

THE LIFE
OF
HENRY MONTGOMERY
BY
J. H. MONTGOMERY

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THE LIFE

OF THE REV.

HENRY MONTGOMERY, LL.D.



VOL. I.





H. Westphalen Esq.

Esq. of the Court of the Admiralty



THE LIFE

OF THE REV.

HENRY^W MONTGOMERY, LL.D.,

DUNMURRY, BELFAST;

WITH SELECTIONS FROM

His Speeches and Writings.

BY HIS SON-IN-LAW,

THE REV. JOHN A. CROZIER, A.B.,

NEWRY, IRELAND.

WITH PORTRAIT AND ENGRAVINGS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO

The Stedfast and Generous Friends,

STILL LIVING,

OF THE LATE DR. MONTGOMERY,

AND TO

The Memory of Others who have Passed Away,

THIS WORK IS,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF GRATEFUL RESPECT,

INSCRIBED BY

The Author.

P R E F A C E.

THE distinguished place which the talents and labours of Dr. Montgomery secured for him in public estimation, his intimate association with the progress of Civil and Religious Liberty in Ireland for more than half-a-century, and his eminent personal qualities, have caused a natural desire on the part of many friends to possess a record of his life. To meet this desire was the original purpose of this work.

The Author's connexion with the family of Dr. Montgomery, his intimacy with him during his latter years, and his having come into possession of his voluminous papers, as well as being a minister of the same church, have induced him to undertake the duty of preparing his life—a duty pressed upon him by many whose opinion he valued.

It is to be regretted that an interval of nine years should have elapsed from the date of Dr. Montgomery's death till the publication of this volume; but circumstances beyond the Author's control have prevented him, until recently, from entering on its preparation, and many unavoidable causes have hitherto delayed its completion.

The task was one of no ordinary magnitude, and the needed leisure for its fulfilment only such as could be spared from professional engagements. The miscellaneous literary accumulation of a public life of nearly sixty years, entirely unprepared for the press, required in itself a considerable period for selection and arrangement; while as to information from external sources, those ever active harvest-men—Time and Death—had been meanwhile so busy, that the gleanings in the field of Dr. Montgomery's earlier life, of those personal traits and reminiscences that add so materially to the interest of biography, have been necessarily few and brief. Another generation has arisen, "which knew not Joseph."

Consequently—save in the record of his childhood and youth, carefully gathered from the recollections of a few still surviving relatives, and from certain well-authenticated traditions of his early home—the greater part of this first volume is rather a compilation from public records descriptive of his public career, than a relation of his personal or social life drawn from more familiar intercourse.

In this the Author's constant aim has been, from all available and reliable sources, to supply, not a fancy sketch of an ideal hero, but a real portrait of a man of no common mould, the noble proportions of whose outward fame truly betokened alike the capacious mind and heart residing within—to describe him as he lived and acted amidst the diversified scenes and stirring events in which his lot was cast. He has not sought to write that unmeaning, and to him impossible thing, called an "impartial" biography; but he has endeavoured, he would hope not without success, that it should be a faithful one.

Anticipating the possible objection that the delineation of Dr. Montgomery's character is much too partial, and that no mention has been made of faults to which, like other men, he must have been liable, it may be replied, that in regard to those earlier portions of his life to which this volume is confined, of the various authorities which there have been opportunities of consulting, the uniform testimony has been found to be, not of faults to be censured, but of eminent abilities to be admired, and virtues to be praised. Whatever may have been the faults observed by his contemporaries, they seem to have been forgotten in admiration of his genius, and respect for the uprightness of his intentions; and even his bitterest antagonists, while smarting under the lash of his indignant eloquence, not only bore repeated testimony to his powers, but asked to be allowed to call him "friend."

So universal is this testimony both from friends and foes—as to his commanding worth and influence, and his potent sway over the minds and feelings of those around him—that in preparing this book, the Author feels that he has enjoyed the rare privilege of recording the life of one formed by nature to be an *ἀρχὴ ἀνδρῶν*—a veritable king of men!

The work was originally designed simply as a memoir of

Dr. Montgomery, prefixed to a publication of his speeches and writings; but his connexion with almost all the important public events of his day, and the leading part he took in them, rendered it impossible to confine it to the bounds of a mere personal narrative. Hence numerous incidental notices of persons and events became necessary; so that this volume has assumed in some measure the form of an historical sketch of the religious and political condition of the North of Ireland, for a period of forty years from the date of his birth.

Such are the notices of the Irish Volunteers and Rebellion of '98, Early Presbyterianism in Ulster, the Belfast Academical Institution, Catholic Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform, and O'Connell and Repeal.

But second only in importance to the main purpose of the work, it has been the Author's special aim to furnish a detailed history of the entire Non-Subscription Controversy in the General Synod of Ulster, the consequent separation of the Synod, and the formation of the Remonstrant Church.

Of these events, so interesting in themselves, important in their principles, and vital in their bearings upon religious freedom, no adequate and reliable record has hitherto been published—Dr. Montgomery's "Outlines of Presbyterianism," equally graphic and faithful so far as they go, having terminated abruptly with the close of the Strabane meeting. It is to be hoped that the narrative in the following pages may be found to supply the omission.

In order to do justice to the subject, and at the same time avoid undue partiality, even at the risk of being considered tedious, copious extracts have been given from the speeches of the leaders on both sides of the great controversy; while an extensive use of foot-notes has enabled the Author, without breaking the course of the narrative, to supply descriptive sketches, not only of many Remonstrant ministers and other distinguished Non-Subscribers, but also of the more prominent men of the Synodical party. Frequent references will enable the reader to verify the information furnished.

Should any apology be deemed necessary for the prominence given in these pages to the Rev. Dr. Cooke, it must be borne in mind that, had they been really brothers instead of opponents,

the public lives of the two great men during the eight years of their continuous conflicts could not have been more inseparably associated; while it is believed that no more than justice has been done to the leadership and talents of Montgomery's brilliant antagonist.

With the exception of occasional letters given in the present volume, most of the extensive correspondence (referred to in the Prospectus) between Dr. Montgomery and many leading public men, eminent ministers, and others, belongs to a later date, and will appear in Volume II. Extracts from many of his speeches and discourses have been introduced in the narrative; while others, requiring to be given at greater length, are published in their order as Appendices to this volume.

The remainder of those meant for publication will appear in a similar form in the succeeding volume; in which it is also intended to supply, amongst other important matters, an interesting and authentic record of proceedings in connexion with the Dissenters' Chapels Act.

The Author desires to express his thankful acknowledgments to those friends who have aided him by their valuable information in the preparation of this work, which is now committed to the candid consideration of an indulgent public; and, in trustful reliance on an overruling Providence, he humbly places the present result of his labours—an imperfect, but faithful offering—on the shrine of Civil and Religious Liberty.

NEWRY, *February, 1875.*

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LIFE OF DR. MONTGOMERY.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD.

1788—1799.

Parentage and Household—Locality—Descent—Montgomery Family—Grandfather and Grandmother—Father—Mother—Campbell Family—Brothers and Sisters—Birth—Baptism—Incidents of Childhood—Early Destination to the Ministry—Rebellion of '98—Previous State of Ireland—Contrast with the Present—The Volunteers—The Society of United Irishmen—The Outbreak—Brothers Engaged—The Battle of Antrim—Pursuit and Escape of Brothers—Arrest, Imprisonment, and Release of Eldest—Father's House Burnt—Incidents—Influence on Mind and Character.

IN the pleasant old mansion-house of Boltinacommel, in the parish of Killead, and County of Antrim, Ireland, were living, in the beginning of the year 1788, the time this history commences, Lieutenant Archibald Montgomery and his wife Sarah, after twenty years of married happiness, and surrounded by a considerable family. Eight children had then been born to them, of whom one son and two daughters died early, while the remainder—four sons and one daughter—all lived to attain maturity, and some to arrive at a very advanced old age.

The house was a large two-storied thatched building, substantial and capacious beyond most of its neighbours, even in that most thriving of farming districts, surrounded by its extensive range of farm buildings, its garden and orchards, and its sheltering plantations. It was situated near to the leading road through Killead, from Lough Neagh and Crumlin, on the one side, to

Templepatrick and the Six-mile-water on the other, and over the mountains into Belfast. It was not far from the north-western slopes of the Belfast mountains, towards the foot of which stretched the farm, and whose gentle elevations and soft brown sides formed a pleasing background to a picturesque scene.

The land here, as over most of the flat reaches of Killead, is strong and fertile; and the fields, through nearly the entire district, are laid out with a regularity of square and rectangle rarely to be found in Irish farming, and strikingly contrasting with the irregularity of adjoining districts and counties. These, with the general prevalence of well-grown hedge-rows, the long vistas of straight-lined roads between, the large farms and farm-steads, and the better-class farming everywhere observable, resemble so much more the agricultural parts of England and Scotland than the rest of Ireland generally, that one is led to conclude that the district must have been formerly colonised almost exclusively by English and Scotch settlers—a conclusion abundantly verified by the appearance, manners and habits, the names, descent and history of its people.

Amongst these colonists had come over from Scotland, about the middle of the seventeenth century, a family of Montgomerys, a branch of the great Ayrshire clan, and not distantly related to the noble house which, in the adjoining county (Down), became the Lords of Ards, and supplied the talented and illustrious line of the Earls of Mount Alexander—to some of the most distinguished of whom several of the descendants of the fore-mentioned family, and eminently the subject of this memoir, bore a striking and noted resemblance, as well in personal appearance as in mental and social qualities. This Ayrshire family, settling in Killead, received from the family of Rowley, to whom the estate belonged (ancestral connections of the families of Langford, and Pakenham of Langford Lodge), a grant of the townland of Boltnaconnel,* containing upwards of one thousand

* In this townland are two interesting remains of antiquity—a Cromlech, or stone Druidical altar, and a large Danish Ring Fort, enclosing no less a space than four acres within its circumference!

acres Irish. On this property, which descended undivided through several generations, the residence of Boltuaconnel House, before described, was built.

Here, about the middle of the 18th century, was living William Montgomery, then the representative of the family, and possessing the still undivided estate. He also carried on here the business of a linen bleacher and linen merchant. (The remains of the bleachworks, water-course, &c., are now only traceable on the place.) In this capacity he frequently visited Dublin, Londonderry, and other places; and, his first wife having died, he brought home as his second a Dublin lady, by whom he had several children. After her death, he married again, and obtained for his third wife a young lady of superior personal attractions and influential family—a namesake and relation of his own. She was sister to a Sir Henry Montgomery, Baronet, of County Londonderry, then, or formerly, High Sheriff of that county, whose son, Captain Montgomery, is still remembered by old people in the district as having driven from Derry in a stately equipage to visit his cousins and friends in Killead.*

Archibald Montgomery was the son of this third marriage. His father having divided his lands into portions for his elder son William and other members of his family, at his death left to his son Archibald the house of Boltuaconnel, and the large Home Farm, which has since remained united with it. Others of the family removed to other localities, amongst these a son John, who, it is stated, settled in County Down, and built for himself the residence known as Bunker's Hill, near Belfast.

In 1767, Archibald Montgomery married Sarah Campbell, each being over thirty years of age. She was daughter of John Campbell of Killealy, in the same parish of Killead. Her mother's name was Cunningham, of the family of that name residing at Crookedstone, near Antrim. The Campbells of

* It is to be noted that many of the facts here recorded have been taken from the personal recollections of trustworthy informants, or from well-authenticated traditions of the locality, rather than from documentary authorities.

Killealy were, like the Montgomeries, descendants of settlers from Scotland, and claimed a close relationship to the vigorous stock from which the late Sir Colin Campbell was descended.

Their ancestor, Hugh Campbell,* on coming from Scotland, married the daughter of Squire Upton, of Castle Upton, Templepatrick, ancestor of the present Viscount Templeton; and the family became connected by marriage with the lords of the soil, the influential families of Rowley and Pakenham.

The wife of Archibald Montgomery was a tall and well-proportioned woman, with dark hair and complexion, dignified, even commanding, in appearance and manners, possessing a large and vigorous mind, and of indefatigable energy. Combining with these a large-hearted kindness, and thoughtfulness for others, she seemed formed to exercise the potent sway that always belonged to her, not only over her own family, but amongst a wide circle of neighbours and friends. She was the sort of woman sure to impress her children deeply with her own thoughts and feelings, and, by a happy combination of great kindness with much mental power and energy of will, to mould their dispositions, and even permanently direct them in accordance with her wishes. Her husband and she were a well-matched pair. Like most of his race, he was a large man and tall, being six feet high, and good-looking, with light complexion and fair hair. Affable in manners, upright in disposition and conduct, a genial and entertaining companion, a man of far-sighted and liberal views, and a genuine lover of his country and its people, he was well fitted to fulfil the duties and to do honour to the

* Dr. Montgomery thus writes of some of his descendants, the Campbells of that district, his own maternal relations:—"I well remember four patriarchal brothers named Campbell, descended from this worthy man, who, in comparatively unenlightened times, were all remarkable for intelligence, integrity, general information, Scriptural knowledge, and an ardent attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty. That their mantle has not fallen upon degenerate shoulders I could easily prove, by pointing to several living men of their name and race, who inherit all the virtues of an honourable ancestry, conjoined with the advantages of superior personal education—men distinguished, without a single exception, as the liberal and unswerving supporters of truth, freedom, and charity."

position which Providence had assigned him, and worthily to take his part, and a leading part, amongst the substantial, intelligent, and independent farmers of Killead.

A Presbyterian by birth and choice, as were all his Scotch-descended neighbours, he and his household worshipped with them in the old meeting-house of Killead, whose worthy pastor, the Rev. Robert Orr, ministered to the spiritual wants of one of the largest congregations in Ireland, the friend as well as shepherd of his people.

On the enrolment of the Irish Volunteers in the year 1778, to defend the country against an apprehended invasion from France and Spain, Archibald Montgomery was chosen Lieutenant of a company raised in Killead, and continued to hold this office and discharge its duties till the Volunteers were disbanded some sixteen years afterwards. The title of Lieutenant, however, still remained with him, and he was generally called by it for the rest of his life.

Such were the estimable couple who had lived now some twenty years together, their sons and their daughters growing up around them promising and well-conducted, in prosperity and peace, when, on the 16th of January, 1788, at the mature age of fifty years, Mrs. Montgomery presented her husband with yet another son. He was a fair child and a large, giving promise of the future man. Her last-born son, the child, not of her youth, but of her age, he was sure to become his mother's special pet, and to have concentrated on himself the fulness of maternal devotion, previously shared by his elder brethren, but which they had all then, comparatively speaking, outgrown. And this he certainly did receive, and that he became, to such an extent as to exercise a striking influence (according to his own recorded conviction) on the subsequent development both of his bodily and mental powers.

His next elder brother, Alexander, still surviving at the venerable age of ninety (many members of whose very numerous family of children and grandchildren now occupy important positions of honour and usefulness in Ireland, England, and

America), tells of the large christening party, which he distinctly remembers. Being a somewhat late arrival, his parents thought they should honour him accordingly; so they called his name Henry,* after his father's uncle, the baronet of Londonderry of that name.

His childhood and early youth seem to have passed without offering many noteworthy circumstances. He himself, in after life, when speaking of his earliest recollections, used to say that, had it not been for his mother's uncommon stock of controlling good sense through all, he believed he was then in the fair way of being completely spoilt by over-indulgence. But the tale, to be fittingly told, must be in his own very words, as, towards the close of his long and honoured life, in a discourse delivered to his congregation on the fifty-first anniversary of his ministry, he thus touchingly recalls the circumstances of his childhood:—
 “Of a family consisting of nine children, I was very much the youngest, being born in my mother's fiftieth year, and the result was unbounded indulgence; so that my earliest recollection of existence is my living in an atmosphere of brightness and love. I might have been ruined, had there not been some strong, though uncultivated, country sense mingled with such unceasing affection. And, happily, even before I was able to distinguish between right and wrong, my heart supplied me with a species of conscience which became no bad guide. I soon perceived that truth, gentleness, and obedience gave pleasure to those who made my life so happy, and I resolved not to give them pain.”

* The Christian name *Henry* was not uncommon among the Montgomeries of Killead. There were three cousins of Lieutenant Montgomery so-named, residing in that or the adjoining districts—Henry Montgomery of Killcross, Henry Montgomery of Ballinderry, and Henry Montgomery of Ballinadrenta. In the old burial-ground of Carneavy, on a tombstone erected by the last-mentioned, are the armorial bearings of the Killead Montgomeries, viz.:—On a shield three fleurs-de-lys quartered with scallop shells; the crest a full-length female figure, the right hand resting on a sword, and the left outstretched holding a human head; the motto, “Garde Bien”—identical, or nearly so, with the arms of the Ards or Mount Alexander family before-mentioned.—See “The Montgomery Manuscripts,” edited by Rev. George Hill, Belfast, 1869; pp. 110, 111, notes.

While such was its happy moral influence upon the spirit of his childhood, on the other hand, in its material effects, the treatment only served to add more than the usual amount of bone and muscle to his youthful frame.

That he possessed from a very early age a peculiar, quaintly humorous, and persuasive method of coming round the maternal mind and obtaining his wishes, may be inferred from what is told of him on one occasion, when his mother was entertaining a visitor in the parlour, and the child, having been troublesome, found himself on the wrong side of the door, with a strong and not uncommon desire to participate in the cakes and other good things that he knew were being discussed within. The usual expedients to obtain admission were all tried, but this time without success; when at length his mother and her guest were equally astonished and delighted to hear the Lord's Prayer, from beginning to end, distinctly repeated through the keyhole! Of course, there was no resisting this; and, on the child's being admitted, the admiring visitor, doubtless profoundly struck by the evidence of his early taste and capacity for theological acquirements, no less than for their practical application, exclaimed—"Mrs. Montgomery, you must make that boy a minister!" Whether or not this advice should have the credit of being the determining cause history doth not record; but certain it is, that from a very early period of his life, by the common consent of parents and all concerned, the ministry was Henry Montgomery's destination.

A thoughtful boy, well endowed with powers of observation and memory, he had reached the age of ten and a-half years, when events occurred which rudely crossed the peaceful current of his young days, leaving indelible impressions upon his mind, and enabling him to recall the scenes they presented, with photographic clearness, to the latest period of his life.

Although the discussion of the political events of that period does not fall within the province of this memoir, and the general matters connected with the Irish Rebellion of 1798 belong to the domain of history, yet a passing notice of the nature and

originating causes of that lamentable insurrection, in whose progress the family of Henry Montgomery, like so many others around them, were both actors and sufferers, and which was not without its subsequent marked influences on his own young mind, may not be uninteresting to the readers of these pages.

It is not to be denied that, in the latter part of the last century, Ireland was suffering under a grievous load of oppression and misrule. The principles of civil and religious liberty were still in their infancy. Truly appreciated only by a few discerning spirits, who were able to recognise their legitimate limits, as well as their rightful extension, they were scornfully ignored by their enemies, while by the majority of their friends they were alike misunderstood and misapplied. The then condition of the Irish Established Church and Tithe system; of the Land system—its lords, laws, agents, and general administration; of assessed taxation, and commercial restrictions; of the civil disabilities both of non-conforming Protestants and of Roman Catholics; of the electoral and legislative systems—with a mockery of Parliament sitting in Dublin, nearly four-fifths of whose House of Commons, instead of being elected representatives of the people, were merely the nominees of a few peers and wealthy landed proprietors, and, for the most part, the unscrupulous hireling tools of an English Government faction; all this, with the corruption in its worst forms then so widely prevailing, must indicate to every reflecting mind the dark and woful state of Ireland at the period. It is a picture most difficult to realise, in these days of Irish Church and Land Acts, Free Trade, practical Roman Catholic ascendancy and high-soaring Ultramontane pretensions, thrice reformed Parliaments, wide extended Electoral Franchise, and Vote by Ballot: but how much more so in the presence of National Conventions of Home Rulers in Dublin, vast Sunday demonstrations of their adherents in the metropolis and chief towns of Ireland, and speeches delivered which then would have brought their authors quickly and surely to the gaol and the gibbet;—all now permitted

without interference by a compliant Executive and an unconcerned public!*

Were those who then risked property and life and the reproach of rebels, with "Parliamentary Reform" and "Catholic Emancipation" as the only inscriptions on their banner, now to return, and look upon the Ireland of to-day, would they see of the travail of their soul and be satisfied? or would they still feel bound, regardless of all they would now behold, to re-embark, and sail with the noisy agitators of the present over an unknown sea, in further quest of a new mysterious Ireland, the seat of federal or independent perfection? Who knows! "Man never is, but always to be blest!" But surely we of these days must at least admit that their aspirations were, in all conscience, moderate enough.

On the dark page of Irish history to which allusion has been made, the era of the Volunteer Association threw one bright gleam of light, inscribing thereon, as it passed, in letters of gold, the Abolition of the Test Act in Ireland (that obnoxious statute, to which the Nonconformists had long submitted with gathering indignation); a large instalment of Roman Catholic Relief; and the Legislative Independence of the Irish Parliament. These measures, so desirable in themselves, were wrung from the fears of the British Government by the stalwart attitude of a formidable army of 100,000 Irish Volunteers: a bad principle surely on both sides, however necessity might be pleaded in justification, and the cause of multiplied subsequent evils to the country. On the one side, laying up a store of bitter feeling, eager to seek future satisfaction for the humiliation; on the other, fostering a spirit of reliance on physical force, instead of the peaceful influence of public opinion, for the attainment of real or fancied benefits for the nation—an unfortunate spirit, which has since cost Ireland so much blood, anxiety, and woe.

The crisis past, and the Volunteers disbanded in 1793 by

* Written in 1873—before the more recent development of the Home Rule principle, in the election of its present body of Parliamentary representatives, had taken place.

orders of the Government they had humbled, their spirit passed into the "Society of United Irishmen"—a society instituted by good men for good purposes, their original and avowed object being the old one of Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation. It rapidly spread through the length and breadth of the land. It is thus described by Henry Montgomery himself, writing in 1847, with full knowledge of the facts* :—

"The Society of United Irishmen was not at its institution a secret society; and I can testify, upon the unimpeachable authority of Dr. Drennan (one of its leading founders), that it was rather designed to prevent than encourage rebellion. In fact, there is not one principle which its founders maintained that is not now sanctioned by the laws of the land—not one right which it advocated that is not at the present moment guaranteed by the three estates of the realm! How wonderful, that those noble pioneers of liberty were subjected to imprisonment, expatriation, or death, for merely asserting those ordinary human rights and self-evident principles of government, whose advocacy has since commanded the applause of senates, and secured the respect of the world!

"It cannot, however, be denied that principles, sound in themselves, and whose enunciation would produce no injurious effect upon enlightened minds, may be brought so to bear upon the multitude as to result in consequences the most disastrous. So it was, unhappily, with the principles of the Society of United Irishmen. Young men, weak men, enthusiastic men, and, above all, wicked men, so misapplied and perverted them, as to delude the unwary, to involve thousands in criminal projects under false notions of patriotism; and, finally, to crimson the green fields of our country with the blood of her children."

And now commenced a very bad time. Secrecy, alienation, bitterness, disaffection, and wild counsels on the one side; and a wretched system of the employment of base spies, informers, prosecutions, and treacherous incitements to treason on the other. Thus goaded forward from without and from within, the spirit of

* See "Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland: by the Rev. H. Montgomery, LL.D.;" "Irish Unitarian Magazine" for 1847, Vol. II., p. 329. Also, for general notice of Rebellion of '98, with antecedent and subsequent events.

insurrection could no longer be repressed, and a formidable outbreak became inevitable.

This took place in the south of Ireland in the end of May, and in Ulster in the first week of June, 1798. It is not necessary to follow the course of this brief but disastrous insurrection, nor the hard-fought battles between the rebels and the royal troops in Down and Antrim, which have served the then generation as the era from which to compute their annals ever since. It is sufficient to note that the insurgent forces enrolled in Ulster amounted, according to their own returns, to no less than 110,990 armed men, of whom a large proportion would seem to have been Presbyterian, belonging chiefly to the six most Presbyterian counties of Down, Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone, Derry and Monaghan. Dr. Montgomery, writing as above, says:—"The truth ought not to be concealed: the Rebellion was in its origin and almost to its end an Ulster rebellion, and a Presbyterian rebellion; I remember it very well." Of the Presbyterian ministers of Ulster, though few appeared openly in arms on the insurgent side, many, both ministers and probationers, were implicated; many suffered imprisonment and exile in consequence; two were most cruelly put to death; and Dr. Montgomery states that, "with comparatively few exceptions, they were United Irishmen."

The County Antrim contingent of the rebel force amounted to 22,900 men.

The two eldest sons of Lieutenant Montgomery—William and John—had, in the ardour of youthful patriotism, joined the United Irish Society, and of course were implicated in its proceedings. Their father, with greater wisdom, though he heartily approved its *original* principles, and used often to say, "he wished that he might live to see Catholic Emancipation and a Reformed Parliament," had refused to become a member of the society. He does not seem, however, to have objected to his sons' enrolment.

When the rising took place, William, with a company from the neighbourhood, marched on the morning of the 7th June to

join the insurgents in their formidable attack upon the royal troops at Antrim, young Henry running to an adjacent height to watch their progress, with a boy's delight in the martial display. It was on this occasion that Mrs. Montgomery, her maternal anxiety for her eldest born outweighing even her conjugal feelings, is recorded to have said to her husband—" Archie, dear, go yourself, and don't send the wean!"—a saying which has been commemorated as happily illustrating an old localised Scotch proverb—" My wean's my ain wean, but my man's anither woman's wean!"

Having taken his part in the fight at Antrim, on the defeat of the rebel forces, William, during the following night, returned a fugitive to his father's house. Here he remained concealed till the second day after, when the house was surrounded by a band of yeomanry,* eager for his capture and that of his brother John. William had timely notice, and made his escape; but John was in the house, and would have been taken, but for a large house-dog of his father's, that actually kept the armed yeomen at bay, till he got time to escape from the house and hide himself in the furrows of a wheat-field near at hand, where he was not discovered. On the troopers' departure he made his way to a distant part of County Antrim, and remained there concealed for more than a month. William meanwhile fled to Donegore, some six miles distant, and took refuge in the house of a *friend*, who proved his friendship by secretly sending word to the yeomen in Antrim, who came and took him prisoner in the house. He was taken to Belfast, and there confined for a month in the military prison, whence he was only liberated on his brother John surrendering

* Squadrons of yeomanry had recently been enrolled in all directions by orders of Government, and placed under the command of local high Tories, its noted partisans, with a view to watch the proceedings, and counteract the influence of the United Irish organisation. They were chiefly Orangemen of the most violent type, some being Episcopalians, but many Presbyterians, who had been till just before United Irishmen and rebels, but found it convenient to change their colours. And of course, as usual in such cases, no insults—no barbarities towards their recent friends and comrades, were too great to evince their staunch loyalty to their new masters! They were familiarly known by the name of "Orange Croppies!"

himself as a hostage for him. He was fortunately much less implicated than William, and, as little could be found against him, and some influential friends exerted themselves in his behalf, he was soon set free.

The yeomen, whom we left at Boltnaconnel, balked of their prey, and held in check by a dog, resolved to exhibit their bravery by wreaking their vengeance on the house and its contents. Accordingly, they proceeded to turn the house inside out in the style most approved on such occasions, showing themselves perfect adepts in the work. The furniture was tumbled out of doors and windows, and smashed to pieces outside. Feather beds were tossed out and carefully ripped open. Sacks of meal were cut, and the contents strewed over the yard. Drawers and receptacles of money and papers were ransacked, and everything of a portable nature carried off. All this, too, in the presence of the family, and some amongst the most active of the plunderers being neighbours, and known to them all—some whose necessities they had not unfrequently relieved. One of those brave defenders of their country was seen to wrench off the pump handle, and to use it to break every window within reach; another carried off Lieutenant Montgomery's lease of his farm, and in long after years informed him that he had it, modestly demanding a considerable sum for giving it up. But these were not the men to leave their work half done. Having artistically finished their loot of the house, they then set it on fire, and had the satisfaction of leaving only the walls standing. The thatched roof must have made them a fine blaze!

One of the band, who had been conspicuous for his zeal in the plundering and burning, came, in after years, a pauper to beg for alms at Boltnaconnel House. Archibald Montgomery, in the first promptings of a not unnatural indignation, would have sent him away empty; but his wife, with the finer perception of her womanly instinct, brought a peek of meal, and, as she poured it into his bag, quietly told him that she gave him that in remembrance of his "activity"!

In the meantime, the homeless family, with nothing left them

but the clothes they had on, found a kindly refuge in the house of Archibald's brother William, on the adjoining farm. Here, the next morning, Mrs. Montgomery observed that she had not a second shirt for any of them, when her son Alexander, the youngest save Henry, saying he thought it was not quite so bad as that, went out and shortly returned triumphant, with a *sack full* of shirts and an unmade suit of his brother Henry's—sole relics of their household goods. While the yeomen were busy with the house, he had seen the shirts drying on the green, and, with wondrous forethought for a boy of his years, had quickly stuffed them, with the pieces of cloth that came readiest to his hands, into one of the meal sacks already mentioned, and hidden it away under a heap of thorns.

At length the storm had spent itself, and a grateful calm succeeded. The substantial walls of his house were still available; and Mrs. Pakenham of Langford Lodge sent for Lieutenant Montgomery, and generously offered him the loan of a considerable sum of money towards putting on a new roof; influenced, as she said, by his upright character and undeserved misfortunes, as well as by the connexion subsisting between his wife's family and her own. So their dwelling was rebuilt, and by degrees re-furnished; their farm prospered, their substance became replaced, and the household gradually regained its former position, and fell into its accustomed ways.

Such was Henry Montgomery's earliest education; not drawn from schoolrooms or schoolbooks, but from the great book of human nature, and from a strangely varied and impressive experience for one so young, in the mingled schooling of blessing and calamity, of sunshine and storm!

And as they were the earliest, so the same heaven-provided sources were the main study, and supplied the marked experiences of his eventful life. They might make him a minister, and send him to school and college for the purpose; and he might acquire much learning in letters and theology, and receive the degrees of M.A. and LL.D., and become an elegant and accomplished scholar; but it was in the university of the *knowledge of*

humanity that he may be truly said to have graduated as *master*; and in the noble evidences of the rare skill and commanding power which that knowledge conferred, lay the real greatness and attraction that adorned his life. The lessons he had already imbibed may be easily traced in his after life—in his ingrained love of liberty; his quick indignation against injustice or oppression; his steadfast adherence to the principles of law and order, and safe and salutary progress, political and social; his deprecating horror of scenes and measures of violence and blood; and his delight in the prevalence of peace and contentment, and in contributing to promote the innocent enjoyment and happiness of his fellow-beings.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DAYS.

1799—1809.

School at Lyle-Hill—Books—Master—Rev. Isaac Patton—The “Shorter Catechism”—Sports—Crumlin Academy—Classical Seminaries in the North of Ireland—Mr. and Mrs. Alexander—Glasgow College—Study—Professors—Drs. Milne and Young—College Life : Associates and Friends—James Carley—Extracts from Memoir by Montgomery—David Whyte—William Finlay—Patrick White—His Letters—Friendly Discussions on “Endless Punishment,” “Total Depravity,” &c.—Letters of D. Whyte and Rev. N. Alexander—Tuition at Seapark—Second Letter of D. Whyte—Degree of M.A.—Divinity Course—Letter of William Finlay—Return to Seapark—Preparation of Discourses—First Sermon—Licence by the Templepatrick Presbytery.

BUT all things, however great or good they may afterwards prove, must have a beginning, which is often prosaic and commonplace enough; and Henry Montgomery was sent to learn the first rudiments of an ordinary education at a small country school, at the age of eleven, which would show that his parents, being plain people, were sadly wanting in the proper ambition to have their son a prodigy in petticoats!

The school was at Lyle-Hill, in the adjoining parish of Templepatrick. It was four miles from Boltinaconnel. The road was rough and dreary, over steep hill and mountain. Eight miles (Irish) along this was his daily walk six times in the week (the Saturday holiday of the present day not having then come into fashion), for the next three years—in itself not a bad lesson to the boy that there is no royal road to learning. Books of any kind were then a scarce commodity, especially with country folk; schoolbooks were few and bad; of regular class-books there were none. A few primers of a very primitive type, an odd reading-book, some old copies of the *Delphine*

Classics, with that plague to schoolboys, their Latin "Interpretation" and Notes, and an occasional "Gough," which practically taught multiplication and division by doing duty as the common arithmetic for half the school,—these, picked up by the "scholars" how and where they could, formed the usual intellectual furnishing of an ordinary country school in those days. The master was looked upon as, of course, a necessary institution, to keep the house open, wield the birch, and receive the pence; but in many instances, for aught beyond, if not much for ornament, he was still less for use.

The school to which Henry Montgomery was sent was substantially of this class. It was held in the house of the Rev. Isaac Patton, minister of the Secession congregation of Lyle, the first "Seceding" minister settled in Ireland, then an aged man, "in whose little, old parlour," writes Montgomery himself, "where he sat for upwards of fifty years, I learned the rudiments of Latin from his son-in-law (named Alexander Greer, who conducted the school), and in the old vestry of his meeting-house, though not of his communion, I repeated every Saturday for two years 'The Shorter Catechism, with the Scripture proofs at large.'"* It was almost the only thing, as he himself elsewhere records, that he remembered to have really learnt all the time he was at the school, the teacher being in many essential respects unfitted for his position and duties.

But if his progress in school lore was not then great, he seems to have been making up for it in other respects, as he had become the acknowledged leader of his schoolfellows, many of them much older than himself, in every boyish pastime. He had grown very tall and athletic for his years, and was long remembered by his schoolmates and others as the fleetest runner and most active lad in the school or neighbourhood. And the games then most in fashion amongst boys, such as those called "Prison-bars" and "Hare and Hounds," involving many a sharp run over a long stretch of country, were well calculated to test the youthful powers of activity and endurance.

* See "Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland;" "Irish Unitarian Magazine," 1847, p. 231.

Early in the year 1802, at his own urgent request, Henry Montgomery was removed by his parents from the school at Lyle and sent to the Crumlin Academy, a very decided change for the better. Here he found himself in a more congenial atmosphere, with schoolfellows who, like himself, were seeking to prepare for college and a professional life, with opportunities more suited for the development and training of his mind and talents, and under the care of an instructor who lived in the respect and affection of his pupils. The Crumlin Academy was then one of a few centres of light in the dark waste of the North of Ireland, in respect to the education of its youth. Though wanting in most of the modern "appliances and means to boot," now so abundantly provided, for instance, in the district Model National Schools of the present day, they yet supplied what these do not,—a sound classical and historical education, sufficient to enable young men to matriculate with respectability or distinction in college. Such were the Academies of Rademon (County Down), Strabane (County Tyrone), and Belfast and Crumlin (County Antrim), with a few others of lesser note, where, under the care of earnest and well-qualified teachers—some being eminent classical scholars and authors—a large number of Irish youth, of various denominations, received their school education, who afterwards became members of the ministerial, medical, or legal professions, or entered into mercantile life, or became farmers and country gentlemen in their several neighbourhoods.

Amongst these seminaries that of Crumlin held no mean place. Its principal was the Rev. Nathaniel Alexander, the minister of Crumlin Presbyterian congregation, a sterling man in every way, and exemplary in every relation of life. To a sound head and extensive attainments he united a most benevolent heart and the guilelessness of childhood. In Mrs. Alexander, a woman of rare excellence, he had happily found a help-meet for him, and under their joint influence were formed the minds and morals of hundreds of youths committed to their care, the after lives of numbers of whom did high credit to their training, and gave evidence that their good counsels and virtuous example

had not been unproductive. This worthy couple soon became, and ever remained, the fast friends of Henry Montgomery, and in all the large circle of his subsequent friends and associates there were none whom he more entirely esteemed in life, or whose deaths he has more touchingly commemorated, than his "revered old master" and Mrs. Alexander.

The village of Crumlin lies west of Boltuacommel, towards Lough Neagh, and as the distance was greater than to Lyle, his father got Henry a pony to ride to and from school, a source of healthful exercise and enjoyment for several years. As, however, he had grown to be considerably over six feet high ere he left the academy, with legs unusually long even for that height, it is said that his *tout ensemble* as an equestrian was perhaps more striking than graceful.

In November, 1804, Henry Montgomery, in his seventeenth year, having entered as a student under the care of the Templepatrick Presbytery, matriculated in Glasgow College, which was then, as formerly, the usual resort of Irish students preparing for the Presbyterian ministry. How he got there, or who were his travelling companions, there is no record; but it is probable that, like many another, he had to wait at Donaghadee for a favourable wind, for the small sailing craft called the packet to effect its passage to Portpatrick, whence he made his way north as best he could to the city of Glasgow. Here he took up his lodging with a family called Henderson, from his own parish of Killead, with whom he seems to have remained during several sessions of his college course.

The session in Glasgow College lasted from November till May, and attendance for three sessions on the prescribed curriculum of lectures and examinations constituted the undergraduate course. After receiving their degree in Arts (*i.e.*, the M.A., the Bachelor's degree not being customary in the Glasgow University), the Irish students were required by the General Synod of Ulster to spend one session in attendance on the Divinity classes—such being then considered sufficient theological training, so far as college was concerned, for candidates for the Presbyterian

ministry in Ireland.* With the exception of Dr. Milne, Professor of Moral Philosophy—of whose instructions Montgomery was wont to speak in the highest terms of gratitude and respect—and perhaps also of Dr. Young, Professor of Greek, the professors of Glasgow University at this period do not seem to have been men possessed of any great distinction, either in regard to their own talents and acquirements, or their power of communicating instruction to their students. Not that they were wanting in the needful qualifications for their office, but the system which they found themselves engaged in administering was by no means a strict one. Its requirements as to time and study were neither very extended nor very rigidly enforced. The students were not much looked after; they were not required to reside in the college, and, so far as its authorities were concerned, they might live where and, for the most part, how they pleased; and, unless gifted with a strong desire and determination towards study and self-improvement, it was possible for them to pass through their course easily enough. They were thus thrown very much upon their own resources; their education became in great measure dependent on themselves; and Montgomery has left it on record that, in relation to his own case, at least as a student of Glasgow College, with the exceptions before mentioned, he “was mainly self-taught.”

This freedom of Glasgow student life in those days contrasts strongly with the stricter discipline and superintendence of later times and other localities. It seems to have partaken more of the characteristics of the “*Bursche-Leben*” of the German Universities; and, while it lost in the educational benefits of enforced application and systematic training, it gained in fostering to a much greater degree the spirit of self-reliance and independence, and in providing greater facilities for the more distinct and varied development of the individual tastes and diverse mental

* In this same year (1804) the General Synod passed a law requiring two sessions of Divinity, Hebrew, and Church History from their students; but repealed it in 1806, and returned to their former practice of regarding one collegiate session spent in these studies as sufficient.

aptitudes of the students, whatever their nature and direction might be. It was also productive of a light-hearted and joyous companionship, often ripening into warm and lasting friendship, between young men who, coming from the same locality, found themselves in a land and city of strangers, thrown together in the daily converse of collegiate and social life, with a similarity of studies and pursuits, or who found amongst their fellow-students spirits congenial with their own. The disposition of Henry Montgomery was peculiarly suited for such companionship. Genial, quick-witted, and full of resource and anecdote, he seemed born to be the life and soul of the social circle wherever he moved. He soon found himself surrounded with such companions, chiefly Irish like himself, of whom a chosen group of four singled themselves out, entered within the confines of his outer life, and became his special college chums, his intimate, confidential associates, and his warm personal friends—a friendship which, in the case of two of them at least, continued steadfast through the greater part of his life. Their names were James Carley, David Whyte, William Finlay, and Patrick White.

Foremost of these stands James Carley, not in point of time—for, though three years Montgomery's senior, he was by one year his junior in college, from which their acquaintance seems to have dated, while David Whyte would seem to have been the schoolmate and friend of his earlier years—but in the closeness of their intimacy, and in the affectionate, enduring strength of their life-long, brotherly regard. James Carley, like Montgomery, was from the south of County Antrim. His native place was at Kilroot Point, where the French Admiral Thurot landed in 1760 on his advance to attack Carrickfergus Castle, on which occasion Carley's grandfather and father were made prisoners by the French. His appearance was very prepossessing. He was tall, and strikingly handsome; his features and form may be said to have presented the type of manly beauty. Reserved and formal in manner and expression, a man of few words, and shy and sensitive with strangers, the very contrast between himself and Montgomery, in these and other respects, seemed to attract

them the more to each other; while the genuine goodness of heart and upright principles which they mutually discovered, served to cement their regard into an enduring friendship, only to be interrupted by the hand of death. From this, and the subsequent family connexion subsisting between them, it may not be inappropriate to subjoin here (though anticipating the course of the narrative) some extracts from a beautiful memoir of the former, written by Montgomery, and published in the "Christian Unitarian" for March, 1862. He died at Antrim, on the 20th December, 1861, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his ministry, just four years before the death of Montgomery himself, who thus offers the last tribute of affection on the altar of a life's friendship and communion, premising with the remark, that "in what he was about to say he would keep his modest wishes and unambitious spirit strictly in view, to temper the warmth of personal regard and professional esteem."

"The blessed inheritance of a gentle spirit, upright principles, and remarkable prudence, James Carley derived from his good parents, whom the writer of this notice well knew and greatly esteemed. On the 9th of November, 1805, he entered Glasgow College with a view to the ministry; and his career during the usual four sessions in that seminary was always highly creditable, and would have been distinguished, had not 'Irish students,' as a custom, been shuffled into the background. In the year 1807 he obtained the degree of Master of Arts; and in February, 1809, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Templepatrick, along with his particular friends, David Whyte and H. Montgomery. A somewhat singular circumstance occurred in the spring of that year. The large congregation of Donegore required a minister, owing to the removal of the Rev. J. C. Ledlie to Larne. Thereupon one portion of the congregation desired to obtain James Carley, and another to obtain H. Montgomery, as their pastor. Both in turn preached four Sundays on trial; but neither was able to secure the two-thirds of votes essential to a valid election; and thus two of the most attached fellow-students, before the elder of them had passed his twenty-third year, were pitted against each other in anxious and exciting competition, which, however, did not produce one unkind feeling at the time, or leave one moment's alienation behind.

“Few circumstances could illustrate more clearly than that just stated the force of the poet’s words—

‘There’s a Divinity that *shapes* our ends,
Lough-hew them how we will.’

The mutual defeat which the two young farmers’ sons inflicted upon each other in pursuit of what naturally seemed to them a great prize, gave a new colouring to the entire aspect of their future lives, and produced happy results both to themselves and others of which they never dreamed. Into the uncongenial soil of Donegore they could not have struck deep root, and, consequently, their fruits would have been few and tasteless. Happily, therefore—we had almost said providentially—their first great aim miscarried. Two months thereafter H. Montgomery’s ‘lines fell in pleasant places,’ in the favourable soil of Dummurry, thoroughly adapted to his intellectual and moral nature. James Carley, in a brief period, became assistant pastor to the venerable and enlightened Rev. William Bryson, of Antrim, the not unsuitable successor to a long line of eminent ministers, including the celebrated John Abernethy, Dr. Duchal, M’Lean, and Bryson. In his new and congenial field of operations Mr. Carley speedily developed his many admirable qualities, and secured universal esteem. He and his former competitor in Donegore soon became united by interesting ties of affinity (both being married to members of the same family, the daughters of Mr. Swan); they uniformly assisted each other at the solemn services of the communion for upwards of fifty years; their views upon all religious subjects were singularly coincident; their friendship was like that of David and Jonathan, and a few short years will renew it, we believe, in a better world, never more to be interrupted by time or change. Mr. Carley was a man of a clear, vigorous, and penetrating understanding, able to acquire knowledge with great ease, and to communicate it with singular success. Hence for many years he was a popular and useful teacher of youth; and numbers of the gentry of Ulster, as well as many of its professional men—lawyers, divines, and medical practitioners—are largely indebted to his conscientious training for the honour and prosperity which they now deservedly enjoy. Of no man could it have been more truly said, ‘The integrity of the upright doth guide him.’ Truth, honour, and sincerity were the constant companions of his journey through life. His mind was substantial and vigorous, rather than active and excitable, and hence he wrote with more facility than he spoke. Hence, also, he was rather formal and silent in mixed society, though with familiar friends he

was abundantly agreeable and kindly, and no one ever lived with him in the domestic circle who did not part from him with sentiments of affectionate esteem." "The remarkable symmetry and perfection of his bodily organisation were but the index of his well-balanced mind and pure spirit. His soul was a meet residence for faith, hope, and charity; and no more thoroughly convinced Christian believer than James Carley ever lived or died. Yet he was not a Christian merely by education, or implicit faith. He had anxiously studied the evidences of Christianity, until he had become unhesitatingly convinced that the Bible contains a Divine revelation; and having attained that conclusion, his next step was to ascertain the *actual* teachings of the sacred records, utterly irrespective of all human creeds. His long, serious, and prayerful inquiries upon these last points led him to adopt what are termed 'High Arian' views concerning the person and office of Christ, in contradistinction to Trinitarianism on the one hand, and Humanitarianism on the other; and likewise to embrace the enlarged and cheering views of Arminianism in regard to the terms of salvation, in opposition to the doctrines of Calvinism. In relation to the person, office, and work of Christ, in particular, his views were amongst the very highest ever held by a genuine Unitarian."

David Whyte comes next. To know him at any time of his long life was a privilege; but to have had the unrestrained intimacy of his college companionship, and, still more, the devoted friendship of the fresh years of his youth, must have been rare enjoyment. His was indeed a gifted spirit. To a well-stored, cultivated mind, rich classical taste, and warm Irish heart, he united the fire and fancy of the true poet, an imagination abounding in beautiful and tender thoughts, quaint humour and pleasant conceits, an exhaustless fund of mirth and drollery, and a vocabulary of choice and terse expressions. He also was a County Antrim man, and was wont to dwell upon the beauties of his native place, Gleno, near Larne, in many a sweet verse. From expressions in one at least of his letters, he would seem to have been intimate with Montgomery from his early boyhood, if they had not been school-fellows together at Lyle-Hill. He was some seven years senior to Montgomery, and had been at college for one session before him; so, when he first arrived, Whyte kindly took his inexperienced youth under his care, and

acted as his guardian and guide in his introduction to the ways of college and city life.

Whyte having intermitted the session of 1806, spent the interval teaching in a school at Cairncastle, County Antrim, and passed the remainder of his undergraduate course *pari passu* with his three friends, Montgomery, Carley and Finlay. Having been licensed along with the two former, as already mentioned, he conducted for some time a classical school in the town of Ballymena, whence he removed to become minister of the important rural congregation of Ballee, near Downpatrick. And here he remained, respected and beloved, through a ministry extending over sixty years, and died in 1871 at the green old age of more than ninety years. Like his friend Montgomery, he held from the first pronounced liberal or "new-light" views in theology. He was his co-presbyter during all their ministerial lives. He was one of the original Remonstrants, and, side by side with his early friend, he went forth from the Synod to found the Remonstrant Church, sacred to the principles of Christian freedom. Long and pleasant was their personal and ministerial intercourse; and when, in their latter days, differences as to points of discipline produced a temporary estrangement, the strength of former feelings soon bridged over the chasm, and the friends of a lifetime were friends once more.

William Finlay came next. His acquaintance with Montgomery seems to have dated from their meeting at Glasgow. Clever and good-hearted, and a most genial companion, he was a great favourite with his three companions, and always made one of their chosen party, as well in their studies as their amusements. He was understood to hold similar liberal sentiments in religion; and afterwards, becoming minister of Dundonald, near Belfast, he was a co-presbyter with Whyte and Montgomery in the Bangor Presbytery; but, like many another, when the time of trial came, he did not come out from the Synod with his early friends, in the Remonstrant separation.

Patrick White has also been mentioned—afterwards the minister of Bailieborough—as sharing in the intimacy and part-

nership of these college friends. Coming from a distant county—Tyrone—and a very different Presbytery from that of Templepatrick, trained under different auspices, and early developing a tendency towards old light, or Calvinistic, opinions, he was yet freely admitted to share in their companionship, and to participate in their good offices. Both of these he cordially acknowledged, as shown in a letter from him to Montgomery, written on 10th May, 1807, as follows:—

“DEAR CHUM,—I hope you will not attribute my delay of writing you either to indifference or ingratitude, either of which to you would be very unbecoming one who hath received such repeated displays of friendship from you as I have done. For these I still consider myself a debtor. The last instance of your kindness claims my gratitude in no less degree than the many former. I am happy to hear by your letter that Mr. Carley was well, and that he arrived safely in Belfast, but was uneasy because of his not writing according to promise. I thought our connection was bound by too firm ties to be dissolved so soon. Indeed, it would appear strange to me if *ever* the affection which subsisted between Carley, you, and I should become languid—I’ll not say dissolved.” Then, after some youthful *badinage*, comes the following postscript:—“Dear Sir,—I think it might be improving were your next letter to take the religious turn, and in any manner your better judgment would point to treat it. Perhaps if you would state a few arguments for some particular disputed tenet, and sum up a few objections to the contrary one, it might be a very good employment for me to endeavour to refute them, and to advance as many arguments on my own side of the question as may seem proper. As you incline to the New Light side, take it. “P. WHITE.”

Montgomery seems to have acted on this hint, and to have written an argumentative letter, amongst other points disputing the doctrine of the “Endless Duration of Future Punishment,” and observing that it was a “new doctrine to him.” In reply, White, writing July 5, 1807, says:—“Dear Montgomery, I have a few days since received your kindly letter, which I have read with pleasure, and from which I received instruction. I must, however, confess some of your sentiments, but more particularly your style, gets beyond the grasp of my weak imagination.”

He then refers him to the Bible, with which, he suggests, he is "perhaps too little acquaint," and proceeds, cleverly enough, to adduce the usual Scriptural texts in favour of the doctrine of endless punishment. Thence he diverges into "Original Sin," "Imputed Guilt," &c., and sums up, amusingly enough after having himself invited discussion, by the exhortation:—"Let us not torture our understandings about those religious matters where the sacred writers are respectfully silent. Where they cease to inform us, let us drop our inquiries." He then fittingly concludes by proposing, as the subject of Montgomery's next letter, the *speculative* question, whether "Total Depravity," and the inheritance of a "corrupt nature by *all* Adam's posterity," or merely mortality and natural evil, are the "consequences of the Fall." As to what should be his treatment of this and other "controverted points," he gives him some very broad hints, and very earnestly he prays for him that he may be guided to take them. It would have been interesting to see Montgomery's reply, and how the young controversialist of nineteen *did* treat his subject; but, unfortunately, none of his letters of that early date seem now to be extant, and only a few remain of the letters from his friends from which to gather somewhat of the nature of the loss.

Of these the pleasant, merry style of his friend David Whyte contrasts strongly with the ponderous gravity of his last-mentioned correspondent. Writing from his retirement in Cairncastle in the previous December, having humorously adverted to several of the fair ladies of the neighbourhood, he says:—

"The other misses of this place are well, desire to hear of you, send their love and compliments to you, and they call you the *handsome long* student! I *don't* know why they call you *handsome*, but why they call you *long* is more evident to me! . . . Tell me what books are read in the classes this session, and what must I do to be saved—*i.e.*, to get a degree. I beseech you do not let the flame of friendship be extinguished for the false delicacy of troubling me with the postage of a few letters. Know, I shall estimate your friendship from the frequency of your letters. Don't look for so many from me. I'm in

solitude; cheer me with your communications from that theatre of learning and busy life; and, as often as circumstances will allow, you shall hear from your native country, and from your sincere friend and old 'eating' partner,

“D. WHITE.”

During this session Montgomery seems to have been much impressed with the lectures of some of the professors, and especially of Young, the Professor of Greek, and Milne, the Professor of Moral Philosophy, of whom he wrote a favourable account to his old master, Nathaniel Alexander, who thus replies:—

“CRUMLIN ACADEMY, 24th March, 1807.

“DEAR SIR,—I felt much gratified by the pleasing account you gave me of your classes, and the character you gave me of the professors. I cannot conceive a more complete chemist of language than Young. But I am sorry to find my young friends all so fond of the Necessarian system as to admire Mr. Milne. I am not so wedded to my own opinion as to insist upon my acquaintances adopting my counsel implicitly, still less so when they see good reason to act differently.” Then, after sundry messages and counsels to several old pupils, Montgomery's fellow-students, “I do not exactly recollect the appointments of Presbytery for May, but I know Thompson is appointed to examine in Physics, Ledlie in Ethics, and N. Alexander in Logic.* We proceed in our academical career as usual. . . . I am in low spirits to-night on account of the probable change of administration.† Never was there such a focus of talent, wealth, information, and benevolence, as in our present ministry.—I am your sincere friend,

“N. ALEXANDER.”

It was usual for students at that period to employ the intervals of their college sessions in teaching, either as assistants in schools or tutors in families, with the combined object of training themselves in the art of giving instruction, and of lessening to their

* The allusion is to the customary examination by the Presbytery at each May meeting of its students returned from college on the subjects they had studied during the previous session. After this, an additional course of study was prescribed for the summer months, together with trial pieces of composition, upon which the young men were carefully examined at the ensuing November meeting by ministers previously appointed to the duty. Thus was remedied the frequent deficiency of collegiate instruction, and an adequate standard of ministerial education generally maintained.

† The Grenville Administration.

parents the expense of their education. With this view, Montgomery, in the summer of 1807, after the conclusion of his undergraduate course, obtained a most desirable appointment as private tutor in the family of Thomas Stewart, Esq., of Seapark, near Carrickfergus—a wealthy family of high social position, and cultivated and refined manners. In their society, while faithfully devoting his abilities to the benefit of his pupils, he likewise benefitted much himself. He quickly became a favourite both with old and young, and remained with them, a welcome inmate, during the greater part of that and the following year. That he succeeded even thus early in rapidly making for himself no slight local name and reputation, the following amusing letter from his friend, D. Whyte, affords strong incidental evidence. It was received only some two months after his going to Seapark.

“GLENSIDE, 20th August, 1807.

“DEAR MONTGOMERY,—I have put off writing day after day, still expecting a letter from you; but I waited, like the rustic to pass the river, *volvitur et volvetur*, &c. You are silent, and will be, the deuce knows how ‘long’! I expected to be so angry by this time as to be able to paint the eloquence of passion, to awaken the slumbering echoes of Knockagh Hill, and to rouse the sleepy energy of your soul; but still I find myself neither angry nor eloquent. As soon as I expressed the two first words of my letter, I felt my anger drop from my mind like the sins of a Methodist fanatic. Who could be seriously angry with a *dear friend*, had he no other claim? But who could be angry with the idol of Carrickfergus, the oracle of Seapark, the adored of Killead, the beloved of Cairncastle, the worshipped in Belfast, the followed to Island-magee? *Dum tot sustineas negotia solus*, I am passing my days in inglorious ease, a prey alternately to passion and apathy, care, love, jealousy, fear, hope, disappointment, &c., so that it is easy for me to make demands on your time that would not be easy for you to answer. Alas! *mon ami*, you are yet a stranger to my precarious situation in Cairncastle; nor did I tell an inkling of it to Carley, who was with me. You are both worthy of the secret, however, and through you I wish him to know it. This country is swarming with *belles baigneuses* this summer. All the houses in the neighbourhood are filled with them; and of a fine day you would verily think that the wide bay of Gally is entirely covered. To speak of their beauty would be super-

fluous, and perhaps dangerous. Half a look from any one of them would do my business, or yours either. It is now become dangerous even to take a walk on the summer evening. To walk through the fresh fields, or along the shore of the far-sounding ocean, you know, formed the most rational and the most agreeable of my rural amusements. That must now be laid aside. I wish the present Irish insurrection bill of Parliament was once in full force. They would be detained in their houses from nine o'clock. I might then steal out in the evening unobserved and secure. *Grand Dieu ! quel m'arrivera ? voila ma situation !* I am fully determined for college this session for your company's sake. I hope you'll go also. If neither C. nor you be there, I'll be, as the first session I passed there, 'lone without a friend, to muse in pensive mood on past delight !' Fair form of beauty, innocence, and love ! Sweet Mary of Carrickfergus ! forgive me for not mentioning your sweet name sooner. Indeed, it should have filled my letter from end to end. Did the wondering regard of Larne ever fix on a more amiable visitor ? Did the beauty of Cairncastle ever see itself rivalled before ? How happy are you, Mont., and how I envy your situation near so precious a jewel ! Oh, she's a divine little creature ! Carrickfergus possesses a treasure of inestimable value ! What a prosaic dog I am, to speak of so elegant a girl in the common style and language of the world, on common occasions of life ! Surely this is not one of these ; but my muse is always distant and shy when I would wish her to be familiar and obliging. I perceive I have given you no more than the Christian name of the little belle, but that is sufficient for a man of your gallantry. She is Mary of Carrickfergus !

“ D. WHYTE.”

In the absence of Montgomery's reply itself, we must rest satisfied with Whyte's description of its nature, as found in a letter from him to Carley written shortly afterwards :—“ I have just had a long, good, kind, earnest, entertaining letter from Mont.”

Having taken his degree, he returned to Glasgow the following winter, with Whyte and Carley, for the Divinity course. This included Divinity, Church History, and Hebrew. Whatever benefits may have been derived from the two latter classes—and from his own account it was not much—the attendance on the lectures of the Professor of Divinity must have been then worse than an empty form. He was very old, very deaf, and very

inarticulate. The effect is strongly, but graphically, described in a letter written the following session, while attending his class, by William Finlay, who had not gone back for his theological year till the session of 1808-9, to his friend Montgomery:—"I need not describe my sensations respecting my new classes, they coincide so exactly with your own. On this subject there can be but one opinion. I cannot conceive anything more vexatious, or a greater trial of patience, than to be obliged to sit extracting sense, as Carley expressed it, from mangled sounds. Certainly the man who does so for a session will have no need of purgatory!" But if not in the Divinity class, Montgomery's *progress* in another respect was pleasantly noted by Finlay in a letter to Carley after their return:—"I know not what your progress may have been during the session, but if Montgomery's has kept pace with the growth of his whiskers, his condition must now be something wonderful!"

His college life passed, the summer and autumn of 1808 were spent by Montgomery in the work of his tuition, and in the preparation of discourses and trial-pieces for the Presbytery. On the 8th January, 1809, he preached his first public sermon in the meeting-house of his native parish, Killead, in the pulpit of his old friend and pastor, Robert Orr; and on the 5th February following he was duly licensed, with Carley and Whyte, in the meeting-house of Templepatrick, by the Templepatrick Presbytery.

CHAPTER III.

COMMENCEMENT OF MINISTERIAL LIFE AND SETTLEMENT IN DUNMURRY.

1809—1817.

Pulpit Services—Invitation to Donegore—Sketch of Congregation—Trial Sermons—"New Light" Discourse—Rejected by the Elders—Reception at Home—Invitation to Dunmurry—History of Dunmurry Congregation—Place and People—His own Account of his Arrival and Reception—Call and Settlement—Early Ministrations—Doctrinal Views—Marriage in 1812—Mrs. Montgomery, Her Family and Connections—First Years of Married Life—Residence—Birth of Children—Teaching—Ministerial and Social Progress—Early Appearances in Synod—Debate in 1813—Aids the Rev. Wm. Porter in defending Dr. Steele Dickson and defeating Dr. Black—Proposed for Clerkship in 1816, but declined Nomination.

THE interval from the completion of his college course till the date of his settlement in the ministry was not likely to be protracted to a young man of Henry Montgomery's distinguished endowments. But, brief though it was, it was diligently spent in the pursuit of his theological studies, and the frequent composition and delivery of sermons. That this work of preparation was earnestly and faithfully performed, his early discourses, especially those composed while still a probationer, abundantly testify, as they were all written out *verbatim*, and carefully committed to memory. In fact, he seems to have continued this practice for several years of his ministry; although the extraordinary command of language, and the faculty of simultaneous mental arrangement of every thought and argument in the most lucid order—which from the first he eminently possessed, and for which he was afterwards so conspicuous—might seem to have rendered, for him, such labour unnecessary.

From his occasional services in supplying the pulpits of the

ministers of his own Presbytery and others, he at once became known as a young man of no ordinary power; and in the spring of 1809, about three months after he had been licensed, he received an invitation to preach on trial in the then vacant congregation of Donegore, in County Antrim, distant only a few miles from his native home.

The congregation of Donegore—a large and flourishing community, consisting of about five hundred families, principally of well-to-do farmers—seemed to offer a highly advantageous prospect for a young minister; and the family and connexions of Henry Montgomery were naturally most anxious for his success. The last minister was the Rev. James C. Ledlie, succeeding the Rev. John Wright, who had been minister for half-a-century, and was of moderate Old Light views. Mr. Ledlie, on the contrary, held New Light sentiments, which, however accordant with those of the more cultivated portion of the people, were not acceptable to a great body of the smaller farmers and others constituting the majority of the congregation. Donegore, from its situation, had been from time to time largely recruited by bodies of Scotch Covenanters, who had settled along the valley of the Six-mile-water. Of the strictest sect of Calvinism, austere and uncompromising, they had gradually acquired an increasing sway over the more moderate counsels of the earlier Presbyterians; and when, after a ministry of two years, Mr. Ledlie* resigned the pulpit and removed to Larne, their influence had come to preponderate in the congregation. The pulpit of Donegore had been more than a year vacant when Henry Montgomery went to preach the four trial sermons, then the usual course for candidates. He was well received; his services made a most favour-

* Rev. J. C. Ledlie, afterwards D.D., remained minister of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne, in connection with the Presbytery of Antrim, from 1808 to 1832. He subsequently became minister of Enstace Street, Dublin. He was an able and distinguished advocate of the Unitarian doctrines, and of freedom of conscience in matters of faith. His efficient services at the time of the Dissenters' Chapels Act, and subsequently his clever exposure of the unprincipled career of Duncan Chisholm (*alias* George Matthews), are worthy of lasting remembrance.

able impression, and the fire and power of his youthful eloquence bid fair to win for him a call to the congregation; but he felt that there was still something more to be done—a high duty remained to him, and, trying though the task must have been, he was not the man to shrink from its accomplishment. On the fourth Sunday of his preaching, he took occasion clearly to enounce and discourse upon the so-called New Light or Arian doctrines of his belief, though well aware of their unpopularity with probably the majority of his audience. After service, the session assembled, and keenly questioned him upon his views and statements, more especially whether, if chosen, he would be willing to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Now, the congregation of Donegore and the candidate himself alike belonged to the Presbytery of Templepatrick, known as one of the ten Presbyteries, out of the fourteen comprising the General Synod, which did not require subscription to the Westminster Standard on the part of candidates for licence or ordination, having been consistent in their non-subscription for fifty years before. Montgomery, then, might well feel that he was only vindicating the Christian freedom of his Church, while he maintained his own, and upholding its wise and salutary practice, in returning, as he did, an emphatic negative to the question of the elders. His reply gave rise to a sharp discussion amongst the members; and although he had many staunch friends in the congregation, the numbers and strength of the Covenanting element succeeded in procuring his rejection. Thus was the boy of twenty the father of the man; and at the very threshold of his public life was called to break his first lance in behalf of that self-same cause, of which he became the recognised and powerful champion in many a hard-fought field in after years.*

He returned home, no doubt sad enough, to meet the re-

* See p. 22, where the competitive candidature of James Carley is described. The defeat of his friend Carley seems really to have arisen from the same cause—the determination of the Old Light majority to reject both candidates.

proaches of his brothers, their pride in their gifted junior being naturally wounded by his defeat. They blamed him for having been unnecessarily outspoken, more than the occasion or the time required; but his noble father rebuked them for their misjudging spirit, received his son in his arms, told him he was fifty times prouder of him than if he had succeeded, and prayed that God would abundantly bless his faithfulness. The father's prayer was heard and granted. After a long and honoured ministerial life, that son, in an affecting pulpit address on the *fifty-first* anniversary of his ministry, thus refers to this event of his early career—"Under God's general providence 'honesty is the best policy.' I found it then; I have found it ever since. My refusal at Donegore to be a time-server and selfish hypocrite gave a complexion to the subsequent events of my life, happy for myself, and not altogether, I trust, unhappily for the cause of Christian liberty and truth."

But, in addition to the approval of his parents and his own conscience, another, and a more than sufficient, compensation awaited him for his disappointment at Donegore. The very day of his rejection there brought him, without any previous knowledge or expectation on his own part, an invitation to preach on trial at Dunmurry.

The Presbyterian congregation of Dunmurry was at this time vacant by the resignation of its minister, the Rev. Andrew George Maleom, who had accepted an invitation to the pastoral charge of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Newry. Mr. Maleom was the seventh minister of the Dunmurry congregation since its original formation. The first was the Rev. Mr. Glass, who came over from Scotland about the year 1686, but returned in about two years after, "on account of the troubles which attended the Revolution." The Rev. John Maleom succeeded Mr. Glass, and continued minister of Dunmurry about thirty-six or forty years. He was succeeded by the Rev. John Moorhead, the first minister who was ordained in Dunmurry. The meeting-house at this time was an old malt-kiln, on the other side of the road from where the present meeting-house stands. On Mr.

Moorhead's death in 1769, the Rev. James Stoupe was ordained as his successor. During Mr. Stoupe's ministry a new meeting-house was built by subscription of the congregation—the same convenient, picturesque, and venerable edifice that is still in use, and is happily kept, as it deserves, in such excellent preservation and repair. The stones in the front of the meeting-house bear the inscription—"This house was rebuilt at the expense of the congregation of Dunmurry, 1779: the Rev. James Stoupe, A.M., Minister." On Mr. Stoupe's death, the Rev. Robert Jackson was ordained minister in 1782. The congregation had been hitherto under the care of the Presbytery of Bangor; but having, in the year 1790, made choice of the Rev. William Taggart, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Antrim, to succeed Mr. Jackson, they took the opportunity of transferring themselves from the Presbytery of Bangor, and becoming connected with the Presbytery of Antrim, by whom their new minister was accordingly ordained. This step appears to have had the consent of both Presbyteries; and their new connexion continued during the ministry of Mr. Taggart. His ministry, owing to certain constitutional peculiarities, having been far from prosperous, was officially closed by the Antrim Presbytery in 1805; and after an interval of a year and a-half, during which the congregation was supplied by probationers from the Presbyteries of Bangor and Antrim, the Rev. A. G. Malcom, a licentiate of the Bangor Presbytery, received and accepted a unanimous call. This led to a re-transfer of the congregation, by consent of all parties, to its former Presbytery, by whom Mr. Malcom was ordained in March, 1807; and in this presbyterial connexion the congregation of Dunmurry has since remained. During the brief but energetic ministry of Mr. Malcom, the congregation rapidly recovered its prosperity. The session and committee, which had fallen into comparative desuetude, were renewed, and received many valuable accessions. The respective duties of the office-bearers were clearly defined. The congregation was carefully visited; new families were added, and many old recovered; and the regular Sunday attendance was materially increased. In fact,

when, early in 1809, it became vacant by the removal of Mr. Malcom to Newry,* few, if any, congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland offered a more desirable and happy prospect for a ministerial settlement than Dunmurry.

The small rural village of Dunmurry, within four miles of Belfast, and three of Lisburn, lies in the very heart of one of the richest and most beautiful valleys in Ireland—the Vale of the Lagan. Extending in a long unbroken sweep from the southern shores of Lough Neagh, near Lurgan, to the Belfast Lough—its climate warm and salubrious—its soil uncommonly fertile—studded over with handsome country seats, in some districts so numerous that their enclosures are continuous, and afford miles of beautiful park-like drives—with its deep green lanes and many sheltered woodlands—it resembles the more favoured spots of English rural scenery, rather than the generality of Irish landscape. The banks of its rivers are crowded with linen-factories and bleach-greens, and its sloping sides covered with well-tilled farms, and dotted with prosperous farm-steads. Defended from the north-west and west winds by the soft brown summits of Collin, Divis, and Black Mountains, and bounded on the east by

* Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Malcom was installed in March, 1809, in the charge of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Newry, where, through his talents as a preacher, his untiring zeal and energy, his methodical business habits, and his admirable power of organisation, his ministry became eminently successful. It is recorded that during his twelfth year in Newry, the communicants attending at one time in his meeting-house numbered five hundred and ten, of whom forty-seven were young persons communicating for the first time. In public matters he took a most influential and leading part, and many of the most valuable charitable and educational institutions of Newry owe their origin and early support mainly to his exertions. In the General Synod he occupied a good position, being regarded as a man of large information, clear thought, and terse and polished expression. In 1820, he was appointed on a Synodical committee, with the Rev. H. Cooke and others, to draw up a “Code of Discipline,” for which he wrote an admirable introduction, showing the Scriptural foundations of Presbyterianism in contradistinction to other forms of Church Government. This, though approved by Synod in 1821, and ordered to be prefixed to the new publication, was afterwards unceremoniously thrust aside, as scarcely suiting the fraternal leanings towards the Episcopalian Church which, for the time, had come to characterise the Calvinistic majority. Dr. Malcom died of fever in the year 1823.

the swelling green hills of Down, this charming valley well deserves the name of the garden of the north. The picturesque old meeting-house of Dunmurry stands on a rising ground above the village, on the upper side of the road leading across the valley, surrounded by its burial-ground, where many generations of its people sleep. The congregation was numerous and wealthy, comprising the leading families of the neighbourhood, numbering amongst them several of the most eminent and respected merchants of Belfast. The names of John M'Cance of Suffolk, afterwards Member of Parliament for Belfast; Walter Roberts of Collin House; John Stoupe of Glenville; William Hunter of Dunmurry House; and Robert Calwell of Lismoyne, amongst others, are sufficient to indicate the social position of the congregation; while of the list of its then members, the Wallaces, Johnstons, M'Kibbins, M'Cances of Ladybrook, Hunters, M'Clures, Moats, Irelands, Services, Mercers, Collinses, Magees, Wyleys, &c., made up an extensive circle of prosperous, intelligent, and most kindly people, able and anxious worthily to support any minister of their choice, and cause him quickly to feel that his lines had fallen to him in pleasant places.

Added to this, the people were all of one mind in the more important and prominent matters of Christian faith and doctrine. Their five previous pastors at least had been, without exception, Unitarians (of the Arian school) in point of doctrine, and consistent non-subscribers to human creeds—neither the Presbytery of Antrim nor that of Bangor, with which they were successively connected, requiring subscription to the Westminster Standards. So for a hundred years the people had been instructed only in the simple truths of Bible Christianity, and they had learned to love and cherish them accordingly.

Such was the place and such the congregation from whence an invitation reached Henry Montgomery on the day of his rejection by the rigid Old Light people of Donegore. One may imagine something of the feelings that animated him as he prepared himself to respond to the invitation. But we must let him tell them in his own words, as, fifty years afterwards, he

affectionately recalled the memory of that day in addressing his attached people :—

“It appears in many respects but as yesterday, and yet it is more than fifty years since that day. It rises up before me at this moment as one of the prominent and sunny spots of my existence. I can *see* it all—I can almost *feel* it all again. The dawn of that 11th June, 1809, arose bright and beautiful. It was a calm and lovely morning of the early summer. I left the roof under which I had been born and cherished, amidst the prayers and tears of parents from whom I had never received aught but the tenderest love, and the warmly expressed good wishes of elder brothers and sisters. I soon arrived at the top of the mountain. I paused for a moment, and looked back upon the beautiful valley of the Six-mile-water and Donegore. My soul was light and hopeful, under my parents’ approbation and that of an honest conscience. I turned again, and surveyed with new-born interest and longing the still more beautiful scene before me—the mountains basking in the summer sun, the far sea glittering in his beams, the prosperous town with its harbour and shipping, the out-stretched landscape of the adjoining country, the smiling, happy valley at my feet—this fair valley of whose wealth and liberality I had heard so much !

“And then, from all this scene of interest and beauty, my eye sought out one little spot, this humble temple, where it was my hope and prayer that the good providence of God might establish the scene of my future labours, amidst a liberal people, of sentiments congenial with my own. Long and earnestly I looked towards it, with a prayer and a presentiment that it might be my future home.

“Had I failed here, in one month afterwards I should have been upon the broad Atlantic : so wonderful are the events that shape our destinies ! But I was kindly received—unanimously chosen ; and during our now closed fifty years of married life, we have lived in uninterrupted harmony, neither pastor nor people, I trust, having cast discredit upon each other.”

The old congregational records contain the following minute of his appointment :—

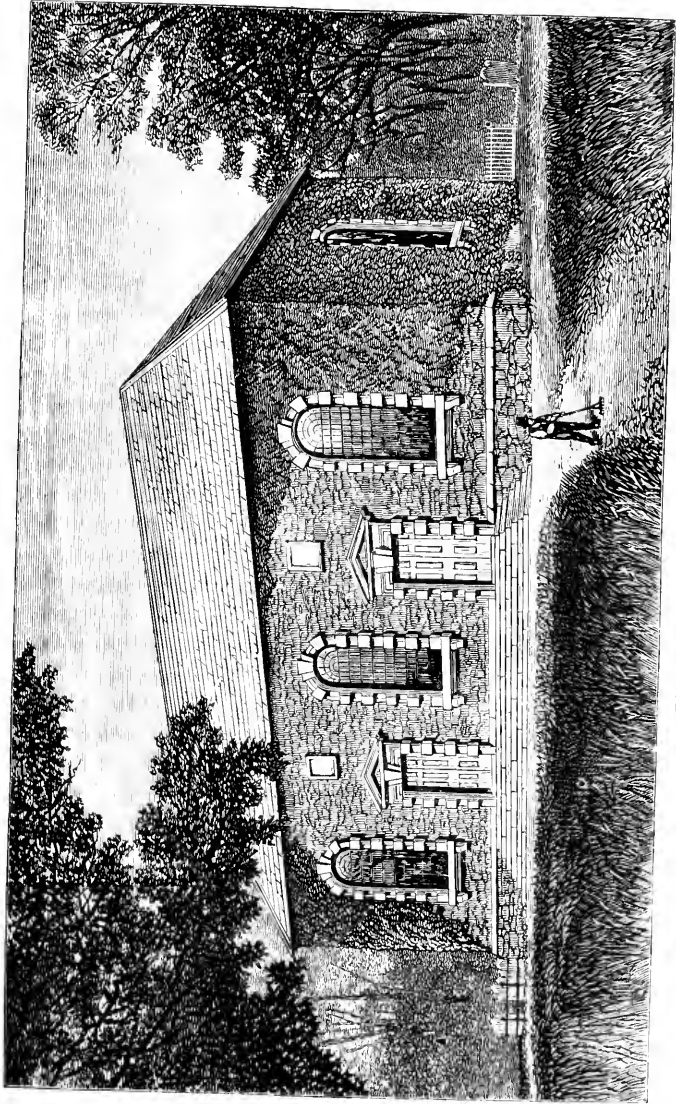
“Pursuant to request, the Rev. H. Montgomery preached four Lord’s Days. The Rev. Alexander Craig was appointed to poll the congregation on the 9th of July, when he found the people perfectly unanimous in wishing Mr. Montgomery to be their minister, and drew up a call accordingly. Mr. Montgomery was ordained on the 24th of

September, 1809 (in the twenty-first year of his age), and promised whatever stipend the house would produce, being then about £72 per annum. Immediately after his ordination, however, the assessment on the seats was raised so far as to produce £86 per annum."

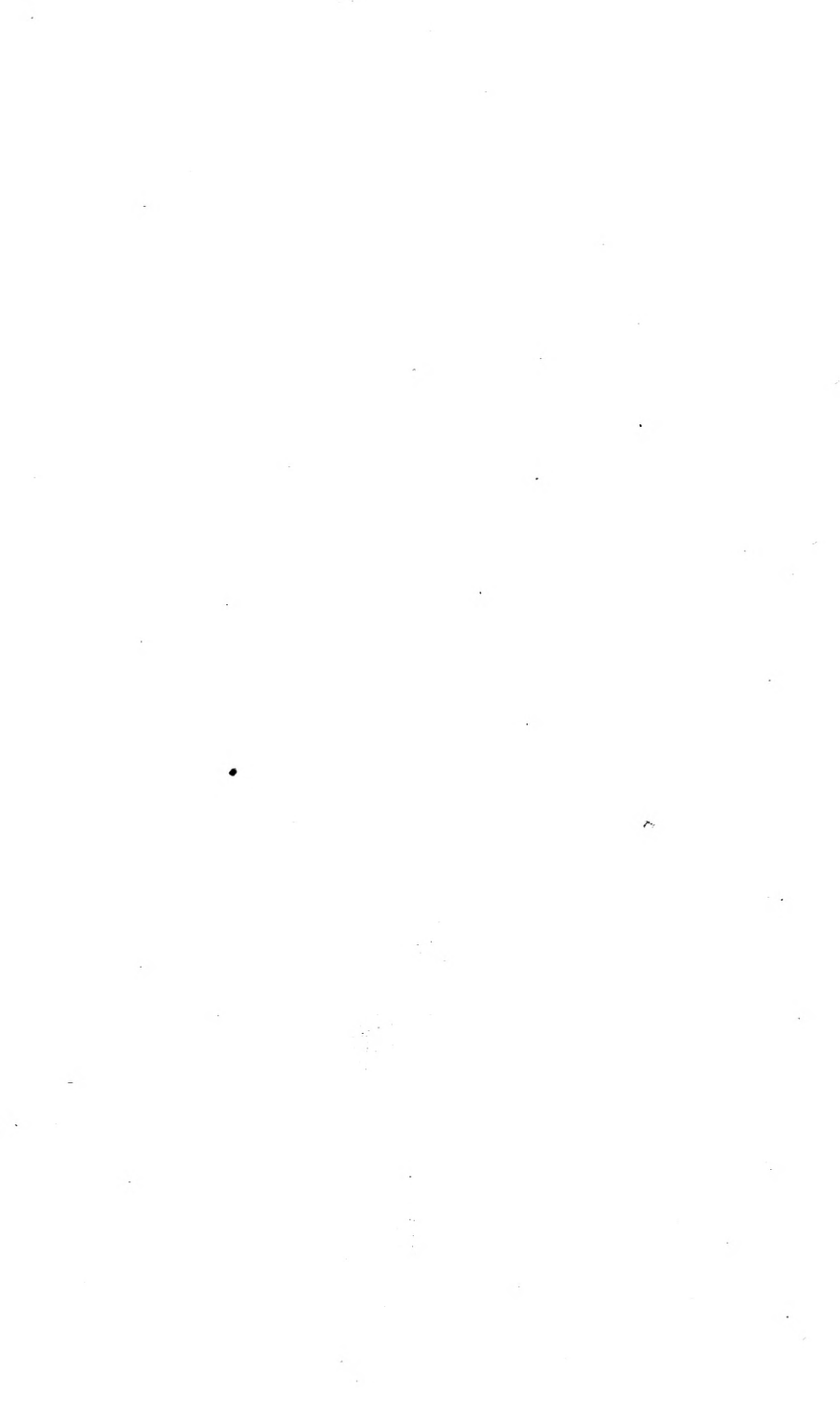
This was a large amount for a country congregation at that period.

There belonged also to the congregation some eight acres of rich land, adjoining the meeting-house green on two sides, held in perpetuity at a low rent, the benefit of which was added to the minister's income. On this a small glebe house had been erected, on the site occupied by the present Glebe, when Mr. Taggart first became pastor; but this had fallen into disrepair, and in 1809 was not found suitable for their new minister. However, he found himself most comfortably lodged with a respectable family of his congregation, the McClures of Beechlawn, with whom he remained for about two years.

This opening period of his professional life seems to have passed quietly and uneventfully in the careful discharge of his pastoral duties, and in acquiring, through acute observation, that peculiar insight into human nature and character for which he afterwards became distinguished, and which materially contributed to the wide-extended influence he possessed. His pulpit discourses of this early time are marked rather by careful preparation of the subjects, solidity of reasoning, painstaking elaboration of the thoughts, and accuracy of language, than by any brilliancy of rhetoric, metaphorical flights of fancy, or adornments of eloquence. In their wide grasp of the subject, and calm strength and lucidity of thought and expression, they read more like the compositions of an aged and experienced divine, than of an eager, sanguine young man of one to three-and-twenty. They remind one more of the broad, clear expanse of the lake, calmly reflecting the evening sun, than of the narrowed stream up nigh its source, now tumbling over rocks, now rushing swift and strong along meadow-banks, alternately flashing in the beams, darkened by the clouds, swept by the rains, and tossed by the fresh breezes of the morning. In his writing, as in his



DUNMURRY MEETING-HOUSE.



life, there is to be observed a marked departure from the more usual course. The morning was assuredly for him the time of comparative calm and peace.

In one respect, however, there was in him no variation : his earliest discourses unmistakeably exhibit the self-same broad and generous, yet clear, well-defined, and Scriptural views of Christian Truth and Christian Liberty, which, without change, marked his whole course of life, in all his speech and writing, to its close.

Doctrinal distinctions, as between Old and New Light (then so-called)—or Trinitarian and Unitarian, Calvinist and Arminian, Subscribing and Non-subscribing—were then comparatively but little insisted on, at least in a controversial or antagonistic form, among the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland. Sermons inculcating sound practical morality, conveying general Biblical instruction, and pervaded by a reverential Christian spirit, were the order of the day ; and where ministers or people might not agree on some points, at least they pretty generally agreed to differ.

The consideration, therefore, of the doctrinal views held by Henry Montgomery, may seem more properly to belong to the times when he was subsequently called upon to declare and defend them with all his strength against a multitude of powerful opponents in the field of theological warfare, than to the notice of his halcyon spring-time—those early days of “ piping peace.”

It will suffice, then, for the present to state that his religious views were those known, then and since, by the name of Arian—that is, Unitarian, of the older or more conservative type ; believing such to be the plain doctrine of Holy Scripture, and maintaining in its fulness the great Protestant principle of the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment, as against all subscription to, or authority of, human creeds, Confessions, or Articles of Faith.* The spirit of these sentiments

* See Appendix, “ The Creed of an Arian,” for a full and succinct exposition of his views.

animated his earliest discourses from the pulpit of Dunmurry, and, unaltered, they formed the latest productions of his pen. In them he lived, and in them he died.

On the 6th of April, 1812, he married Elizabeth, fourth daughter of Hugh Swan, Esq., linen merchant, of Summerhill, near Antrim, a young lady six years his junior, and possessing uncommon attractions both of mind and person. The respectability of her family and connexions also contributed to render the union both suitable and desirable. Her father was widely known and esteemed as a merchant and country gentleman. Her mother, Lilian Dickey, was a woman of remarkable beauty, and of excellent, kind-hearted disposition. She was daughter of James Dickey, Esq., of Dunmore, Randalstown, the representative of a time-honoured name and family amongst the gentry of County Antrim. The house of Summerhill was noted for its genial hospitality, and formed a favourite stopping-place for several of the young ministers of the period when visiting and preaching in the neighbourhood. Amongst these, the friends James Carley and Henry Montgomery found themselves not unfrequent guests. The daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Swan, inheriting much of their mother's attractiveness, were no less beautiful than accomplished, and, as a natural result, the two young ministers soon fell in love; and their attachments becoming reciprocated, Margaret, the second daughter, became Mrs. Carley, and, shortly after, her younger sister, Elizabeth, consented to share the home and fortunes of Henry Montgomery.*

He had secured for his abode a small but comfortable cottage, close to the residence of John M'Cance, Esq., who was then, as afterwards, his warm and steady friend; and here he brought

* The eldest daughter, Mary, became the wife of George Ash, Esq., whose honourable name and warm and generous heart are still held in kindly remembrance amongst the merchants of Belfast; and some years after, the youngest, Anne, married Joseph Nelson, Esq., afterwards Q.C. of the Irish Bar, whose early death closed the bright promise of a high and successful career. Of these, Mrs. Carley and Mrs. Nelson died early; Mrs. Montgomery outlived her husband for seven years, dying in 1872; while the remaining sister still survives in a delightful old age, happy in the esteem and affection of a large circle of friends.

home his youthful bride, not yet eighteen. In this little dwelling, surrounded by kind and hospitable friends, passed the first happy years of their married life, and here their eldest daughter, Lily Montgomery, was born on the 3rd October, 1814. Soon afterwards he determined to remove to the congregational glebe house, which for this purpose he was obliged to repair, and in great measure rebuild.

For a year or so previous to his marriage he had acted as tutor to the son of his friend, Mr. M'Cance; and upon his settlement in the glebe, he determined to recommence teaching, and received in his house a number of pupils, to whose instruction he devoted for the two following years the time he could spare from his congregational duties. Here his eldest son and his second daughter were born. During this period his popular ministerial talents and general attainments were rapidly bringing him into prominent notice as a polished speaker and an able writer. His pulpit services were much sought after, not only in Dunmurry, but in Belfast and elsewhere; while his amiable disposition, and eminent social qualities, were drawing to him a large circle of friends.

In the proceedings of the General Synod of Ulster—at its annual and other meetings—he was able thus early to obtain for himself a well-ascertained and even a distinguished place. So early as 1813 he threw himself into the cause of the celebrated, but much injured and persecuted, Dr. Steele Dickson, who had been unjustly condemned by Synod the year before on political grounds, through the all-powerful influence of Dr. Black, of Derry. In this contest the Rev. William Porter, of Newtownlimavady, worthily led the opposition in a speech of singular power and telling effect; and the fire and force of Montgomery's youthful eloquence, combined with the penetrating good sense and sturdy liberalism of Dr. Patrick, elder, of Ballymena—a distinguished, zealous, and consistent Unitarian reformer all his life—lent substantial aid in inflicting upon the proud Synodical dictator his first crushing defeat. On the death of Mr. Cuming, of Armagh, the Clerk of Synod, at a special

meeting of Synod at Cookstown, in November, 1816, Montgomery was nominated, with the Rev. William Porter, of Newtownlimavady, and the Rev. William D. H. M'Ewen, then of Killyleagh, for the important office of the Clerkship. He declined the nomination, however; and joined with Mr. M'Ewen and others in protesting against the election then taking place, on constitutional grounds, the meeting having been specially convened for a different purpose. It is strange to find amongst those who then protested against Mr. Porter's appointment the names of so many ministers and elders who were afterwards his fellow-Remonstrants, and zealous friends and supporters; while the majority who then supported his election were mainly those, afterwards the Subscribing party, his unsparing opponents. It speaks well for their early love of the ancient constitution and order of their church, that those who—in November—were thus obliged to protest against Mr. Porter's election, cordially united as one man in the unanimous vote to sanction and continue his regular appointment at the ensuing annual meeting of the Synod.

CHAPTER IV.

APPOINTMENT TO THE BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION. ITS EARLY HISTORY AND OBJECTS.

1817—1818.

Becomes Candidate for Appointment in Belfast Academical Institution—Origin and early Proceedings of Institution—Government—Original Officers—Subscriptions—Buildings—Opening of Schools—First Masters—Opening of College—Resolution of General Synod—Parliamentary Grant—Early Success—Grant Withdrawn—Independent Support—Resolutions of Dunmurry Congregation—Letter announcing Appointment—Invitation to Killileagh—Archibald Hamilton Rowan—His Letter to Montgomery—His Replies, declining the Invitation—Rev. W. D. M'Ewen—His Letter recommending Rev. H. Cooke—Montgomery's Removal to the Institution—His Success—Report of Parliamentary Commissioners—Letter from W. J. C. Allen, Esq.—List and Notices of Assistants—Messrs. J. S. Porter, P. S. Henry, Jas. Simms, B. Stannus, George Hill, John Montgomery, D. L. Blakely, Jas. and A. G. Malcom, Wm. Hamilton, Wm. M'Cready, &c.

THE close of the year 1817 witnessed a marked change in the life and occupations of Henry Montgomery, and gave a complexion to his after career, which it would scarcely have worn had he always remained merely in the position of minister of a retired country congregation.

In August or September of that year, the office of Head Master of the English School in the Belfast Academical Institution became vacant by the retirement of Mr. James Knowles.* The school offered a promising field for the exertions of a man of talent and energy; the position and prospects of the Institution were excellent, and the vacant office was universally regarded as equally honourable and useful.

* The father of James Sheridan Knowles, the celebrated dramatist, who was then, and afterwards, an assistant teacher in the school.

At the urgent suggestion of several friends, and conscious, no doubt, of his own qualifications to fill it with credit, Montgomery, having consulted with the heads of his congregation, became a candidate for the office, to be held in conjunction with his position as minister of Dunmurry.

As the affairs of the Belfast Academical Institution became, thenceforward, so closely interwoven with a great part of his active life, and were mainly concerned with many of its most stirring and eventful scenes, it may not here seem undesirable to offer some account of its origin and formation, and the objects and purposes of its founders. The following is taken from the "Statement of the Origin and Proceedings of the Belfast Academical Institution since its Commencement," which was issued and circulated by the Committee of the Subscribers, in December, 1808.

The formation of literary institutions in various parts of the United Kingdom having been found highly conducive to the dissemination of useful knowledge, a desire has been for some time very generally expressed that this part of the kingdom should partake of these advantages, by means of an Institution founded on similar principles. The want of such a seminary had long been felt in the North of Ireland, and was demonstrated by the annual resort of Irish students to the Scotch colleges. Notwithstanding the expenses attending such a journey, they were found much less than those attending one to the capital of this part of the kingdom. The children of the wealthier classes alone in Ulster had been able to avail themselves of the advantage of a liberal education in the Dublin University; while no mode whatsoever had been provided for disseminating that species of knowledge so necessary for the lower classes, who were engaged in manufactures, mechanics, or agriculture. While the Province was thus unprovided with the means of attaining the higher branches of science, the increasing population of the country made the want of primary schools to be as severely felt. It was, therefore, thought by the friends of literature, that an establishment comprising both would be highly useful, as well to the

immediate neighbourhood of Belfast as to the Province at large. By this combination, the progress of science would be extended among the higher ranks, and a number of teachers would also be brought forward at a cheap rate, who would diffuse knowledge among the lower classes.

In pursuance of these intentions, an application was made by a number of the most respectable inhabitants of Belfast and its vicinity to the Marquis of Donegall, for his approbation, and a grant in perpetuity of a suitable lot of ground for the necessary buildings. This application was immediately acceded to in the fullest manner, and a lot of more than four—afterwards increased to six—acres, in a central and advantageous situation, at the western end of Chichester Street, was assigned by his Lordship to trustees, for the uses of the Institution. In consequence, a meeting of its friends was held on the 1st of August, 1807, at which a Committee was appointed to draw up a plan for the future regulation of all its departments. This plan was laid before a second meeting, held on the 22nd of September following, and, after some discussion, adopted and published.

In this plan, it was proposed to form two schools; one for the education of children intended for the learned professions, the other for those whose future pursuits did not necessarily require a knowledge of the learned languages; also to found lectureships, to which young men might be admitted, after having finished the common course of school learning, either in the seminaries of the Institution or elsewhere, and in which they might proceed through a regular series of studies, at the termination of which they might be furnished with a stock of knowledge equal to what is generally deemed necessary for engaging in any of the professions to which they might have been destined. In addition to those lectures that require a previous regular course of studies, it was proposed to have others of a general and popular kind, in the sciences more intimately connected with Agriculture, Manufactures, and the Arts, from which persons wishing to gain information on any of these subjects might derive instruction, though they had not received the rudiments of a liberal education.

“Although the Prospectus takes no notice of the religious part of education, it is the intention of the Institution to admit Professors of Divinity, and to afford them suitable accommodations, on an application from any ecclesiastical body.”

The government of the Institution was entrusted to a President, four Vice-Presidents, twenty Managers, and eight Visitors, the whole chosen by the Proprietors at large; one-fourth of the Vice-Presidents, Managers, and Visitors vacating their seats annually. The President and Managers, with the assistance of the Visitors, to appoint Masters and Professors, and regulate the whole of the internal economy of the Institution.*

Numerous and large subscriptions were received, amounting, before the first general meeting, to the sum of £14,580, and eventually, with many substantial additions from officers serving in the East Indies, reaching the munificent amount of £16,000. The spacious and handsome buildings that still continue to occupy the site were soon afterwards erected, combining every facility and convenience for the conduct of large Public Schools and Collegiate Lectures, and also for the formation of a College Library and Museum. The buildings for the School Department included a large common hall, and spacious rooms for English, Classical, Mathematical, Writing, French, and Drawing Schools; with residences for the English and Classical Head Masters, and

* The list of the original officers of the Institution, appointed at the First General Meeting of the Subscribers, held 4th February, 1808, the Marquis of Donegall in the chair, is well worthy of record:—

The Most Noble the Marquis of Donegall, President for life.

Honorary Visitors.—The Primate of all Ireland, Bishop of Dromore, Bishop of Down.

Vice-Presidents.—Marquis of Downshire, Hon. Edward Ward, William Brownlow, Esq., M.P.; Edward May, Esq., M.P.; Joseph Stevenson, *Sec.*; Robert Calwell, *Treas.*

Managers.—Edward May, jun., *Sov.*; William Tennent, Robert Getty, William Stevenson, Cunningham Grey, Gilbert M’Ilveen, Robert Bradshaw, William Clarke, Samuel Gibson, John Gregg, John M. Stoupe, George Bristow, H. A. S. Harvey, Thomas Andrews, James M’Cleery, William Magee, John Thompson, John Cranston, Robert Simms, Adam M’Clean.

Visitors.—Dr. Drennan, Dr. Stephenson, Rev. H. Henry, Rev. Wm. Holmes, Robert Tennent, Rev. E. Groves, John Templeton, Rev. S. Hanna.

Auditors.—John M’Cracken, Andrew M’Clean, William Newsam.

ample accommodation for their respective boarders at either end of the building. A Royal Charter for the new Seminary having been obtained, the schools of the Belfast Academical Institution were opened in February, 1814, and quickly commanded a most gratifying measure of success. The first masters appointed were Dr. Obeirne, Head Master of the Classical Department; Mr. James Knowles, of the English, Mr. James Thompson, of the Mathematical, and Mr Spence, of the Writing Schools.

In regard to the Collegiate Department of the Institution, application was made by the Managers, in the year 1813, to the General Synod of Ulster, as to the propriety of adopting their new Seminary as a place of education for candidates for the ministry in the Irish Presbyterian Church; and a Committee of Synod was appointed to confer with them upon the subject. The conference was friendly and satisfactory; and the Committee, which was numerous and influential, recommended, at the Annual Meeting of Synod in 1814, a certain resolution, which was finally adopted in the following year. As that resolution laid the foundation of the primary connexion between the Institution and the Synod, and, at the same time, became the chief source of almost all the heart-burnings and embittered conflicts which afterwards arose, both in the Belfast College, and in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, it is here given in full:—

*“ Moved and unanimously agreed to—*That the same respect be paid by the Synod of Ulster to the certificates of the Belfast Academical Institution, of attendance and progress of the students in learning, as to the certificates from foreign Universities, so soon as adequate Professors are appointed to lecture in this Institution, on the different branches of science which the Synod points out to the students under its care; *provided* a Committee of this body, who shall be annually appointed for this purpose, and attend the examination of the students in the Institution, shall concur in such certificate, and signify its approbation by the signature of its Moderator.”

“ Under these liberal and wise regulations, the Institution was opened, as a College, on the first day of November, 1815. A Parliamentary grant of £1500 *per annum* was obtained; learned and popular Professors, elected on perfectly unsectarian principles, occupied the

Chairs ; the classes were rapidly filled up ; all was life and energy ; and the Synodical Committees that attended the examinations at the close of each session, exhausted the language of panegyric, in praising the whole arrangements of the new and popular Seminary.

“ But an event occurred at the end of two years, which produced a great sensation and some changes. Two of the masters attended a dinner, in honour of Ireland’s patron Saint ; and ‘ America, the land of liberty and asylum of the oppressed,’ was given as a toast. The dinner did not take place within the walls of the Institution, and no professor was present ; yet on this pretext, the Government of the day withdrew the Parliamentary grant. It was but a *pretext*, however ; for the then agent for Royal bounty, Dr. Black of Derry, whose influence with Government was still potent, though his long dictatorship over the Synod was on the wane, and who was hostile to the Institution as a place of college education, had persuaded Lord Castlereagh, the Irish Secretary, that Divinity students should be educated in Scotland as formerly, and not in the Whig town of Belfast. This is confirmed by the fact, that, in 1819, Lord Castlereagh offered, not only to renew the grant, but to augment it, provided the education were confined to secular branches—excluding students for the ministry. And did the proprietors of the Institution accept the golden bribe, and break their compact with the Synod ? No ; they maintained their fidelity at all hazards ; they cast themselves upon public liberality for aid, and nobly did the public answer to their appeal. Thousands upon thousands were subscribed by generous men of all sects ; and, for twelve years, the Professors were supported by this sustained liberality.”*

It was just after the withdrawal of this grant from the College Department, and when the Institution was, consequently, claiming and receiving such large measure of public sympathy and support, that Montgomery offered himself a candidate for the vacant office of Head Master of the English School. His application was supported by the following gratifying resolutions, passed by his congregation :—

“ At a meeting of the heads of families belonging to the congregation of Dunmurry, convened by regular notice, and held on the 8th of September, 1817, Nathaniel Magee, Esq., in the chair, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to :—

* See “ Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland : ” by the Rev. H. Montgomery, LL.D. ; “ Irish Unitarian Magazine ” for 1847, pp. 353-355.

“1. That, from the respect which we bear towards our minister, the Rev. Henry Montgomery, and our consequent wish to promote his interest, we should be extremely happy to see him appointed to the situation of Head Master in the English Department of the Belfast Academical Institution.

“2. That, although we have thus expressed our wish for the interest of Mr. Montgomery, that he may fill the situation, *we would not have done so*, had we not the firmest belief that his private character (with which we are well acquainted), and his abilities as a scholar, would do honour to himself, and raise the reputation of the Institution, so far as he would be concerned.

“3. That, in the event of his election, we will endeavour to render all occasional duties in the congregation so convenient to him, as not to interfere with the strictest attention to the literary and moral improvement of his pupils in the Institution.

“Signed in our name and on our behalf.”*

The election took place on the 7th October, and a complimentary letter to Montgomery of same date, from Mr. Getty, the Chairman of the Board, announces his success:—

“BELFAST, 7th October, 1817.

“DEAR SIR,—Permit me to congratulate you on your appointment this day to the office of Head Master of the English School in the Belfast Academical Institution. The connexion so happily commenced, will, I trust, long continue, and prove to your advantage, as well as to the character and stability of the Institution.—I am, dear sir, with much respect, your obedient servant,

“ROBT. GETTY, *Chairman.* †

“REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY.”

* The congregation of Dunmurry had given early evidence of their interest in the establishment and success of the Institution. Many of their members were amongst the original subscribers for sums varying from £170 to £56, and many others for sums ranging between £34 and £5 13s. 9d.; and the “Belfast Commercial Chronicle,” of November 2nd, 1816, records that—“The Presbyterian Congregation of Dunmurry have subscribed twenty guineas to the Belfast Academical Institution, for the purpose of making their present clergyman, the Rev. Henry Montgomery, and his successors, proprietors in the Institution. They have also appropriated the sum of thirty pounds to the fund for establishing a Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History in the Institution.”

† The “Belfast Chronicle” of the following day (Oct. 8) thus refers to his appointment:—“The election of a Head Master for the English Department of the Belfast Academical Institution took place yesterday. A great number of

At this very time, in the period intervening between his application and his appointment to the Institution, he had the additional satisfaction of receiving an invitation, not more honourable to him as a testimony of the general estimation which his character and talents had inspired, than from the influential quarter from which it came, and the distinguished man through whom it was conveyed.

The Presbyterian congregation of Killileagh, County Down, one of the most numerous and influential in the North of Ireland, was then vacant, owing to the removal of the Rev. W. D. M'Ewen to the pastorate of the Second Congregation of Belfast. Although the distinctions between Old and New Light were then little insisted on, it was well known that many of the leading members of the congregation thoroughly coincided with their late minister, Mr. M'Ewen, in his New Light and liberal views; and foremost amongst these was the name of one of Ireland's noblest and most honoured sons—the gifted, patriotic, upright, and distinguished Archibald Hamilton Rowan, of Killileagh Castle.*

most respectable individuals offered themselves as candidates for the situation. Their testimonials, both as to moral character and literary reputation, were examined with the most scrupulous accuracy. Upon a ballot, the Rev. HENRY MONTGOMERY, A.M., of Dunmurry, was elected by a very large majority. We congratulate the Managers upon the appointment of Mr. Montgomery, in which, we feel assured, the public will heartily concur."

It is a peculiar and gratifying fact that Montgomery was not required to furnish any testimonials; and that only two of the electors voted against him—and that on the ground of his retaining his congregation.

* The career of this eminent Irishman belongs to the history of his country. The descendant and representative of an ancient and honoured house, his personal, no less than his mental qualities, early marked him out for high distinction amongst his contemporaries. Possessed of a powerful mind, unflinching resolution, and steadfast integrity, an accomplished speaker and writer, of dignified and courtly manners, and most imposing presence, he seemed by nature fitted to become a leader in the popular cause, into which he ardently threw himself, in opposition to the High Tory Government of the day. He was one of the originators and strenuous supporters of the "Society of United Irishmen;" and, becoming implicated in the subsequent insurrectionary movements, he received sentence of banishment, and remained for many years an exile from his native land. His sentence being at length remitted, he returned, and spent the evening of his days in the land of his fathers. The advanced age to which he reached enabled him

From him Montgomery received the following letter, conveying the unanimous request of the Session of the Killileagh Congregation, in flattering terms of personal appreciation.

“KILLILEAGH, *Sept. 29th, 1817.*

“SIR,—The elders of the congregation of Dissenters in this town have unanimously requested me to write to you, for your permission to present your name to them, that they may call upon you in proper form to preach to them, with a view of filling up the vacancy created by Mr. M'Ewen's being called to Belfast.

“I have great pleasure in complying with their request, as I should rejoice to see our pulpit filled by a gentleman of whose liberal sentiments and excellent character I have heard so much praise.—I am, sir, your very obedt. servant,

“ARCH. HAMILTON ROWAN.”

To this he wrote twice in reply, on October 3rd and 8th, as follows :—

“DUNMURRY, *Oct. 3rd, 1817.*

“SIR,—Being from home two days, I only received your letter this evening, on my return. I feel most sensibly the very high honour conferred upon me by the Session of the congregation of Killileagh.

“The subject of your communication, however, is one which, in itself, would demand my most serious consideration; besides, I am a candidate for a situation in the Belfast Academical Institution, and cannot know whether I may be successful until Tuesday next. It is not therefore in my power at present to give a definite answer to your letter.

“You will have the goodness, however, in the meantime, to acquaint the Session of your congregation that I feel most grateful for their good opinion, and that I will, on Wednesday next, return that kind of candid and explicit answer, which a compliment so great in itself, and

to see the fulfilment of many of his early aspirations; and, had he lived some few years longer, he would have had the happiness of seeing all, and more than all, the best measures, for advocating which he had suffered so heavily, enjoyed by his native country in peace. His appearance, as he passed along the streets of Dublin in his latter days, was peculiarly striking. The tall, bowed, yet still almost gigantic figure, with strongly marked features and venerable aspect, accompanied by a brace of huge Irish wolf-dogs—last specimens of a noble breed, now almost, if not totally extinct—afforded a truly impressive spectacle—the majestic reminders of a by-gone age!

conveyed in such flattering terms, justly deserves.—Believe me to be, with unfeigned respect, your obliged and obedient servant,

“HENRY MONTGOMERY.”

“DUNMURRY, 8th Oct., 1817.

“SIR,—Having been yesterday elected, in a very flattering manner, to the situation of Head Master in the English Department of the Belfast Academical Institution, I must decline the honour of preaching in Killileagh. Be assured, however, that I am not less *grateful* to you and the elders of your congregation, than if I had *accepted* your kind invitation. I shall always recollect it as one of the most pleasing circumstances of my life, that I was considered worthy of the attention of so respectable a society. I sincerely hope that you will be so fortunate as to find a person in every respect better qualified than I would have been, to support the respectability of your congregation.

“I beg it of you, personally, to accept my warmest thanks for the manner in which you were pleased to communicate to me the wishes of the Session of Killileagh.—Believe me to be, with much gratitude and respect, your very obedient, humble servant,

“HENRY MONTGOMERY.

“P.S.—I owe *much* of my success in the late election to the exertions of our highly-gifted and affectionate friend, M’Ewen.”*

* The Rev. William D. H. M’Ewen, son of the Presbyterian minister of Killinchy, had been minister of the congregation of Usher’s Quay, Dublin, in connexion with the General Synod of Ulster, up to 1813, in which year he removed to Killileagh, where he remained for the next four years, the respected and eminently popular minister of the congregation. During this period, and afterwards, he held, and publicly advocated, “New Light,” or Unitarian views; and that these met with acceptance from his people may be inferred from the fact, that, on his leaving Killileagh, in April, 1817, to take charge of the Second Congregation of Belfast, he received an Address from the elders of the Killileagh congregation, expressing their respect for him as a man, and their approbation of his conduct as a minister; and stating that they had witnessed with delight the increase of the congregation whilst under his care. More than a year after his removal to Belfast, and Montgomery’s appointment to the Institution, the congregation of Killileagh being still vacant, Mr. M’Ewen wrote as follows, to one of its most influential members, recommending the Rev. Henry Cooke, then of Donegore, for their minister—a generous act of kindness that met with a very different return :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—By rendering every service in your power to Mr. Cooke, you will secure to yourself the society of a well-informed man, and to the congregation a useful and popular preacher.

Montgomery removed from Dunmurry to his new residence in the Institution in the latter part of 1817, procured the services of efficient assistants, and soon had the satisfaction to find the classes under his care rapidly increasing, the day school well filled, while boarders from various parts of the country became more and more numerous.

In the "Fourth Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry," presented to Parliament in February, 1827, the following account is given of the school. It has relation to its condition up to October, 1825, the date of Montgomery's examination before the Commissioners—*i.e.*, eight years from the date of his appointment as Head Master:—

"ENGLISH SCHOOL.

"The Rev. Henry Montgomery, A.M., was appointed Head Master in 1817. In this school the pupils are instructed in spelling, reading, grammar, parsing, exercises in composition, recitation, history, chronology, and any other subjects calculated to produce a knowledge and proper application of the English language.

"Mr. Montgomery is a member of the Synod of Ulster; he has a congregation in the neighbourhood of Belfast. On entering upon the duties of his office, he found in the school 6 boarders and 66 day

"He is by no means bigoted in his opinions, and has too much good sense not to be charitable towards those who differ from him in sentiment. I regard him as at the head of the young placed men in the General Synod. He possesses great general information, and you will find him a good scholar, an able preacher, and an honourable man.—I am, very truly,

"WM. D. H. M'EWEN.

"Mr. JOHN CARR, Corporation, Killileagh."

It is strange now to reflect that, to the influence of the Unitarian M'Ewen, who had aided to place Henry Montgomery in the Institution, Henry Cooke may have in a great measure owed his settlement in Killileagh.

Mr. M'Ewen was one of the most eloquent and popular preachers of his time. His discourses were especially distinguished for the power, variety, and beauty of the striking figures and metaphors with which they abounded. He was also a man of large general accomplishments, and an author of no little repute. His instructive, genial conversation, polished wit, and kindly heart, rendered him a general favourite in the social circles of Belfast. He long held the office of Professor of Elocution in the Collegiate Department of the Belfast Institution. His death took place in July, 1828.

pupils. For the last four years the number has fluctuated from 35 to 45 boarders,* and from 150 to 200 day scholars.

“Of the day pupils, several have received gratuitous instruction on the nomination of subscribers of one hundred guineas, agreeably to the provision in the Act of Incorporation; and, besides these, the sons of professors and masters, and likewise several others, under peculiar circumstances, have, by the liberality of the master, been educated free of expense.† The number of pupils (including boarders and free scholars) in September, 1824, was 186, of whom 5 were free, being on the foundation, and 11 from other causes. Of these 186, 52 were of the Established Church, 117 Presbyterians, 4 Protestants of other denominations, and 13 Roman Catholics. There are seldom more than from 70 to 110 pupils in the school at any one time, the others being divided amongst the different masters, and only coming to the English School at regular intervals. The Head Master teaches occasionally every class in the school, and also regularly instructs the senior classes in the ordinary routine. He has four assistants, of whom three are resident, and have the superintendence and instruction of the boarders before and after the usual hours of teaching. The boarders read the New Testament, without note or comment, in the evening school. The senior pupils have the benefit of the Institution Library. In the English Department, the terms are two guineas per annum for day scholars, and thirty guineas for boarders.”

Owing to the peculiar nature of the establishment, involving the hourly changes of the pupils from one department and one master to another, and to his ministerial and other public duties making frequent demands upon his time, especially after school hours, it will be evident that a large measure of responsibility in the successful conduct of the school necessarily devolved upon his assistants. In the choice of these, Montgomery was not only extremely careful, but it will be seen, almost without exception, singularly fortunate.

* Subsequently the number of boarders at one time reached as high as 52.

† In his evidence before the Commissioners, Montgomery states:—“I have never charged Presbyterian ministers, of any denomination, anything for the tuition of their children. (Asked)—Is that your own arrangement, or does the Institution require it? It is my own arrangement, as to the sons of the ministers.”

The following letter, from his early pupil and intimate life-long friend, Wm. J. C. Allen, Esq., J.P., Secretary of the Institution, will be read with interest, as furnishing a valuable record of the names, and brief, but appreciative description, of the subsequent lives and positions of most of those who, at various times, were his assistants, while he retained his appointment in the Institution:—

“FAUNORAN, GREENISLAND, BELFAST, *April 14th, 1873.*”

“MY DEAR MR. C.,—Until to-day I have not had leisure to write anything to you on the subject of your note respecting Dr. Montgomery. . . .

“When I first went to the Institution, in February, 1821, Mr. David Watson, who afterwards became the minister of Clough, at the time of the Remonstrant separation, and Mr. Campbell Blakely, who was subsequently minister of Drumbo, were two of the assistants; and, as well as I can remember, Mr. William Hunter, who for about fifty years was the minister of the Unitarian congregation of Bandon, was at that time the third. These three gentlemen all survived till within the last two years. At what precise period Mr. J. Scott Porter*

* The Rev. John Scott Porter, present minister of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast. He was the eldest son of the Rev. William Porter, of Newtownlimavady, and was sent by his father as a boarder to Montgomery in November, 1817, immediately after his appointment to the Institution. He became his assistant in November, 1823, and left in August, 1825, to become minister of the Old Presbyterian (Unitarian) Congregation of Little Carter Lane, London, where he remained for more than six years. During this period he edited the “Christian Moderator,” took an active part in the successful agitation for the repeal of the English Test and Corporation Acts, and became distinguished for his powers as a preacher and writer. One of his then published discourses in particular, on “The Christian Beatitudes,” was most favourably reviewed. On the 2nd February, 1832, he was installed by the Presbytery of Antrim, as successor to the Rev. Dr. Bruce, and colleague to his son, the Rev. William Bruce, in the pastorate of the First Congregation, Belfast, from which he had accepted a unanimous call; where he still continues to minister, after a service of forty-two years, in undiminished vigour, and still growing in the reverential affection of his people. His subsequent distinguished career as a theologian and pulpit orator, celebrity as an Oriental, biblical, and general scholar, services as a Professor, usefulness as a public man, and talent and high repute as an author, are far too well-known to permit more than the present respectful reference here. Amongst his most valued publications may be noted—The “Unitarian Discussion” with the Rev. Daniel Bagot, M.A., afterwards Dean of Dromore, in 1834; “Principles of Textual Criticism;” “Twelve Lectures on Unitarianism;”

was one of the assistants I cannot now recollect, but it must have been somewhere about the same period, as he was settled in Little Carter Lane Congregation about the year 1825. About 1824 and 1825, Mr. P. Shulldham Henry was assistant to Dr. Montgomery—devoting himself very much to the teaching of elocution, an art to which he had given much attention, and in which he had achieved great success. Mr. Henry left the Institution to take charge of the Congregation of Armagh,* in connexion with the Synod of Ulster, where he continued until he was appointed, under the Queen's College Act, to be the President of the College, Belfast—an office which he still occupies. It must have been about the year 1827 that Mr. James Simms became one of the Doctor's assistants. Mr. Simms originally intended to enter the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, and had proceeded so far in his studies as to be put upon trial for licence by his Presbytery—I think that of Route. Having been set, as a subject for a trial piece, the text, 'He went and preached to the spirits in prison,' the views he propounded in his exposition of the passage were deemed by the reverend Presbytery very heretical; and the result was that Mr. Simms gave up his intention of becoming a minister. He left the Institution in, I think, 1831, having been appointed Editor of the 'Northern Whig,' a post which he filled for the next twenty years; and during that period, by the vigour of his style, the thorough independence of his tone, and the enlarged views he entertained on all public questions, he placed that paper in a position second to none in Ireland. He subsequently established the 'Belfast Daily Mercury,' but the labour and anxiety of conducting, unaided, a daily paper,

"Lectures on the Atonement;" "Calvin and Servetus;" with many other admirable discourses, tracts, and essays. For a number of years he edited the "Bible Christian," and partly the "Irish Unitarian Magazine." From his many and lengthened relations with Dr. Montgomery, his name will often appear in the latter portions of this biography.

* Mr. Henry had been strongly recommended by Montgomery to the New Light Session of Armagh Congregation, and was accepted, after their second rejection of the Rev. Henry Cooke of Killileagh. At his ordination, the "Charge to Minister and People" was given by Montgomery. It was a powerful defence of Presbyterianism as against Episcopacy, and an eloquent condemnation of the "Church"-going tendencies of many of the more wealthy and ambitious Presbyterians of the day; a manly and serviceable address, admirably adapted to the position and circumstances of the congregation in the Primatial City of Armagh.

Dr. Henry succeeded the Rev. George Hay of Derry, as Distributor of Royal Bounty to the General Synod and Assembly; and has been from an early period one of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland.

proved too much for his physical strength, and he died in May, 1858.

“Mr. Stannus was contemporary with Mr. Simms in Dr. Montgomery’s school. He was a most finished elocutionist, having studied the very best models of the bar, the pulpit, and the stage. He left the Institution to become the pastor of the Unitarian Congregation in Edinburgh, whence, after a few years, he was transferred to Sheffield, where he died some years ago.

“Mr. Osborne was, I believe, son of the minister of Newtownards Congregation, in connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim, and he became the first minister of the Remonstrant Congregation of Ballymoney. Mr. Hirst died after a few days’ illness, in Nov., 1832, deeply lamented by Dr. and Mrs. Montgomery, as well as by all his acquaintances. He was a young man of very varied accomplishments and brilliant talent, giving promise of a distinguished career had his life been spared. I knew him well, he having been a school-fellow and intimate friend from our boyish days. Mr. James Malcom was the first minister of the Remonstrant Congregation in Carriekfergus; he afterwards removed to Boston, in Lincolnshire, and subsequently to Chester, where he died, a good many years ago. Mr. Geo. Hill* became the minister of Crumlin Congregation, in succession to the Rev. Nathaniel Alexander; which place he resigned in consequence of physical infirmity unfitting him for active pastoral duty in a country parish, and he was appointed Librarian in the Queen’s College, Belfast, in the year 1850, a place he still occupies. Mr. Hill is distinguished as an archæologist, particularly in regard to the antiquities of Ireland. I need not tell you of your valued predecessor, Mr. Henry Alexander, nor of Mr. John Montgomery† (nephew to Dr. M.), who became

* The Rev. George Hill, the amiable and accomplished Librarian of Queen’s College, Belfast. The genial disposition he has at all times manifested early rendered him a special favourite in the Institution; and old pupils still speak of their intercourse with him in terms of grateful and friendly remembrance. As a writer, Mr. Hill’s name stands deservedly high. In his valuable edition of “The Montgomery Manuscripts,” and his later work, “The Macdonnells of County Antrim,” he has displayed a profound and patient research, and an extent and accuracy of knowledge, in regard to the genealogic and ancient historic lore of Ireland and Great Britain, which has been seldom equalled. He was for some time editor of the “Irish Unitarian Magazine.”

† The Rev. John Montgomery, second son of John Montgomery of Killead, Henry’s elder brother, and of Mary Campbell, his wife. His father, whom he much resembled, was a very fine-looking man, taller even than his brother Henry, but of spare frame, dark hair, and straight, handsome features. His mother possessed such a superior judgment, that Henry Montgomery, before his settle-

minister of Banbridge. Mr. D. L. Blakely, after leaving the Institution, became an Inspector of Schools under the National Board, and died at an early age. He was the son of the Rev. Fletcher Blakely of Moneyrea. Mr. A. J. Malcom was a brother of Mr. James Malcom; (they were sons of the Rev. Dr. Malcom, one of your predecessors in Newry.) He subsequently entered the medical profession, and was one of the physicians of the Belfast General Hospital. He died at a very early age, but not before he had acquired a high reputation in his profession, and had given a more practical turn to the public mind, in regard to the necessity of sanitary measures.

“Mr. William Hamilton had been, at the time of Dr. M.’s resignation of the English School, for some years his principal assistant, and he became a candidate for the vacant office, to which he succeeded. He continued to be Head Master of the English School for several years, and afterwards he emigrated to Canada, where, I believe, he is still living—the pastor of a flourishing Presbyterian congregation.

“I have jotted down these imperfect recollections of persons, many of whom I knew well in times long gone by—so long, indeed, as to warn me of the rapid lapse of years. Whilst I have been thinking of them, many pleasing memories have been revived; but whether these notes will be of any use to you I am more than doubtful. . . .
—Believe me, very truly yours,

“W. J. C. ALLEN.”

In addition to the names given in the foregoing letter, may be ment in the ministry, used to read to her his early discourses, for the benefit of her discriminating criticism, ere he delivered them from the pulpit. John Montgomery was educated by his uncle, and twice filled the office of his assistant in the Institution, viz., 1834–35 and 1837–39. Licensed by the Templepatrick Presbytery, he became in 1840 assistant and successor to the Rev. Wm. Porter of Newtownlimavady, where he remained till 1847, when he succeeded the Rev. James Davis as minister of the influential congregation of Banbridge. Here he continued a useful and popular ministry till his death, by fever, in 1867.

Although not possessing the pre-eminent talent of his uncle, he was yet a man of no common ability as a speaker and writer. His judgment was solid rather than brilliant; his aim was more towards practical instruction, than to overcome or persuade; and his pulpit services were at all times highly impressive. The later volumes of the “Bible Christian,” and the “Irish Unitarian Magazine,” contain many valuable contributions from his pen, and he also published several excellent discourses and tracts, notably his discourse on “The Holy Spirit,” and his tracts on “The Atonement,” and “On the Doctrine of Two Natures in Christ.” Friendly, hospitable, and charitable, he was held in deserved estimation, and his premature death occasioned very general regret. His elder brother, William Montgomery, is the present worthy possessor of Boltnaconnel House and Farm.

mentioned Alexander Kennedy, afterwards Professor of Elocution in the Collegiate Department of the Institution; William M'Creedy, who subsequently filled for many years, with honour and distinguished usefulness, the important post of Secretary to the Board of National Education in Ireland; Thomas Smyth, minister of the Remonstrant Congregation of Raloo; Robert Miniss, afterwards a Unitarian minister in England; and Maxwell Davison, who, after a ministry of several years in England, became the first pastor of the Unitarian Church of Melbourne, Victoria.

CHAPTER V.

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER—ITS EARLY HISTORY. SUBSCRIPTION AND NON-SUBSCRIPTION.

1818—1821.

Elected Moderator of Synod (1818)—Synodical Sermon (1819)—The Gospel Ministry—Constitution of General Synod—Origin, Character, &c.—First Presbyterian Settlers in Ireland—Non-Subscribers—Their Varied Fortunes—First General Synod of Ulster (1692)—Subscription First Enacted (1705)—The Seven Years' Conflict—Disruption of Synod (1726)—Presbytery of Antrim—Old and New Light—Renewal of Friendly Feelings—Causes—Continues till Beginning of present Century—Montgomery's Description of the Synod in 1810—Political Principles of Ministers and Laity—His Moderatorship ends in Peace—Objections to such Synodical Calm—Refuted—Synodical Work sufficient to the Time and Circumstances—Agreement to differ, no Compromise of Doctrine—Sermon of Dr. Malcom (1821) on the Holy Scriptures, the Rule of Faith—The Principle of the Reformation—What broke the Peace of the Synod?—Approach of the Storm—Events immediately preceding the Synodical Conflicts—Death of Dr. William Nelson, Professor in the Institution—Four Candidates for the Appointment—Excitement of Parties—Rev. William Bruce elected—Theological element introduced—Opinion of Sir R. Bateson—Of Rev. E. Reid, Moderator of Synod—Outcry of the Orthodox—Rev. H. Cooke comes to the Front—Montgomery's subsequent Reference to the Election in 1841.

THE next year (1818) was signalised to Henry Montgomery by his attainment of a very distinguished honour. At the age of thirty, and being only in the ninth year of his ministry, he was chosen Moderator of the General Synod of Ulster.

His immediate predecessor in this important office was his revered old instructor and life-long friend, the Rev. Nathaniel Alexander, of the Crumlin Academy, who had been elected out of eleven ministers nominated, eight being "Old Light;" while

in the year but one following Montgomery's Moderatorship, the Rev. Dr. Malcom of Newry was chosen to the office out of eight competitors, six of whom, at least, were understood to hold "Old Light" views. The fact of the General Synod having thus, in the space of four years, placed three ministers of well-known "New Light" sentiments in the Moderator's chair, while the Rev. William Porter of Newtownlimavady, a man of most pronounced Arian views, held the important position of its salaried clerk by unanimous appointment, speaks volumes for the friendly feeling, if not the partiality, then generally entertained towards "New Light" principles by the Presbyterians of Ireland, whom the General Synod represented.

Montgomery's year of office seems to have passed uneventfully; and at its close, he preached the outgoing Moderator's sermon before the Synod in Dr. Hanna's meeting-house, Belfast, in June, 1819, from 1 Cor. i. 21. His discourse was a noble defence of the gospel ministry generally, and of the ministers of his own Presbyterian Church in particular—well worthy of his talents and rising reputation. Having been carefully written out and preserved, a few extracts may serve to indicate his style at that period. Having adverted to the views of certain classes of objectors, even then not unknown, but whose representatives in these days are not to be numbered for multitude, he continues:—

"Such persons wish to obtain the reputation of being, what they are pleased to term, *philosophic Christians*, or they, perhaps, aim even higher—at the distinction of being unbelievers. Vanity is always their predominant feeling; and they imagine that singularity will cause them to be admired, and that to be able to sneer at the clergy is a sure proof of understanding. If they support any religious establishment, they do it on the same principle that they keep an equipage; because it has been done by their ancestors, or because it is the custom of the country, and suitable to their rank. To such men, preaching is *foolishness*, and gospel ordinances are idle forms. But to the man of sober judgment, it would not be difficult to prove that a regular stated ministry is absolutely necessary for the preservation of religion and social happiness.

“Such are the forgetfulness and passions of man, such the regulations of society, and such the situation of human affairs, that the duties and motives of religion require to be frequently and earnestly enforced. In this busy, anxious world, few men have leisure, and still fewer have inclination, carefully to investigate Scripture truths and moral obligations. There are, besides, vast numbers who, from the nature of their education and their worldly circumstances, are but ill qualified for such pursuits. To all these (and they constitute a large majority of every Christian community), it is a matter of paramount importance to have explanations of Scripture and details of moral duty frequently laid before them, by conscientious men, whose previous studies and attainments have qualified them for the task. Were not men regularly brought together in social worship, were not religious ordinances administered, the most amiable feelings of the human heart would be uncultivated; and, in a few ages, the glorious light of the Gospel would be obscured, by the return of anti-Christian superstition and immorality. It is true, some *knowledge* of the truth might still remain in the world, and be preserved in the lordly habitation, or the seat of learning; but even there, the spirit would be wanting: and where would be that sacred trust that now cheers the peasant’s cottage—where that balm which heals the wounded heart—where that beam of hope that lights the departing spirit on its way?

Besides, though the laws of the State might endeavour to defend the property and persons of the people—though penalties might be multiplied upon penalties—though civil officers might be appointed to watch over the vigorous execution of the laws, we all know that human sagacity would never provide for *all* the varieties of crime, nor human vigilance guard against the wiles and cunning of iniquity. No: it is only by taking vice by the root—by purifying the human heart and enlightening the human mind, that the progress of immorality can be effectually opposed. The principles and precepts by which the multitude are to be guided, must be easily understood, and of universal application—must be such as to require, not the vigilance of the eye, nor the strength of the arm, to enforce them. These principles and these precepts are to be found only in the Sacred Volume; and the man who is influenced by them will not commit evil in the secret place, or at the silent hour, more than in the public assembly and the open day. He does not feel it necessary to become acquainted with the voluminous and obscure contents of statute-books, nor to calculate the probabilities of detection, and the chances of escape—the *will of God* is his law; it is imprinted on his heart; and his conscience makes him feel that

the sinner cannot escape. Now, these holy impressions can only be made, these virtuous sentiments can only be retained, by the early, the repeated, the continual exertions of a faithful gospel ministry. *They* are the men who pre-eminently deserve the appellation of ‘guardians of the public morals,’ which has sometimes been given to civil magistrates. I do not deny the respectability and utility of the civil magistracy. They are necessary to deter and punish those over whom religious ties and moral obligations have no influence. But whilst, through the operation of fear, they might prevent, or by the strength of power might punish, *great offences*, and thus heal the surface of society, the fever of corruption would rage within, ready to break forth, and many of the most baneful vices would mock their authority. Here it is that the influence of a faithful ministry is felt. The seeds of disease are rooted out of the heart—the springs of the moral constitution are purified—vigour is restored to the frame—and the social countenance wears the glow of *genuine* health. Scattered over the country; mingling with the population; intimately acquainted with the weakness, the wants, and the temptations of the people; prompt at every call of humanity; watchful to nip the buds of every vice, and cherish the seeds of every virtue; constantly proving that the interests of time and eternity are inseparably interwoven with the discharge of *present duties*, the ministers of the Gospel become the great instruments of private and public virtue and happiness.

“The witling may laugh, and the infidel may sneer. It has always been the lot of those who have been engaged in contending with vice, to meet the contempt of fools, and the hatred of the wicked. . . . To such persons preaching *may* be ‘foolishness,’ and *preachers* merely tolerated encumbrances, and the doctrines of the Gospel the inventions of priestcraft. Yet, whilst such men, and such preaching, and such doctrines, teach the young to enter upon life with virtuous principles; assist the middle-aged to maintain their integrity and purity in the midst of temptations; and enable the old, the afflicted, and the unfortunate to sustain with equanimity the infirmities and evils of this life in anticipation of a better, I should think it more profitable, and more truly honourable, to be the meanest and most unnoticed labourer in the vineyard of my Master, than to have the principles and the reputation of the most renowned sceptic that ever endeavoured to dash the cup of Christian consolation from the lips of the afflicted, to break the staff of hope that supports the helpless and forlorn, or to sap the foundations of morality and social order.

“But whilst I speak of the utility of the clerical order, I only mean

ministers *as such*—men actually engaged in the discharge of the duties of the ministerial office. I do not mean to assert that there is one particle either of utility or honour in holding nominally the situation of a minister, where the only duty is to receive emoluments which are confessedly not *deserved*—wages that have not been *earned*; whilst the actual labourer, the real minister, ‘*who does the work of an evangelist,*’ pines in neglect, or starves in solitude. It may be the prejudice of education, or profession; but whilst, to me, there is in society no man more respectable than a humble, faithful minister of the Gospel, who walks in the midst of his people with integrity of heart and purity of life, who ‘*allures to brighter worlds and leads the way*’; there are, at the same time, few persons whom I respect less (though he should wear a mitre or a tiara) than I do him who is but *in name* a pastor, ‘*who shears his flock, but feeds them not.*’”

The Synod at this time consisted of 14 Presbyteries, containing about 196 ministers and 181 congregations—not including the nine ministers and their congregations forming the Presbytery of Antrim, which, although connected with the Synod, and presenting a report at its annual meetings, was not one of its radically constituent elements, nor subject to its Synodical discipline.

It is not requisite, nor would it be in keeping with the character and purpose of this work, here to enter at length into a historical account of the General Synod of Ulster, as representing the great body of Irish Presbyterians. Most educated Presbyterians are already familiar with it; while the general reader is referred to the fore-mentioned valuable “*Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland,*” by the subject of the present memoir, published in the “*Irish Unitarian Magazine*” for 1846-7. A few brief remarks, however, indicating its origin, character, and leading events, may be here permitted.

† The “*Plantation of Ulster*” by Scotch colonists in the reign of James the First, combined with the prelatical persecutions of Presbyterians in Scotland and Puritans in England, led to the settlement of several Scotch Presbyterian and English Nonconformist or Puritan ministers in the North of Ireland, between the years 1613 and 1630. The names of these were—Edward

Brice (Presbyterian), Robert Cunningham (Presbyterian), John Ridge (Puritan), Henry Calvert (Puritan), James Hubbard (Puritan), Robert Blair (Presbyterian), and James Hamilton (Presbyterian). These were the original Fathers of Presbyterianism in Ulster, and to them were almost immediately added—Josias Welsh, Andrew Stewart, George Dunbar, and John Livingston—all Scotchmen and Presbyterians. The places of their original settlement were respectively Ballycarry, Holywood, Antrim, Oldstone, Carrickfergus, Bangor, Ballywalter, Templepatrick, Donegore, Larne, and Killinchy.

It is to be observed that these founders of Irish Presbyterianism entered on their work on the strictest principles of non-subscription and non-conformity. It was adherence to these principles that brought them here; it was on these principles that they were ordained to their pastoral charges—the Bishops of the day, glad to get their aid, admitting them on their own terms, and not unfrequently assisting merely as Presbyters in their ordination. It was in these principles they lived and laboured, afterwards enduring persecution and the loss of all things, and died in their integrity. They may or may not have been Calvinists in doctrine, but in this country they were Christian freemen. They neither subscribed, nor required subscription, to any Articles or Confession of Faith. “No man was answerable to another for his opinions; and no Standard of Faith was recognised but the Bible.”

† After undergoing the most varied experiences of good and ill fortune during the reigns of James I., Charles I., the Commonwealth, the Protectorate, Charles II., James II., and William III.—persecuted in turn by Episcopalians, Independents, and Papists as they had the power, and not failing to show a similar persecuting spirit themselves, when, by one or two rare chances, they found themselves possessed of the ability—exhibiting throughout a loyal yet independent spirit—having passed through the horrors of '41, and the revolution of '88, the Irish Presbyterians reached at length, under the fostering care of the great and good King William, a time of safety and peace. † The “King’s Bounty”

preserved the ministers from want. "The ordinances of religion were duly celebrated, church discipline was revived, Presbyteries were held in several counties, and, in the year 1692, the *First General Synod of Ulster*, consisting of five Presbyteries, was convened."

It was literally an assembly of Christian freemen. Escaped from persecution, and established in comfort, they passed some five to eight years in the exercise of mutual forbearance and goodwill. Then, however, the stricter Scotch Covenanting element waxing stronger through continued immigration, the question of subscription was raised. Precedents were sought in the practice of the Church in Scotland. But it was not till 1705 that subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith was enacted as the law of the Church.

This imposition, seemingly acquiesced in for a few years, soon gave rise to continual and rancorous debate. The persecution of Emlyn in Dublin, the "Exeter Controversy," the "Salters Hall Debates" in London, and the overthrow of creeds and proclamation of religious liberty in Geneva, had at this time largely contributed to diffuse a spirit of free inquiry on religious subjects, which extended to a considerable degree amongst the Presbyterian ministers of Ulster. The distinction between Subscribers and Non-subscribers became more sharply defined, and led at length, after an embittered conflict of seven years' standing ("Narrative of the Seven Synods," 1727), to the expulsion from the Synod in 1726 of seventeen ministers and their congregations, who adhered to the principles of non-subscription, and their formation into a distinct body, under the title of the *Presbytery of Antrim*. The separation, however, is stated to have been only of a limited nature, not excluding them from ministerial communion in religious ordinances and sacraments, but merely from "ministerial communion with subscribers in church judicatories as formerly;" or, in other words, from ecclesiastical fellowship, by being members of the Synod or its inferior courts. (Dr. Killen's "Continuation of Reid's Presbyterian History," p. 325.) The separation was also incomplete in its extent. "The

Non-subscribers had many warm partisans, who had secretly adopted their views, but who, not being honest enough to avow them, continued in the communion of the Synod." The leader of the Subscribers thus writes to a friend in Scotland :—"Indeed, the number of those in the Synod who are for a strict adherence to our Confession as a term of communion seems to be but small ; and a vast number are so carried off, that they could make greater concessions to the Non-subscribers *than some of us can with peace yield unto.*" (Killen's "Continuation," &c., p. 326.)

During this contest the epithet "New Light" was first used as a term of reproach to designate the Non-subscribers ; and subsequently the terms "Old Light" and "New Light" became generally employed as the familiar and accepted designations of the two respective parties, both within and without the Synod. The "Memoirs of the County of Down," published in 1744, record that in the several localities of Ballyhalbert, Dromore, and "Moyrah," *inter alia*, "the Dissenters have in each two meeting-houses—of the Old and New Light, as they are called—which terms signify the subscribers or non-subscribers to the Confession of Faith agreed to by the Westminster Divines, A.D. 1649."

The celebrated names of Abernethy of Antrim (afterwards of Dublin), Michael Bruce of Holywood, Samuel Halliday, of First Congregation, Belfast ; and P. Kirkpatrick, of Second Congregation, Belfast—the leaders of the Non-subscribers—attest the superior abilities by which the separatists were distinguished.

In the calm that succeeded this seven years' storm, the horror of "New Light doctrines" became less and less, a more friendly feeling gradually sprang up between the two bodies, and, even in the Synod, subscribing to the Westminster Confession speedily became so loose and vague as to be little more than a mere matter of form ; and at the end of twenty years the two bodies practically differed so little, that ministers and congregations repeatedly passed from one to the other, retaining intact all their rights, privileges and properties. The congregations of the Antrim Presbytery, being in general more wealthy than those of the

Synod, had no difficulty in procuring leading ministers from the so-called orthodox body in all cases of vacancy; and these were usually found to be even more New Light in their doctrinal views than the members of the society which they joined. ("Outlines," &c., p. 206.) So matters for the most part continued during the remainder of the eighteenth century. Several attempts, no doubt, were made from time to time to renew and reinforce subscription, but these all proved ineffectual; and, of the fourteen Presbyteries of which, in the beginning of the present century, the General Synod had come to consist, no less than ten were, and had long been known to be—in practice at least, if not in principle—non-subscribing.

Amongst the causes which contributed to foster the kindly feelings prevailing amongst the ministers of Synod at the beginning of this century and for some sixteen or seventeen years afterwards, and their partiality for non-subscription, must not be forgotten the happy influences of the several large classical seminaries before referred to in the North of Ireland, where a great proportion of the youths intended for the ministry received their education preparatory to going to college in Glasgow, whose conductors were *all* distinguished men of New Light views. The school acquaintances and friendships thus formed, and frequently cemented afterwards by pleasant college companionship, were often eagerly renewed in after years, in ministerial exchanges and communion; and the meetings of Presbytery and Synod were generally looked forward to as agreeable opportunities for the interchange of kindly thoughts and fraternal regards. This is happily shown in the following description by Montgomery, in his "Outlines of Presbyterianism," of the Synod in the year 1810:—

"When, for the first time, I attended the annual meeting of the General Synod of Ulster, at Cookstown, as a constituent member of the body. Never shall I forget that peaceful, happy assemblage of Christian freemen! It was worthy of the early and uncorrupted times of Irish Presbyterianism: it realised all my boyish dreams concerning the Church of my Fathers and of my own choice. Our

mornings and afternoons were spent in the calm, cheerful, and harmonious discharge of routine duties: our evenings, in delightful social converse, amidst

‘The feast of reason and the flow of soul.’

The young ministers, scattered over the Province in various fields of duty, renewed their school and college friendships; the older members talked over, in graver mood, the pursuits and pleasures of earlier years; and sometimes the young, the middle-aged, and the old mingled together—forgetting their years in their rational, Christian enjoyments. How delightful it was to listen to the genial flow of matured wisdom from venerable lips—to hear ringing peals of laughter elicited by the playful and polished wit of manhood—and to rejoice when some ingenuous youth gave promise of future distinction by grave remark or ready humour! And then the whole scene, both within and without the Synod-house, was rendered bright and beautiful by the constant sunshine of mutual forbearance and charity. Amidst a recognised variety of creeds, there was perfect ‘unity of spirit;’ for every man, whilst rejoicing in his own liberty, respected the rights of his brother. We therefore met in love, continued together in harmony, and parted with regret. Old friendships were cemented, new attachments were formed, and we looked forward to our stated meetings as annual jubilees! Such *was* the General Synod of Ulster, when, on my first return from Cookstown, I gloried in the name of Presbyterian, and rejoiced in my Church, as the embryo of a Church *universal*, in which the Bible was the only standard of faith, and the conscience of every man was free!

“Such did the General Synod continue to be for several years—a bright example, in its own harmony, of the living influences of religious liberty; and, as a natural consequence, the strenuous advocate of equal civil rights for all the people of these realms. So early as the year 1813, a strong and unanimous declaration of Synod in favour of Catholic Emancipation was transmitted to Government, and published in all the leading journals of the empire.”

In their general politics, the large majority of the ministers of Synod, especially in the towns, as well as the more wealthy and educated portion of the laity, were at this time undoubtedly Whigs; whereas the mass of the agricultural population, though inclined to sympathise with the Whigs so far as being opposed to the power of the Tory landlords of the day, were yet so much

more deeply attached to Orangeism than to any other form or phase of political creed, that the leader who should be loudest in proclaiming Orange views and principles would be sure to secure their adherence—no matter how uncompromising his Toryism, and but little signifying what the special complexion of his religious profession might be.

In the Synod, however, the defeat of Dr. Black in 1817, and his subsequent melancholy death, had relieved the body of the high Tory dictator to whom they had been long accustomed; and as yet none of the more youthful aspirants for Synodical power were prepared for the bold attempt of stepping into his shoes. It required time for its maturing, as the newly emancipated Synod would scarcely have been found in the humour so soon to bend its neck to another yoke. And so the period of Montgomery's Moderatorship, and the three years following, were allowed to pass in peace. It was the last peace which the General Synod of Ulster, as then constituted, was destined to enjoy—the last period of sunshine and tranquillity—of harmony and mutual good feeling, which its members were to experience.

It has been since urged that the calm of that time was neither natural nor desirable; that it was not the necessary and invigorating rest in the intervals of toil, but an unhealthy and lethargic inactivity; and that the communion of sentiment amongst its diverse constituents—its Old and New Light sections—was only apparent, not real; not a commendable agreement to differ, but an unholy compromise of sacred things for secular purposes—an irreligious attempt for the impossible fusion of elements essentially and properly antagonistic and mutually repulsive.

It does not appear, however, that this view is at all borne out by the evidence. No doubt there were not then to be found in operation the varied activities and organisations which the requirements of the present very different age demand; but yet the Synodical Records of the time registered a large amount of Christian work—of Presbyterian and Synodical diligence and

success. The successful working of the Home Mission for many years in the South and West of Ireland, in connexion with the Synod of Munster—the continual formation of new congregations, not only in the more remote localities visited by that mission, but in various places within the immediate bounds of the Synod—the careful oversight and internal government of the several constituent Presbyteries and Congregations—the painstaking investigations of disputed and difficult cases—and the regular and devoted attention of Presbyteries and Examination Committees to the education and training of candidates for the ministry; all these manifest an amount of church activity which, taking into account the general conditions of the country and people at the time, as to the facilities of travel and intercommunication, the state of education and general enlightenment, and the comparative expense and limited circulation and means of access to books and periodicals, may have been quite as extensive as was at all practicable under the circumstances.

Then, as to the allegation of a general agreement to conceal or compromise doctrinal distinctions—while it is admitted that, though the epithets “Old Light” and “New Light” were well known and generally applied within the Synod, the distinctive doctrinal views that characterised their respective bearers were not then insisted on or discussed in a disputatious or controversial spirit, there is no evidence that they were wont to be concealed or dishonourably compromised. The Old Lights, being the majority, were under no temptation to do so: the New Lights, being at peace, were under no restraining fear. Their respective views were held firmly; but not held up to vex their neighbours, nor held back when duty required their utterance.

The spirit that animated the New Light or non-subscribing members, at least, was well illustrated by a sermon preached by Dr. Maleom, as Moderator, before the Synod in 1821, from Acts xix. 20—against bigotry and intolerance, the exercise of human authority in matters of faith, and in favour of taking the Bible as the only guide—in which, advocating the claims of the

Hibernian Bible Society, he advances and supports with great ability the following six propositions, viz. :—

“1. That the Holy Scriptures are a *perfect* rule of faith and practice. 2. That they are a *plain* rule. 3. That they are a *safe* rule. 4. That they are the *only* rule. 5. That they are a rule *which all have a right to use*. 6. That they are a rule *which it is the duty of all to use without restriction or limitation.*”

Here is no evidence of deadness, concealment, or compromise. Here is the great, the sacred principle of the Protestant Reformation—the sufficiency of Scripture, and the right and duty of private judgment—fearlessly and earnestly proclaimed. Yet it breaks not the peace of the Church, because it “speaks the truth in love,” not in controversial bitterness. It seeks not to crush opponents, much less brethren of the same Church, to obtain the ends of a party triumph.

No doubt *magna est veritas*—great and sacred is truth; but can it only be presented to men *volens volens*, on the point of the sword? Is there to be nothing for Christian peace and Christian charity? When Christ, the Prince of Peace, declares—“I come not to send peace, but division,” may we not hear the accompanying sigh that tells us that the cause lay not in the gospel of peace, but in the passions of men? When He sadly predicts that “offences must come,” He emphatically denounces “Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.”

What was it that broke the peace of the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster; placed its members, as two hostile bands, in fratricidal conflict for seven long years; rent the Church ruthlessly asunder; and kept up for fifteen years more incessant and fierce contests between embittered foemen who had once been friends?

It was the spirit of human assumption, of ecclesiastical dictation, of spiritual pride—the spirit which says to a brother, “Stand by, for I am holier than thou;” which undertakes to “judge another man’s servant,” and which would reward and punish according to its own capricious laws—the spirit of criminal ambition to “lord it over God’s heritage,” snatch the

keys of heaven and hell, usurp the place of God Himself over the consciences of His human children, enforce obedience to its dictates by persecution and the unsparing infliction of temporal and spiritual penalties, set up its own peculiar standard of faith, and require all men to bow down to it as the only infallible truth for time and for eternity!

It was the self-same spirit that had banished Arius, and imposed the first bondage of a human creed upon Christ's free Church; that slaughtered the Waldenses, that excommunicated Luther, that burnt Servetus; that, one black Bartholomew's Day, flooded the streets of Paris with Protestant blood; that revelled in the torture chambers of the Inquisition; that lighted the fires of Smithfield, and whetted the axe of the Grassmarket; that ejected the Two Thousand in England, and our own Presbyterian forefathers in Ireland; that imprisoned Emlyn in Dublin, and burnt the house of Priestley in Birmingham—the self-same spirit that, carried to its logical extreme in 1871, in the Council of the Vatican, decreed the infallibility of Pope Pius the Ninth!

There is nothing more evident, and at the same time more extraordinary, to any thoughtful person making himself acquainted with the history of the conflict in the General Synod of Ulster that led to the Remonstrant separation, than the invariable *assumption of superiority* on the part of those styling themselves “orthodox,” on account of their views of doctrine, over their brethren who may conscientiously differ from them; and of their consequent *right* to dictate to them and all the Church their own human creeds and interpretations, as the necessary terms of church membership—to say, “Sign this, or you cannot be members of the Church of Christ; you cannot continue to hold communion with us!” It is truly a serious sin, the sin against Liberty! And grave indeed is the responsibility of fallible men who conspire, for any ulterior purposes whatever, to defraud Christ's people of “the liberty with which Christ Himself hath made them free!”

But to proceed with our narrative, though one is fain to linger

over that fair scene of union and peace which never *has* returned—one would grieve to think it *never may*.

The repose, before described, be it bad or good, was broken at length; and rude indeed was the awakening! The pleasant sunshine and clear sky became overcast. The cloud, at first “no bigger than a man’s hand,” quickly assumed alarming proportions; threatening masses appeared on the horizon, and slowly rose and met at the zenith. A portentous darkness succeeds, rendered more gloomy by a sombre, lurid glare. A few heavy drops are felt, and some light puffs of air, and the growlings of distant thunder are heard. All things await in silent apprehension the inevitable tempest. It comes at length. The storm is on. The torrent pours, the lightning flashes, and the thunder rolls. The winds are up, and, as Charles Dickens somewhere has it, “The wind from the north met his brother from the south; the wind from the west met his brother from the east; the winds also from the lesser points of the compass came to meet their brethren, and they made a *night* of it!”

The events which more immediately preceded and led up to the Synodical conflicts were the following:—

In April, 1821, the death took place of Dr. William Nelson, Head Master of the Classical School, and Professor of the Classical, Hebrew, and Irish languages in the Belfast Academical Institution. This eminent man (son of Dr. Moses Nelson, minister of Kilmore, and Principal of Rademon Academy) had been minister of Dundalk, till, on the opening of the Belfast Institution, he was appointed to the foregoing important offices, the duties of which he discharged with surpassing ability and success. His reputation as a profound classical scholar and general linguist stood high as any in the three kingdoms. He was also an eloquent preacher of moderate New Light views, and a kind-hearted and excellent man.

To supply the vacancy thus created in the Professorship of Classics and Hebrew, four prominent candidates presented themselves, all of whom advanced high literary claims—Rev. William Bruce, junior pastor and colleague with his father, the Rev.

William Bruce, D.D.,* in the ministry of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Belfast; Mr. J. R. Bryce, a member of the Reformed or Covenanting Presbyterian Synod, a most worthy and well-qualified man, who possessed the additional advantage, in the eyes of many of his supporters, of a high reputation for strict "orthodoxy;" a Mr. Kyle, also highly recommended, supposed to have good Government interest, being nephew to the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin; and lastly, a Mr. Repp, a native of Iceland, and almost unacquainted with the English tongue, but patronised by Mr. David Kerr, a near relative of Lord Castlereagh.

Various subsidiary considerations were brought forward in support of each candidate or against him.

"Mr. Bruce's father, Dr. Bruce, was well known to be justly a favourite with Lord Castlereagh, and the appointment of his son was likely to conciliate the Government; or, at the worst, the affluent friends of Dr. Bruce, who had hitherto kept aloof from the Institution, were sure to become liberal subscribers. Mr. Kyle's appointment might also have conciliated men in power, from his connexion with

* The Rev. William Bruce, D.D., grandson of the Rev. Michael Bruce, of Holywood, one of the early Non-subscribers and founders of the Presbytery of Antrim in 1726, and lineally descended from the Rev. Michael Bruce, who came from Scotland to be minister of Killinehy in 1657, and from the old Royal Bruces of Scotland. He was perhaps one of the most remarkable individuals of his line. "An elegant scholar, a sincere Christian, an accomplished divine, a steady friend, and an example of all the domestic virtues; a man who became softer and kinder and more estimable as his years increased, and whose advocacy of the great principles of Gospel Truth and Christian Liberty can never be forgotten!" For many long years he led the instruction of the youth of Belfast as Principal of the Belfast Academy, the religious thought of its Presbyterian people by his pulpit ministrations in the First Congregation, and its highest and most cultivated social circles, by his dignified manners, commanding presence, superior attainments, and refined and polished wit. In 1824, the publication of his celebrated controversial sermons "On the Study of the Bible," and especially his statement in the Preface, that Arian opinions "were making extensive though silent progress in the General Synod of Ulster," had a wondrous effect in intensifying the discussions and widening the breach then taking place between the opposing parties in the Synod, consequent on the election above described. "Thus did the excellent Dr. Bruce and his son, although themselves the calmest and most moderate of men, originate an excitement and contest, whose influence will extend to remotest generations, through the wonderful combinations and dependences of events." ("Outlines," &c., p. 357.)

Dublin College; and Mr. Kerr's protégé had evidently good Government interest. Now, it is no disparagement to the electors of the Institution to allege, that, under the circumstances then existing, they should lean to the candidate whose election, other things being equal, was the most likely to secure the restoration of the Parliamentary grant, or large private contributions. On these grounds, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Repp became the most ostensible candidates; but as a counterpoise to their subsidiary recommendations, Mr. Bryce's *orthodoxy* was brought prominently forward; and Mr. Cooke, who had even then acquired some celebrity, became his ardent champion. Thus, for the first time, was the question of theological opinions introduced in connexion with a merely literary professorship in the Belfast Institution. A new ingredient of bitterness was therefore thrown into the contest; and seldom has an election created so much interest, or roused so many angry feelings. The result was favourable to Mr. Bruce, by a small majority over Mr. Repp, and a large one over Mr. Bryce. A violent clamour was immediately raised by Mr. Cooke and the other friends of Mr. Bryce, who alleged that Mr. Bruce was chosen by Arian voters, because he was an Arian minister. The allegation that Mr. Bruce was elected by Arians, or by Arian influence, is wholly without foundation. In point of fact, he was strongly opposed by two-thirds of the Unitarian voters, in consequence of his family's well-known hostility to the Institution; whilst his election was carried by the influence of Sir Robert Bateson, at the head of the Episcopalians, and by the Moderator of the General Synod, as leader of the Calvinistic Presbyterians."

The sentiments of Sir Robert Bateson in support of Mr. Bruce are well worthy of record:—

"I disapprove of party spirit in general, but nowhere so much as here, among ourselves, in an institution for the general education of youth; and I predict that it will be our ruin if not checked. A reverend gentleman has introduced religious topics, religious creeds" (alluding to the Rev. Dr. Samuel Edgar, Professor of Theology to the Secession Synod in the Institution, father to the late Dr. John Edgar, who had objected to Mr. Bruce as an Arian). "My Lord, I shall not enter into a religious controversy with the reverend gentleman, but merely remark, that Belfast, which boasts so much of her liberality, ought to be the last town in Ireland, and this Institution the last place in that town, where I should have expected to hear such arguments used against any candidate."

The Moderator of the General Synod was the Rev. Edward Reid of Ramelton, brother of the late Dr. Seaton Reid, the Church historian, who had been brought from the extremity of Donegal, by the instrumentality and urgent entreaty of Dr. Hanna, the General Synod's Divinity Professor in the Institution, they being both distinguished lights of the "orthodox" party, to support Mr. Bruce! He thus delivered himself:—

"I am Moderator of the Synod of Ulster, and appear here as the representative of that body—that respectable body. My decided conviction is, that the vital interests of this Institution will be most powerfully promoted by the election of Mr. Bruce. I am disposed to recommend him as a person in *every* respect calculated to fill the vacant Professorship."

It was generally said that by this eulogium on Mr. Bruce, and by his large influence as Moderator, he alone secured the election of an Arian! Montgomery, twenty years afterwards, at another noted meeting of the proprietors of the Institution in 1841, spoke as follows:—

"This, then, was the introduction of Arianism into the Institution; and from that election have sprung all our meetings, all our angry discussions, and even, I do believe, the very breaking up of the General Synod itself. ('Hear, hear!' from Dr. Cooke.) And yet these gentlemen come hither to lay their sins—if they be sins—at our door!"*

* Dr. Montgomery's "Speech at Institution Meeting, April 13, 1841," p. 38.

CHAPTER VI.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE INSTITUTION AND ARIAN CONTROVERSIES—THE REV. HENRY COOKE.

1822—1824.

Synod in Newry, 1822—Cooke's Declaration of War—His Attack on the Institution—Debate—First Encounter of Montgomery and Cooke—Defeat of the latter—Thunderstorm—Sketch of Rev. H. Cooke—His Early History—Religious and Political Views—Character—Talents—Personal Appearance—Oratory—Description of him by Montgomery—Becomes a Party Leader—Synod in Armagh, 1823—Debate Renewed—Two days' Discussion—Opponents of Institution again defeated—Synod in Moneymore, 1824—Cooke appointed Moderator—Compromise by Opponents of Institution to secure Government Grant—The Code of Discipline—Its Nature, History, and final Adoption—Compromises the question of Subscription—Described by Montgomery—Cooke's parting blow at the Arians—His Evidence before the Parliamentary Committee in 1825 regarding the Institution—And before the "Commission of Irish Education Inquiry," as to number of Arians in Synod—Refutations of the former by Institution Authorities and Students—Actively promoted by Montgomery—Contradictions also by Newspapers and Correspondents—Cooke's Rejoinder—His Appeals to the Orangemen, who support his cause—His Popularity and Influence.

THE election of Mr. Bruce took place in October, 1821, and at the Annual Meeting of Synod in Newry, in June, 1822, on the reading of the usual letters and report from the Boards of the Institution, it was made the occasion of a powerful and determined attack by the Rev. Henry Cooke of Killileagh upon the Institution and its Managers, and, generally, upon the Arian or New Light party, both within and without the Synod.

“He bore testimony to the great literary talents of the Professors of the Institution, but asserted that something more was necessary for the education of the students of Synod. The interests of religion were concerned; and when he saw men introduced into the Institution who

openly avowed themselves Arians, and even Socinians, he held it to be a sign that the time was come for the Synod to pause and consider whether their connexion with the Institution should be continued—with an Institution *which had commenced by professing a strict neutrality in religion*, but had since transformed one-half of its Professors into Arians.”

Such is the statement with which he is reported to have opened the campaign; though in following years he and his party quite changed their ground, and repeatedly asserted that the Institution was originally ORTHODOX; and, as such, made its first compact with the Synod, and secured its students, which it had afterwards violated by the introduction of Arianism. His first statement as to *neutrality* was strictly true, and its after-growth seems curiously to have kept pace with that of his party. He then proceeded vigorously to declare the “Orthodox” faith, and to pronounce, with a downrightness of assertion that would have done credit to the infallible chair of St. Peter’s, the doctrines essential to the Christian system and fellowship; though here it may be also remarked, that the three essentials to which he reduces them sound strangely small, compared to the full-blown Westminster Confession of Faith afterwards inflicted upon all the Church. But everything must have a beginning!

He concluded by giving notice of motion for the next Annual Meeting, “for an inquiry as to the orthodoxy of the Professors of the Institution.” The reception of the notice was strongly opposed by Dr. Hanna, the Synod’s Divinity Professor, who declared the whole discussion to be utterly uncalled for, and injurious both to the Institution and the Church; said he would not yield to Mr. Cooke or any man in attachment to Calvinism, “that is, *moderate Calvinism*,” but apprehended no danger to their students, and thought the Institution admirably suited for their education, and that it ought to be sustained. Mr. Carlile of Dublin seconded the notice of motion, as he was not prepared to say it was not required. Dr. Wright and many others opposed; and the discussion becoming general, Cooke soon found, by unmistakable evidence, that almost the whole Synod, Old

Light and New, were opposed to him, and annoyed and alarmed at what was generally regarded as an unnecessary, invidious, and reprehensible attempt to break the peace of the Church, and to let in the waters of strife. Doggedly he fought on, however, with characteristic perseverance, giving and receiving many hard knocks, till at last he had secured for his views abundant ventilation; but, finally, he and Carlile were obliged to withdraw the notice.

In this discussion Montgomery and Cooke first encountered in their famous Synodical contests, unequalled perhaps in the annals of theological controversy, and certainly not excelled in those of forensic oratory. At first, however, it was little more than some slight passes—an occasional stinging sarcasm and quick repartee—the guarded fencing of two powerful opponents, meaning only to try their adversary's strength and test their own, and carefully husbanding their real resources for the more serious conflicts, which they mutually felt were surely impending. For these, Cooke's time was evidently not yet come; and Montgomery, as evidently, needed not finally to buckle on his armour, while almost the whole Synod intervened to separate them, or till some of the minor combatants, having entered the lists and splintered some lances, should have left their way clear. But the war had been declared, the tocsin sounded, and the spirit of the war—the *odium theologicum*—distinctly, and with deep purpose, manifested. After years of preparation, and with that deliberation, foresight, and iron resolve that marked his character, Henry Cooke has chosen his time, unrolled his colours, and thrown down his glove; and if there be one who truly knows him in that Synod, he can with certainty predict that he will fight it out even to the bitter end.

It is still remembered by those who were present, that the very elements of nature seemed to mark their disapprobation of the breaking out of that fratricidal war. During Cooke's opening speech a heavy thunderstorm took place, and the darkened sky and ominous roll of the thunder were added to the frowning brows and angry murmurs of his Synodical brethren. Truly he was a man of iron nerves! How strange the diversities of

human judgment! How many there are now, not greater Calvinists than those whom he then addressed, who would say that the work to which he had bound himself was a thankworthy task! Who shall decide? But it is time to devote some space to a brief sketch of the antecedents and early history, the general appearance and extraordinary powers, of this celebrated man.

Henry Cooke was a native of County Derry, the son of John Cooke, a farmer near Maghera. He was born in 1788, the same year as Henry Montgomery, being but a few months his junior. Like his great antagonist, and most other men of pre-eminent abilities, he seemed to have owed his superiority chiefly to his mother. Mrs. Cooke is described as having been a woman of masculine understanding and energy, powerful memory, strong, even vehement, opinions in politics and religion, and of great determination and perseverance. Having early marked the superior capacities of her son, she determined to secure for him the best education that the circumstances of the country and their own could afford, with a view to his attaining what was then the height of the Presbyterian farmer's ambition for his son—going to Glasgow College, and becoming a minister. To this end she urged him constantly onward, bent his energies in the wished direction, and fired his youthful spirit.

At length, through no slight hardships and difficulties, as they must seem in these days of learning "made easy," the wished-for goal was attained; "Glasgow" had been won and passed; and on the 10th of November, 1808, the Reverend Henry Cooke, at little more than twenty years of age, was ordained as assistant minister to the Rev. Robert Scott of Duneane, in County Antrim. Feeling uncomfortable here, he resigned after two years, and became tutor in a family at Kells, in the same county.* In his

* A lady of great discrimination has told the writer that, happening at that period to visit the family with whom Mr. Cooke was residing, she well remembered seeing the tall, spare, and somewhat ungainly young tutor, seated, very erect and silent, on a chair behind the door. Being struck with his strongly-marked profile and general aspect, she took occasion to address him; and, from the few words and manner of his reply, was led to remark emphatically to a friend on leaving the house, that "there was *outcome* in that young man."

letter, however, to the Rev. Dr. Armstrong of Dublin, of 27th September, 1827, Cooke himself says, "I was that minister's [Mr. Scott's] assistant for *four* years"?

In January, 1811, he was chosen minister of the congregation of Donegore, previously adverted to, which had then been nearly three years vacant. Here he soon became very popular, and ministered with great acceptance for a period of more than seven years. During this time he returned to Glasgow College, and spent two sessions there, pursuing various studies, but chiefly occupying himself with medical science; and, in the winter of 1817, he also spent some time in Dublin, attending several of the hospitals and medical schools. While there, he also actively engaged in the work of the Presbyterian Mission to the South and West of Ireland, then under the united auspices of the Synods of Ulster and Munster, for his exertions in the prosecution of which he was several times commended, along with Messrs. Horner, Stewart, and others, in the reports presented to the Synod of Ulster by the Rev. Dr. Armstrong of Dublin, secretary to the Mission Committee, and received the thanks of the Synod. His rising reputation as a young man of distinguished talent, and more especially his deserved fame as a brilliant pulpit orator, were now becoming established. So early as December, 1814, he had made a most impressive display of eloquence in a charity sermon preached in Belfast, in behalf of the House of Industry, and afterwards published, which rapidly reached the third edition—a truly beautiful discourse, of the views of which any Unitarian preacher might well be proud. Dr. Killen, in his "Continuation" (p. 551, *note*), has characterised it as "remarkable for the absence of evangelical sentiment."

While in Dublin, Cooke had obtained the intimate acquaintance of the Rev. James Armstrong, D.D., senior minister of Strand Street Congregation, an eminent Unitarian divine; and in the following year, 1818, the important congregation of Killileagh, County Down, being still vacant, the influential recommendation of Dr. Armstrong to leading members of that congregation contributed in no small degree, along with that of the Rev.

W. D. H. McEwen of Belfast (see p. 55, *note*), to procure his election.

This, amongst other things, was subsequently brought forward as ground for a serious accusation of treachery and ingratitude against Cooke, when, a few years afterwards, he came out as such a fell opponent of his former Arian friends. But however this may have been, it was not meant to assert that he concealed or compromised his religious views. He was, and was understood to be, in faith a Calvinist; yet, at this time, he certainly found no difficulty in cultivating Arian acquaintances, receiving Arian favours, offering himself as candidate for Arian or New Light congregations—successfully for Killileagh, and afterwards unsuccessfully for Armagh and the Second Congregation of Belfast—holding communion with Arian brother-ministers, and frequently interchanging with them on sacramental occasions.*

It was certainly not unnatural, then, that the Arian party, who knew these things, should question his sincerity, when, only some *two years* afterwards, he commenced his crusade against Arianism; three years after that declared at Coleraine—“Sooner shall I permit this right hand to be severed from my body than sign an act confirming the introduction of any man into the Synod who might infect it with Arian principles. It has now come to this: *We must put down Arianism, or Arianism will put us down*”;—and, finally, in 1829, forced his Arian brethren out of Church-fellowship with himself and the Synod.

Cooke was installed in September, 1818, as minister of the congregation of Killileagh; where, as we have already seen—also, by a curious coincidence, was the case in

* He was undoubtedly in the habit of thus exchanging at communions with Mr. McClelland of Ballynahinch, and Mr. Glendy of Ballycarry, both New Light ministers; and a great point was afterwards sought to be made against him, that, at the May communion in Killileagh, in 1821, he left the latter and Mr. Haslett of Castlereagh, a Calvinist, to conclude the addresses of the Lord's Table to his people (where it was said they awkwardly differed as to their respective doctrines), while he drove to Belfast, and took the Sunday evening mail to Dublin, to be present, with the joint deputations of the three Synods, the next morning, to address King George IV. on his visit to Ireland.

Donegore—the shadow of his great future antagonist had lately passed before him. His subsequent course of action in relation to the election in the Belfast Institution, and his opening of the Synodical campaign in Newry, have already been described.

To the student of human nature, the character of Henry Cooke presents a subject of no common interest. Independently of his powers as a pulpit and platform orator, and of the widespread popularity and extraordinary influence to which he attained, there was that in the man himself which irresistibly rivets the attention. Especially is one struck with the rare combination, manifested by him, of qualities seldom found united—a large measure of enthusiasm, closely allied, if not amounting at times to fanaticism, with cool, calculating forethought, and indomitable perseverance. He was, even from early life, emphatically a man of deep thought, and extraordinary concentration and tenacity of purpose. He could, and he did, in early life, lay plans which he knew must require long years to put in execution, to which he nevertheless deliberately bent all the great energies of his mind and body. Yet he kept them locked in his own breast, studiously concealed even from chosen friends, and during years of intimate companionship with those against whom they were ultimately to be employed; and when the time and the means were ripe, then, and then only, with deliberate boldness, he declared his design. That he was possessed of the most dauntless courage is beyond dispute—a courage that led him seemingly to rejoice in difficulties to be conquered, and, innately conscious of his great powers, to be willing at all times, single-handed, to face a host of foes. That he was actuated also by immense ambition seems equally indisputable, a desire of power fully commensurate with his superior abilities for its gratification. Admitting that his religious views were of the narrowest and strictest sect of Calvinism, few of his best friends will be prepared to maintain that, in the great contests of his public life, and especially in those which distinguished its earlier portion, he was actuated by no other motive than purely and solely the desire for the propagation of Calvinistic prin-

ciples; and that the gratification of a great personal ambition did not at least keep pace with it in the direction of the leading actions of his life. After all, this is little more than to say that he acted from two motives instead of only one, or that he was actuated by the mingled motives by which men are ordinarily governed; which, if it made him a little lower than an angel, would not derogate from his position as a man. But it is right also to add that, acting under the impulse of all or any of such motives, he was by no means scrupulous in the means and expedients he employed—whether to support his cause, maintain his popularity, serve his ambition, or wrest victory from an opponent. His adversaries, at least, frequently and loudly accused him of misrepresentations and misstatements—to use no stronger terms. Against these he defended himself with surprising ability; but whether at all times with complete success, must be left to those acquainted with the history of those events, and to the readers of the following narrative, so far as it may relate them, to judge. At any rate, it never seems to have occurred to either friends or foes to speak of him as a Nathaniel!

His strong political partisanship, as an extreme Tory, a bitter opponent of the Roman Catholics and Catholic Emancipation, and a strict upholder of Church and State, effected much more than even the promulgation of his religious views, in securing his popularity and influence. It gathered the Orangemen of Ulster into his following; and not only so, but also brought them, through sympathy with their chosen and eloquent leader, to be the indiscriminating supporters of his general policy, Synodical and religious, as well as political.

The personal appearance of Henry Cooke at this time has been described as tall, spare, and slight, with erect carriage, bold front, and cool, resolute aspect; his features marked, large, pale, and very aquiline, but well cut and regular; with fine massive forehead, thick projecting brows, and flexible, but peculiarly sarcastic mouth. His general expression when in repose was stern, observant, and collected; and his gait slow and dignified. His

powers as an orator and debater were of the highest order. His fine face and figure—a voice perfect in power and training—a mind well stored with general literature and Scripture—a powerful and capacious memory to retain, and an unsurpassed readiness to reproduce its stores at all times with even literal exactness—unfailing command of language, and often strikingly quaint, figurative, and attractive turns of thought and expression—amazing powers of humorous sarcasm and impassioned denunciation—infinite quickness in reply—a most thorough knowledge of the feelings, expectations, and wishes of his auditory—and graceful and telling elocution,—all combined to render Henry Cooke one of the most powerful and effective popular speakers of his own or any age. His very failings seemed only to add to his power. If he descended, as he too often did, to mere *ad captandum* and mob oratory, it was sure to obtain the favour of his hearers; and his most grotesque vulgarisms were eagerly repeated through the length and breadth of the land. If he spoke with a slow and rather provincial and drawling accent, that self-same accent and style became, then and since, in the minds of thousands, inseparable from true orthodoxy. If he happily met and turned aside some home-thrust of an opponent, armed with logic and truth, by a transparent fallacy lightly veiled under a rhetorical artifice, the fallacy was sure to be eagerly believed and swallowed, while the opponent's logic and truth, however strong, were contemned and forgotten. No man better knew, and oftener proved, the “virtue in an IF!” As with some preachers, who put forth their oratorical powers in inverse ratio to the power of their discourse, their people swear that their worst sermons are ever the best; so the worse the cause, the more popular and successful did it often become under the skilful advocacy of Cooke. His great antagonist himself, in after years, has thus described him:—

“I cheerfully admit that he was, generally speaking, an open, manly *opponent*—not very scrupulous, indeed, about means and weapons, when in a difficulty, but usually frank and fearless. His dexterity as a debater I have never seen surpassed, whether in defending his own

weak points or attacking those of his adversary—his eloquence during our Synodical discussions was frequently commanding, and would have been always attractive, had it not been so often blurred by slang and buffoonery—the skill with which he played on all the chords of the popular heart was quite perfect—and had his cause been as good as his powers were distinguished, he would have been altogether irresistible. In private life, I rejoice to believe, he has no superior. Genial and cheerful always, instructive and amusing by turns, no man contributes more largely to the rational enjoyments of the friendly circle, or to the happiness of scenes still holier and more dear.”

Such was the man who, at the Synod in Newry, in 1822, first raised the question of doctrinal distinctions, and declared war against his non-subscribing and Arian brethren. As previously stated, his first attempt was singularly unsuccessful; and finding the whole Synod opposed to him, both ministers and elders, he had to withdraw his resolution, without even submitting it to a division.

But having tested the feeling and ascertained the hostility of the Synod, he set to work with characteristic energy to form and organise a party for his support. Directing himself especially to the more ignorant and bigoted sections of the laity, and combining the strongest-flavoured politics with religion in his appeals, he went through the country preaching and lecturing continually, in meeting-houses and other places, on week-days and Sundays; thus itinerating during two or three following years through a great part of the Province of Ulster. His determined energy and popular talents were favoured by the peculiar political aspect of the times, and the growing hatred of the majority of both Episcopalians and Presbyterians to the Catholic claims and their supporters. Thus, by acting upon the laity, and through them on the ministers, he gradually, but surely, gathered round him a party, ready to acknowledge him for their leader, and uphold him under all circumstances.

The Synod met in Armagh the following year, 1823; and, on the annual letter from the Boards of the Belfast Academical Institution being read, Cooke took occasion to renew his complaints, and to demand that an inquiry should be instituted into the

orthodoxy of the Professors. A bitter and acrimonious discussion was the result, which lasted through three sessions, extending over nearly two days. A small section of the Orthodox party sided with Cooke, but the great majority, including nearly all the leading men of the Orthodox, as well as the New Light party, were still opposed to him. In this debate Montgomery and many other New Light ministers took an active part. Finally, as the report states, "the great majority of the Synod being of opinion that the proposed inquiry was altogether uncalled for, Mr. Cooke did not proceed with his motion." Thus, as the Synodical minutes record, "the discussion on the matter alluded to having terminated *to the satisfaction of all parties*, the Synod adjourned."

The next annual meeting of Synod took place in Moneymore, County Derry, June 29, 1824, when Cooke, who had been nominated for the Moderatorship the previous year at Armagh, but without success, but whose Synodical following had in the meantime acquired considerable accessions of strength, was appointed Moderator. This still further contributed to increase his influence.

At this meeting the Institution Controversy was again renewed; but this time the proposals took a different form. Deputies from the Institution Boards attended to inform the members of the likelihood of the Government grant to the Institution being speedily restored, but only on condition of Synod expressing its unqualified approbation. What was to be done? How could its opponents turn round upon themselves, and approve the "Arian Seminary" they had so lately and so unsparingly denounced? But the astute mind of Henry Cooke was equal to the occasion, and a notable plan suggested itself—to secure the money, and at the same time provide for the *future* orthodoxy of the Institution. It was nothing less than an Overture to the effect, that the testimonials of all future candidates for Professorships in the Institution should be submitted to the inspection of the Synodical Committee, with a view to direct the choice of the Moderator, and his voting at all times, and

through him to influence the other electors to vote for Trinitarians only.

This objectionable demand was not carried in the Synod until *after a warm debate*, and unanimous agreement—by way of compromise, and with a view to the Government grant—of the opponents of the Institution to pass the following resolution—which, to say the least, is *difficult to reconcile* with either their previous or subsequent assertions :—

“*Resolved unanimously*—That this Synod, having long and deeply felt the important advantages that would result from a Home Education for the Candidates for the Presbyterian Ministry in the Province of Ulster, and having experienced its happy effects in the literary progress and moral deportment of their students at the Belfast Academical Institution for the last nine years, learns, with very high satisfaction, that the Parliamentary Commissioners appointed to investigate the State of Education in Ireland, have been instructed to inquire into the utility, administration, and resources of the Institution, and to report their opinion respecting the same to his Majesty.

“The Synod hails such a measure, as likely to terminate in the permanent connexion of the Institution with the Government of the country ; *by which the continuance* of public confidence would be ensured, and adequate means afforded, not merely for securing the inestimable blessings of a liberal and virtuous education to the students of this Church, but also for extending them to the North of Ireland in general. *Being so fully sensible of the merits of that rising seminary, and the eminent attainments of its Professors, the Synod has only to regret* that the Institution wants those collegiate privileges which would enable it still further to excite the emulation, and reward the labours, of its students.”

This resolution speaks for itself! Yet even this, strange as it must appear, did not exhaust the extraordinary compromises effected by the Synod then assembled. Another, still more important, remains to be noticed. But we shall leave Dr. Montgomery to tell the history of it himself.

“At this meeting, in Moneymore, ‘A Code of Discipline,’ which had been projected in the year 1810, was finally adopted. Previously to this period, the laws and regulations of the Church were exceedingly

imperfect in themselves, often contradictory, and so scattered through the minutes, as to be inaccessible to all young ministers, as well as to the great body of the people. Some fixed rules, therefore, were evidently necessary, to guide the proceedings of Congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods; but so jealous were the ministers of any interference with Christian liberty, that the original Committee, appointed to draw up the Code, were expressly enjoined to exclude all questions of Doctrine, and 'to confine themselves to matters of Discipline alone.' That Committee, consisting of senior members, made no progress for eight or ten years; and the matter was eventually entrusted to young and energetic men, including the late amiable and excellent Dr. Malcom of Newry, Mr. Cooke, and several others. Dr. Malcom was specially appointed to draw up a Prefatory Discourse, showing the Scripture foundations of Presbyterianism, in contradistinction to Popery, Protestant Episcopacy, Independency, and other forms of Church Government. Mr. Cooke, with the aid of our old minutes and certain Scotch publications, drew up that portion of the work which properly related to Discipline. Both parts were executed with great ability; and after being carefully revised by a Committee, they were printed *ou slips*, for the convenient perusal and consideration of the whole Church. Those labours necessarily occupied several years, and, in the meantime, the election of Mr. Bruce having occurred, an evident courting of Orthodox and High Church approbation sprang up in the Synod, in consequence of which, Dr. Malcom's admirable defence of Presbyterianism was unceremoniously cast aside. Mr. Cooke's part was then referred, for final revision, to a very numerous Committee of ministers and elders, which assembled in Moneymore, in December, 1823, and whose proceedings, from various causes, will never be forgotten by those who were present. Had not the matter proceeded so far in quiet times, that those who had taken a prominent share in its arrangements could not decently disavow their own acts and opinions, it was quite evident that no code would have been harmoniously adopted, without containing a rigorous Doctrinal Test. As it was, several attempts were made to accomplish this end, *indirectly*, by the insertion of amendments and new clauses; and, at one period, the Committee had nearly broken up in confusion. That event, indeed, would have undoubtedly occurred, but for the dexterity of a grave, orthodox divine, when a proposition was made to require from students at the time of their being licensed to preach, either a direct subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, or an equivalent subscription, in other terms. This proposition was strenuously opposed by all the

Unitarian members of the Committee, and also by several liberal Calvinists, who showed that it would virtually revive Subscription, which had only been required by four Presbyteries out of fourteen, during the preceding fifty years. The amicable suggestion of the grave Professor was therefore eventually adopted, in the following ambiguous terms, viz. :—‘Presbyteries, before licensing candidates to preach the Gospel, shall ascertain the soundness of their faith, either by requiring subscription to the Westminster Confession, or by such examinations as they shall consider best adapted for that purpose.’ In recommendation of this resolution, it was jocularly urged, that ‘*soundness in the faith*’ was a pleasant, India-rubber phrase, which every Presbytery could stretch, so as to suit its own views ; and the Bishop’s witticism in the House of Lords was quoted amidst loud laughter, ‘Orthodoxy is *my* doxy, and Heterodoxy is *your* doxy.’

“The affair was thus settled, laying aside the Westminster Confession as the authoritative Standard of the Church, but practically leaving matters precisely as they had stood for more than half-a-century. I confess, however, that I look back upon the entire transaction, although I was weak enough to acquiesce in it, with sorrow and humiliation. The compromise was an unworthy one, on both sides ; and the Unitarians left themselves at the mercy of an *understanding*, and the interpretation of an *equivocal phrase*, of which Dr. Cooke did not feel ashamed to take advantage, during the progress of the Dissenters’ Chapels Bill, although he was, himself, an assenting party to the arrangement ! A hollow truce is always mean and dangerous ; and my only consolation is, that our primary error operated as a beacon to warn us against the sin of unworthy compromises on all subsequent occasions of temptation.

“‘The Code of Discipline,’ as sanctioned by the Committee, was adopted by the Synod, at Moneymore, in the year 1824, with the single dissent of honest James Elder of Finvoy, a thorough bigot, but, at the same time, a most amiable, worthy, upright man. Many sanguine persons anticipated the permanent establishment of peace and forbearance from the apparently amicable settlement of this affair. I confess, however, that I never was of this opinion, for I clearly saw that the discordant elements of the Synod could never be completely amalgamated. Constant appeals were made to the passions and prejudices of the people, both religious and political ; an evident design was manifested of acquiring power, by the aid of popular clamour and excitement, so as either to crush impracticable opponents, or to make the Synod too hot for them ; and the appointment of Mr.

Cooke as Moderator, in the year 1824, gave him the position which enabled him, during the succeeding year, to create so much excitement on the subject of the Belfast Institution in particular, and on political and religious subjects in general." ("Outlines," &c., pp. 357-9.)

As if to justify these expectations, give earnest of his future intentions, and in some measure compensate himself and his followers for the above compromises, Cooke, ere the meeting separated, delivered a parting blow at the Arians, by procuring the passing of an overture condemnatory of a sentence (which has been previously noticed) in the preface to Dr. Bruce's Sermons, just then published, which declares that "Arian opinions were making extensive, though silent progress in the General Synod of Ulster."

Early in the Parliamentary session of 1825, Select Committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons were appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland; and Cooke, as Moderator of the General Synod of Ulster, as a matter of course, was summoned to give evidence. Before the Lords' Committee he deposed that the Presbyterians of Ulster, as a body, were unfriendly to Catholic Emancipation; and, in regard to the Belfast Academical Institution, "that it was likely to become (and had already to some extent become) a great seminary of Arianism."

He also gave evidence, as Moderator, before the Royal "Commission of Irish Education Inquiry," and, amongst other things, deposed, that there were then, "to the best of his knowledge, thirty-five Arians in the Synod." The Clerk of Synod, Mr. Porter, being likewise summoned before the Commission, declared himself an Arian, and testified his belief that "there were more real Arians in the Synod than professed ones;" that "Arianism was gaining ground among the thinking few;" and that a "comparison of the new code of laws (just adopted) with the sentiments of the Synod in 1726, when the Presbytery of Antrim were expelled, showed that New Light principles had been progressive in the Synod." The Report of the Commissioners in which this evidence appeared was not printed till February, 1827; but the particulars of Cooke's evidence before the Lords'

Committee immediately became public, and created no little indignation, both in the North and other parts of Ireland.

His statement in regard to Catholic Emancipation was made in defiance of the fact, that in 1813—only twelve years before—a strong and unanimous Declaration in favour of Catholic Emancipation was transmitted by the General Synod to the Government, and published in all the leading journals of the empire. It gave great offence, not only to the Roman Catholics throughout Ireland, but to the Liberal Presbyterians of Belfast and the North. The latter, especially of Belfast, took the immediate measure of practically disproving it by a Declaration, presented to Parliament, from the Presbyterian ministers and elders of Belfast and the vicinity, in favour of Catholic Emancipation. The name of Henry Montgomery headed the list. The allegation respecting the Institution was indignantly repelled by three separate unanimous “Declarations” on the part of the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors, the Professors’ Faculty, and the Students, respectively. While, doubtless, it had been mainly originated, and was still mainly supported, by New Light men and money, it was their pride to maintain that it was, and had ever been, a non-sectarian Institution, resolutely opposed to, and prohibiting, any denominational or doctrinal ascendancy—their own as well as others.

In thus refuting the Moderator’s evidence, Montgomery took a most active and leading part; for he truly felt, that, his own Arian principles being well-known, his honour as a public instructor, to whom so many Irish youth of all denominations were trustingly confided, had been publicly and deliberately impeached; and no man ever was more punctiliously jealous of his honour than he!—no man could less brook the false and detested imputation of a breach of trust!

The Belfast newspapers, both Whig and Tory, took up the subject, and publicly contradicted Cooke’s statements, and a number of correspondents took him pretty sharply to task. Nothing daunted, however, he stoutly reiterated the accusation, and published an elaborate pamphlet, which he called an “Illustra-

tion and Defence" of his evidence, containing the most unsparing onslaughts upon the Institution and the Arians generally, and vehemently calling upon all loyal and orthodox men to sympathise with him as the spotless victim of Arians, Radicals, and Papists.

"Nor did he call in vain. The entire Orangemen of Ireland, from the peer in his castle to the peasant in his hovel, rallied round him; and Orthodoxy, in all its phases, hailed him as its champion. Thus uniting Evangelicism with Orangeism, and the countenance of the aristocracy with the applause of the multitude, in a few months from the publication of his evidence, he had acquired extraordinary popularity and influence." ("Outlines," &c., p. 360.)

CHAPTER VII.

SYNODICAL CONFLICTS—COLERAINE AND BALLYMENA.

1825—1826.

Synod in Coleraine, 1825—Packed Congregation—Cooke's violent Sermon—He carries Resolutions against Institution—Attacks the Armagh Presbytery—His War-cry against the Arians—Montgomery's successful Appeal—Cooke's Overture against the Presbytery of Antrim—Committee appointed to confer with Proprietors of Institution—Meeting of Proprietors in Belfast—Montgomery's Speech—Resolutions—His Speech at Linen Trade Dinner in Belfast—Synod in Ballymena, 1826—Sermon of Moderator, Rev. J. Carlile, in advocacy of Non-Subscription—Attempt to prevent Debate on Institution opposed by Montgomery—Cooke's Speech and Resolution—Carlile's able and successful Defence of Institution—Montgomery's Conciliatory Measure—Moderate Resolutions Adopted—Debate on Subscription—Mr. Elder's Motion—Cooke's Speech and Amendment—Carlile's Reply—Synod rejects both Motion and Amendment—Prospects of Peace delusive—Publication of Royal Commission Report—Growing Excitement—Preparations for next Campaign—Selection of Strabane as place of Meeting.

THE time came on for the Annual Meeting of Synod in Coleraine, and the proceedings were looked forward to with great interest. It was felt that matters would not be allowed to remain as they were; and that Cooke was not the man to throw away the chance afforded him, by the Synod meeting in his native county, and in a region especially inhabited by Old Light and political sympathisers, as well as the fact of his having there to deliver the outgoing Moderator's sermon, of endeavouring by some formidable effort to increase and strengthen his party, and vigorously to push forward his operations against the Institution and the Arians. Nor were these expectations disappointed.

“When the Synod assembled, the Moderator preached for two hours, to a packed meeting-house, a furious orthodox sermon, and hurled all

manner of scorn and defiance against his opponents. He subsequently attacked the Belfast Institution; and, amidst the applause of an excited multitude, carried, by a large majority, a series of resolutions, calculated to wound the reputation, impair the usefulness, and trench upon the independence of that seminary; and although some calm-judging men looked upon those insolent resolutions as rather an ungrateful return to the Proprietors of the Institution for taxing themselves to support Presbyterian education, and refusing an ample Parliamentary grant on the ground of fidelity to their compact with the Synod, the multitude applauded the ungenerous act as a triumph of religious principle." ("Outlines," &c., p. 361.)

In the pride of his temporary success, and with the multitude at his back, Cooke also gratified his bitter hostility to Dr. Bruce and the Presbytery of Antrim by a furious onslaught upon the Armagh Presbytery, who were chiefly New Light men, and who had proceeded, in defiance of a threatening letter from him as Moderator, to ordain the Rev. S. C. Nelson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Antrim, as minister of the congregation of Dromore.*

It was during this attack that he enounced, with vehement energy, the words before adverted to, which thenceforward became the watchword of his party—"We must put down Arianism, or Arianism will put us down!" A long and heated discussion ensued. The Armagh Presbytery was eloquently and ably defended by James Davis of Banbridge, William Porter of Newtownlimavady, and several others. Montgomery "made a lengthened and feeling appeal to the Synod, not to distract its affections and destroy its past influence by resorting to harsh measures, the consequences of which would be most injurious to its dearest interests." Eventually, the ordination of Mr. Nelson was sustained by Synod, while Cooke, prevented from obtaining satisfaction in this quarter, recompensed himself by forcing on

* At the dinner given after this ordination in Dromore, Dr. Bruce, returning thanks as Moderator of the Presbytery of Antrim, took occasion to congratulate the Armagh Presbytery on "belonging to a Synod which had recently announced the progress of liberal principles by leaving Subscription optional, with only one dissenting voice."

the Synod the adoption of the following resolution in reference to the Presbytery of Antrim :—

“ *Overtured and agreed to*—That it appears, in the year 1726, the Presbytery of Antrim were separated from the General Synod of Ulster; and have not, since that period, held any ecclesiastical connexion with the Synod, in matters of doctrine, discipline, or jurisdiction.”

A large committee, consisting of fifteen ministers, including Cooke and Montgomery, and as many elders, was appointed to confer with the Proprietors of the Institution regarding their acceptance of the above-mentioned Synodical overtures.

A meeting of the Proprietors was accordingly held in Belfast, in the following October, to receive the Synod's deputation. A very numerous assemblage was present—the Marquis of Donegall in the chair. Here, however, the intolerant party of the deputation found themselves in a very different atmosphere from that of the Synod-house at Coleraine. A number of excellent speeches were made, amongst others by Mr. John Barnett of Belfast, and other “Orthodox” proprietors, vindicating the Institution against the attacks in Synod. Montgomery addressed the meeting at some length as a Proprietor of the Institution. The concluding part of his speech was reported as follows :—

“ I agree with him who said, ‘ I will do nothing on *compulsion*.’ Let us adopt this sentiment, and *do nothing on compulsion*. If you yield to the Synod and sanction their overture, you submit yourselves to their dictation, and sink in public estimation; nay, even in the estimation of the Commissioners of Education Inquiry, whose published Report proves them to be men of liberal and independent sentiments, and of upright and impartial minds—who recommend a general education for the community, free from sectarian influence and sectarian prejudice.

“ Do not think so meanly of the Synod of Ulster as to imagine that it is a *mere rattle*, an idle toy, which they seek to obtain. No! not content with the direct influence which they already possess by their Moderator in the election of Professors, they seek, *indirectly*, a much more extensive and decisive power. If you grant this to the Synod,

you cannot, with any consistency, refuse similar influence to many other sects equally deserving; and then, see in what a singular predicament you will be placed! Their candidates would appear under many different—nay, opposite—conditions, professing discordant creeds, and arranged, as it were, under different standards, banners, and colours; whilst each elector would eagerly labour to procure a Professor for those of his own sentiments. What *respectable candidate* from the South of Ireland, from England, or Scotland, would thus subject himself to the *local influence*, the *clerical influence*, the *party influence*, to which the elections would then be liable, when the object would be to elect, not the possessor of the highest intellectual qualifications, but the *Professor* of the most approved theological creed? Even a Locke or a Newton would fail in such a competition, unless his creed strictly corresponded with the favourite standard. The object of the preliminary literary and philosophical education for ministerial candidates, is to prepare the mind for the subsequent investigation of the sublime doctrines and mysteries of religion. It would, therefore, be utterly improper, at that early period, to imbue the mind with peculiar views of faith, which would be founded on prejudice rather than on reason. But when such a liberal preliminary education has been given, the students are then handed over to the Theological Professors appointed by their respective Churches, who, no doubt, communicate such views of the Christian doctrines as they consider most accordant with the sacred Scriptures. And is not this a sufficient *guarantee* for all sects?

“Beware how you excite a spirit of jealousy amongst your liberal supporters, by giving so decided a mark of preference to any one religious body. A clergyman myself, I yet warn you against yielding to clerical domination. The laymen ought to preserve their independence, and resist any species of clerical encroachment with firmness. Remember that our present resolutions (of the General Synod) will not terminate in themselves. They have a prospective object; for we do not legislate merely for ourselves, but for posterity. A matter apparently now of light moment may hereafter produce the most serious grievances.

“Established and supported without any regard to sect or party, the Institution has secured by its useful and honourable labours the cordial approbation of the wise and good of all denominations. But this very circumstance, which renders it peculiarly suitable to the state of society in the North of Ireland, has naturally made it an object of jealousy and dislike to all the bigoted and intolerant. Hence the

incessant hostility with which it has been doomed to contend; a hostility which would have overthrown any seminary not founded in the wishes and wants of the people, and not sustained by its own unbending integrity and extensive utility. Like the *Alpine tree*, however, it has raised its head aloft amidst the war of elements, and struck its roots more widely and securely in the land in consequence of the tempests by which it has been assailed. Its Proprietors nobly resisted former encroachments. Let them persevere in the same upright and independent course; and though for a season its prosperity may be retarded, it will remain a monument of lasting honour to its founders, and extensive usefulness to our country, when we, with all our petty interests and passions, shall be crumbled into dust."

The "Northern Whig," from which this report is taken, says—"The above is a mere sketch of Mr. Montgomery's speech, which was received with unqualified applause."

In the end, a resolution of a temporising nature was proposed and carried by Dr. Bruce, but against the advice of Montgomery, who warned the meeting that it would be useless for conciliation, and counselled, instead, the decisive rejection of the Synodical overtures. Cooke and one or two others of the deputation attempted to defend them, but finding the meeting utterly opposed to them, they do not seem to have persevered.

A few days afterwards, October 21st, a public dinner was given in the Royal Hotel, by the Linen Merchants of Belfast, to Charles Brownlow, Esq., of Lurgan, in testimony of their appreciation of the substantial encouragement which he had given to the Linen Trade in that town. The dinner is described as having been a "splendid entertainment, with a most numerous and influential company—John S. Ferguson, Esq., occupying the chair, and John M'Cancee, Esq., the vice-chair." Montgomery was amongst the few invited guests. Amongst other toasts, "The Academical Institution" was given from the chair. "The toast was received with warm demonstrations of good-will, and a general call was made upon the Rev. H. Montgomery to address the meeting." Of his lengthened and very admirable speech, it must suffice here to give merely the concluding portion:—

"The excellent opportunities of improvement, however, now enjoyed

by the humbler classes, will soon enable them to tread upon the heels of the middle and upper orders, unless they keep their distance by embracing the advantages of a collegiate education. And whatever efforts learned Doctors may make to perpetuate the ignorance of the poor, and to shut out the light of knowledge and science from the eye of the artisan, and how ungraciously soever they may talk of 'radicalism of mind,' and 'levelling of intellect,' the impulse given to society is too strong for them to resist. I rejoice that it is so. I rejoice that those dark and barbarous and feudal times have passed away, in which men were held, like Indian castes, in the state wherein they were born. I rejoice that, under the free institutions of this country, every man may advance himself in the scale of society, by his talents, his industry, and his moral worth. To this glorious 'radicalism of mind,' we owe the greatest ornaments of the bar, the senate, the judgment-seat, and the pulpit—all the brightest lights of poetry, and literature, and philosophy, and science. Without any disrespect to the clergy of any Church, I question whether an Arkwright and a Watt have not contributed as much to the prosperity of their country as the whole bench of Bishops, or even the Synod of Ulster!

“The present moment is peculiarly interesting and important to the Belfast Academical Institution. The Commissioners of Education Inquiry, who have shewn themselves to be men of enlarged minds, and of liberal and impartial dispositions, are engaged in a solemn investigation into its principles and utility. Supported by a large body of influential proprietors of various ranks and denominations; by the general friendly feeling of the community; by the emphatic approval of high-principled, intelligent, and liberal men; by the evidence of wide-spread benefits rendered without distinction of sect or creed, and by the wise and impartial administration of a just and equal system, we hope for the best, in regard to a permanent grant being obtained from the Imperial Government.

“Should our reasonable expectations, however, be disappointed, and should we be obliged to apply to the public for aid, there is no class of men to whom I would apply with more confidence than to the Linen Drapers of Ulster—a body of gentlemen distinguished by intelligence, integrity, and liberality. In saying this, I express but the deep conviction of my mind. I have no desire, I can assure you, to use the language of flattery. That my lines have been cast in pleasant places I gratefully acknowledge, and amongst the members of the Linen Trade I have found my earliest, steadiest, and most generous friends. Raised above the petty jealousies which too often disgrace those engaged in

the same avocations, I was at first disposed to attribute their social harmony and good-will to some peculiarly favourable circumstances in the state of society in the district in which I resided. On a more enlarged acquaintance, however, I found the spirit of my own vicinity was but the spirit of the Trade, and that Linen Drapers over all the country, whilst honourably emulous to ascend the eminences of fortune and respectability, never thrust forth an envious hand to impede the progress of their neighbours. Grateful for the patience with which you have heard me, I beg to propose the health of your excellent chairman, John S. Ferguson, and the Linen Trade of Ireland."

The next Annual Meeting of Synod took place in Ballymena, in County Antrim, in 1826, when an admirable discourse, of most liberal sentiments, was preached by the outgoing Moderator, the Rev. James Carlile, of Mary's Abbey, Dublin, who, although a strong Calvinist, was opposed to Subscription, and was likewise, at this time, very friendly to the Institution. The Institution also found a strong defender in the succeeding Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Wright of Annahilt, whose pronounced "Orthodoxy" rendered his warm support all the more telling. When the Report of the Committee of Conference before-mentioned, was read, a motion was made by the Rev. Mr. Morell of Ballibay, and seconded by Mr. Horner of Dublin, that a Committee of Synod, consisting of aged and influential members, should be immediately appointed during the evening recess, and submit to the Synod the next day such propositions as might supersede the necessity of a general discussion. The motion was strongly objected to by Montgomery, who declared his belief that the Institution was lying under an undeserved "incubus" of public odium, which it was just and necessary to remove by a full and fair discussion. He expressed deep regret for having acquiesced in the injurious resolutions of the last year. "He had done so out of a wish for peace and conciliation—objects which, as usual, would have been more likely to be attained by the straightforward course of open debate." Mr. Carlile and others supported his opinion, and Mr. Morell's motions were withdrawn. Then the Moderator, Dr. Wright, leaving the chair, vindicated

the Institution from the charges which had been urged against it, and censured the conduct of Synod, in having, without evidence, passed the injurious resolutions of the year before. He upheld the conduct of the Professors, whether Arians or not, as strictly honourable and impartial; and concluded by moving that the Synod, passing by the obnoxious overture of the year before, should be satisfied with the recognition of that adopted at Moneymore in 1824. This proposition being supported by several members, the discussion became general. Cooke made a violent and characteristic speech. He declared that he so valued temporal peace, that he would not come forward on that occasion, "did he not conceive that on so doing *depended his own soul's salvation*,"—with other expressions of a similar kind.

"He maintained that the serpent of Arianism was making rapid and destructive progress. If the ministers and elders of that body suffered it to proceed, it would soon turn and make them feel its venom. Woe to the men who were left to writhe under its coilings! Dreadful are the persecutions of Arians when they have power and influence. He called on the Old Light ministers and elders to rally round him against this overwhelming evil; complained of being deserted by persons holding the same religious sentiments, who had gone over to the camp of the enemy; and concluded by moving an amendment, the purport of which was—'That the appointment of persons holding Arian sentiments to Professorships in the Institution is a matter of regret, and is of dangerous influence to the students of this body.'"

He was replied to by the Rev. Fletcher Blakely of Moneyrea, and the Rev. William Glendy of Ballycarry, the latter of whom, in a long and clever speech, combated many of his deductions; but, above all, by Mr. Carlile, who, in an address of most marked ability, successfully met and answered his every point, captured his guns, and turned them with destructive effect upon himself.

"He censured in strong terms the use of such solemn language as Mr. Cooke had employed in such circumstances. He also animadverted on Mr. Cooke's use of the term persecution, as applied to himself, illustrating its true meaning by a reference to the real persecutions undergone by our Presbyterian ancestors for the sake of their religion,

and declared that Mr. Cooke's use of it was little less than a profanation of a sacred term. He declared *his belief that the blessing of God had been on the Institution*. He strongly censured the Synod's resolutions of the last year as calculated to degrade the Institution in the eyes of the empire, and expressed his satisfaction that the Proprietors did not accede to them. He contended that faith had been broken with the Institution."

A great degree of interest was given to the proceedings by a number of young clergymen, of undoubted "Orthodoxy," who had been educated either wholly or partly at the Institution, coming forward to give warm and affectionate attestation in its favour. They unanimously declared that no attempt had ever been made to interfere with their religious belief, save by the Synod's own Divinity Professor in the exercise of his duty to his class; and expressed the great regard they felt for the seminary to which they owed so much. Effective reference was also made to the fact that the Secession Synod of Ireland, a body of 110 Presbyterian ministers of the purest, most undiluted Calvinism, were the earnest friends of the Institution, and continued year after year, by emphatic resolutions, letters to the Court of Proprietors, and public statements of their Moderators, to testify their unshaken and increasing confidence in the Institution and its management.

In this debate, seeing not only the weight of argument, but the feeling of the Synod, favourable to his views, Montgomery magnanimously forbore to reply to Cooke and his party. He was ever a generous opponent, and scorned to take advantage of a beaten foe. With mingled good feeling and good sense, he threw out instead a conciliatory suggestion, which, while it involved no sacrifice of principle on his own side, might serve as a plank for Cooke and his friends to come over to them, and secure a peaceful termination of the debate, which had continued through nearly two days. The proposition, which was eagerly embraced by Cooke, was as follows:—

Resolved—“That it be earnestly recommended to the electors in the Belfast Institution, that, in future, no minister of any denomination holding a pastoral charge be appointed to any of its Professorships.”

With this rider, a resolution was almost unanimously adopted, substantially the same as that with which Dr. Wright had opened the debate:—

Resolved—“That the Synod, having received every assurance that the overture of 1824, relative to the election of Professors in Belfast Institution, sanctioned as it has been by the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors, and recognised in principle by the Court of Proprietors on the 29th of September, 1825, is calculated to afford the same security, and produce the same beneficial effects, that were contemplated by the overture of 1825, relative to the same subject; and believing that it will at all times be acted on with good faith, and hoping that the Court of Proprietors may yet see the wisdom of securing its permanence by some legal enactment, is now disposed to rest satisfied with it.”

“On the following day, conformably to his notice of the last year, the Rev. James Elder (the same who had protested in 1824 against Subscription being left optional by the new Code of Discipline) moved—‘That no candidate for the ministry shall be licensed or ordained by any Presbytery under the care of the Synod until he subscribes the Westminster Confession of Faith.’ He was seconded and ably supported by his kinsman, Rev. Mr. Elder of Kilraughts. After some other members had spoken against the motion, Mr. Cooke rose to move an amendment—‘*He knew there were things in the Westminster Confession of Faith to which neither he nor any other member of that house could subscribe*, such as the parts relating to the power of the civil magistrate in religious matters;’* but he would have a committee to draw up a new confession, to be called, if you will, that of Ballymena, and to contain in substance the glorious and eternal doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith.’ He went on to show that in proportion as Subscription was laid aside, Orthodoxy disappeared, and *vice versa*. This he illustrated by his favourite reference to the city of Calvin, now

* What an instructive commentary is afforded to this statement by the Report of the Annual Meeting of the General Synod in Cookstown just ten years afterwards, in 1836, where, at *half-past four* on a Friday morning, and in the midst of a scene unparalleled, save in the Synod itself, Drs. Cooke and Stewart forced *unqualified subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith—power of civil magistrate and all*—upon an enraged minority! But Montgomery and the Remonstrants were no longer there, to give them a noble example of moral courage; and, like the naughty urchins in Dotheboys Hall, terrified by Squeers’ uplifted cane and Mrs. Squeers’ long spoon, they opened their mouths, and swallowed the nauseous compound!

Arian Geneva—to the old English Puritans, now for the most part Arians or Socinians—to the Antrim Presbytery—and to those Presbyteries of the Synod who had ceased to require Subscription. He represented the Synod as a gallant, but injured vessel, sailing proudly on the waves of ocean. Her canvas still remained, and her pumps were yet capable of working. He called upon the orthodox sailors to exert themselves, while still there might be hope and safety; and declared that he would not desert her, suffering as she was, either for the long-boat or for another more stately galley. (We suppose alluding to the Secession and the Established Church). After an impassioned harangue, he submitted an amendment as above-mentioned."

He was again immediately and most ably answered by Carlile, who advocated the broadest principles of Non-Subscription, save to the Bible alone. As before, seeing the case was in good hands, and perceiving the feeling of the meeting, Montgomery forbore to reply, and with him most of the other New Light men; and after a brief discussion, both the motion and the amendment were negatived by the Synod.*

The check given at this meeting to Cooke and the Intolerants seemed for some months to hold out a faint prospect of peace; but the hope was utterly delusive. The impeded stream only gathered additional force and volume to overleap every obstacle; and the timely publication of the "Fourth Report of the Royal Commission of Education Inquiry in Ireland," in the spring of 1827, containing the authentic evidence of the different members of Synod who had been examined, furnished the leaders with the requisite materials for a maturely planned, combined, and sweeping attack upon their Arian brethren.

Most probably with a far-sighted purpose of securing for the intended campaign a more favourable battle-ground than Ballymena, with its independent, intelligent people, leading Arian elders, and moderate, if not New Light minister, was expected or found to afford, Strabane was cleverly selected as the place for the next meeting of Synod.

* See "Christian Moderator" for August, 1826, Report of General Synod; and "Minutes of Synod," 1826.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEETING OF SYNOD IN STRABANE—DEBATE ON SUBSCRIPTION.

1827.

Place and People—Crowded Meeting—Moderator's Sermon—Planned Attack on Clerk of Synod—Motion for his Removal as an Arian—Montgomery's immediate Defence—Mr. Porter follows—Warm Discussion—Cooke assails the Arians—Synod adjourns—Debate resumed next day—Rev. R. Stewart's Amendment—Combated by Mr. Porter—Rev. J. Morell's Amendment—Opposed by Cooke—Passed by a Majority—Protest of Cooke and Party—Third day's Proceedings—Beginning of real Contest—Cooke's Opening Speech—Proposes Compulsory Test—Seconded by Stewart—Montgomery speaks to "The Previous Question"—The Orthodox persistent—Debate proceeds—Mr. Porter's Address—Rev. G. Hay—Synod adjourns—Debate resumed on Friday morning—Speeches of Orthodox members—Mr. Carlile—Dr. Hanna—Discussion among themselves as to Terms of Test—Montgomery's subsequent Description of Scene—Compares with Council of Nice—Mr. Morell to the rescue—Declare or Sign?—Rev. R. Campbell—Cooke's "Uterior Measures"—Rev. John Mitchel—The Scene presented—Montgomery rises to speak—His Personal Appearance—Manner—Voice—Oratory—Sketch from "Synodical Portraits"—*His Speech on "Christian Liberty"*—Its Effects—Agitation of the Assembly—Synod obliged to adjourn.

SITUATED at the western side of County Tyrone, on the borders of Donegal, the Presbyterian population of the small market town of Strabane and the surrounding localities, was, beyond most other parts of Ireland, narrow-minded and exclusive, both in politics and religion. Intensely bigoted in Orangeism and Calvinism, though not, perhaps, well-informed as to the true nature of either, they had come to look upon them as convertible terms. "No Surrender!" and "Down with the Arians!" seemed to them pretty much the same thing; and the

leader who could loudest ring the changes upon these favourite cries, was sure to have their "sweet voices" for his reward.

The town itself had not been always so. Several very enlightened and eminent New Light ministers had filled the pulpit of its Presbyterian congregation, and by their scholarship and character had imparted dignity to the instruction given. A flourishing Academy had been also long conducted by its several ministers, and at one time had been recommended by Synod to receive a grant from Government as a place of education for Presbyterian ministers. But its glory had departed. Far isolated from the larger centres of commerce and intelligence, and with few facilities of communication, the rude spirit of an uncultured people hemmed it in, and gradually closed upon it; and its fair light became dim, and was at length quenched in darkness.

Here the Synod assembled in annual meeting on Tuesday, 26th June, 1827.

Something in the air seemed to have told that great things were expected. The Synod-house was crammed. Not only the ministers and elders of the body, but a vast concourse of people of all denominations, gentle and simple, were there—especially members of the Established Church; whose clergy brought their wives and families, to manifest their sympathy with the redoubted leader of Orthodoxy and opponent of the Roman Catholic claims.*

One hundred and thirty ministers of Synod and thirty-eight elders attended the meeting. The Moderator, Dr. Wright of

* The pupils of the Strabane Academy were granted special holidays, that they might hear the debates; and rarely, if ever, has it fallen to the lot of schoolboys to receive such impressive lessons from *real life* in the art of public speaking! One of those pupils, now an elderly man of distinguished position and abilities, recently described to the writer the wondrously deep and vivid impression which the scene and its leading actors made upon his youthful mind. He stated that from the Titanic conflicts which he there witnessed between the two great leaders, he received his first and greatest lesson, as to the mighty power possible to be attained and exercised by one man of superior abilities over the minds and feelings of his fellow-men—a lesson never since equalled in all the varied experiences of a stirring and diversified life.

Annahilt, a kindly man of moderate Old Light views, preached an excellent sermon on Charity, which ought to have had some influence on the subsequent proceedings. The roll was called; the new Moderator, Rev. J. Seaton Reid of Carrickfergus, appointed; and on the usual motion being made that Mr. Porter of Newtownlimavady be continued Clerk, the long-meditated attack commenced.

The Rev. Robert Magill of Antrim—a noisy, fanatical man, with pretensions to oratory of a highly inflammable stamp, and devoid of shame—often a useful instrument in the hands of Cooke and Stewart, was put forward to inaugurate the graceless work, and he executed his task *con amore*. He concluded a violent harangue against Arianism and Arians, by moving—

“That Mr. Porter, having avowed himself an Arian before the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, be no longer continued Clerk to the body.”

The motion having found several supporters, Dr. Wright, the ex-Moderator, praised Mr. Porter's fidelity, honestly expressed his sorrow that such motion had been made, and proposed a conciliatory amendment:—

“That though the Synod highly disapprove of and disavow Arian principles, yet as Mr. Porter has always faithfully discharged his duty as a Clerk, he shall be retained in his office.”

This having been seconded, Montgomery rose at once in defence of his friend—

“Avowed himself an Arian, and expressed his willingness that any one should take up his avowal, and deal with him as might be deemed right. Until some one had procured a patent of infallibility, he had as good a right to maintain his opinions as others had to state theirs. Whilst some ministers of this body think it right to join the clergy of the Established Church, and are assisting them in their labours of conversion; and whilst both are constantly urging on their Roman Catholic brethren the right of free inquiry, surely it would be only common honesty to grant him what they are offering others. These measures now proposed were calculated to lead to absolute Popery in the Presbyterian Church. He spoke with the highest respect of his Roman Catholic brethren—no one could mistake his meaning; but it

was the principle he referred to. He then read from the Synod's code an extract:—'It is the right and duty of every man to read and examine the Scriptures;' and contended that even the Jews were invited by Christ and His Apostles to read and examine the Scriptures. We have but one Lord and Master, even Christ Jesus; and shall the Synod of Ulster usurp His place, and deprive us of what Christ freely gave to the unbelievers of His day? If, therefore, either the example or instructions of Christ were to be regarded, he could see no grounds for the Synod adopting the motion. He spoke of Mr. Porter's talents, honesty, purity of heart, and uprightness of life, and asked what crime he had been guilty of? 'We are not,' said Mr. Montgomery, 'charging him with any dereliction of duty, as our Clerk; but we are about to punish him for having, when on his oath before a Parliamentary Commission, honestly professed what he believed to be the truth. We are about to disgrace a man for his honesty. Oh! fathers and brethren, is this the conduct of the followers of Christ? Pause before you so commit yourselves as preachers of Christian mercy and peace among men!' He felt no personal anxiety about the issue of the question; but it was for the character of the Synod he was alarmed. He referred to the secret measures which had been adopted against Mr. Porter; condemned the vulgar and low humour which had been exhibited on this occasion, and asked, would any member of this body use his common servant in this way?—would he turn him out of doors without a moment's notice? Surely, then, the Synod would not use a brother minister worse than they would a common servant. The manner of the thing proved the malignity of the spirit in which it was engendered. . . . He lamented the aspect of affairs in this Synod; and asked why Mr. Porter should be punished for doing what Mr. Cooke had done? (He then read an extract from Mr. Cooke's evidence in 1825, in which he had said, that 'very few of the Arian members of the Synod were willing to avow it.') 'You accuse Mr. Porter of bringing a charge of hypoerisy against you, and yet Mr. Cooke had done the same thing twelve months before. In the name of consistency, what do you mean? It is now a century and a year since you drove out one portion of your body; and you are now about to offer a moral stigma on your character which ages cannot remove.' Mr. Porter was a civil officer paid by Government; and this body had no right to interfere in an ecclesiastical manner, and punish him for matters of opinion. On these grounds he opposed the motion." ("Northern Whig" Report, July 5, 1827.)

Mr. Porter followed, in a noble, manly self-defence, stating that "Mr. Magill and his seconder were mere tools in the hands of designing men," and vigorously applying the lash of his powerful eloquence to his real and influential foes. He said that

"His religious opinions were as well known to his brethren the day they appointed him to office as they were at that moment. He had practised no deception, he had betrayed no trust, nor would he bend his body to one unmanly stoop, nor his spirit to one unworthy concession. Should the Synod's confidence be withdrawn from him, he should ever regret the privation; for their confidence was a possession which he prized most highly; but he had no retractation to make—no time-serving apology to offer."

The discussion was continued by Messrs. Brown (Aughadowey), Elder, Simpson, and Park, against Mr. Porter; and by Messrs. R. Dill (Ballykelly), Morell, Bleckley (Monaghan), and Carlile—all orthodox men—as strongly in his favour. The debate waxed hotter and hotter. Mr. Hay of Derry made an earnest appeal against the contemplated persecution of Mr. Porter for his opinions. "He put it to the feelings of the body whether Mr. Porter should be sent home with feelings deeply wounded, after eleven years' faithful and useful services."

Cooke, seeing that his forces were getting the worst of it, that the persecution was unpopular, even with the Orthodox, and that the appeals of Mr. Porter's friends to good sense and good feeling were telling upon the meeting, came to the rescue; and in a speech, remarkable rather for vehement energy and fierce denunciation, than for any close reasoning or logical argumentation, supported the motion for Mr. Porter's removal, assailed the Arians in the bitterest terms, and demanded their entire exclusion from the Synod. The following selections, taken from the "Northern Whig's" Report, are fair specimens of its peculiar style:—

"Mr. Carlile had observed that the Bible was sufficiently powerful to purify a man before he entered into the door of the church. If it would effect this at the door, why not inside the house? If we find

that an enemy's army has, under false colours and assumed clothing, entered into a garrison, will we not use all our exertions to have them driven out, lest they conquer and overthrow the citadel? If they plot, should we not counterplot? If they mine, should we not undermine? . . . If a wolf have gotten into the fold in sheep's clothing, shall the shepherds not drive him out?—shall he be allowed to remain and destroy the flocks and young lambs? Surely not. Let us then try the flock; carefully inquire who are the wolves that have crept into the folds of Christ's flock, that we may drive them out; or, if they are too strong for us, that we may withdraw from them, and take our flocks with us. He had heard much about the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Before God, he could not stand silently by and contemplate a unity of the Spirit between men who assert Christ to be a mere man, or a little more than a mere man, and those who believe Him to be the Eternal Son of God, the Supreme God over all.

“We are to be known also by our public officers. If we have an officer, therefore, who has publicly avowed himself an Arian, shall we, knowing it, retain him in office? Now that our eyes are opened, let us separate the wolves from the sheep. Let us divide, and let Lot's flock take the right bank of the Jordan, and Abraham's the left; but, in God's name, let us divide our flocks. He wished the Clerkship to be held in abeyance; and he would, next day, propose a measure for the separation of this Synod. He illustrated his argument by referring to an ambassador at a foreign court, who openly avowed his disloyalty to George the Fourth, and inquired if this rebel would still be retained as the king's ambassador? How much more necessary is it, therefore, to dismiss an ambassador who has openly avowed himself the enemy of our Heavenly King? He thanked his God he was not of the ‘thinking few’ who would rob the Lord Jesus of His eternal glory; and called on the Synod, in the name of God, and of His holy Son, and by all the terrors of the day of judgment, to rouse themselves from their slumber of death, to renew their faculties, and to become ‘the thinking many.’”

The Synod adjourned after seven o'clock, the debate having lasted the whole day without result. Next morning it was resumed at ten o'clock, and a most exciting discussion ensued, which continued till six o'clock in the evening. By many of the speakers on the “Orthodox” side the question of the Clerkship was forgotten in their eagerness to attack the Arians

generally, and to follow Cooke in demanding their removal from the Synod. Mr. Stewart of Broughshane, * then, as ever, Cooke's friend in need, doubtless seeing that the motion was not likely to pass, brought forward an amendment, which he said "had been prepared on the preceding evening by a number of elderly clergymen assembled for the purpose;" which, while it sought to affix the strongest stigma of the Synod's condemnation on Mr. Porter's sworn evidence, yet held it inexpedient to remove him from the Clerkship, as being open to the imputation of persecution for the sake of opinion. This he proposed, while, at the same time, he made a plausible speech, not in support of his own amendment, but avowedly of the original motion. Mr. Porter himself promptly exposed the true nature of the amendment, as "calculated to crush him to the dust;" and declared that "the moment it passed he would resign his Clerkship." Having stated, on reliable authority, which he gave, that Messrs. Cooke and Stewart had acknowledged the measure for his expulsion to have been long before resolved on, he was thus politely interrupted by the former. "Mr. Cooke—'I pronounce the assertion to be *a lie*. (Order, order.) I do again repeat it to be a falsehood.'" It is only right to state that this mode of speech, which may seem somewhat full-flavoured to readers of these degenerate days, was then and since, with the redoubted

* The Rev. Robert Stewart, afterwards D.D., minister of Broughshane, County Antrim, the class-fellow, college companion, and constant ally and Synodical supporter of Cooke. He was a man of very considerable ability—a ready and clever, though not brilliant speaker, apt in the use of sarcasm, and talented in reply. He was cold and imperturbable in temper, wary in debate, and not scrupulous in the use of means. He was thus often enabled skilfully to counteract the excesses and cover the weak points of Cooke, and others of his party—to parry many a home-thrust of opponents, to push the results of victory, and to lessen defeat. Having, as he himself admitted, entertained grave doubts as to the leading doctrines of "Orthodoxy" till within two or three years of the Strabane debates, the zeal of recent conversion enhanced the value of his services in the encounter with the Arians, in which, next to Cooke himself, he occupied the most prominent place in the hosts of Orthodoxy—a position he still retained, when, in after years, he stood by his friend, through good and evil report, in the days of the Dissenters' Chapels Act. He was ordained in Broughshane in 1809, and died in 1852.

leader of orthodoxy, a not unfrequent, and apparently favourite style of reply to inconvenient statements of an adversary.

In the course of the same debate, in reply to Mr. Campbell of Templepatrick, reminding him of a time when he was not unwilling to associate with Arians, and give them the right hand of fellowship, Cooke did not scruple to make use of even the following extraordinary terms:—

“He said that he had indeed once been in communion with an Arian Presbytery, and that connexion had left such deep wounds in his conscience, as nothing but the blood of Christ and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost could heal.”

A new amendment of a more moderate nature, and in terms not necessitating either the removal or resignation of Mr. Porter, was substituted by Mr. Morell for that of Mr. Stewart. Against this, Cooke delivered another fierce and characteristic speech:—

“He denominated Arianism the great Upas-tree whose pestilential influence was calculated to destroy the religious views of mankind.” . . . “He cautioned the body against loving all men as brethren—men who do not worship the same Father cannot be brethren. We will love them as we would love a robber; for they rob the Lord Jesus Christ of His eternal crown of glory.” . . . “In the whole of this business he felt nothing personal in the matter; it was an inward working of the Spirit of God,” &c., &c.

After a further lengthened discussion, Mr. Morell's amendment was passed by a majority of 32—91 members voting for it, and 59 against. Against this amendment, on the following day, Cooke, after a sharp debate, obtained leave for himself and others to enter on the minutes a Protest, declaiming, from the usual high ground of infallibility of judgment, against Arian opinions. It was signed by 41 ministers and 14 elders. *

It quickly became apparent, however, that the matter about the Clerkship and the Protest was merely skirmishing, preliminary to entering upon the real question of the Synod.

The same day—Thursday, 28th June, 1827—witnessed the

* For names of these ministers and elders, see “*Outlines*,” &c., p. 386.

commencement in Synod of the real struggle—the great and memorable contest on the subject of “Christian Liberty”—of which the first battle then lasted through three days—which was renewed in two other powerfully contested fields in the two following years—which was then for a time suspended by the separation of the Remonstrants from the General Synod; but the end of which, as regards the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, assuredly is not yet!

Cooke, as usual brave and ready, marshalled and led on his forces to the attack. After the foregoing Protest was handed in, he rose and addressed the Synod. The carefully studied and plausible language of his opening speech, intemperate as is the spirit which it breathes, forms, on the whole, a good contrast with the greater violence of his previous addresses. From its presumed importance as opening the discussion, and as the reply of his great antagonist will afterwards be given in full, it is desirable to adduce at length the main portion of his address as reported:—

“Mr. Cooke rose and said—‘As we would stand well in the eyes of the world, as ministers of the Lord Jesus, he conceived we were called on to put on record our opinions regarding certain great leading doctrines of our faith. With this view, he was prepared with a list of the members of this Synod, and was ready to affix a mark to each of those ministers’ names whom he believed to be Arian.’ Mr. Cooke then read a Test or Declaration of Faith, which was in substance, ‘That the Godhead is composed of Three Persons; that these Three are One, the same in Essence and Spirit;’ and he proposed that all the members of the Synod who were present should be compelled to sign this test, and those who were absent should be written to, and directed by the Clerk to forward their signatures, to be by him affixed to it, previous to the printing of the minutes. An honest man (continued he) is said to be the noblest work of God; and it would be the act of honest men for us to state to the world what is our belief, and to let our people know what our sentiments really are. If we rely for our salvation on Christ Jesus, it is surely worth our while to declare unto men that such is our belief. It is surely worth while that the Arians should tell to the world what their views are on the great question of their own and their congregations’ souls’ eternal welfare. The pro-

ceedings of this body have found, and the transactions of this day will find, their way to the British Metropolis—nay, over the whole British Empire, and even into the Continent of Europe, and our colonies abroad; and they will be animadverted on with all the severity and want of candour for which certain publications are proverbial. . . . After the avowals and the declarations we have heard made in this house, we cannot go home to our people, without leaving something on record which will enable them to know who are the Arians, and who are not. . . . Were he to stand alone in the measure he had now brought forth, he would put the issue of the question to the test. In the beginning God said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light.’ Now, if we have the light in us, let us set it on the hill of our salvation—let us set it on the hill of the pulpit—let us set it on the hill of the public press—and let it so shine before men, that our deeds may be seen and known. ‘If I could conceive’ (said Mr. Cooke) ‘that there was the slightest attempt to persecute for the sake of opinion in the motion I have now made, I should be the last man who would put my hand to further such a measure. I have no right to institute any proceeding which might interfere with men’s £100 or £150 a-year: it is not with that view that I have prepared the resolution I wish this meeting to sanction with their approval; but it is the blessed light of God which has opened my eyes to the danger, and which directs me to withdraw from those men whose views are not as my views, and whose hopes of salvation do not rest on the same rock as mine. Dr. Wright has expressed a wish that I should point out who the thirty-five or forty Arians are in this body. If he wishes for it, I am ready to go over the list of the Synod, and to put a mark opposite to those whom I believe to be Arians. The blood of Jesus is so precious to all who wish to be saved through Him, that none who sincerely believe in Him will deny Him. Let us at once, then, lay hold of the truth, and openly, before men, say whether the Eternal Son of God be indeed the God of our salvation.’ Mr. Cooke concluded an impressive address by reading his motion.

“Mr. R. Stewart seconded the motion.”

After some observations from Dr. Wright, Montgomery rose and stated—

“That he was not at present going into an inquiry as to the merits of the question before the house (although he was perfectly willing to enter on the subject of a separation of the Synod, or a Code of Faith for its members, at the proper time), but he was opposed to an import-

ant measure of this kind being discussed in a corner of the Province. Besides, the laws of this body decidedly allowed proper time for men to reflect on the matter, and make up their minds what course they should adopt in case of its being carried. He wished the discussion to stand over till next year; and by that time we shall have calmly examined the merits of this question, and then, when we shall also have a fuller attendance of members, we shall be able to come to a decision, which will not, by such a hasty and intemperate course as is now pursuing, fix a lasting stigma on the Synod of Ulster. For himself, he was totally regardless of what step should be taken; the Synod was all-powerful, and it could act in whatever way it pleased. Such a course would be but fair play, not only to absent members, but to those members of this body now present, who have been taken by surprise by the adoption of a measure which is at variance with our laws, and which might be considered by many as very oppressive. (Mr. Montgomery then read an extract from a law of the Code, which stated that no measure should come before the Synod unless twelve months' notice of it had been given, and that it was licensed by the Committee of Overtures.) There is (continued Mr. Montgomery) no parallel in our minutes for such a proceeding; indeed, there is no instance, in the whole record of human transactions, of men having been called on, in an instant, to come to a decision on one of the most important subjects which can affect us as frail expectants of a blessed immortality. He therefore did implore the Synod to pause, and consider well the consequences of the rash and intemperate conduct which was about to be pursued; this he did altogether through a respect for the body. It was easy to see what decision would be come to; and although it would give him great pain to part with his Calvinistic brethren, yet if it must be so, he wished to do it in a Christian-like manner, and not with that hasty and angry feeling which was now exhibited by Mr. Cooke."

Stewart endeavoured to shew, by several ingenious and elaborate arguments, "that Mr. Montgomery's reasons against this measure now being discussed were not good." Montgomery referred in explanation to several precedents which had been quoted, and observed—

"That Mr. Stewart, with all his ingenuity, was not able to shew that the Committee of Overtures was not the fair and legitimate channel through which this motion should come. Its not having done

so, argued an evident wish to take this house by surprise. He acknowledged that the feeling in the public mind was that this was a Calvinistic body ; yet it never was the practice of Synod to enforce a subscription of faith. The Code was also opposed to it. Mr. Stewart talks finely of 'soundness in the faith.' Now, every man, in every religion, thinks his faith is the sound one."

Several other members expressed themselves to a similar effect ; but the majority of the Synod were brought there for the purpose, and were resolved to have the fight, and so the debate on the motion proceeded. And now the various leading members of the several sections seemed to feel that a great historic occasion had indeed arrived, calling for the exertion of their best intellectual powers, and eloquent speeches became the order of the day.

After several members had spoken, Mr. Porter addressed the house at considerable length. His speech, chiefly in reply to Cooke, is a noble defence of Christian Liberty and Christian Union, and a brilliant specimen of cogent argument and faultless logic, and of classic purity of style and diction. He concluded in the following words :—

"A lamentable change has of late years taken place in the character and complexion of the Synod of Ulster. Formerly, the Old and the New Light members of the body met together with feelings of cordiality and kindness. The points on which they differed were kept in a state of abeyance. When a committee was appointed to draw up a Code for the government of this Church, they were instructed to confine themselves strictly to matters of discipline. Things are now wofully changed. At present as much anxiety seems to be discovered to excite discord as there was formerly to prevent it ; and if the moderate and aged Calvinists do not come forward to repress these mischievous attempts, *separation must take place*. The peace which once prevailed amongst us has been called by one gentleman 'the peace of the grave ;' but even that peace would be better than the discord of Pandemonium. Another gentleman (Mr. Dill of Donaghmore, Mr. P. believed) has said that Arianism naturally leads to Atheism. In another part of his speech he called us Atheists in plain terms. Be it so. With such Atheists as Sir Isaac Newton, Locke,

Milton, Whitby, Lardner, Clarke, Abernethy, Leland, Benson, Bishop Hoadly, and Bishop Law—with such Atheists as these we are very willing to be classed.”

The Rev. George Hay of Derry followed, deprecating the proposed Test being forced on the body, when, amid loud calls of “Roll!” “Pass!” “Adjourn!” the Synod adjourned at eight o’clock.

On Friday morning, at half-past eleven, the discussion was resumed. Several orthodox members tried to get out of the difficulty by proposing a declaration of general approval of the writings of Calvin, Knox, and the Westminster Confession of Faith, as containing the doctrines of the Christian religion; but were speedily routed by Mr. Carlile, who advocated a definite declaration of faith, while refusing to sign a test, and objecting especially to the composition, wording, grammar, &c., of Cooke’s resolution. He counselled moderation and delay. Dr. Hanna objected to the use of the terms, “Essence,” “Godhead,” &c. “If Mr. Cooke pressed his motion as it now stood, he would not sign it.”

Then ensued a long, desultory, and assuredly most extraordinary debate, between the orthodox ministers, relative to the terms which should be applied in the proposed Test in denoting the persons of the Trinity, and which must have been highly edifying, if not convincing, to their listening Arian brethren! They had the advantage of hearing the changes rung incessantly on such phrases as “Substance” and “Essence,” “Person” and “Godhead,” “Father, Word, and Spirit,” “Father, Son, and Spirit,” “Father, Word, and Holy Ghost,” and “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;” as if the very repetition of these *sounds* of orthodoxy, reaching the brain through the ear, and taking possession there, might thus enforce reception and compel belief. But, first of all, it would be desirable that the professors of orthodoxy should agree among themselves as to the terms necessary to define it; and of this there still seeming to be little prospect, Montgomery rose, and mildly observed that “surely it was but fair that brethren of humbler capacity should be allowed some

licence in deciding on these nice points, when the Calvinistic Fathers themselves could not agree about the very epithets which should be applied to the Deity !”

In after years, in the course of his lectures as Professor of Church History to the students of the Non-Subscribing Association, having described the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, and its condemnation of Arius and his supporters—when the *first human* and Trinitarian creed was forcibly imposed upon the free Church of Christ—Montgomery thus powerfully compares with it the meeting at Strabane, and especially depicts, with a master’s hand, the foregoing instructive scene :—

“ I remember a modern Synod, convened at Strabane, A.D. 1827, which was an exact epitome of the Council of Nice. The subject of debate was the same. The materials and motives of the Synod were similar. It is true, no Emperor was present ; but we were significantly told that the eye of the Government was upon us, and that if we persevered in avowing our heresy, the Royal Bounty would be assuredly withdrawn.

“ On that occasion our opponents agreed to stigmatise us ; but they were never able to agree among themselves. They determined to draw up a declaration in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity, and some half-dozen of their learned doctors separately tried their hands at framing it. Had not the scene been melancholy, from the bitter spirit so abundantly manifested, and the want of honest principle so glaringly exhibited by the leaders, it would have been ineffably ludicrous to behold the conflicting creeds which were proposed for adoption, and to hear the manner in which the several writers assailed and ridiculed each other. This scene continued, amidst repeated efforts at a definition of the Trinity, for fully an hour, at the end of which time we proposed, like the early Arians, to extricate them from the dilemma in which they were placed, by agreeing to sign a creed drawn up in the language of Scripture. This proposition, however, was necessarily rejected, for such a creed would *not have been Trinitarian*.

“ At length, the late James Morell of Ballibay, a man of great talent, but known to us all as a humanitarian, if not *something less*, made a suggestion which was greedily adopted. He proposed that they should sign, as the confession of their faith concerning the Trinity, the answer to a question relating to the Godhead contained in

the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The words are these—‘There are Three Persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and these Three are One God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.’ But even with regard to this creed our opponents were not agreed. One said, ‘it was absurd to talk of the substance of a spirit ;’ another said, ‘that the word equal involved a comparison, and implied Tritheism, as no being could be equal to himself ;’ and the late Dr. Stewart of Broughshane jocosely declared, ‘that the sentence conveyed no more distinct ideas to his mind than *High Dutch*.’ And yet, whilst no two of them seemed to agree with regard to its meaning, they did marvellously agree to subscribe to it as a *common creed*.

“That Synod was composed of materials even more discordant than the Council of Nice. We had arrayed against us five distinct parties—viz., Calvinists, Arminians, Sabellians, several Humanitarians, and, I regret to believe, some having not much faith of any kind. In one respect, however, we were more fortunate than our brethren at Nice ; for although many shrank away from us who held our views, on account of worldly influence and danger, our numbers never sank below seventeen.” *

The *matter* of the Test having been at length agreed on, the discussion, still amongst the orthodox members, next turned on the *manner* of its being applied—whether the members should take it standing or sitting, and whether the latter part of the clause, requiring signature, should be inserted.

At this stage, the Rev. Robert Campbell† of Templepatrick addressed the Synod, and though frequently interrupted by cries from the Orthodox creed-makers of “Order, order !” “No creeds, no creeds !” he proceeded to give a most impressive, dignified,

* See also “Outlines,” &c., pp. 380–91 ; Description of Synod at Strabane.

† Honest, worthy, persecuted Robert Campbell ! This aged minister, for the crime of honestly avowing his anti-Trinitarian faith, and throwing in his lot with his Remonstrant brethren, incurred the inveterate hostility of Cooke and Stewart and their followers. Unable, after repeated efforts, to deprive him of his meeting-house and congregation, they enjoyed the still greater Christian satisfaction of seeing him driven *houseless and homeless* upon the world. He was, through orthodox influence, ejected from his house and farm by order of his landlord, General Upton. But the benevolent Being who catereth for the sparrow found a shelter for His old and faithful servant, and he closed the days of his pilgrimage in peace.

and truly Christian explanation and vindication of his religious principles, the spirit of which told on the more moderate part of the meeting, and favourably influenced several succeeding speakers.

Again Cooke came to the rescue, and with an affectation of candour, detailed the several "ulterior measures" which he proposed should follow the adoption of his Test. Amongst these were, to impose upon all students, probationers, and candidates for the ministry the heaviest Calvinistic shackles that ingenuity could forge :—

"The appointment of a committee of Synod to send missionaries into certain extensive Arian congregations to pray with and instruct the people, and entreat them to renew a right spirit within them, and abandon their mistaken course." "When the committee found a faithless minister neglecting to teach the people the doctrines of orthodoxy, they were to suspend that preacher, to pray with him, and to exhort him to turn unto the truth. If, in due time, he exhibited a spirit of repentance, then he should be reinstated in his pulpit ; but if he still remained contumacious, then he is to be lopped off like a diseased limb, lest through this member the whole body become infected." "Another object was to preclude the members of this body from holding ministerial communion with the persons who thus differ from us on the most vital of all subjects."

"He then proceeded to state another ulterior measure, which was, not to attempt to split the Synod this year ; but, by the blessing of God, he did contemplate that measure next year. He then made a powerful appeal to the Synod not to stand idly by whilst they saw in this very house their Lord and Master stripped of His Eternal Godship, and robbed of His everlasting crown of glory." ("Northern Whig" Supplement, July 26, 1827.)

The haughty, dictatorial spirit of this extraordinary address, while calculated, and doubtless meant, to stimulate to further degrees of fanatical enthusiasm the already over-excited minds of the mass of his Calvinistic following, in anticipation of speedy triumph over the Arians, was probably also intended to goad his opponents into extremes. Several of these amongst the moderate Orthodox reprobated his spirit and language in terms

of strong, even vehement condemnation. Even the gentle and long-suffering spirit of John Mitchel* could no longer brook the unworthy taunts and assumption of Cooke and his party; and rising before that heated and hostile assembly, he gave eloquent and indignant expression to the outraged feelings of his nature :—

“As to the Test, he would protest against it as an attack on individual liberty of conscience.” . . . “It was introducing an Inquisition into this body which he never would submit to. He had been a member of Synod for twenty-two years; he was licensed by the Derry Presbytery, and no charge can be made against him for unsoundness in the faith, but he never will submit to be dragged into signing, as a test of his belief in the doctrines of the Scriptures, any formulary of human construction.”

It was Friday evening, 29th of June, a sweet summer evening, the serenity of God's temple of Nature contrasting with the stormy passions agitating His children, assembled ostensibly in His service in the temple made with hands! Four successive days spent in fierce debate—two on the Clerkship, and two on the Test questions. The latter still undetermined; and the excitement instead of lessening, still waxing more and more

* The Rev. John Mitchel, M.A., minister of Newry. This mild and apostolic man has been happily commemorated by his friend Montgomery in after days as “the strong-headed and sweet-souled John Mitchel, the Melancthon of our Synod.” He was minister successively of the rural settlement of Dungiven, and of the influential congregations of Londonderry and Newry—declining, in favour of the latter, a unanimous invitation to Armagh, then reckoned amongst the first congregations in the Synod. He was Moderator of the General Synod in 1822, and of the Remonstrant Synod in 1840—the year of his death. Of superior intellect and varied attainments, as a preacher his meekly persuasive eloquence deeply impressed his hearers; as a writer, his published sermons on “Scripture Doctrine” furnish such convincing expositions and defence of Moderate Unitarianism as have not been surpassed; while, as a minister and a man, from his amiable disposition, steadfast integrity, and ever active usefulness, few have been more loved and revered in life, or have left a sweeter memory behind. Montgomery, who preached his funeral sermon, said of him :—“I knew him well, amidst varied and trying scenes; and I can truly say, that in guileless innocence of heart, and untarnished purity of life, I never knew his superior.” An eminently beautiful obituary of him, written by his friend the Rev. William Porter, appeared in the “Bible Christian” of April, 1840.

intense—an interest and excitement unparalleled in the Irish Presbyterian Church! The last impetuous harangue of the Orthodox leader, and his violent expressions and appeals, have had their effect; the packed masses of his adherents are eager and impatient to snatch their expected victory, and cries for a division have become loud and frequent.

Then, above the tumultuous crowd, slowly the tall form of Henry Montgomery is seen to rise; and his majestic presence calmly confronts the house, as, drawing himself up to his full height, he raises his head to address the chair. Instantly a deep hush falls upon the excited throng. Not an interruption—not a murmur is heard; and, amidst the perfect and respectful silence of the great assemblage, the leading opponent of reputed Orthodoxy and advocate of religious freedom commences his address.

But it is time that some attempt should be made to describe him, as, in the very prime of his manhood, he stood before the Synod that day, on one of the very greatest occasions of his eventful life.

He was then in his thirty-ninth year, and mind and body had alike reached the full maturity of their developed powers. His frame was of most striking proportions and most imposing altitude. He was almost six feet four inches in height. Like Saul among the Israelites, from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people. But this great height was not accompanied by any appearance of awkwardness, the whole figure being in admirable proportion. The shoulders, slightly drooping, relieved the perception of their ample breadth; the chest, wide and deep, betokened large lung-space to support the powerful voice; the arms were long and muscular; the hands, though large, were peculiarly shapely; the long limbs, having lost the spareness of youth, were large and well-formed; and his general appearance had acquired a becoming portliness that added considerably to the commanding dignity of his presence.

He was punctiliously neat in his person and dress. The arranging and tying of the voluminous folds of cambrie with which it was then customary for ministers, and laymen also, to

enswathe their necks, was a study in itself; and in this he was always neat and successful. He always wore shirt ruffles, and the single ornament which he allowed himself was a small diamond brooch worn as a breast-pin to keep them in their place. His usual dress was a black full-made tail coat, silk vest, knee-breeches, silk stockings, and buckled shoes, save when he encased his legs instead, as latterly he was almost invariably wont to do, in the capacious tasselled boots, reaching almost to the knee; which, for many years, became so familiarly associated with his appearance, whether at Synodical or other public meetings, along the roads of Dunmurry, in the streets of Belfast, or the thoroughfares of Dublin and London.

But it was his face and his head that were the *true glory* of the man. Not that his features were especially regular, or, strictly speaking, handsome. On the contrary, when in repose, or, as so often the case, deeply absorbed in thought, the pale face, long upper lip, compressed mouth, half-closed light grey eyes, the close-drawn arch and almost sullen expression of the overhanging brows, together formed a *tout ensemble* that impressed one rather with the sense of power than beauty, and to the casual observer must have appeared more striking than attractive. But when repose gave place to action, the change was almost marvellous to behold. The bent brows, like a bow unstrung, expanded into a broad benignant arch. The eyes came forth, as it were, and shone full and clear, like the sun breaking from the cloud. And never were eyes more powerful to express the varied sentiments of their possessor—now softening in affection, now melting in tenderness, now sparkling with humour, now lightening with the electric power of thought, now waxing earnest with exhortation, or blazing with indignant rebuke, now swimming with sympathy, now darkening with anger, now glittering with scorn.

His voice was remarkably fine. Powerful and penetrating, of rich musical intonation, without a harsh note in all its compass, it fell upon the ear like the mellow tones of a grand cathedral bell, predisposing his audience, how adverse soever, as if in spite of

themselves, to listen with pleasure, and even rapt attention, to the speaker's words. No special exertions seemed ever to be needed or employed, even before the largest assemblies he was wont to address, in making his slightest utterances distinctly heard by all. The most distant were spared the unpleasantness of having to strain the ear to catch the words addressed to them when he was the speaker.

His elocution was entirely correspondent with his voice and appearance. In character it was not so energetic, as dignified, commanding, and persuasive. Of action he was usually sparing, save on some extraordinary occasions—notably in the presence of a hostile auditory, or repelling the assaults of an adversary; and then, when roused by his theme, and approaching the climax of his speech, his action would become powerfully energetic, and he would freely use one and sometimes both arms with vigour and effect. In this action, however, of the arm and hand to give force to his words, there was a marked departure from the practice of most Parliamentary and other public speakers of the present day, with whom it generally consists in a frequent up and down, somewhat jerky movement of the hand and lower part of the arm from the elbow downwards; whereas with him, the whole arm was invariably raised gradually from the shoulder, and flung slowly out with a gradual, wavy motion from thence to the tips of the fingers, that admirably accompanied the course of the sentence he was pronouncing—the broad palm extended facing his auditory, or the long, shapely, nervous hand stretched out, palm downwards, towards and over them, with an effect of such attractiveness and persuasion as could not be easily described.

An ably written series of papers appeared in the "Northern Whig" in 1829, entitled "Synodical Portraits," of which that devoted to Montgomery is a most felicitous description of what he was at this time. Though referring to events of two years afterwards, a portion may not inappropriately be here transcribed, the whole being too lengthened for insertion:—

“THE REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY.—It is exceedingly difficult for one who is acquainted with the Rev. Henry Montgomery in private life, to give a correct delineation of his character as a preacher and an orator, without being suspected of colouring the portrait with an undue partiality. There is something about this distinguished man, in his domestic and social relations, so amiable, so benevolent, and so winning upon the affections, that the recollection of his private virtues is sure to obtrude itself, and to rob the mind of that discriminating power, the exercise of which is indispensable to a just and impartial estimate of his talents as a minister of the Presbyterian Church, and the eminent leader of a religious party. It is more than probable, however, that the fear of indulging in overstrained panegyric will throw a chillness over deserved eulogium, and heighten the severity of criticism.

“The most distinguishing characteristics of Mr. Montgomery’s style and manner as a preacher are not of that species which suddenly arouse and powerfully fix the attention. He has nothing of that copious and fervid declamation—that wild and daring soaring into the lofty regions of metaphor, for which Mr. Cooke is so remarkable ; nor does he equal that singular preacher in the intense energy and enthusiastic warmth of his delivery. There is more repose, more calm dignity, and less of the claptrap of the pulpit in everything he utters. By this distinction, it is not meant to convey the idea that Mr. Montgomery’s style and manner are deficient in impressiveness and force : these qualities they possess in a very eminent degree ; but he does not excel in that soul-stirring power which takes the passions of an auditory by storm. Persuasion is the leading feature of his pulpit eloquence. Though he does not appear to be much versed in abstruse metaphysical lore, yet he has undoubtedly studied the human mind where it can be best studied. Knowing and feeling himself to be a man, ‘he leans and hearkens to his kind :’ he forms his estimate of human nature, not from what it *was* or *will* be, but from what it *is* ; and, in weighing the *powers of the human mind*, he throws into the scale what most metaphysicians have forgotten—the *influence of the human heart*. By gentleness and plausibility, he insinuates himself into the good graces of his hearers : they are more pleased than astonished—more convinced than dazzled : they listen with a sort of equable delight to things which are not all new to them, but on which they never before reflected so seriously ; and when the sermon is ended, they feel themselves not so much delighted as improved by what they heard, while their love for the man predominates over their admiration of the orator. Mr. Montgomery’s sermons, if they can, in any degree,

be considered as artfully arranged, are artful from their admirable simplicity. His style is free from rhetorical affectation, from fantastic conceits, and from figurative ornaments. Occasionally, it is evident that Nature has been abundant to Mr. Montgomery in the power of imagination; but this faculty is carefully subdued and kept under by the vigilant control of a taste naturally good. He is, therefore, rather scanty than lavish of flowers of rhetoric and figures of speech; and when he does condescend to employ them, they are classically conceived, correctly finished, and clothed in language at once chaste and beautiful. His language—natural, unadorned, and pure—pours from him with the transparency and beauty of a summer stream; which, though it seldom breaks into foam, or rushes with the impetuosity of the winter flood, makes sweet music with the pebbles, and gurgles melodiously as it runs. His similes and illustrations are neither far-fetched nor striking. In fact, they are nothing more than such as our everyday ideas and natural feelings can at once suggest and appreciate. . . .

"Mr. Montgomery's voice, which we have already remarked as monotonous, has certainly not much of flexibility in its modulation, nor variety in its tones; but there is in it a sweetness and solemnity which are peculiarly adapted to the language of prayer. His public prayers are altogether of a different cast from those which we are accustomed to hear. From some unexplained reason or other, Presbyterian ministers are in general accustomed to address the Deity in terms of the most fulsome adulation, and to approach the footstool of His throne just as oriental slaves would prostrate themselves before an earthly despot. Mr. Montgomery, in supplicating his Maker, addresses Him as 'Our Father in Heaven;' and though the sceptic, or the fatalist, or the believer in philosophical necessity, might question the probability of supplications of weak and erring mortals working any change in the decrees of the immutable Jehovah, yet no one who would listen to Mr. Montgomery's prayer, could avoid admitting that it is good to draw near to God, to bless Him for His bounty—that in this turbid and unquiet scene, it is profitable to pray for our neighbours, and to profess with the lips, even though our hearts too often forget, that we all are brethren. . . .

"The celebrity which Mr. Montgomery has acquired, is owing rather to his ability as a public speaker than to his talents as a preacher. When freed from the trammels of the pulpit, he possesses a vast control over the feeling of his audience. Even then, however, there is nothing about him which would have fitted him to act the part of a

demagogue with success. It has generally been his lot to have to contend against popular opinion. It is scarcely probable that he would have deigned to borrow assistance from the cheers of a multitude; and were he so inclined, he never would have been able to address himself, with success, to the passions and prejudices of a mixed assembly. When it is said, therefore, that he possesses a mastery over the feelings of his audience, it must be understood that reference is made only to the nobler feelings of our nature. In appealing to these, lies his great forte as a public speaker. His speeches, though far from being deficient in cogency and logical arrangement, are sometimes too declamatory, and occasionally wide of the question at issue. He frequently contents himself with asserting some of the minor propositions, which others would lose time in attempting to prove. 'I do aver,' or 'I affirm,' or 'I do conscientiously believe,' are among his favourite phrases; but he uses them in such a manner as to convey with them an irresistible impression of their truth; and he answers a whole train of subtle reasoning, by an appeal to some principle, which is admitted by the common sense and better feelings of his auditors. That those who generally agree with him in the Synod should be carried away on such occasions is nothing strange; but it would require a minute investigation into the springs of human action to account for the circumstance that, during many of his late addresses since the dissensions in the Synod commenced, men long accustomed to intrigue and debate have given way to their feelings, even to the shedding of tears, while he was describing the consequences of the very measure which they were predetermined to support. It is upon these occasions only that he swerves from his calm dignity and earnestness. It is then that his gesture, of which he is sparing, and which, when he is not animated, is anything but graceful, becomes all at once dignified and impressive. It is then, when the words fall in a deep and measured cadence, undisturbed and unbroken even by the free breathing of an individual among the dense throng—it is then that the soul appears to 'overform the tenement of clay'—that the tall form swells with energy even beyond its gigantic dimensions, and the long muscular arm is uplifted in triumph, as if its physical energy could crush at a blow a whole battalion of the host of intolerance. It must not be supposed, however, that because gentleness, dignity, and repose are the characteristics of Mr. Montgomery's manner as a preacher, these do not sometimes give way, in public debate, to bitter irony and biting invective. The truth is, sarcasm—keen, cutting sarcasm—is a weapon which he uses with tremendous effect. There is not, like Byron's Corsair, a

'laughing devil in his sneer;' but when the derisive smile plays about a mouth which is usually remarkable for a sweet and kindly expression—when the eye, naturally soft and gentle, darts forth flashes of mockery that wither and consume—it is then that the torrent of invective may be expected, which is never so dreadful as when its first rush is glittering in the sunshine of some ironical compliment, and whose effects can only be estimated by watching the man on whose devoted head it is poured 'grin horribly a ghastly smile,' and try to look indifferent, while he inwardly writhes with excruciating agony. Let those, however, who occasionally feel the effects of this fearful power, blame themselves for having provoked it. . . .

"Without admitting the possibility of ascertaining the length and breadth of a man's intellect by the application of a pair of callipers, it may safely be said that the depth and amplitude of Mr. Montgomery's forehead may claim all the advantages that are said to be derived from strong intellectual developments in that region of the head, which, uncovered as it is even by an accidental hair, gives a fine and dignified aspect to the whole countenance. His eyes have not the advantage of darkness, corresponding as they do with the light colour of the hair and the other features; but they compensate for this by their brightness and animation. When he sits in the Synod, listening to some member to whose arguments he means to reply, they peer out from beneath his depressed brows, the remote corners of which are drawn down, so as to conceal half their brilliancy; and although seemingly fixed on vacancy, their settled lower gives a certain presage of the storm that is gathering within. His body is cast listlessly, and with little appearance of vigour, on the bench or chair on which he rests; but when he rises to address the house, the figure, which in its former relaxed position seemed scarcely capable of assuming an erect attitude, is now raised to its full height; the brow, whose deep fold was before drawn down like a dark impenetrable veil over the sullen glare of the eye, is expanded into the calm, benignant look; and the terrors of the eye itself are lost in its full-orbed serenity. His fine dignified appearance and honest front at once make a favourable impression; and as if he were satisfied of this, he takes little trouble to gain upon his audience by an artful exordium. It is seldom, in the course of Synodical discussion, that a speaker can venture to let himself be hurried on by the strong emotions which operate so powerfully at times in other assemblies, and produce high-wrought bursts of impassioned eloquence. Late occurrences, however, have given rise to more specimens of heated and popular discussion than are usual in that body. The unjustifiable

attacks made by Mr. Cooke and Mr. Carlile, on the electors of the Belfast Institution and upon the newly-elected Professor (1829), seemed to awaken stronger feelings of indignation in Mr. Montgomery than he has, with perhaps one exception, exhibited in the whole course of his Synodical career. When he rose to reply, there was, at first, a good deal of his accustomed serenity of countenance, but it was very soon shrouded by the dark tempest which followed. The face put on a sallow paleness, the lip shook and curled upwards, and the eye flashed awfully from beneath the scowling brow. It was no transient burst of feeling, which pealed for a moment and then was over. The storm gathered and thickened; and it was not until it had fallen with terrible retribution upon the guilty heads—taking fit vengeance for maligned integrity and calumniated worth—that its thunder passed over, and freed the listeners from wonder and dismay.

“It is seldom, however, he dwells in such scenes as these. He chooses rather to walk abroad amidst the loveliness and fertility of nature, exulting in the fair prospect of existence, and ‘blessing his God that it is so;’ or to descant upon the virtues which, amidst much selfishness and sin, still adorn mankind, as if anxious to exalt the character of his race, and vindicate the dignity of man. On such topics he expatiates with peculiar felicity; his own straightforward mind giving a high tone to his conceptions, and a general earnestness to his manner of expressing them. Rising above the caution of the cold theorist or calculating philosopher, he looks with pride and satisfaction on the myriads of his fellow-creatures around him rejoicing in their civil and religious liberties; he recognises in each a right to equal privileges with himself; and at no time does his indignation kindle with such warmth as when any attempt is made to abridge what he conceives to be the natural prerogative of the species—the right of every man to equal and impartial government, and to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.”

Such was the man who, on Friday evening, 29th June, 1827, rose before the Synod of Ulster at Strabane, to vindicate the sacred “Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free!”

His address (which is given in the Appendix to this volume)* occupied an hour and ten minutes in the delivery, and “excited an interest that never was equalled in the Synod of Ulster, in

* Appendix A.—“Speech at Strabane, 1827.”

the remembrance of its oldest members."* The agitation pervading the Assembly was so intense that members rising to reply were for a length of time utterly unable to obtain a hearing. Again and again the attempt was made; but "in vain; the storm had passed over the waters, but the heavy swell still remained." The Rev. S. Dill and others persisted in addressing the house, but it was soon found necessary to adjourn the Synod till the following morning.

* Supplement to "Northern Whig," July 26, 1827.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRABANE MEETING (CONTINUED)—APPLICATION OF THE TEST.

1827.

Debate on Subscription resumed—Cooke's Reply to Montgomery—Rev. F. Blakely—Rev. N. Alexander—Stewart closes Debate—The Division—"Believe or not"—The Numbers—Protest of Minority—Montgomery's Account of the Scene and Circumstances—Aspect of the House—He avows himself an Arian, and retires before the Division—Private Visit from a "Believer"—Adventure at Urney Meeting-house—Calvinistic Expectations not realised—Heart against Creed—Liberal and New Light Progress—Interest excited by Montgomery's Speech—Reprints and Circulation—Complimentary Publication—Public Testimonial—Presentation of Service of Plate—Report of Proceedings—Address and Reply.

NEXT morning (Saturday) the battle was fiercely resumed. A number of the minor cannons of Orthodoxy were run forward, double-shotted, and discharged with much noise, but little other effect, against Montgomery and his friends; and the way having been thus cleared for their chief, Cooke proceeded to deliver his reply.

In this he exerted to the full those marvellous arts and devices of oratory of which he was such a master. He was conscious beforehand that the great majority of the Synod were with him already, and resolved, in any case, to carry out his views. He had the multitude at his back; and although Montgomery's crystalline statements and magnificent illustrations of the everlasting principles of Christian freedom and integrity might claim the reluctant assent of their reason and conscience, and defy any human power really to controvert or overturn, and his powerful appeals on behalf of Christian charity might have thrilled for the time the better feelings of their nature; yet their prepossessions,

their prejudices, and their profoundest passions, he knew were all his own. To these, therefore, he devoted himself; and in rousing, swaying, moulding, turning, directing, and propelling these at his pleasure, he seemed to revel in the very fulness and abandonment of oratorical pride and power.

His speech abounded in brilliant repartee, coarse but striking metaphors, and the most ingenious, though utterly sophistical attempts to turn the points of his opponent's arguments, and more especially to seize upon his choicest illustrations and similes, and, by many a dexterous wrench and slyly introduced hypothesis, to make them his own, and use them against their author. His appeals to the passions of his auditory were equally full-flavoured and powerful, and, of course, successful; and the frantic applause of the crowded masses of Orthodoxy rewarded the eloquence of their champion.

It was truly an extraordinary combat; and apart entirely from the respective merits of the questions debated, and looking only to the amazing intellectual and gladiatorial powers displayed by the two leaders, we of these commonplace times are constrained to acknowledge, almost with a sensation of awe, that "there were giants in those days!"

Cooke's address concluded, at him went Fletcher Blakely,* sledge-hammer in hand, and delivered such honest, sturdy, ringing blows, not to be parried, that even the Goliath of Orthodoxy reeled under their force.

Nathaniel Alexander followed, and though, as he said, "neither

* The Rev. Fletcher Blakely, for upwards of fifty-two years (from 1809) the devoted pastor of the congregation of Moneyrea, County Down, which early became, under his faithful care, a radiating centre of liberal thought and Unitarian doctrine in the North of Ireland. Conspicuous always for his manly and fearless bearing; honest of purpose; with no talent for intrigue or diplomacy, but going straight to his aim as bullet from the gun; endowed with no graces of oratory, but ready in speech, capacious in memory, powerful in argument, and mighty in the Scriptures; he stood by his friends Montgomery, Porter, Mitchel, and the other non-subscribing ministers, a pillar of strength and trust in all their trials, and proved himself an able champion of Christian faith and liberty in many a hard-fought field. He was especially associated with Montgomery in most of his Synodical labours, both in the General and Remonstrant Synods, during the greater part of their mutual lives.

so long nor so loud as Mr. Cooke," he sent some keen-pointed arrows right through the armour of his opponents; observing, *inter alia*, that "when he beheld an attempt made to change a Presbyterian assembly into a Popish council-chamber, he thought he also saw in the distance racks and gibbets, and all those instruments of torture which have been so often employed to coerce and keep in chains the human mind."

Encouraged by these sentiments, several ministers and elders of the Orthodox party manfully resisted the imposition of a doctrinal test; and, spite of the great odds in numbers, popularity and fiery determination, the creed-makers were looking pale, when Cooke's *Fidus Achates*, his ever-ready ally and henchman, Stewart,* came to the rescue, and, as the seconder of the original motion, addressed the Synod in reply to previous speakers, and to bring the lengthened debate to a close. His speech, though not brilliant, was undoubtedly clever of its kind, and contained many things which, while they must have proved a bitter portion for the more moderate Orthodox, were skilfully calculated to

* It is worthy of remark the curious error, or series of errors, as to matters of fact, into which Dr. Cooke's talented biographer has been led, in describing this discussion. He states, in the "Life and Times of Dr. Cooke," pp. 120-1, that, "On Saturday (!), after the modification of Mr. Cooke's motion" (that is, by the substitution of a verbal for a written Declaration of Faith, and by not insisting on requiring signatures), "Mr. Montgomery rose to address the house." And after a most eulogistic and beautiful reference to his oratory and its effects, he continues—"The excitement was so intense, the visible effect produced so great, that many Orthodox men began to despair. Mr. Stewart of Broughshane with much difficulty obtained a hearing. His speech was calm, cold. . . . Like a mental anatomist he dissected the oration of his brilliant antagonist." . . . "The debate was closed by Mr. Cooke, who, as mover of the original resolution, had the right of reply. . . . The few shreds of Mr. Montgomery's oration which Mr. Stewart had left untouched he tore to atoms," &c., &c. The *fact being*, that *if there were* any final tearing of shreds, it must have been done by Mr. Stewart, as he, and not Mr. Cooke, spoke at the close of the debate on Saturday evening, his speech *following Mr. Cooke's by about five hours*, and by some *twenty-four hours* the address of Mr. Montgomery, which, as we have seen, was delivered, not on Saturday, but on *Friday evening*, and consequently before, not after, the modification of Mr. Cooke's motion, which took place the next day.

These facts may not be of much importance, yet accuracy is at all times desirable; even though the established reputation of Messrs. Cooke and Stewart for *impromptu* oratory may not have derived any support from their concluding addresses in this memorable debate.

stimulate the unscrupulous appetite of the Calvinistic masses, already only too eager for their prey.

The following extract from the “Whig’s” report may serve as a characteristic specimen of the much-lauded replies to Montgomery which it contained:—

“Mr Stewart had to request that Mr. Montgomery would read that portion of the preface to his (Mr. Stewart’s) sermon, to which Mr. Montgomery referred in his speech of yesterday. (Mr. Montgomery read the part required, which was in substance, that Mr. Stewart had changed his opinions on the subject of the Trinity *within the last two years*.) Mr. Stewart went on to explain that an ambiguity existed in this part of the preface, from the circumstance, that while the work was printing, a considerable part of the types were lifted out of one of the galleys, and the matter then run close, without any connecting or linking paragraph being introduced. This was done at the instance of a friend of Mr. Stewart’s, who thought that some parts of the preface bore hard on members of another church, and might appear ill-natured or invidious. However, he would *now say*, that it was not in 1825 he first began to entertain doubts as to the soundness of his then belief, but when he was *Moderator*. In 1825, he felt himself fully satisfied, from reading and inquiring, of the truth of his present belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.”

The fact that an eminent Orthodox leader was neither ashamed nor afraid to advance such a statement in the face of the assembled Synod of Ulster, assured of its meeting a ready acceptance, affords melancholy evidence of the reckless partisanship of the Calvinistic majority.

At length the momentous discussion came to an end, and the still more momentous division was about to take place. The division was taken upon the modified or amended motion of Cooke and Stewart. This, with the state of the votes, and the Synodical action upon it, appears as follows in the minutes of Synod for 1827:—*

“*Moved*—That whereas some members of the Synod have made open profession of Arian sentiments; and whereas Mr. Porter, in his evidence before the Commissioners of Education Inquiry, has declared,

* “Minutes of General Synod at Strabane,” 1827, pp. 22-3.

‘that, in his opinion, there are more real than professed Arians in this body;’ and whereas Mr. Cooke, in his evidence before the Commissioners, has declared his opinion ‘that there are, to the best of his knowledge, thirty-five Arians amongst us, and that very few of them would be willing to acknowledge it;’ and whereas Dr. Hanna, on a similar examination, has declared his opinion, ‘that he presumes there are Arians amongst us’—we do hold it absolutely incumbent upon us, for the purpose of affording a public testimony to the truth, as well as of vindicating our religious character as individuals, to declare that we do most firmly hold and believe the doctrine concerning the nature of God, contained in the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, ‘That there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;’ and that the members now absent be, and are hereby, directed to attend the next meeting of Synod, to express their belief concerning the foregoing doctrines; and that such of them as do not attend, shall send to said meeting an explicit declaration of their sentiments on this important point, which declaration shall be addressed to the Clerk.

“It was carried that the question on this motion should be put in the following form:—‘Believe the doctrine or not;’ and it was directed that each member should stand up when giving his vote. Before the sense of the house was taken, four ministers obtained leave to withdraw; the roll was then called—117 ministers and 18 elders voted ‘Believe,’ two ministers voted ‘Not,’ and eight ministers declined voting.

“Against the proceeding in this matter, Mr. Mitchel and others protested; and, at a subsequent period of the meeting, gave in the following reasons, which were ordered to be inserted in the minutes:—

“‘WE PROTEST—

“‘1. Because we regard the procedure in question as being in its introduction and progress a direct violation of the law of Synod, which requires that “*all matters originating before the Synod shall first be submitted to the Committee of Overtures, and stand on the Synod’s books for at least one year.*” (See “Code of Discipline,” p. 54.)

“‘2. Because it is obvious, and has been admitted by the friends of the measure, that it cannot assure the Synod of the sentiments of individuals, even for a single day; and, therefore, that it is nugatory.

“‘3. Because we cannot sanction a proceeding, which, more especially under the influence of the popular odium now so generally excited, evidently creates a temptation to insincerity.

“ 4. Because we do not approve of the practice of bearing solemn testimony to a mysterious doctrine of pure Revelation in the words of man.

“ 5. Because this measure, as it has been put and carried, operates as a test of individual faith, is strictly inquisitorial in its nature, and such an infringement on Christian liberty, as is without a precedent amongst us, and utterly inconsistent with the fundamental principles of our Church.

<i>“ Ministers.</i>	<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>Elders.</i>
J. Mitchel.	S. C. Nelson.	Leonard Dobbin.
J. Jenkins.	A. Orr, for first reason.	William Orr.
Robert Orr.	F. Blakely, } 1st, 2nd, 3rd,	William Moody.
R. Campbell.	H. Montgomery, } and 5th	D. M. Blow.
N. Alexander.	Wm. Porter, } reasons.	Walter Roberts.’ ”

But the real account of the conclusion of the Strabane meeting and its deeply affecting scenes must be given by him who was best qualified to describe them—Montgomery himself—as he has recorded them in the last pages of his “*Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland.*” (“*Unitarian Magazine,*” 1847, pp. 392–399.)

“The entire circumstances connected with the Synod at Strabane were burned into my memory at the time; and there they must remain indelible, until the frail tablet which contains the record shall be destroyed. Some of those circumstances, as illustrative of principles and characteristic of men and parties, appear to be worthy of preservation; and I shall specially note down a few which could not have become known, even to the most accurate newspaper reporter.

“The popular excitement was very great, even from the commencement; for, by some means, an expectation of great events had been awakened ‘in all the region round about.’ The Synod-house, therefore, which was unusually filled upon the first day of meeting, came to be frequently crowded, almost to suffocation, as the debates proceeded; and the audience unequivocally manifested by their looks, their gestures, and their tumultuous applause, that they deeply sympathised with the Calvinistic orators. It was evident, too, that in this excitement there was something more than mere sectarian enthusiasm; for the High Church and Orange parties lent all their strength to swell the cry against religious liberty. In fact, the cause of Catholic Eman-

icipation was, at that time, making rapid progress; and as the Unitarians were well known to be, without exception, the steady advocates of Catholic enfranchisement, the opportunity was dexterously seized to awaken political hostility throughout all the regions of Calvinism, by identifying Orangeism with Orthodoxy, and political Liberalism with heresy. The design was completely successful, not in Strabane alone, but over the entire Province; and Dr. Cooke speedily became quite an idol with the supporters of Protestant Ascendancy, by converting the stiff-necked Presbyterians of Ulster from the Volunteer enthusiasm of the year 1782, and the less justifiable patriotism of 1798.

“The excitement at Strabane produced another effect, which had, no doubt, been clearly foreseen. In the absence of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and during the slumber of the Church for the preceding sixty years, religious opinions had not been investigated, and the great mass of the people were entirely ignorant of doctrinal distinctions. In many cases, this arose from the neglect of the ministers and the indifference of their flocks; but, to a considerable extent, it was attributable to the fact that many of the clergy, as educated men, had outgrown the nominal creed and catechism of their church; and not wishing to alarm the prejudices or disturb the harmony of their congregations, they had gone quietly on, preaching neutral doctrines and good morality, without ever entering upon the thorny field of controversial theology. A few reading and thinking men in such congregations, with whom their ministers held friendly private intercourse, knew their opinions upon points of controversy, and generally participated in their doctrinal sentiments; but the great body of the laity, except in some fifteen or twenty congregations where the clergy had spoken *plainly*, still held a kind of traditional Orthodoxy, and were greatly prejudiced against ‘New Light.’ In a very large number of congregations, therefore, there were two parties—a small Unitarian party, from conviction; and a numerous Calvinistic party, from hereditary feeling and prejudice. I could name Presbyteries in which this condition of affairs existed, almost without a single exception; and I believe there was scarcely one Presbytery of the General Synod, in which it did not exist to a considerable extent—or, at least, to some extent. It is evident, therefore, that amongst a population thus circumstanced, nothing could be easier than to create a general excitement, by declaiming about ‘glorious old John Knox, who rebuked a Popish Queen, and pulled down the nests of the Popish rooks, in Edinburgh’—about ‘our martyred ancestors, that crimsoned the deep glens and mountain heather of Scotland with their precious blood, in

defence of Orthodoxy'—about certain monsters who, 'though called ministers of the Gospel, deserved no more love, and were entitled to no milder appellation, than *robbers*, for they robbed the Saviour of His eternal crown of glory'—about 'the awful destruction of priceless souls from the foul leprosy of Arianism'—and, finally, about 'the blue banner of Ulster, which would soon wave over the worthy descendants of the glorious Scottish martyrs, and marshal them on to victory over all the enemies of the Truth.' Under the exciting influence of such harangues, and amidst fearful denunciations of all who should dare to exercise the right of individual judgment in the concerns of religion, the General Synod of Ulster resolved, like their worthy brethren of the older Inquisition, to demand from each member his assent *to*, or dissent *from*, a Declaration of Faith, couched in human phraseology, at which several of them had previously cavilled, and to which, I sincerely believe, not ten individuals attached precisely the same meaning!

"To me, and to many others, the scene was awful. I have looked upon the wreck of earthly hopes—I have followed the remains of loved ones to the tomb—I have myself stood, as I believed, upon the very brink of the grave; but I solemnly declare that, before or since, I never experienced such an utter crushing and desolation of the heart, as I felt in the Synod-house of Strabane, at three o'clock on the 30th of June, 1827. I had taken my stand immediately in front of the pulpit: the whole house lay distinctly before me: the galleries, the alleys, the very window-seats were densely crowded by an eager and angry multitude. With one or two exceptions, I could discern no marks of triumph on the countenances of the majority—many of whom were comparative boys. They had, no doubt, gained a victory over Christian liberty, amidst popular excitement, and by unscrupulous appeals to unworthy prejudices and passions, because to have opposed them, either by speech or vote, would have brought down upon many sudden and irremediable ruin: and yet they did not seem to be quite satisfied with their work; they seemed to shrink from sacrificing the victims whom they had taken unawares, without notice or preparation. But if the very victors appeared to be thus disconcerted, how did it fare with the vanquished? Some ten or twelve, who had firmly resolved to keep a conscience at all hazards, manifested that tranquillity of countenance and demeanour which ever attends upon an honest purpose. My venerated master, Nathaniel Alexander, stood erect, like 'an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile;' the true-hearted Robert Campbell, although clearly foreseeing the tempest which afterwards so relentlessly burst upon him, continued calm and unmoved;

the noble brow of William Porter remained unruffled; John Mitchel, the Melancthon of our Church, 'looked more in pity than in anger' upon his opponents; and Fletcher Blakely, the early champion of truth and freedom, maintained a bearing worthy of his character and cause. But there were others of the vanquished there—less firm, less sustained—deeply miserable. Some of them, too, were hoary-headed men—'to dig unable, and to beg ashamed;' and some were middle-aged, but wanting popular talents to give them any hope of successfully supporting an unpopular cause; and some were young, with human hopes and affections, too strong for nobler purposes, clinging around their hearts. I knew them all; I knew their opinions and their feelings; 'I saw the iron enter into their souls.' Some of them looked down in shame, others looked up in agony; but only two alternatives presented themselves to view—closed pulpits, starving children, and destitute old age; or all those appalling evils avoided, by uttering a solemn falsehood before God and the world! Like Peter, they fell, they sinned; and like him, some of them, I *know*, 'repented bitterly, with tears!' I do not justify their conduct: I do not deny their weakness, their guilt. But were they the only, or even the principal sinners in this deplorable affair? They wanted moral courage—they were deficient in Christian integrity—they sacrificed truth to the yearning affections of the human heart; but those who, for ambition, for the love of power, under the plea of promoting a visionary and unattainable uniformity of belief, wilfully and deliberately laid snares for their unwary feet, were unquestionably steeped in tenfold guilt. The seducer is always more criminal than his victim—the suborner of perjury is deeper dyed in sin than the low wretch who commits it—and the solemn falsehoods uttered in Strabane lie heaviest on the souls of those who tempted frail and erring brethren to pronounce them. And what was the compensative gain for all this sacrifice of decency and truth? Was any man's *opinion* altered? No: but several persons changed their *profession*, and duly received the right hand of Orthodox fellowship, who would have been spurned, and persecuted, and reduced to beggary, had they been bold and honest enough to speak the truth! And this was lauded to the skies as 'a glorious *purifying* of the Church!' In other words, the Church was *purified* by doing an act which drove out honest men, and allowed false professors and selfish knaves to remain in her bosom as favoured children. Such, indeed, ever has been and ever must be the effect of creeds. They are strong enough to exclude honest men; but knaves 'cut boldly' and cut through them. A man's Unitarian opinions may be certainly known

by his refusing to enter a Trinitarian Church; but the simple fact of his subscribing a creed which is essential to his obtaining honours and emoluments, is, in itself, no proof that he believes it. Professor Leslie of Edinburgh ostentatiously subscribed the Westminster Confession, although he was avowedly a sceptic; and a late leading member of the General Synod freely took the Trinitarian Test at Strabane, although I once saw it declared under the hand of one of his Orthodox brethren, that 'he must be an Atheist.'

"These melancholy things too fully show how effectually churches labour to make men dishonest; and to avoid being a witness of the deplorable havoc of conscience which I knew was about to take place at Strabane, I avowed myself to be an Arian, and then obtained permission to retire from the Synod-house during the call of the roll. In this request I was joined by the late Robert Orr of Killead, F. Blakely, and S. C. Nelson. Mr. Blakely well remembers, that he and I walked along the street with the tears streaming from our eyes, as we mourned over the degradation of our once Free Church, and thought of the deplorable scenes which were at that moment passing within the walls of a meeting-house, in which the most able and most excellent William Dunlop had, for twenty-five years, delivered eloquent lessons of Christian Truth and Christian Liberty.

"Eight ministers, avowedly Arians, remained in the house, but refused to make any declaration, on the just ground that the Synod had no right to demand it, and that the whole affair was an act of usurpation and tyranny. Their names were, I believe, John Mitchel, Robt. Campbell, Ephraim Stevenson, Samuel Watson, Alex. Orr, William Finlay, Thos. Alexander, and Arthur Neilson. The two ministers who distinctly voted 'Not,' were N. Alexander and William Porter. Five honoured elders did the same, viz.:—Leonard Dobbin, Armagh; Walter Roberts, Dunmurry; William Orr, Strabane; Wm. Moody, Newtownlimavady; and D. M. Blow, Templepatrick—of whom the first four have long since departed from this transitory scene.

"The melancholy exhibition closed at five o'clock on the Saturday evening—the crowd rapidly melted away—and the ministers of the Synod, victors and vanquished, came out 'in mingled tide,' haggard, depressed, and evidently dissatisfied with the deplorable work in which they had been engaged. About two hours afterwards, one of the *professed* believers came into my private room, wrung my hand, and burst into an agony of tears. He was an early and most valued friend; and were it not that further particulars might cause the individual to

be recognised, and inflict pain upon honest living hearts, I could tell a tale of what he said about himself, and others, both actors and sufferers, as affecting as it would be instructive. Some day it may be told; but I must now forbear."

The "tale" was partly "told" in one of his unpublished discourses, as follows; though, from the same kindly motives, the name and other means of identification were still withheld:—

"On the evening of that miserable day I was sitting in my chamber, dreadfully depressed by the humiliating scene that I had witnessed, and mourning over the almost hopeless degradation of that Church, with which the earliest and brightest visions of my life had been associated, as the emblem of Christian purity and Christian liberality. The door opened, and an old college acquaintance entered—a man with whom I had lived for years upon terms of unrestrained communion—a man whom I knew to the heart's core, and few better hearts have I ever known! Roused and cheered by his entrance, I forgot my gloomy reveries, and advanced to meet him, with the cordial smile and salutation of earlier days. He seized my hand with a flurried agitation, wrung it with violence, looked in my face with an expression of inconceivable misery, and burst into an agony of tears. Oh, my friends, it is not a common sorrow that can melt the firm heart of manhood into woman's weakness! But the mystery was soon explained: he had been one of the *professing* believers in the Athanasian Trinity: from a natural infirmity of purpose, and the fear of bringing ruin upon his family, he had virtually denied the *one* living and true God—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—in whom alone he did *truly believe*; and his tortured spirit was the prey of a deadly remorse." (He added, in describing the scene privately to friends—"He threw himself upon the couch, and buried his face in the cushions in a passion of sobs, exclaiming—'Oh, Montgomery! I'm a disgraced and ruined man! I can never hold up my head again!'") "I spoke to him of the mercy of the Being who knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust; of the apostle, who had denied his Lord; and of the fair, open field of manly confession and retraction, which yet lay before him. He was soothed; and he promised that another sun should not set, until he should redeem his forfeited integrity! But, alas! he remains another living proof 'that the first step in vice is generally fatal.' The weakness which originally betrayed him, and the earthly affections which still clung around his heart, aided by a want of moral fortitude to acknowledge that he had gone astray,

carried him from the scene of his shame without amendment, and he is this day the *Orthodox minister* of a willing people, who, had he been a man of unbending truth and integrity, would have turned him and his family adrift upon a cold and merciless world! And this man is but one of *many* who became the *victims* of worse men than themselves—men who sinned with less temptation, and from more degrading motives.”

His description in the “*Outlines*” thus continues:—

“The week of excitement, anxiety, and sorrows was followed by a Sunday morning, calm, bright, and refreshing. Human passion had not been able to cast a veil over the glorious sun, or to despoil the fair earth of its sweetness and its beauty. ‘The very air was balm’—the beasts, the birds, the insects—all were happy, as I journeyed two miles through a delightful country, to worship in the meeting-house of Urney, of which congregation my clear-headed and warm-hearted young friend, James Purss, was then the pastor. He had invited me to preach; but knowing the hateful spirit which had been awakened in the country, I declined, on his account, and he had engaged, in my place, one of the *Believers* of the preceding day, whom, until that moment, I had considered to be as great a heretic as I was myself. Arriving at the meeting-house before any of my friends had reached it, I turned into ‘the green,’ where I saw a considerable crowd, evidently very much on the alert. I soon learned the object of the party; for a rude young farmer instantly advanced and exclaimed—‘No man will preach here that denies his Saviour: we thought you were coming, and the pulpit stairs are lined with men to prevent you from getting up.’ To this courteous salutation, I quietly replied, that ‘he and his friends had given themselves unnecessary trouble, as I had no desire to cast pearls before swine.’ At that moment my co-presbyter, the Rev. John Orr of Portaferry, came forward and announced that *he* was to preach; but he was instantly informed that ‘he also had denied Christ.’ In vain did he repeatedly assert his Orthodoxy: the young farmer was inexorable; and although Mr. Purss, who now arrived, confirmed Mr. Orr’s statement, John Brown could not be moved—declaring that ‘he had been himself in Strabane, and knew better.’ The Rev. Robert Winning joined his testimony in support of Mr. Orr’s Orthodoxy; but all was in vain: the crowd would not believe the united evidence of three Orthodox ministers, and hinted pretty plainly that such company rather cast some doubt upon Mr. Purss himself. In the end, Mr. Winning preached two very rational

sermons. Thus had the leaven begun to work in the whole mass of society. One week earlier, and I could have preached at Urney with perfect acceptance; now, the people gave the lie direct to their own minister and two of his friends.

“The result of this adventure is at once amusing and instructive. When the Synod assembled on the following day, Mr. Orr, being anxious for his reputation, requested the Clerk to state whether or no he had expressed his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. There could be no doubt of the fact—he *had*; but, lest he should be too proud of his faith, Dr. Cooke looked across the alley, and addressed him in these pleasant and memorable words—‘You did say you believed, Mr. Orr, and I suppose you are Orthodox in your own way; but *your* Orthodoxy is not *my* Orthodoxy!’ How instructive a commentary was this upon the proceedings of the previous week! Two learned divines, having only *one Creed*, had nevertheless two *Orthodoxies*—and *that* I firmly believe. Thus it is that creeds delude the people, by ‘holding up a uniform testimony to the world,’ whilst all sorts of *opinions* quietly nestle under their sheltering wings! This is notoriously true, in relation to every creed-bound Church in Christendom: and, at this moment, there is far more actual uniformity of belief in the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, without any creed save the Bible, than exists in the Irish General Assembly, with its stringent Confession and Catechisms. Creeds, in fact, are of no use, except as cloaks for time-servers and hypocrites; for honest men will candidly state their real opinions, and consequently do not require them.

“The Calvinistic party calculated, not unnaturally, that their triumph at Strabane had crushed the spirit and annihilated the hopes of Unitarianism. I say *not unnaturally*, because all sects and parties deceive themselves by supposing that the views and feelings which actuate the ardent supporters by whom they are almost exclusively surrounded, also pervade the entire mass of society. The clamour of the multitude therefore, in Strabane, they mistook for the voice of all Ulster. They saw how easily many unfortunate ministers had been crushed by the terror of the multitude—and they confidently believed that the few foolhardy heretics, who had refused, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to worship the image which Henry Cooke had set up, would be speedily consumed in the fiery furnace of popular indignation. Some of them, consequently, in the kindness of their natures, which were less rigid than their iron creeds, looked upon us with unaffected compassion. As a fair sample of this amiable class of practical intolerants with generous hearts, I may adduce the case of my early, esteemed,

and still living friend, Richard Dill of Ballykelly, near Newtownlimavady—as sincere and honest a man, I believe, as ever existed. On their return from Synod, he cordially invited my worthy elder, Walter Roberts, to accept the hospitalities of his pleasant home; and after much agreeable conversation, he expressed himself in the most gratifying terms with regard to myself—deeply lamenting the unfortunate course which I had pursued, and taking it for granted that I would not be permitted again to enter the pulpit of Dunmurry. On this point he was speedily, and, in spite of his Calvinism, I am persuaded, *agreeably* undeceived. My venerable friend truly informed him that I ran no risk, although an *opposite* course might have exposed me to danger—inasmuch as I was the *ninth* minister under whom he had sat in Dunmurry, and that, without a single exception, they had preached the doctrines of Unitarianism! As the head of my session, in years, in worth, in public esteem, in every generous and excellent quality of head and heart—that good and honoured man, in whose house I first broke bread, when I entered Dunmurry as a stranger and comparative boy, only did justice to the worshipping society whose sentiments and interests he so appropriately represented in Strabane. In good truth, I was in no danger: from the highest to the humblest, my people were instructed, liberal, and determined; and I had not the merit of most of my brethren, in resisting the tyranny of the Synod of Ulster.

“So far were subsequent facts from realising the sanguine hopes and confident expectations of our Calvinistic opponents, as to the extinction of Unitarian Christianity, that the proceedings at Strabane gave a sudden impulse to the great principles of truth and liberty, as gratifying as it was important. The press carried our debates into every house—tracts and pamphlets expository of our opinions were widely circulated—our pulpits awoke from their quiet slumbers of neutrality—and ‘New Light’ literally penetrated the darkest regions of the land. Instead of being annihilated, we were merely aroused; and the sudden irruption of our enemies only proved that we had a latent strength in ourselves, and a hold upon the public sympathies, upon neither of which we could at all have calculated.”

The interest created by the Strabane debates, and, more especially, by Montgomery’s speech, was of no ordinary kind, and quickly extended itself far and wide throughout the kingdom. His address was originally reported by the “Northern Whig,” subsequently copied into all the Liberal papers in Ireland, and several

of the leading journals in London ; published, in various forms, in Dublin and Belfast ; and inserted into many of the most respectable religious periodicals in the kingdom.

In Dublin and the South, it was printed and circulated in the form of a Broadsheet, at the expense of the venerable Archibald Hamilton Rowan, with the following heading :—

“For the serious consideration of all Dissenters, this speech of the Rev. Mr. Montgomery, at the General Synod of Ulster, is reprinted for A. H. R., from the ‘Dublin Morning Post’ of August 1st, 1827.”

In the course of the same month, a reprint in Belfast was heralded by the following highly eulogistic advertisement in the “Northern Whig” :—

“SYNOD OF ULSTER—REV. H. MONTGOMERY.

“This talented divine’s unanswered and unanswerable address, at the late meeting of Synod in Strabane, which elicited eulogium even from his opponents, is about to be published in a separate sheet, revised and corrected.

“The extraordinary excitement created by this most talented and Christian-like address throughout the whole of Ireland, will justify the throwing off a very large edition. It may be had after to-morrow at the ‘Whig’ Office.”

The reprint itself, in broadsheet, is thus introduced :—

“Some friends of religious liberty, who are of various Christian communions, and several of whom entertain different views on points of doctrine. publish the following speech of the Rev. Henry Montgomery, on the Declaration of Faith proposed at the last meeting of the Synod of Ulster, in Strabane, in 1827. Whilst they do this solely with a view of disseminating principles of Christian charity and mutual forbearance amongst persons of all religious persuasions, they feel bound, in justice to Mr. Montgomery, to state that the publication of his speech in its present form is done without any participation on his part.”

By these means, it was calculated that upwards of 30,000 copies of the address were soon put into circulation ; yet still the interest waxed and grew, and the thirst was unslaked. Many

persons of different denominations, desiring to have it in a more permanent form, procured the publication of a beautifully-printed edition in Belfast, with a suitable introduction, which refers to it, "not only as a tribute to the individual who spoke it, but as tending to support the true principles of Christian Liberty." An elegantly bound copy was presented to Montgomery, with an additional most complimentary dedication from the publisher, his friend, Mr. John Hodgson.

But the public feeling, still unsatisfied, craved further and more marked expression, and effected its object, some months afterwards, in the presentation of a truly splendid testimonial, a most flattering tribute of esteem.

The 18th of June, 1828, was indeed a *Dies Creta* for Henry Montgomery and his family—a day to be long remembered with honest pride and satisfaction. The magnificent guerdon of public esteem, bestowed upon him that day, was stated to have been, till then, "unparalleled in this country;" and if we take into account the difference of circumstances of the country and its people in those days and the present, it will appear to have been not often surpassed, perhaps seldom equalled, even since. As a token of distinguished services and conspicuous merit on the one hand, and of true appreciation thereof on the other, it conferred high honour alike on the givers and the receiver.

In the "Northern Whig" of the next day, June 19, the leading article thus complimentarily dwells on the subject:—

"In another part of our paper it has been our grateful task to record the interesting ceremony attendant on the presentation, to the Rev. Henry Montgomery, of one of the most splendid and valuable testimonials of public approbation and esteem that ever was conferred in this country on any private individual. We are aware that attempts have already been made to misrepresent the object of this gratifying tribute of regard, and the motives of the respectable individuals from whom it has emanated. Without further reference to such attempts at misrepresentation, we shall show, by a simple narrative of facts, that the distinguished mark of esteem which Mr. Montgomery has received did not owe its origin to sectarian or party zeal, but to a general feeling of respect and admiration for

genuine integrity, unaffected piety, and Christian benevolence, united with unshaken firmness and splendid talents; qualities which have long been eminently conspicuous in Mr. Montgomery's character, which by him have uniformly been directed to promote peace and good-will among Christians of all denominations, and which were exerted on a memorable occasion in support of the great principles of Christian Liberty."

Then, after describing the previous condition of the Synod, the spirit of the Strabane debates, and the imposition of "a measure, inquisitorial in its nature, destructive of the character of the Presbyterian body, and subversive of Christian Liberty," it continues:—

"It was upon this memorable occasion that the Rev. Henry Montgomery stood forward, not in defence of any particular doctrine, or of any peculiar set of opinions; though then, as he has done on all proper occasions, he made the most manly and candid avowal of his conscientious belief; but he stood forward in defence of those great principles of toleration and mutual forbearance to which the Synod had been solemnly pledged, and which were about to be violated. He stood forward to prevent the body to which he belonged from giving their sanction to measures, which were calculated to hold out a premium for hypocrisy, and produce uncharitable recriminations, anti-Christian dissensions, and disreputable divisions. He stood forward in defence of that great principle which is recognised by the dictates of nature and of reason, and sanctioned by the Eternal Word of Truth: 'Do unto others as ye would, that, in like circumstances, they should do unto you;' a principle which forms the great bond of social life, and which cannot be lawfully infringed, no matter how holy may be the end proposed to be attained by the violation.

"These principles Mr. Montgomery defended, in a speech which has done honour to himself, reflected new lustre on the body to which he belongs, and which will long be preserved as a specimen of commanding eloquence.

"To express their admiration of the noble stand which Mr. Montgomery made in defence of what the good and upright of every religious persuasion recognise and venerate—to put on record their respect for his virtues as a minister and a man—a number of individuals, of various religious denominations, have presented Mr. Montgomery with a service of plate; a testimonial of esteem, which, for splendour

and magnificence, is without a parallel in this country, and which is rendered still more valuable by the rank, respectability, and high character of the donors. The subscribers to this testimonial are not exclusively composed of men who agree with Mr. Montgomery on speculative points of religion. In the subscription list are the names of Calvinistic Presbyterians, who, though zealous in maintaining their own belief, respect the conscientious opinions of others; members of the Church of England, who, though sincerely attached to the form and faith of their own communion, are willing to extend the blessings of religious liberty to all; Roman Catholics, who, though adhering conscientiously to the doctrines and ceremonies of their own church, cheerfully recognise those principles of toleration and Christian forbearance, so necessary to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity, wherever diversity of opinion prevails: in short, men of all denominations, throughout this intelligent Province, have united in presenting to Mr. Montgomery this splendid tribute of regard. This flattering testimony of esteem and approbation, therefore, has not been conferred for the purpose of furthering the views of any sect or party; it has not been presented to Mr. Montgomery for his advocacy of any peculiar doctrine; for, on the occasion which called forth this demonstration of general respect, Mr. Montgomery was trying to pour out the oil of peace on the troubled waters of contention, and he abstained from every topic that was calculated to increase the storm which prevailed. It has been presented in recognition of those principles of mutual forbearance, Christian charity, and moral justice, about which the wise and good of all religious persuasions are agreed, and which Mr. Montgomery has not only eloquently defended, but exemplified and adorned by the whole tenor of his life.

“To a feeling far superior to every narrow and sectarian prejudice, does Mr. Montgomery owe the place which he holds in the affection of his friends and the estimation of society; and that he may long live to enjoy the same honourable and enviable situation is our sincere and cordial wish.”

The report of the proceedings, as given in the “Whig,” and afterwards re-published and extensively circulated by the subscribers, is as follows:—

“The friends of religious liberty, of different denominations, residing in Belfast and its neighbourhood, met on Wednesday, June 18, in the Assembly-Room of the Commercial Buildings, Belfast, for the purpose

of presenting a superb service of plate to the Rev. Henry Montgomery. At half-past one o'clock the company began to assemble; and at two, there were upwards of five hundred ladies and gentlemen present, who may be fairly said to have represented the rank, wealth, and respectability of this portion of the North of Ireland. John Holmes Houston, Esq., was called to the chair.

"After some introductory observations, Mr. Houston read the following address:—

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"We, your friends and admirers, of various religious persuasions, in Belfast and the adjoining counties, present for your acceptance a Service of Plate, and conceive that it will be satisfactory to you, and agreeable to the wishes of your numerous friends, to state the grounds on which we think you are entitled to this public testimonial of our esteem and approbation.

"Convinced that unanimity of opinion upon speculative points in religion is neither attainable nor essential, we have observed with pride and gratification your unceasing efforts to enforce the practical duties of Christianity, to spread peace and good-will among Christians of all denominations, and to prevent the diversity of sentiment, so prevalent on theological subjects, from being converted by narrow-minded men into a source of *lasting* discord, by which the cup of social life is too often embittered, domestic harmony disturbed, and the bonds of Christian love rent asunder.

"This liberal and conciliatory spirit was manifested by you, sir, during the recent struggle of intolerance in the Synod of Ulster, in a manner which at once reflected lustre on your profession as a minister of the Gospel, and exalted you in the estimation of every liberal-minded member of the community. Upon that memorable occasion, your manly, honest, and talented efforts to defeat an attempt tending to narrow the circle of toleration, and to fetter the right of private judgment, deserve our admiration, and command our gratitude.

"Whilst we are desirous to avoid impugning the motives of those from whom you then differed, we cannot sufficiently applaud the splendid talent and unshrinking firmness with which you vindicated the most sacred and valuable privilege of man, against an attempt to confine the doctrines of Divine Faith within the limits of human creeds, and to enforce a test upon a subject on which mankind can never arrive at a perfect concurrence of opinion.

"The speech, sir, which you delivered at that period, with a degree

of courage which the confidence of your opponents could not shake, and of uncompromising integrity, which no consideration of interest could seduce from its noble purpose, we regard as a brilliant specimen of eloquence—pure, forcible, and persuasive; combining strength with elegance, and extorting admiration even from those whom it may have failed to convince.

“In addition to these indisputable claims upon our regard, we recognise in your character the talents and acquirements which so eminently qualify you for the important situation you hold in the Academical Institution, combined with those private virtues which grace and sweeten the intercourse of domestic life.

“With the most cordial wishes for your health, happiness, and prosperity, we subscribe ourselves your affectionate friends.

“(Signed, on behalf of the subscribers,)

“ C. GREG.	SAML. THOMSON.
JOHN H. HOUSTON.	JOHN MACKENZIE.
JOHN M ^C CANCE.	JAMES ANDREWS.
WM. TENNENT.	WM. HUNTER.
ROBERT CALLWELL.	JAMES ARTHUR.
JOHN S. FERGUSON.	JOHN CURRELL.
JAMES T. KENNEDY.	CLOTWORTHY DOBBIN.
JOSEPH STEVENSON.	MICHAEL ANDREWS.

“*June 18, 1828.*”

“To which Mr. Montgomery made the following reply :—

“ BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION,
“*June 18, 1828.*”

“ ESTEEMED FRIENDS AND CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

“With profound gratitude and honest pride, I receive the truly valuable and splendid testimonial of your regard, which has just been presented for my acceptance, accompanied by an address, equally remarkable for its cordiality, its talent, its eloquence, and its moderation. Next to the approbation of God and my own conscience, I have always valued the esteem of the wise and good amongst my fellow-men; and when I consider the number, the station, and above all, the moral respectability of the persons by whose liberality I have been presented with a gift, more magnificent than was ever bestowed upon any private individual in this part of Ireland, I feel that I am placed in a situation sufficient to gratify the highest earthly ambition. Had this affair been commenced and prosecuted with a view to support

sectarian theology or party politics, I might have been grateful for the zeal of my friends, whilst I regretted the contracted feelings in which it originated; but when I perceive amongst the subscribers men of distinguished rank and character, widely differing, both in their religious and political sentiments, I exult in the important fact, that the honour conferred upon an humble individual is connected with a glorious and immutable principle, infinitely raised above the tainted atmosphere of sect and party. The very names of your Committee, that so fairly represent the great body of the contributors, stamp upon the whole proceeding a character equally unassailable and influential.

“It would be unjust towards you, presumptuous in myself, and derogatory to your objects, to imagine for a moment that any trifling service, which, in the conscientious discharge of duty, I may have been able to render to the holy cause of Christian toleration, has been the only, or even the principal reason of the distinguished reward bestowed upon my feeble exertions, by so large and respectable a portion of the laity of different churches. Your own hearts being attuned to generous and liberal sentiments, it is evident, from the flattering tenor of your address, that you have greatly over-valued the power of the feeble hand which touched the living instrument; but, at the same time, it is my highest gratification to perceive that you have honoured me with your approbation, not so much as a private individual, as the humble advocate of the sacred cause of Christian Liberty. Such a testimonial, from such characters, in support of an indefeasible public principle, must, in these irritated and unsettled times, produce a salutary effect. It proves, beyond question, that although individuals may err, and public bodies lose sight of their principles, there is still a noble spirit of religious liberty alive and active in the great mass of the community, Nay, more; it demonstrates that this hallowed spirit is not confined to sect or party, but that it is the denizen of every generous breast, without distinction of creed or denomination. It is a triumphant consideration, that whilst in all ages some have endeavoured to circumscribe the charities of nature, others have still been found, whose ample hearts swelled beyond the measure of all human restraints, and whose benevolent sympathies were bounded only by the rational creation of God. If such men always existed, if the darkest ages and the direst tyranny could not blot them from the earth, it is not wonderful that they should abound in the nineteenth century, and under the protection of the British Constitution. Erring men may vainly imagine that they can stem the current of Christian Liberty, and they may invoke the passions and prejudices of the multitude to aid

them in opposing barriers to its course ; but although their puny efforts may create a momentary ripple upon its surface, it will continue to roll forward with irresistible majesty, adorning and fructifying the world. It has been well observed that ‘the schoolmaster is abroad ;’ yes, and the spirit of fearless inquiry is abroad ; and what is more important still, the Bible is abroad ; and he who shall attempt to convince mankind that strife and vain glory may be co-existent with Christianity, will soon discover the error of his calculations.

“The proceedings of the late Synod of Ulster may cast a momentary cloud over this cheering prospect ; but I am convinced that, in the end, they will be the means of diffusing religious light and moral beauty. Under the influence of a sudden and unexpected impulse, many estimable men forgot, for a season, the principles of their church, and acceded to measures which they now deplore. I am perfectly satisfied that amongst the most enlightened, experienced, and upright of my Calvinistic brethren, there exists as little desire ‘to place the yoke of bondage’ upon my neck, as I entertain to impose it upon theirs ; and I am willing to hope that amongst the less experienced members, dogmatic theology will not be able to turn back the genial current of nature, and to implant ungenerous sentiments in the youthful breast. I do believe there is yet a redeeming spirit in the Synod of Ulster ; and that, if any calculate upon disunion and strife, they will be signally disappointed.

“But it *may* be otherwise. The page of history and our own experience amply testify that there is no assumption too arrogant for fallible and sinful man, no act of tyranny too gross to be perpetrated under the hallowed guise of religion. The Synod *may*, therefore, ‘forsake its first love ;’ it may forget the very rudiments of those great principles upon which it stands as a Protestant and independent Church ; it may expose conscientious men to inconvenience, whilst it retains hypocrites in its bosom ; it may disseminate hatred and division in the blessed name of Him who hath so frequently commanded us ‘to love one another ;’ but it cannot arrest the progress of Christian toleration. Its late efforts have given much pain to the sincerest friends of the principles which it endeavoured to advance ; and should further aggressions be attempted, I am persuaded that many distinguished men will say to those engaged in pressing them forward :—‘We have preserved inviolate the faith which we pledged on entering the Church ; we have given you all that we dare to give—our Christian love, our civil courtesy, our most cordial co-operation in all plans of general usefulness ; but we will not give up, what you have

as little right to demand as we have to surrender—the free exercise of our immortal minds, the inestimable privilege of diligent inquiry and unrestricted judgment, and the unalterable allegiance which we owe to the great King and Head of the Church : we will adhere to our *Bibles*, and let you hold by your *Creeeds* ; we will endeavour to ‘stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free ;’ we will place no human authority in His room ; neither will we become accessories in ‘setting a snare for the feet of our brethren,’ by demanding a uniformity of opinions which we know to be unattainable, under the impious assumption of an infallibility which we know to be absurd. And should they, in the maintenance of such sentiments, be shunned by the intolerant or misrepresented by the designing, the present scene affords ample proof that they will be cheered in their onward course by the cordial esteem of the liberal and generous of all denominations. Many of them, I am aware, may be placed in perilous situations, where they will *really* require the constant exercise of that moral fortitude and intrepidity for which you have given me a degree of credit that I by no means deserve. In taking the course which I pursued at the last Synod, my duty and interest were perfectly coincident. It is my pride and happiness to be the pastor of a truly Christian people, who have uniformly cherished in *my* breast those kind sentiments which animate their *own*. Had I been dastardly enough to conceal any opinion which I entertained, or base enough, in opposition to my conscience, to join in any act for the curtailment of Christian Liberty, I might then have incurred a risk ; for I firmly believe that, in such circumstances, there is not a member of my congregation, from the humblest to the most exalted, that would not have looked upon me with coldness and disapprobation.

“I entirely concur in your desire not to impugn the *motives* of those who dissent from our views of Christian Liberty and universal toleration. We think them wrong ; we consider their principles and conduct as detrimental to the cause of truth, by checking free inquiry ; as calculated to ensnare the consciences of men, by holding out temptations to dissimulation ; and as injurious to the well-being of society, by sowing the baneful seeds of contention and disunion : but the charity of the Gospel, ‘which thinketh no evil,’ teaches us to hope that they are perfectly sincere. Of this, however, I am convinced, that if they be sincere (and I firmly believe that many of them at least are so), they will gradually become more humble-minded and more charitable to their brethren ; so that in the end we may all be brought, as children of one gracious Parent, and expectants of salvation through one

common Lord, 'to forbear one another, and to forgive one another, as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us.'

"I feel the total inadequacy of language to convey a just conception of the deep sense of gratitude which I entertain for your kind expressions of approbation respecting the manner in which I have discharged my humble but arduous duties as a public teacher, and the delicate terms in which you so flatteringly advert to my private walk and conversation. Such expressions of regard, from those who have seen 'my goings out and comings in' during the principal part of my public life, and especially from those who are themselves so much distinguished for all the virtues that can grace individuals or benefit society, are not only truly gratifying, but most deeply affecting. I trust for pardon to the honest sympathies of your own bosoms, when I say that, much as I prize your splendid gift, and highly as I value the other portions of your eloquent and Christian address, I do, as a husband and a father, thank you for the cordiality and kindness of that short paragraph, more than for them all. 'So long as memory holds her seat,' I shall treasure up the most grateful recollection of your kindness; and when the heart, which now swells with emotions which the tongue cannot express, shall have ceased to beat, I trust that I shall leave those behind me, who, 'from generation to generation,' will cherish the lasting remembrance of this day. Your address, with the honourable names affixed to it, I shall transmit to my children, with more honest satisfaction than I would hand down the title-deeds of an estate; and to the names of all the contributors, when engraved upon your bequest, I shall often turn their attention, that they may learn to respect the benefactors of their father, to cherish sentiments of Christian liberality, and to maintain the path of integrity, as that of safety and honour, amidst all the seductions of the world.

"To every contributor I return my heartfelt thanks for the individual compliment conferred upon myself; but, more especially, for his setting his seal to the great cause of the rights of conscience. To the members of your Committee I owe a debt of gratitude which I am as unable to express as to repay; and were it not invidious to particularise *individuals*, where *all* have been so courteous and so kind, there are some to whom I would personally, and by name, pay the public tribute of my unfeigned gratitude and esteem. I am well aware, however, that none of you have descended from your elevated rank, or neglected your important avocations, to mingle in this affair with any other view than to give the weight of your characters and names to the support of Christian toleration; and the general and cordial approbation by which

your views have been seconded, must be as satisfactory to you as it is truly gratifying to me.

“Whilst I have endeavoured to avoid a brevity of reply, which might have been construed into disrespect or insensibility, I fear I have run into the opposite extreme. But if a good motive be any apology for an erroneous act, I am not without excuse; for, in trespassing so long upon your patience, my sole aim has been to give, as far as words *can* give it, adequate expression to the feelings of my heart. That I have not succeeded better in my object is chiefly owing to the situation in which your unequalled kindness and generosity have placed me, by conferring upon me a gift, which, I joyfully admit, is well suited to the respectability of the donors, but altogether disproportioned to the very humble merits of the receiver.

“That the genuine spirit of the Gospel of Peace, which breathes nothing but charity and forbearance, may speedily acquire more influence in our native land; that ‘the strife of words’ may soon be changed for the hallowed accents of brotherly love; and that the ample blessing of a benignant Providence may rest upon you and yours, is, my much esteemed Friends and Benefactors, the fervent prayer of

“Your truly obliged and sincerely grateful,

“HENRY MONTGOMERY.”

“The following inscription was engraved on the two salvers:—

‘THE SERVICE OF PLATE,

OF WHICH THIS MAKES A PART,

WAS PRESENTED, BY A NUMBER OF THE INHABITANTS OF BELFAST AND
THE ADJOINING COUNTIES,

TO THE REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY, A.M.,

PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR OF DUNMURRY, AND HEAD MASTER OF THE ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT IN THE BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE HIGH RESPECT FOR HIM AS

A CHRISTIAN MINISTER, A FRIEND OF FREEDOM OF INQUIRY AND UNIVERSAL
TOLERATION, AND AS AN ELOQUENT AND FEARLESS ADVOCATE OF
THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT;

AS MANIFESTED AT THE LATE SYNOD OF ULSTER, HELD AT STRABANE,
JUNE, 1827.’

“The service of plate weighed 1000 ounces, and is massive and richly embossed.”

CHAPTER X.

REVIEW OF DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL LIFE.

1817—1828.

Domestic Circle—Children—Letter to Eldest Daughter—Prosperity of English School and Institution—Contemporary Head Masters—Dr. Nelson—Dr. Hincks—Dr. Thomson, &c.—Montgomery as a Teacher—System of Instruction—Composition and Elocution—His Pupils—Their after Pursuits—Varied Lives—Distinguished Careers—His Social Qualities and Position—Belfast Society—Hospitalities—First Visit to England—Political Principles—Early Advocacy of Catholic Emancipation—County Meeting in Belfast (1828)—The Dinner—Dr. Crolly—Montgomery's Health and Reply—Dr. Crolly's Complimentary Remarks on Institution—Charity Sermon for House of Industry—Collection.

ON the 24th of the same month, June, 1828, the next Annual Meeting of Synod was to take place in Cookstown; and mysterious rumours were abroad that a wondrous blow was to be struck by the Orthodox leaders, which was utterly to overwhelm the Arians.

But ere we accompany Montgomery once more into the Synod's heated atmosphere of debate and painful strife, let us turn for a short space to the pleasanter task of reviewing the course of his domestic and social life, during the eleven years intervening from his appointment to the Institution, to the day when he stood in the Belfast Assembly-Room to receive the splendid tribute of public esteem.

In the domestic circle his family had been increasing around him, and at this time the number consisted of two sons and four daughters—another son having died in infancy. He was an extremely fond and loving parent, ever solicitous for his children's welfare, and nervously anxious when they encountered the mishaps and sicknesses incident to childhood. He was

already providing for their education. His eldest daughter, having early shown superior aptitude, was sent at the age of eight to a desirable boarding-school, then conducted, near the sea-side village of Ballywalter, by the well-known family of Swanwick, long held in estimation as superintendents of female education both in England and Ireland. A letter written to his daughter, shortly after she had been placed there, may serve as an illustration of his manner with his children, and of the ease with which he could accommodate himself to the childish mind. After recounting a number of little incidents of home news about her brothers and sisters, such as would most interest the child, he writes :—

“I am sure you are a very good girl, and very attentive to your lessons and music. It would distress both your mother and me very much if you did not do all in your power to please Mrs. Swanwick in every respect, and especially if you did not treat all your little school-fellows with great kindness and good-nature. Be always diligent, obedient, and good-tempered, and your mistress will love you ; be obliging and affectionate towards your play-fellows, and they will, in return, endeavour to make you happy. I hope you never forget to say your prayers night and morning. I expect you will be able to repeat the whole Catechism* at vacation ; and perhaps, if you be a good girl, Mrs. Swanwick will be kind enough sometimes to hear you repeat the ‘Sermon on the Mount,’ that you may not forget it.

“We hope to hear a good account of you very soon from Mrs. Swanwick.—I am, my dear child, your affectionate father,

“H. MONTGOMERY.”

His sons, as they grew old enough, were placed on a footing with his boarders, and shared with them in the ordinary discipline

* The Catechism here referred to was that entitled—“A Catechism for young persons ; intended to instruct them in the principles of the Christian religion, and to encourage them in the practice of virtue. Belfast : Simms & M’Intyre. 1811”—a truly admirable and valuable publication. The author’s name has not been given ; but if, as there is every reason to believe, it was composed by Montgomery himself, and formed his earliest publication, it manifests such maturity of intellect and judgment, and such comprehensive grasp, logical arrangement, and felicitous expression of ideas and principles in the elucidation of doctrinal and practical religion, as have rarely marked a work of the kind by an author only in his twenty-third year !

and training of the school. The name and fame of his school rapidly increased; and in a few years from his appointment it became the popular place of education for the sons of the gentry and merchants—the respectable middle classes—of a great part of Ulster, with not a few from Dublin and the South. Even from England and Scotland, and from distant colonies, youths were occasionally sent to be under his care. And admirable indeed was the instruction they received! The system pursued in the Institution was well calculated to effect this result. The division of labour through so many departments—each a distinct school, with its own head master and assistants, responsible for its efficiency, and striving for its success—promoted a thoroughness in the instruction afforded in the several branches, not usually found where only one master has the general charge of the whole.

The names of the principal head masters, who, during those years, were contemporary with Montgomery, will be sufficient to indicate the character of the education imparted in the several schools.

The Classical Department—the head master of which had a similar residence to that of the English master in the other end of the Institution building, and, like him, received boarders—had the advantage of being presided over by the Rev. William Nelson (or Neilson, as the name was then), D.D., M.R.I.A., a celebrated classical scholar—author of the very superior Greek Grammar which long held its place as the text-book on the subject, both for schools and colleges in Ireland. He was also Professor of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Irish in the College Department. Dying in 1821, he was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Dix Hincks—afterwards LL.D., M.R.I.A.—whose profound and varied scholarship, and that of his family, have made the name of Hincks so familiar in the highest walks of literature.* On the retirement of Dr. Hincks, Mr. Hugh Wilson became head master of the Classical School, by whom it continued to be efficiently conducted for a number of years.

* Father to the late Rev. Dr. Hincks of Killileagh, the renowned archaeologist and philologist, and to Sir Francis Hincks of the Canadian Government.

The Mathematical and Mercantile School had for its head master James Thomson, M.A., also Professor of Mathematics in the College. He afterwards became Dr. Thomson, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow—author of the several popular educational works known as Thomson's Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid, Trigonometry, Differential and Integral Calculus, &c.* His son, Sir William Thomson, D.C.L., F.R.S., Professor in Glasgow University, and late President of the British Association, received the honour of knighthood from the Queen, after having superintended the successful laying of the first Atlantic Telegraph Cable from Ireland to America. He, with his equally celebrated brother, James Thomson, LL.D., Professor of Engineering in the University of Glasgow, together with the above-mentioned and other sons of Dr. Hincks, were amongst Montgomery's early pupils. Mr. Thomson was succeeded by the Rev. I. Steen, who worthily sustained the reputation of the school through a long series of years. In the Writing School, Mr. Spence was no less celebrated for his own finished and ornate caligraphy, than for his success as an instructor in the art. In the French School, Messrs. Ferris, A.M., Lamoile, and d'Oisy; in Italian, Messrs. Fabrini and d'Oisy, and Dr. Forneri; in German, Mr. Schweitzer and Dr. Forneri; in Spanish, Mr.

* The facts of Dr. Thomson's early life are equally interesting and instructive. He was the son of a small farmer, living at the Spa Wells, near Ballynahinch, County Down; and in early youth was often occupied in looking after (or, as it is termed, herding) his father's cattle. While thus engaged, he was frequently observed drawing with a piece of chalk, or sharp-pointed stone, on an ordinary roofing slate, strange hieroglyphical figures, over which he would pore in silent abstraction; but which, to his father and the family, were quite unintelligible. On one occasion, however, the late Rev. Dr. Armstrong of Dublin, then a young man, assistant to Dr. Bruce in the Belfast Academy, happening to call at Thomson's place, was shown some of these drawings, and, to his surprise, discovered them to be abstruse mathematical problems, carefully worked out. He at once examined him on the subject, found the stuff he was made of, and urged his father to send him to school, and, if possible, to college; telling him that, in all probability, he would arrive at high distinction. His advice was fortunately taken, and the result more than realised his anticipations. Young Thomson was sent to the school conducted by the Rev. Samuel Edgar near Ballynahinch, where he afterwards became assistant. Thence he made his way to Glasgow College, and thence to the usefulness and distinction that marked his life.

Besaucele ; and in Drawing, Messrs. Fabrini, Besaucele, and Molloy—successively contributed, in their different departments, to maintain the educational character of the Institution.

As a teacher, Montgomery was regarded as a disciplinarian—strict in his requirements, and severe in his punishments. A code of regulations for his boarders, drawn up in his own handwriting, in which are included the minutest directions for their conduct at all times, both on Sundays and week-days, evidenced the particularity and painstaking conscientiousness with which he regarded the duties of his office. In the schools of that period, corporal punishment was the prevalent rule—not, as now, the occasional exception. The employment of the cane, in greater or less measure, was considered an essential part of the education of youth. The Institution was no exception to this rule ; and in the English Department, while confinement after school-hours, and occasional manual correction, formed the usual punishment for neglected lessons—for moral offences, including *mitching* from school, Montgomery flogged, and, if the offence seemed to require it, flogged severely ; so that the oft-repeated and long remembered school couplet of the time—

“ The Lord have mercy on us,
And keep ‘ Long Harry ’ from us ! ” &c. —

would not seem to have been very unnatural under the circumstances.

That, however, his pupils were, for the most part, well able to distinguish between the occasional severity of the *teacher*—as believing that Goldsmith’s description well applied to him—

“ If severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ” —

and the constant kindness of the *man*, one may well conclude from the expressions of loving respect with which they ever spoke, and still do speak, of him, and from the warmth of grateful affection with which their letters to him abound, for years after leaving his care.

The teaching of composition and elocution, and familiarising the minds of his pupils with the works of the best English classic

writers, was, as might be expected, his peculiar *forte*. In regard to the first, he was in the habit of giving, during every session, to the pupils of the senior classes, an admirable series of original lectures, entitled, "Instructions for Composition," which he required them to write out *verbatim*. These were comprehended under the headings of "Introduction, General Directions, Style, Figures of Speech (sixteen of which he describes), Themes, Essays, Narrative Pieces, Letter-writing, and Mercantile Letter-writing." They are not less distinguished by correct taste and thorough mastery of the subject, than by his usual perspicuity of thought, and graceful simplicity of language.

Of the roll of his pupils, very many preceded, and many have since followed, their old master into another world; many are scattered abroad, fulfilling their various lots in as various localities of the earth; many are passing their lives in contented, or discontented, obscurity; a few have sunk into dishonour; many have acquired affluence as merchants; many have reached distinction in professional life. The Bar, the Bench, the House of Commons, the Army and Navy, the Civil Service, the Pulpit, the Hospital, the College Lecture-Room, and the Press—all have been from time to time adorned by pupils of Montgomery. Some have climbed high on the ladder of an honourable ambition; and some have set their foot even upon its topmost round—not excepting the highest position possible to be attained by a subject of the Crown in Ireland! *

* The Right Honourable Baron O'Hagan, the recent Lord Chancellor of Ireland, was long a favourite pupil of Montgomery, who early marked his superior talent and assiduity, as well as his gift of graceful and telling elocution. Some time after he had become his pupil, his father, Mr. Thomas O'Hagan, who was in business in Belfast, called on Montgomery, and asked to speak with him in private. He turned to his elder brother, Alexander, who was present (and by whom this incident has been narrated), introduced him to Mr. O'Hagan, and asked if he had any objection to mention the matter before him. He replied, "Certainly not;" and asked his advice as to his son Thomas—what he ought "to put him to." Montgomery "bit his lip," as wont to do when pondering a subject; and, after some consideration, said, "It depends on your means. Can you spend £500 on your son?" He replied that he was both able and willing to do so. "Then," said Montgomery at once, "we'll make him a barrister." The wise counsel was followed, fortunately for his gifted pupil himself, and still

There still remain, however, a goodly number of his old pupils, chiefly resident in Belfast and its vicinity, and through the Province of Ulster—most of them occupying high positions in mercantile and professional life—by whom it is hoped the memories recalled by these imperfect notes may not be found uninteresting.

Socially, the time of Montgomery and his family, during these years, seems to have passed very pleasantly. Both he and Mrs. Montgomery were endowed by nature with rare social gifts and faculties of pleasing, which each had carefully cultivated. They were possessed of conversational powers of the very highest order, not only on graver subjects of general interest, but an unfailling fund of witty anecdote and general pleasantry, which caused them to find themselves each the centre of a charmed circle wherever they went in society, and their company to be eagerly sought for at all times. In addition, they possessed not only youth, health, energy, distinguished personal appearance, a good social position, and a fair ambition to succeed; but were surrounded by an extensive circle of desirable friends and acquaintances, from whom they received, and towards whom in turn they exercised, a large and liberal hospitality.

The galaxy of wit and wisdom which had gained for Belfast the name of the Athens of Ireland, in the days of the Volunteers, had, for the most part, passed away; but not without leaving traces, broad and deep, in the liberal and advanced thought of its leading inhabitants of the succeeding generation. Such were the social elements amidst which their lot was cast; and the spacious rooms of the Institution were often thronged by a company, possessed of such varied attainments, as would have

more fortunately for the honour and welfare of his country. He continued to foster the education and to note the rapid progress of his protégé with unceasing interest; and after reading with delight one of his talented speeches on a public question, shortly after he was called to the bar, he is recorded to have said to a friend—"Mark my words! That young man, if he live, will yet be Lord Chancellor of Ireland!" His early friendship was warmly reciprocated by his distinguished and amiable pupil; and, honourable alike to both, this mutual regard remained unabated ever afterwards.

conferred distinction on any society, and rendered Mrs. Montgomery's reunions amongst the most popular and attractive in Belfast.

In the summer vacation of 1822, Henry Montgomery, for the first time, visited England and London—a journey to become so familiarised to him in after years. He was accompanied by his wife and her elder sister, Mrs. Carley, and their object would seem to have been merely a pleasure-trip. Their route was by Dublin, Kingstown, and Liverpool; and of their journey, till after their arrival in Liverpool, he left some pleasant sketches, amusingly written as notes by the way. It is to be regretted that, though containing several most entertaining descriptions, they are so incomplete in their nature, and stop so abruptly—having been merely intended as private memoranda—that they cannot be here transcribed.

Into the several political questions which in those days occupied the public mind, Montgomery entered with all the spirit and energy that distinguished him, as the consistent advocate of liberal progress. Above all, the question of Catholic Emancipation—which then stirred the nation to its depths, and was evidently approaching the time when a settlement would be necessitated, and could be no longer delayed—always found in him a strenuous supporter. He believed that absolute justice required that no class of the community should be debarred from equal rights with their fellow-subjects and fellow-countrymen, because of the form of religion they professed, or the church to which they belonged. This principle he had declared and maintained from the earliest period. So far back as 1813, when not four years settled in the ministry, he was one of four leading speakers who brought the Synod of Ulster to an all but unanimous * Declaration in favour of Catholic Emancipation.

* This is testified to by the Moderator of Synod for that year, 1813—Rev. James Morell of Ballibay—in a letter to the "Northern Whig," dated March 30, 1829, deprecating the opposition of the party of Cooke and the Intolerants to the Catholic Relief Bill, which had then triumphantly passed the second reading in the House of Commons. He states—"The meeting (of Synod) in 1813 was numerously attended. It consisted of 105 ministers and 36 elders. The late Dr.

During the latter part of 1827 and beginning of 1828, numerous large meetings of Roman Catholics were held in Ireland, to pass resolutions and petition Parliament in favour of Catholic Emancipation; at one of which—a great County Antrim meeting, held on the 10th January, 1828, in the (then) new chapel, Donegall Street, Belfast—a considerable number of liberal Presbyterians had taken a prominent part. In the evening of the same day, a dinner of the friends of Civil and Religious Liberty took place in the Royal Hotel, at which Henry Montgomery sat at the right of the chairman, his friend Dr. Crolly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, and at which were also present, amongst others:—Rev. W. D. H. M'Ewen, Dr. Tennent, Dr. Patrick (Ballymena), John S. Ferguson, John Barnett, Adam and James M'Clean, &c., &c.

The report of the meeting states that in the course of the proceedings—

“The Chairman said—‘*The liberality of the Presbyterian ministers is interwoven with the records of their religion.* I shall select one out of the many excellent ministers belonging to the Synod of Ulster, and give you—The Rev. Henry Montgomery and the Synod of Ulster.’ (Three times three, and loud cheering.)

“Mr. Montgomery returned thanks for himself, and on the part of his clerical brethren. He alluded to the Declaration of the Synod of Ulster, in 1813, in favour of Catholic Emancipation; and also to the address to the Marquis of Wellesley, in 1822, when the same principles were recognised. After which, the reverend gentleman entered into a train of reasoning, to show that there was a natural working of cause and effect, which must, in the end, secure to the Catholics of these countries a full concession to all their just demands. He condemned

Neilson, then of Dundalk, introduced a document on the subject of Catholic Emancipation. The discussion was short. The principal speakers in support of it were Dr. Neilson, Dr. Black, Mr. Horner, and *Mr. Montgomery*. One minister only spoke against it—the Rev. R. Hogg. It was about being carried without a division, but he insisted on the roll being called. The minority amounted to eight. The general feeling was that the decision was nearly the same as unanimous. In a respectable periodical of that day it is said, that ‘the minority was so inconsiderable, as only to add lustre to the cause.’” Cooke, who had been at the time six years a member of Synod, seems to have been silent on the question. “Where, where was Roderick then?”

the violence exhibited by many of the most prominent leaders of the Catholic body, 'because those who are in the right do not require it. It is the man who is acting unjustly that stands in need of violent measures. Still, however' (said he), 'when I look on the treatment which the Roman Catholics of Ireland have endured, I am far from considering that they have acted with violence. As a body, they have behaved with remarkable temperance; and as parents, they have exhibited a patience which, to minds accustomed to look on the world's honours as legitimate rewards to the enterprising, is really wonderful.' The reverend gentleman next referred to the breaking down of the moral principle of man, in consequence of the exhibitions which we are compelled to witness in our courts of justice at party trials, where the worse passions of human nature triumph over the dictates of conscience, until, in the end, the heated partisan becomes the convicted perjurer! He recommended perseverance and patience to the Catholics of Ireland, satisfied as he was of the justice of the cause, and that in the end they must triumph. He called on them to keep firm and united; and he was sure that a combination of events would soon burst open the doors of the temple of the Constitution, and give them free access to all the honours and emoluments contained therein. He wished to propose a toast; it was—"The Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor.' (Three times three and loud cheering, particularly from the Protestant part of the assembly.)"

After several other toasts and speeches,

"The Chairman observed that—"We find in later times, as well as in the early history of the world, *the serpent too frequently is found coiling itself about the tree of knowledge.** But we have in this town a tree of knowledge, near unto which no serpent of bigotry or intolerance dare intrude. Let us, then, hail with delight *The Belfast Academical Institution; a perfect model of education without bigotry.*' †

* What an instructive comment on these words is furnished by the letters of this same Dr. Crolly, published by his nephew after his death, in vindication of his uncle's Catholicism and Orthodoxy! (See Dr. Montgomery's "Lecture for the Times," Belfast, 1851, p. 30.)

† Let not readers in this year of grace (1874) be astonished at this extreme laudation of a seminary of *mixed and purely secular education* by a great prelate of the Catholic Church—afterwards Primate of the Isle of Saints! A few years earlier they could have seen the same liberal prelate sitting for two years and a-half on the Committee of the "Belfast Brown Street Sunday School Society," and selected by the Committee to deliver an address at the opening meeting under the presidency of the Marquis of Downshire! The avowed object of the society

“The Rev. Henry Montgomery replied at considerable length, on the extensive advantages which have resulted, and must continue to result, from a well-regulated system of home education; and expressed his conviction that, eventually, this admirable seminary would triumph over all its difficulties.”

To the cause of charity, no less than education, and civil and religious liberty, Montgomery then, as at all times, lent his earnest support. On the very Sunday but one preceding the above meeting (the ~~14th~~^{30th} December, 1827), he had, in a most eloquent discourse delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, advocated the claims of the “House of Industry.”* In the report of his sermon it is stated that—

“To the rich and affluent he made a powerful appeal, and descanted on a circumstance which appeared from the calculations of the most accurate writers on pauperism, that more is contributed to the support of the poor by the labouring classes than by all the nobility and gentry and merchants of the land. The doors of their humble houses were always open to the wanderer; their hearths were free to the cold and desolate; their scanty meal was shared by the hungry.”

The collectors on the occasion were the Marquis of Donegall, Sir Stephen May (Sovereign), Sir Robert Bateson, W. S. Crawford, Esq.; John M’Cance, Esq.; Richard Blakiston, Esq.; Richard Dobbs, Esq.; and Major Darcy, assisted by a corresponding number of respectable members of the congregation; and the collection obtained amounted to upwards of two hundred and ten pounds, being, till that time, “the largest ever got in Belfast.”

being “to give to the children of the poor such instruction in reading and writing as may prepare them to be useful to society; to train them up in habits of cleanliness, regularity, and piety; and to afford them *an opportunity of obtaining an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures*, ‘which are able to make them wise unto salvation.’” And here they could have seen for *five years* (1819-1824) some 300 Catholic children receiving, side by side with Protestants, instruction *every Sunday in the authorised English version of the Bible*, chiefly from *Protestant teachers*, and with the *consent and co-operation of their Bishop, Dr. Crolly*, in the desirable work!—till, in 1824, the schools in connexion with the Catholic Chapel in Donegall Street having been completed, the Roman Catholic children were suddenly withdrawn by his directions from Brown Street, and all the other Sunday Schools in Belfast. What a wondrous composition for plasticity and elasticity is the indiarubber “*conscience*” of Old Mother Church, to be sure!

* Appendix B.—Charity Sermon for the House of Industry, Belfast, 1827.

CHAPTER XI.

CONTINUATION OF THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY—THE COOKSTOWN MEETING.

1828.

Cookstown—Meeting of Synod—Position of Parties—Old and New Moderators—Discussion on Clerkship—Analysis of Numbers for and against Strabane Test—Absentees required to vote—Rev. John M'Cance—Rev. William Finlay—Discussion on Arianism—Morell's Resolutions—Their Strategical Character—Seconded by Carlile—Cooke's Speech and Amendments—Messrs. Dill, Campbell, Elder, Brown, Johnston, M'Cullough, Dr. Wright, Messrs. Barnett, Hogg, &c.—Speeches of N. Alexander and F. Blakely—Montgomery addresses the Synod—Difficulties of his Task—His Speech described—Eulogised by Stewart, Cooke, and Dr. Porter, "Northern Whig," and "Belfast News-Letter"—Stewart's Reply—Described by Montgomery—Close of Debate—Division—Vote virtually decisive—Comparison of Strabane and Cookstown Divisions—Numerical strength of Non-Subscribers, Apparent and Real—True Causes of Discrepancy—Synod adjourned.

AT ten o'clock on Tuesday morning, 24th June, 1828, the Synod of Ulster met for its annual sittings in Cookstown—like Strabane, in the County Tyrone, and, also like it, then a stronghold of High Toryism in politics, and hard Calvinism in religion. Yet, withal, there was a difference. The locality, not being quite so remote as Strabane, was somewhat more accessible to the influence of public opinion; and the very general indignation awakened, through the circulation of Montgomery's speech and the comments of the public prints, against the unconstitutional and usurping measures of the Orthodox party on the one hand, and, on the other, the fast gathering strength of the friends of Catholic Emancipation, were not without their salutary lessons, the force of which was felt even there.

Within the Synod, too, there had been meantime no slight

reaction. There had been time for reflection; and many timid or wavering members, who had been taken by surprise the previous year, had received courage, from the tone of the public sentiment, to oppose the dictatorial measures of the majority, and to sympathise with their persecuted brethren; while not a few ministers, who had not been present at the Strabane division, were prepared to refuse the Test then imposed, some of them being men of well-known Orthodox opinions.

Under these circumstances, the Orthodox leaders, though still secure of their majority, and determined as ever to carry through their measures, felt it necessary to act a more wary part, and to take much more trouble than they had thought it worth while to do at Strabane, to disarm public opinion, and, if possible, conciliate it, by plausible arguments, to their views. To this end the meeting had been preceded by the publication of sundry carefully concocted letters, from Cooke and the other leading men of his party, to the Presbyterian body, intended chiefly to act on the minds of the laity and elders, or at least, as pilot balloons, to ascertain the direction of the air-currents.

The meeting was very large, no less than 164 ministers and 95 elders being present, while a vast local auditory filled the large meeting-house from end to end.

The retiring Moderator, the Rev. James Seaton Reid* of Carrickfergus, preached a strong Orthodox sermon, in the course of which—

“He alluded to the existence of Arian principles in the Synod of Ulster, and expressed his belief that the Almighty would soon root it out of the body. He hoped that the members of the Synod would allow this to be done by the silent operations of the Divine will, and not (like the impatient philosopher, who poured out the contents of his crucible just as the brilliant diamond was about to be formed) prevent that consummation which every true Christian so earnestly desired, and which he felt assured God would speedily bring about.”

* Afterwards D.D., the learned author of the “History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland,” and subsequently Professor of Ecclesiastical and Civil History in the University of Glasgow—a powerful supporter of the Calvinistic party.

Out of five candidates for the Moderator's chair—all Orthodox—the choice fell upon the Rev. Patrick White of Bailieborough, Montgomery's early friend—an indication that, for the time at least, a more moderate and conciliatory spirit prevailed.

When the appointment of the Clerk came on, instead of a direct attack being made upon Mr. Porter, with a motion for his removal, as at Strabane, Mr. Morell of Ballibay, having stated that he "rose under a deep sense of the awful and responsible situation in which he was placed," which was followed by a corresponding speech, contented himself with moving at the close two roundabout and mysterious resolutions, to the effect that the appointment of a Clerk should be postponed, and that meantime a committee of "experienced Orthodox ministers" of "*liberal principles*" be appointed to take into consideration the state of the Body, devise a remedy for its existing evils, and report same to the Synod. Among the names he suggested for this committee were Messrs. *Cooke, Dill, &c.*!—and having stated his reasons for excluding Arian members from the list, he added:—

"At the same time, the Arians ought not to be jealous of this proposition; for they should have the utmost confidence in the liberality of their Orthodox brethren!"

This *curious* proceeding naturally led, as most probably was intended, to a protracted discussion, in which many ministers of both sides took part, and during which several amendments were proposed. The "Northern Whig" report says:—

"The discussion generally bore the hue of forbearance and a *kind of* conciliation. In the end, at near seven o'clock p.m., both the amendment and original motion were withdrawn, and the Synod adjourned till next morning. From a review of this day's proceedings, it is evident that Mr. Cooke has lost ground. The intention of driving out the present Arian members seems *almost* abandoned, nor does the idea of a split of the body appear *at all strengthened*. Yet there is no doubt that such measures will be adopted towards the young men coming forward to the ministry as will ultimately cut off the open and expressed Arians." "Private meetings of the Orthodox

party were held (as previously advertised in the newspapers by Mr. Cooke) on the evening of Monday and morning of Tuesday; but a great number of those known as *liberal* Orthodox ministers absented themselves on both occasions." "There appears a great likelihood of the present being a long and interesting meeting of Synod."

Wednesday's proceedings were not of much interest, the understanding being that Mr. Porter should continue to act as Clerk till after certain propositions—which a self-constituted Orthodox Committee were privately engaged in preparing—should have been brought before Synod through the Committee of Overtures. Thursday came and passed, and still the blow had not fallen—the bolt had not been shot; but the interest of the meeting had been, nevertheless, sustained by the novel proceeding of calling upon the ministers who had not been present at the last annual meeting, and the elders then attending at Cookstown, to record their votes for or against the Strabane Trinitarian Test.

As the sum of the votes recorded at Strabane and Cookstown, on either side, is the only means available for approximating the relative strength of the Synodical parties *for* and *against* the imposition of a human creed—though, from causes previously stated, that of the minority must have been thereby very inadequately represented—it is desirable to place the same on record as a testimony to the facts of the case. The following statement is therefore taken from the report of the Cookstown meeting in the "Northern Whig" of July 3, 1828, which vouches for its correctness:—

" At Strabane, 1827.....	117	<i>ministers</i>	voted ' BELIEVE.'
At Cookstown, 1828.....	38	" "	" "
	<hr/>		
Total <i>ministers</i> ,...	155		' BELIEVE.'
At Strabane, 1827.....	18	<i>elders</i>	voted ' BELIEVE.'
At Cookstown, 1828.....	59	" "	" "
	<hr/>		
Total <i>elders</i> ,.....	77		' BELIEVE.'

At Strabane, 1827.....	2	<i>ministers</i> voted 'DISBELIEVE.'
At Cookstown, 1828.....	4	" " "
	<hr/>	
Total <i>ministers</i> ,...	6	'DISBELIEVE.'
At Strabane, 1827.....	—	<i>elders</i> voted 'DISBELIEVE.'
At Cookstown, 1828.....	14	" " "
	<hr/>	
Total <i>elders</i> ,.....	14	'DISBELIEVE.'
At Strabane, 1827.....	4	<i>ministers</i> withdrew.
At Cookstown, 1828.....	1	" "
	<hr/>	
Total <i>ministers</i> ,...	5	Withdrew.
At Strabane, 1827.....	8	<i>ministers</i> declined to vote.
At Cookstown, 1828.....	12	" " "
	<hr/>	
Total <i>ministers</i> ,...	20	Declined to vote.
At Strabane, 1827.....	5	<i>elders</i> declined to vote.
At Cookstown, 1828.....	2	" " "
	<hr/>	
Total <i>elders</i> ,.....	7	Declined to vote.
At Cookstown, 1827.....	3	<i>ministers</i> did not answer the call.
At Cookstown, 1828.....	2	<i>elders</i> protested against the measure."

From this statement we perceive, that while 155 ministers and 77 elders voted in favour of the test, *34 ministers and 23 elders* signified in various ways their *disapproval* of it—either by voting "Disbelieve," by withdrawing, declining to vote, not answering the call, or protesting against the measure. That is, they were either Arians, or sympathisers with Arians in their non-subscription to a human and Trinitarian creed; for what other reasons could be possibly assigned for their exposing themselves to the popular odium by refusing to go with the majority? In other words, supposing these numbers relatively to represent the ministers and congregations of the Synod—though it was well known that the numbers in the minority fell far short of the reality, while the majority was swelled by many whose conscientious convictions would have placed them

on the other side, had they not lacked the moral courage for their assertion—still, supposing the numbers to represent the reality, *one-fifth* of the ministers and congregations of the General Synod of Ulster were then either avowed Arians, or supporters—more or less declared—of the Arian principles of Non-Subscription.

But many, when called upon, did not content themselves with merely voting or declining. “A number of clergymen and elders delivered their reasons at considerable length for adopting their respective courses in voting, or refusing to vote, on their belief or disbelief in the Trinity;” and the Synod was occupied till nearly seven o’clock in the evening in hearing their statements on the subject.

Amongst the addresses then delivered, those of the Rev. John McCance, the aged minister of Comber, and the Rev. William Finlay of Dundonald, Montgomery’s college friend and companion, were conspicuous for ability and courage—both resolutely declaring their refusal to submit themselves to any human creed. The words of the latter breathe a spirit well worthy of his early friends:—

“I yield to no man in admiration of the great principles on which the Presbyterian Church is founded; which I take to be the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ, the equality of His ministers, the right of private judgment, and the sufficiency of the sacred Scriptures as a perfect rule of faith and practice. Impressed with the conviction that these principles constitute Presbyterianism as it ought to be, I cannot submit to a test drawn up in human language. I recognise no human authority in matters of religion, and I shall subscribe no human creed. . . . You will observe that I have given no opinion about the doctrinal proposition which has been submitted to me in human language. It has been admitted on all hands that it is a difficult and sublime subject; but this I will say, that were it as clear to my mind as the sun, whose beams are now flashing into this house, I should express no opinion about it, knowing, as I do, that this subject is likely to be made the instrument of injuring my brethren, and distracting and dividing this Synod.”

Noble words truly, deserving illustration by deeds as noble!

All this, however, was merely the skirmishing preliminary to the real conflict—the great pitched battle which was virtually to decide the question of the unity or division of the Synod of Ulster! This began on the following morning (Friday, 27th June) at ten o'clock, and continued for two days, till late on Saturday afternoon.

The full and impartial report of the proceedings—as given in the supplement to the “Northern Whig” of July 10, 1828—commences as follows:—

“COOKSTOWN, *June 27, 1828.*—The interesting discussion, on the subject of introducing such restrictive laws into the discipline of the Synod of Ulster as will effectually check the progress of anti-Trinitarian principles in that body, came on to-day, by the introduction of a number of resolutions, which had been prepared on the previous evening at a meeting of some Trinitarian members of the body.

“Mr. Morell (Ballibay) rose to move those resolutions. He said he would not detain the house with a recapitulation of the reasons which induced him to bring forward the motion he was about to propose for the adoption of Synod. These reasons he had before stated. He would now only say, that his object was to secure peace and unity to the Synod of Ulster; and although he would sacrifice much for the obtaining of those objects, yet there were things which he could not give up, to obtain a temporary, but dangerous and insecure repose for this body. He could not give up his Bible—he could not give up his reliance for salvation on the Lord Jesus Christ, to procure this unity. He had heard an unfortunate expression yesterday, of a gentleman in that assembly, who had quoted the example of Jesus, in allowing Judas to remain with Him even when He knew he was about to betray Him into the hands of His enemies; but if that gentleman found the example of Judas a good illustration of the situation in which that gentleman stood towards the Synod of Ulster, it is not to be expected he (Mr. Morell) would pin his faith on his sleeve. Mr. Morell then moved the following resolutions:—

“‘1. That many of the evils that now unhappily exist in the Synod of Ulster, have arisen from the admission of persons, as preachers of the Gospel, who are ignorant of the Truth as it is in Jesus, unrenewed in the spirit of their minds, and, consequently, destitute of that zeal which is necessary for the dissemination of the Gospel of Christ.

“‘2. That while we are individually bound to use all Scriptural

means to guard against the continuance of these evils, it is also our duty, as a Church, to adopt such regulations as may, with the Divine blessing, prove effectual to prevent the introduction of ministers unenlightened by the Spirit of God, and to advance spiritual religion in our Church courts and congregations.

“‘3. That before any person be recognised as a candidate for the ministry in the Church, he shall be enjoined to present himself at an annual meeting, previously to his entering a theological class, before a Committee of the Synod, who shall examine him respecting his personal religion, his knowledge of the Scriptures, and especially his views of the doctrines of the Trinity, Justification by Faith, and Regeneration by the Spirit; and his motives for offering himself as a candidate for the sacred office of a minister of the Gospel.

“‘4. That students, after having finished their theological course and their trials in the Presbytery, shall again present themselves for a similar examination before the same Committee; and it shall be the duty of that Committee to ascertain their soundness in the Faith, by requiring from them a statement of their views of the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

“‘5. That if any person thus licensed shall afterwards be found not to preach the doctrines of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, or to avow any principles in opposition to those doctrines, he shall not be continued in fellowship with the ministers of this body.

“‘6. Should any person be licensed or ordained in opposition to the above regulations, such licence or ordination shall not be deemed valid by this body.’”

The mover of these resolutions was the Rev. James Morell, the same of whom Montgomery has left it on record, that he “was known to them all as a humanitarian, if not something less.” If so, he had the sagacity not merely to conceal his real sentiments from the general public, but, by a policy of remarkable astuteness, to get credit for being a pillar of Orthodoxy. His course both at Strabane and Cookstown was a strange one. Under an appearance of studied moderation, he seemed all along to have effectually “played the game” of Cooke and his party. He it was who, at Strabane, secured for the Orthodox the favourable battle-field of Cookstown for their next campaign. He it was who, when, after an hour’s futile endeavours of the combined leaders of the party, the attempt to define the Trinity

for the purpose of framing the required test had ended in ignominious failure, came to the rescue, and helped the lame dog over the stile, by suggesting the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which were eagerly adopted. He it was who, ere the Cookstown meeting had well begun, first turned on the waters of strife, paved the way for the coming contest, and by his insidious propositions respecting the Clerkship, and a Synodical Committee, brought men's minds unconsciously to regard the expected attack upon the Arian members as a matter of necessity and duty. And now, he again comes to the front as the mover of the series of resolutions prepared by the self-constituted Orthodox Committee, that met for the purpose the evening before at the instigation of Cooke himself!

The very vagueness of these resolutions, in which the Arians, as such, are never once named, was evidently intended to recommend them to the more moderate Orthodox, and secure the adhesion of such men as Carlile, who had frequently declared himself opposed to any measures countenancing the idea of a separation, or to the adoption of any authoritative test of doctrine, either for old or young, beyond the Bible.

For so far, these last, Orthodox though they might be, had stood on common ground with the Arians, and would have been bound to have supported them and voted with them against a direct attack of Cooke and the Intolerants; and many sympathisers, lay and clerical, would probably have been encouraged to join them. It was necessary, therefore, in the first place, to devise a scheme for intervening between the Arians and their Orthodox and semi-Orthodox allies, which would isolate the former, and cause them to bear alone the whole brunt of the battle; while it would send the latter into a false position, where they would be effectually precluded from using their forces to advantage, or from either giving or receiving much assistance in the course of the conflict.

Hence the resolutions proposed by Mr. Morell, which were such as no honest Arian, and no consistent Non-Subscriber, could possibly accept; but which, with their dexterous use of vague

phraseology, and seeming concern for the interests of vital godliness and "personal religion," &c., the Orthodox did not see their way to decline. But whatever the plea, the principle (or the *want of principle*) once admitted, the first step taken from the solid ground of Non-Subscription, and the key of the position was virtually surrendered or ever a blow was struck. The result was what might have been expected; and when once the formidable battery of Cooke's amendments was unmasked, and commenced to play upon their front, his shots, aimed with more direct and logical precision, quickly cut the ground from under them; and these faithless and futile allies thus early forced to retire, the battle was left between the smaller band of those who maintained, at all hazards, their strong and true position of genuine Non-Subscription, whether they were Arian or Trinitarian, and the host of their avowed Orthodox and subscribing foes. The manœuvre was clearly the design of the commander-in-chief himself, shewing him a master in the art of strategy. It was admirably planned, and ably executed; and it succeeded in its object. It must have been pitiful to see a strong man like James Carlile, the chosen leader of the Moderates, "floundering and foundering" in the quagmire into which he had suffered himself and his followers to be led, and at last aimlessly firing as often upon friends as foes! Such was the spectacle presented by him in his speech on seconding the preceding resolutions. It was in the spirit of a compromise—and a weak and futile one, too; so that when Cooke rose immediately after him to propose his series of amendments, he had already, and by their own help, if not connivance, effectually disposed of the "Moderate" Orthodox party, and was master of the situation, so far as they were concerned.

His speech, in introducing his amendments, was brief, and comparatively temperate and cautious. He several times hinted his intention of reserving his main arguments for a later opportunity, which, from his frequent reference to it, he evidently intended to make the occasion of a studied and imposing display of oratory. Meantime, he confined himself to combating several

arguments advanced by Carlile. He declared himself in favour of a separation of the Synod; and made a statement, curious enough as coming from one in his position, but wondrously clever as having regard to the purpose it was intended to serve. He said—

“He would most probably himself separate, if some measure leading to a final separation is not adopted. He would do it, he was convinced, with a very small minority; but whether with ten, twelve, or twenty, he would do it, though he had not made up his mind as to the time. *Respectability does not depend on numbers*; and he was sure he would separate with the blessing of God, and in the simple enjoyment of the Saviour’s promise—‘Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’” (“Northern Whig” Report, July 10, 1828.)

Pretty well this, from one who well knew that he had at least two-thirds of the Synod, lay and clerical, at his back, through thick and thin, for better for worse! Pretty well this, from the leader and representative of a party, which has never ceased, from that day to this, to cast up, as an undying reproach to the Arians and Non-Subscribers, who afterwards became the Remonstrant Separatists, the smallness of their numbers! But what an admirable plan of pointing out to a discerning public, through the spirited declaration of his own intentions, what the Arians, if beaten, would be bound in turn to do! What an easy and cheap method of setting his opponents an *example*—of pointing to them the road which he wished, and hoped to be able to compel, them to take! It was a masterpiece in its way!

But this was as nothing to the resolutions themselves, where his genius for diplomatic intrigue became conspicuously manifest. He had already got the Moderates and their leader—of whose influence, as being themselves Orthodox, he was most afraid—*pledged* to the *principles* which he desired to establish, as to the appointment of a theological examination committee, and the interrogation of future students on the main doctrines of Orthodoxy. But the very vagueness and indecision of these temporising resolutions, unsatisfactory to all parties—of which

he was no doubt well aware, if he had not directly aided or connived at their introduction—he managed to make the means and stepping-stones to victory. He did not propose a new set of resolutions in their stead, directly attacking the Arians, and proposing a separation, which would have frightened the Synod, and probably alienated many of his general supporters, who were not prepared to proceed to such extremities. But he took up the resolutions already before the house, and *improved* them to effect his object. While retaining their general form, he skilfully dovetailed and altered them, brushing away the cobwebs of compromise, supplying their ellipses, and seemingly carrying out the original intentions of their framers, by bringing them to bear against the Arians and their sympathisers, with a force and directness which, if it were more severe and domineering, gave to them, at the same time, a character of greater apparent honesty, straightforwardness, and sincerity than they had worn before. He thus, with surprising ability, destroyed at a blow the middle party in the Synod, and brought the contest to a direct issue between Trinitarianism and Arianism—Subscription and Non-Subscription.

The importance of those amended resolutions, as forming and covering the real ground of the subsequent separation of the Synod, deserves that they should be here recorded at full length. (It will be observed that the 2nd, 4th, and 7th are respectively the same as the 2nd, 4th, and 6th of the original resolutions, but are here reprinted for sake of the connexion, and for the purpose of subsequent reference.) They were as follows:—

“1. That many of the evils that now unhappily exist in the General Synod of Ulster, have arisen from the admission of persons holding Arian sentiments, contrary to the accredited standards of this body, as founded on the Word of God; from the occasional admission of others, who, though nominally holding in sound words and profession the form of godliness, were yet deniers of the power thereof, and, consequently, destitute of that zeal which is necessary to the dissemination of the Gospel.

“2. That while we are individually bound to use all Scriptural

means to guard against the continuance of these evils, it is also our duty, as a Church, to adopt such regulations as may, with the Divine blessing, prove effectual to prevent the introduction of ministers unenlightened by the Spirit of God, and to advance spiritual religion in our Church courts and congregations.

“3. That before any person be recognised as a candidate for the ministry, he shall, previously to entering a theological class, be enjoined to present himself at our annual meeting, to be examined by a committee of this Synod respecting his personal religion, his knowledge of the Scriptures, especially his views of the doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, Justification by Faith, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit; and likewise as to his motives for offering himself as a candidate for the sacred office of the ministry; and that should any such examinant be found opposed to those doctrines, or appear to be destitute of vital godliness, he shall in no case be recognised as a candidate for the ministry in this Synod.

“4. That students, after having finished their theological course, and their trials in the Presbytery, shall again present themselves for a similar examination before the same Committee; and it shall be the duty of that committee to ascertain their soundness in the Faith, by requiring from them a statement of their views of the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

“5. That if any person thus licensed be afterwards found not to preach the doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, Justification by Faith, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, or to avow any principles in opposition to these doctrines, he shall not be continued in fellowship with this body.

“6. Persons who are already preachers in this body, but have not been licensed according to these regulations, shall, previously to ordination, be required to undergo a similar examination.

“7. Should any person be licensed or ordained in opposition to these regulations, such licence or ordination shall not be deemed valid by this body.

“8. The Committee for these examinations shall annually be appointed in open Synod.”

The amendment was seconded by the Rev. S. Dill (Donoughmore), who delivered a long and energetic address against the Arians. He was followed by the Rev. R. Campbell (Templepatrick) in a manly, Scriptural defence of his anti-Trinitarian views. A long discussion ensued, lasting till seven o'clock, when the Synod

adjourned, the principal speakers being Messrs. Elder, John Brown (Aghadowey), Johnston (Tullylish), and M'Culloch (Newtownards)—all in favour of the amendment; several of whom, for lack of argument, betook themselves to the congenial task of abusing and misrepresenting the Arians—Dr. Wright alone feebly supporting the middle course in advocacy of the Original Overture.

Next morning (Saturday), at eight o'clock, Synod re-assembled, and the debate was resumed by Rev. J. Barnett (Moneymore) in a very outspoken, not to say violent, address in favour of separation. He said—

“He could not consistently *love* men whom he believed to be enemies to the cause of Christ. . . . Arianism had been long lying like an incubus on this Church, and the plans proposed would have no influence on those already infected. He would suppose a family of twelve children, six of whom were seized with fever. What would we think of the physician who would leave the six infected children to perish, and who would only take care that they who were whole should not be contaminated? We had heard much of the peace that had been produced by silence regarding points of difference, but it had been justly compared to the stillness that reigns over the deleterious waters of the Dead Sea. . . . Suppose a man and wife to be eternally disagreeing, would they not live in far better harmony by taking different houses?” &c., &c.

The Rev. J. Hogg (Carlan) followed in an address equally powerful and charitable, strongly sympathising with the Arians, and advocating non-subscription, union, and peace. He made a damaging exposure of the irreconcilable contradictions and absurd positions maintained by Mr. Barnett, and other previous speakers on the Orthodox side.

Patient and long-suffering, the Arians themselves had silently listened to the heated addresses, the reproaches and misrepresentations of their adversaries; and hitherto, save in the case of Mr. Campbell, they had borne the “tempest of evil tongues” without reply. Rightly distrustful of the majority of their faithless allies, they had seen them driven from the field with suspicious rapidity;

and calm in the consciousness of a righteous cause and a sound position, they had awaited the approach of the enemy's forces, and development of their combined attack upon themselves. This had now taken place, and the time had at length come for the full exertion of their strength, to repel the formidable assault of their foes; and, irrespective of consequences as to their continuance in the Synod, to maintain and defend the sacred standard of Christian Faith and Christian Liberty which had been given to their keeping. In this momentous crisis they agreed to entrust their defence to three chosen men of their band, who, with the serene resolution and conscious strength of soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, addressed themselves to the discharge of their arduous duty.

Rightly, from his years, his position, his single-minded life, and spotless integrity, Nathaniel Alexander led the way. His brief address was like his life and character—it resembled a well-cut gem of purest crystal. Its terse, logical arguments were so many direct and brilliant reflections of the pure light of truth, just as the facets of the crystal in turn reflect the beams of the mid-day sun.

“He declared himself an enemy to all human creeds, tests, and confessions, as fetters upon the free soul of man, the inventions of men, for which they can find no authority in the Scriptures. ‘I am not an Arian (he said), but after carefully perusing the Word of God, and after much reading on the subject from my youth till the present time, I am an anti-Trinitarian. I not only oppose this test because I cannot find it in the Scriptures, but I oppose all human tests as assumptions of infallibility and relics of Popery. Tests are either agreeable to the Word of God, or they are not. If they are agreeable to the Word of God, they are superseded by the superior Word of God, and are, therefore, useless, and to be rejected. If they are not agreeable to the Word of God, they are sinful, and, therefore, to be rejected. Again, no supplements to the Word of God (such as tests and confessions) ought to be adopted, unless made by infallible men. Since the time of the Apostles, there are no infallible men, therefore no such supplements as tests or confessions ought to be adopted. Again, human tests are either intended to be permanently binding, or they are not intended to be so. If they are not intended to be so, they may be changed the

day after they are made, and are, therefore, useless. If they are intended to be permanently binding, they bind those that sign them never to be wiser than they are at present; and, therefore, being a sinful drag on improvement, ought to be rejected. The use of tests implies that the Spirit of God could not foresee or provide against all future errors in the Holy Word of God; it is, therefore, a libel on that Spirit. The only test that I can see necessary, then, is a minute examination of our young men on the Scriptures, the only infallible guide given to us in our present state of trial.” (“Northern Whig” Report.)

Two addresses followed from Orthodox men—Messrs. F. Dill and Brown (of Tobermore)—one for and one against the amendment; and then rose Fletcher Blakely, to do good service and leal for liberty and truth. Though always ready and effective, yet never before had this intrepid warrior distinguished himself and adorned his cause as he did now. Though wanting in many of the graces of style, and in the variety of illustration, for which the addresses of his friend Montgomery were generally distinguished; yet for massive breadth and clearness of thought, for directness, simplicity, dignity, and force of expression, for the telling power of straightforward honesty and strength of conviction, for arrangement and force of arguments, for downright earnestness of purpose, for fearless courage, and for evidence of a mind well furnished and prepared at all points, his speech on this occasion could not have been surpassed. His manly statements of his own sentiments, and dignified and Scriptural rebukes of the inconsistencies and presumption of his opponents, are remarkably fine. Some of the latter were so clear and telling, as to receive marks of approval from all parts of the house. After stating that he “rose to oppose the Amended Overture to the best of his ability”—referring to his well-known anti-Trinitarian views, and declaring, at the same time, that he was not a disciple of Arius or Socinus—he intimated the course he meant to pursue in his remarks, and added—

“In pursuing this course, I must forget all popular feelings which have been so frequently and so shamefully appealed to, and speak as

if in the hearing of God alone, whose all-seeing eye is everywhere present. I have heard, sir, much pompous declamation concerning religious liberty, and the right of private judgment; but as nothing definite has been said, I am at a loss to know whether the gentlemen who have supported the amendment mean their own religious liberty and right of private judgment, or those of their brethren. In either case, I would humbly recommend them to remember one beautiful passage of Scripture—‘If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s.’ Notwithstanding the high-sounding phrases which have been used in connexion with religious liberty, I am surprised that this liberty is so badly understood and so sadly abused. In the exercise of the right of private judgment, I have taken Christ for my Master; and, however much some may be alarmed, I tell you candidly and boldly, that I have *now no liberty to serve other masters*; and I trust that neither the fear of persecution nor of death shall influence me to break my engagement, and choose Synods or Councils in His stead. . . .

“If any suppose the Scriptures not plain enough to be a rule and centre of union, how shall we mend the matter? Can we express the ideas of Jesus Christ in clearer and better terms than Himself? Can we express the ideas of His Apostles, who wrote and preached under the inspiration of God, in plainer and better words than they? Can we put our ideas on an equal footing with any of these? Can we improve that which we declare to be perfect? If all the Synods and Councils in the world should make this presumptuous attempt, they cannot have my concurrence. For there can be no medium between an earthly infallible head of the Church, and the sufficiency of the Word of God: if any such medium can be found, let it be pointed out. No individual in this large assembly dare assume the right of dictating to me in matters of faith; and if no individual will attempt it, how can numbers create the right? You might as well, sir, think to make an arithmetical sum out of noughts. We must understand the Scriptures before we can make a *rule* by which the Scriptures are to be understood; and yet, according to the views of my brethren on the other side, we must apply that rule for understanding the Scriptures, which we must have understood before it was made! This is evidently most strange and preposterous. If we cannot bind a man’s conscience by the Divine Word of God, no human composition, however excellent, can bind him: and, in proportion as we fix our affections on human and fallible creeds and tests and articles, in the same pro-

portion must we forget the Divine and infallible creed contained in the Holy Bible. And it is absolute mockery to grant the right of private judgment in the examination of the Bible, and then reproach and injure a man because he cannot see every passage in the same light as his neighbour, who is as liable to err as himself."

In the course of his remarks he read an eloquent passage from a distinguished Unitarian writer, offering Dr. Lardner as a sample of a Unitarian Christian; and he adduced in detail no less than nine different and opposed definitions of the Trinity, by as many distinguished bishops and other authorities of Trinitarian Churches. After stating the true nature and Scriptural foundations of the *Arian* doctrine, exposing the absurd and contradictory charges brought against its supporters, and powerfully directing their own arguments against its opponents, he concluded his speech as follows:—

"What now, sir, shall be said of this boasted uniformity! On my right hand, I see Calvinists with their five points; on my left, I see Arminians with their opposite five points, and claiming, on both sides, the names Orthodox and Evangelical. Nay, more—much more: they all lay claim to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Were not this a mere pretence, we should have a sure and safe guide to uniformity. But one Orthodox spirit is frequently at variance with another Orthodox spirit, though both the spirits pretend to be of God. They may pretend what they please; but as for us, we must return to Moses in the Law, and to Christ in the Gospel. Personal piety is mentioned in the Amended Overture, and is, undoubtedly, of great moment. But to those who wish to encourage it in others, I would respectfully remark, that humility is the first lesson which we learn from diligent reflection, and self-distrust the first proof we give of having obtained a knowledge of ourselves. I could speak many hours on the question before the house, but am aware that your time is too precious to claim such indulgence. I invite, however, any of my Orthodox brethren to meet me with his Bible in his hand, and discuss with me the important points at issue."

Blakely's address concluded before noon on Saturday. His final challenge, as he left the lists, rang through the assembly like the trumpet notes of one of the Paladins of old; and he

and Alexander might well rest satisfied in the consciousness that, be the issue what it might, they had both "quit themselves like men," and had well done their knightly duty to the cause entrusted to them in the arena of Synodical combat.

And now the third and last of the chosen defenders has entered the lists. The tall form of Henry Montgomery stands once more before the Synod of Ulster, again to do battle for the self-same cause of Christian Liberty, and the "faith once delivered to the saints," for which, twelve months before, he had fought at Strabane, with such signal prowess and renown.

It is the fifth day of the Synod's meeting—close upon noon on Saturday—a day in midsummer. The largest meeting of the Synod, lay and clerical, that had ever taken place was before him; and in addition, the meeting-house was thronged to its utmost capacity by an eager, anxious auditory, of various denominations, drawn alike from near and far by the surpassing interest of the debates.

When he presented himself, the great assembly became instantly hushed. It was ever so with him—no matter how strange or how hostile the audience before whom he stood to speak.* There was something hard to describe—a majestic grace in his presence—that bespoke for him an attentive and respectful hearing or ever he had opened his lips.

The magnitude of the task before him, and the weight of the responsibility resting upon him, might well have discouraged the stoutest heart, and disturbed the strongest head. He had not only, as others before him, to defend his brethren and vindicate his cause; but coming after them, and so late in the debate, he knew it was likely that, under Providence, the last defence of

*The celebrated occasion of his coming forward at the great meeting in the Theatre Royal in Dublin, in January, 1841, to oppose the mighty dictator of the day in the plenitude of his power, where an organised attempt was made to prevent his being heard, may seem an exception; but even there the interruptions came chiefly from the hired myrmidons of O'Connell, at the bidding of their master, and did not long succeed in their purpose.

their position rested now upon his single arm.* And then, how did he stand furnished in relation to his task and subject? Thirty thousand copies of his Strabane speech on the self-same theme had been flung broadcast over the kingdom, and its utterances were, at that moment, familiar to his auditory as household words; and of its arguments and phrases he must carefully avoid the repetition. He had to repel the manifold assaults, and review the speeches and diverse arguments, of the long and formidable host of his Orthodox foes; and not only the more bold and straightforward assaults of Cooke and his great following, but the still more dangerous advances of many calling themselves the Moderate party, under the insidious guise of forbearance, and the hypocritical mask of brotherly interest and good wishes. Well he knew how true it is that—

“ An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse !”

and rightly he felt, and acted on the conviction, that upon these the weightiest of his strokes should fall.

The quality of the speeches, too, was very different from before. At Strabane the attack was sudden, and the theme was new. The addresses of the Orthodox were generally strong-flavoured, coarse, and violent; but the arguments were few and poor, and consequently they were the more easily answered. But since then a year of preparation had passed. Their ingenuity was taxed to its utmost, and every conceivable storehouse—ancient and modern, sacred and profane—ransacked for arguments and illustrations to furbish up their speeches and support their attacks; and though their reasonings were no whit sounder than before, yet the fallacies underlying them were now often

* It was doubtless true, as he subsequently stated, that “ Mitchel, Davis, Glendy, and several other powerful men, were ready for the combat.” And so they were—always to be found ready for the post of duty; and each and all would have done noble service to their cause, and given a good account of even their most formidable adversaries, had they seen their exertions were required. But their silence indicated that they had agreed to entrust their cause mainly to the powerful advocacy of Blakely and Montgomery.

cleverly covered from public view, the weak spots guarded by specious plausibilities, and a general regard had to external appearances which had not existed before. They seemed to have awakened to the consciousness that the Press was reporting their proceedings, and Public Opinion waiting to pronounce its verdict upon them. All this added immensely to the task that Montgomery had before him. He knew also that his two most talented and formidable adversaries—Stewart and Cooke—were preparing themselves, and biding their time, to follow him in the debate.

In addition to all this, even the addresses of his friends had not lightened, but rather increased his labour; as many of the points on which he meant to dwell having been by them anticipated, and, especially by his friend Blakely, treated with marked power and cogency, he had the additional duty thrown upon him of guarding himself from repeating their arguments.

In the opening sentence of his address, he expresses the natural embarrassment he felt arising from several of these causes. But it quickly passed away; and having in a brief sentence laid down the broad and unassailable principles on which he meant to build his arguments, he was soon pouring forth, with the full powers of his matchless oratory, such a rich, varied, and commanding tide of eloquence as—it is not too much to say—has been seldom, if ever, equalled, and certainly never excelled, in the annals of the Presbyterian Church, or of any other ecclesiastical assembly in Ireland!

The speeches of his opponents were in turn reviewed, their statements discussed, their representations overthrown. The doctrines of the Arians were clearly and minutely stated, and powerfully defended. Then, in long and goodly array, his own arguments were advanced, forming not the angry front of a line of battle, but rather “a line of linked sweetness, long drawn out.” Powerful, and logically unanswerable in themselves, they were not submitted in the unadorned simplicity of bald outline; but were felicitously clothed, by the orator’s fervid

fancy and unequalled command of language,* in the most varied and graceful robes of similitude and illustration.

For two hours and a quarter the wondrous tide rolled on, "his voice pealed through the vast assembly," and he kept the whole mass enchained, as by a spell, through the power of his marvellous oratory. Both his leading adversaries—Stewart and Cooke—acknowledged the surpassing ability of his address. The former, who immediately followed him in the debate, thus expressed himself:—"Such a flow of powerful and commanding eloquence I never heard; and were the principles and reasoning as sound and conclusive, as the language is beautiful and appropriate, I should consider the speech of my learned friend absolutely unanswerable."

Cooke, in his corrected report of the elaborately prepared reply, which he took occasion to deliver on the following Wednesday, thus alludes to it:—"I (now) come to engage with the condensed phalanx which Mr. Montgomery has so powerfully led on against us. Permit me, sir, to pause for a moment, and pay the tribute of my admiration to the splendour with which he has exhibited his array of argument."

His talented biographer also refers to Montgomery's appearance and speech on the occasion in the following complimentary terms:—"Mr. Montgomery's presence was commanding, his manner graceful, his style chaste and classic, his voice singularly sweet. . . . As a display of brilliant oratory, sparkling wit, touching pathos, and powerful declamation, his speech had never been surpassed in the Synod. It held the audience spell-bound. His friends, then and afterwards, pronounced it unanswerable."

The "Northern Whig" of July 3, 1828, in its summarised report of the debate, says:—"The speech of Mr. Montgomery was a masterly specimen of extemporary oratory, and in one part drew tears *from everyone within our view.*" (Again, in the same paper)—"The speech of the Rev. Henry Montgomery occupied

* In later times, when the days of this great controversy were long gone by, Dr. Cooke paid his old opponent the compliment of publicly stating, that "*he had the greatest command of the English language of any man living.*"

him two hours and a quarter in the delivery. It was argumentative, luminous, and convincing. As a specimen of forensic eloquence, it is unequalled by anything ever delivered in the North of Ireland."

And in the articles which appeared in the "Belfast News-Letter," in July, 1862, containing a brief sketch of the Arian controversy in connexion with the public life of Dr. Cooke, it is thus referred to:—"Towards the close of his most thrilling speech, as he defended himself against the imputation that he was a denier of the Saviour, he repeated, with deep emotion, and in tones which melted every listener—

" 'Jesus, my Lord, I know His name—
His name is all my boast ;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.' "

In fact, there can be no doubt that of all the speeches and addresses ever given by Montgomery during his long and eventful public career, this speech at Cookstown was the finest effort of his genius. Strabane might be more simple ; Lurgan, in the following year, more vehemently eloquent ; and his magnificent Synodical speech of 1857 more varied, elaborate, and splendidly ornate : but for the happiest combination of comprehensiveness and completeness ; of most skilful arrangement of parts, with apparently artless and natural sequence ; of logical force and telling power of argument, with prolific beauty and appropriate choice of illustration ; of high-soaring thought, with child-like simplicity of diction, drawn from the "pure well of English undefiled ;" of sarcastic wit, and wisdom most matured ; of humorous pleasantry, and intense pathos ; of the light ridicule of scorn, and the most whole-souled and appealing earnestness ; of energy and calmness ; and of watchful prudence, with dauntless and determined courage—for the happiest combination of all these qualities, his speech at Cookstown assuredly bears the palm !

It would be altogether unjust to Montgomery to attempt to give here a mere outline or analysis of this address. The readers

of these pages are referred instead to the speech itself, from the *verbatim* report of the "Northern Whig," given in the Appendix to this volume.*

His speech concluded, the Rev. Robert Stewart rose to reply, and spoke for more than an hour. Having prefaced his observations by some discontented remarks regarding certain alleged misrepresentations in the "Northern Whig's" report of his speech at Strabane the previous year, he stated his purpose to be—

"To attempt to reply to my eloquent friend, Mr. Montgomery; for I will still call him *friend*, notwithstanding our difference of opinion. ('Hear, hear,' from different quarters, especially from Mr. Montgomery.) Every one (he continues) will admit that my task is no sinecure."

Then, after the complimentary remarks previously quoted, he proceeded to deliver an address, which, if it cannot be regarded as an *answer* to Montgomery's, was undoubtedly characterised by great ability and remarkable ingenuity. As a speaker, he was very different both from Cooke and Montgomery. His voice is said to have been comparatively harsh, his appearance and manner somewhat ungainly, and his style cold and deliberate. But for power of memory, skill, readiness, and astute management in debate; promptness to see and seize upon the weak points of an adversary, and to cover those of himself and his friends; and for ability to impart a plausible air of logical directness and simplicity to his arguments, he was quite unsurpassed. Nor did he abstain to use occasional illustrations, especially when he desired to divert attention from the damaging effect of some telling shot of his adversary. But in this department he was by no means fortunate. Take, for instance, his well-known illustration of the potato and the farina, in his reply above mentioned.

Montgomery had proposed, in the course of his speech—

"That a monthly publication shall be issued at the mutual expense, and under the mutual management, of Calvinists and Unitarians, in which each party shall occupy the same number of pages (say, thirty

* See Appendix C—"Speech at Cookstown," 1828.

or fifty), with articles in support of their peculiar opinions, either original or selected, as they may deem expedient."

To this proposal Stewart replies in the following terms :—

"In all kinds of food, whether animal or vegetable, there is a portion that is poison. Taken as a whole, it is nutritious ; but decompose it, and you will get a part of it totally unfit for the support of animal life. Even the commonest, the peculiar vegetable of our country, the potato, if deprived of its farina, becomes useless, if not deleterious. Now, in the judgment of the Orthodox, their own system is the entire, the wholesome vegetable ; but when deprived of its peculiar doctrines, it becomes like the useless residue ; and Orthodox ministers could not, therefore, in consequence, feed God's people with what they consider husks, in place of the sweeter food of the Word." *

In other words, take away from the "entire and wholesome potato of Orthodoxy" the "farina" of its "peculiar doctrines"—that is, the *four points* of the Amended Overture which he was then supporting—and you leave behind the "poison," the "deleterious" part, the "useless residue," the "husks" (for he calls it by all four names), which is *Arianism*. Of course, "he could not feed God's people" with this! Yet he does not propose to feed them with the *farina* alone, which, as their sole and constant article of diet, might chance to be "deleterious" also ; but he proposes to feed them with the whole potato of Orthodoxy—that is, with the combination of the "husks" or "poison" of Arianism and the "farina" of the four points, both of which, it appears, are necessary to constitute the wholesome vegetable !

Such is the argument used by Mr. Stewart contending for the *separation* of Arianism and Arians from the Synod!—such the pleasant fare which he sets before his "friend" Montgomery, when he asks him to "take a potato with him!" Why was not Cooke near to whisper to his trusted ally, wandering in the unfamiliar mazes of illustration, the needed warning—*Ne sutor ultra crepidam ?*

But the "potato" notwithstanding—if not by very reason of

* "Northern Whig" Report.

its use, logic "irresistible" indeed to an Irish audience!—the speech of Stewart was hailed by his party as a wonderful effort of close, logical, and conclusive reasoning—as a complete and satisfactory reply to Montgomery. He was lauded to the skies by Orthodox newspapers of the time, and by several writers since, as having met and defeated his antagonist at every point. His address was spoken of as almost a specimen of pure reasoning—a sort of mathematical demonstration of the "fundamental rottenness of his opponent's oration." As, however, this is but a matter of *opinion*, in which each party, now as then, according to the side from which they regard it, will be likely to form and to maintain their own; it may be as well, instead of adducing any modern estimate of its merits and demerits, to give the views of him who, next to the speaker, was most interested about it—Montgomery himself. They are taken from the celebrated letter,* which he afterwards published, regarding Cooke's subsequent speech before the close of the Synod's meeting; and are at least as likely to be honest and well-founded as any that have proceeded from the other side.

He proposes to give "a short account of the tactics of the campaign." ("Mr. Cooke," he says, "has nearly infected me with a military taste.") . . .

"Before I went to Synod I understood that two great batteries were to be opened upon me, and I was not long there until I had confirmation of the alarming fact, at least with regard to one. . . . At length I ventured to attack the formidable Overture, and when I had finished, Mr. Stewart opened a vigorous fire. It was evident, however, that I had approached in a direction which he did not expect: several of his balls fell short, some went over my head, and a number of his guns only flashed in the pan. I cheerfully confess, however, that he proved himself, on the whole, a brave and honourable soldier, that some of his guns were skilfully directed, and that no man of his 'livery and regiment' could have defended the post so well."

The proceedings, on the conclusion of Stewart's address, are thus reported in the "Northern Whig":—

* See Appendix D—"Letter: Reply to Rev. H. Cooke," 1823.

“It was now past three o'clock ; and whilst a number of speakers presented themselves to the house, there were loud and continued cries of ‘Roll, roll!’ Mr. Cooke said, that, as the assembly appeared to have made up their minds on this subject, he would willingly consent to suppress his speech, if other gentlemen would do the same. There was some confusion for a few minutes, when ‘Roll, roll!’ was loudly repeated. The roll was then called on the amendment, when—

“99	<i>ministers</i>	voted	‘PASS.’
40	<i>elders</i>	,,	,,
—			
139	‘PASS.’		
40	<i>ministers</i>	voted	‘NOT PASS.’
17	<i>elders</i>	,,	,,
—			
57	‘NOT PASS.’		

“Majority for the amendment, 82.” *

This was unquestionably the decisive vote in the great controversy between Subscription and Non-Subscription in the General Synod of Ulster, and in the question of the unity or separation of the Synod. After this decision, the Non-Subscribers *could* not remain long in membership, and, unless able to effect a repeal of the obnoxious Overture, their separation was only a question of time and arrangement.

Let us see, then, the relative position, as to numbers, in which they were left by this Synodical vote. It is to be remembered that the Synod, when the meeting began, was attended by 259 ministers and elders. It had continued its sittings from Tuesday morning till Saturday evening ; and when the final vote was taken, only 196 members answered to their names. Of the remaining 63, most had probably left for their homes, or their ministerial duties on the ensuing Sabbath, and a few may have kept silent, as not wishing to vote. The opinions of these 63 upon the question it would of course be impossible now to ascertain ; but it may be fairly taken for granted that they were divided in the same proportion of Subscribers and Non-Subscribers

* “Northern Whig,” July 10, 1823.

as those who remained and voted. Indeed, it might well be held, that the proportion of Non-Subscribers and favourers of Non-Subscription would be much greater amongst those who retired—the “timid disciples” and middle party of the Synod, discouraged by the evident majority against them, and dismayed by the threatening aspect of affairs—than amongst those who remained to vote; while the holy zeal of the Orthodox members would more generally induce them to remain to the last, to swell the known majority against the Arians, and add to and witness the anticipated triumph of their popular champion and his party. But, not pressing this probability, we may take their proportion to have been the same. We arrive then at the following results:—The Cookstown decision declares the proportion of Non-Subscribers and Subscribers, amongst the members of the General Synod of Ulster, representing its constituent congregations and people, to have been on that day as 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$, or to have been more than *one-fourth*—in reality, *two-sevenths* of the whole! If this result be compared with the analysis of the division on the Strabane test,* where the opinion of *every* minister and elder was recorded, and the foregoing equitable proportion be added on account of the absent members, it will be seen how materially, despite the sum of Orthodox endeavour, fiery zeal, eloquence, argument, and boasting, the cause of the Subscribers had waned, and their numbers declined; and how, despite of every conceivable obstacle, discouragement, and repressive influence that could possibly be brought to bear against it, the cause of Non-Subscription had been maintained, and its numbers kept up and increased.

In the relative proportion of the Non-Subscribers in this division we have the *real strength of the Remonstrant principles in Ulster*. The constitution of the Remonstrant Synod, afterwards established, has nothing whatever to do with Arianism (or, more properly, Unitarianism), or any other *ism*; a Trinitarian being quite as admissible as a Unitarian to the pulpits of its congregations, if he be acceptable to the people.

* See pp. 173-4.

Unitarianism in doctrine merely represents the result to which freedom in investigating the Scriptures seems to have led the majority of Non-Subscribers. The twelve "fundamental principles" of the Remonstrant Constitution are the pure essence of Non-Subscription; and every man who voted on that day against Cooke's Overture could and ought to have joined the Remonstrants in their subsequent adoption. So that the discrepancy between the number of that minority and of those who afterwards came out from the Synod as Remonstrants, instead of being the proportion of additional converts from Arianism to Orthodoxy in the bounds of the Synod, only represents the additional number of *human consciences crushed and broken* under the iron wheels of Cooke's chariot of triumph.

But though the majority may not have been as large as they reckoned upon, still the *deed was done*; and the leaders could now afford themselves a little cheap magnanimity. So it was moved—"That Mr. Porter be continued Clerk," and *carried by acclamation!* And the Synod adjourned till the following Monday.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION OF THE COOKSTOWN MEETING.

1828.

Synod re-assembles—Protest against the Overture—Signatures—Discussion regarding Fisherwick Place Congregation—Cooke defeated—His “Reply to Montgomery”—The “Authentic Report”—“Aladdin’s Lamp”—His Arguments against “Private Judgment”—Montgomery’s Answer—Their Fallacy demonstrated—“Notes of the Synod”—Opponents of Cooke not allowed a Hearing—The case of James Simms—Congregational Memorials—Extraordinary Proposal—The Meeting concludes—Publication of Montgomery’s Letter in Reply to Cooke—Its Character and Power.

ON the Synod re-assembling on Monday afternoon, the Rev. N. Alexander and other members, who had on Saturday protested against the decision adopting Cooke’s Overture, assigned their reasons as follows :—

“We, the undersigned ministers and elders, protest against the decision of Synod in this case, for the following, amongst many other reasons :—

“1. Because the overture contains several statements respecting the opinions and characters of the ministers of this church which we consider to be unfounded and injurious.

“2. Because subjecting our students and licentiates to the control of an ever-varying Committee of Synod, who may be under the influence of personal feelings or local connexions, appears to us to be imposing subscription to human interpretations of the Word of God, in a form more objectionable than has ever been attempted in any other church.

“3. Because human tests and confessions have, in all ages, tended to encourage hypocrisy, to restrict the right of private judgment, to lessen the authority of Scripture, and to prevent that free inquiry and discussion which are essential to the extension of religious knowledge, and of which truth need not be afraid.

“4. Because all attempts to produce a uniformity of belief have hitherto entirely failed, and, from the nature of man, must continue to fail; whilst they have created unrighteous divisions amongst Christians, thrown a shield over the time-server, and exposed the conscientious to injuries and persecutions; as the case of the Two Thousand ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity, under Charles the Second, incontestibly proves.

“5. Because, as Presbyterian Protestants, we will never surrender the fundamental principle of the Reformation, which forbids us to call any man, or body of men, ‘Lord or Master,’ considering that ‘one only is our Master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren.’

“6. Because we believe that the sacred Scriptures, ‘given by inspiration of God,’ are the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and as we are determined to submit to no other standard ourselves, but ‘to hold fast the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,’ so we never will be accessory to subjecting the opinions of others to any human interference, save such explanations as may take place between pastors and people.

“7. Because, if any creed or test of religious belief contains nothing but what is to be found in the Bible, it is superfluous; and if it contains anything contrary to the Bible, it is pernicious; calculated to mislead the understanding, to prevent the progress of truth, and to perpetuate error.

“8. Because the Overture just passed must eventually trench upon the most valuable rights of the people in the free election of their ministers, inasmuch as their choice must be restricted to persons professing to hold the opinions approved by the Committee of Examinators, although such opinions should not be agreeable to the views of sacred truth entertained by the congregation.

“9. Because, although some of us believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, we consider it improper to require the belief of that, or any other controverted doctrine, from our brethren, as a necessary condition of Christian communion; and we are, therefore, determined to embrace the earliest opportunity of pressing the repeal, or a sufficient modification of the Overture.

“10. Because we regard it as exceedingly preposterous, to require students, who have not even entered a theological class, to profess their belief in some of the most abstruse and difficult points of theology.

“11. Because we consider this proceeding as a direct breach of faith with those students and licentiates who became candidates for the ministry under our previous regulations.

“12. Because, whilst in the recent repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, in England, we have a gratifying proof of the increasing liberality of that country, and of the Legislature, we consider it reproachful to any Protestant, and more especially to any Presbyterian Church, to impose fresh restrictions upon liberty of conscience and freedom of inquiry in matters of faith.

“Signed by twenty-one ministers and eighteen elders, as follows :—

“ *Ministers.*

Elders.

N. Alexander.	Isaac William Glenmy.
John Orr.	James Kydd.
John Mulligan.	John Alexander.
William Porter.	James Muirland.
Samuel Arnold.	Alexander Steen.
John Mitchel.	John Montgomery.
H. Montgomery.	Hugh Jackson.
James Davis.	William M'William.
James Lunn.	Edward Swanwick.
Arthur Nelson.	Robert Dickson.
William Campbell.	James Montgomery.
Alexander Orr.	John Gowdy.
John Fisher.	William Orr.
David Whyte.	John Roberts.
Fletcher Blakely.	James Boyd.
Robert Campbell.	John M'Gowan (by and with the
Samuel Armour (7th reason ex- cepted).	consent of the Banbridge Session, assembled 30th June).
S. Watson (1st part of 7th reason excepted).	William M'William (accredited elder).
S. C. Nelson.	George Crawford (a believer in the Trinity).”
William Cuthbertson.	
Robert Campbell (Templepatrick).	

(Minutes of Synod, Cookstown, 1828, pp. 34-36).

An Orthodox Examination Committee, subsequently appointed, ostentatiously excluding the names of the non-subscribing ministers, was also protested against in strong terms by the minority.

Two days were then devoted to various Synodical business; and a great part of the afternoon of Wednesday was occupied by

an acrimonious and contradictory discussion relating to the new congregation of Fisherwick Place, Belfast—in which, for two hours, Cooke endeavoured to harass and override the worthy Orthodox Commissioners who represented it in Synod. These were—Professor Thomson of the Institution, and Messrs. Charles Thomson, Hugh Montgomery, and Thomas Wallace; and because they and the congregation could neither be coaxed nor coerced, at any price, to translate the Rev. Henry Cooke from Killileagh to be their minister,* they must be made to feel the weight of his august displeasure. But he found these sturdy laymen well able to hold their own, even against the mighty Orthodox Dictator himself, and his attempts received a most signal discomfiture. The circumstances are thus described by Montgomery in his letter before adverted to on the Synodical proceedings. †

“He (Mr. Cooke) had been most *disinterestedly* employed for two hours in labouring to overturn the very regulations which he had *himself* sanctioned for the management of the new congregation in Belfast. But really, as my friend Mr. Stewart said, ‘his task was no *sinecure*.’ He made one assertion; Mr. Henry of Connor said ‘No.’ He made another; Mr. Glendy denied it: a third; Mr. Charles Thomson refuted it: a fourth; Mr. Wallace disproved it: a fifth; Mr. Montgomery upset it: a sixth or seventh; and Professor Thomson completely overwhelmed him with a whole mass of documents and proofs.”

In the face of such a damaging exposure of interested and personal motives, even his most unscrupulous partisans failed to support him, and Synod decided in favour of the Commissioners.

* Recent confirmation of this fact is afforded by the passage in the autobiography of the late Dr. Morgan, recently published, where, writing of his own settlement in Fisherwick Place Congregation, he states—“There was another whom it was my anxious desire the congregation would call in my stead. This was Mr. Cooke. It seemed to me that the public voice, and his peculiar talents, pointed to him as the right man for the place. But it appeared this could not be done. There was strong opposition to him, arising out of the offence he had given by his opposition to certain proceedings in the Belfast Academical Institution, and his well-known and strong political sentiments. On these grounds his appointment was hopeless.” Dr. Morgan’s call to the congregation was subsequent to the Cookstown meeting. (See “Recollections of my Life and Times, by the Rev. James Morgan, D.D.,” pp. 38-39.)

† Appendix D—“Letter: Reply to Rev. H. Cooke on Synodical Proceedings,” 1828.

It was then, seeing the necessity of a supreme effort, to revive the sinking courage of his followers, and re-establish his influence, that he entered on his long-threatened and long-prepared oration. In the second week of the Synod, and at the fag end of its meeting—the debate and decision on the Overture long past, and Montgomery's speech more than four days old—Cooke, on Wednesday evening, came forward to reply to it! He made, as the occasion of his address, the giving notice of motion, at next annual meeting, "for a consideration of the state of the Synod, with a view to reform existing evils." And upon this he proceeded, "contrary to all precedent and all law," to speak for nearly two hours, "upon subjects," said Montgomery, "which had never been before the Synod, upon questions which were settled, and finally upon the business of next year!"

What purports to be an "Authentic Report" of this speech was published under his own superintendence, and copied in full into the "Northern Whig" and other papers, as his "Reply to Montgomery." Like his friend Stewart, he commenced with accusing the "Northern Whig" of serious misrepresentations in its report of the Strabane meeting twelve months before; and, like Stewart's, his accusations were each and all most ably met and entirely refuted by the editor, the literal exactness of the Strabane report established, and a severe castigation administered to both the gentlemen. Of this, and the "Authentic Report," Montgomery thus writes in the letter above-mentioned:—

"To accuse a public paper of misrepresenting him, after the lapse of *twelve months*, and when the recollection of particular words and phrases must have become indistinct in the memory of those that heard them, was no great exertion of courage; but to give a new version of his speech at the end of a fortnight, when the whole affair was green in the minds of men, and to call it "an authentic report," is the act of no ordinary personage. That a considerable portion of the report is given literally as it was spoken or read, I freely admit; for several omissions, and a great change of language, in those parts which were delivered altogether extemporaneously, I bring no charge, well knowing that such things are unavoidable; but for the introduction of entirely *new matter*, containing *heavy* accusations and bitter insinuations, which

were not even *hinted at* in his speech, I consider myself bound to arraign him at the bar of public opinion."

Though this highly-lauded speech, either as spoken or reported, does not contain much that should be called sound argument, it is undoubtedly characterised by all the great ability and peculiar cleverness in "making the worse appear the better part," with which he was gifted. Some of his retorts, and especially the celebrated dioramic series of "dissolving views" comprised under "Aladdin's Lamp," are masterpieces of ingenuity. Yet it is to be remembered that they were, for the most part, but clever comments and amplifications on the ideas and illustrations supplied him by Montgomery; for no man ever equalled Cooke in his skill in "entering into other men's labours," whether friends or foes; and of this, held by many of his admirers to have been his greatest speech, it has not inaptly been said, that he borrowed his arguments from Stewart and his illustrations from Montgomery!

In a newspaper sketch of Cooke's life, it is told that in after years, in Synod, he once silenced a formidable adversary, in the full swing of picturesque oratory against himself, by exclaiming—"You have stolen my Lamp!" Had his opponent been as quick-witted, he might have replied with equal truth and force—"As you stole Montgomery's!"

In the "Authentic Report" of his speech, after several pages of introductory matter, he commences his main subject with a dashing onslaught against the Non-Subscribers' cherished principle of "the right of private judgment," and devotes a considerable space, containing some very choice specimens of his peculiar style of argument, to the endeavour to overturn it. This has been brought forward by his admirers as one of the strongest and most telling parts of his address; and as it certainly met with one of the completest and most effective answers that Montgomery ever penned, in his letter aforesaid,* it may be desirable here to place their respective statements in

* Appendix D—"Letter: Reply to Rev. H. Cooke," &c.

juxtaposition, to enable readers to compare them and judge for themselves. For this purpose the passages are given *in extenso*.

Cooke's statement is as follows :—

“Against the whole past proceedings of the Synod, and against the object contemplated in my notice of future motions, three broad grounds of objection are exhibited.

“The first of these objections represents the proceedings of the Synod as opposed to ‘the right of private judgment.’ Whether our proceedings be, or be not, opposed to the right of private judgment, I shall not take upon me to determine; as I must confess myself, up till this hour, ignorant of what the ‘right of private judgment’ can possibly mean. This is a startling confession of ignorance in the midst of ‘the march of mind,’ and in the full blaze of the ‘lights of the nineteenth century.’ But the fault is not mine. No member of Synod has condescended to explain what he means by ‘right of private judgment.’ Does it mean that every man has a right to think as he pleases—as the lights of the late French, and of some modern schools of philosophy seem to intimate. Then, at once, I totally deny its authority. Let me look at thee, thou idol called ‘right of private judgment.’ I am told that if I deny to worship thee, I shall be branded as a rebel to thy high and legitimate powers. It may be so; yet will I not tremble before the philosophical idol men have conjured into existence, nor bow before the image they are pleased to set up. If, by ‘right of private judgment,’ we are to understand a ‘right to think as we please;’ then what we have a *right* to think, it never can be *wrong* to think. We cease then to be accountable for our opinions; indeed, accountability becomes impossible; for where there can be no wrong, the ordinary idea of accountability disappears. Then, as our actions arise from our opinions, where opinions cannot be wrong, actions cannot be wrong. Thus virtue and vice are confounded for ever, and the distinctions between moral right and wrong disappear from the universe.

“But have we not been told, one thousand times, that the Protestant religion is built upon the ‘right of private judgment’? God forbid it were built upon any such flimsy foundation. The Protestant religion is built upon the command, the Word of God—upon Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. There it rests unshaken upon the Rock of Ages, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

“I know it has been the practice of many called philosophers, and of

not a few called divines, to fix upon human principles, when they should have ascended to Divine principles. Hence the modern doctrine concerning ‘right of private judgment.’ When I therefore deny all allegiance to this phantom king, I am bound to point out to this assembly what principles I consider to be entitled to the legitimate sovereignty. These seem to me to be the following :—

“1. It is the *duty* of every man to search the Scriptures.—John v. 39.

“2. It is the *duty* of every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind.—Romans xiv. 5.

“3. It is the *duty* of every man to receive the dictates and guidance of Scripture, as the revealed will of Heaven.—2 Tim. iii. 16.

“4. A fourth principle, or rather corollary, necessarily follows from the foregoing, viz. :—That, as public bodies are composed of individuals, they, as public bodies, are subject to the same laws as individuals. Consequently, it is the duty of public bodies to search the mind of God in the Scriptures, to be fully persuaded in their own minds, and, in all their decisions, to be guided solely by the authority of what God has revealed. Now, if these four principles include what is meant by the ‘right of private judgment,’ let me first entreat our opponents to reduce their phraseology to some more intelligible, some more definite, some more Scriptural standard. And let me assure them, that if these principles include their ‘private judgment,’ we will be the last in existence to recede from one iota of them. Let them convince us of departing from one of these principles, and we will thank them for the correction—but till they bring this conviction, which I am persuaded they will not even attempt, we will say with Luther, when accused before the Diet—‘Here we take our stand: we can pursue no other course; and God be our help!’”

On this statement, Montgomery, in his letter, makes the following comments :—

“His next effort is a very bold one. Like a true theological *Cobbett*, he turns round with the utmost effrontery upon the principle which he has been advocating for years, and which he has been pressing upon others as incontrovertible. When a poor Roman Catholic is to be turned against his priest, or an impression to be made at a Bible Society meeting, ‘the right of private judgment’ is quite a Divinity; but when a brother Protestant happens, in the exercise of that right, to think differently from Mr. Cooke, it instantly becomes an object to be *sneered* at—‘a mere idol, a phantom king;’ and he gravely assures

us, that, 'up till this hour, he is ignorant of what it can possibly mean!' But, he alleges, 'the fault is not his; for no member of Synod has condescended to explain it.' This assertion must have been made in mere *forgetfulness*; because Mr. Cooke cannot be ignorant that 'the right of private judgment' has been explained by a member of Synod, in whom it was 'condescension' to do so, if his own words deserve any credit; by a man who has modestly informed the world, that '*God and Truth are with him, and the prayers of ALL good men are with him!*' No person can doubt the competency of such a man 'to explain what is meant by the right of private judgment;' and here are his words, written with his own hand, and printed under his own inspection:—'It is the privilege, the *right*, and the duty of every man, to examine the Scriptures for himself. In exercising the *inalienable right of his own judgment*, the Christian refuses to acknowledge subjection of conscience to *any authority but the Word of God*; and before he assent to any doctrine, he claims the right of examining the Scriptures for himself, that upon their authority he may rest thoroughly persuaded in his *own mind!*' This admirable definition of the right of private judgment was penned by the *Rev. Henry Cooke*, and unanimously sanctioned by the Synod of Ulster, in 1825; yet, strange to say, the writer informs us in 1828, 'that up till this hour he is ignorant of what it can possibly mean.' Alas! it is ever thus that men involve themselves, when 'they forsake the onward path.' In vain does he endeavour to subvert the great fundamental principle of Protestantism, '*the sufficiency of Scripture, and the inalienable right of every man, on due inquiry, to form his own opinions with regard to the doctrines and precepts of the Bible.*' His multitude of '*ifs,*' his puny quibbles upon the words '*right*' and '*wrong,*' which are not worth exposing, and his quotation of texts which really make against him, all prove to what straits he is reduced, in his determined opposition to the plainest principles of Christian Liberty. The truth is, even Mr. Cooke's talents are inadequate to the support of such a cause: he has no firm ground, either of reason or Scripture, on which to stand. I defy him to produce a single text, authorising any man, or body of men, to prescribe rules of faith or modes of worship to their fellow-disciples; whilst, on the contrary, the whole tenor of the New Testament, as well as many explicit declarations, deprecate the arrogant assumption of fallible men over the consciences of their brethren, inculcate the free exercise of individual judgment, and exhort believers to 'maintain the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.'"

It is worthy of note that modern admirers of Cooke, when quoting the foregoing passage of the "Authentic Report" of his great speech, have *altogether omitted* the important words with which he introduces his fourth principle as above—the words:—"A fourth principle, or rather corollary, necessarily follows from the foregoing, viz. :—"* The omission is the more remarkable, as upon the truth or otherwise of the statement contained in these few *omitted* words depends the *entire fabric of Subscription*, which it cost Cooke and the Orthodox party so much time and trouble to rear! If that single statement be untrue, or incapable of proof, their house tumbles in irretrievable ruin upon their heads! Now it is exactly this statement, or proposition, which the Non-Subscribers emphatically deny to be either demonstrable or true, and which, they assert, even if it were true, would not justify the imposition of a human creed by any "public body" upon a single individual! They accept to the fullest extent the first *three propositions*—for they are the very principles of Non-Subscription; and they are glad to see their adversary appending to each of them even one of the many strong Scripture proofs by which they can be supported. But they utterly deny that the fourth principle, or proposition, is a *corollary*, or *necessary consequent*, of all or any of these; and they are not surprised to observe that for this fourth proposition, on which his whole structure rests, he has prudently forborne to refer to Scripture support, as in the three other instances, or to adduce a single Scripture proof. Therefore Montgomery's challenge holds good—"I defy him to produce a single text authorising any man or body of men to prescribe rules or modes of worship to their fellow-disciples."

But independently of Scripture proof, the proposition is inherently unsound. The first three propositions establish the duty, the paramount obligation of every individual. This is admitted by both parties. Is there anything, then, in the chance or voluntary association of a number of individuals in a *public body* relieving the individuals composing it, or any of them, from a single iota of that duty, or entitling, or requiring them to

* See "Life and Times of Dr. Cooke," p. 162.

delegate it, in the very least degree, to the "body" in its associate capacity; much less entitling, or in *any way necessitating*, the "body" to assume the slightest control over the minds and consciences of its individual members, dictate any course of opinion or action, or to prescribe any pains or penalties in this regard? Most unquestionably not.

The words of the presumed "corollary" are—"That as public bodies are composed of individuals, they, *as public bodies*, are subject to the same laws as individuals." Say rather—That, as the sacred duties previously established are prescribed and have regard to *individuals* only, "public bodies," which are accidental and not essential to these duties, have only a title to exist, in so far as, in principle and practice, they are conservative of the *rights* and *duties* of each and every individual comprising them; and the only legitimate laws they can form are such as shall preserve inviolate the unrestricted liberty of every member, in the performance of the sacred duties before enjoined. The "public body" was made for man, not man for the "public body!" "Consequently it is the duty of" the *individuals* composing "public bodies to search the mind of God in the Scriptures, to be fully persuaded in their own minds, and, in all their decisions, to be guided *solely* by the authority of what God has revealed." So say, emphatically, the Non-Subscribers; and, so saying, *they* can with some reason adopt the words of the great Reformer—"Here we take our stand; we can pursue no other course; and God be our help!" Words employed with an amount of cool assurance, simply amazing, by their great antagonist; but which, in the mouth of Henry Cooke, at the moment he uttered them, were about as appropriate as they would have been in the mouth of Leo the Tenth, when dictating his Bull for Luther's expulsion!

One more notice of this extraordinary address must suffice for the present. It is taken from an interesting editorial article, entitled, "Notes of the Synod," in the Supplement to the "Northern Whig" of July 24, 1828, where the speech itself is also published in full:—

“It must be admitted that, if Mr. Cooke possesses little of the harmlessness of the dove, he has a full share of the wisdom of the serpent. He is a most excellent manceuverer. With seeming moderation, he gave up his right of reply to Mr. Montgomery, on the 28th of last month; but, four days afterwards, he took an opportunity—which, had the proceedings been regularly conducted, would not have been afforded him—of replying *seriatim* to Mr. Montgomery’s arguments, or rather to the arguments which he was pleased to attribute to Mr. Montgomery; for, like many other rhetorical artificers, Mr. Cooke is very fond of framing a flimsy edifice, which may be upset with a breath, and imposing it upon his auditors as one of the strongholds of his opponents. For instance, Mr. Cooke, when he proceeds to reply to Mr. Montgomery’s speech, commences, like one of the old schoolmen, to attack a proposition which Mr. Montgomery had laid down at the beginning of his address.

“‘The lecturer,’ says Mr. Cooke, ‘began with announcing, with all due solemnity, this important proposition—“Religion is a matter entirely between a man and his God.” This proposition sounds well. It served the lecturer to show that we, as a Synod, could have no possible right to interfere in the matter. It is strange, sir, how nearly a proposition can approach to the truth, and, after all, be untrue. That religion is *a matter between man and his God*, is a truth most certain; but that religion is a matter *entirely* between man and his God, is an assertion most unfounded. Were the lecturer’s proposition true, I wonder how a minister should attempt to interfere in the religious instruction of his parish. Why is he to be instant in season and out of season; to exhort, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine?’

“In this strain Mr. Cooke proceeds to show the absurdity of the proposition advanced by ‘the lecturer,’ as he is pleased to call Mr. Montgomery; and it must be confessed that his manner of doing so is most admirable. There is one trifling drawback, however, on the success with which Mr. Cooke assails Mr. Montgomery’s postulate. The proposition which Mr. Cooke attacked, bears, in reality, no more resemblance to that which Mr. Montgomery advanced than a ‘horse chestnut’ does to a ‘chestnut horse.’ When Mr. Montgomery advanced his proposition, *he coupled with it the very qualification for the want of which Mr. Cooke cavils at it as untrue.* Mr. Montgomery’s words are these:—

“‘I shall set out upon a principle which I consider to be unassailable, viz. :—That religion is entirely a matter between man and his Creator,

excepting so far as one human being may lawfully endeavour to influence another by friendly counsel and instruction.

"That Mr. Cooke should so barefacedly divide Mr. Montgomery's proposition, for the purpose of perverting its meaning, will not be surprising to those who know the man; he calculated on the trick not being discovered, owing to the defect of human memory; but that he should have the impudence to publish the perversion, when the knavish sophistry could so easily be detected, exceeds anything that we have ever met with in the records of assurance."

Dr. Cooke's talented biographer has stated that "no attempt was made to oppose the notice of motion." But it should be remembered that the speech on the motion was only delivered at the close of the third day's protracted sittings in the second week of Synod. These had continued up to seven, eight, and nine p.m. on the three days respectively, having commenced at seven a.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday; and it being nine o'clock, when the Synod adjourned, exhausted after Cooke's speech, no discussion on the subject was then possible; and on the next day *none was allowed*. For, on Carlile rising "to offer some explanations in reference to previous statements which he conceived had been unfairly attacked and misrepresented by Mr. Cooke," Stewart deftly interposed, and, with the help of the "sweet voices" of the crowd, prevented him being heard. A scene of "most admired disorder" ensued for some time. Carlile declared—"I shall leave the house if I am not to be allowed a hearing;" and the confusion continuing, with no prospect of his being heard, he took up his hat and retired. When the Orthodox Carlile was so treated, what chance was there of a luckless Arian obtaining a hearing?

The case of James Simms, which next came before the Synod, deserves a brief notice. He had been for two years one of Montgomery's assistant teachers in the Institution (see p. 58), and at the same time pursuing his studies as a candidate for the ministry under the care of the Presbytery of Route, in the far north of County Antrim. He was a young man of great talent and energy, and of independent mind in the formation and expression

of his opinions. These circumstances, together with his having been so long within the influence of the formidable Arian, Montgomery, seemed to his Presbytery—which was, perhaps, the most intensely Calvinistic in the Synod—too desirable an opportunity to be neglected for entering on the favourite occupation of heresy-hunting—a pursuit at all times so refreshing to the pious zeal of elect souls! They entered on the chase with characteristic ardour; and in their selection of subjects for his trial discourses, and their criticisms upon his performances, showed themselves possessed of well-trained noses for the work. He had, however, so far stoutly held his own; till, finding himself living at such a distance from their remote place of meeting, and, no doubt, also finding their combined and unrelenting pursuit grow unendurably hot, he sought to free himself from it and them by asking them for “credentials” to the Presbytery of Bangor, which he wished to join instead. This was a perfectly legitimate step, and as he had creditably passed his several Presbyterial examinations and trials, there was no reason to refuse him.

The Presbytery, therefore, in the first instance, consented to his application; but subsequently drew back, and after a whole year’s delay, refused to grant him the usual credentials necessary to his reception by the Presbytery of Bangor. Thus hardly used, he appealed to the Synod, and was heard in support of his memorial in a lengthened statement of great ability. Mr. John Brown (Aghadowey) and others of the Presbytery replied, evincing a bitter and revengeful spirit. Both parties having withdrawn, it was cruelly moved by *Stewart*, and seconded by *Cooke*, that he should be sent back to the Route Presbytery, and ordered to give a discourse before them on *John i. 1*, before he apply for his credentials. On this an animated discussion ensued. While Messrs. Park and Dill supported the motion, Messrs. J. Hogg, Barnett, Reid, and Hay amongst the Orthodox ministers, with Davis, Alexander, Porter, and Montgomery of the Non-Subscribers, most strongly protested against its cruelty and injustice, and urged upon the Synod a more generous treatment.

But all in vain. The first exercise of their new-found power was too sweet to be relinquished. They had started a noble stag, and bravely, when hard pressed by the pack, had he stood to bay ; but they had run him down, and having tasted blood, were not to be withheld ! The "Northern Whig," indignantly commenting on the proceeding, thus describes the scene :—

"In vain did Mr. Barnett and other *Orthodox* ministers protest against sending Mr. Simms back to the Presbytery of Route, whose ruling members live '*so far north,*' that they are as far beyond the reach of grammatical rules, Synodical rules, or even the rules of their own Presbytery, as their conduct to Mr. Simms proves them to be from the plain precepts of natural justice and Christian candour. 'Send Mr. Simms back,' cried Mr. Park, 'or you will otherwise encourage a spirit of *petulance in young men!*' 'Send him back,' said Mr. Dill of *Know-head*—'he appears inflated with the pride of intellect.' 'Send him back,' said Mr. Cooke ; 'he must receive a lesson from this body.' There wanted but the profession of Christian charity to complete the exhibition ; and another minister said 'it would be doing Mr. Simms a *kindness* to send him back !' Even the ordeal of their *own new Synodical Committee*, before which Mr. Simms professed himself willing to be tried, would not satisfy them ; and they decided by a majority to send him back to the Presbytery of Route."

The decision having been announced to Mr. Simms, the following was his dignified reply :—

"MODERATOR,—If, in the warmth of my feelings, I have used any expression which may seem disrespectful either to the Presbytery or to this body, I have to express for it sincere regret. I cannot, however, acquiesce in the decision which has just been announced, because I am convinced that sending me back to the Presbytery of Route would only revive our differences, and prove a source of unhappiness to both parties. Besides, to me such a course seems quite unnecessary, when you have a Committee before which my sentiments, on the great doctrinal points alluded to, can be sufficiently ascertained. I regret the course that has been forced upon me, as I have often looked forward with delight to the time when, in the Synod of Ulster, I should meet many of the early associates of my studies. But those bright visions are now fled. I trust in whatever situation I may be placed, I shall always conduct myself with honesty and integrity ; and as I can-

not recognise the justice of the Synod's decision regarding me, I beg leave most respectfully to inform you, that I cannot longer consider myself as connected with that body."

So fell the curtain on the completion of the *Second Act* of this theological drama, concluding its further performance for the time. It was the beginning of the end! As customary, however, in theatrical representations, it was followed by nothing less than a "Screaming Farce!" The brief and graphic account of this, given in the conclusion of the newspaper report of the Synod's meeting, supplies such a striking comment on the whole proceedings, as a volume of reflections would fail to convey.

At *six o'clock a.m.* on Friday, the last morning, the ghost of the Synod met to consider several congregational memorials on either side of the Arian controversy—those from the Orthodox side "praying that the Arians might be driven out from amongst the Orthodox ministers of the Synod."*

"Mr. Park moved that the consideration of these memorials be postponed till next annual meeting. *Mr. M'Clelland* (Ahoghill) moved as an amendment, *that the prayer of the memorials be granted, and that the Synod do divide accordingly!*

"*Mr. Porter* expressed his astonishment, that any member of the Synod of Ulster would dare to make such a motion, at the close of its proceedings, when there were only FIVE members present! There being no seconder to *Mr. M'Clelland's* motion, of course it fell to the ground.

"The Synod closed at eight o'clock with prayer."

For some weeks after the Synod, Cooke's speech flourished in different forms in the columns of the Belfast papers—the "News-Letter," "Guardian," "Northern Whig," and elsewhere; and afterwards he had the "Authentic Report" printed as a pamphlet.

On the 21st August appeared Montgomery's reply, in the form of a letter to the "Northern Whig," entitled, "Mr. Montgomery's

* It is only justice to the eminent Orthodox zeal of the family whom they represent, to note the interesting coincidence, that *four* of these latter memorials, praying for the driving forth of their Arian brethren, proceeded from the congregations of Knowhead, Ballykelly, Ray, and Donaghmore, in the remote districts of Derry and Donegal, presided over ministerially by divines bearing the honoured names of *Richard Dill*, Senior; *Richard Dill*, Junior; *Francis Dill*, and *Samuel Dill*, respectively!

Reply to Mr. Cooke, on the late proceedings of the Synod of Ulster." It occupied a supplement of sixteen columns. If his Cookstown speech be regarded as the finest he ever spoke, so may this letter be said to be, with possibly the one exception of his celebrated letter to O'Connell in 1831, the finest he ever penned. It certainly is a most noble reply; and comparing it with his speech, one is at a loss to determine whether he is more deserving of admiration as an orator or as a writer. There is not a point or supposed argument, in all his opponent's long address, that he does not in turn take up and effectually deal with—not a sophistry, however artfully veiled, he does not expose—not a *verisimilitude*, however apparently sound and plausible, that he does not arraign, try, and condemn at the bar of *verity* itself. It is marvellous with what powerful grasp of intellect, concentration of logical reasoning, tenacity of purpose, and rare detective skill, he patiently follows his crafty adversary through every tortuous wile and deep device, not only of his address, but of his whole Synodical campaign; and brings the full flood of daylight to shine upon their darkest places! It is marvellous the apparent ease with which he strips off the tinsel from the several figures, as used by Cooke, and separating the original from the borrowed parts, exposes the real "rags and tatters" of which the additions are composed!

Montgomery has been described by some Orthodox writers as having been a mere "special pleader;" as appealing to the fancy and imagination by beauty of language and illustration, rather than convincing the judgment by sound reasoning; and as having a propensity to "leave arguments and principles, with which he never cared to grapple." But any who may be disposed to hold or express such opinions, are referred, for their most complete refutation, to a careful perusal of the letter now under consideration, as given at length in the Appendix to the present volume,* which will probably be found to compare favourably with many of the first compositions of ancient or modern times, as a sample of lucid, logical, and powerful argumentative writing.

* See Appendix D—"Letter: Reply to Rev. H. Cooke."

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTES OF A TOUR IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

1828.

Compagnons du Voyage—The Passage—The “Saints”—The Curate—Scenery of the Clyde—Rothesay—The Kyles of Bute—Loch Fine—The Glasgow Merchant converted—An Admiring “Compatriot”—Inverary Castle—Highland Inns and Charges—Tarbert—Loch Lomond—Inversnaid—The Provost and his Daughters—Highland Generalship—Loch Katrine—A Contrast—“Ellen’s Isle”—The Trosachs—The Inn—A Disappointment—Irish Generalship—A Morning Walk—Loch Achray—Benvenue—The Guide—The Ascent and Return.

IN the interval between the close of the Synod’s meeting and the publication of his letter, Montgomery sought some much-needed relaxation in an excursion to the Highlands of Scotland. Of a portion of this visit, he has left some pleasant reminiscences, written as light notes by the way. Though intended solely for his own private use, a few extracts may not be found uninteresting.

The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery, their friend, James Simms—no doubt rejoicing in his emancipation from the Inquisition of Route—and one other young friend, W. H. It was Montgomery’s first visit to Scotland since his college days, and the first occasion of his ever crossing from *Belfast*. The now so familiar passage, and the scenery of the Clyde, possessed for him all the zest of novelty, and he describes them with much animation. It seems strange, now-a-days, to think of any one sitting down to write even a note on such familiar themes! Yet he notes almost everything—the day on which they start (July 9), the vessel (the *Eclipse*, Captain Price), the incidents of the passage, and the passengers, are in turn alluded to.

Amongst the last, a “saintly” family, who had managed

during the night, by some selfish trickery, to make themselves comfortable at the expense of the comfort of Mrs. Montgomery and the other passengers, are thus told off:—

“The breath of morning, however, fanned my wife’s pale cheek, and she somewhat revived. After a little, up came the ‘saints.’ Mrs. M. was inclined to renew acquaintance; but they had served their turn with her, and seemed instinctively to trace heresy in her very looks. From the first hour they came on board, until we left them, they seemed to dislike everybody; and nobody cared for them. Is it that ‘saintship’ makes people cold and heartless, or that nature has made them so; and they assume airs of sanctity to forward their selfish designs? Another passenger, Rev. ———, curate, from Dublin; a pale, sickly, wretched-looking man—rusty hat—blue ecape—old umbrella—faded yellow great-coat—rather tall figure—Dominic Sampson, or the ‘gifted Gilfillan;’ yet innocent and good, fitter for heaven than earth—the very antipodes of M—— K. C——.”

The beautiful scenery that meets the eye on both sides in the sail up the Clyde to Greenock is next graphically described, and the various handsome country seats noted, with passing references to most of them, and their proprietors. Remaining at Greenock for the day “to recruit,” he says—

“In the evening I climbed the mountain at the back of the town, and gratified myself in contemplating the beautiful scenery before me. The evening sun was shining upon the Highland mountains, that rose like gilded clouds in endless variety to the west and north; the Clyde rolled in majesty before us, almost from Glasgow to Arran; the busy town was at our feet; and crowds of steamboats, filled with people, were shooting in all directions. Nothing could be more beautiful and cheering.”

How great were the powers of observation and description, which could thus invest, as it were, with a halo of interest and beauty, even dirty, black Greenock itself, from which the modern *voyageur*, whether on business or pleasure bent, invariably hurries, only too glad to escape!

Next day they set sail for Inverary, and called at Rothesay, which he describes as—

“A most beautiful little town. . . . Altogether, I never saw

any bathing-place which I should so much like. Here we stopped about half-an-hour, and then started for the Kyles (or Straits) of Bute—a narrow channel separating the island from Argyle. Nothing could be more delightful than our sail up this strait—mountains hanging over us, glens opening and shewing other mountains in the distance, the sides of the hills now wild and abrupt, now covered with under-wood and verdure, every minute giving a new view of the scenery. At one time we seemed to be in a basin of very trifling extent, from which there appeared no outlet, and then the vessel glided round a projecting cliff, and we were ushered into a fresh scene of grandeur and beauty. Soon we emerged from the Kyles into the entrance of Loch Fine, between Arran and Argyle. Here a more extensive prospect opened up before us, and we had Highland scenery in all its perfection.”

After describing the sail up Loch Fine to Inverary, he thus adverts to his fellow-passengers:—

“We had a great variety of company—all courteous. A Glasgow merchant, liberal both in religion and politics, a hater of Culloden Cumberland, whom, he said, ‘he hoped was burning in the flames of hell, for his cold-blooded cruelty.’ On this I took him up, and made him a convert to the benevolent system of limited punishment, a discovery with which he seemed much pleased, even though it should release the Duke of Cumberland! Another character was a young, generous, and, I should think, rather dissipated, Highland laird—a fifty-second cousin of the Duke of Argyle. . . . I was principally attracted by an Irish Catholic, called O’Neill, who had been settled in Inverary for the last sixteen years in general business. He was just returning from visiting his friends in Sligo, and seemed quite versed in the state both of political and religious parties in Ireland. He enquired if I knew the Rev. H. Montgomery—‘a raal Irishman, and a complate Christian!’ I said I did know him a little. I had then to describe him; and when, after enjoying half-an-hour’s fun in hearing myself praised (in consequence of Master O’Neill’s reading the ‘Irishman’ and the ‘Whig’), I told him who I was, the fellow went nearly frantic, offered all manner of services, let the captain and all the passengers know *how great* a man was on board, and watched every look of my eye to see if he could gratify me in any way. When we arrived at Inverary, he went with us to the inn, looked important, whispered the landlord, and went off in triumph.

“Next morning, went over the way to see my Irish friend, O’Neill,

found him in a well-stocked shop, and learned from the innkeeper that he is a cautious, well-doing fellow—‘just as cannie as ony Scotchman.’”

A visit to Inverary Castle—the Duke of Argyle’s—is next described :—

“It stands about a quarter of a mile from the town, and some fifty perches from the shore of a small bay near the head of Loch Fine, and commands a view of the noble scenery on both sides of the loch, stretching down to Arran. At the back, rises the beautifully-wooded conical hill called Duniquoich; and other hills, planted and improved, extend to an immense distance on the west and east. Taking the situation altogether, I have seldom seen any to compare with it in natural sublimity and beauty. . . . The castle is a fine square building, with round turrets at the corners, built of St. Catherine stone. . . . Within is a noble hall, lighted from a dome turret, and ornamented with arms, armour, statues, &c. &c. The feature of the rooms is the quantity of French and Flemish tapestry they contain. The drawing-room is a fine room, and it is said the tapestry with which it is hung cost eighteen thousand pounds. A great number of family portraits cover the walls, amongst which that of ‘the great Duke, John’ stands conspicuous.”

He notes with regret the aspect of neglect which the house and grounds had acquired, owing to the continued absence of the then Duke from his ancestral castle. “Still,” he says, “it is a noble place, and might be made unequalled.”

At the head of Loch Fine, they had the *rare* fortune in Highland travelling to meet with—

“An excellent, *cheap*, well-conducted inn, whose owner was blessed with a wife of very uncommon talents and acquirements in her station of life. Mrs. P. not only keeps her house in the best of order, but reads poetry—ay, and writes poetry, too—with great ease and accuracy. She repeated to us ‘three poems’ of her own composition, and wrote one of them down with a neatness and correctness quite surprising. It turned out, however, that the lady was come of high descent, which accounts for the taste, the education, and the poetry in the mistress of a little country inn in the middle of the West Highlands. Spent Sunday here, and heard a plain, useful sermon in the afternoon from the Rev. Mr. M’Gilvray—a very unecouth-looking Highlander, but much

esteemed by his flock, the best testimony to the worth of his character. Had some conversation with him, and liked him in spite of his looks and manner. He was sorry I did not let him know who I was before sermon, as he would have asked me to preach."

From this place they journeyed "in a cart" through the vale of Ardkinlass and the wilds of Glencrow, by Arrochar on Loch Long, to Tarbert on Loch Lomond; and on the varied beauties of this picturesque drive he expatiates in glowing terms. The experience of miserable accommodation at Tarbert, with extortionate charges for that and a stormy morning row on Loch Lomond, hastened their departure for Loch Katrine. The Highland hotel-keepers seem, even in that day, to have acquired the *high* reputation for making out accounts which they have ever since maintained.

"It is vain, however, 'to live in Rome and strive with the Pope;' and just as vain to travel in the Highlands and contend with Highlanders! So we made a merit of necessity, left a wretched inn, and entered a wretched, wet ferry-boat. Here an old gentleman and two young ladies, who were anxious to get forward, requested to join us. We consented, and were rowed across the loch to Inversnaid, where we arrived about three in the afternoon. Now what is Inversnaid? Is it a romantic village? Is it a comfortable inn? It is a miserable hovel, situated in one of the most romantic spots imaginable, at the side of a foaming cascade, commanding a view of the noble mountains that shelter the east, north, and west of Loch Lomond! From this to Loch Katrine is five miles, over a kind of rugged mountain path, the first half-mile of which is exceeding steep.

"On our passage we learned that our companions were the Lord Provost of Perth (the worthy Bailie —) and his two daughters. The Provost seemed a plain, good-tempered, rather commonplace man. The young ladies were well inclined to repay him for an expensive education by snubbing and correcting him at every observation, which Madam observing, looked considerably grand, and spoke with a dignified nod of the head.

"On, however, we must go, and so must our luggage. Let no man who values his pocket travel with women in the Highlands! Four Highlanders (men) were engaged at the reasonable sum of five shillings a head to carry our luggage; and, to add to our other comforts, we

had not gone more than forty perches up the hill, when a mountain shower burst upon us in all its fury. But what of that in 'a pleasure tour'! On we went, and to do Madam justice, she showed great spunk, tripped as strong, if not as light, as Ellen Douglas, and kept our spirits up by saying 'she was not a bit fatigued.'

"At Inversnaid we were informed that ponies might be procured for the ladies at some distance in the country; and a trusty Highland courier—*alias*, a red-legged strapping lassie—darted up the mountain to procure one for Mrs. M. In the meantime, we proceeded on foot through torrents of rain; and W. H. offered his arm most gallantly to the younger daughter of the Provost—a pretty red-haired girl, from whom Sir Walter Scott might have drawn his picture of the 'Fair Maid of Perth.' His mother would have been delighted to see with what courteous zeal he stepped in puddles and morasses to hand the fair lady along the few projecting stones that marked the rugged path. In the meantime, we had a fair sample of Highland generalship; for when all the difficulties and more than half the way were passed, our naïad from Inversnaid appeared upon a white pony, and at her heels a lad with another. Mrs. M. would not mount to ride *down* hill, as she had walked up; and the Bailie's daughters never had any intention of taking ponies. The question then came, how were the ponies to be settled for? Mr. Simms had ordered one, and would give two-and-sixpence, though he had got no work; but no, both ponies must be paid for in full, five shillings each. One only had been ordered, and that one did not come in reasonable time. What then? Why, the naïad said *two* had been sent for; and the Highlandmen gathered round Mr. S. and the Bailie, and swore they must be paid for. The Bailie 'had ordered nane, an' wad pay for nane;' Mr. S. said he had. The Bailie said 'he was a daft callant,' walked on, and left Mr. S. to settle with the Highlanders as he could. How the affair ended I do not know; for it is a sore place with Mr. S.; but I rather suspect more was paid than ever will meet the eye in an account.

"At length 'Loch Katrine's mirror blue' rose upon the eye, and I hurried forward to procure a fire to dry the ladies' feet, and a boat to carry us to the foot of the lake. I found a cabin on the strand—mean outside; but within, neat, clean, and comfortable—hung round with green birch boughs, graced by a cheerful old woman and most intelligent 'kintra lass,' named Christian M'Naughten. In a few minutes a fine wood fire blazed on the hearth; oaten cakes, butter, and Farintosh graced a little white table; and when the ladies arrived, they made their toilette at the fire, and 'laughed at their toils and perils o'er;'

while the Bailie and I praised the Farintosh in another room, proved the sincerity of our commendation, and had our opinion amply confirmed by W. H. and Mr. S.

“Our four beasts of burden were now transformed into four boatmen, and off we set for the foot of Loch Katrine, leaving behind a simple country girl (Chr. M’N.), who spoke English and Gaelic well, and *French* a little, having lived in a family ‘where the young leddies were learnin’ it!’

“The evening (six o’clock) was now fine, the boatmen cheery, our spirits light, and the whole scene enchanting. Behind us rose the mighty Ben Lomond, the dark ridges of Arrochar, and the vale of the Macgregors, where Rob Roy was born; before us, or rather to the right, Benvenue; in front, Ben-An; and a little to the left, ‘Benledi’s distant hill.’ On the left side of the lake was the estate of Lord Gwydyr, who had married the heiress of Perth (a Drummond), by whom he had obtained about £30,000 a-year. My heart filled with joy to hear him praised as the kindest and best of men; and I saw evidences of his love, both of nature and art, in all that lay before me. Happy man! blest both with the will and power to make others happy! Wooded mountains, grassy slopes, substantial farm-houses, numerous flocks—all spoke ‘the kind and liberal lord.’

“But on the right, far as the eye could reach, from the margin of the lake up to the top of Benvenue, all was stunted and barren; a few straggling, barkless oaks being all that remained of a district more beautiful and romantic, eight years ago, than that which now smiled in pity from the opposite shore upon its desolation! This was the work of an agent of the Duke of Montrose, who had cut down and sold timber worth, perhaps, even in that wild country, £5000, for a trifling sum. If the tasteless barbarian be not dead, he should be hanged upon one solitary tree, which his rapacity could not reach, over the brink of Benvenue!

“As we sailed down, the scene was constantly throwing out new beauties—every mountain changing its aspect, and every cliff reflecting upon us the glorious beams of the evening sun. At length ‘Ellen Douglas’ Isle opened upon our view, sitting in the peaceful lake, protected by the giant rocks and mountains, as the fair Ellen had once been by Roderick Dhu, the Douglas, and brave Highland carles. Its romantic beauty baffles description—even Scott has fallen short! We landed, ascended, entered the cottage built by Lord Gwydyr, exactly after Scott’s description—targes, swords, skins, banners, helmets, &c. Madam and I strayed away to the western point, where the finest

view of the lake is seen; and there, just where Ellen and Malcolm Graham may be supposed to have stood, I gave my dear wife a kiss of affection as sincere as ever favoured lover gave to favouring maid. There was a tear in Madam's eye: I would not swear there was not one in my own. We lingered till evening closed, 'pushed our shallop from the shore,' rowed down to 'the rude Trosach's dreaded defile,' landed, and bent our way through the sublime and beautiful ravine to Mrs. Stewart's inn, about a mile and a-half distant, on the romantic banks of Loch Achray.

"It was now eleven o'clock. We were all dreadfully jaded and hungry; but were told not a bed could be had, as the house was full. We had shelter and seats, however; supper in prospect, pleasant reflections, and some Alloa ale as introduction. Mrs. M. sallied out; was sweet as her mother or M. C. on mistress, maids, and waiter; and came in with a promise of beds for herself and the fair Perthians, mattresses on the parlour floor for the Provost and me, and beds across Loch Achray for W. H. and Mr. S. We were all delighted; Madam looked kind upon the Perthians; the Provost's heart overflowed; the supper came, abundant and good; Mr. S. and the Provost became friends; W. H. made himself agreeable to the younger Perthian; and, in short, we were a very happy party!

"But 'the nearest and dearest must part'—the ladies were about to retire—W. H. and Mr. S. turned restive about the romantic beds beyond the lake—wouldn't stir a foot—and lo! a fine spot of work! Mrs. M. turned sweet again—made it a matter of personal favour to herself, &c., and would have failed, had I not aided her exertions by an additional glass of toddy. Flesh and blood could stand it no longer; 'they took the cup, and down they drained it quick'—then sallied forth, arm in arm, with a guide in front; and, as far as I could hear them, they went gaily up the lake, singing 'Royal Charlie.' The Provost and I chatted together for some time longer, were both very well pleased with each other, and 'sunk on our bed of down.'

"*July 15.*—Five o'clock in the morning. The Provost awoke—groaned, sighed—wondered 'why he had allowed the bairns to lead him sic a wild-goose chase,' &c. I knew his complaint—spoke to him of his dignity and influence, &c.—and soon had the satisfaction of observing him recover his former complacency. On the preceding day I had seen that he eyed W. H. with some suspicion. I now took occasion, casually, to advert to my young friend's position and prospects. The Lord Provost instantly perceived that W. was 'a douce lad, a spunkie callant, a maist promisin' chiel'; and in this happy

humour I left him about half-past six o'clock, and proceeded by the top of 'lovely Loch Achray' towards the farm-house where W. H. and Mr. S. were sleeping.

"The morning was delightful, the mists were rolling off the hills, the trees and cliffs were emerging from its bosom, the lake was glancing and dimpling in the morning sun. I looked above and around me—all was beauty and magnificence. I thanked God for His bounty to myself and all animated beings. I had not, I believe, one evil thought in my mind, nor one angry passion in my breast. I was happy! In this mood I strolled slowly on until I came to the eastern entrance of the Trosachs—'the narrow and the broken plain,' where the Saxons paused before 'the battle of Beal and Duine.' I knew it was but the creation of the poet, yet I felt as if I had been treading the scene of a real conflict. I now wound about the foot of a precipitous wooded rock of great extent and height, along a narrow footpath, until I came to a rustic bridge, which crosses a rapid river, issuing from Loch Katrine and joining Loch Achray. No scene could be more enchanting—on my right, Benvenue, Ben An, &c., &c.; on my left, Loch Achray, Benvoirlich, &c.; around me, high rocks—some boldly displaying the uncovered outlines of their rugged beauty, others garmented in the graceful draperies of their natural woods; again were fruitful fields and smiling pastures; and before me, a neat and substantial farm-house—the picture of home comfort and prosperity. I was so delighted that I spent about an hour and a-half in walking one mile. W. H. and Mr. S. had just risen, and while they made their toilet, I got into friendly chat with the farmer and his wife. Their house was remarkably well furnished and clean. He holds a countryside from the Duke of Montrose, for which he pays £700 per annum.

"The boys were now dressed, and as we were at the foot of Benvenue, I proposed that, to give us an appetite for breakfast, we should ascend its 'eastern ridge,' whence the minstrel watched the battle of Beal and Duine. W. H. laughed at the absurdity of stopping before we got to the top; Mr. S. rather joined him; and I said, 'Well, well; let us go.'

"Just at this time a respectable young man, evidently not a mountaineer, came from the house. I asked him a few questions about the mountain, and requested him to get us a guide. He said, if we would accept of him, he would do his best. So off we set, and soon found our guide to be a highly talented and educated young man, who, for health or some other reason, had been rusticiating (from Glasgow)

in that happy spot for twelve months past. On we passed, for about an hour, 'through heather, bog, and fern,' until we got to a little ridge about one-third way up the mountain. Thence we saw Loch Katrine, Loch Achray, Loch Vennachar, innumerable mountains, and, far away to the east, 'the wild heath of Uam-var.'

"Here I feigned a desire to go up to the top, but W. H. found 'his boots too tight,' Mr. S. 'had a pain in his head,' and, in short, we were all willing to return for breakfast. To diversify our walk, we crept down the side next the Trosachs until we came to the river that empties Katrine into Achray. Passing along this, we at length regained our starting-point, where we took leave, with regret, of our kind guide, who had beguiled the way for us with much interesting information, and several amusing anecdotes of the locality; and, after getting a delicious drink of milk from the farmer's 'douce wife,' we returned to the inn for breakfast."

So end, with provoking abruptness, these interesting but unfinished notes of his Highland tour.

CHAPTER XIV.

VISIT TO MANCHESTER AND LONDON—CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

1828—1829.

Letter from Rev. D. Whyte—Preached in Ballee, &c.—State of Ireland—Agitation for Catholic Emancipation—The “Catholic Association”—“Rente”—O’Connell, &c.—Brunswick Clubs—Exasperation of Parties—Encounter at Ballibay—Apprehended Outbreak—“Northern Whig”—“Times”—Montgomery’s Visit to Manchester—Anniversary Services—Sermon on “Unity of the Spirit”—His Tribute to Dr. Channing—Speech on Catholic Emancipation—Complimentary Dinner in London—The Company—The Chairman’s Remarks—His Speech—Newspaper Notices—Eminent English Unitarians—Presentation from Greengate Congregation, Salford—Sermons Published: “Religious and Moral Education;” “Christ the Saviour”—Belfast great Catholic Meeting—Montgomery’s Speech from the Altar—The Dinner—Dr. Crolly’s Eulogy—Enthusiastic Reception—Addresses—Passing of Roman Catholic Relief Bill—Absence from “Conciliation Dinner”—Charity Sermon for Poor Weavers—Newspaper Notices—Its Effect on a Methodist Hearer described.

AFTER his return from Scotland, and the publication of his letter on the Synodical proceedings, he had promised, during the autumn, to preach for his old friend Whyte in Ballee, who writes to him as follows:—

“DILLON, *9th Sept., 1828.*

“DEAR MONTGOMERY,—This will reach you before Sunday, and in time, I hope, to make arrangements for preaching in Ballee on the last Sunday of this month.

“I announced your preaching for that day from the pulpit last Sabbath, and I assure you it was received with great pleasure by the people. You will have an immense multitude of all denominations hearing you—Whigs and Tories, Old Lights and New, infidels and sound believers. I know it is unnecessary to give *you* any hints how

to conduct your discourse on such an occasion ; but let me request you to remember, *that day* is our *preparation*, and will thereby afford you an opportunity of shewing who they are that ‘deny the Lord that bought them,’ and how it is that Christ is honoured best by those who bear His name.

“You’ll come on Saturday, and give us the pleasure of having under our roof the greatest heresiarch of the age.

“Compliments to Mrs. M. If she could come with you, how it would delight us!—Hoping there will be no disappointment, I feel great pleasure in writing myself, yours as of old, &c.,

“D. WHITE.”

In response to this appeal from his old friend, Montgomery preached in Ballee on the day appointed, selecting an appropriate text in Matthew xvi. 24—“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” In his discourse he seems to have closely followed the wishes expressed by his friend. It was a most powerful exposure of the Orthodox doctrine of “Justification by Faith alone,” as contrasted with the Scriptural teaching of the necessity of *faith and works*—a connected statement of the principal doctrines of the Arian belief, and their vindication from the various misrepresentations of their opponents. These last were successively noted, and most ably refuted, under ten different heads.

Referring to the then constantly repeated cry, that the Arians “denied the Lord that bought them,” he exclaims—

“Oh! it is an awful charge to bring against any man or body of men, that they deny their Saviour! The truth is, our uncompromising *adherence* to Him is our chief offence. If we bore allegiance to men, all would be well. We know the penalty of this adherence—worldly loss and opprobrium, hatred and misrepresentation; and we know the reward—‘Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.’

“We will bear our cross, through good report, and through bad

report; and we fear not to stand in judgment along with our revilers. We are at least honest. Were we really deniers of our Lord, we would sail with the favouring breeze.”

During this period he also preached, in response to similar invitations, in various others of the New Light congregations in the North of Ireland—amongst others, in Killead, Moneyrea, Rademon, Moira, Holywood, &c.—always taking the opportunity of employing his great powers to defend the rational and Scriptural faith of himself and his fellow-believers, and the principles of religious liberty, which he held to be the inalienable birthright of every member of the Church of Christ. But his reputation now stood so high, and had become so wide-spread, not only as a preacher of liberal Christianity, but as a writer and speaker in the cause of civil as well as religious liberty, that the requests made to him to give his services in their behalf were not confined to his neighbours, the ministers and congregations in the North of Ireland.

Towards the close of the year, he received a cordial invitation from the influential Unitarian body in Manchester to preach there on Sunday, 28th December, 1828, on the occasion of their anniversary meeting, and more especially for collections in behalf of the Unitarian Chapel of Greengate, Salford. Having consented to undertake this duty, his visit to England for this purpose formed his first personal introduction to the English Unitarians; and for this, as well as for other reasons that will appear, the record presents some features of more than ordinary interest. Though, in point of time, it should be preceded by the account of the Presbyterian meeting in Belfast in October, 1828, when the “Remonstrance” was adopted, yet this will be better deferred until treating of the subsequent proceedings of the Non-Subscribers and the General Synod in the following year, with which it was directly connected.

In order fully to understand and appreciate the important representative position accorded to him on the occasion of this English visit, it will be needful to refer briefly to the political state of Ireland at this juncture. In the twelve months which

had passed since he had advocated the cause of Catholic Emancipation, at the dinner of the friends of civil and religious liberty in Belfast, that cause had made giant strides. The Roman Catholics of Ireland had banded themselves together under the name of the "Catholic Association," which had become a united, organised, and most formidable body, under the leadership of Messrs. O'Connell, Lawless, and Shiel. It comprised most of the prelates and superior clergy, thousands of the priests, the great majority of the Roman Catholic gentry and men of property in the South and West, numbers of professional men, and vast masses of the people of every rank and occupation. Subscriptions, under the name of "Catholic Rente," were pouring in from all quarters. O'Connell was the popular idol; and having in this instance a good cause, he had pursued the policy of "agitation" with such success, that the great mass of the Irish people were his pledged and devoted adherents, ready to attempt anything—even to the extent of overt rebellion—so soon as he gave the word. Hitherto, their measures had been on the whole legal and peaceable; but their power was formidable, their attitude menacing, and their union and organisation complete.

O'Connell had been returned member for County Clare, defeating a Minister of the Cabinet, the sum of £1300 having been voted by the association for his election expenses; and he had declared his intention—in defiance of the law, which then disqualified Roman Catholics from sitting as members of the British Legislature, or holding any civil office under the Government—to go and take his seat in St. Stephen's at the opening of the next session of Parliament. Of course this would bring the question of Catholic Emancipation to a direct and decisive issue; and if the Government and the Legislature should allow it to come to this point without having passed a measure for Catholic Relief, and should proceed to put the law in force against O'Connell, it was universally expected that this would be the signal for one of the most formidable outbreaks that had ever taken place in Ireland.

On the other hand, the mass of the Protestant population in Ireland—and especially the Episcopalians, and the Presbyterian laity and no small proportion of their clergy, in the North—were bitterly opposed to the Catholic claims; regarding their concession, no doubt conscientiously, as nothing less than a radical subversion of the Protestant Constitution of the United Kingdom. As a counterpoise to the Catholic Association, a “Brunswick Constitutional Club” was formed by the Protestants of Dublin; and this being taken up by the Orangemen and other Protestants of the North, in a few weeks “Brunswick Clubs” were established in Belfast, Derry, and every town and village in Ulster; and the advocates of the maintenance of Protestant ascendancy were called by the general name of “Brunswickers.” These were all well armed and organised, while the Roman Catholics were understood to be for the most part unarmed. Wild harangues were made by the Protestant leaders, lay and clerical, in various places, in anticipation of the coming conflict; and challenges to the Catholic party to “begin, and the sooner the better.” On the other hand, O’Connell, Shiel, and other Catholic leaders were endeavouring to restrain the impetuosity of their followers, and urging the necessity of obeying the laws and avoiding a rupture, which would give the Orangemen and the Government an advantage; but it was evident their fierce passions could not be much longer controlled.

A foolish “Progress,” attempted by Lawless, through the Northern Counties—attended by a vast concourse of Roman Catholics, numbering, it was said, above 100,000—brought the matter to a crisis. They were met and stopped at the town of Ballibay, in Monaghan, by a body of from six to eight thousand Protestants, who garrisoned the town and prepared for their attack. Both parties were resolute; and had it not been for the prudence and conduct of General Thornton, who met and persuaded the Catholics to turn aside from the town, Ballibay, on that day, would probably have seen the commencement of a civil war that might have deluged Ireland with blood. As it was, a partial conflict took place, in which several lives were

lost on the Catholic side. A serious disturbance also took place in Tipperary between the people and the police.

The "Northern Whig" of October 2, 1828, thus adverts to the state of affairs:—

"The state of the country at the present crisis is truly awful. In the North, a desperate and armed faction, released from a temporary check, exasperated and thirsting for blood, are daily excited against their Catholic countrymen by the inflammatory harangues of men whose conduct more resembles that of priests of Moloch than ministers of Jesus. In the South and West, a peasantry, the fiercest in Europe, and proverbially reckless of life, are regularly organised, and only restrained from rushing into rebellion by the prudence, moderation, or fear of the Catholic Association. In the North, Catholic blood has already been shed; and in the South, the peasantry have come into collision with the police, torn down their barrack, and consumed everything in it to ashes. We do not hesitate to assert that the only alternative to granting emancipation which is left to the Government, is rebellion and civil war, the most horrible by which any country was ever scourged. We cannot, however, conceive that the Government will be mad enough to hesitate any longer."

The London papers also of the same period write urgently on the subject. The "Times" says:—

"What we contend for is, that if the Government will not at once come forward with a candid declaration of their desire to appease the Catholics, the passions of the Irish people—Protestant as well as Catholic—will prove too violent to be withheld. Events will outstrip the lazy meditations of men who heed not the prelusive rocking of the volcano. Yet even if their dreams be dissipated by the first explosion, and their power destroyed by it, what indemnity have we, the English nation, for the ruin of this noble empire, in the downfall of its headstrong and stupid authors?"

The recall of Lawless by the Catholic Association from his dangerous mission to the North; and the rumours that the Duke of Wellington, then at the head of the Administration, was considering with his colleague, Mr. Peel, the necessity of making some concession to the Roman Catholic demands, and had even, it was said, urged it upon the King—though the latter was

understood to be still strongly opposed to it—gave a temporary respite to the seething passions of the opposing masses of the populace, although it still wanted but a spark to kindle a wholesale conflagration.

It was at this juncture—at the beginning of the year, and before the Parliament met—that Montgomery visited England. He went there in a threefold capacity—as a distinguished representative of the Arians (or Unitarians) of the North of Ireland; as the eloquent and intrepid advocate of religious liberty in the matter of non-subscription to human creeds, and resistance to human authority in matters of faith; and, thirdly, as the no less earnest and powerful supporter of the still broader principles of *civil* and *religious* liberty in every legitimate application, but chiefly in reference to the urgent national necessity and duty of Catholic Emancipation.

He was warmly received and welcomed by the Unitarians of Manchester. The following notice of his visit and services, &c., appeared in the “Manchester Guardian” :—

“On Sunday last, sermons were preached by the Rev. Henry Montgomery of Belfast—in the morning, at the Unitarian Chapel in Greengate, Salford; and in the evening, to a very numerous congregation, at the chapel in Cross Street, Manchester—when liberal collections were made in reduction of the debt on the first-mentioned place of worship. On Monday forenoon, another service took place at the Greengate Chapel, and a further collection was made; after which, the members and friends of the congregation, about one hundred and eighty in number, dined together in the schoolroom—Richard Collins, Esq., in the chair. In the course of the evening, the meeting was appropriately addressed by different gentlemen. Mr. Montgomery, in particular, excited high admiration by the eloquent and powerful manner in which he enforced the importance of the emancipation of his Catholic countrymen.”

Of the sermons which he delivered on this occasion, that preached in the evening in Cross Street Chapel, as above stated, was too remarkable not to merit special notice. It has fortunately been preserved, and is written out almost in full—a rare

thing with him. It shows marks of special care ; and is certainly amongst the very finest of his pulpit compositions.*

It was from Ephesians iv. 1, 2, 3, on “keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Adverting to religion as “unquestionably the most important concern which can occupy the attention of man as a rational and accountable being,” and to the consequent obligation, “on principles both of social justice and Christian charity, affectionately to press its claims upon the serious attention of our brethren,” he points to the grievous wrongs and evils which the misapprehension and perversion of this admitted right and duty have brought upon the world. After enumerating several of these, he points emphatically to the common error of mistaking the extent of justifiable interference with the opinions of others, and of falsely endeavouring to establish through “*Uniformity of Belief*” the true Scriptural “Unity of the Spirit.” The consideration of this error, its causes, its consequences, and its cure, he announces as the main subject of his discourse. Having next examined several of its more immediate causes, he states that “another abundant source of this error is to be found in the false estimate usually formed of the nature, value, and influence of *Faith*.” Then follows a very eloquent and argumentative dissertation upon Christian Faith, concluding in the following terms:—

“Whilst, however, I have endeavoured to show the absurdity and the injurious tendency of exalting mere faith—which in itself, abstractly considered, possesses not the smallest portion of merit—into the sole agent of human salvation ; and whilst I have endeavoured to expose the fallacy of the proposition that men always act up to their principles ; at the same time, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I am far from undervaluing faith, which I look upon as the only secure foundation of a pious and virtuous life. *As the cypher in accounts is entirely without value until placed in its proper relation to some significant figure*, so we have the assurance of an apostle, that ‘faith without works is dead, being alone ;’ but the moment it is placed in its due connexion

* Considerations of space prevent the furnishing more than an imperfect outline of the earlier portion, and a few important extracts, where justice to this noble discourse, and also to the reader, would require it to be given entire.

with the vitality of *action*, it becomes an agent of the highest importance in the economy of human salvation. Without the motives which it supplies—without the materials which it furnishes, morality would be a baseless and unsubstantial fabric, depending upon the interests and caprices of the world. But when a holy life is founded upon the solid principles of a genuine faith, the structure is not only beautiful to the eye of the beholder, but also a shelter and safeguard to its possessor amidst all the storms and trials of existence. Let no man, therefore, suppose that I am indifferent, either to my own faith, or that of my fellow-mortals; for whilst I am fully persuaded that no purity of faith could produce absolute perfection of conduct, and that no errors of faith could produce total depravity, I am entirely convinced that, other things being equal, the belief which approaches nearest to the truth will have the greatest tendency to advance holiness of life. Upon this principle, I earnestly desire to see all men brought to entertain my own views with regard to the glorious perfections and eternal government of God, the exalted character and office of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the nature, the duty, and the hopes of man; and for the attainment of this end, I feel myself equally bound in gratitude towards my Creator, and in good-will towards my fellow-creatures, to use every reasonable and Christian exertion.”

The legitimate nature and strength of that exertion he then goes on to describe. He shows what is the true Christian “Unity of the Spirit,” and adverts to the

“Consequences resulting from attempting to bring about a *Unity of Spirit* by the impracticable means of *uniformity of faith*, which have been deplorably fatal to the dearest privileges and highest interests of mankind.

“1. As having been the principal cause of establishing and perpetuating false religions, from the beginning of the world, and over the greater portion of the earth. . . .

“2. As giving, even to the modicum of religious liberty that may be accorded to Dissenters, the offensive form and name of ‘*toleration*,’ on the part of the more favoured adherents of Government Ecclesiastical Establishments, basking in the sunshine of power and patronage and wealth. ‘Toleration’ has been long the boast of Britain; and its eulogists have been peculiarly eloquent in its praise since the tardy act of justice done to the Dissenters in a late session of Parliament. Now, for my own part, I have a dislike to the very term ‘*toleration*,’ as used in connexion with religion. To say that any class of men are

tolerated or *permitted* to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, implies that some other class of men had a right to prevent them from doing so ; but this right I utterly deny, amongst those who are upon a perfect equality, as the subjects of the one great King and Head of the Church. What ! Is it in a land where our free institutions do not even permit the perishable body to be incarcerated without due forms of justice, that it is matter of exultation to be allowed the free exercise of the unconfined and immortal mind ? As well might they boast of tolerating us to breathe the air of life, or to enjoy the light of heaven. But after all, my fellow-Christians, the very loudness of the boast arises from a secret misgiving that it is not too well founded. True, we do enjoy toleration ; we are permitted to worship God in temples of our own erection (and to procure religious instruction at our own charge) ; we are not cast into a dungeon, or dragged to the stake, for our religious opinions ; but the toleration which we enjoy is a purchased and penal toleration. I know not the opinions of any single individual whom I address upon this subject ; but I do know that I am in a Christian pulpit, and bound to speak the truth with regard to those things which, in my mind, affect the rights of conscience and the interests of evangelical religion. I do, therefore, repeat it : the majority of the people in these countries only enjoy a *purchased* and *penal* toleration.

“ In my own wretched country, multitudes of miserable Roman Catholics are tolerated to worship the God of their fathers before shapeless altars of stone, with no other covering than the blue canopy of heaven above them ; or in a dripping hovel, dignified by the name of a chapel, in which *you* would think it inhuman to house your domestic animals. I say, millions of my countrymen are thus permitted to worship, on the penal condition of largely contributing to the erection of splendid temples for the accommodation of a few scattered worshippers, and a form of religion which they believe to be destructive. And amongst the higher classes, they are likewise permitted to serve their Creator upon the simple condition of forfeiting all claims to the brightest rewards of industry and talents, and looking, with swimming eyes, upon the dearest objects of their affections as only a portion of a degraded caste in their native land.

“ The situation of Protestant Dissenters—who, from their intelligence, industry, religious earnestness, and moral respectability, form a large portion of the strength and stamina of these countries—is, in many respects, more favourable (especially since the late repeal of two oppressive Acts of Parliament) ; yet there is scarcely a Dissenter in the

land who does not pay a pecuniary fine for his liberty of worship, besides being still subjected to several mortifying and degrading circumstances, connected with his natural and constitutional Christian privileges. To contribute largely and with satisfaction of the fruits of our honest exertions, to the benefit and accommodation of those who do not even vouchsafe the poor return of gratitude, though they sometimes treat us with disdain, is scarcely within the compass of human nature ; and to do so, for the purpose of supporting doctrines and perpetuating a system of worship which we sincerely believe to be, in many respects, highly erroneous, is a penalty not only mortifying to our feelings, but wounding to our conscience. I care not in what country such a system may prevail, it is totally at variance both with the spirit and practice of perfect toleration ; or, in better words, with perfect Christian liberty. Wherever one set of opinions are encouraged by any species of bribe or temporal advantage, whilst all others are discouraged by penalties or temporal inconvenience of any kind—there the true principles of that glorious ‘liberty with which Christ has made us free’ are still but imperfectly understood.

“ Upon the whole surface of the globe, there is perhaps but one spot in which the genuine principles of Christian liberty are duly apprehended and practically observed—I mean the land of the truly illustrious Channing, that admirable minister of the Gospel of peace, in whom genius and charity seem to be striving for the mastery—that excellent Christian, upon whom the mantle of the beloved apostle appears peculiarly to have fallen, and who, had he been the immediate disciple of the Lord, would doubtless have ‘lain in His bosom’—that intrepid and energetic man, who, by his simple, edifying, heart-influencing discourses, has probably done more than any other of his species to advance the hallowed cause of ‘pure and undefiled religion.’ For the sentiments now expressed, I, and I alone, am responsible. No man in this assembly, no sect in this country, is in any way answerable for the opinions of an individual and a stranger.”

The preceding extracts may serve to convey some idea of the telling power of this fine discourse.

On the following evening (Monday), at the anniversary dinner, Montgomery, when his health was given, spoke at considerable length, in reference chiefly to the events connected with the Synod of Ulster. Afterwards, Mr. Richard Potter, having expressed, on the part of the British and Foreign Unitarian

Association, their firm resolution to use the most strenuous exertions in favour of Catholic Emancipation, proposed, by leave of the chairman, and amidst loud cheers—"Catholic Emancipation; and may it soon be universally acknowledged that civil and religious liberty are the only solid foundations of a nation's happiness!" There was a general call for Montgomery, and after vainly endeavouring to excuse himself, he rose and spoke. The "Manchester Guardian" gives a report (though an imperfect one) of his speech, from which the following extracts are taken. He said:—

"He certainly could be no Irishman, if, after the gracious manner in which the toast had just been received, and after the unequivocal expressions of kindness for his country which it had called forth, he could refrain from the expression of his feelings. . . . The people of Ireland, he would venture to affirm, were a people by nature as well-disposed, as kindly-affectioned, as any people on the face of the earth. How completely perverted, then, must be that state of things, which could efface and obliterate in the bosoms of such a people the finest lineament of the human character, and present the melancholy picture of jarring passions which that country now exhibited. . . . The two strongest impulses of the human mind were put in motion, the passions of the people were roused by all the considerations that were involved in time and eternity, and they were assailed by the double persecution of religious bigotry and political intolerance. (Loud and continued cheers.) Some of the leading agitators—not many, he rejoiced to say, but some—were ministers of religion—('Shame, shame!')—and one clergyman, as they were aware, had gone so far as to say, in anticipation of a renewal of civil conflicts, that he trusted on the next occasion the Catholics should not be left the alternative of Connaught as a refuge! The meeting which he addressed did not understand the import of this phrase, and he would therefore explain it to them. At an unfortunate era in the history of his unfortunate country, when the Catholics were driven out of some of the counties in the North of Ireland—when their property was destroyed, and their houses were burnt, by the fanaticism and bigotry of their neighbours—it was a common cry, 'To hell or to Connaught!' and the clergyman whom he had mentioned meant by this allusion that the Catholics were not to be allowed the alternative of Connaught. The other alternative was obvious. The language was applied to the whole Catholic

population of Ireland. It was not to its grossness or to its bigotry that he called attention, but to the horrible inhumanity of a proposal that thus proceeded from the lips of a minister of the Gospel of peace, for the total extirpation of five millions of people. ('Shame, shame!') This man, who was living in luxury by the sweat of the brows of many of the wretched people of Ireland, trusted that in the next commotion, out of five millions of people, 'there would not be as many left as would require a second correction!' (The room here resounded with expressions of horror and indignation.) It was impossible to conceive how a country, managed as Ireland had been for centuries, could be happy.

"His Majesty's visit had been regarded as an omen of peace; and he had then an opportunity of judging of the feelings which kindness would elicit from the Irish people. (Cheers). Those were halcyon days; he was sorry that their hopes had been so soon disappointed. They had heard it reported that the Royal breast had been changed; he did not wish to believe it. The essence of the British Constitution was, that all the subjects of the British monarchy had equal rights; and if George IV. was a truly British monarch, he would be anxious to give them. He held that it was a libel on the King to say that he was unfriendly to the civil rights of any portion of his people; and he trusted that we should ere long see it refuted, by his sign-manual to a bill for the emancipation of the Catholics. (Cheers.)

"The Duke of Wellington had recently told them that there were difficulties in the way, and that these difficulties were very great. He could not, however, believe that they were perfectly insurmountable. The chief difficulty was in reconciling the rights of the *many* with the monopoly of the *few*. But was this any difficulty in the way of men who were determined to do as they would be done by? Was it a difficulty for a Christian nation to do an act of justice? Perhaps in the very next session of Parliament the Bishops might free the Duke of Wellington from all these difficulties; they would tell the Lords that no temporary considerations should prevail against the immutable principles of charity and equity. (Cheers and laughter.)

. . . . The Bishops would tell them that the measure was one by which the Protestant interest could not really be endangered, if by Protestant interest they meant the interests of the Protestant religion; and that if dangers might accrue from it to the Protestant establishment, their kingdom was not of this world, and such considerations had nothing to do with religion.

"This question impeded every attempt at improvement. If any-

thing could be calculated to rub off the asperities of feeling that had been contracted, it would be mingling the opposed communities together in childhood;* but by the present state of things, the Catholic children were driven into separate schools; and, from the cradle to the grave, they were brought up and lived in a state of alienation from their fellow-subjects.

“It was said by some that the body of Catholics felt no interest in the question; it might be that many did not; and if this were the case, it was another reason for extending to them their rights. If any Catholic were so degraded as to feel indifferent at being debarred from his rights as a citizen, it was necessary to elevate him to a proper sense of his own dignity by conferring those rights. (Loud applause.) He might state the fact to his countrymen, that the toast had been given at that numerous and intelligent meeting, but could convey to them no idea of the benevolent enthusiasm with which it had been received. ‘Oh! (exclaimed Mr. Montgomery) that the plaudits with which you heard it announced, could be heard in every valley, and in every mountain of my native land. Oh, how it would cheer their hearts!’ Mr. Montgomery, after a complimentary address to the chairman, sat down amid long and loud cheers from every quarter of the room.”

From Manchester he went to London, where he had been invited to a dinner, on Monday, the 5th January, to be given in his honour by the Dissenters of London. On Sunday, the 4th, he preached twice in two of the Unitarian pulpits of the metropolis; and on the next evening the dinner took place in the Albion Tavern, Aldersgate Street. The newspaper report thus describes it:—

“Notwithstanding that the dinner was not publicly announced, and the time for its regulation very much contracted, it was attended by upwards of one hundred gentlemen of the highest respectability—William Sturch, Esq., in the chair. Amongst the company we noticed—Mr. Charles Butler (the celebrated and venerable Catholic barrister), Mr. Towgood, Prime Warden of the Fishmongers’ Company; Mr. Blount, Secretary to the British Catholic Association; Colonel Stoner, Rev. Mr. Apsland, Dr. Carpenter, Professor Patterson of the London

* Here spoke the enlightened friend of Ireland—the early suggester and advocate of *United National Education!*

University, Rev. Mr. Fox, &c. After the cloth was removed, and the usual loyal toasts given and responded to, the chairman said—

“Gentlemen, you are aware that while we meet here as friends of liberty in general, and more particularly of that branch of it commonly called religious liberty, we also assemble to pay the tribute of our approbation to the gentleman who has done us the honour to be our guest. He has the claim of having employed his talents, and these are of a most superior description, in advancing the cause which we are anxious to support. He has laboured, gentlemen, to discharge his duty, and to render himself a blessing to mankind. And this is the way in which we ought to make an acknowledgment to Heaven for the gifts and advantages with which we may have been endowed. If we have knowledge, we ought to communicate it; if we have learning, we ought to teach; if we have light, we should let it shine; if we possess what we consider just religious principles, we are called upon to make them known. Of this description, gentlemen, is our excellent friend. Although I have for some time known his character, until yesterday I never saw his face. But all who had the pleasure and the profit of hearing the discourses which he then delivered, must have been convinced that he is such as I have described. They will not doubt that he is able and zealous, desirous of diffusing light and liberty, and by that means of benefiting his species. . . . The labours of our friend have a direct tendency to this consummation. Every gentleman present will, I am sure, be glad to pay a tribute of respect to a man of this description, and will join cordially in drinking his health—“Our esteemed guest, the Rev. H. Montgomery, the able and intrepid advocate of religious liberty; our best thanks for his past exertions, and our earnest hopes for the success of his future efforts.”’

“*Mr. Montgomery*—‘Mr. Chairman, although this is one of the happiest moments of my life, yet can I not deny that I feel much agitated, indeed I may say oppressed. To meet opponents is an easy task; but I feel at this moment how difficult it is to bear up under the kindness of friends. I am aware that I can return no thanks adequate to the compliment this evening paid me; and however gratifying the present scene may be to me as an individual, yet it is a melancholy reflection that any man should be considered entitled to thanks for defending the great cause of civil and religious liberty, or that such a cause should need defence in the British Islands, and in the nineteenth century. For myself, my conduct has been much overrated. I have no merit in what I did. I only followed the dictates of conscience, and in the happiness that results from that have found my best

reward. I have obeyed the voice of nature, which tells me that I am free. The laws of my country proclaim that my body shall be untrammelled—that it shall not be bound in chains, nor flung into a dungeon; and shall I surrender the freedom of the immortal mind? I am a Christian minister, and I have but obeyed the command of my Master, to stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has made us free. From my childhood I have been most fortunate. “My lines have been cast in pleasant places.” At every step of my journey favours have been showered upon me. I know that I have been charged with thinking too highly of human nature; but I do maintain, that one who has been loaded with so much kindness, can hardly think too highly of his species. My earliest infancy was blest with a parent—now, I trust, removed to a happier world—who instilled into my youthful mind the lessons of universal love. I have been placed to minister in holy things amongst a people in whom liberality is a feeling as well as a duty; and never have I proposed to them one single measure calculated to advance the cause of freedom, or the welfare of mankind, in which I have not been outrun by their philanthropic zeal. Where, then, sir, lies my merit? My interest and my duty are the same; and in doing right, I but promote my temporal, as well as everlasting welfare. But there are others who have made a real sacrifice; men whom no bribe could purchase, no threats deter. When danger frowned upon them, and ruin hung over their earthly prospects, they made light of all, and clung to their integrity. It is to them, through me, this compliment is paid. Oh, how they will be cheered by the voice which will reach them from this assembly! They will learn the sentiments cherished towards themselves; they will feel that you are met to do honour, not to an individual, but to a cause. Our church is now in a melancholy condition. Political and religious bigotry have been mingled together; and those who foment the persecutions amongst us, have made it their policy so to conjoin the two principles, that scarce an individual is now held orthodox, who is not also an enemy to the civil or religious rights of his fellow-men. Shame upon Presbyterians! the men who make it their peculiar boast that they are free; who pride themselves on being not merely Protestants, but Presbyterian Protestants! . . .

“ I rejoice to find that there are in this room men of so many various persuasions—Calvinists, Episcopalians, Unitarians, and Catholics. Sir, I love my own opinions, for they are those of conviction. I love them, too, because they have suffered a little persecution; but I love them still more, from the spirit which I have seen manifested

throughout England by my fellow-believers in the simple unity of God. I do, indeed, rejoice in my visit to this country ; and, anxious as I am that my native island should obtain its full measure of esteem, I must acknowledge that England, as she is the first in the world in wealth and greatness, so is she first in intelligence and moral worth, if the men with whom I have associated since my arrival may be regarded as a fair specimen of her people. On my return, I shall gladden the hearts of my brethren by relating my reception this evening. It will show them the feeling cherished by the liberal of all parties towards them ; and they will not be insensible to the approbation of the wise and good. . . . Sir, again, and from my heart, I thank you. I regret that I was so unprepared ; but I never could prepare a speech. And, in truth, it is almost distressing, that at the very moment we are the objects of kindness for which we are grateful—when we are the most anxious for becoming utterance and language—when we would give the world just to tell what is within us—at this time above all others, so capricious are our feelings, that power is denied. This great compliment is undeserved by me ; but I know it is paid to the principle, not to the man. I know that it is intended to produce its impression in another place ; and happy do I feel to think of the good that may result to Ireland from this manifestation of the sentiments of so many distinguished men.’ (Mr. Montgomery was repeatedly cheered in the delivery of an eloquent and splendid speech, of which we have found ourselves totally unable to afford more than a faint outline. He concluded by proposing the health of the chairman in very complimentary terms, and resumed his seat amidst loud and long-continued applause.)”

The leading article in the “Northern Whig” of January 15, 1829, makes the following reference to the reports of these proceedings in Manchester and London :—

“THE REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY.—In another part of our paper will be found an account of the proceedings at the entertainments given to the Rev. H. Montgomery in Manchester and London. The reception which he has met with, shows that the friends of civil and religious liberty of different denominations in England have not been unacquainted with the late proceedings of the Synod of Ulster, and that they have not failed to appreciate the integrity and talents of the advocates of freedom of conscience in this country. With respect to Mr. Montgomery, there seems to exist only one feeling, that of admiration of commanding talents exerted in support of the rights of

man. To himself, such distinguished marks of respect must be extremely gratifying; but they become more so, when considered in connexion with the great objects of universal toleration. In this latter point of view, they diverge from the individual to the species, and may be regarded as a tribute to honesty and independence and zeal, wherever they exist. Men may be separated by local circumstances; they may be distracted and divided by the avocations of active life; but the aspirings of a noble mind will always meet a response in the hearts of the virtuous and the free; and the friends of universal liberty, whatever be their complexion or their creed, can never fail to give a higher and more irresistible impulse to the champion of their rights, by uniting with his the might of their collective energy. . . . We trust that the proceedings to which we refer will serve as a useful lesson to the Synod of Ulster; that they will teach the advocates of intolerance to pause in their career, and give fresh vigour to the abettors of liberal measures and freedom of conscience."

The following very complimentary reference also appeared in the "Belfast Chronicle" of January 10, 1829:—

"REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY.—In another part of this day's paper will be found some notice of the flattering reception of our respected townsman at Manchester. On Monday last, the Dissenters, with other friends of civil and religious liberty, in London invited him to a public dinner, which is described in the following terms, in a letter received by a gentleman in this town from his friend, who was present on the occasion:—'I have just returned from the superb dinner, at which the Dissenters of London have this day entertained the Rev. Henry Montgomery. A meeting more gratifying, or a prouder tribute to the liberality of the North of Ireland, I have never witnessed. You may conceive how crowdedly it was attended, when I tell you that the great room in the Albion was completely filled, and yet I am told that the number of tickets was limited. The company comprised men of every religious denomination—Unitarians and Calvinists, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics—it was, in fact, a glorious and practical instance of that very spirit of religious liberality which levels all puny distinctions, and unites every party in paying a merited homage to the champion of liberty of conscience. The chair was taken by Mr. Stureh, with whose name you must of course be familiar, as the proposer of Sir Francis Burdett at the Westminster elections for some years back; and the suite of toasts were admirably calculated to keep alive that feeling of excitement in the cause of liberality to which the day was devoted.

The speakers comprised the most celebrated of the Dissenting ministers of England—Fox, Aspland, Carpenter, and others; and the toast of Catholic Enfranchisement was spoken to by Blount, the secretary of the English Roman Catholic Association, and that “octogenarian chief” of emancipation, Charles Butler, the barrister. I have seen many assemblies similar to the present, but I think I have never yet witnessed one in which such unbounded and universal enthusiasm prevailed; there were no sleeping, apathetic, or talkative members, but every individual seemed rife with sympathy in the object which had brought them together, and glowing with admiration of the manly character and masterly eloquence of our celebrated townsman. It is a proud ovation, not only for Mr. Montgomery, but for all those who have supported him in Ulster, and will, I trust, be a fresh incitement to his party to persevere in their opposition to the bigotry and intolerance of those who, in their rejection of what they stigmatise as “New Light,” seem pertinaciously wedded to what may in contradistinction be termed their own old darkness.’”

Montgomery elsewhere enumerates, with evident satisfaction, amongst the eminent Unitarians with whom he had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted during this visit to England, the names of “Dr. Lant Carpenter, Dr. Thomas Rees, Mr. Aspland; and Mr. Robberds, Mr. Tayler, and Mr. Beard of Manchester—apostolic men (he says), though I do not coincide with their opinions (*i.e.*, in their humanitarian views of the nature of Christ); but oh, how much superior is their spirit to that of our every-day saints and professors!”

A few weeks after his return, he had the gratification of receiving from the congregation of Greengate, Salford, a beautifully bound edition of the works of Dr. Lardner, in ten volumes, with the following complimentary inscription:—

“Presented, by the Society of Unitarian Christians assembling for public worship in the Unitarian Meeting-House, Greengate, Salford, Manchester, to the

REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY,

A testimonial of their sense of the obligations conferred upon them by his eloquent and effective services on their behalf at their anniversary, held December 8, 1828, and more especially of the admiration which

they feel of the *integrity and talent* with which, in trying circumstances and evil days, he defended in his native country the great and important cause of

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

MANCHESTER, February 8, 1829."

On the fly-leaf following this inscription appears a choice and appropriate Latin eulogistic reference by the Rev. J. R. Beard, minister of the congregation.

"Observantiæ

Qua par est causa haud testimonii nam qui optime meritus est
de civibus Facta optimos habet testes

Hæc Flacci

'Justum et tenacem propositi virum

'Non civium ardor prava jubentium

'Non vultus instantis tyranni

'Mente quatit solida'

Ad virum vere reverendum

HENRICUM MONTGOMERY

Transfert Refert-que

JOHN RELLY BEARD

Ecclesie ante dictæ Minister."

Dr. Beard was then commencing his career of prolific authorship which, continued through a long life, has rendered his own name so distinguished, and his works so beneficial, not only to the cause of the Unitarian Faith, but of *Religious Liberty*.* In the month of March following appeared the first volume of his "Family Sermons," being a compilation of thirty-one discourses supplied by the most eminent British Unitarian ministers of the day. This work was extensively circulated and highly appreciated amongst the Unitarian and other liberal Christian communities in England, Ireland, and elsewhere. Montgomery furnished two discourses to the volume—or rather one discourse

* And never more so than in the latest production of his pen in the pages of the "Unitarian Herald," exposing and refuting the present dangerous pretensions of the Jesuitical Ultramontane Hierarchy of the Papal Church. (January, 1874.)

in two parts (28 and 29)—on “The Religious and Moral Education of the Young.” In this, *inter alia*, he seems to have anticipated the best and most valued sentiments of the present day on the important subject of *Female Education*. Two years after, in 1831, appeared a second volume of more enlarged scope, containing thirty selected discourses not confined to English and Irish ministers, but contributed by many of the most eminent representative divines of England, Scotland, Ireland, America, and Geneva. To this volume also Montgomery contributed a most valuable sermon on “Christ the Saviour.” This latter discourse, not only on account of its great intrinsic value, but as being most happily illustrative of his views on many important questions of Christian doctrine, is now re-published in the Appendix to this volume of his life.*

On the 27th January, 1829, another great County Antrim Catholic meeting was held in Belfast in favour of emancipation. Of the same nature as that of the previous year, but much more imposing as to numbers and weight, it was calculated to have a powerful influence on the legislature, and hasten the introduction and passing of the Catholic Relief Bill, which took place a few months afterwards. As before, the place of meeting was the chapel in Donegall Street, Belfast, where a vast concourse assembled. The leading men (*i.e.*, *laymen*) amongst the Liberal Protestants of Belfast were present, and took part in the proceedings. Bishop Crolly again presided, and many excellent speeches were made, and determined resolutions passed. Montgomery was there; and after repeated allusions to him by the various speakers, and calls by the meeting, he at length came forward, ascended the altar, and standing there by the side of the right rev. chairman, addressed the assemblage. The “Belfast Chronicle” thus reports the interesting occurrence, and gives his introductory remarks:—

“The Rev. Henry Montgomery advanced towards the altar, and was received with the most enthusiastic cheers, the immense multitude assembled rising to their feet with one simultaneous impulse.

* See Appendix G—“Sermon : Christ the Saviour,” 1831.

“He regretted that he was unable to address the meeting as he would wish. He was labouring under a severe indisposition from cold, and the manner in which he had been received by his Catholic countrymen completely overpowered his feelings. The latter circumstance, however, only confirmed him in an opinion of which he had been long convinced. When even the expression of common sympathy produces such a demonstration of grateful and kindly feelings, it surely ought to be a lesson to our legislators, and prove to them what they might expect from the Irish people, if they treated them as justice and sound policy would direct. He felt that his present situation was a strange one. A Presbyterian minister standing on a Catholic altar, beside a Catholic prelate, with whom he lived on the most friendly terms, and addressing his Roman Catholic countrymen on the subject of their grievances, was, unfortunately, at the present period no ordinary occurrence. ‘How is it,’ said he, ‘that I, who differ so widely from you in my religious sentiments, should be received by you with such testimonies of cordiality and affection, while those who agree most with you in theological opinions are the bitterest enemies of your rights? Is it because the old saying holds good in this as in other cases, that in family feuds, the nearer the relationship, the more bitter is the enmity; or does it arise from the intermingling a portion of that charity which Christianity inculcates, and which is calculated to infuse principles of peace, and harmony, and brotherhood among all sects and denominations? I had intended elsewhere to express my opinion on the question of your claims; but from the manner in which I have been alluded to by the gentleman who moved the last resolution, and from the kind and flattering manner in which every allusion to me has been received, I feel that I would be guilty of dereliction of duty, did I not come forward to express my gratitude by again putting on record my attachment to those glorious principles of civil and religious liberty, for the support of which you have this day assembled. I have just returned from a delightful tour in England; and I feel pleasure in announcing, what must be peculiarly cheering to you, that not only are those of my Dissenting brethren in that country, who agree with me in religious opinion, the most strenuous advocates of your claims, but also, that the cause of Catholic Emancipation is making the most rapid progress in England among all denominations—among Calvinists, Methodists, and even that portion of the Established Church denominated Evangelical. . . . I found that the great majority of the wealth, the talent, and the respectability of the country were in favour of Catholic Emancipation.’”

His extended and powerful address, as was to be expected, was most warmly received by the meeting, and was long remembered with feelings of grateful pleasure by the Roman Catholic community of Belfast and the North of Ireland.

As on the former occasion, a numerous dinner party of "Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty," Protestant and Catholic, who had been present at the meeting, met in the Royal Hotel the same evening under the presidency of Dr. Crolly. The "Northern Whig's" report supplies the following extracts:—

"On the chairman's right sat John M'Cance, Esq.; Rev. Henry Montgomery, John Sinclair, Esq.; Mr. W. Pirrie, &c., &c.; and on his left, Mr. A. M'Clean, Mr. Robert Griuslaw, Mr. James Barnett, Mr. John M'Adam, &c., &c. There were also a number of Protestant gentlemen interspersed through other parts of the room."

After the usual loyal and patriotic toasts of the period, and one or two others of an introductory nature—

"You are all aware (said the Right Rev. Chairman) that we are deeply indebted to our Protestant friends, both in and out of Parliament, in every part of the empire, for their strenuous exertions on our behalf. But gratitude, like charity (to use a commonplace phrase), should begin at home. We have in our neighbourhood a man of distinguished talents, who has long been regarded as the champion of civil and religious liberty. He has stood in the midst of trials like a pillar of patriotism; and he has lately assumed the appearance of a pillar of light, diffusing the beams of liberality wherever he passed. It was lately the intention of some of our brethren to send a deputation to England, for the purpose of making the people of that country better acquainted with the feelings and situation of Ireland; but we have here a single gentleman who has done more service to our cause in his late visit to the sister country than the whole deputation from the Catholic body could have effected. He has long engaged our esteem; now he merits our love and affection—"The health of the Rev. Henry Montgomery." (The entire company stood up, and continued cheering for several minutes.) After this burst of enthusiasm had subsided, Mr. Montgomery rose, and delivered a long and eloquent address, a report of which we had prepared, but we find it impossible to get it into our present publication. In conclusion, Mr. Montgomery

requested a bumper, and proposed, in terms highly complimentary, 'The health of the Right Rev. Dr. Crolly.'

In the course of the evening, the chairman (repeating in identical terms the same toast of the previous year*) gave—"The Belfast Academical Institution; a perfect model of education without bigotry." (Cheers.)

Montgomery returned thanks; and, "in his customary able manner, did ample justice to those principles of usefulness and liberality which are so characteristic of that rising and valuable seminary." Strange, that in all Belfast, he should have been the only Protestant clergyman to take part in the proceedings of that day, and raise his voice in behalf of justice and equality for his then oppressed Roman Catholic brethren!

The cause of Catholic Emancipation soon acquired a strength that became practically irresistible; and the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel earned for themselves a nation's gratitude and a deathless fame, by freely surrendering their strongest party prepossessions, and, with a sincere regard for the common weal and safety, prevailing upon the King to recommend to Parliament, in the speech from the throne, the consideration of a measure for Catholic Relief. On the 5th of March, the Emancipation Bill was accordingly introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Peel, providing for relieving the disabilities, securing the civil equality, and establishing the religious liberty of the Roman Catholics of the United Kingdom. It passed through brilliant debates, and was carried by overwhelming majorities in both Houses—the refractory members, and the clerical intolerance of the Upper House, being completely overborne by the combined power of the Government and the Whig supporters of the measure—and it received the Royal assent on the 13th of April.

The passing of this great measure was hailed with very general satisfaction. It was celebrated in Belfast by another entertainment, which was called a "Conciliation Dinner," attended by a large company, both of Protestants and Catholics. On this occasion Montgomery was not present, being engaged on the

* See p. 168 and Note.

same day in the congenial occupation of joining in an entertainment given to his old master, Nathaniel Alexander, by the pupils of the Crumlin Academy. It may also have been that he felt that *his* work in the great political measure of the time was done; and he had no great desire to exult over fallen opponents, or to join with its many *new* friends in adulating the new-born power. Or was it the influence of a prescient wisdom acting upon his mind? His absence, at least, would bear these latter interpretations, which would be characteristic of the man. His friend, Dr. Crolly, referred to him in replying to the toast of "Civil and Religious Liberty throughout the World." "I regret (he said) very much that an esteemed friend of mine is not here, who could have so ably illustrated the value of this sentiment."*

Having thus seen the fulfilment of his desires and labours for the emancipation of his Roman Catholic brethren, let us turn once again to contemplate Montgomery in the still more attractive and ministerial aspect of the earnest pulpit advocate, pleading the cause of holy charity for the suffering poor. The spring of 1829 was a time of sad and general depression. The mercantile and trading interests felt it deeply. Prices of linen

*The few next sentences of Dr. Crolly's address so admirably illustrated the position and exertions of the Belfast people in the matter, and the *feelings and intentions* of the Roman Catholics at the time, as to be well worthy of perusal. He continued—"I have, until this night, been destitute of the blessings of civil and religious liberty. I owe a debt of gratitude to God, and return my grateful thanks to you, for placing me in the attitude of a freeman in the land of my nativity. Yet I am bound to say, that despite of penal enactments, I have been a freeman, by the practical benevolence of my fellow-townsmen, for the last seventeen years. It has long been the characteristic of your town, that no one can live in Belfast without feeling himself at perfect liberty to worship his God according to the dictates of his conscience. After struggling so long in the great cause of civil and religious liberty, it has at last been your glory to see the great object of your exertions accomplished; and I trust that Irishmen of every communion will recollect, and that Catholics, in particular, will never forget, that when the balance was doubtful, the inhabitants of Belfast stepped forward, and threw eleven millions of property into the scale of freedom. This act of generosity demands the most ardent feelings of gratitude on our part; and *it shall not be lost*. We will give you, in return, a peaceful and prosperous country: and you will have the pleasure of seeing seven millions of Irishmen walking erect in the majesty of freedom, enjoying the full exercise of civil and religious liberty, and feeling that they are not unworthy of the blessings."

goods, the staple trade of the North of Ireland, fell remarkably low. The manufacturers were obliged to reduce the scale of wages accordingly, and in many cases to stop their business and discharge their workmen. Large numbers of linen weavers were thus either thrown idle, or were working at long hours for the miserable pittance of from five shillings down even to *two-and-sixpence per week*! In other words, with their wives and families, they were *starving*! Some benevolent people in Belfast proposed to fit out and send a few of these families—even twenty, if unable to accomplish more—as emigrants to Canada; and they asked Montgomery to plead the poor weavers' cause in a charity sermon. He did so, in the month of May, in the Second Congregation, Rosemary Street, Belfast, to a great assemblage, in one of the most simple and touching appeals that could possibly be imagined, which met with a liberal response. The preacher and his theme were thus beautifully delineated in the columns of the "Northern Whig":—

"It was at once a difficult and delicate task to set forth the distressed condition of the weavers, without doing some violence to the feelings of their employers—to depict the miseries of the *many* without blaming, at least by inuendo, the recklessness of the *few*, who, in the present unnatural state of society, profit by their labours. All this, however, was done with the most admirable tact; the defects of the competitive system were glanced at without conveying any reflection upon individuals; the remedies were suggested from the precepts of holy writ; and coming with the sanction and authority of revelation, they differed alike from the cold-blooded speculations of political economists, and the amiable, but visionary schemes of the utilitarian schools of philosophy. When the attention and understanding of his auditors were fairly engaged, the next step was to interest their feelings. For this purpose he instanced a few cases of distress, which he related with the most unvarnished simplicity; and he spoke with feeling and effect of the calamity which could force the humble individuals, whose cause he was pleading, to quit the land of their birth and affections. Nothing could be more commonplace than the idea, and yet nothing could be more beautiful than the allusion which he made to that strongest and most abiding feeling of the heart—that feeling which, in every country and in every clime, entwines the

affections by some undefinable tie with that spot of earth which, however uninteresting it may be in the minds of others, is hallowed to the soul as the home of our childhood—the abode of maturer years—the scene of our purest pleasures, and endeared even by the recollection of sorrows, which were shared and soothed by those we love. Exquisitely beautiful and touching was the picture which he drew of the poor emigrants, who, having spent their last farthing in procuring the means of voluntary exile, cluster, at the close of day, upon the stern of the retiring vessel; and who, as the red sun is going down in the western ocean, gilding with his parting beams the receding mountains, gaze—for the last time gaze—with streaming eyes and sinking hearts, upon that most interesting and melancholy object in the whole volume of their existence—the last glimpse of their native land. The preacher was ill in health, as he himself stated, and as his countenance too plainly attested. He was even less animated than usual; but the low, tender, and somewhat monotonous tone in which he spoke corresponded well with the theme; and as he made his concluding appeal, he rose in warmth and in earnestness, and demanded as a debt to the Almighty, what he had before solicited as a charitable assistance to a fellow-creature. The effect produced upon the good Methodist class-leader—who was induced, by the eloquence of the Arian heretic, to give just *five-and-twenty times* the sum he had originally intended—is already known; and this circumstance, which accidentally came to light, is at once the best comment and the highest eulogium on the eloquence of the preacher.”

The incident here referred to was narrated in the columns of the “Belfast Chronicle” as follows:—

“The following interesting occurrence, which took place last Sunday in the Second Presbyterian Congregation, is alike honourable to the heart of the donor and to the powerful eloquence of the preacher. When Mr. Montgomery had finished one of the most affecting appeals ever delivered from the pulpit, the collectors entered on their task of taking up the contributions of the auditory. On one of the plates they found a slip of paper, on which was written in pencil the following inscription:—‘Call on ——, at ——, and you will receive twenty-five shillings.’ The treasurer for the fund waited next day on a very worthy, pious, Orthodox man, and presented the slip of paper. ‘I shall have great pleasure in honouring this,’ said the good Samaritan. The money being paid, the gentleman who received it presumed to enquire the reason why he adopted this mode of offering his contribu-

tion. ‘I’ll tell you the truth,’ replied the donor; ‘I went with just a shilling in my pocket; but so forcibly was the case of the poor weavers stated by Mr. Montgomery, that I could not think of offering such a trifling sum; and therefore adopted that plan of giving, not what the cause and the occasion demanded, but as much as I was able to afford.’ The circumstance reminds us of some of the scenes which used to be witnessed when the great Kirwan overpowered his auditory to such an extent, as to cause them to throw in their watches and jewels, after they had emptied their pockets of all their money.”

CHAPTER XV.

PROGRESS OF THE NON-SUBSCRIPTION CONTROVERSY— PRESBYTERIAN MEETING IN BELFAST.

1828.

Encounters of Montgomery and Cooke—Meeting of Theological Committee—Character of its Examination—Preliminary Meeting of Non-Subscribers—Advertisement for Presbyterian Meeting—Letter of Cooke and Stewart—The Meeting—Synodical Overtures and Protests read—Intrusion of Messrs. Cooke, Stewart, Morgan, and Orthodox Party—Montgomery's Speech—Cooke's Reply—Montgomery's severe Rejoinder—Cooke's attempted Explanations—Defeat and Withdrawal of the Orthodox—Resolutions adopted—Addresses of Messrs. Porter, Blakely, and Mitchel—Rev. James Davis—The "REMONSTRANCE"—Its Adoption—The Dinner—The Speakers—Dr. Bruce—Mr. Carley—Letter of William Sharman Crawford, Esq.

FROM the consideration of the peaceful advocacy of the cause of charity, and the successful issue of distinguished exertions for the civil and religious liberties of an oppressed community of his fellow-citizens, the course of this history now recalls us, reluctantly, to far other scenes of embittered strife and obstinate debate, the hot war of words, and the last desperate personal conflicts of leaders, possessed of gigantic powers, conscious that the final shock of the battle had come, and resolved apparently on nothing less than mutual destruction. In truth, in perusing the records of the amazing conflicts of Montgomery and Cooke at the Presbyterian meeting in Belfast and the Synod at Lurgan, one is no little reminded of the grand old contests of Homer's heroes before the walls of Troy; when, as if by one consent, the minor leaders and the rank and file of both sides suspended their own battles, to gaze with admiring awe on the single combat of the mighty chiefs; and every sounding blow,

and every changing feature of the strife, was watched with breathless interest by all.

To obtain a clear connexion for the narrative, we must recur to the year 1828, and to the Committee appointed by the Overtures (pp. 181-2) passed by Synod at Cookstown for the examination of students for the ministry. This Committee held its first meeting at Cookstown on the 2nd September. Ten members attended—all Orthodox, of course—including Dr. Hanna, and Messrs. Cooke, Stewart, Park, Morgan, Reid, &c. The examination was not confined to students entering for the ministry; but eight out of eighty *licentiates* of the Synod—*i.e.*, young ministers who had completed their education and received licence to preach the Gospel from their respective Presbyteries, but who had not yet been ordained to congregations—were brought up before them and submitted to a searching examination of from forty to eighty minutes each, conducted with closed doors, “respecting their *personal religion*, their views of the prescribed doctrines of Orthodoxy, and their motives for offering themselves as candidates for the ministry.” Thirteen candidates for licence were also examined, and eight students for entrance. Several were rejected—one of them being a licentiate of some standing, who had been chosen by a vacant congregation! The extraordinary character of the examination may be gathered from the report of some who had submitted to its ordeal—that it embraced searching questions on the basis of “Caesar Malan’s doctrine of *present salvation*, requiring candidates to specify both the *time* and *place* of their personal conversion.”* The report of these proceedings awakened much public indignation, and seemed alone wanting to secure decisive action on the part of the

* “Amongst other questions, each candidate was asked with all gravity—‘Are you in the habit of carrying a Bible in your pocket?’ To this scarcely any could reply in the affirmative; but as a sufficient compensation, every one was in possession of a copy of the ‘Westminster Confession of Faith.’ . . . Although this question was asked, there was not a single copy of the Bible among the whole Committee themselves, and they were forced to despatch a messenger to borrow one before they could proceed with their examination.” (“Northern Whig,” June, 1829, which “pledges itself to the correctness of this statement.”)

Non-Subscribers. The "Northern Whig" of September 18, 1828, reports that—

"On Friday last, a numerous meeting of ministers and laity belonging to the General Synod of Ulster took place in this town, at Campbell's Hotel, Ann Street, for the purpose of determining what course should be adopted by those clergymen and laymen of the body who disapprove of the Overtures which were passed at the last meeting of Synod. Though the meeting was rather of a private nature, admission was freely allowed to strangers. I. W. Glenny, Esq. of Newry, was called to the chair. The Overtures were read over and freely commented on by several gentlemen, both lay and clerical, as inconsistent, not only with Presbyterianism, but as tending to throw the whole influence of the body into the hands of a few, and subjecting candidates for the ministry to the caprice of a continually changing committee, whose proceedings were in secret, and beyond the reach of public opinion. A list of questions, which had been put to the young men in Cookstown, was read, and a very strong sensation was produced by their evident tendency. . . . The Rev. Messrs. Montgomery, Porter, Blakely, Nelson (Rademon), Mitchel, Davis, and Alexander delivered their sentiments upon the subject, and a committee was appointed to draw up a remonstrance to the Synod, to be submitted to the revision and approbation of a general meeting to be held in Belfast some time about the middle of next month."

An advertisement of the intended meeting accordingly appeared in the Belfast papers early in October, which was worded as follows :—

"PRESBYTERIAN MEETING.—A number of Presbyterians, considering the late Overtures of the Synod of Ulster, with respect to the licensing of candidates for the ministry, and the alarming power conferred upon a mere clerical committee, as utterly subversive of Christian Liberty, and directly opposed to the general principles of their Church, earnestly request those ministers and laymen throughout the province, who disapprove of the above enactments and desire to see them repealed, to assemble in the meeting-house of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, on Thursday, the 16th instant, at twelve o'clock.

"The object of the meeting is neither to advocate any peculiar system of theological opinions, nor to reflect upon the religious tenets of any denomination of Christians; but solely to devise the best means of maintaining the true principles of *Protestantism*, by endeavouring to

frame such a temperate *statement* and *remonstrance* as may induce the General Synod to return to the salutary regulations of their own Code of Discipline, unanimously adopted in the year 1825. It is expected that many Calvinists, who are sincere friends to Christian Liberty, will attend the meeting and take part in the proceedings. The public, of course, will be freely admitted; although none will be allowed to interfere by vote with the measures which may be proposed, except persons who are connected with the Synod, and disapprove of its late enactments. Belfast, 7th October, 1828.

“A number of the persons engaged in the business of the meeting, with as many of their Christian brethren of every religious denomination as may be kind enough to join them, will dine together in the great room of the Commercial Buildings at six o’clock.”

It is to be noted that this was to be strictly a meeting of Non-Subscribers and their friends—none but such as “disapproved of the Synodical enactments and desired their repeal” being *requested* to attend; and therefore, although it was intimated that the public would be admitted, it was evidently intended that it was in the capacity of an audience merely, and not as entitling them to *take part in the proceedings*, except as friendly to the cause. This was so plainly its purport, that it needed not, and would have been better without, the concluding prohibition, as seeming to limit the non-interference of the general auditory to voting alone. But the whole tenor of the advertisement, and character and purport of the intended meeting, were so unmistakable, that anyone possessing a spark of gentlemanly and proper feeling could not fail to understand and respect them; and consequently, anyone coming there avowedly to oppose the promoters would do so in the face of the advertisement, would put himself into the position of an *unauthorised and offensive intruder*, and could not reasonably complain if he found himself treated accordingly. The character of the subsequent proceedings requires that this should be borne in mind.

On the 14th October—two days before the meeting—there appeared in the Belfast “News-Letter” and “Guardian” a long and pretentious letter, drawn up under eight separate heads, attacking the above advertisement, and the proposed meeting and

its promoters. It was signed by Cooke, Stewart, and H. Henry (of Connor), and was conceived in a bad spirit, expressed in coarse and opprobrious language, and contained many uncharitable and unfounded accusations against their non-subscribing brethren. It was nothing less than a direct attack upon the right and freedom of *public meeting*—the right of a minority in any body, conceiving themselves aggrieved, to meet by advertisement, themselves and their friends; to declare their grievances, and to seek redress from the majority or elsewhere. It was an ambitious and daring attempt to push the dictatorship which they had acquired in Synod, into a virtual domination over their opponents and others, in regard to the various concerns and actions of their lives. But it met with its reward! The letter bore the following strangely worded postscript:—

“Being met upon a solemn religious service (the communion at Connor), and having *had* severally read the advertisement for a ‘Presbyterian Meeting,’ we have deemed it right thus hastily to give our views to the Christian public; and are fully aware that, had time permitted, we could have obtained a large number of signatures from our Orthodox brethren.”

On Thursday, October 16, 1828, pursuant to the advertisement aforesaid, a numerous and respectable body of Presbyterians assembled in the meeting-house of the Second* Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, for the purposes stated. “On the motion of John M’Cance, Esq., Isaac W. Glenney, Esq. of Newry, was called to the chair.” The Rev. W. Porter read the Overtures complained of (pp. 181-2). He also read the Reasons of Protest against the Overtures, which were given in the Synod and entered in the minutes (pp. 199-202). A Committee, consisting of twenty-six ministers, having been appointed by Synod to carry the Overtures into effect, the Protest against this measure as found in the record of that body was also read (p. 202).

* The *First* meeting-house having been found inadequate to hold the assemblage—described in the “Whig” report as “one of the most numerous and respectable meetings we ever witnessed”—they were obliged to adjourn to the *Second* and larger house.

Soon after the meeting had assembled, Messrs. Cooke, Stewart, Morgan, and J. Reid, accompanied by a large body of their adherents, entered the house and took their seats; when, the reading of the foregoing documents having been concluded, Montgomery instantly rose and spoke to the following effect:—

“Mr. Chairman, I am extremely sorry that a most unexpected and very painful duty now devolves upon me. In calling this meeting, the object of my friends and myself was, to vindicate the sacred principles of Christian Liberty, and to bring back the Synod of Ulster, by a temperate *remonstrance*, to its own established and salutary regulations. In the execution of this design, it was our earnest desire to avoid everything personally offensive to individuals, or generally offensive to the professors of any creed. We have never, in any single instance, been the aggressors; we have only exercised the privilege of every animated being, in standing up in our own defence; and we hoped to be permitted to hold our present meeting in peace, without obloquy and without molestation. In this moderate and reasonable expectation we have been disappointed. A letter, bearing the signatures of the Rev. Messrs. Cooke, Stewart, and H. Henry, has been widely circulated through the medium of the public press, conveying the most injurious and unfounded accusations against the originators of this meeting. The last of these gentlemen I completely exculpate from any responsibility with regard to this most disgraceful production. Mr. Henry of Connor is a man who, through a long life of ministerial usefulness and fidelity, has been distinguished for his kindness and candour; and I am persuaded, were he not an instrument in more powerful hands, he would not voluntarily join in any act calculated to wound his fellow-men, or even the meanest creature in existence. Whatever, therefore, I may be compelled to say of this letter, or its authors, shall not have the slightest reference to him. With regard to the other two, they, and they alone, are responsible for the consequences of their rude and unprovoked assault—whether these consequences may be unpleasant to themselves or injurious to the cause of religion. Personal conflicts amongst ministers of the Gospel are always to be deprecated; but to *us* there is no choice left; both our characters and our cause imperatively demand that we should not acquiesce in unjust and injurious imputations. The writers have themselves been the first to draw the sword and fling away the scabbard, and they can blame none but themselves should they suffer in the conflict. In what I am about to say, I shall speak with less

reserve than I should otherwise have done, because the assailants, supported by a large body of their friends, have already entered the house."

He then took up in detail the numbered paragraphs of the letter referred to, and powerfully exposed and refuted its various misstatements, exhibiting in broad light and in the plainest terms their unworthy character and injurious design. Thoroughly aroused by his theme and by the presence of his opponents, that seemed to challenge rebuke, he lashed the production and its authors with a strength of language and an unsparing severity greater than he had ever employed before. Coming at length to deal with the insinuation that the assemblage was held in an Arian meeting-house, because the sole object was to disseminate Arian principles—he disproved this by reference to the fact that it was only after having been refused the use of one Calvinistic Presbyterian meeting-house in Belfast, and requested by its members "not to apply for" another, that they accepted the offer freely made them of the First House in Rosemary Street, and afterwards of the Second, in which they were assembled. He then retorted thus on the assailants:—

"But if our assembling within the unsanctified walls of an Arian meeting-house prove that our sole object is to disseminate Arian principles, what awful disseminators of 'Arian poison' must those be who have often officiated in Arian pulpits—who have had Arians preaching from their own pulpits—nay, who from the hands of Arians have received the sacramental elements, and have permitted the same unhallowed hands to distribute the sacred symbols amongst their people!* And what shall we say, if these are the *very men*, who, in the face of our solemn declaration to the contrary, would stamp upon our proceedings this day the character of Arian and Socinian projects, merely because we are assembled in a house where 'the *One* living and true God is worshipped in sincerity and truth!' The conclusion of their fourth paragraph is directly opposed to truth—in the first place, because we are *not* 'an assembly of Arian and Socinian divines;' and in the second place, because it is *not* our 'purpose to endeavour to prevent the Synod of Ulster from restoring itself to those primitive principles of Orthodoxy upon which it was founded.' Our purpose is the very

* See p. 85, *Note*.

opposite of this : we most earnestly wish to restore the Synod to the primitive principles of Orthodoxy, and the *only* principles of Orthodoxy in existence. When Presbyterianism was established in Ireland, the Westminster Confession of Faith was not in existence ; nor was there any standard in the Synod, except the *Holy Bible*, for nearly a century afterwards. Now *we* are the persons who desire to return to the example of those 'primitive,' holy, peaceful, and truly 'Orthodox' days. Our opponents are the innovators : they trample under foot the fundamental principle of Protestantism (the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment) ; that principle by which it advanced amidst all the terrors and struggles of persecution ; that principle which, if it ever practically desert, all the power and patronage of the world will not prevent it from crumbling into ruins. We hold it no disgrace, that we are truly anxious to promote the extension and permanence of this glorious principle. Neither will I, for one moment, affect to conceal my deep and joyful conviction that our present meeting will ultimately tend to promote my own peculiar views of Christian doctrine. These views I firmly believe to be so rational, so Scriptural, so worthy of God, and so conducive to the best interests of man, that they only require an enlightened world, the destruction of human creeds, and the free circulation of the Gospel, to render them finally prevalent over all the earth. Yet I would not *force* them upon others, even had I the power ; for such an aid of tyranny would tarnish their lustre, and be inconsistent with 'the service of Christ, which is perfect freedom.'"

He next takes up the case of the students and licentiates who had been lately examined by the Theological Committee ; and, in reply to the statement in the letter that it was "*totally untrue* that any of these young men had expressed themselves as 'disgusted,' but that, on the contrary, they were treated with paternal kindness and had expressed their fullest satisfaction," he declares — "To this statement, in the face of its authors, and in the presence of this vast assembly, I give the most unequivocal contradiction." Of this he offers documentary evidence in proof. In this connexion he animadverted with telling force on the whole proceedings of the Examining Committee and the statements of the letter regarding them ; and finally, he launched once more into a tremendous attack on Cooke and Stewart, charging these same men, who now paraded their "being met upon a solemn religious

service," with having, a few years before, deserted the Lord's Table in one of their congregations (Killileagh), and left the people to receive the elements from others; whilst they "travelled to Dublin on the Sabbath to bow the knee to an earthly monarch"—to join a deputation in presenting an address to King George IV. the next morning. "I am ashamed," he says, in concluding, "to have wasted so much time upon so worthless a subject; but in these wretched times it is occasionally necessary to expose hollow pretensions and arrogant assumptions; . . . and he who at present tamely submits to unmerited obloquy and misrepresentation, can scarcely fail to injure a public cause."

Cooke, whose dauntless assurance never deserted him, however bad his cause, immediately claimed to be heard in reply. The chairman ruled that he must wait till the first resolution was before the meeting. This having been moved by Rev. N. Alexander, it was then agreed to hear him; and on a general call from the assembly, he advanced and spoke from the aisle in front of the pulpit. He confined himself entirely to attempting to meet Montgomery's personal onset, declaring that "there were there of his brethren who were determined, *at a future stage of the proceedings*, to answer his specious declamations, and to confront with living evidence his groundless assertions against the Synod's Theological Committee." He complained bitterly and repeatedly of his assailant's *personalities*, and that he had "*dragged him before the meeting*," &c. Compelled to admit the substantial accuracy of both the statements of having communicated along with Arians, and of Sunday travelling on the day of his own communion, he strove with long, laboured, and ingenious, but altogether futile efforts, to explain away or weaken their force; and, conscious of his failure, he sought to recover his position by a desperate *tu quoque* retort upon Montgomery. This he managed with great dexterity, exhibiting in a marked degree his well-known and peculiar talent in debate. He accused his opponent himself of two instances of Sabbath-breaking—once in having himself travelled from Dublin and read newspapers by the way; and again, of having, on the Sunday following the meeting of Synod

in Coleraine in 1825, spent the day "admiring the 'sublime and beautiful' in nature, amidst the picturesque scenery of Down-hill," instead of attending Sabbath worship in the nearest Presbyterian meeting-house. Absurd and trivial as these allegations may now appear, he rang the changes upon them at length, and with no little power.

Montgomery replied :—

"It is quite amusing to behold the air of injured innocence with which Mr. Cooke, who is himself the assailant, supplicates public sympathy, as if he were the party aggrieved. He complains that he has been dragged before a tribunal that has no right to try him. Now, what is the fact? No person *dragged* him before this meeting; no person would even have mentioned his name, had he not *obtruded* himself on the public in a letter filled with misrepresentations, and had he not ostentatiously *forced* himself upon our meeting this day. He made a most unwarrantable attack upon his brethren, and now he whines out a complaint because he has been chastised for his temerity. Whatever he has suffered, he has brought upon himself."

He then took up and pitilessly overthrew every point of Cooke's attempted defence against his previous charge (of having left his congregation on Communion Sunday to go to Dublin), which he repeated and drove home with terrible power. He then added—

"But if Mr. Cooke erred *once*, it seems I went *twice* astray in the same manner. Now, even if this were the fact, there would be no apology in it. His condescension in comparing himself with me is quite overpowering. I do not pretend to be 'a discerner of spirits,' or to regulate the faith and appoint the pastors of all the Presbyterians of Ulster by my own sovereign will. Were I, therefore, even guilty of the very same offence as Mr. Cooke, there would be no parallel between us; for very little can be expected from an humble *heretic* like me. But the fact is, there is not more dissimilarity between our pretensions than there is between the cases themselves."

He then places in contrast, side by side, his charge and Cooke's retort, making every point of his own defence the occasion of fixing his keen lance deeper and deeper in the wide

gaps of his opponent's armour. At length, rising to a grand climax of attacking power, he concluded by hurling against him charge after charge—a very phalanx of new and personal charges of grave derelictions of duty, raining a perfect torrent of crushing blows upon his exposed and defeated assailant. “Yet this man,” he exclaims, as he sat down, “now aims at a supremacy over the faith and consciences of his brethren!”

While entirely justified by the circumstances, still it was undoubtedly a tremendous punishment; and Cooke for once was thoroughly beaten. But being what is called in popular phrase, “game to the back-bone,” he would fight on to the last. He once more got up, and insisted on being again heard in reply. He took up Montgomery's charges in detail. Some he endeavoured, plausibly, but unsuccessfully, to set aside; others he stoutly denied; and of others, he entered into long and minute personal details, tedious as they were bootless. Conscious of this himself, he ends, complaining—

“It is cruel to be compelled thus to enter into the petty detail of a journey; but the unfeeling style of the accusation made the history imperatively necessary. . . . That Mr. Montgomery had given extraordinary evidence of ‘love’ to him, perhaps the audience might admit; but . . . he must beg to conclude by wishing he would try another method of shewing it.”

That the discomfiture of the Orthodox intruders was complete, was apparent, even without the fact that the followers of Cooke, *in spite of his declaration and promise* that they were there determined to answer and expose Montgomery's statements, meet his assertions, &c., during the progress of the meeting, and lacking the courage of their leader to attack their terrible assailant, or to undergo such a castigation as he had received, shortly afterwards rose in a body, and, with Cooke himself, left the house. In plain terms—let Orthodox authorities represent it as they may—they fled in dismay from the powerful and overwhelming wrath of the Lion of Arianism, which they had foolishly and deeply provoked. With their departure ended this great scene of personal conflict between the renowned leaders.

Montgomery had accomplished his object, and, with his single arm, had driven the whole band of opponents from the meeting, which they had come with the avowed purpose and "determination" to interrupt. The important proceedings were thenceforward continued and concluded in unanimity and peace.

The resolutions adopted by the meeting were as follows:—

"1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, being given by inspiration of God, and being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, are the only infallible rule of faith and duty.

"2. That the imposition of human tests and confessions of faith is an encroachment on the prerogative of Christ as the sole Head of His Church, is a direct violation of the rights of Christians, and has uniformly tended to encourage hypocrisy and lessen the authority of Scripture, and to prevent that free inquiry and discussion which are essential to the extension of Gospel truths.

"3. That, as every Christian has an eternal interest at stake, and is personally responsible to God, it is his inalienable privilege to search the Scriptures for himself, to be fully persuaded in his own mind, and to worship and serve God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without privation, penalty, or inconvenience inflicted by his fellow-men.

"4. That this being the indefeasible right of every private Christian, it is particularly important that it should be exercised in its fullest extent by every Christian minister, who is bound by the most solemn obligations to declare unto the people the whole counsel of God.

"5. That the late Overtures of the Synod of Ulster, with regard to the licensing of candidates, ordination of ministers, and the alarming power conferred on a mere clerical Committee, appear to us directly subversive of the principles of Presbyterianism laid down in the preceding resolutions, inasmuch as they infringe upon the privileges of every order of persons in our Church.

"6. That a firm but respectful Remonstrance, founded on the preceding resolutions, be presented to next meeting of Synod, with a view to obtain a repeal of the late enactments of which we complain.

"7. That the Remonstrance now read be published and circulated among the Presbyterians of Ulster.

"8. That a subscription be now entered into, to defray the expenses attendant on the objects of this meeting."

The names of those who proposed and seconded these resolutions should be here recorded. They were the Revs. N. Alexander, W. Porter, A. Nelson, F. Blakely, J. Davis, R. Campbell, J. Mitchel, and S. C. Nelson, ministers of Synod; and Messrs John M^cCance, Henderson Black, Robert Dickson, J. C. Mulligan, J. Lindsay, C. Swanwick, W. M^cWilliam, and J. Blow, lay elders.

Of the many admirable addresses delivered, those of William Porter, Fletcher Blakely, and John Mitchel merit especial regard, and, as illustrating the spirit and principles of the Remonstrant party, which may be said to have originated with this meeting, are well worthy of finding a place in this record—the more so, as Montgomery's attention having been, as we have seen, otherwise engaged, the advocacy of the important cause for which the meeting was called was mainly entrusted to the sound judgment and high-toned manly eloquence of these faithful friends. Subjoined are extracts from their several addresses.

Mr. Porter, introducing the second resolution, said:—

“There is one point of view in which the imposition of human formulas of faith has always appeared to me as particularly objectionable; to me, sir, it has always appeared as a most daring invasion of the authority of Christ. To Him, and to Him only, it belongs to frame regulations for the government of His Church; and for men to usurp His prerogative, is presumptuous and injurious in the extreme. Even His own inspired apostles were so far from introducing any innovations in doctrine or discipline, that they uniformly discountenanced such unwarranted boldness, and told the persons whom they addressed to be no farther followers of them than they were of Christ Jesus. They never ventured to prescribe any precept or article of belief from their own uninspired judgment, but were exclusively directed by the authority of their Master. ‘What I delivered unto you,’ says St. Paul, ‘I received of the Lord.’ But the question has often been asked, and asked with a tone of triumph—‘Has not every church a right to judge concerning the qualifications which its members, or persons desirous of becoming its members, ought to possess, and to expel, receive, or reject them accordingly?’ Granted, at once. But, in judging of those qualifications, the Church must be altogether directed by the rules laid down in the Gospel. Whatever may be the case with regard to other churches, ours is not a society which acknowledges the

authority of man. No ; ours is a society which is, or at least professes to be governed, and governed exclusively, by the laws which its Divine Head has laid down. The Bible, and the Bible only, is our creed ; Christ, and Christ only, is our King. Above all churches on the face of the earth, the Presbyterian Church can have the least pretensions to the power or character of a civil society. It has no right to frame new regulations by consent of the majority of its members, and exclude from its communion persons who will not submit to these arbitrary and unwarranted impositions. Now, sir, we have got a point on which the whole question turns. What is the declaration of faith required in the Gospel as a qualification for Christian communion ? One step beyond this declaration, whatever it may be, we have no authority to proceed. Now, if we look into the New Testament, we shall find that the test of admission to communion was very simple indeed. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, was the only declaration of belief which Philip required from the Eunuch. This we confess—this we do most zealously maintain. Why then should we be excluded from the Synod of Ulster for holding a creed which would have entitled us to communion with Christ and His apostles ? But it would seem that Christ and His apostles were latitudinarians in discipline ; they made the door of admission into the Church quite too wide.”

After drawing a very beautiful and touching picture of the former peace and harmony of the Synod, and powerfully contrasting its then unhappy and distracted condition, he traces the latter to its source, as follows :—

“A few individuals have combined for the purpose of raising themselves into adventitious consequence, by stirring up the apparently extinguished embers of religious bigotry ; they have made it their business to agitate questions which must engender strife. For several years the Belfast Institution was a theme admirably conducive to their purpose ; when the firmness of the managers and proprietors recalled the Synod to common justice and common sense, and when the Report of his Majesty's Commissioners defeated the machinations of a certain gentleman, it then became necessary to look out for some other subject that would excite discord. Recourse was had to an expedient which none but bold spirits would have attempted. The existence of anti-Trinitarianism in the Synod of Ulster had long been known and tolerated ; nay, so recently as 1825, the members of the Cabal had themselves been mainly instrumental in framing a Code of Discipline,

in which the licensing of anti-Trinitarian ministers was virtually sanctioned; but what was still worse, the leader of them had unfortunately been in the habit, as he has this day been forced to acknowledge, of joining in sacramental communion with an avowed Arian. These things were no doubt a little embarrassing, but why should consistency be urged as a plea against conscience? Why should faith be kept with heretics? 'The renewed in their minds' were suddenly seized with compunction for their former Christian forbearance, and it was resolved that the religion of Newton and Milton, and Locke and Lardner, should no longer be tolerated in the Synod of Ulster. The cry was, 'If we do not put down Arianism, Arianism will put us down.' *Delenda est Carthago*. In consequence of this revulsion of righteousness, the peace of the Synod has been destroyed, brotherly kindness has fled from amongst us, and jealousy, intolerance, and discord are completely predominant. The disgraceful scenes which preceded the Antrim separation have been renewed; and if the late unconstitutional regulations be not rescinded, the goodly fabric of our Church will once more be rent in twain. Be it remembered that it was not by us the established order of things has been disturbed. Our persecutors are the innovators. If they are dissatisfied with the constitution which they were themselves so lately concerned in framing, they are the party which ought to secede."

Mr. Blakely proposed the third resolution. After a luminous and historical statement of the gradual progress of religious liberty through trials and persecutions, he continued:—

"It is lamentable, sir, that after all these sufferings, and after all these improvements, the General Synod of Ulster should frame Overtures which impose fresh restrictions upon the consciences of its own candidates and congregations; and which, if acted upon, must cramp the rights and privileges of all in connexion with it. They are in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of the Reformation, and to the former practice of the Synod itself. Protestantism is the sufficiency of the Scripture as a rule of faith, and whoever departs from this principle cannot strictly be called a reformer. Presbyterianism is an open court of ministers and elders, equal in authority, and attending to discipline for the good order of the Church. But the Overtures go to appoint a Committee of ministers alone, which can render null and void the decisions of Presbyteries, act without the appointment of elders, blast the prospects of candidates, and deprive

congregations of the objects of their choice ; where there is no charge of immorality, but merely because the licentiate chosen by the people cannot honestly conform his conscience to the conscience of a changing Committee. The practice of the Synod, since Presbyterianism had a name in Ireland, was liberal, till within these last few years. The Presbyterian interest had flourished for *thirty-eight* years in this country before the Westminster Confession of Faith was compiled, and it was *fifty-six* years after it was compiled before it was introduced into Presbyteries—making in all about *ninety-four* years. I do not pledge myself to the exact number of years, but there may have been *one hundred congregations* before it found its way into the Synod ; and even when it was introduced, the form of subscription was so liberal, that it did not generally press severely on conscience, and in some instances no form was required. And it is not merely the amount of the tax upon conscience, but the right to tax conscience, that is in dispute. We should, therefore, disapprove of these Overtures were they less oppressive than they are. Those who have imposed them may, on the same principle, go any length they please ; and if we become careless and indifferent about our privileges, we shall forge the fetters of our own bondage, and shall only want—what our indifference will well deserve—a tyrant to come and fasten them upon us.”

Mr. Mitchel, in speaking to the fifth resolution, said:—

“To this resolution, sir, I give my most hearty concurrence ; because I have felt from the first that the proceedings of the Synod, in this case, are directly subversive of the true principles of Presbyterianism, the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment, and that they grossly interfere with the privileges of every class of persons in communion with our Church.”

He then traced the history respectively of liberty and subscription in the Synod, shewed that the Westminster Divines had no idea of imposing the Confession as a condition of church membership, and that they themselves rejected subscription, even to the Shorter Catechism, “as a direct imposition.”

“It is an extraordinary fact, that neither in the year 1705, when subscription to this formula was first imposed here, nor at any period either before or since, has that Confession ever been *so much as once publicly read in the Synod or in any other of our judicatures!* And it must appear strange that the Synod should adopt a human Confession

of Faith, and make subscription to it an exclusive test of ministerial communion ; and yet that it should never have been publicly read, not to speak of the necessity of examining it *seriatim*, and comparing it diligently with the Holy Scriptures. I will venture to say that such a thing is probably without a precedent in any other Protestant Church.

“There always has been, sir, and I fear there always will be, in the human mind, a thirst for power, temporal or spiritual. This troublesome spirit has been displayed as broadly in the history of the Church, and among ecclesiastical assemblies, as anywhere else ; and the misfortune is, that there it is ever most pregnant with mischief. I look upon the Synod’s test-law as one of the manifestations of that very troublesome spirit. Men of ambitious minds are very fond of rule ; they love to bear sway among their fellows, and to lord it over the heritage of God ; and there is no unprejudiced person who does not see that this is very much the case just now in the Synod of Ulster. Like Mr. Baxter, we have lived to see an assembly of ministers, where two or three such men have been able, through the tame acquiescence of many of their brethren, and under the influence of a popular clamour, to set up a spiritual dictatorship—a most odious Inquisition—in the very heart of Presbyterian Ulster ! Sir, it is, if possible, to redeem the character of our Church, which has been foully tarnished by these proceedings ; it is to free ourselves from the domination of arrogant men ; it is to preserve and hand down, unimpaired, to posterity, the valuable rights we enjoy as Presbyterians and Christians ; it is to assert the supremacy of Scripture, of conscience, and of God, against a few aspiring worms of the dust like ourselves : it is with purposes such as these we have met here ; and in such a cause we need be neither ashamed nor afraid to exert ourselves. It is the sacred cause of Christian Liberty, it is the cause of the Bible, it is the cause of God, and it will prosper in our hands. We must not be told by a junta of fallible men like ourselves, that they are the infallible judges and interpreters of Christian doctrine, both for themselves and for us. We wish for no control over the faith or conscience of others ; but we do wish, and we must have, a control over our own. And if a majority of the Synod of Ulster will go on to claim any such authority over us ; if they will persist in interfering between our conscience and the revelation of God, we must reject the arrogant claim, and assert our independence. For myself, sir, I feel that I cannot, with good conscience, long continue my connexion with the Synod of Ulster, as at present constituted and administered ; and when I say so, I state to you a determination in which, I believe, I shall be

supported by the very respectable congregation of which I am in charge.

"I call upon the fathers around me who may have sons designed for the ministry in our Church—what parent who values his own religious liberty, who values his own sincerity and integrity of conscience, could possibly subject the child of his affections to the awful ordeal prepared by the Synod's Overtures? I call upon such parents—I call upon the Christian people of our communion, to rally in time around the cause of Christian Liberty, and to maintain their independence! . . . Decidedly opposed to the Synod's test-law, I shall cheerfully co-operate with my brethren in such measures as may be thought likely to induce the Synod to repeal the law and to restore us to liberty and peace."

The next resolution having been passed, the "REMONSTRANCE" to which it refers was read to the meeting by the Rev. James Davis* of Banbridge, who had been selected to draw it up by the Committee appointed at the previous meeting. This document *has* become "*historical*," and deservedly so; but not alone on account of supplying the name to the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, established some time afterwards in accordance with the great principles of Christian Truth and Liberty which it proclaims and supports; it also attained this distinction because of its own inherent claims to notice and respect—because of the clearness and vigour of its thoughts, the power of its arguments,

* The Rev. James Davis, minister of the influential and liberal congregation of Banbridge—a man alike distinguished for profound and varied scholarship, warmheartedness and generosity, energetic ministerial labours, and earnest, pious, and charitable life. A native of County Down, he was educated at the Rademon Academy, and attained high honours both in science and literature in Glasgow College. Endowed with a most powerful and ready memory, he continued to store it all through life with every variety of useful knowledge; and, having emphatically the pen of a ready writer, his closely written and rapidly delivered discourses were perfect repositories of valuable instruction on theological and many connected subjects. It would be hard to say whether even his own congregation or the general community of Banbridge, by whom he was exceedingly and deservedly beloved, held him in more cordial esteem than did his ministerial brethren of the Armagh Presbytery and Remonstrant Synod of Ulster—of which last body he was from its foundation, and continued till his death in 1847, one of the most devoted, useful, and learned ministers. (See "Unitarian Magazine," 1847, pp. 304, 318.)

the simple dignity and scholarly finish of its style and language, the breadth and nobility of its sentiments—equally moderate and firm, free and reverently Christian—and not less (with all due respect for a recent Orthodox authority*) because of its perfect and transparent “honesty” of purpose, thought, and expression from first to last.

“In the evening the gentlemen engaged in the business of the meeting, with many friends of various denominations, to the number of 185, dined together in the Assembly-Room of the Commercial Buildings. John M’Cance, Esq., was chairman, and the names of the croupiers were—Leonard Dobbin, Esq., Armagh ; I. W. Glenny, Esq., Newry ; James Andrews, Esq., Comber ; Dr. Gordon, Saintfield ; James Boyd, Esq., Lurgan ; W. Hunter, Esq., Dunmurry ; Henderson Black, Esq., Larchfield ; John Barnett, Esq., Belfast ; and W. Melling, Esq., Newry ; the officiating stewards being William Tennent, Robert Callwell, William Johnston, William Malcolm, Adam M’Clean, William Pirrie, John Roberts, Clotworthy Dobbin, John Hodgson, and John Andrews, Esqs.”

The speech of the evening was that of the venerable Dr. Bruce, senior pastor of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Belfast, who, from his commanding talents and lofty character, had long exercised a potent sway in Belfast society, and was universally recognised as the *Decus et Tutamen* of the Presbytery of Antrim, of which he was a member. He now threw the entire weight of his influence into the scale with the Synodical Non-Subscribers ; and concluded an address replete with finished eloquence by appealing in their behalf in the following terms :—

“On the whole, sir, I beg leave to submit to this great assemblage of Presbyterian Dissenters, and all who may hear what passes at this

* See “Life and Times of Dr. Cooke,” p. 183. A wholesale allegation of “dishonesty” preferred against a “historical document” solemnly adopted and published as the statement of their views and feelings, by men bearing the high ministerial character, and occupying the trying position of the original Remonstans, we should not unnaturally expect to find supported by *some* evidence—*some* real or supposed proofs. When not thus supported, it necessarily falls into the category of mere assertion, and is to be judged accordingly.

meeting, that it is their duty as Protestants, Protestant Dissenters, and Presbyterians, as Christian men and lovers of truth and liberty, to encourage the Protesting ministers with the most liberal and powerful patronage. (The applause that followed this speech continued for some minutes.)”

Montgomery’s old friend, Mr. Carley, in answer to the toast of “The Presbytery of Antrim,” of which he was Moderator, gave expression to similar sentiments in an admirable address:—

“The present state (he said) of the Presbyterian Church bore a singular resemblance to its situation a century ago. Then the intolerance of the Synod called forth the brilliant talents of an Abernethy, a Duchal, a Bruce, and other distinguished and revered names, who nobly vindicated the principle of Presbyterian independence, and the right of private judgment. Then the enlightened laity rallied round their ministers, and supported them in the hour of adversity; and though a few went off, they could well be spared. The true standard of Presbyterianism, which was then displayed, will be recognised with pleasure by the descendants of the independent men of that period. The days of our fathers are gone, but the spirit still remains—still beats in the bosoms of the present race of enlightened Presbyterians, and will prompt them, as Dr. Bruce has well said, to rally and support their ministers.”

In the course of the evening, Montgomery, who was twice called on to speak, read a gratifying letter from William Sharman Crawford, Esq., cordially expressing his sympathy in the sentiments and objects of the meeting. It contained the following statement of his views:—

“I shall always be happy in concurring with any individuals who rationally and temperately support the principles of civil and religious liberty, as I feel they are the only true grounds on which Protestant principles or institutions, either religious or political, can be sustained, and every departure therefrom must inevitably weaken their present influence, and endanger their future permanence.

“These are the opinions I imbibed early in life, and which, I hope I may say, I have since consistently, but temperately, adhered to; and allow me to add, that every day’s additional experience strengthens my conviction of their truth and propriety.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“WILLIAM SHARMAN CRAWFORD.”

Spirit-stirring addresses were also delivered by several other ministers, as well as by a number of the distinguished laymen present. On the whole, it was felt that in the meetings of that day, the liberal Presbyterians of Belfast and the North of Ireland had made a noble stand, issued a powerful manifesto against the intolerant spirit and unjust proceedings of the Synod of Ulster, and contributed greatly to cheer the hearts of the Non-Subscribers in their trying position, and encourage them to perseverance in their arduous struggle.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TEMPORARY CALM. THE INSTITUTION QUESTION REVIVED —ELECTION OF PROFESSOR FERRIE.

1828—1829.

Renewal of Grant to Belfast Institution—Meeting of Synod to consider Government Conditions—Moderation of Cooke and his followers—Reason of the Change—Unanimous Rejection of the *Veto*—Temperate Resolution—Apparent Return of Peace—Many Non-Subscribers deceived—Circulation of the Remonstrance suspended—The Consequences. 1829.—Chair of Moral Philosophy vacant—Meeting of Dromore Presbytery—Cooke's Propositions—His signal Defeat—First Publication of the Remonstrance—Mistaken Policy regarding Signatures—Candidates for Professorship in Institution—Messrs. Carlile and Ferrie—Synod's Fixed Committee—Dr. Hanna—Mr. S. H. Rowan—Return of "Eligibles"—Nomination of Mr. Carlile—Election of Mr. Ferrie—Wrath of Mr. Cooke, &c.—The Coming Storm—The "Northern Whig" on the approaching Synod.

DURING the preceding session of Parliament, the annual grant, so long withheld, had been restored to the Belfast Academical Institution, and a sum of £1500 again voted for its support. The Irish Chief Secretary having written to the Moderator of the General Synod, stating the conditions which the Lord-Lieutenant proposed for the appropriation of the grant, and asking the opinion of the Moderator in regard to them, a special meeting of Synod was summoned for their consideration. This meeting is prospectively referred to by the "Northern Whig" of November 13, 1828, as follows:—

"A *pro re nata* meeting of the General Synod of Ulster will be held at Cookstown on Wednesday next, for the purpose of determining the course to be pursued by the Synod, in consequence of an official communication from Lord Leveson Gower, respecting the grant which was made in the last session of Parliament to the Academical Institution.

We understand that the Irish Government have expressed it as the determination of his Majesty's Ministers, that the Parliamentary grant shall be given only on condition that, for the future, candidates for the Theological, Moral Philosophy, and Hebrew Professorships must procure certificates of their eligibility from the Presbyterian and Seceding Synods of Ireland. As we are convinced that this notification from the Irish Government has wholly arisen from a misconception of the principles on which the Academical Institution was founded, we refrain from making any premature appeal to the public on this subject. As the matter at issue is totally unconnected with the divisions which unhappily prevail in the Synod of Ulster, we are convinced that both that body and the Seceding Synod have too much regard for good faith to wish that, from the misconceptions of his Majesty's Ministers, any conditions should be annexed to the grant which would be in direct violation of the fundamental principles on which the Academical Institution was established."

Again, in its next issue, November 20 (it was then but a weekly paper), allusion is again made to the meeting:—

"THE GENERAL SYNOD.—We have not as yet heard from Cookstown any of the proceedings of this reverend body. We can look as far into a millstone as our neighbours; and *we guess* we should be correct if we were to state that the Synod will have expressed their entire satisfaction with the condition on which the grant was primarily made to our College. There is a circumstance to which we would beg the attention of the Synod—the necessity of another Divinity Professorship in the Institution—a Professorship of Church History and Biblical Criticism (in addition to the Divinity Professorship of Dr. Hanna). . . . A new meeting-house is about to be built in this town for one of the most talented preachers of the day, and we conceive that from the appointment of him many benefits would accrue to society. . . . The deputation from the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors, who waited on the Irish Government on Tuesday last, were courteously received. Lord Leveson Gower, however, informed them that the Marquis of Anglesea could only forward their remonstrance to London for the consideration of his Majesty's Ministers. We understand the remonstrance states that the Parliamentary grant *cannot be received* on the conditions enjoined, as these conditions would deprive the Proprietors of what they have so long laboured to establish, subvert the original intention and constitution of the Institution, and place it under the perfect control of a clerical

body; rather than submit to which we should prefer the last alternative."

The Synod met as above stated, and the "Whig's" anticipations were entirely verified. Moderation and harmony were the order of the day. The letter of Lord Gower was heard and considered, virtually offering the Synod what they had never asked, but what several of the ambitious Orthodox leaders had for years past agitated the Synod and the Province in fruitless efforts to obtain—a *veto* upon the appointment of four, if not five, of the Professors in the Belfast Institution. And now, when the tempting fruit was offered and held within their reach, they would not so much as open their mouth to let it drop into it. They *unanimously* resolved to decline the offer of Government, and, instead, to content themselves with re-affirming and submitting for approval of the Lord-Lieutenant the mild Synodical resolution of 1825 upon the subject, viz. :—

"That our Moderator be instructed respectfully to request the Proprietors of the Belfast Academical Institution to authorise, by a bye-law, or by such other mode as may be consistent with the Act of Incorporation, the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors, whenever a Professor is about to be chosen, to give notice of the day of election to the Moderator of the Synod, in sufficient time for him to convene a meeting of a Committee of the Synod in Belfast; and to afford to said Committee access to the testimonials of the different candidates, for the purpose of forming an opinion respecting the qualifications of such candidates; which opinion the Moderator is directed to communicate to the electors, specifying those candidates whom the Committee consider eligible."

Having quoted this resolution, they add, in the Synod's reply to the Chief Secretary :—

"Should this resolution be now recognised by a bye-law, and confirmed by his Excellency, thereby rendering permanent our right, through our Moderator, to express our opinion respecting the eligibility of the candidates, we are *unanimously* of opinion that our influence, as a church, in the election of all Professors in that seminary, would be abundantly secured. In seeing this arrangement carried into effect,

we should have the greater pleasure, because we have reason to hope that it would be satisfactory to the Proprietors of the Belfast Institution."

And this, it appears, was done by the advice of Henry Cooke ; and the reason assigned was—lest otherwise the Managing Board (of the Institution) "might be humiliated!" Even the possibility of the Lord-Lieutenant being dissatisfied with the refusal of his offer is not now to be weighed against such a catastrophe. Lord Gower's reply to the Moderator's letter contains the following significant allusion :—

"His Excellency is of opinion that he should not be justified in directing me to make any remark in the way of doubt or objection on a well-considered declaration of this nature, emanating as it does from a body so deeply interested in the soundness of its conclusions, and so well qualified to protect that interest. He thinks that he should best continue to evince the same anxiety for the welfare of that body which he has hitherto shown, by acceding to the arrangement which it suggests."

The "Northern Whig" of the following week thus states and comments on the proceedings:—

"The meeting of the Synod of Ulster on the 19th of the present month proceeded and terminated exactly as we predicted in our last publication. In our prophecy, we were guided, not by any particular information which we had received, but by a sober estimate of human nature. The calmness, and harmony, and moderation of the late meeting, which have been so much extolled, and which have been hailed as an omen of halcyon days, proceeded from the very *same principles* that had produced tempests and divisions upon former occasions. The leaders knew too well the honesty and independence of the Proprietors of the Institution, to suppose for one moment that they would submit to the degrading terms proposed by Government ; and they likewise knew, that if the Institution rejected the grant, the endowment of their own Divinity Chair, and that of *other Professorships*, which they saw 'through the dim vista of futurity,' would 'melt into thin air!' Ambition and self-interest, therefore, instead of seeking their wonted enjoyment in raising popular clamour and forging fetters for the conscience, assumed the air of excessive meekness and

forbearance. Even our rev. pupil, Mr. Cooke, who has improved so much under our instruction, declared ‘that he wished for no *вето*, and that all the power he desired to exercise over any man was the power of *advice!*’ Happy will it be for the Synod of Ulster, the character of Presbyterianism, and the interests of religion, if these ‘fair words’ be acted upon, and the temper of the late proceedings carried into the ensuing Synod at Lurgan. ‘Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished;’ but we view it rather as a subject of *hope* than of *expectation*. We know, indeed, that there is still a good spirit in the mass of the Synod—that the majority secretly disapprove of acts, which, under various influences, they were induced to support—that many Orthodox ministers, of excellent talents and estimable characters, are beginning to be *ashamed* of standing year after year as mere *ciphers* to increase the value of the principal figure in the account—and that, at the late meeting at Cookstown, there was a universal sensation of delight at the temporary restoration of ancient amity and fellowship. We know all this; and that ‘the heart’s desire and prayer’ of the great majority are for *peace*; yet we dread the operation of human interests and human passions, and, still more, the infirmity of human purposes, under the influence of strong popular excitement! It is pleasant, however, to be able to record even one harmonious meeting of Synod.”

This conciliatory disposition of the Synod was correspondingly met by the Court of Proprietors of the Institution, who assembled by requisition on the 30th December following, and unanimously passed the bye-law required in the very terms of the resolution of Synod.

So for a while there was nothing *apparent* in the Synodical atmosphere but concord and returning peace; and some of the Non-Subscribing ministers may well be excused, if, looking to the personal obloquy, the distraction of their congregations, and the blighted worldly prospects of themselves and families, too surely to result from a separation, they may have too fondly clung to the hope of a possible re-establishment of peace—may have been all too ready to fling aside their defensive armour, and gratefully and contentedly to bask in the transient gleams of winter sunshine with which they were favoured.

“Hope told a flattering tale,” and the earnest “wish was father to the thought!” But surely it would have been nothing

less than the most fatuous credulity to believe, with the experience they had already so dearly bought, that the velvet paw, with claws back-drawn and concealed, which now so gently caressed them, and the soft feline purring that now sounded so pleasant in their ears, could ever, by possibility, prove to be the voice and hand of a *friend*! The judgment of the observant writer in the "Northern Whig" was entirely correct. It was the kid glove upon the iron hand; and never was the subtle leader of the Orthodox more resolute, with remorseless vigour, to carry out his plans, than when, seeing the advantage the Non-Subscribers had gained, in the influence of the Belfast meeting and the Remonstrance upon public opinion, he affected a moderation he did not feel, in order to conceal his ulterior designs, and throw his opponents off their guard. That he succeeded to a considerable extent there can be little doubt. Many fell into the snare, and "listened to the voice of the charmer." Urgent representations were made to Montgomery and other leading men of the liberals by some of their brethren, whose congregations were most divided, or whose minds were least resolved, of the advantage to be derived from delay—that time should be given for excited feelings to cool down, and a more healthy public opinion to be formed, &c. In a moment of weakness, but with the most kindly intentions, they yielded a reluctant assent, which they afterwards bitterly regretted. The publishing and circulation of the Remonstrance were suspended, and all other matters relative to further Synodical action on the part of the Non-Subscribers were allowed to stand over. It was a great, and might have been a fatal mistake. Reflection might have taught them that anything they had hitherto gained had been acquired, not by inactivity, timidity, or untimely concession, but by the most outspoken boldness, by sleepless vigilance, by prompt and resolute action, and by encountering their opponents half-way, everywhere and in every attack, public or private. In failing promptly to follow up the results of the Belfast meeting, and to strike the iron while it was hot, an opportunity was lost not to be recovered; and many timid disciples, lay and clerical—if not

congregations also—who would then have cast in their lot definitely with the Non-Subscribers and signed the Remonstrance, becoming exposed, through the delay, to the secret influences and machinations of the Calvinistic leaders, who exerted themselves incessantly, personally or by their emissaries, in every congregation or district, were found wanting when the time of trial and the final separation came.

The activity of Cooke at this time was wondrously great. He is represented as having travelled through various districts in Ulster, preaching and lecturing as often as twice a-day for many days together. Nor was Montgomery idle in his very different sphere of activity, preaching, as we have seen, in all places *where his services were desired and acceptable*. Always preferring, however, to identify himself with the inculcation and support of the great general principles of civil and religious liberty, rather than confine his views to the propagation of a sect, though it should be his own particular church, he devoted himself, as we have seen, during the winter of 1828-9, to the special advocacy, both at home and abroad, of the great measure of political justice—Catholic Emancipation; while, during his visits to Manchester and London, his proceedings served to form that acquaintance and cement that friendship between the liberal Dissenters of England and the Irish Non-Subscribers, which bore fruit of such immense importance in after time.

So passed the winter, and the early spring months of 1829. In March the death took place of Dr. Young, who had been the popular Professor of Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics in the Belfast Institution from its first opening as a college; and during the same month, the Joint Board of Managers and Visitors advertised that the election of a successor would take place on the 18th June following, inviting candidates to send in their testimonials.

On the 31st March, a meeting of the Dromore Presbytery took place on the requisition of Cooke and another, when, after a strong political speech from the former, and a warm discussion, in which his views were opposed by the majority of his brethren,

he proposed that a special meeting of Synod should be requested through the Moderator, with a view to petition Parliament for the farther endowment of *new* Presbyterian congregations; to record their condemnation of the measure of Catholic Emancipation (which had then passed triumphantly the second reading in the House of Commons, and was likely speedily to become law by sweeping majorities in both Houses); and, thirdly, to appoint an Election Committee to attend the election of a Professor of Moral Philosophy in the Belfast Institution. "He descanted at great length on the Synod's Fixed Committee (on whom, constitutionally, the duty of considering and recommending in regard to such election devolved), as being opposed to Orthodox principles, declaring that he had no confidence in them." When the Presbytery divided on these resolutions, Cooke found himself supported only by *two* of the ministers, all the rest of the Presbytery—nine ministers and four elders—voting against him. This marked change was to be traced, however, mainly to the alteration that had taken place in the political atmosphere on the subject of Catholic Emancipation. In the same paper which reports these proceedings, the "Northern Whig" addresses a strong expostulation to the Non-Subscribers for their *presumed* apathy since the great Belfast meeting in the previous October:—

"It was with pleasure that we looked forward to the results likely to be produced by the resolutions entered into in October last, for the purpose of concentrating the influence of liberal Dissenters of different religious opinions, in order to remonstrate against the objectionable Overtures passed at the late meeting of Synod in Cookstown. The spirit of the resolutions, and the talent and respectability of the numerous meeting by which they were supported, but above all, the high tone of liberal independence which seemed to pervade one of the most influential assemblages of Dissenters that we have ever witnessed, awakened the most sanguine anticipations. It had been feared that the violence of illiberal measures, and the reckless severity with which they had begun to be executed, would quench the little flame of toleration and independence that still remained; but, on the contrary, the dark and unjust proceedings of the *Inquisitorial Committee* only

tended to remove the gossamer deception that had been thrown over clerical penal enactments, and called forth a prouder display of Presbyterian spirit than their friends could have expected, or their enemies apprehended. Thus far we look back with pleasure on the proceedings of the meeting; but here we must pause. . . . The meeting of Presbyterians to which we have referred was held on the 16th of October last; since that date till the present the objects of it have scarcely been mentioned. A Remonstrance to the Synod was then prepared for signatures; not a name has yet been attached to it. This Remonstrance was to have been 'circulated among the Presbyteries of Ulster;' it has yet done little else than feed the moths. A subscription was to have been entered into 'to defray the expenses attendant on the objects of the meeting;' and till this moment no attempt has been made to carry this object into effect. . . .

"There is yet time to do much, but let them recollect that nothing will serve but active agitation. Let funds for defraying incidental expenses be collected; let copies of the Remonstrance be sent to every congregation in the Synod; let individuals be appointed at convenient places throughout the Province for receiving signatures; and let a committee of ministers and laymen meet at least every fortnight for forwarding the objects contemplated. Let this be done, and good results may yet be anticipated; but let the next three months pass away as the last five have, and the Remonstrants will be thrown back by the majority of the Synod, even without the consolation of public sympathy."

This timely admonition, together with the simultaneous evidence of Cooke's unchanged *animus* against them, re-awakened the slumbering zeal of the Non-Subscribers. The question of vigorously recommencing the agitation against the Synodical Overtures was resolved upon; and the Remonstrance, with the Overtures, Protests, and Resolutions prefixed, was published in the Belfast newspapers *for the first time* on the 18th May, 1829, accompanied with the intimation that "copies of this Remonstrance adapted for signature will be circulated; and it is recommended that they be signed *only by ministers, elders, members of committee, licentiates, and students.*" This recommendation may have been intended to secure the entire veracity and representative character of the signatures, and thus prevent cavil on the part of opponents; but it was assuredly nothing less than a

threefold mistake in other respects. In the first place, it was contrary to the declaration contained in the prefix to the Remonstrance itself—viz., that “it is published and circulated that ministers, licentiates, candidates, students, elders, congregations, and all persons in connexion with the General Synod of Ulster who disapprove of the Overtures in question, may have an opportunity of joining in it by affixing their signatures.” Again, by confining the signatures to ministerial and other office-bearers of the churches, and to candidates for the ministry, the great body of the people, who had the deepest and most permanent interest in the maintenance of their rights and liberties, were prevented from *personally* entering their protest against their invasion; and thus a chill was likely to be thrown upon their zealous and united action. And, thirdly, the limitation being only a *recommendation*, and not a positive stipulation, some would be led by it, and others would disregard it. The result would then probably be that the Remonstrance, being signed by the *people* in some localities and not in others equally Non-Subscribing in their principles, would necessarily present to the Synod and the public a small, inadequate, and misleading representation of the numbers and strength of the Non-Subscribing party, and afford a handle to their opponents which they would be only too ready to seize. The result entirely confirmed this objection, the number of seat-holders signing in the only two congregations where the recommendation seems not to have been attended to shewing how large the number might have been had it never been issued; while, on the other hand, the necessary smallness of the total signatures of seat-holders and people was falsely represented as betokening the numerical weakness of the Non-Subscribing or Remonstrant party. The Remonstrance was printed in a pamphlet form, and circulated mainly through the congregations and districts of the Synod believed to be most favourable to Non-Subscription.

On the 23rd of June—just a week before the annual meeting of Synod—a long letter, entitled “Review of the Remonstrance, &c.,” and signed “A Minister of the Synod of Ulster, and Member

of the Committee for examining Candidates and Licentiates," appeared in the Belfast papers, and was also immediately and extensively circulated as a pamphlet through the length and breadth of the Synod. It was evidently written by Cooke, and manifested uncommon *cleverness*. It was admirably calculated to serve its purpose. The great object seemed to be, by the constantly repeated application of the terms "Arian and Socinian" to the Non-Subscribers and their Remonstrance, to impress the mass of the Presbyterian community with the belief that the sole aim of the Remonstrants was to introduce and establish in the Synod the doctrines known by these names—much dreaded, more hated, and most misunderstood! It suited his convenience to ignore the oft-repeated declarations of Remonstrants, that the maintenance of their Presbyterian rights and religious liberties—not the inculcation of controversial doctrines—was their object; that they would feel themselves bound to ordain Trinitarians as freely as anti-Trinitarians to their pulpits, if such were the people's choice. The letter was no real reply to the arguments of the Remonstrance. Not one of its statements was ever shaken; but the writer well knew his men, and, no doubt, felt that it was perhaps all the better fitted on that account to bring his followers to the Synod the ensuing week in the frame of mind best calculated to serve his designs. In subtle depth of thought, far-sighted calculation, and deliberation and tenacity of purpose, he had certainly no match, either amongst friends or foes; while the perfection of his imperturbable assurance enabled him to employ these qualities to the full advantage for compassing his ends, undeterred by the sensibilities of ordinary minds.

But, meantime, a new element of discord had arisen, by which, even Subscription and Non-Subscription, the Overtures, and the Remonstrance, were for some time pushed into the shade. The election had taken place in the Institution, and the new Professor of Moral Philosophy had been appointed.

Fourteen candidates presented themselves for the appointment, most of them well recommended. Two of the number, however, soon came to the front, and it became apparent that the election

lay between them. Of these, one was the Rev. James Carlile of Mary's Abbey, Dublin—already, as we have seen, a distinguished minister of the Synod. In the Synodical debates of the preceding year, while his Calvinistic sentiments secured the confidence of the majority of members, the comparative moderation of his conduct, and his acknowledged dislike to the principle of subscription to human creeds, had obtained for him the respect and goodwill of the Non-Subscribers. Although his intermediate position necessarily brought him into opposition sometimes to one side and sometimes to the other, yet hitherto his principal conflicts upon the subject had been with Cooke and the other leaders of the ultra-Calvinistic party. He was also known as a theological writer of considerable ability, his works showing a strong metaphysical turn of thought. His latest work on the Trinity, published in 1828, had received much attention. His testimonials, which were very high, were principally from the Fellows and Theological Professors of Trinity College, Dublin. One was from the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Magee, who had noticed with commendation his work on the Trinity. He was the favourite candidate of the Synodical majority, and the desire for his success was pretty general in the North of Ireland. His competitor was the Rev. John Ferrie, a minister of the Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He had held with acceptance two successive parochial charges in that country, and had filled for seven years the office of chaplain to the College of Glasgow. He presented testimonials from the Principal, ex-Principal, and twelve Professors of Glasgow University, and a number of letters and recommendations of the very highest character from thirteen distinguished ministers of the Church of Scotland, and many other respectable literary gentlemen. Many of these dwelt especially on his eminent philosophic attainments as a moralist and metaphysician, as rendering him peculiarly suited for the office which he sought. A few days before the election the Synodical Committee met in Belfast to inspect the testimonials, and select amongst the candidates those whom they might think deserving to be returned as

“eligible,” for the consideration of the Election Board. The extraordinary discussion, of which the action of the Committee subsequently furnished the occasion, renders its constitution and proceedings subjects of more than common interest. Including the Rev. P. White, Moderator of Synod, the meeting consisted of ten members—seven ministers and three elders—all, except one minister, Montgomery, and one elder, Dr. Patrick (of Ballymena), being understood to be Orthodox men. Dr. Hanna, the minister of Rosemary Street, Belfast, and the Synod’s Professor of Divinity, was amongst the ministers; and Mr. S. H. Rowan, Cooke’s favourite and trusty elder, one of the three laymen present. A rumour having gone abroad unfavourable to the Orthodoxy of Mr. Ferrie, it was made the ground of objection by Dr. Hanna and some other members to recommend him, with several other candidates selected, as “eligible” for the appointment. Montgomery, however, and others argued that, Mr. Ferrie having been brought up and licensed by the Church of Scotland—having signed the Westminster Confession of Faith, and been for many years under the care of the Presbyteries of Ayr and Glasgow—having officiated so long with acceptance and without reproach as chaplain to the University, and having received so many and so distinguished credentials as to his piety and usefulness as a “genuine” minister of the Gospel—it would be utterly unjust, merely on the strength of an unauthorised and unsupported rumour, to refuse to assign to him the place in their recommendation which the strength of his testimonials demanded. After some discussion, Dr. Hanna yielded to the reasoning of Mr. Ferrie’s friends; and his literary qualifications being unquestionably superior, they finally agreed to return his name amongst the list of “eligibles.”

During the discussion, Mr. S. H. Rowan observed that, “if superiority of testimonials were to give the preference, Mr. Ferrie would undoubtedly be elected.” For having given utterance to this sentiment, he was subsequently severely taken to task by his minister, and the circumstance is thus referred to by Cooke himself at the ensuing meeting of Synod. “I certainly

was surprised at seeing my worthy elder act in this manner, *and I did exercise due discipline upon him.*" The times were changed, sure enough, when, in the Synod of Ulster, and in the presence of his obedient minion, Henry Cooke could boast of having "exercised discipline" upon the son of Archibald Hamilton Rowan, for the crime of having dared, in the absence of his master, for once to give utterance to the sentiments of an honest man !

The ultimate finding of the Committee is thus recorded in their subsequent report to Synod :—

"The Committee having heard all the testimonials read, after mature deliberation, directed the Moderator to state to the Joint Board of Managers and Visitors their gratification at finding that so many candidates of superior talents and acquirements had offered themselves on the present occasion. Whilst the Committee consider them all persons of respectability, yet, in compliance with the line of duty prescribed by the regulations of the Synod, they select the following gentlemen as eligible, solely on the ground of their superior testimonials, viz. :—The Rev. Messrs. Carlile, Ferrie, Lewis, Cowan, G. M. Young, and Dr. Cummin. They have requested the Moderator to vote in favour of the Rev. James Carlile of Dublin.

"ALEX. PATTERSON, Clerk of Committee."

On the 18th June the Joint Board of Managers and Visitors of the Institution met, and, by a majority of fifteen to thirteen over Mr. Carlile, elected Mr. Ferrie to the vacant Professorship. It was a remarkable fact that, with all the Arian influence and exertions, about which so much was afterwards said in reference to this election, it was actually decided in favour of Mr. Ferrie by a member of the *Established Church*, who voted for him in the second poll.*

This election was the addition of another ingredient of tremendous force to the already overflowing cup of Synodical strife. It opened the way for a renewal of the old contests between the Synod and the Institution, between Subscription and Non-Subscription, Orthodoxy and Arianism, on another

* "Belfast Chronicle," July 19, 1829.

field, and a somewhat different plea, but in a form no less virulent than before. Many were the mysterious intimations, public and private, of the coming storm—of the vials of wrath that were to be poured upon the heads of the Institution and the Arians at the approaching meeting of Synod. The subject became quite a favourite one with the Northern newspaper writers of the day. Editors and correspondents vied with each other as to whose lucubrations upon it should be longest and strongest. The editor of the “Whig” thus commenced a flourishing article, duly introduced with a passage from Shakespeare:—

“ ‘This is the latest parle we will admit ;
Therefore, to our best mercy give yourselves,
Or, like to men proud of destruction,
Defy us to our worst.’ ”

“Our readers scarcely require to be told that the annual meeting of the General Synod of Ulster will take place next week in Lurgan. The interesting and important nature of the business likely to come under the consideration of that body has excited general and deep anxiety respecting the results. Our attention is, therefore, almost necessarily drawn to the subject. We confess, however, that, deeply interested as we feel, in common with the great body of the Province, we have seldom, perhaps never, felt more reluctance in turning the attention of our readers to the proceedings of this assembly. The subject, instead of being one on which the mind loves to dwell, as calculated to soothe and to instruct, only holds up to our view a delineation of the frailties of humanity ; and the comparison of the past with the present, and of what should be with what actually is, must afford grounds of mournful reflection to every person at all anxious about the character of the Synod of Ulster, and the spread of Christian feeling. . . . The approaching meeting of Synod is contemplated as a scene of prospective animosity and party dispute. The tocsin of hostility is sounding from one end of the Province to the other ; and the mild principles of religion must be sunk amid the jar of party discord.”

After administering to both contending parties a pretty sharp rebuke for past misdeeds, and a high-toned admonition to the respective leaders to moderation and calmness at the approaching meeting, the writer proceeds to attack the Synodical Overtures,

and to give a powerful exposure of these, their effects and their promoters, in a style not especially calculated to further the peace which he enjoins. He announces in concluding:—

“We intend to be at our post ; and we pledge ourselves to take every means of unravelling the intricacies of clerical intrigue, that we may be able to present our readers with as correct a view as possible of the various motives and movements of the whole. When men set themselves up as public censors of the morals and motives of their fellows, they must either set their own conduct above reproach, or submit patiently to public scrutiny. We design, during the discussions in Lurgan, to furnish our portfolio with copious notes and remarks, upon which we can draw as occasion may require ; and which we may probably use as materials for a few select ‘pencil sketches’ of the most prominent characters of the Synod.”

It seems to our thinking, that the artist would have been just a little disappointed had his peaceful counsels been followed by the Synod !

CHAPTER XVII.

CRISIS OF THE SYNODICAL CONFLICTS—THE LURGAN MEETING.

1829.

Synod meets at Lurgan—The Assemblage—Sermon of Rev. P. White—Carlile's Attack upon Montgomery—Skirmishing about Institution Grant and Theological Committee—Letter from Trustees of Dublin Presbyterian Fund—History of their connexion with the Synod—Withdrawal of their Support—Cooke's Assault on Institution Deputies repulsed—Beginning of great final Conflict—The Question of Mr. Ferrie's Election—The Synod's Fixed Committee assailed and defended—Efforts to avert the impending Storm—Dr. Wright's Motion—The Crisis arrived—Cooke's Attack—His Speech described—Extracts—His Amendment—Seconded by Carlile—Institution Deputies, Dr. S. Thomson and Professor Thomson, heard in reply—Friday's Debate—Cooke—Morell—Montgomery addresses the House—The Situation described—Orthodox Devices—Indignant Feelings—Reasons justifying their Expression—His Speech a Reply to Cooke and Carlile—Description of it and its Effects by Dr. Porter—Adjournment of Synod.

ON Tuesday, 30th June, 1829, the famous meeting of Synod took place at Lurgan. The number of members attending was—ministers, 144; elders, 95—total, 239; only less by 20 ministers than the great Cookstown meeting, the number of elders being the same. The meeting-house where the Synod assembled was also thronged, as on the previous occasions of Strabane and Cookstown, by an eager crowd, many persons having come from Belfast and other parts of the Province to hear the debates. The Rev. Patrick White, the retiring Moderator, preached; and, alas for the old college friendship! his sermon was a studied harangue in support of the Overtures in their most objectionable features. This, if not an unusual

course, was at least wholly unnecessary—a gratuitous blow levelled at the Non-Subscribers in their already isolated and trying position—an Irish illustration of his old letter to his “Dear Chum”—“Indeed, it would appear strange to me if *ever* the affection which subsisted between you and me should become *languid*—I’ll not say *dissolved!*” (See p. 26.)

The “Northern Whig,” under the head of “Notes of the Synod,” observed:—

“We did not expect Mr. White to travel aside from the general precepts and doctrines of Christianity, and employ himself for over an hour in declaiming in favour of the Overtures of last year. We think it would have been more in accordance with his office, if he had endeavoured to soothe the angry spirits, which he knew were about to blaze out, than to take his stand, even in the pulpit, upon the debatable ground of such subjects. With one observation of the rev. gentleman we were particularly struck. He stated that with respect to the motives and purity of heart of the candidate for the ministry, the individual himself could *alone* judge; whilst in the next sentence he urged the necessity of submitting such matters to the investigation of a Committee of Synod. When men take up unsound doctrine, it is only to be expected that their arguments should be contradictory and fallacious.”

The Rev. Robert Park (Ballymoney), a thorough-going Calvinist and Subscriber, was appointed Moderator. On the motion for the election of a Clerk, Mr. Magill of Antrim renewed his motion of the two previous years—“That the Rev. William Porter, being an avowed Anan, shall no longer be continued Clerk.” A very tedious and uninteresting discussion ensued, in which the conduct and motives of the mover were placed in no very enviable light. It was evident that the respective leaders awaited the coming on of questions of greater import to put forth their powers. Finally, as before, the proposition was withdrawn, and the question of the Clerkship postponed till a subsequent period of the meeting. The next subject, if not more edifying, was certainly more interesting. It occurred during the evening session of the same day. On the Report of the Bangor Presbytery being read, Mr. Carlile, the late unsuccessful candidate for

the Professorship in the Institution, made an attack of the most extraordinary character, and entirely without previous notice, upon Montgomery—on the ground, forsooth! of the allegation made by Cooke, and admitted by him at the Belfast meeting, that he had once travelled from Dublin on a Sunday. This was made the theme of a bitter and acrimonious personal attack, resulting in a distinct charge of ministerial unfaithfulness and Sabbath desecration. He was supported in this charge by his own colleague in Mary's Abbey, Mr. Horner, who actually submitted a motion for having Montgomery brought to trial before his Presbytery. Finding no other supporter in the *entire Synod*, Mr. Carlile was obliged to second this motion himself, which, to the credit of the Synod be it said, was indignantly rejected without coming to a division. It would be idle to deny that in replying to this attack the indignation of Montgomery found expression in terms more suited to the warmth and strength of his outraged feelings, than to the calm dignity and unruffled temper most becoming the ministerial bearing. The "Northern Whig," in its notes of Synod, thus refers to the occurrence:—

"Tuesday evening was chiefly taken up with a very disagreeable scene of personal dispute, introduced by a most extraordinary proposition from Mr. Carlile, to institute an investigation into Mr. Montgomery's conduct, upon an alleged crime of Sabbath-breaking, because the latter gentleman had acknowledged, that upon very urgent and important business he had travelled on the Lord's day. We were never more astonished than when Mr. Carlile brought forward this matter; particularly as he passed by altogether in his observations the conduct of Mr. Cooke and Mr. Stewart, who acknowledged themselves guilty of a far more gross violation of the Sabbath—when Mr. Cooke fled from his own sacramental table, and drove off to Dublin, to throw himself at the feet of an earthly king. Neither did Mr. Horner embrace this fact in his motion against Mr. Montgomery. Such dishonesty is most disgraceful in any men, but much more so in such exclusive arrogators of religion as Messrs. Horner and Carlile. The charge against Mr. Montgomery implied a crime of a very heavy nature, particularly as affecting a clergyman; and if Mr. Carlile thought himself called upon to interfere, he was bound, both by the laws of Synod, and by the common courtesies of one gentleman to another,

and also by the precepts of Scripture, to give Mr. Montgomery previous notice of his intention ; and yet, notwithstanding all this, no such notice was ever given till Mr. Carlile rose up, to the utter astonishment of the whole house, to submit his proposition. We always were admirers of Mr. Carlile, and we confess it was with pain that we contemplated the course which he thought proper to adopt. He may attempt to soothe himself as he pleases, but we tell him, and we do it with sorrow, that he has lost more by his unkind and undignified attempt than he will retrieve for years. He may disregard our opinion if he will, but, unfortunately, we are only echoing the opinion of every member of the Synod with whom we conversed. Every one regrets the circumstance ; and as Mr. Carlile was respected and esteemed by all parties for his straightforwardness and integrity, it is with sorrow that they are obliged to look back upon an act unworthy of the man. But why such infatuation ? Did Mr. Carlile really suppose that such a charge could affect the gentleman against whom it was levelled, or that any good could result from it ? Impossible. No one believes it. Is it, then, because he is smarting under the consequences of a late defeat at the Academical Institution, that he turns round, like a chafed lion, to devour the first object he meets ? This, too, is equally unworthy of the man ; and yet, although we are anxious not to believe it, we have been told over and over again by men of different parties, that, ‘if Mr. Carlile had been the Professor of Morals in the Institution, he would have kept his lectures for his class, instead of wasting them on such an intractable pupil as Mr. Montgomery.’ Be this as it may, nothing could be worse advised than the whole matter. But these are the times for bringing about extraordinary occurrences in the Synod.

“ ‘ Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul,
Must now be named and printed heretics,
By shallow Richards, and Scotch what d’ye call.’ ”

On the following (Wednesday) afternoon, the reading of the communications between the Synod and the Irish Government, relative to the renewal of the grant to the Belfast Institution, “gave rise to a discussion, from which it was easy to infer that a very animated debate was likely to take place on Thursday, on the late appointment of the Professor of Morals.” The Overtures and Protests of the previous year, relative to the

appointment of a Theological Committee, having been subsequently read from the minutes—

“Mr. Cooke observed, that as he understood certain charges were about to be preferred against the Committee, he thought it fair, and agreeable to the laws of the Synod, that the object of these charges should be announced to them, that they might take means to justify themselves if they could. Some of these he had heard; but there might be others of which he was not aware.

“Mr. Montgomery did not conceive it necessary to give notice of the points of inquiry into the conduct of a Committee; but as his object was not to criminate, but to come at the truth, he had no objection to give any explanation. The course, in fact, which he might pursue would depend much on the information which he might receive. He then proceeded to ask several questions of the Committee; and it was finally agreed that a meeting should take place between it and Mr. Montgomery, along with others who were disposed to complain on the subject. This was accordingly agreed to, and the conference appointed to take place at eight o'clock (that evening).”

On Thursday morning, amongst other matters, an important letter was read and considered from the Trustees of the General Presbyterian Fund in Dublin, assigning their reasons for withdrawing the countenance and substantial aid afforded by them for many years to the Synod's mission to the South and West of Ireland. This Trust Fund had been formerly established by the bequests of wealthy Presbyterians of Dublin for the support of Presbyterian interests in Ireland, especially in connection with the Synod of Munster; and on the formation in 1818, pursuant to a proposal of the Synod of Munster, of a United Presbyterian Mission Committee under the joint auspices of the Synods of Munster and Ulster, the administrators had consented mainly to supply the funds for its operations. Of this Committee, there were two co-operating portions, one in Dublin, the other in Belfast. Each had its own Clerk—*Mr. Carlile* for the former and *Mr. Cooke* for the latter, with Mr. Horner for Joint Treasurer. Much had been done through its exertions to revive old and establish new congregations in the South and West. As the Mission was a joint one, commenced solely for the pro-

motion of the general interests of *Presbyterianism* in the South and West, it was not for some time thought important under which Synod the *new* congregations should be placed, the *revived* ones being naturally presumed to belong as formerly to the Synod of Munster. So when several of these congregations became in time annexed to the Synod of Ulster, no specific rule on the subject having been adopted, the Trustees opened their fund for their benefit. "In so doing, be it observed, they diverted the proceeds of their fund from their original channel towards the support of a new object; for the fund having been instituted by congregations in the Synod of Munster, its income had hitherto been applied to the exclusive support of that body, by whom and for whose advantage it was originally formed." (The knowledge of these facts, stated in the letter of the Trustees, is essential to the proper understanding, not only of the nature of the complaints which they then preferred, but of subsequent references in this work to important proceedings regarding this trust in following years.)

In 1821, an address was published by the Committee, with the names of both its Clerks appended, to the Presbyterians of Scotland, asking their pecuniary aid to the Mission; and Messrs. Carlile and Cooke were sent as a deputation to support the application. An important meeting was held in Edinburgh; speeches were made and resolutions passed expressly founded on the address, which acknowledged the "Presbyterian connexion" between the Synods. On the other hand, it was charged against the deputies that they came to a private understanding with certain Calvinistic leaders of the Scotch Church, that none of the new or revived congregations that might be established or supported by the Mission should be allowed to connect themselves with the Synod of Munster, it being mainly an "Arian" body. On this understanding they acted for six or eight following years, managing to have all such congregations annexed to the Synod of Ulster, and Calvinistic ministers placed over them; while they even succeeded in obtaining the settlement of a number of ministers holding concealed, or at least unpronounced,

Trinitarian and Calvinistic views in many of the best congregations of the Synod of Munster itself. These facts became notorious; and Cooke, when strongly taxed with them by the Rev. James Armstrong (afterwards D.D.) of Dublin, Clerk of the Munster Synod, in his letters of September, 1827, took the bold step of utterly repudiating the Committee's "Address" of 1821, acknowledging the Scotch "understanding," and glorying in all that he had subsequently achieved. Such were the means employed through a period of eleven years, by the Calvinistic party in the Synod of Ulster, to acquire an influence and a final preponderance amongst the Presbyterians of Dublin and the South of Ireland utterly unknown before. From coveting their people and their congregations, it was but a small step afterwards to covet their houses and their funds! These proceedings formed the grave charges stated in the letter of the Trustees to the Synod at Lurgan, and are thus summarised in its concluding sentence:—

"In calling the attention of your Synod to the circumstances detailed in this letter, we have no object in view but simply to lay before you our reasons for withdrawing our countenance from a Mission, which seems in several instances to have been disingenuously conducted, in the course of which the dignity and honour of your Presbyterian Committees have been compromised by a disavowal of their public credentials—the compact, which induced the Trustees to become a party to the Mission, violated—and that portion of the Presbyterian body ungenerously treated, for whose special protection our fund was originally instituted.

(Signed by order of the Trustees),

"JAMES MARTINEAU, Moderator.*

"DAVID HUTTON, Registrar.

"Dublin, 21st May, 1829."

The "Northern Whig" remarks in reference to this letter:—

"We are not surprised that the Synod should feel a little uneasy on receiving such a communication from so respectable a body of gentle-

* The Rev. James Martineau, then junior pastor of Eustace Street Presbyterian Congregation, Dublin, now Principal of Manchester New College, London.

men as the Trustees of the Dublin Fund. The letter contains charges which deeply affect the honour and integrity of the Synod, and which, if substantiated, clearly prove the spirit of trickery and underhand dealing with which the proceedings of a certain portion of that body are suspected to have been carried on for several years."

The letter was received with extraordinary and suspicious meekness by the Synod, a propitiatory resolution framed, and a deputation appointed to confer with the Trustees, offer explanations, &c. Accordingly, the Moderator and several leading members waited upon them in Dublin in July, but were unable to afford satisfactory explanations, and the grants from the fund were discontinued.

On Thursday evening, Dr. Samuel Thomson and Joseph Stevenson, Esq., secretary, appeared as a deputation from the Joint Boards of the Belfast Institution, and Professor Thomson on behalf of the Faculty, and read and handed in the annual letters; whereupon Cooke at once commenced the meditated attack, by assailing the Proprietors of the Institution for not passing the bye-law required by Synod in the terms or intention of the Synodical resolution which prescribed it—that they had not accorded to the Moderator, in specific terms, the right which the Synod claimed for him in cases of election. He was fully answered by Dr. Thomson, but still he persevered in the accusation. The late Moderator (Mr. White) and Mr. J. S. Reid both defended the Institution, and showed the utter groundlessness of the charge. Still he persisted. Again Dr. Thomson replied—"We have adopted the spirit of your resolution, and your Moderator has all the privilege contended for; and Mr. Cooke's objection is nothing more than a quibble, the absurdity of which any man of plain understanding could not but perceive." But he would not be silenced, and proceeded to question and cross-question the deputation with a view to obtain some ground for his charge. It was only when the Synod gave unmistakable indications of dissatisfaction with his pertinacity, and that they considered his alleged ground of complaint only imaginary, that he at length gave way. The object of this attack was only too

apparent. Had he succeeded in imparting even a colourable show of ground for his charge, he would have injured the Institution, not only with the Synod, but with the Government, and endangered the grant so lately renewed.

This, however, was but an affair of outposts. The conduct of the Synod's Committee that had met to examine the testimonials of candidates for the Moral Philosophy chair next came under consideration; and Mr. Alexander Patterson, Jun., Clerk of Committee, read their minutes as before given (p. 288), stating their having mentioned six candidates as "eligible," solely on the ground of superior testimonials, and having requested the Moderator to vote for Mr. Carlile. "Then came the tug of war!" Dr. Hanna, Mr. Dobbin of Lurgan, and Mr. S. H. Rowan got frightened, and sought shelter from the coming storm under the first pleas—reasonable or otherwise—they could find, especially in trying to roll all the responsibility over on the broad shoulders of Montgomery. Montgomery briefly defended the actions of himself and the Committee, and repeated the words of Mr. Rowan regarding Mr. Ferrie's testimonials. Mr. Rowan made a futile endeavour to escape, and then exclaimed, amidst *strong disapprobation*—"I am convinced the electors in the Institution will never elect any but Arian Professors if they can." The late Moderator, Mr. White, stood firm, and vindicated the conduct of the Committee with no little dignity. Other members of Committee also behaved well; and the Clerk of Committee, Mr. Patterson, acted with special courage and determination; and, though Orthodox himself, he ably defended the whole procedure of Montgomery and the Committee in every particular—showing that on the strength of the testimonials *they were bound* to return Mr. Ferrie as "eligible," disregarding vague and unsubstantiated rumours against his Orthodoxy.

"Several questions were then asked of the members of the Committee, the object of which was to ascertain whether the Committee had not been previously in possession of the fact, that Mr. Ferrie is not Orthodox; and whether, in fact, it had not been so stated in the Committee. Nothing more was elicited than that some vague rumours

had been heard by some of the members, and that Mr. Montgomery had stated that he was not what he (Mr. M.) would call Orthodox. By this, however, it was understood that Mr. Montgomery meant that Mr. Ferrie is not an Arian. It was also asked whether Mr. Ferrie had not been proposed as a candidate for the Second Congregation in Belfast; in reply to which Mr. Porter asked whether the Committee had not heard that the most Orthodox man in this house had been a candidate for the same situation.* Dr. Thomson spurned the idea thrown out by another gentleman, that the electors would always choose an Arian Professor if they could. The supposition went on the idea that they would act contrary to their charter, and in violation of the most solemn stipulation. The statement could have been made only from the grossest ignorance on the matter."

Other significant questions were put, and the session closed amid the ominous gloom of the close impending tempest.

The Synod resumed at five o'clock, and Dr. Wright, the friend of moderation in former conflicts, bravely sought, even at the last moment, to anticipate and put a stop to the coming evil—to dam up the already bursting waters of strife. After some brief and sensible words, he said "he was sorry to see so much time wasted; and he could not conceive why the Committee should be censured, unless there was some ulterior object in view. He would without further preface move 'that the conduct of the Committee be approved of.'" This brought on the crisis, which it could not prevent. The long meditated attack must needs be developed at last; and *Henry Cooke* rose to move an amendment. The speech that followed was one of the most elaborately prepared and finished efforts of his life. In perusing it, we miss, for the most part, the familiar style of illustration, the clap-trap expressions, the commonplace sayings, which, in most of his extemporised, and many even of his studied orations, he was only too prone to employ. Nay more—one misses also much of the fervid oratory of his usual speeches, and the careless, even reckless mockery so often characteristic of his sarcastic wit.

* Referring to the well-known fact of the candidature of Mr. Cooke for the Second Congregation, Rosemary Street, Belfast.

Here all is changed. The style is lofty and dignified, the arrangement well considered, the language choice and pure, and the illustrations classical and appropriate. Here is no impetuous, heated attack—no fierce blaze of passionate resentment. On the contrary, all is cold and deliberate—cold as death, deliberate as a burial. It is the ice-chill of deadly animosity, the fixed and stony-hearted determination of revenge, the fell deliberate purpose of destruction. It is almost fearful to read this intellectually noble speech by the clear, cold, deadly light emitted from its every paragraph. We can easily fancy, as we read, that we see the cruel glitter of the eyes, the set purpose of the pale, rigid features, and the smile—the terrible smile—only too faithfully described by Montgomery in his speech on the following day. It all meant—death to the Institution, and no quarter to the Arians, as plainly as if spoken by him in so many words. It meant, that he believed that the time, the power, and the opportunity had come to accomplish his fell design, and that his triumph over his prostrate foes should be ruthless and complete. As this address was afterwards so elaborately reviewed by Montgomery, in his celebrated speech, as given in the Appendix to this volume,* it must suffice here to select but one brief specimen as illustrating its spirit and style:—

“Mr. Ferrie’s heterodoxy is established in the minds of some of the most eminent men in the Church of Scotland. But were there only a suspicion of it, he is not fit to fill the Moral Philosophy chair. Your Professor should be like Cæsar’s wife—above suspicion. Were he adverse to the faith, he has many means of spreading the religious virus, the moral miasma, without directly attempting to do so. It will not do, when the plague is raging, to send a Committee of some sort of physicians to fumigate the apartments, and to whitewash the walls. We must remove all for whom we are interested from the deadly contagion. . . . An Arian Professor will corrupt the fountain at its very source; the bitter waters will sap the foundations of our religion, and fill the soul with doubts and misgivings which would flow on to all eternity. An Arian Professor may do all this without directly violating his compact. . . . Thus the moral

* See Appendix E—“Synodical Speech at Lurgan,” 1829.

contagion would be going on, till, like the leprosy, it reached from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot."

He proposed, as an amendment to Dr. Wright's motion, the following resolutions :—

"That the duty of the Synod's Committee was, according to the Overtures of the Synod in 1825, to examine the testimonials of candidates, and to give their opinion with equal reference to the literary eminence and religious orthodoxy of the candidates.

"That, while we have not the most distant idea of exercising any undue influence in the election of Professors, we regret that the electors did not, in the late election, concur with the recommendation of the Moderator.

"That, as the Moral Philosophy chair is one of the greatest importance to the religious education of our students, we deem it expedient to appoint a Committee to ascertain the religious opinions of Mr. Ferrie, and to submit their report to the Synod, to be convened for the purpose."

Cooke was followed by Carlile, who made a long and most virulent attack upon the Institution—its Proprietors, Boards, and newly appointed Professor of Morals—and urged the Synod to remove their students. To characterise as bad taste and bad spirit an address of such a kind coming from the defeated candidate, would be utterly inadequate for its description. It was an unconcealed and reckless manifestation of bad temper, disappointment, and revenge. It is marvellous to think that a man of his reputation and position—who had a character to lose—should have thus wilfully thrown from him his advantages, and courted his own disgrace; and it affords grounds to suspect that his previous professions of moderation and piety were but a mask to conceal the ugly features beneath! (See p. 105.)

On the representations of Montgomery and others, the Synod agreed to hear the Institution deputies in reply. Dr. Samuel Thomson accordingly delivered an address—one of the most talented and effective speeches ever heard from a layman in the Synod of Ulster. Manly, straightforward, and eloquent, it was equally powerful as a defence of the Institution and an exposure

of the motives and misstatements of Cooke and Carlile. The following is an extract from the report of his speech :—

“Much had been said of a *fama clamosa*, with respect to Mr. Ferrie's religious principles. Such *fama clamosa* had never reached the ears of the electors ; and were he (Dr. Thomson) to insert in his dictionary the meaning of these words as employed on this occasion, he would translate them by the terms ‘calumny and slander.’ . . .

“Mr. Cooke (he said) disclaimed all wish to obtain an undue influence over the Institution. He had declared, on a former occasion, that all he desired for the Synod was to have the privilege of an *avisumentum* with respect to our proceedings. This word Dr. T. did not find in his dictionary. He presumed it was barbarous Latin, and conjectured its meaning was an *advice* or *opinion*. Oh! it was a soft, a honied word. But what did the proceedings of that day show to be intended by it? That the word *mandatum* should have been substituted ; ‘for it was, in fact, a domination, a command, which the Synod desired to assume over us ; and if we ventured to disobey, we were to be visited with grievous pains and penalties. The gentleman has compared the Institution to a stage-coach, in which they (the Synod) had agreed to take their passage. Sir, I accept the simile ; but what are the facts? Who built the coach? The inhabitants of Belfast and its neighbourhood have, with a spirit of liberality and patriotism which does them infinite credit, erected the Institution at an expense of nearly £20,000, from which they personally receive neither advantage nor profit. They have opened its doors for the education of Presbyterian Ulster, and what has Presbyterian Ulster contributed to its support? *Not a single hundred pounds from this whole Synod or its people*, with the exception, I believe, of *two congregations*. Now, sir, when the proprietors of the coach had continued to run it on its original and fundamental principles, until by the exertion they had exhausted themselves, so that they were not able to purchase even grease for the wheels ; then, sir, and not till then, did this Synod step in and say, we will abandon you unless you will consent to drive according to our views and our plans—nay more, we will insist on having the whole management of the coach in our own hands. Sir, this management we will never give them ; we will go on in amity and concord with them, if they please, to carry on and promote the great object for which the establishment was founded ; but our independence we will never surrender.”

Professor James Thomson next addressed the house. He entered a dignified protest against the spirit in which the Institution had been attacked; warned the Synod that they would be the first to feel the adverse effects of its injury or destruction; and vindicated, with the unanswerable logic of facts, the purity and propriety of Mr. Ferrie's election.

The Synod adjourned at eight o'clock, and the debate was resumed on the forenoon of the following day (Friday), when the Report states—"Mr. Cooke brought forward his resolutions, modified to a considerable degree from what they had been the evening before. *Mr. Morell* said, though he could not have agreed to them before, he would now support them in their amended form." The spirit of evil was abroad, and once again his peculiar instinct taught him that the opportunity had come when his interference would most contribute to stimulate its progress and fan its destructive flame!

It was early on that Friday afternoon when Montgomery claimed the attention of the house, and proceeded to deliver his last great address in the General Synod of Ulster—thought by many to be the greatest of his life. His appearance was eagerly awaited by both friends and foes. It was felt by all that the supreme hour of the great conflict had arrived. The increasing onslaughts of eight long years had culminated and, as it were, been concentrated in Cooke's present attack on the Institution, which invited and merited the reply that Montgomery alone could give.

For twelve years identified with the Institution, vitally interested in its progress, and an inmate of its walls—a member of its Court of Proprietors and Electors, and of its Board of Masters—the recognised representative of the broad unsectarian views of its liberal and enlightened founders and supporters—its powerful Synodical champion on many a hard-fought field—who but Montgomery should be its defender in this its most perilous hour? Personally concerned also in Mr. Ferrie's election, in the twofold capacity of a member of the Synod's Committee and an elector of the Institution, he was called on to meet and to repel

the charges so unsparingly hurled against both by Cooke and Carlile. But he had still other causes that called him to the front, and demanded the fullest and best exertion of his powers. Dearer still to him than the Institution and its affairs, was the independence—the spiritual freedom of his brethren and himself; and this he *well* knew it was the great object of his opponents to destroy, that against this the death-blow was in reality aimed through the side of the Institution. Their crafty foes resolved to anticipate the action of the Non-Subscribers by effecting a diversion, and attacking them in flank under cover of the Institution and the late election, rather than wait to meet the force of their "*Remonstrance*" face to face. The object of this was evident. If successful, it was expected that the prestige of the Remonstrance would be materially damaged, the strength of the Non-Subscribers wasted, their energies spent, their courage shaken, and their hopes dismayed. On the other hand, even if unsuccessful, time would have been gained, the Non-Subscribers compelled to adopt the dangerous and critical measure of changing their front in the presence of the enemy, the people's attention diverted from the main object of the controversy, and their patience wearied by the delay; and so, perhaps, through the chances of the war, the Orthodox leaders might be enabled to fight it out on the collateral issue of the Institution, and, if fortune favoured, to devise some plan of having the formidable "*Remonstrance*" pushed aside, or even of finally getting rid of it altogether. This has been applauded as "*superior generalship*" by some, condemned as base "*manceuvring*" by others; and, indeed, while it may deserve every credit as a display of deep and clever strategy, it might scarcely seem to be the course adapted for *upright* and *honourable* Christian ministers, dealing with their brethren of the same church, and assured of the soundness and purity of their own cause.

Montgomery well knew this policy of his adversaries, which, while it increased his responsibility, was not calculated to disarm his resentment. It is to be understood that nature had not

alone endowed him with superior capacity both of mind and body; she had also bestowed upon him a correspondingly large heart, with feelings proportionately deep and strong, and a power of giving them expression fully commensurate to their depth and intensity. It was, then, with the recollection of seven long years of persecution, injustice and wrong; of unmerited obloquy and social injury, inflicted through dastardly misrepresentations in public and in private; of incessant and unprovoked assaults against his Non-Subscribing brethren and himself, and all of liberty and truth they held most dear; of friendships, warm and true, broken for ever, kind hearts severed, pleasant companionships alienated and gone; of peace destroyed, ministerial dignity overborne, and charity fled; of his Lord and Master wounded in the house of His friends, the light of Gospel truth quenched in the thick darkness of human creeds, and the blood-bought freedom of the Presbyterian Church of his fathers prostrate under the feet of an ambitious spiritual dictator and his unscrupulous following; of the wide-spread moral desolation effected amongst the consciences of the weaker Synodical brethren; while the brave, the pure, and the true, whose only crime was fidelity to conscience and to God, were now to be compelled to dis sever themselves and their families from all certainty of earthly support, and to cast themselves upon the charity of a cold and changeful world—it was with recollections and reflections such as these burning at his heart that Montgomery rose to address himself to his heavy and unwished-for task. What wonder that his deep and bursting feelings should have found vent in a tide of indignant eloquence such as has rarely poured from human lips! What wonder that the scathing denunciations of his chafed and wounded spirit should have rolled like molten lava from the mountain upon his terrified and stricken opponents, withering and scorching as it came!

It has been represented that his address was a carefully prepared oration, with which he had come to the Synod ready provided in anticipation of Cooke's attack; that the

materials for his tremendous charges had been collected and arranged some time before, being the result of a deliberate search through Cooke's evidence and speeches for many years; and that the speech was delivered from elaborate notes. But all this is simply a mistake. The speech was entirely unpremeditated and unprepared, *till after the attacks of Cooke and Carlile the day before*, to which it was in every point intended as a *reply*. The only documents quoted—save references to the testimonials of the respective candidates at the late election—were Cooke's speech at Synod the previous year, which had been printed and circulated by himself, and was then in everyone's hand; and the famous "Fourth Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry," containing not only Cooke's evidence of 1825, but the History of the Origin, Principles, and Government of the Institution; with the whole mass of the valuable evidence collected (that of Montgomery himself amongst others) regarding its general progress, previous elections, and relations with the Synod and Government. For Montgomery, under the circumstances, and in the light of his twofold responsibility as an elector of the Institution and a member of the Synod's Committee, to have come to the Synod unprovided with this source of information and reference in case of need, would have been worse than folly. The "notes" referred to, though *not* "elaborate," and consisting merely of a few small pages of heads of his intended speech in the briefest and simplest form, are yet amply sufficient to prove the absence of premeditation, having been every word written the night before, or that very morning, referring expressly from first to last to the speeches of Cooke and Carlile, just then delivered, to which they are statedly intended to be a "reply." In fact, his speech was no cold, studied oration, far-fetched attack, or expression of simulated indignation. It was the honest outcome of the strongly roused feelings before described; and if the weapons employed were of the keenest and weightiest, they were those most naturally suggested by the speeches and acts of his adversaries, and they had only themselves to blame for placing them so ready to his hand.

The speech itself, as given in the Appendix,* is taken from the admirable report of the "Northern Whig."

To obviate the possible suspicion of undue partiality, the following description of this celebrated speech and its delivery is taken from a source the least likely of all others to be prejudiced in its favour. While containing some statements and suggestions entirely incorrect, it is on the whole a not ungenerous, and a beautifully expressed tribute of admiration, on the part of an opponent, to Montgomery's pre-eminent genius.†

"About one o'clock on Friday he rose to address the house. He took his stand below the Moderator, in front of the pulpit. His commanding figure was in full view of the members of Synod and the audience. Mr. Cooke sat in a pew close to him, and, next to the speaker, was the centre of observation. Mr. Montgomery held in his hand elaborate notes, and the ponderous Blue-book containing the Report of the Royal and Parliamentary Commissions. The moment he rose, he was hailed with enthusiastic cheers. It was clear that the vast majority of the audience belonged to his party. It was clear, too, from the triumphant looks of the Arian ministers, that they expected a victory. Mr. Montgomery did not disappoint them. In sentences measured, calm, persuasive, he related the history of the question at issue. The outline was accurate; but the narrative was so skilfully arranged—some parts brought out prominently, others all but excluded—that the Orthodox members of the Synod, and especially Mr. Cooke, appeared (!) to be relentless persecutors. He deprecated the introduction of the question into the Synod, and modestly apologised for the attitude which stern necessity compelled him reluctantly to assume:—"I am not in this case the aggressor: I am not conscious that I have been so in any other; but there is nothing inconsistent with the principles of the Gospel in repelling accusations against public or private character, and repelling them, too, with an open, honest indignation."

"Having fairly introduced the subject, he proceeded to assail Mr. Cooke. As he did so, his manner entirely changed. His utterance became more rapid; his voice, though still musical, became louder and deeper. His eyes flashed with indignation as he glanced from

* Appendix E—"Speech at Lurgan," 1829.

† "The Life and Times of Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D.; by J. L. Porter, D.D., LL.D.; London, 1871;" pp. 194-197.

time to time on his antagonist. Never, perhaps, in the annals of debate, never in the whole history of controversial warfare, were charges, grave and terrible, constructed with more consummate ingenuity, and pressed home with such overwhelming power of oratory. Referring to Mr. Cooke's attack upon the deputies from the Institution, and the smile which, it seems, lighted up his face as he made it, Mr. Montgomery said :—

“ I have heard of the vampire which fans its victim while it is sucking its blood, and such was the character of that smile. After the smile we had a laugh, but it was a laugh that foreran the dagger. I have, in common with other members of this house, been guilty of having been at the theatre ; and I recollect having once witnessed Kemble's personation of *Zangui* in the tragedy of “ *The Revenge*, ” and of having been struck with the expression of his countenance when, in the triumph of his feelings, he sets his feet on his fallen enemy. Such was the triumphant look with which Mr. Cooke seemed to regard the Institution, when he fancied it had fallen, and he was trampling it under his feet. But then we are told that this arises from a love of truth, and a regard for the interests of the Redeemer. This would be tolerable if men's conduct did not betray their motives.’

“ Mr. Montgomery's main point was to convict Mr. Cooke of contradiction in statements made at different times and for different purposes. He tried (!) to show that his sworn testimony before the Parliamentary Committee was directly at variance with his assertions in the Synod. In fact, if proved, Mr. Montgomery's charge amounted to perjury. He exerted all his eloquence and ingenuity to establish the proof. He held, in his hand the Parliamentary Blue-book. He quoted from it sentence after sentence. Raising the volume above his head, and waving it in the face of the astonished audience, he exclaimed again and again, with tremendous vehemence—‘ This, remember, is his sworn testimony—sworn upon the Holy Evangelists.’ Then taking each sentence, and comparing it with Mr. Cooke's statements made in the Synod, and fresh in the memories of all, he said :—

“ If Mr. Cooke have *sworn* the truth—yes, *if* Mr. Cooke have sworn the truth, it is impossible that his assertions made now before this Synod can be true. At that time, when the Parliamentary Commission sat, his great point was to put down the Institution. It answered a particular purpose then to give the Institution a stab by holding up the Orthodoxy of Glasgow Professors. Now, it answers a different purpose to deny their Orthodoxy ; and accordingly he denies it.’

“ His denunciations were absolutely appalling. They sent a thrill

of horror through the assembly. Once and again he turned, in the midst of his vehement philippic, and with voice, and gesture, and look, expressive of bitterest scorn, pointed to his adversary, who sat before him, calm and motionless as a statue, and exclaimed—‘Who or what is our accuser? Has the Almighty given any peculiar dignity of intellect or person to Mr. Cooke, that he should speak so of us?’

“Towards the close, the orator, with matchless skill (!), again changed theme and manner. The glance of scorn melted into a smile of benevolence; the voice of triumph gave place to the mellow tone of touching pathos; the flashing eye became dimmed by a gathering tear-drop; the lip, before curled with indignation, now quivered as if with suppressed emotion. In language of classic beauty, he alluded to the impending rupture of the Synod. He contrasted the stormy scenes of earthly conflict with the peace of Heaven:—

“‘I trust,’ he said, ‘that when we have laid aside the garb of frail mortality, when we have cast off the flesh with its passions, we shall all, friends and foes alike, meet in that happier and better world, wondering at our own sinful folly in having disputed, and excited strife, where all should have been harmony and love. I am weary of this contest. . . . If we cannot live together in peace, in the name of God let us part in peace. I have no fear as to consequences. Some of my brethren may be injured; but He that catereth for the sparrow will not let the children of the sufferers for conscience’ sake come to want. The cause of God and truth will finally prevail; and though I cannot approve of the individuals who excited them, I feel convinced that the storms which have raged among us will purify the Church, and have their results in the triumph of those opinions which I believe in my conscience to be true.’

“When he concluded, the Synod, the whole audience, seemed as if under the spell of a mighty magician. When the enchanting music of that marvellous oratory ceased, there was, for a time, a stillness as of death. The intense strain upon the feelings needed a moment of rest. Then thunders of applause burst from the assembly. They ceased, but were renewed again, and again renewed. The Arians were triumphant. The Orthodox thought their cause lost. Even the warmest friends and most enthusiastic admirers of Mr. Cooke hung their heads, or conversed in anxious whispers. Many supposed his character was ruined; all believed his influence was gone for ever.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION OF THE LURGAN MEETING.

1829.

Synod re-assembles—Carlile's Defence—Cooke's Reply—His Position—The Charges against him irrefutable—His Ability, Courage, and Dexterity—His apparent Emotion—Effects of his Speech—Montgomery refused the Right of Reply—Speaks to the Merits of the Case—His Successful Defence of Mr. Ferrie's Election—Cooke's Apology—Withdraws his Resolutions—Modifications adopted—Proposed Conference with Secession and Reformed Synods—Objects of this Policy—Protest of Montgomery, Porter, &c.—Evidence heard against Mr. Ferrie's Orthodoxy—Mr. Steen—Dr. Burns—Tedious Inquiry and Discussion—A Crafty Scheme of Cooke and Stewart—Unwary Non-Subscribers entrapped—Crowning Orthodox Manceuvre—Stewart effects a "Surprise"—Discussion on the "Overtures" postponed to Special Meeting at Cookstown—Opposition and Protest of Montgomery and Remonstrants—The last Cord severed—A merited Exposure—Final Proceeding of Synod—The Clough Memorials—Adoption of Morell's Amendment—Last Protest of Remonstrants—The Meeting concludes—Termination of Montgomery's Career in the General Synod of Ulster.

MONTGOMERY'S speech lasted for two hours and a-half. When he concluded, the Synod adjourned for dinner; and, on its re-assembling at half-past four, Carlile entered on his defence. It was a most weak and spiritless attempt, and powerless to relieve him from the unenviable position in which he found himself so justly placed.

After him rose Cooke, amid the breathless silence of the whole assemblage. The great majority of the Synod and the general audience by whom he was surrounded were still of his party; for though Lurgan was not just so favourable a battle-field for the Orthodox as Cookstown and Strabane, yet the difference of

locality could not possibly, as it has been represented, have sufficed to turn the scale of numbers against them, and the mass were still on his side. Yet well might friends and foes alike receive him in silence! Well might they ask themselves—What will he say? How can he meet the grave charges of Montgomery? His sworn testimony of 1825—his speech of yesterday, face to face; not to be denied, and not to be reconciled! What can all his matchless daring, his dexterity, his tact, his versatility, his resource, his eloquence avail to rescue him from this extremity? What a changed position from the pride and expectant triumph with which he cross-questioned the deputies and assailed the Institution the day before! But this subject deserved to be treated with the utmost candour. The Non-Subscribers and their sympathisers, in and out of Synod, felt that all his powers, great though they were, would not suffice for his rescue. They believed then, and they *still* retain the conviction—in common, they hold, with a great portion of the community to whom the facts were known—that the serious charges preferred by Montgomery, of grave inconsistency (*to use no stronger term*) on certain momentous occasions and subjects, were true and were distinctly proven; that they were not, and could not be refuted; and that they remain indelibly recorded against the name and memory of Cooke to this day.

But while regard for truth and honest conviction requires this statement, it does not preclude the record of their unaffected admiration for the transcendent ability of Cooke's reply. It was, in truth, a splendid display of genius. No language could too strikingly depict the magnificent strength of courage and resolution—of self-possession and self-control, observation, and direction—the perfect knowledge and gradual mastery of the feelings of his auditory—the ready tact, resource, dexterity, and histrionic talent—not to speak of the wondrous powers of memory and imagination, and the eloquence of speech, by which it was distinguished. Besides, having had little or no time for preparation, as a sustained effort of extemporised oratory, it was simply marvellous of its kind.

The situation was so peculiar as to be well worthy of some further study. He, the champion of Orthodoxy, and chosen leader of its hosts, whose uprising on every great occasion had been hitherto always hailed by the tumultuous applause of his supporters and not too scrupulous admirers—followers alike through good and evil, who had never yet failed him in his need—Henry Cooke now rises amid the ominous and gloomy silence of the Synod of Ulster, alike of friends and foes!

“But yesterday, and Cæsar stood against the world;
Now, none so poor as do him reverence!”

And yet he means, in two hours' time—nay, within an hour—to be Cæsar, standing against the world again, receiving the rapturous applause of the crowd, established as never before in the sympathy and admiration of his followers, having increased his influence to sevenfold strength, and, pursuing his relentless course, to exterminate his opponents, as if he had never received a check! It was no child's play he had set himself to accomplish. The task might well have daunted anyone feeling himself possessed of less than a giant's powers. The dread silence with which he was received was not for nought. It indicated charges of the most serious nature affecting his personal credit and reputation, supported not by hearsay, but by the conflicting testimony of his own words, his speech and his sworn evidence, recorded against him in black and white—charges the truth of which he must have known in his breast that it was hopeless for him to attempt directly to disprove or deny. But his resolution was dauntless, his perseverance amazing, well worthy of a better cause. His friend Dr. Morgan has happily described this his distinguishing characteristic:—“He would never give up. His vehemence and purpose to conquer gave him at least the appearance of victory.”* It is highly interesting to note the expedients which he successively employs in accomplishing his purpose—the deprecatory humility, half earnest, half mocking, of his introductory words; the solemnity of his opening; the

* “Life and Times of Dr. Morgan,” p. 48.

really picturesque and beautiful tribute to Montgomery's eloquence and power :—

“I rise, Moderator, to explain what I must call the misrepresentations of Mr. Montgomery. I rise under difficulty and fear. Never has the Synod or any other assembly witnessed such a display of what I shall best characterise by calling forensic eloquence. What its effect must have been I can well conceive; for even I, who was suffering under its stroke, could not help admiring it; and, as the dagger was driven home to my heart, I felt that it was directed by the hand of a master.”

His retorts in reference to Montgomery's similes of “Zanga” and the “vampire” are in his most characteristic style. Adverting to the former, he says :—

“Mr. Montgomery has reminded the house of his having gone to the theatre. I hope he tells the house so in order to show his repentance, and acknowledge the shame of showing such an example to the laity. With sorrow and contrition I confess that I myself have been foolish enough to do the same. He has given you a description of John Kemble and his spirit-stirring powers. He has described him as he played the part of *Zanga* in ‘The Revenge;’ and how he ensnared his victim in his toils; and how he smiled most diabolically, I suppose, when he had him in his power. Mr. Montgomery, no doubt, meant this as a compliment; and truly it was a noble one—to compare the masterly acting of John Kemble with the conduct of one of your humble ministers. It is one of the last compliments, however, which I would wish to receive—to be compared with an actor.”

As he proceeds, he throws in, tentatively as it were, a few sarcastic touches, as if to feel the pulse of his audience. Then having got them once more to laugh with him, he makes a high-wrought appeal against Montgomery's personalities on the score of religion, “ministerial friendship,” and “Unity of the Spirit;” declaring he “will not follow the example,” though having just been engaged in doing so, with no apparent disrelish for the occupation. He continues :—

“But I pass from these personalities; and when I entreat Mr.

Montgomery never to repeat them, I tell him that he never attempted to grapple with the question at issue: he never even dared to touch it. He gave us a specimen of that eloquence which is sometimes soft as the evening breezes, or still and awful as the dread hour when the vampire walks abroad; and anon thundering like the cataract, and splendid as the blaze of noonday. But though he had a plain question before him, he steered clear of it: he boxed every point of the compass but that in which the true north lay. While I was writhing under Mr. Montgomery's chastisement, it was a cause of congratulation to me, that if I was to be the victim of his eloquence, I could say, like one of old, I had died a noble death. I, even I, the victim, rejoiced at the giant powers that were put forth to immolate me. I felt a joy, like the joy of the victim, as it is led to the sacrifice amidst the splendour of a pageant. But I had one cause of regret; I said, there is a man with eloquence sufficient to make the worse appear the better cause, yet he dare not touch the question. The great question is, Shall we send our students to an Arian Professor?"

This was not in reality the question at all, though he sought to make it appear so. The real question was, as to the conduct of the Synod's Committee and the Institution Board, in regard to Mr. Ferrie's election from the testimonials he had received—the allegation that he was an Arian resting solely, for so far, on the unsupported assertions of Cooke and Carlile. He then directed himself to Montgomery's minor charges and arguments, which admitted of more discussion, and where his own recorded words did not come so directly against him; and with these he dealt long and energetically, until he had, as it were, rehabilitated himself into something of his accustomed position with his audience. He then gradually approached the difficult point, and having skilfully prepared the way, he first took up the most objectionable sentence in his speech of the day before, which was in direct conflict with his sworn testimony; and, with a coolness and daring almost incredible, he deliberately altered the sentence, so as to render it comparatively innocuous, and insisted that such was the way in which he had spoken it, though materially differing from the words as taken down on the previous day from his own lips both by Montgomery and the reporter of the

“Northern Whig.”* And on this amended sentence, amended after the charge had been made, he founded his subsequent attempted refutation. He at length reached the question of his sworn evidence, as contradictory of the statement aforesaid, to which he adverts in the following terms:—

“Mr. Montgomery has been pleased to take up my evidence before the Commissioners, and he has accused me of contradicting myself on oath. I stand before this house charged with the foul crime of perjury. I am a poor man. I have a large family. I have nothing to depend on for their maintenance but my profession; and if my character be taken from me, my profession falls to the ground. I have still some shreds of reputation that I wish to preserve. Oh! may it never be your fate, sir, or that of any one here, to be under so foul, so base a charge.”

At this point he stopped, apparently overcome by uncontrollable emotion. He covered his face with his hands, appeared to give way to his feelings, and to be affected to tears. After an interval, he raised his face, bearing traces of agitation, and seemed gradually to recover his self-command, as he thus continued—raising himself to his full height, and exhibiting the powers of his splendid voice and animated action, as he approached his climax:—

“You will pardon me for showing feelings that I cannot repress.

* The amended sentence runs thus—“*There is not one Orthodox man that testifies to Mr. Ferrie's Orthodoxy.*” On which the “Whig” remarks in a note to the report:—“This is the form which Mr. Cooke afterwards gave to the sentence himself. In our notes it stood thus:—‘*There is not one Orthodox man who said one word about him.*’ We cannot say positively which is the form of expression that was used. The impression left on our mind was that Mr. Cooke gave the sentence the latter form, and did not connect with it any such qualification as he afterwards said was attached to it. This impression has been strengthened by the inferences drawn from the latter part of Mr. Cooke's speech, the gist of which went to prove that Mr. Ferrie *had no testimonials whatever* to his Orthodoxy. With this object the frequent reiteration that Mr. Ferrie had not the testimonial of any *Orthodox* individual to his Orthodoxy is almost totally inconsistent—at least it is so unnecessary as to be an oversight which few practised debaters are in the habit of committing.—ED. ‘Whig.’” When it is considered that the “sworn evidence” went to prove that there were *none but Orthodox ministers in Glasgow*, the import of the above alteration will become apparent.

You will sympathise with a man that is charged with the crime of absolute perjury; and you will bear with him as he assails the foul impeachment—as he blows to atoms the vile production—and smites the atrocious calumny with the talisman of truth.”

The effect was irresistible; and re-acting on their late depression, sent the mass of his audience nearly wild with enthusiastic applause. “Richard was himself again.” Their old leader was once again before them, more vigorous than ever, and still abler than before to repel every attack, and lead them on to victory over the Arians and every other foe! How wonderful is the power of the orator! All this sudden change effected by what? Not by the power of his rebutting arguments—he had only *promised* them, he had not given one as yet—but solely by the exhibition of some little emotion, and the utterance of a few words with appropriate gesture and delivery! Was his emotion genuine or feigned? Who can tell? But if genuine, it was one of the most timely visitations of feeling that ever came to the aid of a public speaker; if feigned, it was simply magnificent—proving him to have been a potent master of that very art which a few moments before he had affected to despise. It is stating only a well-known truth to say that it was generally regarded by the Non-Subscribers and by many others in the latter point of view, and “*Cooke's Crocodile Tears*” soon became a bye-word in the North.* But what mattered it, so long as he found himself once again the ruler of the Synod—the popular idol? He had achieved his purpose, and he well knew that any pleas he might choose to advance against Montgomery's charges, however weak and faulty, would now be sure to be accepted and maintained as conclusions “strong as Holy Writ.” Accordingly, in the latter portion of his speech, he gave his great and varied

* The “Northern Whig” of July 13, 1829, in its “Notes on the Synod,” thus adverts to the circumstance:—“It suited Mr. Cooke's purpose to make an appeal to the feelings of his auditory, and he did so with a talent which we could not help admiring, even when we saw through the stratagem. We have seen our first-rate actors far oftener than either Mr. Montgomery or Mr. Cooke; but we are free to admit, that we never witnessed a finer specimen of *acting* than when Mr. Cooke attempted to weep at the charge of perjury, but could not accomplish it. He could not accomplish it, for no such charge was brought against him.”

powers full play, and seemed to revel in the exuberance of their unrestrained exercise. It was indeed a wonderful performance. While as a defence it fails to satisfy the intellect and conscience, as a display of oratory it captivates the imagination and charms the sense. But the orator forgot not his main purpose; and finding his troops once more well in hand, he soon left the defensive, and led them on to fresh onsets on the Arians and the Institution. It was little wonder that, with minds so well inclined, the Orthodox majority allowed themselves to be carried away by his power; and that, when he sat down at the end of two hours, the house rang with repeated acclamations in celebration of his presumed victory. Immediately he had concluded, the house adjourned.

The discussion was resumed next morning (Saturday) at ten o'clock. It has been represented by many Orthodox writers that the foregoing speech of Cooke at Lurgan virtually decided the "Arian Controversy," as they call it, in the Synod of Ulster; that the Arians from that moment abandoned the conflict, and eventually retired without even an attempt at renewing the struggle. One writer, looked upon by many as an authority, states, in reference to the opinion of the Synod regarding Cooke's speech, that—

"Mr. Montgomery was constrained to bow to the decision of the auditory, and during the remainder of the sittings of the court did not again appear inclined to measure his strength with the Goliath of Orthodoxy." *

The nature of the "constraint" put upon him, as well as the incorrectness of the statements generally, will be seen from the Report of the Synodical proceedings subsequent to Cooke's speech. On the debate being resumed, Stewart addressed the house, said that they had "yesterday witnessed two of the most brilliant, but *inconvenient* speeches that had ever been heard either in the Synod or the Senate;" and in anticipation of Montgomery's evident purpose of replying, proposed that neither of the

* Dr. Killen's "Continuation of Reid's History of Presbyterianism in Ireland," Volume III., p. 564.

parties should be again heard in explanation or reference to their previous speeches, though he admitted this was scarcely fair to Montgomery. Dr. Wright concurred, and—

“ Said that it was too bad to give a licence to two individuals to assail each other.

“ Mr. Montgomery called Dr. Wright to order—he had not spoken but in self-defence. ‘ A worm (said he) will turn if it is trod upon, and I am something more than a worm. I have a right to be heard in point of order. I ask you, is it fair, after allowing public bodies and individuals to be most wantonly assailed, and the impression to remain for a whole night on the public mind—then, after you have allowed the assailant to vindicate himself, and to charge others with misstatements, to refuse them an opportunity of clearing themselves? Though the dispute is personal, it will not do much mischief, and it will show what kind of spirit has been presiding for some years over Presbyterian Ulster. I wish you to allow me to substantiate the statements I made yesterday, which I believe myself able to do. I am very chary about my character and veracity. Some of the scenes of yesterday are not very creditable; but, if you refuse to hear me, I shall put the matter in black and white before the public, and the Synod may now choose its course.’

“ A good deal of discussion now took place about the point of order. At last Mr. Montgomery said that he was perfectly willing to let the cause and his allegations go before the world as they stood; for such was the spirit of the Synod, that he thought it probable he would never again trouble it with a speech of five minutes—not even one.”

After some explanatory remarks as to the general charge of personality in the past discussion, Cooke expressed his willingness that Montgomery should be heard, and waived his right of reply, except a casual explanation. It being ruled that the speakers should confine themselves to the merits of the case, Montgomery, and Messrs. Davis (Banbridge), Mulligan (Strabane), Hay (Derry), and others addressed the house in defence of the Committee and Mr. Ferrie's election. Mr. Hay said “ it was completely a jury case, and it should be tried according to the laws of ordinary evidence. He brought forward one of Mr. Ferrie's testimonials—a letter from Dr. Gibb—on reading which

any twelve men in a jury-box would give a verdict of not guilty." Upon this a hot altercation took place between Cooke and Montgomery, with other members of the Committee, the former urging a number of objections in a breath against the production of the letter—that it was but a copy—that it was dated some years before—that there was no evidence of the Orthodoxy of its author, &c. Montgomery, however, persisted, and read the letter, *which had been previously read before the Committee.*

“Speaking of Mr. Ferrie, Dr. Gibb says—‘His sermons are striking and instructive, his principles sound, and his manner of delivery ardent and impressive;’ and he ‘had no doubt,’ that wherever Mr. Ferrie might be settled, he ‘would prove *a most useful minister of the Gospel.*’ This was in 1824; but at a later date, in a postscript, Dr. Gibb says—‘I have continued my acquaintance with Mr. Ferrie up to the present date, and *in every respect* I confirm the above testimonial.’ This is signed ‘Gavin Gibb,’ and dated in 1829. Testimonials to the same effect were read from Dr. William Muir of Edinburgh, and Dr. Taylor, both dated in 1824; and in a postscript to that of the latter, in 1826, his opinion of Mr. Ferrie continues ‘in all respects the same,’ and his discourses are characterised as inculcating ‘Scriptural, sound religion, in *all its parts.*’ There were several other letters to the same effect, which Professor Thomson had on Thursday; and, amongst the rest, one from Dr. M’Turk, who was eulogised so highly yesterday.

“Mr. Cooke—‘Never has a Synod been so treated by a Committee as we have been. Had these letters been produced, you should never have had these resolutions from me. I cannot suppose that the Committee intended to entrap us; but I declare to you that I stand here informed for the first time that there were any such documents as these in existence. It is most extraordinary, and it does put those who have been arguing against Mr. Ferrie into a most awkward situation. If I had not heard from any quarter a charge against him, I declare that, on that evidence, I would not have hesitated for a single moment.’ Why did they object to Mr. Ferrie at all?” (“Northern Whig” Report.)

Acquainted, as they must have been, with these proceedings, and contrasting these humbling concessions of the Orthodox leader with his two preceding speeches, it is extraordinary how even the most partisan historians could have represented Montgomery and his party as succumbing in silence to the

victorious power of Cooke's oratory, and abandoning all further efforts!

After some further conversation, "Mr. Cooke said *he was willing to give up the three first resolutions!*—*i.e.*, those reflecting upon the conduct of the Synod's Committee and the Institution electors respectively, which had formed the main theme of his two great attacks; but still (he said) the question is, shall we continue our students under his care with the evidence before us?" Another resolution was then drawn up, a modification and amendment of the third just withdrawn, and was adopted and passed by the Synod. This, as it appears in the minutes,* presents a striking contrast to the series with which Cooke inaugurated the debate on the previous Thursday (p. 302).

"Resolved—That whilst we entertain the highest respect for the Managers and Visitors of the Belfast Institution, and admit that in the late election of a Professor to the chair of Moral Philosophy they acted strictly within the limits of the regulations existing between them and us; yet, from certain doubts that have arisen respecting the religious tenets of the individual elected, we think it right to appoint a Committee of our body, to communicate with the Managers and Visitors of the Institution, and to confer with the Secession and Reformed Synods on this subject, so important to the interests of the Presbyterian Churches in this kingdom, and to report the result of these communications and conferences to the Synod."

The minutes further record that "against that part of the foregoing decision which relates to the appointment of a Committee for the purposes specified, Messrs. Porter, Montgomery, F. Blakely, and several others members protested." In relation to the members protesting, the "Whig" reports Montgomery's expression of opinion as follows:—

"Mr. Montgomery objected to the conference with the other Synods. The converging rays of these bodies ought not to be brought to bear on the Institution. By doing so, said he, you are but inviting them to blow the coal."

* Minutes of Synod, Lurgan, 1829, p. 49.

His superior insight enabled him to penetrate the twofold object of this clever stroke of policy—that, under the plea of regard for sound Orthodoxy, the Calvinistic party of the Synod sought to draw to their aid two other Calvinistic bodies, one of them *hitherto* friendly to the Institution, and by their combined influence endeavour to effect the coercion of the Institution Boards, which they had been unable to accomplish themselves; while, at the same time, by originating a system of joint action with these bodies for the promotion of supposed common Calvinistic interests, way might be made for a closer juncture and ultimate union with one or both on the Calvinistic basis, as a counterpoise for the approaching separation from them of the Non-Subscribing and Arian party, which the persevering and compulsory proceedings of the leaders of the Orthodox majority had now rendered inevitable. It was, as it were, the feeler put forth to try the ground for this ulterior movement—the first step of that policy which had its accomplishment in the subsequent ecclesiastical union of the General and Seceding Synods, and the formation of the General Assembly in 1840.

But though compelled to yield, as we have seen, in regard to the action of the Committee and the electors, and to admit Mr. Ferrie's eligibility on the strength of his testimonials, Cooke had pledged himself in concluding his reply "to prove to the Synod, by *viva voce* evidence, that Mr. Ferrie was not only an Arian, but a Socinian—a rank Socinian." And although he would apparently have been glad to get out of it after the passing of the preceding resolution, he felt that the Synod and the public would hold him to his pledge, and he accordingly offered his proposed evidence, but with manifest reluctance, suggested that the house should take it for granted, and at length declared—"I tell you I shall not produce it but *in answer to the call of this house*, for I am but a poor man, and shall not expose myself to the consequences of a lawsuit." In the long discussion which ensued on the question of its production, the parties seemed in some respects to have changed sides—Messrs. Porter, Montgomery, and Dr. Wright insisting on its being given, in which

they were joined by Mr. Stewart, while Mr. Carlile vehemently and repeatedly opposed it. He said that—

“*Doubts* of Mr. Ferrie’s Orthodoxy are sufficient, and doubts exist independently of the evidence, which goes simply to prove that there are *doubts*. He protested against the proceeding, for what was this evidence? It went to do nothing but establish the existence of *doubts* in Scotland as to Mr. Ferrie’s Orthodoxy. Ought we to go into evidence to prove that a *doubt* has existed? It is the greatest farce, the most monstrous thing that has ever been heard of.”

“Mr. Montgomery proposed to pay his share, in common with the other members of Synod, to secure Mr. Cooke against the consequences of adducing the evidence. Mr. Ferrie was a man with a large family. His character had suffered extremely by having been bandied about in the discussions of that body; and if it should go to the world that he was a Socinian, his prospects were for ever ruined. There was not a congregation in Scotland or in Ireland that would receive him. And, as a matter of justice to an absent man, the Synod was bound to hear the evidence on which so weighty a charge against him rested.”

“The evidence having been ordered, Mr. Cooke called forward and examined Mr. Steen, a youth who had attended Glasgow College, and who, as we understood, is either a licentiate or a student in connection with the Synod of Ulster.” His evidence was of the poorest description; and on being asked on cross-examination, “Was it from what he said, you concluded Mr. Ferrie not Orthodox?” He replied—“Sometimes from what he said, and sometimes from what he did not say; but chiefly from that silence which we have heard so eloquently described.” And again, in the reply to the question, “How did you form your opinion from what you did not hear?” “It was from analogy. *His silence spoke conviction to my mind.*” The other and main witness was Dr. Burns of Paisley, who, it was afterwards ascertained, had given a certificate to a rival and defeated candidate and had interested himself greatly for him. He admitted, on cross-examination, that he “had never heard of Mr. Ferrie being charged with being either Arian or Socinian, or of his having preached doctrines so called, or that could be so interpreted—that he was understood to be *anti-Evangelical*; but that term in

Scotland was quite consistent with the speculative belief and formal preaching of the Trinity and the other doctrines of Orthodoxy." *Mons parturit, nascitur ridiculus mus!*

The reception of this lengthened evidence, and the long and tedious discussions by which it was preceded and followed, occupied the Synod till late on Saturday afternoon. Is it not an allowable supposition, in view of what subsequently took place, that this whole affair of the evidence against Mr. Ferrie, brought forward after the debate had really closed by passing the resolution, was part of a deep-laid scheme of Cooke and Stewart to *pass the time*, into which Carlile was not admitted, but into which the unsuspecting Non-Subscribers were entrapped? It looks suspiciously like it. Numbers of the members of Synod, lay and clerical, especially of the Non-Subscribers, naturally wearied and probably disgusted, had left the Synod for their homes or their Sabbath duties—no doubt most of them intending to return on the following Monday, when it was expected that the all-important discussion upon the "Overtures" of 1828 would commence. Those who remained in the house were wearied alike in mind, body, and spirit by the scenes of unprecedented excitement and the protracted debates of the week, and were no doubt longing for the Sabbath rest. It was then that Stewart rose—to the utter astonishment of all but the few who were in the secret—and

"Submitted that, as there were many bills to come before the house in the course of next week, it would be totally impossible at the present meeting to enter on the important question of the 'Overtures' of last year. He accordingly moved—

" 'That a special meeting of Synod shall be held in Cookstown, on the third Tuesday of August next, at ten o'clock forenoon, for the purpose of considering the Overtures in pages 32 and 33 of the minutes of last year; of inquiring into the present circumstances and constitution of this church; and of receiving the report of the Committee appointed to communicate with the Managers and Visitors of the Institution, and with the Secession and Reformed Synods.'

"Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Porter, and others, strongly opposed the postponement of these questions, on the ground that it was treating

with injustice both themselves and those who adhered to them. After a great deal of discussion, the first question put was, ‘*Postpone* the consideration of the Overtures or not?’ The roll was called, and ‘postpone’ carried. Another question was then put, ‘Shall the special meeting be held in Lurgan or Cookstown?’ The roll was called, and Cookstown carried.

“Against both these decisions the following ministers and elders protested:—N. Alexander, William Porter, S. Watson, Henry Montgomery, Fletcher Blakely, John Mitchel, John Mulligan, Arthur Nelson, James Lunn, John Alexander, Isaac William Glenny.”*

Thus was rudely severed the last strand of the cord that bound together Subscribers and Non-Subscribers in the ecclesiastical connexion of the General Synod of Ulster! Putting aside all that had gone before, the last act of the majority was not well done. Against all the laws of chivalrous combat, it was a foul and coward blow—a *coup d’etat* as wanting in the spirit of justice and fair play, as proving that the last spark of ministerial and Christian brotherhood so long professed was now extinguished. It left nothing for the Non-Subscribers to do but to hasten their departure, and to shake off the dust from their feet for a testimony against them!

“At half-past five o’clock the Synod adjourned till twelve on the ensuing Monday.”

The “Northern Whig” thus refers to “the *manœuvring* which led to the postponement of the discussion of the Overtures.”

“As the time for this important discussion drew nigh, it was found that the Remonstrants had been upon the alert; that they were likely to muster strong in numbers, and that the situation of the place where the Synod was to assemble would induce many ministers and elders to attend, who, though they loved Orthodoxy much, loved fair dealing, candour, and honesty more. It was, therefore, predetermined that the discussion should be removed to a place where, unfortunately, political feelings were warm and high; by the cherishing of which, contrary to their conscientious and oft-n declared convictions, certain supporters of the Overtures have increased their popularity with the ignorant mob. It was predetermined to defer the discussion till a time when this

* Minutes of Synod, Lurgan, 1829, p. 50.

unhappy feeling would be roused to its full height, and an opportunity afforded of completing designs which had not been fully matured. We stop not to argue at length on the impolicy, the injustice, of deferring the consideration of the late Overtures for nearly two months longer; we stop not to complain that the minority, who were in fact coming forward to the bar of the house, to supplicate a hearing of their grievances, were not allowed that privilege which is granted to the humble and the vile; we stop not to complain of the policy which would give two months longer to the spirit of faction to stalk through the congregations of the Synod, and excite hostility and hatred of each other, where peace and love should preside; but we wish to point the finger of public reprobation at the measures that had predetermined that the minority should not be allowed a hearing in Lurgan on the present occasion. Common justice would have thought that the course of events would have been waited for, and that an additional grievance would not have been imposed upon the aggrieved. It was for some time stoutly denied that any scheme had been premeditated for deferring the discussing of the Overtures; but Mr. Stewart acknowledged, when pressed upon the matter, that before knowing how the business might issue as to other matters, he should at least strive to have the plan adopted which was finally carried into effect. On this plan of injustice we make no comment, but leave it to others to draw their conclusions from this specimen of the manner in which ministers act towards their brethren."

One more act of this celebrated Synod remains to be noticed. It not only determined the Remonstrant separation, but witnessed the commencement of those bitter *congregational* struggles, which ensued on the division of the Synod, occupying the attention of both parties for several years, bringing manifold trials and persecutions to the Remonstrants in the first instance, but the forerunners of a glorious and triumphant deliverance in after time.

On Tuesday afternoon, a memorial came before the Synod from the session and a majority of the congregation of Clough, County Down, in connexion with the Bangor Presbytery, stating that their late pastor, the Rev. William Campbell (a well-known New Light man) had taken for his temporary assistant the Rev. David Watson, licentiate of the Synod (formerly an assistant

teacher under Montgomery in the Institution); that, on Mr. Campbell's death, the Presbytery, by request of the congregation, took a poll for Mr. Watson, which wanted only a few votes of a Synodical majority in his favour; that various unworthy expedients, adverted to in the memorial, were employed by parties extern to the congregation to prevent Mr. Watson's election; that many admitted having voted against him, misled by the misrepresentations of his opponents; and that memorialists appealed against the poll, and prayed for a re-hearing of Mr. Watson. A counter-memorial was presented from certain other members of the congregation, detailing objections to the acts of the Bangor Presbytery—asserting the decline of the congregation under a succession of Arian pastors—praying to be placed under a Committee of Synod, and to have an Orthodox minister settled in the congregation.

“After hearing commissioners on both sides at full length, and after approving of the conduct of the Bangor Presbytery, it was moved by Dr. Wright, that the congregation be continued under the Bangor Presbytery, and the prayer of the majority for a second hearing of the Rev. David Watson be granted. On this motion, *Mr. Morell* moved, as an amendment, that the congregation be put under a Committee of Synod. On this motion it was ruled that the Bangor Presbytery be not permitted to vote; by which exclusion the amendment was carried by a majority of seven. This decision of Synod in granting the prayer of the minority, in opposition to the majorities both of the Presbytery and the congregation, occasioned a protest from different respectable ministers and elders, and has justly excited the indignation of the injured parties, as well as the regret of all the friends of Presbyterianism.”

Sixteen ministers and four elders signed this protest. It was the last personal act of the Remonstrants in the Synod of Ulster. On Wednesday, 8th July, when the business of the famous Synod of Lurgan came to a end, they left, to return no more. Thenceforward their accustomed place remained vacant.

Montgomery's career in the Synod of Ulster was closed. He had entered it in 1809, a youth of twenty-one. For twenty years he had attended its every meeting, identified himself with

its interests as a Christian Church, and faithfully devoted his time, energies, and talents to secure its welfare and promote its progress. He had ever willingly accepted a large share in its labours and duties, taken a leading part in its deliberations, and exercised a distinguished influence upon its decisions. From the first, he had consistently upheld, in the sight of all men, with his brethren, now called Remonstrants, those principles of Christian Truth and Liberty which they believed vitally to belong to the Presbyterian Church of their fathers; but which now, in the changed aspect of affairs, were no longer allowed a resting-place in the very house which had been formerly erected for their special home. Yet the growing power and machinations of their opponents, which at length procured the condemnation of their opinions and the extrusion of themselves, only seemed to raise the character and principles of the Remonstrant ministers and their people higher in the esteem of the discerning and unprejudiced portion of the community; while they enabled Montgomery to command the respectful admiration alike of friends and foes, and through the brilliant displays of pre-eminent oratorical genius which they called forth, to terminate his Synodical career in a blaze of personal renown, and win for himself an elevated niche in the temple of fame.

CHAPTER XIX.

HISTORY OF THE REMONSTRANT SEPARATION.

1829.

First Act of Separation—Clough Congregation—Conference of Non-Subscribers—Birth of Remonstrant Church—Described by Montgomery—Opportune Support—Dr. Henry Ware, Jun.—Action of Institution Proprietors—Conferences of Orthodox Synods—Settlement of Mr. Ferrie's Case—Special Meeting of Synod—Absence of Remonstrants—Attendance analysed—The "Remonstrance" presented—Signatures examined—"Address" of Remonstrants also presented—Composed by Montgomery—The ADDRESS—Orthodox Discussion on Overtures—The "Heart-probing Committee" re-appointed—Cooke's Misrepresentations—Their Refutation—His premature Disclosures respecting *Regium Donum*—Stewart to the Rescue—Resolutions of Synod regarding Remonstrant Congregations—Closing Scene—Rev. Wm. Porter resigns the Clerkship—Conference between Synodical and Remonstrant Committees—Articles of Separation—Dunmurry and Moneyrea Congregations leave the Synod—Resolutions of the Former—Vote of Thanks to Montgomery.

THE first act of separation was that of the congregation of Clough. Indignant at the treatment of their memorial by the Synod, at their having been removed from the friendly charge of the Presbytery of Bangor, and placed under the command of a hostile Committee of Synod, and at the surreptitious inroads being constantly made upon them by Synodical disturbers of the peace, the majority of the congregation passed a series of resolutions in their meeting-house, on the 19th July, protesting against the Synod's violation of the common rights and Presbyterian privileges of themselves and their Non-Subscribing brethren, detailing their special congregational grievances, and resolving as follows:—

"That we apply to the *Presbytery of Antrim* to take us under their care until some ultimate arrangement, in which we can conscientiously

jeu, be adopted by those of our brethren who concur with us in disapproving of the late proceedings of the Synod. That we take this decided step, not as standing pledged to any peculiar views of controverted doctrine, but simply in defence of our recognised principles of Protestantism.”

A copy of these resolutions was sent to the Moderator of Synod, and congregational commissioners to present their memorial to the Presbytery of Antrim, praying to be taken into their connexion. A few days after, that Presbytery met, agreed to receive the congregation, and to supply them with preaching till a stated minister should be appointed.

On Thursday, 30th July, a conference of Presbyterian ministers and laity, representing the Remonstrants and Non-Subscribing portion of the Synod, took place in the Royal Hotel, Belfast, to take into consideration the position in which they were placed by the decisions of the Synod, and their duty under the circumstances. Amongst other influential lay representatives attending were—James Andrews of Comber, Henderson Black of Dunmurry, James Montgomery of Aghnacloy, Isaac W. Glenly of Newry, James Boyd of Lurgan, William M^cWilliams of Banbridge, Daniel Blow of Templepatrick, Alexander Montgomery of Killead, Esqs.; Dr. Stewart of Moneyrea, Dr. Patrick of Ballymena; and of ministers—the Revs. John M^cCance of Comber, Robert Orr of Killead, and John Orr of Portaferry, with the seventeen ministers who afterwards formed the original roll of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. The “Northern Whig” report adds—“There were different gentlemen at the conference, and the dinner which followed it, whose names we could not collect.” The report states that—

“After prayer, many of the gentlemen present expressed their opinion on the unpleasant and unhappy state of the General Synod, and lamented that the changes and innovations, which had been recently and hastily introduced into that body, made it imperative on many ministers and congregations to stand forward in vindication of their former privileges as Protestant Dissenters. Though the meeting was composed of persons entertaining different religious views, yet the

same feeling seemed to beat in every breast, the *right of ministers* to enter the pulpit free from the shackles of any *human authority*, with the *Bible alone* as their text-book; and the *liberty of each congregation* to choose for themselves such a pastor as a majority of the members might think best qualified to promote their religious instruction."

The meeting and its preceding circumstances were thus graphically referred to by Montgomery himself, in his great speech in the Remonstrant Synod, in March, 1857 (he spoke in the presence of Revs. Fletcher Blakely and David Whyte, two of his original Remonstrant brethren):—

"Truly we did live in 'perilous times.' Mortal pen could not describe the clamour which was raised and the means which were employed to destroy us. My heart bled for many a poor minister, whose large family and bigoted people compelled him to bend before the storm! Even those of firmer purpose were irresolute as to the course which they ought to pursue; and my good friend, Fletcher Blakely, must well remember the solemn—I had almost said the awful—meeting which we held in Belfast in 1829. The crisis of our fate had arrived. By failing to leave the Synod the preceding year, in the vain hope of effecting some good by remonstrance, several ministers and congregations that might have been saved had sunk under clamour and intimidation; and, when farther delay was suggested, I saw distinctly a similar result awaiting us. In the deepest distress, therefore, and under a sense of responsibility the most solemn which I ever experienced, I addressed my valued fathers in the ministry, deploring the straits to which very many of them were reduced—urging them not to bring utter ruin upon themselves and their families by seceding, as they would not personally be compelled to disavow their principles—but declaring that, if I were to retire *alone*, I should at once separate *myself* from the General Synod. A pause of a moment ensued—the most solemn through which I ever lived—and then instantaneously, as if by a Divine impulse, sprang up William Porter, F. Blakely, N. Alexander, R. Campbell, W. Glendy, J. Lunn, and ten other undaunted Christian ministers, with several lay elders, not only to re-echo my sentiments and determination, but to enforce them by the fervid eloquence of martyrs. Sir, I never witnessed a scene so exciting, an enthusiasm so noble and so touching. My heart swelled with emotion, my eyes overflowed with tears of joy and sympathy; and hands were grasped and wrung in token of unutterable Christian esteem and love.

Oh! 'it was a day much to be remembered' for itself—for its glorious triumph of principle over expediency—and specially to be remembered by me; for I am sure Mr. Blakely will bear me out in saying that, only for the events of that day, the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster would never have existed! No doubt, three, four, or, at the utmost, five congregations, would have been added to the Presbytery of Antrim; but the remainder, under the fatal influences of delay, clamour, misrepresentation, and the power of landlords and agents, would have become absorbed in the General Synod. That memorable day, Moderator, was the day of our *birth*, in 'an upper room' of the Royal Hotel!"*

It was at this juncture that the Remonstrants received a timely note of encouragement from a gratifying quarter. A few days after the conference, the Rev. John Porter (nephew of the Rev. William Porter) was ordained by the Presbytery of Antrim to the ministry of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, vacant by the death of Mr. M'Ewen. Messrs. Porter, Montgomery, Blakely, and other Remonstrants took part in the ordination, and afterwards attended and delivered addresses at the dinner. Amongst the guests was the distinguished American Unitarian minister, Dr. Henry Ware, Jun., Professor of Harvard University, then on a visit to Europe; who, having replied to the toast of his health, again rose (after listening to a touching address from Mr. Porter in reference to the Synodical persecutions of the Remonstrants, and himself personally as Clerk of Synod), and spoke these words of good cheer:—

"In that part of New England from which I lately parted, the people have passed through scenes very similar to those which Mr. Porter has described, and which I understand, from other sources, have just occurred here. We were visited with similar storms of a persecuting nature; but our Church was built on a rock, and could not fall. (Cheers.) I would willingly give a word of comfort to my brethren here. I would say to them—Preserve your integrity and persevere; your cause is a good one; and I bid you 'God speed.' (Cheers.) Put your trust in Heaven, and all will be well."

In his Life, by his brother, Dr. John Ware, the following

* Speech of March, 1857, p. 70.

references to this intercourse with the Irish ministers occur. Writing to Professor Norton from Dublin, August 14, he says :—

“Belfast and Dublin were full of business and excitement to us, owing to the present state of religious parties, and the organisation, which is now making, of the Unitarian body. There is a great deal of talent and zeal coming into action in the best way, and I feel myself favoured to have been on the spot at this moment.”

Again, writing from London, August 24, to the Rev. Dr. Carpenter of Bristol :—

“I spent a fortnight in Ireland with great satisfaction. The state of things among our brethren is full of interest and life, and I believe they are wide awake to the call of the times, and fully equal to the emergency. There are fine spirits among them ; and I shall be greatly disappointed if the actions which seem to be beginning there do not have most salutary influences both in England and America. The Irish are very favourably disposed towards their brethren in both countries—I mean the leading men ; for you are aware that the multitude have rather held back from English communion, under the idea that Unitarianism here is exclusive and *ultra* ; and this feeling is yet to be removed. The principal men are doing what they may to remove it ; and, when it is found that the English are seriously abandoning the narrow interpretations of Unitarianism, and look complacently and with brotherly kindness on Arianism, then will be seen a cordial union and co-operation. This is most devoutly to be wished.”

The 18th August was the day appointed for the special meeting of Synod at Cookstown ; but, meantime, the annual meeting of the Proprietors of the Belfast Institution had taken place on the 9th July. Montgomery attended, and made a firm but temperate statement. A number of capital speeches were delivered, and a series of spirited resolutions passed almost unanimously, conveying the “ warmest thanks of the court to their deputation, for the uncompromising firmness and distinguished ability with which they had, before the Synod, defended the integrity of the Joint Boards, and maintained the independence of the Institution”—declaring their fullest confidence in the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors, entirely sustaining

and sanctioning their conduct in the late election, and stating “their conviction that their Boards, while willing to receive with every courtesy the deputation appointed by the Synod, would, at the same time, in any conference that might take place, maintain unimpaired the fundamental principles of the Institution.” A conference was accordingly held on the 7th of August between the Synod’s Committee and the Joint Boards of the Institution, where the latter acted in accordance with the spirit of the preceding resolutions, declining to become a party to any investigation into Mr. Ferrie’s religious opinions, but allowing individual members to read for the information of the Committee letters from Mr. Ferrie and others, containing a declaration of conscientious adherence to the Church of Scotland, and also a reply to the evidence of Mr. Steen at the last Synod. At the same time, as a conciliatory measure, they agreed to recommend to the Proprietors an amendment of the bye-law before referred to, so as to convey a “fuller *statement* of the privilege, which the Proprietors *had always recognised*, accorded by it to the Moderator of Synod, to lay before the electors the opinion of the Synod’s Committee as to the eligibility of candidates for Professorships.” Conferences were also held between the Committees of the General and Reformed Synods—the Secession Synod, being then friendly to the Institution, does not appear to have then consented to any joint action against Mr. Ferrie—when, after inquiries in various parts of Scotland to find cause against him, a series of joint resolutions were adopted, the last of which sufficiently indicates the then position of the question :—

“That, notwithstanding the doubts which, under existing circumstances, are still entertained regarding Mr. Ferrie’s Orthodoxy, the proposal now made by him, solemnly to renew his subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, seems so reasonable, that we recommend it to be accepted, provided it be done in a satisfactory manner in presence of Committees of both Synods.”

The special meeting of Synod took place at Cookstown, as appointed, on Tuesday, August 18, 1829, at ten o’clock—Rev. R. Park, Moderator. Only about fifteen ministers at first answered

the roll, and the total number at any time attending was only eighty-three ministers and forty-four elders. Save Mr. Porter, who attended only in his official capacity as Clerk, the Remonstrants, and most of their friends and sympathisers, were absent. The changed appearance of the Synod was remarkable. "It presented," writes an Orthodox authority, "an aspect very different from what it had ever before exhibited in the memory of any of its ministers." It must have looked desolate enough. It might be questionable how far, even in this first blush of their triumph, the Orthodox leaders and their followers may have felt satisfied with their work. The "eloquence of silence," so lately appealed to by Cooke and his supporters, must surely have sufficed then to teach them the feelings with which their acts against their brethren were regarded by the real majority of the ministers and people of the Synod.

Of the three Presbyteries to which the generality of the Remonstrants belonged, that of Armagh, containing thirty ministers and congregations, sent only two ministers and *no* elders to this Synod—that of Templepatrick, with twenty-nine ministers and congregations, furnished but three ministers and *one* elder—while of the Bangor Presbytery, consisting of thirty-two ministers and congregations, the Rev. James Morgan and two other ministers, with *never an elder*, were its sole representatives! That is, three of the most important Presbyteries of the Synod, consisting of ninety-one ministers and congregations—the three most directly and vitally interested in the question—were absolutely represented only by eight ministers and *a single elder*, in the Synod meeting expressly for the final disruption of themselves and their Church! But even this was not all. The Presbytery of Strabane, numbering twenty ministers and congregations—of which the Clerk, Mr. Porter, was a member, and all, save himself and his congregation, stately Orthodox—though in the same county and within convenient distance of the place of meeting, was conspicuous for its absence, *neither minister nor layman belonging to it appearing at the Synod!* Another Orthodox Presbytery—that of Clogher, in the same

county—had but one minister and one elder present; another from the West had none. Many other Orthodox Presbyteries were also, as to their members, most inadequately represented. That of Monaghan, with thirty-three constituents, returned only ten, including Mr. Morell; while even from Cooke's own Presbytery of *Dromore*, the largest in the Synod, numbering forty-four ministers and congregations, the attendance was only *eleven* ministers and *ONE* elder! Such was the constitution of the Synod which met expressly to determine the momentous question of the retention or repeal of the obnoxious Overtures of 1828, and as consequence, whether the Remonstrant ministers and their people should be retained as brethren, or finally driven forth as strangers from the fellowship of their Church!

After much time occupied in hearing a number of memorials from Orthodox congregations in favour of the Overtures, and praying for the expulsion of the Arians, the REMONSTRANCE of the Non-Subscribers, that had been drawn up by the Belfast meeting in October, 1828, was at length presented and read by the Clerk, "complaining of the course of proceedings commenced at the meeting in 1827, when ministers and elders were called on to submit to a test of faith framed in the words of fallible men; pointing out also the injustice and pernicious tendency of the Overtures of 1828, and urging their immediate repeal, and a return to the regulations respecting admission to the sacred office, which are laid down in the Code of Discipline." The Remonstrance bore 862 signatures, which were inserted in the minutes, in a tabulated form, by order of Synod. They are as follows:—Ministers, 18; licentiates and students, 15; lay elders, 197; members of committee, 138; seat-holders, 314. The number of signatures from each congregation was ordered to be specified. Against this ruling Mr. Porter ineffectually protested. He said—"It had been recommended that none should sign the Remonstrance except ministers, elders, members of committee, and students. But for this restriction the list of signatures might have been very full—he himself could have procured the signature of every member of his congregation; and if they did

not order this recommendation to be annexed, they would not be recording a fair statement of the matter.”* In the number of seat-holders signed to the document, only three Remonstrant congregations were represented—two of these affording 256 names, and the other 26; while 25 of the remainder were supplied in various proportions from eight Orthodox congregations. Again, of the elders, no less than 59 names were of members of session of eighteen Orthodox congregations; while of the members of committee, eleven Orthodox societies supplied no less than 38. Under these two last heads, the congregation of Armagh supplied 11 elders and 7 members of committee; while 1 elder and 4 members of committee were furnished by *Killileagh!*

On the same afternoon (Tuesday), after a brief adjournment, an “ADDRESS,” which had been adopted by the Remonstrants and their friends at the July meeting in Belfast, was presented to the Synod, and read by the Clerk. It was written by Montgomery, and was intended as a parting manifesto, in anticipation of the Synod refusing to retrace their steps. As a final statement of the Non-Subscribers’ case—*authoritative* and clear, temperate and dignified—embracing in a comprehensive summary the leading subjects of the earlier and more lengthened “Remonstrance,” and bringing down the history of the matter to a date almost a year later than the former—it may be accepted as sufficient to be here subjoined, instead of the more voluminous “Remonstrance” itself, of which imperative considerations of space alone preclude the introduction. It was as follows:—

* (See pp. 283-4.) Was the author of the “Continuation of Reid’s History of Presbyterianism” not aware of this fact when he penned the following note, which appears on p. 565 of his volume?—“The small number of signatures to a document of so much importance clearly proved that the Unitarians enjoyed a very small share of public sympathy. In some single congregations of the General Assembly there are more than three hundred and fourteen seat-holders.” In some single congregations of the *Remonstrants* there were more than that number of seat-holders also.

(ADDRESS.)

“ TO THE REV. THE GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER,

“ *To meet at Cookstown, August 18, 1829.*

“CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,—We desire to address you in the spirit of the Gospel, and with an anxious wish to promote the permanent peace and unity of that portion of the Church of Christ with which we are connected. In common with all the sincere friends of religion, we deeply deplore the unhappy dissensions which have, for several years, distracted the General Synod of Ulster, and diffused their unfriendly influence throughout the whole frame of society. Although we enjoy the consolation of reflecting that we never *originated* any measure tending to generate strife, to restrict liberty of conscience, or to interfere with the Christian privileges of our brethren, we cannot avoid feeling that, even in defending our indefeasible rights, some of us may have been ‘unduly moved,’ and that, in the estimation of the public, we are liable to be considered partakers both in the shame and sin attendant upon acrimonious discussions.

“From these unpleasant conflicts many of us would long since have retired, had not our hearts been powerfully attracted, by early associations and friendly attachments, to the Synod of Ulster, and had we not entertained a sanguine expectation that, under the soothing influence of time and the peaceful spirit of the Gospel, ancient amity might be restored, without any sacrifice of conscience, or any degrading concession upon either side. This hope encouraged us to bear, for an entire year, the burthen of unprecedented enactments, which to most of us were extremely grievous; looking forward, as we did, to a final and friendly settlement of the chief subject in debate, at the late meeting of the General Synod in Lurgan. We have no desire to impugn the motives which, to our grievous disappointment, and that of many others, induced the majority of our brethren at that meeting to postpone the reconsideration of the Overtures of 1828; but we should be exceedingly obtuse of understanding, did not the spirit and acts of the late Synod entirely dissipate our hopes of an amicable and satisfactory adjustment of our differences, by a public discussion before a popular assembly. We are now firmly persuaded that such a course of procedure would only aggravate existing evils, by inevitably leading to personal attack and defence, crimination and recrimination—in which the contending parties would be thrown more widely asunder, the passions of the multitude more inflamed, the truly religious portion of our communion more seriously grieved, and the enemies of our Church and religion more amply gratified.

“To such results, we are determined, no consideration shall render us accessaries. In contention, we have had no pleasure; and from the continuation of strife, we can anticipate no good. The scenes exhibited at our annual meetings, for several years past, have been injurious to our better feelings, discreditable to Presbyterianism, and inconsistent, in many respects, with the spirit of the Gospel. We have, therefore, resolved to avoid all risk of perpetuating such evils, by absenting ourselves from the approaching meeting of Synod. We are well aware that by our *numbers* we could not carry a repeal of the obnoxious *Overtures*; and we know enough of human nature to be convinced, that when two parties have been publicly committed against each other, *argument*, how cogent soever, is much more likely to confirm determined resistance, than to produce mutual concession. In our absence, you will naturally come more calmly to the reconsideration of those *enactments* of which we complain; and we are not without hope that the issue of your dispassionate deliberations will be honourable to yourselves, favourable to the cause of Christian Liberty, and conducive to the unity and prosperity of the Presbyterian Church.

“But whilst we have thus resolved to leave entirely to yourselves the settlement of the vital question, for the discussion of which you are about to assemble, we deem it candid towards you, and right towards ourselves, freely and plainly to submit to you our views, our wishes, and our determinations. Affairs have arrived at such a crisis, that our mutual interest and honour demand the utmost plain dealing, and the sacrifice of all forms of expression inconsistent with the most perfect sincerity. We therefore refer to the *Remonstrance* already submitted to the Synod, for a distinct view of the principal grievances of which we complain; and shall content ourselves, at present, with merely re-stating a few of them, in the shortest possible compass, for your serious consideration.

“We complain that the *Overtures* of 1828 are a direct breach of contract, because they trench upon the immunities and privileges which were guaranteed to us by the laws and usages of the Synod, when we became members of it, and without which none of us would have become ministers in the Presbyterian Church. We complain that they violate the rights of Presbyteries, because they entirely take away their accustomed power of licence and ordination. We complain that they directly interfere with the liberties of the people, because their choice of pastors is entirely restricted to candidates approved by a few ministers of the Synod. We complain that they have a necessary and powerful tendency to produce hypocrisy and time-serving amongst

licentiates and ministers, because they attach high rewards to the inculcation of certain doctrinal opinions, whilst they connect excessive penalties with the maintenance of any other views of Christian doctrine. And, lastly, we complain, above all, that they virtually deny the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, by setting up a human tribunal as the only faithful interpreter of the Word of God, and rendering it highly penal to dissent from the decisions of that tribunal.

“Now the principles and privileges which, according to our conception, the Overtures directly overturn, have been handed down to us by our forefathers as the richest legacy ; and we are determined, in humble reliance upon the Divine blessing, to use our most strenuous exertions to preserve them inviolate for ourselves, and to transmit them unimpaired to our posterity. The question at issue between us is not, as has been frequently asserted, *a question of doctrine* ; it is not whether Trinitarianism or anti-Trinitarianism, Calvinism or Arminianism, be most accordant with the Word of God. Upon these points we acknowledge a variety of opinion to exist, even amongst ourselves. The real subject in debate, therefore, is not the absolute truth or error of certain theological tenets ; but simply this—whether the sacred Scriptures be a sufficient or insufficient rule of faith and duty—whether the ministers and licentiates of the General Synod shall be permitted, without molestation or injury, to inculcate those views of Christian doctrine, which, in their *own consciences*, they believe to *be true* ; or shall be required, under the penalty of the most serious worldly loss, to teach the opinions approved by a Committee of their brethren, no wiser and no less fallible than themselves, although they should believe those opinions to be utterly *erroneous* ; and, finally, whether the people of the Presbyterian communion shall have *full liberty* to elect pastors whose religious sentiments accord with their *own*, or be limited in their choice to such individuals as may have regulated their religious profession by the standard of *human authority*. We press it upon your serious consideration, that this is the *real and only* question at issue. *Absolute Truth* can be determined only by an *Infallible Tribunal* ; but *Liberty of Conscience*, which is the divinely chartered right of every Christian, *may* be mutually conceded, and *ought* to be conceded in the fullest extent, by those whose theological views are most directly opposed to each other. Whilst, therefore, we are by no means indifferent either to the maintenance or extension of our own peculiar opinions, we desire to hold them in charity with all men ; and, in conformity with our uniform practice, we shall never attempt to press their adoption upon others by any authoritative or penal enactments.

We hope to find the same spirit prevailing amongst our brethren of the Synod; and as we earnestly desire to act towards you with all due respect and the most perfect candour, we consider it right to state, explicitly, the conditions upon which a division of the Synod may be prevented:—

“1. That the Overtures of the year 1828, against which we have protested and remonstrated, shall be totally repealed.

“2. That the Code of Discipline adopted in 1825 shall resume its authority as the law of the Synod, and be acted upon in good faith, and agreeably to the liberal spirit by which it was enacted, freely permitting licence and ordination according to the long-continued and general practice of our Church.

“If you can conscientiously accede to these conditions, it will give us heartfelt satisfaction to see the Synod of Ulster restored by these means to its ancient harmony, and to continue that union with our brethren, which, we are persuaded, would be mutually advantageous, conducive to the interests of Presbyterianism, and friendly to the advancement of the great cause of religion. With any conditions less favourable to Christian liberty in our Church, we shall never be satisfied; but whilst we anxiously entreat you to grant them, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not solicit your compliance as a *boon*: we ask it as a *right*; we claim it on the ground of solemn and honourable *compact*; and we fondly hope that in our expectations we shall not be disappointed. We are convinced that our brethren will not be offended by the plainness with which we have spoken, and the attitude of conscious rectitude which we have assumed. Acting in the spirit and with the design of conciliation, we sincerely trust that the maintenance of a becoming respect for ourselves will not be misconstrued as implying any kind of disrespect towards others. Nothing could be farther from our intention than the expression of a single unkind or uncourteous sentiment. We most anxiously desire to bring all our differences to an amicable adjustment, and with this view we have laid before you our claims and our wishes, in a manner equally unreserved and unequivocal.

“Should it unhappily occur that you may regard it as your duty to refuse our claims, we can only lament our continued difference of opinion, upon the ground of our respective duties, and must endeavour to devise some other means by which we may henceforth be enabled to live in peace. Many of us never can consent to remain in the Synod of Ulster, under the painful circumstances that have characterised the proceedings of late years. For our own peace of mind, for the honour of our Church, and for the interests of religion, we shall do all in our

power to put an end to contention : we shall, whatever struggles it may cost us to sever early attachments, and whatever worldly sacrifices we may be compelled to make in obedience to the dictates of conscience, retire, at all hazards, from a body, changed, and as we conceive, deteriorated in its principles, its usages, and its laws. By the temporary sufferings of individuals the cause of Christian Liberty may be strengthened ; and in the blessed name of Him who said, ‘Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom,’ we shall go forth, like the tried servant of God in ‘the olden time,’ determined ‘not to forfeit our integrity so long as we live.’

“In this case, we most earnestly solicit you to appoint a Committee, vested with full power to enter into an arrangement, with an equal number upon our part, for a friendly and Christian separation. This proposal, at least, we are fully persuaded, will entirely meet the wishes of those who have hitherto been most opposed to us, and who have repeatedly pressed this very matter upon our serious consideration. We confess, however, that we do make it, after all, with reluctant minds and heavy hearts. Nothing but the most imperative sense of duty, enjoining us ‘always to keep the faith in a good conscience,’ could ever induce us to think of retiring from a body in connexion with which we received our education, and in communion with which we ardently hoped to terminate our little journey through this vale of tears. Next to a peaceful union, an amicable separation will, unquestionably, be most conducive to the honour of all concerned, and will least tend to the injury of those great principles to which we are still mutually attached. We submit to your consideration, *if we must separate*, that the appointment of as early a day *as possible* for the proposed conference, and in the town of Belfast, would evince a conciliatory spirit on your part, and be peculiarly gratifying to us. We also take leave to suggest, that in a matter so intimately affecting the interests and privileges of the people, lay elders should form a constituent part of our respective committees.

“Though we have been compelled to make these proposals, we feel that *we* are not justly chargeable with being schismatics or fomenters of divisions. *We* have not changed in *any* thing : we are, at this hour, the same, both in principles and practice, as when we became members of the Synod ; and we are willing to fulfil, in the amplest extent, every compact, written or implied, into which we ever entered. In our respective Presbyteries, we have freely joined in licensing and ordaining candidates for the ministry, without regard to peculiar theological views ; and by whatever name, or in whatever form we may hereafter

exist, we hereby pledge ourselves to continue to act upon the same principles, and to ordain *Trinitarians* or *anti-Trinitarians*, as they may be freely chosen by the congregations under our care.

“ We have heard it insinuated, that our declining to attend the ensuing meeting of Synod arises from a fear of encountering our opponents in the open field of discussion. We need not stop to expose this idle sarcasm, which no respectable man would utter, and to which our characters and our cause afford the best reply. We confess, however, that we are not without fear of another kind, which has exercised a powerful influence in determining our present course of procedure. We do very greatly fear to offend our Creator, by perpetuating scenes of contention which are inconsistent with His holy laws, and which tend to ‘wound religion in the house of her friends.

“ We appoint our esteemed brother, the Rev. William Porter, to lay this paper before you, convinced that a document drawn up with a view to promote peace and unity in the Church will be received and considered in the same spirit of kindness by which it is dictated. If any of our remarks respecting the nature of the Overtures should appear to be unduly severe, we beg to say that they have no *personal* reference, and that we merely express our own opinion concerning the pernicious tendency of measures which *we* think highly improper, but of which *others* may as conscientiously approve.

“ May the God of all peace direct your deliberations to the advancement of ‘pure and undefiled religion’ in the Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“ August, 1829.

(Signed by)

“ *Ministers.*

Nathaniel Alexander.
John Mitchel.
Arthur Nelson.
Fletcher Blakely.
Thomas Alexander.
Robert Orr.
Henry Montgomery.
William Glendy.

“ *Elders.*

James Boyd.
James Montgomery.
Isaac William Glenny.
James Andrews.
William Hunter.
Alexander Montgomery.

Ministers.

Alexander Montgomery.
William Porter.
John Mulligan.
David Whyte.
Samuel Arnold.
James Davis.
James Lunn.
Samuel Craig Nelson.

Elders.

William M-William.
Henry Stewart.
William Lamont.
John Johnston.
James Stevenson.”

This important Address was specially reported in full in the "Northern Whig," and afterwards republished in broadsheet, with appropriate introduction, "for the information of the Presbyterians at large who are in connexion with the General Synod."

No immediate attention, however, was given by the Synod to the Address; but after considering some other documents favourable to the Orthodox side, the discussion upon the Overtures commenced, and continued through three entire sessions, Stewart moving the re-appointment of a Theological Committee in accordance with their requirements—to consist of twenty-six ministers and as many elders. The opposition was conducted, in the absence of the Remonstrants, by the Rev. G. Hay of Derry, the Rev. Robert Gray of Dungannon, and a few others, whose addresses were good and to the point, though clearly out of time, and weakened by the too evident fact, that though their *words* might be strong, their *actions* neither had been, nor were likely to be, in correspondence with them. Their compliance had already taken place; their after-speeches were but a weak endeavour to save their conscience. During the discussion, Cooke, objecting to the examination of the Theological Committee being heard in public, observed—"It is not wise to expose any examination to the public gaze, where the object is to *probe the breast*." The expression quickly became proverbial; and the Committee was thereafter generally known amongst the Remonstrants and others as the "*Heart-probing* Committee." His speech contained such outrageous misrepresentations of the views of the Remonstrants as would never have been permitted to pass uncontradicted had they been present, and which afterwards met with a sharp refutation from them in the newspapers. The letter of the Remonstrants, dated 10th September, was signed by twelve ministers and eight elders on the part of themselves and their brethren. After quoting at length the statements of Cooke, it says:—

"We hereby declare that *in every part* they are *injurious, calumnious, and untrue*, so far as they relate to our acts or opinions." It then

proceeds to specify under five heads the "*absolute untruths*" which they contained, and concludes by "asserting, that with regard to some of us, *Mr. Cooke must have known* that we do not entertain the opinions which he has ascribed to us; and that with regard to the great body of our fellow-*Remonstrants* (including Calvinists), whom he had indiscriminately calumniated, he had no means whatever of knowing their peculiar theological sentiments."

The Committee was subsequently re-appointed, and the Overtures therefore re-affirmed, by a large majority; but no protest from the opponents present was *now* received!

The separation being thus *un fait accompli*, the Synod appointed a Committee, as requested by the Remonstrants, to confer with a similar Committee on their part on the terms of an amicable separation. The Committee appointed were instructed to confine their negotiations entirely to arrangements connected with the four principal Synodical Funds, viz. :—The Widows' Fund, and the Divinity Professorship, Charitable, and Incidental Funds. In regard to the *Regium Donum*—

"Mr. Cooke was of opinion that the Committee should receive specific instruction. 'The whole state of the case should be laid before the Government. If a number of the Orthodox members of these congregations prefer remaining attached to the Synod, we have no right to denude them of the bounty.' . . . *Mr. Porter*—'Does Mr. Cooke mean to say that when only a *few* remain with the Synod he would retain the bounty for them? Let him speak plainly.' *Mr. Cooke*—'Certainly. The money belongs to this body collectively, and we have no right to rob the people. If only three people remain, we would endeavour to give them the bounty. *When they refuse our discipline, will we give a premium for recusancy?* I would give the bounty to three; nay, to *two, or even one.*'"

Such an undesirable revelation of their intentions would never do, and the more politic Stewart was obliged to come to the rescue of his rash chief.

"What (said he) will the world say of us? Will they not very justly say that we have forced these men from amongst us, and that after all we will not let them depart? I cannot agree to this invasion of the property of congregations. Would it be just to give bounty to a

few families, at the same time that perhaps you deprive hundreds of it?"

Cooke, in explaining, made this admission :—

"I do think *taking away bounty would be persecuting, but I would not neglect the interests of our people.*"

A candid declaration that the "persecution" of the Remonstrants was not to stand in the way of the (monetary) interests of even the smallest number of Orthodox people, who might be induced to leave the Remonstrant congregations and adhere to the Synod—that these were to be pushed forward *regardless of consequences!* It was no idle threat. The revelation might be inopportune, but it disclosed a matured plan of action which was afterwards rigorously pursued in every case where the smallest opportunity offered; nor was it ever relinquished, until, having developed itself in alarming proportions in subsequent years, the Imperial Legislature at length benignantly interposed, snatched the prey from the very jaws of the spoilers, and extended over the *persecuted* its ægis of secure protection and permanent relief. Finally, the resolution adopted was—

"That, inasmuch as the Synod has no information respecting the sentiments and intentions of the congregations at present under the care of these Remonstrants, and as some of them may be disposed to continue under the care of the Synod of Ulster, Presbyteries are hereby instructed to take charge of such congregations, or parts of congregations, as may apply to them. They are to supply them with ordinances; and in case of a minister being ordained amongst them, they are to lay before Government his claims to a portion of Royal bounty."

It was under cover of this resolution, with its semblance of equity, that the many unscrupulous invasions of Remonstrant congregations so soon after took place.

Then came the fine closing scene, when the Rev. William Porter rose in his place as Clerk, and, in a dignified and affecting farewell speech, resigned his office. Then, after some indefinite resolutions regarding Mr. Ferrie, the Synod was concluded.

On the 9th September the conference between the Committees

of the General Synod and the Remonstrants was held in Belfast, when articles of separation were presented by the latter, considered and replied to *seriatim* by the former, and of these replies seven were accepted and two objected to in whole or in part by the Remonstrants. The importance of these proceedings in relation to the history of the separation requires that they should be fully recorded. For this reason, as likewise for purposes of reference, a complete copy of the minutes of the conference is given in the accompanying note. *

[COPY.]

* Minutes of a Conference held in Belfast, 9th September, 1829, between a Committee nominated by the General Synod of Ulster, and a Committee nominated by the Remonstrants against certain Overtures enacted by that body at its annual meeting in 1828; and which Committees were appointed for the purpose of arranging the terms of an amicable separation between their respective constituents.

The Moderator of the General Synod having opened the Conference by prayer, the following members of Committee, nominated by the reverend body, answered to their names:—

Rev. Robert Park,	Minister of Ballymoney.
James Horner,	„ Mary's Abbey.
Henry Henry,	„ Connor.
Dr. Hanna,	„ Third Belfast.
George Hay,	„ Derry.
Edward Reid,	„ Ramelton.
Henry Cooke,	„ Killileagh.
Robert Stewart,	„ Broughshane.
James S. Reid,	„ Carrickfergus.
Lawson Annesley,	Elder of Third Belfast Congregation.
Sidney H. Rowan,	„ Killileagh „

The following ministers and elders appeared as the Committee nominated by the Remonstrants:—

Rev. Nathaniel Alexander,	Minister of Crumlin.
Thomas Alexander,	„ Cairncastle.
William Porter,	„ Newtownlimavady.
John Mulligan,	„ Moira.
John Mitchel,	„ First Newry.
Arthur Nelson,	„ Kilmore.
Fletcher Blakely,	„ Moneyrea.
James Davis,	„ First Banbridge.
Henry Montgomery,	„ Dunmurry.
William Glendy,	„ Ballycarry.
John White,	Elder of First Newry.
John Alexander,	„ Newtownlimavady.
William Hunter,	„ Dunmurry.

Meantime, the Remonstrants were not idle in organising their new association. They advertised an examination, to be held in the ensuing November, of such young men as might wish to enter college with a view to the ministry under their auspices, and made arrangements to receive under their care such

Gavin Orr,	Elder of	Moneyrea.
Dr. Stewart,	„	Moneyrea.
James C. Mulligan,	„	First Banbridge.
Isaac W. Glenny,	„	First Newry.
James Armstrong Stevenson,	„	Crumlin.

A paper, of which the following is a copy, was submitted by the Committee of Remonstrants to the consideration of their brethren, nominated by the General Synod:—

“At a General Meeting of the Remonstrants, held in Belfast on Tuesday, 8th September, 1829, it was unanimously resolved, that the majority of the Synod of Ulster having refused to repeal the Overtures against which we remonstrated, and to return to the Code of Discipline unanimously adopted in the year 1825—such of us as may deem it right to form a new Presbyterian connection, do stipulate for ourselves, and for all who may hereafter join us, that we, and they, shall be secured in the full enjoyment of the following rights, privileges, and immunities:—

“1st. That all sums contributed to the Fund for the support of the Divinity Professorship, by congregations which are now, or which may hereafter become connected with us, shall be returned to such congregations.

“2nd. That all ministers who are now, or hereafter may become connected with us, who may wish to become contributors to the Widows' Fund, shall be admitted as such, and their widows and families entitled to the full benefit of that institution.

“3rd. That an equitable proportion of the Charitable Fund shall be returned to such of our ministers and congregations as have contributed to its establishment.

“4th. We make a similar demand with respect to the fund for defraying the incidental expenses of the Synod; and in case said fund should prove insufficient to discharge the debts already incurred by that body, we pledge ourselves to contribute for this purpose whatever sum we may be justly liable to pay.

“5th. We make a similar demand with respect to the Fund of the Home Mission Society.

“6th. We require our brethren of the Synod to declare, that, on our ordaining a minister in any congregation now in existence, or which may be hereafter erected, their Moderator shall, in all such cases, annex his signature in the usual manner to the memorial for the Royal bounty forwarded to him by such minister; and shall on no account whatever withhold his signature, when regularly certified of such ordination.

“7th. That the members of our connexion shall at all times have free access to the records of the General Synod which are anterior in date to the present time.

licentiates as might deem proper to cease their connexion with the Synod.

The first notes of congregational separation from the Synod were sounded by the people of Moneyrea and Dunmurry. On Sunday, 27th September, 1829, both these congregations, by

“‘8th. That some convenient mode of managing the concerns of the *Interloquitur* shall be adopted.’”—(For the joint management of the Widows’ Fund.)

After an amicable conference on the foregoing propositions, the Committee of the General Synod retired to a separate apartment, for the purpose of taking them into more minute consideration. The Synod’s Committee, after spending some time in separate deliberation, returned, and submitted to the Remonstrants the following reply:—

On reading the preamble to the application from Remonstrants, in which they state that they require this Committee to “stipulate the full enjoyment of certain rights, privileges, and immunities, not only on behalf of themselves, but of all who may hereafter join with them” in their ecclesiastical connexion, it was resolved—

“That we do not hold ourselves competent to enter into any stipulation on the points committed to us by the Synod, with or on behalf of any person, except those who, at the meeting of Synod in August last, requested the appointment of the present Conference.”

At the adjourned meeting of the Synod’s Committee, held at seven o’clock p.m., the preceding resolution was thus amended, viz.:—

“That, in reference to our preliminary resolution, we now agree that, in consequence of the Committee of the Remonstrants having alleged that they met us in the name, not only of those who had made the application to the last meeting of the Synod at Cookstown, but also of those who had signed the Remonstrance to the Synod in Lurgan, we are willing to extend the benefit of such stipulations as may be entered into on the present occasion, towards an amicable separation, to all the ministers who have signed either of the above documents. And, further, that if the Committee of the Remonstrants are now unable to furnish us with a list of those on behalf of whom they are appointed to treat with us for an amicable separation, our Moderator will be ready to receive such a list on or before Wednesday, the 30th instant, when we are to hold an adjourned meeting of Committee, in Dr. Hanna’s meeting-house, at seven o’clock p.m.”

This amended resolution having been submitted, Remonstrants stated that they are not satisfied with the limitation prescribed therein. The Synod’s Committee then submitted the following replies to the several applications made to them by the Remonstrants:—

“1st. That after payment of the debt due on the *Divinity Professorship Fund*, an equitable proportion of the balance shall be returned to those congregations in which contributions have been made in its behalf, and which shall, at a public meeting regularly convened for the purpose, resolve to apply for the same.”
(*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

“2nd. That the rights of the present contributors and their successors are

unanimous resolutions, dissolved their connexion with the General Synod of Ulster. The meeting of the Dunmurry congregation was presided over by John M'Cance, Esq., and the proposers and seconders of the several resolutions were—Messrs. Robert Callwell, John Service, William Hunter, John Johnston, William Montgomery, John Collins, — Emerson, and John Craig. The first three resolutions were are follows:—

unquestionably secured to them under the existing regulations of the *Widows' Fund*; but that, agreeably to our preliminary resolution, we hold ourselves incompetent to decide upon the alleged claims of any but of the Remonstrants and their successors." (In reference to the preceding, Remonstrants stated that they are satisfied with this stipulation, so far as regards themselves and their successors; but are by no means satisfied that it does not embrace such ministers as may hereafter become connected with them.)

"3rd. That an equitable portion of the *Charitable Fund* shall be returned to those congregations in which collections in behalf of that fund have been made, and which shall, at a public meeting regularly convened for the purpose, resolve to apply for the same." (*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

"4th. That after every exertion shall be used to collect the arrears of fines due to the *Incidental Fund*, in which it is expected that the Remonstrants will join, if any surplus remain, an equitable proportion thereof shall be returned; but if there be a deficiency, a due proportion shall be contributed by the Remonstrants, agreeably to their own offer, to make up the same. (*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

"5th. That the *Home Mission Fund* not being a funded capital, but one raised annually to meet an annual expenditure, the accounts of which are passed each year at Synod, we do not conceive that we can, with propriety, take into consideration any sum, save the existing balance; and that this amount shall be equitably divided in proportion to the sums contributed since the meeting of Synod in Strabane, in the year 1827—this proportion be determined by Messrs. Lawson Annesley and Gawin Orr." (*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

In reference to the preceding resolutions, it was further resolved—"That where congregations who have contributed to any of the preceding funds, and who may claim their proportion of the same, may have been separated into two distinct congregations since they have so contributed, the payment of such claims shall only be made in proportion to the contributions of that part of the congregation who may withdraw from the Synod." (*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

"6th. That our Moderator shall be directed to sign the memorials of the successors of the Remonstrants in the same manner in which those of members of the Presbytery of Antrim are at present signed by him—the Synod reserving to itself the right of making such representations to Government as the circumstances of any case may require." (*With this reply the Remonstrants stated they were dissatisfied.*)

"7th. That free access to our *Synodical Records* be given to Remonstrants and their successors up to the date required, in the same manner as to members of the General Synod." (*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

“I. That the Synod of Ulster having, in their proceedings during the last three years, violated the right of private judgment, which is the fundamental principle of Protestantism; having trampled upon their own Code of Discipline, adopted unanimously in 1825; having broken the solemn compact under which ministers entered that body; and having enacted Overtures tending to produce the most shocking hypocrisy amongst ministers, and denying to the people the free choice of their teachers—we can no longer, as Presbyterians valuing our own Christian privileges, and desiring to transmit them unimpaired

“8th. That we shall recommend to Synod that the business of the *Interloquitur* be entered on at each Synod, on the morning of the third day of the meeting, at seven o'clock, and to continue the consideration thereof till it may be finally issued.” (*Accepted by Remonstrants.*)

“J. S. REID, Clerk to the Synod's Committee.”

The foregoing Minutes of the Conference are attested by

WILLIAM PORTER, Clerk of General Synod.

NOTE BY THE CLERK.—According to the suggestion of the Synod's Committee, a paper, of which the following is a copy, was subsequently transmitted to the Rev. Robert Park, Moderator:—

“A list of the ministers whose names are subscribed, some to the Remonstrance presented to the Synod at its late stated meeting in Lurgan, some to the Address and Definite Proposals submitted to that reverend body, at the late special meeting in Cookstown, and some to *both* the documents now specified:—

“ Andrew Miller,	Minister of Carnall.
Andrew Craig,	„ Lisburn.
Robert Orr,	„ Killead.
Alexander Montgomery,	„ Glenarm.
Thomas Alexander,	„ Cairncastle.
Robert Hogg,	„ Loughgall.
Nathaniel Alexander,	„ Crumlin.
Robert Campbell,	„ Templepatrick.
William Porter,	„ Newtownlimavady.
John Watson,	„ Greyabbey.
John Mulligan,	„ Moira.
Samuel Arnold,	„ Narrowwater.
John Mitchel,	„ First Newry.
Henry Montgomery,	„ Dunmurry.
William Glendy,	„ Ballycarry.
Fletcher Blakely,	„ Moncyrea.
Arthur Nelson,	„ Kilmore.
James Davis,	„ First Banbridge.
David Whyte,	„ Ballee.
James Lunn,	„ Carlingford.
Samuel Craig Nelson,	„ First Dromore.

(Attested by)

“WILLIAM PORTER, Clerk of General Synod.”

to our posterity, continue our connexion with the General Synod of Ulster.

“2. That we shall, therefore, embrace the earliest opportunity of connecting ourselves with the new Presbyterian body, about to be formed by the Remonstrants, for the protection of the rights of conscience.

“3. That we shall reclaim the sum formerly paid by us for the support of the Synod’s Professor of Divinity; and likewise an equitable proportion of all other Synodical funds.”

Mr. Emerson, in moving the fourth resolution, spoke as follows:—

“Mr. Chairman, the conspicuous part which our respected minister has taken in the late proceedings of the Synod of Ulster, has been justly appreciated by the wise and the good of every denomination of Christians, not only in this country and through every part of the United Kingdom, but also on the other side of the Atlantic. It would discover in us a degree of insensibility, which I believe cannot be justly charged upon us, if we did not feel a conscious pride in having for our teacher a man possessed of such transcendent talents, which can only be equalled by the goodness of his heart and the purity of his life. I believe there is not an individual belonging to this congregation that is not sensible of the advantages he possesses, in having the instruction and example of a man who would have done honour to the profession of Christianity in its primitive purity. I am sensible that an opportunity of this kind was only wanting to give expression to feelings which have long animated the breast of every individual in this congregation to our beloved teacher, and that the only regret which will be felt on this occasion is, that our expressions must fall so far short of the love we bear him, and our admiration of his excellence. Sir, I beg leave to move—

“4. That the thanks of this congregation be given to our beloved and worthy pastor, the Rev. H. Montgomery, for the conscientious, decided, manly, and upright part which he has taken in stemming the torrent of bigotry, maintaining the rights of the laity, and vindicating the true principles of Presbyterianism.”

CHAPTER XX.

HISTORY OF REMONSTRANT SEPARATION CONTINUED—

THE PRESBYTERY OF ARMAGH.

1829.

Secession of Armagh Presbytery—Amicable Separation of Synodical Minority—Conduct of Dromore Presbytery—Newry and Banbridge Congregations divided—Persecution of Rev. S. Arnold of Warrenpoint—Orthodox Invasion of Templepatrick, Glenarm, Cairncastle, and Ballycarry—Rev. William Glendy—Cooke visits an old Friend—*Ultimatum* of Synod's Committee for Conference—Letters from separating Ministers—Remonstrant Convention in Newry—Resolutions of Armagh Presbytery—Montgomery replies for Remonstrants to Synod's Committee—Seventeen Ministers declare for Separation—Montgomery in Dublin—Home Letters—Interviews with Lord Plunket, &c.—Cooke's Interference with Kilmore and Killinchy Congregations—Meeting at Derryboy Cross—Montgomery invited to Preach—Great Assemblage—Notice of his Discourse—Attention of the Press to Synod and Remonstrants—"News-Letter" and "Guardian"—"Chronicle"—"Northern Whig"—Dublin Papers—"Globe"—"Scotsman"—Last on Remonstrant Claims to *Regium Donum*.

OF the Presbyteries, that of Armagh, one of the oldest and most influential connected with the Synod, was the first to move. At a meeting at Banbridge, 18th September, 1829, they resolved—one minister and one elder alone dissenting—"That they should, as a body, decline the jurisdiction of the Synod, and retain the name and records and privileges of the Presbytery of Armagh." Some members not having attended this meeting, another was held in Markethill on the 13th October, when the Banbridge resolutions were again put and confirmed by a majority of *fourteen to ten*. The whole Presbytery subsequently dined together, and authorised the publication in the newspapers of the minutes of their meeting, with the following note ap-

pended:—"The above proceedings are published at the request of the entire meeting, for the purpose of preventing anonymous misrepresentations, and of evincing the friendly terms on which the members of Presbytery have separated."

While such were the dignified and Christian terms on which the separation of the Armagh Presbytery took place—corresponding with the kindly spirit which had always prevailed amongst its members—it is not to be supposed that its Remonstrant ministers and congregations had escaped the vexatious persecution to which their brethren of other Presbyteries were exposed, though it had neither been originated nor countenanced by their co-Presbyters. After several years of the most persistent and unscrupulous invasion and agitation, the Presbytery of Dromore, under the direction of Cooke, had succeeded in dividing the flourishing congregation of Mr. Mitchel of Newry, and establishing the minority sometime previously as a distinct congregation, and with a stated minister in their connexion. The same policy had been pursued in Banbridge, and with a prospect of success. Encouraged by these successes, the congregation of the Rev. Samuel Arnold of Warrenpoint had been invaded during the previous winter, and an almost incredible system of persecution resorted to, which this aged and pre-eminently gentle minister was ill-calculated to withstand. The plan adopted was a singular and a safe one. The ministers of the Dromore Presbytery did not come *themselves*; but young *probationers*, with faces of brass and lungs of iron, and with their spurs as knights-errant of Orthodoxy to win, were sent, armed with their authority, to enter his meeting-house Sunday after Sunday, and there to remain and preach after the regular service had concluded—to preach and harangue to a few discontented individuals and strangers, in the very presence and despite the wishes of the venerable minister of the place, and of his session and people! The Armagh Presbytery, without distinction of parties, had strongly reprobated these proceedings, and indignantly remonstrated with the Presbytery of Dromore, but without avail; and it was not until after the establishment of the Remonstrant

Synod that, the arm of the law being by their advice and assistance brought to bear against the intruders, peace was once more restored to the aged shepherd and his flock.

In the Presbytery of Templepatrick the same policy had been pursued. It seemed to be the deliberate plan of the campaign at this time to attack the Remonstrants in their outlying congregations, where their numbers were few, and their forces for mutual support and defence comparatively feeble. The five senior ministers in this Presbytery were avowed Remonstrants—Revs. N. Alexander, Crumlin; R. Campbell, Templepatrick; Alexander Montgomery, Glenarm; Thomas Alexander, Cairncastle; and William Glendy, assistant, Ballycarry; and it was well understood that in every instance their congregations were with them. Crumlin especially was well situated and strong, and rather too near Dunmurry to make it safe to meddle with it; but against the others a crusade was resolved on, and no means were left untried to make it a success. The ministers of Templepatrick, Glenarm, and Cairncastle were aged men, of retired and quiet lives, and simple, unsophisticated minds. Their people, remote and unsuspecting, seemed to offer an easy and inviting prey. A perfect army of eager volunteers was sent into their bounds. Ministers—placed and unplaced—from this Presbytery and that—neighbours and strangers, licentiates, itinerant missionaries, and society agents, swarmed over their congregational districts in all directions, preaching and praying amongst their people, in season and out of season, in public and private; terrifying the weak-minded by appalling pictures of the deadly heresy of the Arians and dread denunciations of everlasting burnings, and especially warning them against the Arianism of their own long-accepted teachers. In some instances they actually demanded from the ministers themselves the keys of their meeting-houses, that they might from their own pulpits most fittingly denounce the pastor to his flock—more than one generation of whom had been baptised and instructed by him, and had grown up to manhood under his care.

In William Glendy of Ballycarry, however, they found a man

of a very different stamp—in the prime of manhood, of vigorous and powerful mind, with popular talents as a preacher and speaker, and friendly and attractive qualities as a man. He had been long the intimate friend and confidential companion of Cooke (they had regularly assisted each other at their communions for fifteen years), also of Stewart and Park and Reid, and other Orthodox leaders; and this circumstance seemed long to hold him back from openly opposing himself to them in the Synod. But when at length they had fairly thrown off the mask, and compelled him to take his place in opposition, he found himself persecuted by them with a virulence great in proportion to their former intimacy.* Then it was that his native courage and strength became fully roused. Though in a remote locality, and, as it were, alone amongst the Orthodox lions, his heart never failed him. He set his back to the rock and his face to the foe, and fought out his battle with a constancy, eloquence, and power that deserved, and finally commanded entire success. No more powerful blows than Glendy's were given on

* So far was this carried, that after he and his congregation had definitely renounced their jurisdiction, the Presbytery of Templepatrick actually attempted to assemble in his meeting-house of Ballycarry, with an apparent intention to gain possession of the congregational property; and his old friend Cooke came all the way from Belfast to give them his assistance. The scene is most graphically portrayed in the columns of the "Northern Whig." It tells how the new-made doctor (he had just then received the American degree of D.D. from Jefferson College) drove down in imposing state from Belfast in his "new phaeton," and met the assembled Presbytery in solemn and secret conclave in the village ale-house—of their march in procession up the street to the meeting-house—of their finding the men of Ballycarry equal to the occasion, and assembled to the number of eleven hundred to defend their rights and liberties—of their demanding and being refused admission—of their like unsuccessful attempt to enter the adjoining old churchyard of Templecorran, the memorable "ruined Fane," where Presbyterianism was first preached in Ireland—of their being driven from its gates by an indignant people with shouts of "No Surrender"—of their attempting to hold a service in the street, and the Moderator's psalm-singing stopped by the discordant cries of his congregation—and of their retiring, utterly discomfited, amidst the ringing cheers of the people, to finish their deliberations in the ale-house. It is also recorded how, on setting out to return home in the evening, Dr. Cooke's horse was startled—and not unnaturally—on seeing *before him*, surrounded with smoke and flame, a fearful impersonation of his reverend driver, whom the boys of Ballycarry were just then amusing themselves by burning in effigy in the street! On the whole, his last *visit to his old friend* was scarcely a success!

either side during the war. Selecting many a keen shaft from the quiver of his previous intimacy with Cooke and the others, he sent them, with aim strong and true, right home to the breasts of his opponents, bearing with them discomfiting and disgraceful exposure of their dishonesty and hypocrisy. Finally, he proved himself more than a match for the combined hosts of his foes. But he fought not only his own battle; he devoted himself with zeal and energy to maintain the cause, and support the courage and the united interests, of his Remonstrant brethren and their congregations in the Presbytery; displaying in the struggle those qualities that enabled him in after years to render substantial service in promoting the Dissenters' Chapels Act. Mainly through his exertions, the machinations of their enemies were at length signally defeated; and well and truly did his friend Montgomery, in long subsequent years—when offering a touching tribute to the memory of the noble band of Remonstrants who had passed away—characterise him as “though last, not least, in talent, energy, and usefulness, the upright William Glendy of Ballycarry, who saved no fewer than five congregations to our Church, by his persuasive eloquence and indomitable spirit.”*

In the Bangor Presbytery, in addition to the congregations of Dunmurry and Moneyrea, which had already declared themselves, the ministers and congregations of Ballee, Greyabbey, and Moira were understood to be Remonstrants, and to intend casting in their lot with their Non-Subscribing brethren.

On the 1st October, 1829, a letter was written by the Moderator of Synod, Rev. R. Park, by direction of the Synod's Committee for conference, to the Rev. N. Alexander, Moderator of the Remonstrant Committee, containing copy of a series of high-handed and imperious resolutions passed by the Synod's Committee regarding the list furnished by Mr. Porter, of those who had signed the Remonstrance or the Address, or both—refusing to receive it as a proper list of Remonstrance, expressing their disappointment at not having received the required return,

* Speech in Synod, 1857, p. 40.

and demanding to be furnished forthwith with an authorised list of those Remonstrants “who were desirous to separate from the Synod.” Their third resolution ran thus:—

“That we now declare that, unless such a specific and authorised list be returned to us on or before *the 15th October, at the hour of seven o'clock p.m.*, we shall certainly hold the stipulations agreed to on the 8th inst. as recalled by us and rendered null and void.”

Mr. Alexander immediately sent the letter to Montgomery, requesting him to obtain the necessary information, and answer it on the part of the Remonstrants. Montgomery at once wrote to all the Remonstrant ministers, asking them to meet in Newry on the 14th October, and if unable to attend, to reply, stating if they wished their names to be returned as desirous of separating from the Synod. The replies in every instance were resolute expressions of unhesitating determination, and in several cases where the congregations or sessions had been already consulted, conveying also their unanimous resolution, to separate from the Synod. The Remonstrant Convention was held in Newry on the 14th, at the same time with the first meeting of the free Presbytery of Armagh, on the day following their emancipation. Montgomery was asked to sit and deliberate with the Presbytery, and he gave them a spirit-stirring address. A number of resolutions were passed, reconstituting the Presbytery on its ancient basis of Christian Liberty and Non-Subscription, and adopting for its discipline the general principles of the Synod's Code for 1825. In the general meeting of Remonstrants, many important matters were considered bearing on the position and prospects of the Remonstrant ministers and congregations; and by their instructions Montgomery returned the following reply to the Moderator of the Synod:—

“BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION,
“October 15, 1829.

“DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the 1st instant, addressed to the Rev. N. Alexander, and likewise the resolutions of the Synod's Committee by which it was accompanied, were yesterday submitted to a meeting of Remonstrants held in Newry.

“The Remonstrants assembled have instructed me to write to you in their name and by their authority. They have desired me to express *their* ‘regret and disappointment’ at the tone and tenor of your resolutions. They are unanimously of opinion, that the list furnished by Mr. Porter was, *bonâ fide*, that agreed upon at our conference; and they think it strange that the Synod’s Committee should have taken a different view of the subject. They farther consider it remarkable that, requiring ‘a list of those desirous of separating from the Synod,’ you did not allow *time* for ministers to bring the matter regularly before their congregations, by a week’s previous notice. Your letter to Mr. A. was only posted on the 2d instant; he did not receive it until the 4th; and, consequently, only *one* Sabbath intervened between that and the present date. The Remonstrants cannot believe that by your *third imperative* and *threatening* resolution, you intended thus to place them in circumstances of inconvenience, through which you might have a plea of violating a solemn compact, by no part of which they obtained more than they were justly entitled to obtain. They do not admit that you have any right to declare ‘the stipulations entered into null and void,’ solely upon your own interpretation of your *own* resolution. Were such a principle allowed in treaties, every party that regretted any act or agreement could easily recall it, and thus altogether destroy the honourable basis of all social compacts.

“Lest, however, any source of disagreement should arise from a mutual misunderstanding of each other’s meaning, the Remonstrants have instructed me (though without admitting your right to demand it) to send you the following list of ministers who, in the words of your own resolution, ‘have directed their names to be returned as desirous of separating from the Synod’ :—

“N. ALEXANDER.	D. WHYTE.
THOMAS ALEXANDER.	ROBERT CAMPBELL.
ALEX. MONTGOMERY.	JOHN MULLIGAN.
WILLIAM PORTER.	ARTHUR NELSON.
SAMUEL ARNOLD.	JAMES DAVIS.
JOHN WATSON.	WILLIAM GLENDY.
JOHN MITCHEL.	JAMES LUNN.
H. MONTGOMERY.	S. C. NELSON.
F. BLAKELY.	

“The Remonstrants are anxious to fulfil, both in the letter and in the spirit, all the engagements which they entered into at the Conference, and to cultivate with their brethren of the Synod all the friendly relations of which the peculiar circumstances will admit.—I am, dear

Sir, with great personal regard, and much respect for your official impartiality, your faithful servant,

“ H. MONTGOMERY.

“ The Rev. ROBERT PARK,

“ Moderator of the General Synod of Ulster, and of the Synod’s Committee for Conference.”

We next find Montgomery in Dublin, having gone there on most important business connected with laying the case of the Remonstrants before the Government, and obtaining the recognition of their ministers and congregations, as entitled to the continuance of the Royal Bounty. The following letters to Mrs. Montgomery furnish an account of his proceedings. The first is of date October 20, 1829 :—

“ DUBLIN, *Tuesday, five o’clock.*

“ DEAR ELIZA,—I arrived safe this morning at six o’clock, . . . and am just now returned from a five hours’ conference with the Synod of Munster. How pleasant it is to meet with *Christian* ministers! [This had evident reference to their *conduct* as contrasted with that of the ministers of the Ulster Synod.] They are ready to do everything in their power to facilitate our separation.

“ To-morrow morning, about the time you will be reading this, I expect to be at Lord Plunket’s at Bray, with Mr. Glenny, Mr. Mitchel, and Mr. Armstrong. I do not anticipate that anything will occur to prevent me from going by to-morrow night’s coach, unless Lord P. should recommend our waiting upon the Secretary or the Lord-Lieutenant on Tuesday—a thing not at all calculated on. We are in good spirits; but I do not like to be sanguine, knowing how smoothly matters usually go with knaves, and how crossly with honest men! I am just going to dinner with the Synod of Munster here in Gresham’s.

“ God bless you; and good night.—Ever yours, “ H. M.”

The following day he wrote again as follows :—

“ *Wednesday Evening.*

“ DEAR E.,—We had a conference of two hours to-day with Lord Plunket. Nothing could exceed his kindness, and the warm interest he takes in our affairs. Towards myself he expressed himself in such terms as I should be almost ashamed to repeat even to *you*. Lord Gower has just returned to town, and Lord Plunket is to come in to-

morrow from the country to endeavour to procure us an interview with him, and if necessary with the Lord-Lieutenant. I hope in God to-morrow will settle the business; for I have heard fresh reasons for losing *no time*.

“I hope to return to-morrow night.—Yours ever, dear E.,

“H. M.”

The further proceedings at the interviews have not been recorded, but they were believed to have left a favourable impression upon the minds of the authorities, as to the equity of the Remonstrant claims to the continuation to them of the Royal bounty.

A few days after his return from Dublin, Montgomery's services were called for in a different quarter. Cooke had latterly not been getting on well with several members of the congregation of Killileagh, who were liberal-minded men, Remonstrants at heart, and opposed to his dictatorial spirit and conduct. Besides, he had lately transferred his affections from Killileagh to Belfast—having accepted an invitation to become their minister from the new congregation of May Street, whose recently erected meeting-house he had just opened with great *éclat*, and where he expected very shortly to be installed. Desirous, however, to signalise his departure by an effective *coup* against the Remonstrants, he had been engaged, with several of his coadjutors of the Dromore Presbytery, in preaching assiduously in the bounds of his Remonstrant neighbours—Mr. Nelson of Rademon, and Mr. Watson of Killinchy*—with a view to form a new congregation,

* The Rev. Samuel Watson of Killinchy, brother of the Rev. John Watson of Greyabbey, and the Rev. David Watson of Clough—all of County Down. He had protested against the Overtures and the appointment of the Theological Committee in 1828, and with the large majority of his very numerous congregation, was well known to agree with the Remonstrants. He and his people did not, however, feel themselves prepared to join their Remonstrant brethren in separating from the Synod the following year. Their hesitation was unfortunate for themselves. Had they left the Synod in 1829 instead of 1836, they would have been spared *six* years of the bitterest persecution, seven years more of ruinous litigation, ending in the loss of all their congregational property and the payment of above £1000 of law costs, and *three* years more obliged to worship in a wooden house, ere a site could be procured and a new place of worship erected.

if possible, amongst their outlying hearers. The attempt was unsuccessful; but the campaign was so hot, that it was thought desirable by the Presbyterians of the locality, with many others of the adjoining districts of Saintfield and Killileagh, that measures should be adopted to counteract their efforts. A meeting was accordingly held in September at Derryboy Cross, in the parish of Killileagh, which was attended by many Presbyterians from all the four parishes of Kilmore (Rademon), Killileagh, Saintfield, and Killinchy, and at which the newspaper report states—

“The senior member of Mr. Cooke’s own session was in the chair. At this meeting it was unanimously resolved ‘that the Rev. H. Montgomery be earnestly requested to appoint a time for delivering such a religious discourse at Derryboy as he may deem suitable to the present state of the Christian Church.’ Upon this resolution a written request was founded, signed by a considerable number of the most respectable members of the congregations of Killileagh, Killinchy, and Rademon, ‘on behalf of themselves and many others,’ and presented to Mr. Montgomery by a most respectable deputation. Having inquired minutely into the circumstances of the case, Mr. M. expressed his aversion to the prevalent system of ministers invading each others’ congregations in order to excite divisions, and stated his determination to confine his sermon *strictly* to a defence and statement of his own opinions, without impugning the tenets of others. Mr. M. appointed November 8th for complying with the request presented to him.”

Notice was given by circular. Cooke was virtuously indignant, and in order to prevent his people from attending, he announced that same day for preaching his farewell sermon in Killileagh.

“How far (the report continues) the *ruse de guerre* succeeded, beyond manifesting his own irritation and annoyance, we cannot say; but if we are to judge from the immense multitude that attended on Mr. Montgomery (computed to be, at least, from *four to five thousand*), it was not over successful.

“The day was delightful, the situation a fine dry field, on the sheltered and sunny side of a wood; and we have never seen a congregation whose attention was so intense and unabating as that of the vast concourse who listened to Mr. Montgomery’s sermon for *two hours and twenty minutes*. Of that discourse we shall not attempt to

give an outline, or to speak of it as a specimen of Christian eloquence and reasoning, according to our own feelings. Suffice it to say, that it was one of Mr. Montgomery's most powerful and successful efforts. He confined himself strictly to a statement of his own religious views, and to a refutation of the manifold misrepresentations which have been heaped upon them, without uttering one word condemnatory of the tenets of any Christian denomination. We sincerely wish that, instead of the thousands who heard him, his voice could have reached the whole Presbyterian population of Ulster; and we hope that it may yet do so through the medium of the press, as we learn that he has been most earnestly solicited, by many persons of different religious sects, to publish his discourse. The most respectable families in the vicinity, and many individuals from the distance of ten or fifteen miles, were present; and in mingling in the crowd after the service was over, we heard the expression of but one universal feeling of satisfaction. Friends were gratified, and opponents had the veil of misconception and prejudice removed from their minds. We are persuaded that, if Mr. Montgomery did not succeed in converting Trinitarians and Calvinists to his own peculiar views, he did succeed in what even he himself would consider much more important—namely, in making all denominations think more favourably of each other, and in awakening sentiments of brotherly kindness and charity. We ought to have stated that in the commencement of his discourse he expressly disavowed any intention of *invading* any minister's congregation, or attacking the creed of any Church."

Meantime, no little share of public attention had been drawn to the Synodical proceedings, the Remonstrants and their cause, and the persecuting acts of the Orthodox party and their leaders. The several Belfast papers had been for several years pretty well occupied with the subject—the "News-Letter" and "Guardian" as the recognised organs of Cooke and the Orthodox, and sworn foes to the "Arians" and Remonstrants; the "Chronicle" maintaining a dignified impartiality, at the same time showing itself friendly to liberty and justice, and opposed to persecution; while the "Northern Whig," regarding the cause of the Non-Subscribers and Remonstrants as bound up with that of Civil and Religious Liberty, of which it was the pledged and consistent advocate, continued to afford them through all their struggles its steady and most valuable support. Conducted, as it was, with

conspicuous ability, its reports of Synodical and other meetings, notices of the Non-Subscription and Institution controversies, correspondence, leading articles, "Notes of the Synod," and especially its very admirable series of papers entitled "Synodical Portraits,"* had awakened a large amount of general interest. It was felt that the subjects in dispute were of more than mere local and temporary importance—that they deeply concerned the rights and liberties of the community. Though locally confined to a small district of the North of Ireland, still "those things were not done in a corner." The more influential press of the kingdom took the matter up. Newspapers and periodicals in England and Scotland contained notices of the proceedings. "By the public press of the metropolis of each of the three United Kingdoms the subject was noticed; and in all the most gratifying encouragement was given to the friends of liberty, while the domineering Synodical party were condemned in the most pointed terms. The "Atlas," the "Dublin Evening Post," the "Morning Register," and many other papers warmly supported the Non-Subscribers; and the "Globe" and the "Scotsman" entered at length into the history of the question, and minutely criticised the proceedings of the Synodical Conference, and the terms of the Remonstrant separation, commenting with much severity upon the spirit and conduct of the Orthodox. The "Scotsman," then, as now, the talented exponent of the best liberal thought of Scotland, wrote on the subject as follows:—

"Mr. Cooke had threatened to deprive the Remonstrants of the Royal bounty in every case where the smallest fraction of the congregation, even one or two individuals, avowed its adherence to the Synod. He saw it necessary, however, to abandon this high ground. It was agreed that when the Remonstrants ordain a minister, whether Arian or not, the Moderator of Synod shall annex his signature to the memorial; the payment of the bounty depending on this formality. This concession, however, only extends to the ministers of those

* These graphic and beautiful sketches were eight in number, the subjects being respectively — Messrs. Cooke, Montgomery, Stewart, Porter, Carlile, Blakely, Hay, and Mitchel. They manifest no ordinary degree of analytical and descriptive power.

congregations which have now separated from the Synod, and not to those which may separate hereafter; and the Synod claims the privilege of making representations to Government respecting the appointments so made. The interesting question now is—Will Government grant the bounty to an Arian clergy, or at least to a clergy who openly admit Arians into their ranks? We think it *will*, and we are quite clear that it *ought*. We have never patronised Arian doctrines; but we consider the well-being of society as deeply interested in *religious liberty*. Government, in our opinion, has no title to arbitrate or judge in doctrinal matters, any further than they are distinctly connected with the support of morals, and the peace of the community. Every body of well-informed men, who deduce their tenets in the spirit of sincerity and sobriety from the Bible, and hold no doctrines tending to injure society, ought to be equally accounted Christians in its eyes, and to receive equal favour and protection. It would neither be wise nor decent in ministers to act upon any other principle. They endow an Episcopal clergy in England and Ireland, among whom there are many concealed Arians; they pay a body of Catholic priests in Canada; and they support idolatrous Brahmins and Buddhists in India. Were the men who find it compatible with their duty to protect and encourage all these, to regard the Arians, who follow the opinions of Loeke and Newton, with aversion or Orthodox horror, every candid person would feel disgust at such barefaced hypocrisy. In Lord Castlereagh's time, the Remonstrants would certainly have been cast off without mercy; but the courage, firmness, and good sense which the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel have shown in braving intolerance and bigotry, entitle us to hope better things from them."

But soon after, events took place which cast into the shade all previous proceedings, and acquired for the leading actors in them an amount of public notoriety which was evidently more marked than agreeable.

CHAPTER XXI.

FORMATION OF REMONSTRANT PRESBYTERIES. THE GREY- ABBEY PERSECUTION. "THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN."

1829—1830.

Remonstrant Presbytery of Templepatrick constituted—Meeting at Greyabbey—Montgomery's Speech and Resolutions—Inauguration of Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor—Congregation Votes for Remonstrants—Attempted Interference of Rev. J. Morgan and Party—"Advice to Presbyterians"—History of First Act of "Greyabbey Persecution"—Synodical Presbytery—Proceedings of William Montgomery, Esq., J.P.—Exclusion and Arrest of Rev. John Watson—Effects of Montgomery's Narrative—Second Act—"More Wonders at Greyabbey!"—Mr. Watson again arrested on Magistrate's Warrant—Kept Prisoner while Mr. Morgan preached—His Treatment—Eight Hours in Custody—Letter from Cooke and Synodical Bangor Presbytery—Their subsequent Conduct and Resolution—Letter of Apology from William Montgomery, Esq.—Offers Reparation to Mr. Watson—Morgan's First and Second Letters—Montgomery's Reply and Rejoinder—Reference to Greyabbey in Dr. Morgan's Autobiography—Effects of Persecution—Public Opinion—The Press—"Christian Pioneer" and Rev. George Harris—Commencement of "The Bible Christian"—Prospectus—Description—Editors—Montgomery's Contributions: "Introduction," "Creed of an Arian," "Sigma," "Remonstrant," "Christianus," &c.—Other Contributors: Dr. Bruce, Dr. Armstrong, W. Bruce, F. Blakely, W. Porter, J. Mitchel, G. Armstrong, &c.—Irish Unitarian Society—Prospectus—Inaugural Meeting.

ON the 14th November, 1829, the day previous to the lively meeting before described of Cooke and the Orthodox ministers of the Templepatrick Presbytery at Ballycarry, the five Remonstrant ministers, with an elder from each of their congregations, met at Cairncastle, and by unanimous resolution formally constituted themselves and their five congregations into the "Remonstrant Presbytery of Templepatrick," on the ancient Protestant principles of Non-Subscription. This was

the second Presbytery which, though not in the same numerical proportion as the first, had achieved its emancipation. It remained for the Remonstrants of the Bangor Presbytery to follow the good example.

The following notice of the formation of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor appeared in the "Northern Whig" during January, 1830 :—

"In consequence of the exertions of a neighbouring clergyman, and a few secret emissaries, some symptoms of disaffection appeared in the congregation of Greyabbey, whose minister had connected himself with the Remonstrants. The Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, therefore, met at Greyabbey on Tuesday last, at the request of the minister, session, and committee of the congregation. On their assembling there, they found the part of the Presbytery in connexion with the Synod already met in the inn, along with the few disaffected members. The Remonstrants immediately proceeded to the meeting-house, where a sermon was preached by the Rev. F. Blakely. The Rev. J. Mulligan was afterwards chosen Moderator. In proceeding with the business of the day, an attempt was made by certain of the Synodical members to interrupt their deliberations; but the Remonstrants being seconded by the almost unanimous feeling of a crowded house, went on to explain the grounds of their separation from the Synod."

The further account of the proceedings is taken from the report in the first number of the "Bible Christian."*

"The Rev. Mr. Montgomery of Dunmurry made a most powerful speech in vindication of the rights and privileges of Presbyterian congregations; exposed the recent enactments devised to take them away, and the base means resorted to in misrepresenting the opinions and conduct of such ministers and elders as do not submit to the new and unprecedented measures. After some additional remarks from other Remonstrants, the following resolutions, proposed by Mr. Montgomery, and seconded by Mr. W. Kelly Bailey, were unanimously carried, viz. :—

"That the General Synod of Ulster, having departed from the fundamental principles of Protestantism, broken the solemn contract under which we became members of it, and departed from its own "Code of Discipline,"—we hereby dissolve our connexion with that

* "Bible Christian," February, 1830, Vol. 1., No. 1., pp. 39-43.

body, and unite ourselves in the bonds of Christian fellowship, under the designation of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor.

“‘That the Synod of Ulster’s “Code” be our guide in matters of discipline.

“‘That the people under our care shall have their inalienable privileges amply secured to them, in the free choice of their ministers, according to their own views of Christian truth.’”

The ministers who thus formed the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor were the Revs. John Watson, John Mulligan, H. Montgomery, F. Blakely, and D. Whyte. The report continues—

“Mr. Watson, the minister of the place, and who had been a Remonstrant from the time the great change took place in the Synod, addressed the congregation at considerable length, and concluded by moving a resolution, in vindication of his and their privileges, which, after much deliberation, was carried in a crowded meeting, with the exception of a few dissentient voices. Lest any doubts should be entertained on the question, it was finally proposed that those who were for adhering to the Remonstrants should retire by one door, and that those who were in favour of the Synod should retire at another. On a division taking place, nearly the whole congregation adhered to the Remonstrants.”

The Orthodox party, in their attempted interference, were led by the Rev. James Morgan of Fisherwick Place, Belfast, a member of the Synodical Presbytery of Bangor. In the fourth number of the “Orthodox Presbyterian,” published during this month—a monthly periodical commenced in Belfast in the previous October in the interests of the Synodical majority, and in the pages of which Cooke and his party revelled uncontrolled—a very virulent letter appeared in reference to the meeting at Greyabbey, to which the “Bible Christian,” in the report above quoted, thus refers :—

“The ‘Orthodox Presbyterian,’ labouring in his usual calling of misrepresentation, has given a very erroneous report of this meeting. The article which contains it pretends to be written from Greyabbey, but we have good reason to believe that it was prepared by a *smooth preacher*, who has officiated for some time in Belfast, who has hitherto

affected moderation, and who has been slyly engaged in attempting to mislead the silly and credulous. The statement begins, proceeds, and ends with a total disregard of facts." Referring to what it characterises as "a gross perversion of Mr. Montgomery's very lucid and eloquent speech," it continues—"The pretended Greyabbey writer says, 'his address I do not wish to describe,' and yet in the very next sentence he pronounces that 'it was distinguished by bitterness and cunning.' It may have been bitter to those who were exposed by his powerful arguments, and they may have deemed it cunning on account of his ingenious illustrations, but the people of Greyabbey received it as an upright and open appeal to their common sense."

Such was the commencement, and such the primary phase, of that very peculiar and startling episode in the theological conflicts of the time, which, in its subsequent extraordinary development, obtained for its leading actors of the Synodical party a very unenviable notoriety, under the title of the "GREYABBEY PERSECUTION;" and which, even after the lapse of forty years, has called forth a whole section of softening and apologetic disclaimer, in the recently published autobiography of that eminent man of *peace*, the late Rev. Dr. Morgan!*

In the same number of the "Orthodox Presbyterian," and immediately preceding the letter above referred to, appeared an "Advice" to Presbyterians in congregations where the minister and majority of members had joined the Remonstrants. In this, which was generally attributed to the pen of Cooke himself, amongst other things, they are told—

"No matter how small the number of the Orthodox, let them apply to a Presbytery for preaching. 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good will to give you the kingdom,'—Luke xii. 32. Let them, under advice of Presbytery, claim the use of their meeting-house for preaching. Let them consider themselves as the *original* and *endowed* congregation; and by preserving their congregational form, continue to assert all their *congregational rights*. The Lord judgeth righteously, and the law will give them protection."

It is not wonderful that there were found in Greyabbey, as else-

* "Recollections of my Life and Times: An Autobiography by the Rev. James Morgan, D.D., late minister of Fisherwick Place Church, Belfast; 'Belfast, 1874; Chap. XII., pp. 164-7.

where, bigoted adherents of the Synod, only too ready to act upon this "Advice," and willing, if possible, even to better the instructions; and accordingly every conceivable effort was made in Greyabbey, not only to divide the congregation, but actually to eject the Remonstrant minister and his congregation, and obtain possession of all the congregational property for the Synod and their handful of adherents. But the history of the subsequent proceedings will be best told by Montgomery himself, in his graphic statement before the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, at a special meeting held in Belfast, in reference to this case. The "Northern Whig" report commences as follows:—

"MOST EXTRAORDINARY CASE.

"On Saturday, 13th February, 1830, a meeting of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor was held in Dr. Bruce's meeting-house in Belfast, to take into consideration the present disagreeable state of affairs in the congregation of Greyabbey. After the minutes of a meeting of Presbytery, held at Greyabbey on the 12th ultimo, had been read, the Rev. H. Montgomery was requested to give a statement of the business respecting which the present meeting had been convened. We regret that want of time prevents us from giving more than a very feeble and imperfect outline of Mr. Montgomery's extremely animated, eloquent, and affecting address. Some of the ideas and statements we shall endeavour to communicate; but of the language and manner, which added so much to their force, we feel that we can convey no adequate impression. Addressing the *Moderator*, he spoke to the following effect:—

"SIR,—Whether we regard the time or the circumstances connected with our assembling this day, our meeting may be justly considered *extraordinary*. We have come together in the nineteenth century, upon an unusual day of the week, to consider the case of a Presbyterian minister shut out of his meeting-house, without notice or without crime, and committed, by order of a Protestant landlord, to the custody of an armed police, upon the Lord's day, whilst proceeding to enter the house of God for Divine worship!"

He then briefly referred to the Synodical proceedings that led to the separation—to the fair professions of their opponents to induce them to separate—to their subsequent violation—to the

recently published "Advice" above-mentioned—asking, "Is it possible that this 'Christian advice' was given by the very man who exclaimed, when a popular effect was to be produced—'We want none of your loaves and fishes'?"—to its effect in Greyabbey—to the Remonstrant meeting there on the 12th January—to the formation of their Remonstrant Presbytery, and to the enthusiastic vote of the congregation to cast in their lot with them.

"Some members of the Synodical Presbytery of Bangor, who had gone to ascertain what prospects there were of detaching the people from their pastor, retired with the few mal-contents to the village tavern, and there employed themselves in organising plans for creating disaffection. They appointed a meeting of *their* body to be held in Greyabbey, on the 27th of January, and drew up a memorial to *themselves*, which was to be carried through the congregation for signature, expressive of a determination to abide with Orthodoxy and the Synod. To obtain signatures to this document, the most disgraceful arts were practised—members of other churches interfered—one name at least was forged—some houses were visited four times—the religious principles of the Remonstrants were grossly belied—names were obtained to papers *without any healing*—and, in one instance, a poor woman told me, with tears in her eyes, she had put her name to the paper, being informed it was in *favour* of Mr. Watson! The great engine, however, by which signatures were obtained, was the terror of the landlord's displeasure—no puny engine, when it is considered that he is proprietor of perhaps *three-fourths* of the parish, and that very many of his tenants hold their lands upon the single life of our illustrious monarch—the prolongation of whose days we all so ardently desire. To what extent this system of cajolery, misrepresentation, and intimidation proceeded, I cannot pretend to say; but at the meeting of Synodical Presbytery upon the 27th of January, ninety-seven signatures were attached to the memorial. Hearing of these things, I preached in Greyabbey upon January 24th—called upon the people to maintain their integrity, and to ratify their resolution of adherence to the Remonstrants passed upon the 12th, by actually affixing their signatures to it. The call was promptly answered; in the meeting-house, before my own eyes, about 150 *bonâ-fide* seat-holders signed, and in the course of two days others come forward—making in all 260. Here, then, we have for the Remonstrants 260 *unbiassed* votes; on the other side only 97, many of whom are said not to be seat-holders.

“On the 27th of the same month, the Synodical Presbytery of Bangor met in the inn at Greyabbey; it was then inquired if they would not proceed to the meeting-house? A member answered in the negative, as the keys of the house were in the hands of Mr. Watson’s Committee. They were informed, however, that the meeting-house was open; for some individuals had actually forced the door, and taken possession of it during the night or that morning. After one of the members of Presbytery had preached, others feared that they had been acting illegally, and the Presbytery retired to the green, when it was resolved that preaching should be supplied to such members of the congregation as were dissatisfied with the present minister. It was also proposed, that Mr. Montgomery (of Rosemount) should be requested to give the house to the Synodical party; but the proposition was immediately scouted. After these proceedings, one of the minority proceeded to the meeting-house, accompanied by a police constable; a padlock was put upon the door, and the key safely deposited in the man’s pocket. All these transactions took place in the absence of Mr. Watson and his people. On Saturday, the 30th of January, two policemen were stationed at the meeting-house, guarding two notices which were posted on the walls or door. I shall take the liberty of reading these notices; in the first instance without comment, lest I should destroy the beautifully running flow of the language by any remarks of mine:—

“NOTICE.

“As the dissensions in the Presbyterian congregation of Greyabbey have amounted to an absolute schism, it has now become an imperative duty on me, both as magistrate and landlord, to interfere for the preservation of the peace, and, by exerting myself towards the restoration of harmony, to prevent the dissolution of the congregation. In furtherance of this, to me most desirable object, I have this day accepted the surrender of the meeting-house, and now call on the contending parties to prepare and lay before me, with all convenient despatch, such written statements, whereby I may be enabled to decide who are the successors, in discipline and faith, of the congregation to whose use the meeting-house was originally appointed; as to such congregation I hold myself in honour bound to restore the use of the house. And, further, I purpose granting a lease to the minister by them chosen, containing such covenants as, I trust, will prevent all similar dissensions. As, however, this decision must not be made hastily, or without serious deliberation, I cannot determine upon shutting up the house for so long a period; and have resolved, for the

meantime, to permit some unobjectionable minister to perform Divine service therein on the accustomed days. Were I to permit the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Watson to that duty, I should prejudice the case, and exclude a large number of individuals who allege that Mr. Watson has seceded from the original faith. I have therefore acceded, with certain modifications, to the *request of the Presbytery of Bangor*, and resolve as follows:—"The ministers appointed by the Presbytery of Bangor have my permission to perform Divine service in the meeting-house of Greyabbey, under the proviso, that they shall abstain from all controversial points of doctrine, and in the full confidence that they will strenuously instil into the hearts of their hearers Christian charity and brotherly love. These are my injunctions; and I sincerely trust that I may shortly see that once happy and contented parish again united in the bonds of peace.

(Signed) "WM. MONTGOMERY.

"Greyabbey, 30th January, 1830.'

"I say nothing respecting the legality of this notice. I dare say Mr. Montgomery was perfectly justifiable in the course which he took. I do not pretend to question his right of interference as a magistrate to prevent schism. Such is the doctrine laid down in the Confession of Faith; and there can be little doubt that it was strongly brought before him. . . .

"I shall not venture to characterise, as I have heard done, the next notice which I shall read to you:—

"NOTICE.

"The Rev. J. M'Cauley of Donaghadee is to officiate in the meeting-house of Greyabbey, on Sunday, the 31st inst., that is to say, to-morrow; he having obtained my approbation and permission so to do.

(Signed) "WM. MONTGOMERY.

"Saturday, 30th January, 1830.'

"A servant would be entitled to more courtesy than Mr. Watson experienced in being thus superseded. No man would dismiss the humblest domestic, without treating him in a different manner. Here is the whole matter settled at once, in the most convenient and easy way imaginable. Mr. Watson, however, proceeded next day, being the Sabbath, to his meeting-house, as he had been accustomed to do, accompanied by a considerable number of his people. Instead of two

policemen, as on the preceding day, he found no fewer than six guarding the door of his house. They had increased like the soldiers who had sprung out of the serpent's teeth sown by Cadmus. He was appalled at this sight. He retired to consult with the members of his congregation; and they, being of opinion that it was unsafe to expose himself to an armed police, who were acting under the command of a magistrate, advised him not to persist. He complied with their advice, and retired to his session-house. This house is very small, and unable to contain the people who were assembled. He proceeded with the services of the day. Those of his flock who were unable to find admittance into the house crowded round the door; and, cold and inclement as it was, exposed their bare heads to the driving snow, whilst they were thus engaged in devoutly worshipping their God. Meantime, whilst this aged minister and his people, driven from the place in which they had long bowed before their Creator, were, with what feelings I do not pretend to describe, supplicating the throne of divine mercy, a minister passed by, entered through the armed constabulary, occupied the pulpit of his distressed brother, and preached—the Word of God! [Here a person, who seemed to be a countryman, uttered some expression respecting Orthodox charity.] I will not (said Mr. Montgomery) permit any person in this assembly to say anything bearing against my Orthodox brethren without rebuking him. These are not Orthodox men who are accessory to such evils. They are men who have assumed the names of Evangelical and Orthodox, but who are really devoid of religious principles. They are the froth fermenting on the surface, but are not entitled to the name of Evangelical. Were I forced to go out to beg, in support of this injured and distressed minister, I know many Orthodox men to whom I would confidently apply for assistance. I would appeal to the respectable Vicar of this town, to John Barnett, to Dr. Tennent, to James Munfoad, to Lawson Annesley, and a whole host of others, who are an honour to human nature. (Loud cheers.)

“On the 6th of February, Mr. Watson noticed Mr. Montgomery to restore his right to preach in his meeting-house, which was refused. Next day, being Sunday, he proceeded to his house of worship. On his arrival, he perceived a party of seven police constables, planted to guard the house. He then turned to his session-house, which he had been in the habit of entering for thirty years; and there the following notice, fixed up before him, met his eye:—

“ CAUTION.

“The police are ordered to call upon all persons assembled in the neighbourhood of the meeting-house to disperse; and the people are hereby warned, that should they disobey such order to disperse therefrom, proclamation under the Riot Act shall immediately be made, whereby any person so assembled whatsoever, or even conducting themselves in the most peaceable and quiet manner, are rendered liable to all the pains and penalties that are enforced against rioters and disturbers of the peace.

“ WM. MONTGOMERY.

“ ‘Sunday, 7th Jan., 1830.’

“[When Mr. Montgomery concluded reading this document, there were a movement and murmur throughout the meeting, proceeding apparently from great excitement of feeling. Mr. Montgomery was himself so much affected, that he was unable for several minutes to proceed.]

“The police then ordered Mr. Watson to go home. He declined doing so; and a sergeant of police, getting upon an eminence, read the Riot Act! Yes, the Riot Act was read to a Presbyterian minister and his people assembling peaceably to worship their God! Mr. Watson advanced, with the Holy Bible in his hand, towards the door of the house in which he had ministered for upwards of thirty years; and, on his attempting to enter, two soldiers prevented him with their crossed guns and bayonets! With a spirit which does him immortal honour, he pushed his arm between their weapons, and persisted in his purpose. They thrust him back, and threatened, if he would not retire, they would handcuff him; and one of them actually took off his glove, for the purpose of putting the threat into execution!”

The magistrate having returned, after some harsh language, ordered the minister into custody.

“He was seized accordingly, and dragged down the street under an armed guard! Meanwhile, the junior minister of Lisburn was proceeding on the opposite side of the street, attended by some ten or twenty people. Did he rush forward to his aged father, express his sorrow at the lamentable occurrence, ask if his coming there had in any way operated in bringing him into such a situation—and endeavour to mitigate the calamity? No, he did none of these things. We hear of a priest of old who passed by on the other side when he saw his neighbour in distress: this modern priest passed by on the other side also, went to the house of his brother, and preached—the Gospel!

“I shall here beg leave to read a letter from Mr. Watson, addressed to the Moderator of this Presbytery. It is a letter calculated to reflect honour on a Christian man:—

“DEAR SIR,—Under the distressing circumstances in which I am placed, the interest taken by you and my other brethren of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor in my situation is truly consoling to my heart. I must, however, decline taking any part in your Presbyterial meeting on Saturday next, either by myself or an elder; as I know not how far my doing so might affect the appeals which I intend to make to the justice of my country. It was very hard for me, when wishing to go into the Temple where I had officiated in the service of my God and my Saviour, to a willing and a happy people, for more than thirty years, to be threatened with handcuffs, and dragged away by the armed police like a felon! but I am convinced that God will not allow me to be brought to utter desolation in my old age for acting in obedience to my conscience. To my kind friends I commit myself for advice—to my country for justice—and to my Creator for support under every trial.

“It would be presumptuous in me to dictate the course you ought to pursue upon Saturday at your meeting; but I trust you will pardon me for suggesting that all your words and resolutions should be mild and Christian. Say nothing harsh of Mr. Montgomery of Rosemount. I hope he has acted under some false representations, and an irritated feeling; and that he may yet be brought to think better of his conduct, and to lament the course he has pursued. At all events, mildness becomes Christians, and especially Christian ministers. Even when compelled to assert our own rights, we should do it with the least possible injury to the characters and feelings of others.

“That you may be guided by that wisdom which is from above, is, dear sir, the sincere prayer of your faithful friend and brother,

“JOHN WATSON.

“‘Greyabbey, 12th Feb., 1830.’

“Mr. Montgomery concluded by moving the first resolution. His speech, as it was delivered, was one of the most pathetic appeals we have ever heard; and the strong expression of feeling that frequently burst out from the numerous and respectable audience proved the deep interest which it excited.

“Resolved—That, as it is the inalienable right of every Christian to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without penalty or privation inflicted by his fellow-man, we shall strenu-

ously exert ourselves, by all legal means, to secure this inestimable privilege to our unfortunate, suffering brother, the Rev. John Watson, and the congregation of Greyabbey."

This, with other similar resolutions, was enthusiastically adopted, several of the other ministers of Presbytery warmly expressing their feelings on the subject. The "Northern Whig" states—

"The meeting was very numerously attended by the influential and respectable inhabitants of the town, who listened to the proceedings throughout with the utmost attention, and gave unequivocal proof of the deep interest which they felt. At the recital of some of the treatment which Mr. Watson had experienced, many eyes not much accustomed to weeping were moistened with generous tears. The whole business was conducted in the most orderly manner."

In the next number of the "Northern Whig" a lengthened article appeared, headed—"More Wonders at Greyabbey!" giving a detail of subsequent proceedings, which might well appear to many to have been almost incredible. With this feeling, the writer says, ere concluding—"Let not our readers shake their heads, and think that the poor 'Whig' is gone mad, and that we have been detailing some melancholy scene of the dark ages. We pledge our characters that we have only stated what is both substantially and literally *true!*"

The "Whig" narrative, however, interesting and graphic as it is, being too lengthened for insertion here, the more condensed account in the "Bible Christian" for March, 1830, must supply its place.* It was apparently written by Montgomery, and proceeds as follows:—

"Taking up the narrative where the proceedings of the Presbytery left it, we have to state that Mr. Watson was not detained long in custody, but permitted to return to his home and family; and on the morning of the next Sabbath day, supposing that the wrath of man had passed away, and that, unmolested and undisturbed, he would be permitted to enter his own meeting-house to instruct his flock, and to raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving to the Giver of every good and

* "Bible Christian," March, 1830, pp. 99-105.

perfect gift, he left his house, which is about two miles from Greyabbey, and when he had proceeded about a quarter of a mile, conversing with his sons, he was suddenly surrounded by a *party of five armed police and made prisoner*, under a warrant from a magistrate, of which the following is a copy :—

“ ‘ *County of Down,* } “ ‘ By William Montgomery, Esq., one of his
 to wit } Majesty’s Justices of the *Peace*, in and for the
 _____) County of Down.

“ ‘ Whereas the Rev. John Watson of Ballyboly stands charged, upon oath, with rioting and inclining to riot at Greyabbey, in the said county, the *Sunday*, on 7th day of February inst., and also with obstructing the constables of police in the execution of their duty, and opposing them;—*These are, therefore*, in his Majesty’s name, requiring you forthwith to *apprehend* the body of the said John Watson, and so, if apprehended, bring before the next nearest of his Majesty’s Justices of *Peace* for the said county, that he may there enter into security to appear before the bench of magistrates assembled in Petty Sessions at Greyabbey, on Tuesday, the 16th inst., to answer the said charge; and also, that he shall, for the meantime, be of the *peace* and good behaviour to all his Majesty’s liege subjects, but more especially at Greyabbey aforesaid; and for so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant. Given under my hand and seal, at Greyabbey, this 12th day of February, 1830, thirty.

“ ‘ WILLIAM MONTGOMERY.

“ ‘ To the Constables of Police in the Barony of Ards, and all other chief and sub-constables in and for the said county, *these to execute.*’

“ Two of the police immediately proceeded to Greyabbey to inform the magistrate of their success, and to receive further instructions; and the other three carried Mr. Watson to his own house, where he was received by his wife and daughters with consternation, terror, and tears.

“ Between two and three o’clock the two constables returned from Greyabbey. They had been detained, we learn, because Mr. Montgomery was in the meeting-house hearing the Rev. JAMES MORGAN preaching; but, doubtless, according to his own *‘injunctions,’* Mr. M. was ‘avoiding all controversial points of doctrine, and strenuously instilling into the hearts of his hearers Christian charity and brotherly love!’ We learn that on the next day he boasted of having preached

to a respectable, regular congregation, without any disturbance or interruption.

“About three o’clock in the afternoon of *Sunday*, the five policemen carried him, by order of William Montgomery, Esq., to the seat of the nearest magistrate, N. D. Crommelin, Esq., about a mile distant. Mr. Crommelin was not at home, but was *expected*; and, in the meantime, Mr. Watson was accommodated with *standing room in his stable yard!* In this situation he remained in the midst of the police for *upwards of an hour*, when a servant maid invited him, out of compassion, *into the kitchen!* Poor wretch! he was fain to accept the proffered courtesy, and did rest his old and weary limbs amongst the menials of ‘The Castle!’ We declare it before our country, and before the world, that such was the treatment experienced by a most respectable minister of the Gospel, in the ‘first county in Ireland,’ upon the Lord’s Day!

“About five o’clock Mr. Crommelin came home, inspected the *warrant*, and asked Mr. Watson, ‘If he were come to give bail?’ ‘No,’ said this Christian hero, ‘I am not; I have done no wrong, I have committed no offence; for I will not admit that it is a *crime* to enter my own meeting-house to worship my Creator.’ Mr. Crommelin very wisely declined farther interference, and told the police to carry their prisoner to Mr. Montgomery at Greyabbey. It was now quite dark, and the poor, feeble old man had to *walk* through mud and cold, upwards of three miles, to the great man’s residence at Rosemount! He had not tasted refreshment of any kind since early morning, and it was now after six o’clock; the police made a signal at the door, a servant opened it, retired for orders, and returned, and said, ‘*Mr. Montgomery was at dinner, and would be seen when he had finished!*’ And where did the wretched, exhausted minister of Christ wait until *Dives* had finished his sumptuous repast? In the *kitchen*, perhaps? No; that would have been too much comfort: *he stood before the steps of the hall-door*, in a bitter, piercing blast, until the man who ordered ‘brotherly kindness and charity’ to be *preached* came out! He then ascended the steps, and the great man stood within. ‘Are you ready to give bail?’ ‘No; I have done no wrong,’ replied the humble man with the martyr’s spirit. ‘Will you promise to attend the Sessions on Tuesday?’ ‘No.’ ‘Well, then, you may go home now, as it is late; but if you don’t attend, the business will be proceeded on in your absence.’ ‘Very well, you may deal with me as you think proper.’ The great man turned into his room, and the minister of the Gospel, after being *eight hours a prisoner*, returned on foot to his afflicted family!

“We shall now insert the letter which Mr. Montgomery alleged as the ground on which he had proceeded in the whole of this affair :—

“‘GREYABBEY, 28th *January*, 1830.

“‘SIR,—In the name of the Presbytery of Bangor, assembled here this day, we beg to return you our best thanks for your kind permission to transact our business in the meeting-house ; but at the time your permission was communicated the Presbytery had retired under the vote of a majority, and as the business had at the time been nearly concluded, they terminated their business without doors. So far we speak in the name of the Presbytery. In what follows, the undersigned beg leave to speak in their own :—

“‘The Congregation of Greyabbey was erected in 1736, and the minister, Mr. Cochrane, was an Orthodox minister, as was the congregation. Of the intermediate ministers we need not speak ; but as Mr. Watson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Dromore, must have signed the Westminster Confession of Faith, there can be no question that he entered the congregation as an Orthodox minister. Now that Mr. Watson has been pleased to avow Arian sentiments, and connect himself with a body of avowed Arians, you are aware that a large portion of the congregation have been forced to withdraw from his ministry. Nearly one hundred seat-holders have applied to us for preaching, and we have accordingly appointed some of our members to supply them each succeeding Lord’s day. We therefore beg leave respectfully to request your countenance in retaining the original right of the Orthodox members of the congregation to the use of the meeting-house, which their fathers received for an Orthodox people for an Orthodox minister, under the patronage of your ancestors.

“‘The affairs of our Presbytery have detained us till so late an hour, that we have not been able to effect our original design of sending a deputation of our brethren to wait upon you in person.

“‘We have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servants,

“‘H. COOKE.

JAS. MORGAN.

GEO. BELLIS.

JAS. TEMPLETON.

JOHN MACAULAY.

ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

“‘To William Montgomery, Esq.’

“We cannot afford space for commenting upon this letter, in order to show its self-contradictions and falsehoods. Important as these are, we confess that, in our view, the most important point of all is, that this letter connects every individual that has signed it with the subsequent transactions. Thus one signature is that of the minister of

Donaghadee, who, therefore, in this letter, asks for Mr. M.'s countenance. This is at once afforded. Notice is given by Mr. Montgomery that Mr. Macaulay is to preach on the next Lord's day. He attends, and, after the violence offered to Mr. Watson, enters the house, under the protection of an armed force, and preaches.

“Mr. Henderson, the minister of Lisburn, attends on the following day, and, after meeting in the village Mr. Watson under the escort of the constabulary, enters his house and preaches. On the next, Mr. Morgan, a minister from Belfast, in full knowledge of the previous proceedings, goes through the same process. Not one of these objected at the time to the escort of an armed constabulary, or to the violence offered to a minister of the Gospel by the civil magistrate; nor did any of them, that we have heard of, make a single allusion in their sermons stating their ‘abhorrence’ of this line of conduct; but the last of the three, with the greatest complacency, preached in the presence of the magistrate who had acted thus, without expressing disapprobation or offering reproof. Would any of their Presbyterian ancestors have acted thus? Would they not have shed their own blood as martyrs before they would have entered any house of worship, at the will of a magistrate, under the protection of an armed force?

“But not the least remarkable part of these proceedings, is the conduct of the Synodical Presbytery of Bangor at their meeting in Belfast on Friday, the 26th ultimo. Five members of that Presbytery had signed the letter to Mr. Montgomery—Mr. Morgan had stated in print on the preceding Friday, that he neither condemned nor excused the conduct of Mr. Montgomery in arresting Mr. Watson—and after all this, the Presbytery came to a resolution, that, ‘as a Presbytery, and *as individuals*, we disclaim having at any time excited discord among the people. We disavow any participation whatever in the arrest of Mr. Watson, and we express our *abhorrence* at the treatment he received.’ These five ministers, as we are informed, were present at the meeting of that body, and one of them wrote and proposed the resolution.

“We cannot characterise this conduct as it deserves—but simply state the fact. They wrote to Mr. Montgomery for his countenance; availed themselves of it in the precise way in which he offered it; expressed no disapprobation until the whole kingdom was re-echoing the cry of ‘Shame!’ and then they wheel round, and leave Mr. Montgomery to make the best fight he can.

“This remarkable case, which is not yet all brought to light, will excite the wonder of distant readers, and may convince the Presbyterians of Ulster that the spirit of party is one thing and the spirit of

Christianity another. We wonder how men, more especially ministers, can venture on such tergiversations, and endeavour at the same time to give a sanctimonious air to their proceedings. Some of our reputed Orthodox divines are involved in such complexities and contradictions, that the utmost exertion of priestcraft cannot place them on a straight-forward path.

“Jesus Christ says, ‘No man can serve two masters.’ The Westminster Confession of Faith says, ‘The civil magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed.’

“The General Synod says, ‘That if any person thus licensed be afterwards found not to preach the doctrines of the Trinity, original sin, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, or to avow any principles in opposition to these doctrines, he shall not be continued in fellowship with this body.’

“William Montgomery, Esq., the magistrate, says, ‘The ministers appointed by the Presbytery of Bangor have my permission to perform divine service in the meeting-house of Greyabbey, under the proviso, that they shall *abstain from all controversial points of doctrine.*’

“Messrs. Macaulay of Donaghadee, Henderson of Lisburn, and Morgan of Belfast *did preach* in Greyabbey under this injunction; and which of these *three masters*—whether Jesus Christ, the General Synod, or William Montgomery—they were obeying, let them state if they can! Let them read the document which they signed in conjunction with three of their allies, and sent to Mr. Montgomery of Rosemount, and which begins—‘*In the name of the Presbytery of Bangor;*’ let them read Mr. Montgomery’s common-sense view of this document, ‘I have, therefore, acceded, with certain modifications, to the *request of the Presbytery of Bangor;*’ let them read Mr. Morgan’s comment on the document*—‘After the Presbytery had *adjourned and separated*, the people requested us to give them a letter to the landlord of the house; we did so—*not in the name of the Presbytery;*’ and let them add to this his marvellous expression, ‘It does not belong to us either to *condemn or excuse* it (Mr. Watson’s arrest), *for we are in no way concerned in it.*’ Neither to condemn or excuse the arrest of a fellow-minister!—wonderful indifference! No way concerned in his arrest, after writing to a magistrate, slandering his opinions, and occupying by force of arms his pulpit for three Sabbaths! What a miraculous change has taken place upon these Orthodox divines within

* Rev. James Morgan’s letter to the “Northern Whig,” 18th February, 1830.

these few days. Though they were no way concerned in the arrest of Mr. Watson, nor did in any way condemn or excuse the harsh treatment he received when they were in full occupation of his meeting-house, and *confined to moral subjects* by the *ipse dixit* of a magistrate, yet their dispossession from his pulpit, and the consequent affliction, has prematurely brought on the new birth. We cast light upon their conduct and consistency by repeating the following resolution, which was not forced on them, but which they carried in Presbytery on Friday last by their own unspeakable ingenuity:—

“ ‘ Resolved—That, as a Presbytery, and as individuals, we disclaim having at any time excited discord among the people ; we disavow any participation whatever in the arrest of Mr. Watson ; and we express *our abhorrence* of the treatment he received.’ ”

On the next page appears an

“ EXPLANATORY LETTER OF WM. MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

“ The following letter, addressed to the Rev. H. Montgomery, we consider so honourable to Mr. Montgomery of Rosemount, so well calculated to illustrate the character of the arts by which he was duped, and so likely to satisfy the public mind as to the propriety of the moderate and Christian course about to be pursued by Mr. Watson and the Remonstrants, that we have great pleasure in laying it before our readers :—

“ ‘ GREYABBEY, 26th Feb., 1830.

“ ‘ SIR,—I have to thank you for transmitting to me the copy of the Minutes of the General Synod held at Cookstown, in 1828, and also the book of 1829.

“ ‘ These documents and your very civil communication have completely opened my eyes to the deceits that have been practised upon me. No man, unless his errors be intentional, can, or ought to be ashamed of acknowledging them ; and I am free to admit that the representations which had been made to me, from a quarter and in a manner that I could hardly discredit, gave me a most false impression of the conduct and proceedings of the Remonstrants in this parish. I now feel myself called upon to give you the most ample assurance that those erroneous impressions are completely erased from my mind ; at the same time hoping that you may be induced to accept the apology which I now with perfect sincerity offer, for having ever entertained them. That my motives should have been misapprehended by you is most natural, as certainly appearances were strongly against me. I am

little known beyond my own private circle; my pursuits have been such as not to place me before the public, nor am I at all ambitious of that distinction; but those who are acquainted with my disposition well know, that of all men I am the last who would ever listen to a suggestion which I thought could in the slightest manner infringe on the liberty of the subject, much less exercise my authority as a magistrate with an oppressive intention, or to promote party views. In the conversation I had last week with you, I mentioned that it was farthest from my intention at any time to interfere with religious disputes, or, in this instance, to take any part, as was imagined, with the Synod. This statement I now give to you under my hand, confirmed by the assurance that I am about to have the some-time promised lease of this meeting-house drawn up, to be granted in trust, for the congregation of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor. I have attentively examined the Overtures and Protest—I have compared them with the Westminster form of Presbyterian Church Government, and am sure it must be evident to the weakest understanding that the Overtures are in direct contradiction of that code. I shall only add, that so perfectly am I convinced of their being subversive of the liberty of Presbyterianism, that were I a member of your Church, while I declare myself a Trinitarian in *Faith*, though certainly not according to the *doctrine* of the Westminster Confession, I should most assuredly be a zealous Remonstrant.

“ I trust that you will permit me to subscribe myself, now and for the future, my dear sir, with esteem, your sincerely obliged,

“ WM. MONTGOMERY.

“ P.S.—I beg you may consider yourself at full liberty to make whatever use of this letter you please.’

“ We have also seen an official letter from Mr. Montgomery of Rosemount, in which he proposes, in the most becoming and gentlemanlike spirit, to make every proper reparation to Mr. Watson, with regard to legal expenses and the injury done to his feelings.”

Meantime, the Rev. James Morgan had written to the papers the letter above referred to in attempted explanation and defence of his position and conduct. He had acted under the instigation of Cooke, and allowed himself to become his too ready instrument in proceedings most justly to be reprobated, and utterly irreconcilable with that character for piety and peace for which

it seemed to be his ambition to become distinguished *par excellence* amongst his brethren; and now he felt himself writhing under well-merited exposure, and a strong measure of public indignation. His letter of 18th February was weak and laboured, while utterly futile as an attempt to escape. Montgomery replied on February 24th, in a long and most powerful letter, administering such a castigation as his opponent had never before, and except in his second letter following, never after received. His critical dissection and exposure of the joint letter of Messrs. Cooke, Morgan, and the other four ministers of January 28th to Mr. Montgomery of Rosemount, written partly in the name of the Presbytery and partly in their own, was done with masterly point and vigour, and is altogether unanswerable.

Two days afterwards (February 26th) the Synodical Presbytery of Bangor met in Belfast, and in the very teeth of Mr. Morgan's statement of the 18th passed a series of resolutions *written by him*, the third of which has been previously quoted. Under cover of these extraordinary resolutions, appeared his reply to Montgomery's letter. It was a long and weak attempt to turn attention from the serious and irrefutable charges against him, by endeavouring to represent Montgomery as having written under the influence of "passion," and speaking of his letter as a "*scold*." But he was not to be withstood. A terrible rejoinder appeared, in which, under ten or twelve distinct heads of accusation, his opponent (Mr. Morgan) and his party were arraigned, and the several charges driven home with tremendous power. These two letters of Montgomery were re-published in broad-sheet, extensively circulated through the three kingdoms, and certainly served to intensify the public indignation against the Greyabbey persecutors.

The mention of these unhappy events, needful to the course of this history, has been truthfully made from the published records of the time; and, while it is trusted that "naught has been set down in malice," no pretence of a singular and mistaken charity has been allowed to screen conduct which appears

to have been blameworthy. It is but fair to say that the late Dr. Morgan (whose eminent success in the ministerial office commends the record of his life to the most thoughtful consideration), has, in his autobiography, recently edited by his son, given his own account of his connexion with the proceedings at Greyabbey, endeavouring naturally to make the best of his case. But even he himself admits that his—

“Position was a most unfortunate and suspicious one.”
 “I was greatly blamed and abused, and defended myself in the public newspapers, but it was under great difficulties.” “All the blame was cast upon me and those who acted with me.” “*I had been drawn into a false position.*” “It was admitted that it would have been well if I had not occupied the pulpit. It was a matter for thankfulness that no injurious impression was made on my own congregation.” “*If I erred, God graciously pardoned and accepted me.*” “It is now forty years since this circumstance occurred, and it is fresh in my memory! Probably there is no other living person who now thinks of it! The present generation have not even heard of it!”

It is to be feared that the wish was here father to the thought, and that Dr. Morgan laid far too flattering an unction to his soul. He had doubtless strong personal reasons to keep these events green in his own memory for forty years. But they have not been forgotten by others either. “These things were not done in a corner;” they left their mark too deeply on the time to be effaced so quickly; and though many other records of that time are passed away, the history of the “*Greyabbey persecution,*” and of the part taken therein by the minister of Fisherwick Place, Belfast, is still fresh as the events of yesterday in the memory of living men and women who have seen that day; and, handed from living sire to son, is “familiar as household words” to many of the present generation of the Remonstrant Presbyterians of Ulster.

The persecutions experienced by the Remonstrants in Greyabbey and Narrow-water, in County Down, and by the several congregations in Ballycarry, Templepatrick, Cairncastle, and Glenarm, in the County Antrim, were rapidly productive of

effects, which must have been as unexpected by the Orthodox as they were gratifying to the Remonstrant party. Public opinion and public sympathy became excited to a remarkable degree in behalf of the Remonstrants and condemnation of their persecutors. The Greyabbey case especially furnished the theme for numerous reports and many caustic or indignant articles in the newspapers; while certain of the influential liberal periodicals of the day—amongst others, the “Monthly Repository” and the “Christian Pioneer” *—gave especial prominence to the subject.

The establishment of the “BIBLE CHRISTIAN,” extracts from the first and second numbers of which have been already given, comes next under consideration, as a direct result of the Remonstrant separation, and the proceedings of the Orthodox majority. These proceedings and the gross misrepresentations of the “Orthodox Presbyterian” rendered the establishment of a counter-publication on the part of the Remonstrants a necessary measure for their vindication and defence. Accordingly, on 1st February, 1830, appeared the first number of the “Bible Christian,” a monthly periodical, “designed to advocate the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment in

* To the “Christian Pioneer,” a monthly periodical published in Scotland, the Remonstrants owed a deep debt of gratitude for its long-continued, earnest, and influential support. It was conducted by the Rev. George Harris, then Unitarian minister of Glasgow, and afterwards of Newcastle-on-Tyne, no less eminent as an enthusiastic religious and social reformer, and devoted friend of liberty, than as an accomplished and eloquent divine. Through a close similarity of sentiment on most subjects of importance, he became much drawn to Montgomery, whom he greatly resembled both in mind and person; and a cordial friendship resulted between them. Besides editing the “Christian Pioneer,” Mr. Harris published many admirable discourses on controversial subjects, a number of popular tracts, and several important pamphlets on leading social questions of the day. The “Bible Christian,” in a notice of one of his earlier discourses, thus speaks of him (Vol I., p. 534)—“Mr. Harris is a gentleman equally distinguished for his eloquence and his zeal. . . . We honour the intrepid devotedness with which, almost single-handed, he has assailed the confederated hosts of error in Scotland. By the aid of the ‘Christian Pioneer,’ his extraordinary pulpit eloquence, and his unabating toil, he has eminently contributed to the growth of Unitarianism in a most uncongenial soil. His opinions are rapidly spreading in various parts of North Britain.”

matters of faith." In the Prospectus it is stated that it was got up as a measure of "*self-defence*" by "some of the late minority of the Synod, and other friends of religious truth and liberty." The design and scope of the publication are well set forth in the following paragraph:—

"Assuming it as incontrovertible, that Moses and the prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ and His inspired followers, taught all that was necessary of divine truth 'for the salvation of sinners,' and 'shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God,' in terms sufficiently explicit and intelligible, the conductors of the 'Bible Christian' will not contend for the peculiar views of Arius or Athanasius, of Arminius or Calvin, but humbly endeavour to maintain the authority of the sacred Scriptures as the only infallible standard of faith, worship, and duty. Resting upon this immovable foundation, they will strenuously advocate the right of private judgment, explain the true principles of Presbyterianism, maintain the privileges of pastors and people, and endeavour to separate the genuine doctrines of the Bible from the 'traditions and commandments of men.'"

Issuing on such principles, and with such purposes, and conducted with remarkable spirit and ability, it may be here briefly noted that the "Bible Christian" quickly secured a large measure of popular favour, and obtained a very extensive circulation, not only in the North of Ireland, but in various quarters of the three kingdoms. It numbered amongst its contributors many of the most eminent and enlightened members, lay and clerical, of the several Non-Subscribing Churches in Ireland (the Presbytery of Antrim and Synod of Munster, as well as the Remonstrants), whose powerful writings in advocacy and defence of their Scriptural principles were read with avidity by multitudes far and near. It continued to be during fifteen years the recognised organ of the liberal Christian Churches in the North of Ireland—the powerful and consistent exponent of the doctrines of Bible Christianity, pure and simple, by which they were distinguished. It became the repository of a vast and ever-accumulating store of the results of the most valuable theological scholarship and accurate, yet reverent, criticism for the exposition and illustra-

tion of Scripture; while its pages were aglow with the spirit of true zeal, practical piety, and exalted devotion. And it proved itself to the last the fearless, uncompromising, and successful defender of Christian Liberty and Christian Truth.

Its editorial management was entrusted to a committee of three gentlemen eminently fitted for the task. They were—Henry Montgomery, Fletcher Blakely, and William Bruce. The first two years of the publication were issued under their joint-editorship. In the third year, Mr. J. Scott Porter, who had then become junior pastor of the First Congregation, Belfast, was associated with them in the management till the close of the fourth year, when the further superintendence of the work was confided to his individual responsibility.

As to Montgomery's contributions to the earlier volumes of the "Bible Christian," it would be impossible at this distance of time accurately to ascertain them all, and it is not desirable to hazard mere conjectures. It is, however, pretty certain that the "Prospectus," from which the foregoing extracts have been taken, was from his pen, and also the "Introductory Remarks" by which it is followed. The "Creed of an Arian" * he afterwards avowed and republished with his name. It commanded a very large circulation, and went through several editions. He was the author, in Vol. I., of three most powerful reviews of the "Synodical Overtures," with the subscription—"Sigma;" and also of three subsequent articles, entitled, "The Remonstrant Synod and 'The Orthodox Presbyterian,'" and signed "A Remonstrant." These last, written in his most trenchant style, and with unanswerable force of argument, were meant to defend the Remonstrant Synod and the Resolutions constituting its Fundamental Principles against the attacks of Cooke, writing in the "Orthodox Presbyterian." It was still the old battle of the Chiefs, no longer meeting at close quarters in Synod, but sullenly pounding at each other with heavy guns from the centres of their respective positions!

To Vol. II. (1831) he contributed a series of four "Letters to

* Appendix F—"The Creed of an Arian" (1830), 1841.

the Presbyterians of Ireland," signed "Christianus," as deeply important in their contents as they were comprehensive in their application. They contained such a multitude of sage counsels and earnest exhortations for the zealous perseverance, united practical working, and true prosperity of the Non-Subscribing interests in Ireland, as leads one to regret that space will not here permit their being rescued from the dust of the past, and offered anew for the guidance of a succeeding race. An article in the same volume exposing the nature and proceedings of "The Continental Society," and a subsequent "Letter to the Rev. John Edgar," in relation to the same subject, both of most caustic severity, were also written by him. Several other interesting papers bear a strong resemblance to his characteristic style, and many of the items of denominational intelligence and references to ecclesiastical proceedings were doubtless supplied by him.

Of able coadjutors there was no lack. Of the many talented contributors to these opening volumes, both from North and South, the learned and venerable Dr. Bruce, in his celebrated series of nine papers, entitled, "A Review of some modern Synods," as well as various other articles equally interesting and instructive, under the well-known signatures of "Erasmus" and "Nemo," was *facile princeps*. After him followed his son, William Bruce, as "V. D. M.," &c.; F. Blakely, probably as "Philaethes"—if not "Ereunetes;" J. Mitchel ("J. M."); Wm. Porter, and Dr. Armstrong (Dublin), in their own names; with, it is believed, Rev. George Armstrong (Bingfield), afterwards of Bristol, and a host of others, both ministers and laymen.

From the last mentioned * Montgomery received at this time a gratifying letter on the subject of the "Bible Christian," from which the following are extracts:—

"BINGFIELD, CROSDONEY, *January 6th, 1830.*

"DEAR SIR,—I have been given to understand, and I have heard it with no slight satisfaction, that you and your liberal friends in the

* The Rev. George Armstrong, formerly Incumbent of Bangor, in the Diocese of Down, and afterwards one of the ministers of Lewin's-Mead Unitarian Chapel, Bristol.

North have resolved upon instituting a periodical for the purpose of sustaining the cause which you have already so nobly vindicated in your memorable struggles with the Synod. I most ardently hope that this excellent measure may produce all the good consequences you contemplate, and that you will find many energetic hands ready and eager to co-operate in this good work, even in the compass of our own island. . . . We can hardly doubt that, for a time at least, the task you propose to yourselves, will be far from encouraging in point of pecuniary profit, or even indemnity. Error has her hosts too thickly arrayed, and too diligently marshalled, to be susceptible at once of any impressions you can yet bring to bear upon her.

“Nevertheless the preparations should be formidable; the *capacity* to rout the bigot troops which are opposed to you, if you have only perseverance, cannot be doubted; and, therefore, to leave metaphor, one of the most important of all duties which can now devolve on the friends of religious freedom and liberal enquiry in this country, is to inspirit the richer members of that class to be generous and hearty in their support of those who are anxious to contribute largely of *their* riches—the riches of the intellect—in this great and truly Christian cause. . . . For myself, be assured that, whenever I have the opportunity, I shall esteem it a high compliment to be permitted to assist your pages to the best of my humble ability. . . .

“With every good wish for your personal welfare in particular, and for the happy issue of the great and righteous struggle in which you are so honourably conspicuous, I beg to remain, dear sir, your faithful servant,

“GEO. ARMSTRONG.”

In this connexion may be also mentioned his reception at this period of a congratulatory letter from Dr. Lant Carpenter of Bristol—to whom Mr. Armstrong afterwards became colleague—in the following terms:—

“BRISTOL, 14th Dec., 1829.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I wish to congratulate you and your band of brothers on your emancipation, and to express the sentiments I entertain respecting the course you have pursued. It will furnish an interesting and instructive page in the annals of religious liberty. . . . I have been much disappointed at seeing no *regular* record of the transactions in Ulster in the “Monthly Repository.” If no one else does it, I must send some documents as a matter of history. Accept

Mrs. C.'s and my daughter's* respects; and believe me, with cordial regard, your faithful friend and brother,

“LANT CARPENTER.”

Another event, closely connected with the proceedings which led to the establishment of the “Bible Christian,” if not in some measure also resulting from them, was the formation about this time of “The Irish Unitarian Christian Society,” a prospectus of which had been issued by its promoters some months previously, bearing the name of the Secretary, the Rev. James Martineau, then junior minister of Eustace Street Congregation, Dublin. The principles of the Society were stated to be, amongst others—

“That all human formularies of faith encroach on the right of private judgment, and virtually deny the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

“That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is strictly and *personally* one.”

The objects chiefly contemplated were—“The production of sympathy and co-operation amongst Unitarians. The circulation of Unitarian books and tracts; and, if possible, the employment or aid of missionaries to promote the views of Unitarian Christianity.”

On the 17th March, 1830, an influential meeting was held in Dublin for its formation. The first speaker was the eloquent and learned Dr. Drummond of Strand Street, who said that—

“The day had at length arrived to which his hopes had long been directed, when Unitarianism was to be recognised by its own name in the house of its own friends. . . . In the resolution which he held in his hand it was stated that Unitarians were called on to unite by the exigencies of the times. In order to judge of those exigencies, let his hearers look to the North of Ireland. . . . He then described the late transactions at Greyabbey with an energy which must have awakened a kindred indignation in every generous hearer; and after reading, to the evident satisfaction of the meeting, the assurance contained in the last ‘Monthly Repository,’ of the

* Miss Mary Carpenter, whose life-long devotion to labours of benevolence, at home and abroad, has rendered her name equally revered and illustrious.

sympathy of the English Unitarians with their persecuted brethren, concluded by moving the first resolution."

He was followed by his colleague, the Rev. Dr. Armstrong, and Messrs. Andrew Carmichael, Joseph Hone, and William Porter, second son of Mr. Porter of Newtownlimavady, who then gave evidence of the powers of dignified and commanding eloquence for which he afterwards became so distinguished; while the Rev. James Martineau gave mingled grace and strength to the cause he advocated by the finished arguments and classic beauty of his oratory. The organisation of the society was completed by the appointment of an influential committee, with Mr. Martineau as secretary.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

1830.

First Annual Meeting of Remonstrant Body—Montgomery's Inaugural Sermon—Exordium—"Sincerity of Heart"—Historical Outline—Objections to the Overtures—Conclusion—Rev. Wm. Porter Moderator—His Opening Address—Appointed permanent Clerk—Mr. Blakely Clerk *pro tem.*—Roll of Ministers and Elders—Reading and Adoption of "Fundamental Principles"—"Constitution" of "THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER"—Addresses of Members—Mr. Mitchel's Sermon—Dr. Bruce, &c., invited "to sit and deliberate"—Reports of Presbyteries—Licentiates and Students—Committees—Memorial of Narrow-water Congregation—Resolution of Synod—Speech and Motion of Mr. Glendy—Seconded by Dr. Bruce—Montgomery receives the Thanks of Synod—His Emotion—Letters of Encouragement—Thanks of Synod to Belfast Congregations and Synod of Munster—Proposal to form a "Presbyterian Fund"—Its Objects—Synodical Appointments—Conclusion of Meeting—Reflections.

ON Tuesday, 25th May, 1830, the first annual meeting of the Remonstrant ministers and the representatives of their congregations took place in the meeting-house of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast. "The house was filled with a highly respectable and attentive audience, and the interest excited was intense." The proceedings were opened by the Rev. Henry Montgomery, who, after conducting devotional exercises, preached the inaugural discourse from Psalms li. 6—"Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." As it would be impossible in a mere outline to do justice to this fine discourse, it will be more desirable to supply from it such extracts as space will permit. The commencement was as follows:—

"FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—I am neither insensible of the honour nor the difficulty of the task which has been assigned to me upon the

present occasion. It is truly gratifying to have been selected to deliver the introductory discourse, at the installation of a new Religious Association, before men who have obeyed the sacred dictates of conscience amidst obloquy and peril, and who have firmly resolved ‘to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free;’ but it is no easy matter to choose for consideration, out of the multitude of ideas which crowd upon the mind, subjects which may vindicate our own principles and proceedings, without reflecting harshly upon those of others.

“I confess, too, that now, when the crisis has arrived—when the hour of separation has come—when the indignant feelings excited by injurious enactments and uncourteous expressions have greatly subsided—there is something which gathers round the heart with an icy chillness, in preparing to break asunder the ties of early and long-cherished associations! The captive has been known to weep in bidding farewell to his dungeon and the inmates of his prison-house, even when the cheering breeze of liberty was beginning to fan his pallid cheek; and it cannot be thought strange, that we should experience a temporary depression of spirits in the hour of our separation from the General Synod of Ulster—a body with which our earliest dreams of usefulness and honour were associated—a body upon which we once looked with pride as the model of a genuine Christian Church, equally respecting the rights of conscience in individuals, securing the privileges of congregations, and promoting the general interests of religion—a body, which, notwithstanding its late melancholy declension, still contains many kind hearts and liberal minds that deeply sympathise in our wrongs, and deplore the existence of recent enactments, which the fatuity of the multitude and the peculiarity of their own circumstances rendered them unable to resist.

“But, whilst our feelings, our habits, and our interests all unite to render the separation painful in *one* sense, there are higher sentiments which make us rejoice that we are endowed with fortitude to sacrifice our prepossessions, our sympathies, and (in many cases) our temporal comforts, upon the holy altar of truth and duty. With our brethren of the Synod we have remonstrated, we have reasoned, we have pleaded, that they might be induced to retrace their steps, and to rescind those injurious regulations which we *know* to have been passed in the open violation of the most solemn laws, the most salutary usages, and the most honourable engagements, and which we *believe* to be equally opposed to the genius of Presbyterianism, the liberty of Christians, and the spirit of the Gospel. We have published to the world, and we reiterate the declaration, that we scrupulously observed, and are

still willing to observe every compact, either written or implied, into which we ever entered with the Synod of Ulster. If our best exertions have failed to secure 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'—if distraction, and misery, and reviling, and hatred, and divisions have spread over our once peaceful province, we call the Christian public to witness that *we* are guiltless in these affairs. We come to the business of this day with *reluctant hearts*, but *determined minds*; we halt not between two opinions; we know that 'the Lord He is God,' and we are resolved 'to serve Him.' We owe it to ourselves, to our children, to our country, to our kind, to our religion, to the great King and Head of the Church, to the Omniscient Searcher of hearts, who 'desireth purity in the inward parts,' to speak and act this day as it becometh *honest men*. Our numbers are comparatively small, but we are 'a city set upon a hill;' the eyes of millions are directed towards us; and coming generations, to the latest posterity, may be influenced by our firmness, our prudence, and our integrity. As individuals, we are of little importance; but as a public body, connected with passing events, associated with the religious and moral improvement of the people, and standing in the very Thermopyke of Presbyterianism, we acquire a relative value of no trifling magnitude; and there is not one of us who can desert the post which he occupies, or slumber upon it for a single hour, without injuring the cause which he has engaged to defend. Inconsiderable though we are, where would have been the boasted privileges of Presbyterians this day in Ulster had we been weak enough to have fallen into the snares that were laid for us, or base enough to have quailed under the terrors of temporal loss which were brought in array against us, by those who desired to 'lord it over God's heritage?' The Presbytery of Antrim, indeed, would have existed—a small band of learned, virtuous, Christian men—but their little territory of light and liberty would have been overshadowed by the surrounding darkness, and constantly exposed to the harassing inroads of dexterous and implacable opponents. In occupying, however, the ground which we have taken, we *claim* and we *deserve* no merit; for we have only feebly and imperfectly discharged our duty. To our Heavenly Father we are truly grateful that He enabled us to maintain our integrity in the midst of trials—to our people we are thankful for the affectionate manner in which they rallied round us and cheered us, in despite of all the odious and unworthy arts which have been used to detach them from us—and to tens of thousands of liberal Christians, in all Churches, we are deeply indebted for their generous sympathy in our exertions and sufferings.

“We trust and believe that we have experienced this support, because ‘He who desireth truth in the inward parts’ knoweth that we are *sincere*. This is all the merit we claim; and we think it will be accorded to us, even by our most determined opponents. Infallibility of judgment we do not arrogate, either by our words or by our actions; for we freely admit that we may be in error. Perfection of character we do not boast; for we know that ‘no man liveth and sinneth not,’ and we have doubtless the ordinary portion of human infirmities. Unblamableness of temper we cannot claim; for we are well aware that amidst the agitations of the world we have not always ‘possessed our souls in patience.’ But we do hope that our title to religious sincerity will not be disputed. Were we sailing down the stream of life with the favouring breeze of popular favour, were the smiles of fashion and the approbation of power lavished upon our exertions, and were our religious profession conducive to our worldly interests, our *sincerity* might be most easily *suspected*. But when all these circumstances are exactly reversed; when the multitude are taught to look upon us with horror; when fashion and power are equally our foes; and when every individual amongst us has experienced distress of mind, alienation of friends, undeserved reproach, or temporal loss, in consequence of the course which he has pursued, we must be worse than deranged if our *profession* do not accord with our principles.”

He then entered into an animated and most powerful Scriptural argument in favour of sincerity of heart as the root and foundation of true religion, and in opposition to assumed infallibility of judgment; bringing his views most forcibly to bear in describing the character of a genuine Gospel ministry, and dwelling on the solemn responsibility devolving on those selecting persons for the sacred office. “On their solemn approach to the holy altar of dedication, no worldly bias or interest should be permitted to sway them on the one hand, no temporal privation or penalty to influence them on the other. Their eyes should be directed straight forward to the bright regions of faith, of hope, and of charity.” Then placing in most striking contrast with this the dedication of candidates to the ministry in Orthodox churches requiring uniformity of faith, he thus continued:—

“Looking upon *sincerity*, therefore, as the very essence of acceptable

religion, with which even error may be sanctified, and *without* which even knowledge and faith are but ‘as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal,’ I base my entire opposition to the Synodical Overtures of 1828 upon their direct, powerful, and inevitable tendency to produce time-serving and hypocrisy amongst the ministers of the Presbyterian Church.” “I feel myself imperatively bound to withdraw from all participation in a system which, according to my decided conviction, thus poisons religion in its very source, and provides for the continued pollution of the stream. I do not at present say that the authorised doctrines of the Synod are erroneous, or that perfectly conscientious men may not entirely approve of the very measures which I consider so injurious; but I do say that with my views, both of the doctrines and of the means by which they have been enforced, I should be the very time-serving hypocrite whom I abhor, did I continue longer in connexion with that body.”

Going on to assign his reasons for coming to this conclusion, he gave, in graphic outline, a masterly review of the proceedings of the Synod of Ulster for the three previous years. Having described the imposition of the test at Strabane in 1827, he said—

“From that day I lost all hope of a regeneration of the Synod of Ulster, at least for many years to come. With public bodies as with individuals, the first step in error is frequently fatal. There is a pride, an obstinacy, a passion that prevents reformation. I saw, and said, that the scene at Strabane was only the ‘beginning of sorrows’—a mere trial experiment to ascertain what might farther be attempted.”

Having next referred to and read in detail the obnoxious “Overtures” of 1828 (see pp. 181-2), he commented upon them at length, arranging his formidable objections under twelve heads, as follows:—

“1. They were enacted in violation of custom. 2. They were enacted in violation of law. 3. They were enacted in violation of solemn compact and understanding. 4. They are opposed to the fundamental principles of Protestantism. 5. They proceed upon the assumption of infallibility. 6. They imply the doctrine of exclusive salvation. 7. They virtually deny the authority of Christ as the sole King and Head of the Church. 8. The Synodical Committee which they appoint consists of some nine or ten ministers really under the

control of two or three—a secret and ‘*heart-probing*’ conclave. 9. Their interference with ordained ministers is a system of espionage, degrading the character of preaching. 10. They break faith with licentiates, to whom they are deceptive and unjust. 11. They strip Presbyteries of their legitimate power. 12. They rob the people of their rights.”

After powerfully enforcing these several objections, he thus continued:—

“Can you wonder then, my Christian friends, that we should leave the Synod of Ulster? Others, entertaining different views of church power, and not so intimately acquainted as we are with the working of the machinery, may honestly remain in it—and many excellent men do remain—but without personal degradation, and a base dereliction of the most sacred principles and duties, *we* could not continue in connexion with a Church which, in our estimation, ‘has forsaken its first love,’ and adopted measures eminently destructive of Christian liberty and Christian sincerity.

“We are willing, we are anxious to conciliate in all things not involving the surrender of conscience. We are willing, we are anxious to meet them upon affectionate terms, on all neutral ground—in ministerial communion, in the courtesies of social life, in carrying forward all plans for the dissemination of the Gospel and the advancement of public happiness. We are willing to join them in all things not involving the sacrifice of our integrity, and our allegiance to the great King and Head of the Church.

“Our principles are few and simple; the Bible is our creed; the mind of every Christian the only authorised interpreter. ‘Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.’ ‘I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.’

“We will acknowledge and receive in the bonds of fellowship every man of fair character and regular education, who admits the ‘Divine authority’ of the Sacred Volume, and who ‘confesseth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’

“We find no other terms of communion in the Bible—we will exact no other terms from our brethren—we will permit no other yoke to be placed upon our own necks.”

Then, after enumerating and dwelling upon the several obstacles and encouragements respectively which they might expect to meet with, he continued—

“Numbers, power, influence, are against us. We *may* suffer—many of us *have* suffered; but the issue in coming years cannot be doubtful. ‘The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.’ The present generation may witness our calamities—succeeding generations will do justice to our principles. The sun may be obscured by clouds, but his glory is unimpaired; the thunder, the darkness, the tempest pass away.”

Expanding the similitude, he concluded his discourse with a glowing and most impressive peroration, maintaining that, few though the numbers, and small the apparent influence of the Remonstrants, their struggle was not for themselves alone—was for no narrow or personal interests. It was in the great broad cause of truth and liberty, of private virtue and public happiness. It was the cause, therefore, not of one sect or locality, but, in the great principles and interests at stake, of their whole country and its people; not of Ireland alone, but of the British empire—yea, the cause of the world at large, and of the whole family of man.

He was afterwards requested by the Remonstrant Synod to publish this discourse, and consented to do so, but the publication did not take place.

Having constituted the body by prayer, he proposed the appointment of a Moderator for the year, and the Rev. William Porter was unanimously chosen the first Moderator of the new society.* His opening address, on taking the chair, was not only

* The honour thus most fittingly accorded to this distinguished man by the unanimous consent of his brethren, on an occasion of such importance, seems to offer a desirable opportunity for placing on record a brief and necessarily inadequate tribute to his excellence. Though possibly tinged with a very excusable partiality, the writer of the beautiful article devoted to him in the series of “Synodical Portraits” in the “Northern Whig,” was probably not far wrong in applying to him the words of Shakespeare with which the notice is headed—

“This is the noblest Roman of them all.

* * * * *

His life is gentle, and the elements

So mixed in him, that nature might stand up

And say to all the world, *This is a man!*”

The character and talents of the venerable William Porter reflected no less honour upon the Remonstrant Church, when he stood forth, as its first Moderator,

remarkably impressive in itself, but signally important as a manifesto of the character and objects of the Remonstrant organisation. He said:—

“Most of us, my Christian brethren and friends, have long been in the habit of witnessing the convention of Synods and Presbyteries. Such assemblies are things of frequent occurrence, and are seldom calculated to excite great intensesness of interest. The present meeting, however, is one of no ordinary character. It is marked by circumstances of a peculiar nature, which can hardly fail to make the

to enounce its foundation principles of Christian Truth and Liberty, than they had been from the days of his youth an ornament and a grace to the General Synod of Ulster. He was truly described by his friend Montgomery, on a public occasion, at that period, as—“A man above all praise, whose amiability of heart and kindness of manner are the admiration of his friends; and whose firmness, integrity, and incorruptible honour are the proud boast of all who have ever heard his name pronounced as the able and fearless champion of the rights of conscience.”

A native of Omagh, in County Tyrone, born of strictly Calvinistic parents, and brought up for the ministry, he returned, at the close of his collegiate education in Glasgow and Edinburgh, a confirmed advocate of the “New Light” faith—acquired after much serious reflection and impartial investigation of Scripture evidence. Early placed as minister of the congregation of Newtownlimavady, he remained during all his life with his first charge, the isolation of the locality serving only to enhance the mutual devotion of pastor and people, having declined in their favour the overtures of Dr. Black for his removal to Londonderry. His marked abilities soon acquired him distinction in the General Synod. In 1813 and following years his powerful eloquence and intrepid devotion were mainly instrumental in rescuing the Synod from the *political* bondage under which it had long suffered, and the tyranny of an imperious dictator; while in his later life we have seen the faithful exercise of the same high qualities procure him an honoured and leading place in the noble struggle to maintain the *spiritual* freedom of the Presbyterian Church; and, failing that, safely to remove his Remonstrant brethren and himself from what had now become a house of darker and more fatal bondage, and to found for them a new home of Christian liberty and peace. For thirteen years Clerk of the General Synod, he resigned the office amidst the warmly expressed regrets even of his greatest opponents; and for a similar period, till his death, he held the Clerkship of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. He died in a good old age in September, 1843; but his talents and virtues are still kept alive to the community in his distinguished sons—the Rev. J. Scott Porter of Belfast, and the Hon. William Porter, till lately Attorney-General at the Cape of Good Hope, who has returned to pass the evening of a highly esteemed and meritorious life in the society of his kindred and friends. His only daughter, wife of the late Francis Dalzell Finlay, was a woman of extraordinary powers—ably assisting her husband by her pen and her counsel in every effort for the promotion of civil and religious liberty, to which the columns of the “Northern Whig” were then, as they are now, so ably and consistently devoted.

breast heave with emotions not easily suppressed. Cold must be the blood that is not warmed, dull and phlegmatic must be the spirit which is not animated by contemplating the situation in which we stand, and the object which we have in view. We have come together on a most interesting occasion. We have come together to lay the foundation-stone of a temple dedicated to RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—a temple, under whose ample dome every individual who chooses to enter will be allowed to worship, in his own way, the one God and Father of all. We have come together, not merely to profess, but to prove that we are genuine Presbyterians—assertors of the right of private judgment, and advocates, uncompromising advocates, of the all-sufficiency of the Bible as a rule of faith and duty. After years of patient endurance, we have succeeded in throwing off a yoke which was by no means easy, a burden which was far from being light. We have emancipated ourselves and our congregations from a state of spiritual thralldom, and established our claim to those invaluable immunities wherewith Christ intended to make mankind free. *The privilege of free and fearless inquiry* is the groundwork of the church we are now preparing to build; and ‘*Prove all things*’ will be the motto inscribed on its front in characters of gold. ‘Call no man master,’ we regard as the *Magna Charta* of our ecclesiastical constitution—Christ, and Christ only, is our King—the Bible, and the Bible only, is *our* accredited standard of belief. We do not associate as Calvinists or Arminians—we do not associate as Unitarians or Trinitarians—we are Presbyterians. To be enrolled as the first Moderator, chosen by a Synod formed on principles so truly evangelical as these, is a distinction highly gratifying, and which is duly appreciated by the individual on whom it has been conferred. Allow him, at the same time, to add, that he does not misconstrue the compliment—he knows well the feelings and motives by which it has been prompted—he knows that it is to be attributed, not to any meritorious services in his power to plead, but purely and exclusively to that fraternal partiality on the part of the donors which has followed him all his life long—a consideration which increases his gratitude, whilst it represses his self-estimation.”

Mr. Porter was then appointed permanent Clerk of the newly constituted body, Mr. Blakely taking the duty temporarily during his Moderatorship. The *Roll* was next made out, the following being the honoured names of the small but faithful band of Presbyterian ministers and elders who formed on that day the “Remonstrant Synod of Ulster”:—

ARMAGH PRESBYTERY.

<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>Elders.</i>	<i>Congregations.</i>
Samuel Arnold,	Thomas Donnan,	Narrow-water.
John Mitchel,	James Lyle,	Newry.
Arthur Neilson,	James Martin,	Kilmore.
James Davis,	James C. Mulligan,	Banbridge.
James Lunn,	—————	Carlingford.
Samuel Craig Neilson,	Robert Dickson,	Dromore.

BANGOR PRESBYTERY.

<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>Elders.</i>	<i>Congregations.</i>
John Watson,	John Miller,	Greyabbey.
John Mulligan,	Captain Stannus,	Moirá.
Henry Montgomery,	William Hunter,	Dunmurry.
Fletcher Blakely,	Gawin Orr,	Moneyrea.
David Whyte,	John Stitt,	Ballee.

STRABANE PRESBYTERY.

<i>Minister.</i>	<i>Elder.</i>	<i>Congregation.</i>
William Porter,	John Alexander,	Newtownlimavady.

TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY.

<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>Elders.</i>	<i>Congregations.</i>
Thomas Alexander,	John Tweed,	Cairncastle.
Robert Campbell,	James Blow,	Templepatrick.
Nathaniel Alexander,	Andrew Dickson,	Crumlin.
Alex. Montgomery,	William Gibson,	Glenarm.
William Glendy,	Wm. Alex. M'Bride,	Ballycarry.

Then came the adoption of the series of resolutions that were to form the "Fundamental Principles" or "Constitution" of the Remonstrant Church. These were twelve in number, and had all been drawn up by Montgomery—a circumstance to which, in long subsequent years, he occasionally referred with evident gratification. They were read to the meeting by Mr. Mitchel, prefaced by an earnest address, and afterwards moved *scritim* by the several ministers, seconded by the lay elders, and were all "deliberately, solemnly, and unanimously ratified by the body." Their leading importance in relation to the Remon-

strant Synod and the Non-Subscribers of the time, to other very different discussions also in long after years, and to the great cause of Christian Liberty, not only in the past, but probably for generations yet to come, requires that they should be specially recorded here, and would seem to entitle their statements to the attentive and candid consideration of every reader. They were as follow :—

“FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

“1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible rule of faith and duty, and contain all knowledge necessary for salvation.

“2. That it is the inalienable right of every Christian to search these records of divine truth for his own instruction and guidance, to form his own opinions with regard to what they teach, and to worship God in sincerity, agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience, without privation, penalty, or inconvenience inflicted by his fellow-men.

“3. That all exercise of Church power, which attaches temporal rewards to the profession of one class of doctrines, and temporal penalties to that of any other, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and directly calculated to undermine that sincerity, without which no profession of faith or form of worship can be acceptable unto God.

“4. That the imposition of human tests and confessions of faith, and the vain efforts of men to produce an unattainable uniformity of belief, have not only tended to encourage hypocrisy, but also to restrict the sacred right of private judgment—to lessen the authority of the Scriptures—to create unrighteous divisions amongst Christians—to sanction the most barbarous persecutions—to trench on the natural and civil rights of men—to place undue power in the hands of the few—to throw a shield over the time-serving—to expose the honest to injuries and persecutions—to perpetuate errors in almost all churches—and to prevent that free inquiry and discussion which are essential to the extension of religious knowledge.

“5. That the Overtures of the General Synod of Ulster, passed in the year 1828, impose submission to human interpretations of the Word of God, in a form more objectionable than has ever been attempted in any other Church. Those enactments subject ministers to deposition at any time, however acceptable they may be to their own people ; and they place students and licentiates under the absolute control of a secret committee, of whose principal proceedings no records

are kept, and who must necessarily be liable to act under the influence of personal partiality or prejudice, selfish interests, or local connexions.

“6. That those Overtures not only subject students, licentiates, and ministers to possible injustice and dangerous temptations, but likewise trench upon the most valuable privileges of the people in the free election of their own pastors, inasmuch as their choice is restricted to persons professing to hold opinions approved of by the Committee of Examinators, although such opinions may be directly opposed to the views of sacred truth entertained by the congregations.

“7. That we consider those enactments as a violation of the fundamental principles of Protestantism, subversive of the liberal laws and usages of our Church, and a direct breach of the solemn compact under which those of us who are ministers entered the General Synod of Ulster.

“8. That having ineffectually endeavoured for two years to obtain a repeal, or even a modification, of those obnoxious regulations, we are now compelled—in obedience to the dictates of conscience—in vindication of our own rights—in support of the inalienable privileges of students, licentiates, ministers, and congregations—in defence of religious liberty, and to avoid being accessory to the suppression of what many of us believe to be the truth of God—to separate ourselves from the General Synod of Ulster, and to remain separated, until that body shall have returned to the Scriptural principles and usages of Presbyterianism.

“9. That we do now, in the name of the great King and Head of the Church, and earnestly imploring the blessing of Almighty God, solemnly associate ourselves, under the designation of ‘*The Remonstrant Synod of Ulster* ;’ a designation to which we consider ourselves justly entitled, as faithfully adhering to the original principles, the solemnly enacted laws, and the salutary customs of our Church.

“10. That we adopt the *Code of Discipline* sanctioned by the General Synod of Ulster in 1824 ; and to show that, in pursuing this course, we are not guided by a view to promote the advancement of *any set of doctrinal opinions, to the exclusion of others*, we do hereby publicly and solemnly guarantee to the congregations which are now under our care, and to those which may hereafter form a portion of our Church, the full, free, and unrestricted exercise of their unquestionable right to elect, in all cases of vacancy, ministers entertaining such views of Divine Truth as the congregations themselves may approve.

“11. That, to secure the exercise of this great privilege in its fullest extent, the ministers and licentiates of the Church of Scotland,

of the General Synod of Ulster, the Synod of Munster, and the Presbytery of Antrim, together with the ministers and licentiates of any other Protestant Church, who may be sufficiently recommended to us by their character and talent, their education, and aptness to teach, shall be eligible to the vacant congregations under our care.

“12. That, in order to cultivate, as far as lieth in us, a spirit of Christian liberality and good-will, the ministers of the religious bodies referred to in the preceding resolution may at all times be invited to sit and deliberate with us in our Church courts, and to join with us in the affectionate intercourse of ministerial services and Christian communion.”

The addresses by which the several resolutions were introduced and supported were, as might be expected, earnest and animated, and many of them powerfully eloquent. They occupied the Synod during two days, Mr. Mitchel having, on the morning of the second, preached a “long, argumentative, and eloquent discourse from Matthew xxiii. 9, 10,” on Christian Liberty. On the third day (Thursday), agreeably to the 12th article of their Constitution just adopted, several members of the Antrim Presbytery, including the Revs. Dr. Bruce, W. Bruce, J. A. Johnson, and J. Porter, and the venerable Robert Orr of Killead, of the General Synod, were invited “to sit and deliberate” with the Synod. The Reports of the several Presbyteries were duly presented, from which it appeared that, in addition to the list of ministers on the roll, a body of *nine* licentiates and *five* students were to be reckoned as belonging to the Synod. Mr. Porter and his congregation obtaining leave to attach themselves to the Templepatrick Presbytery, the name of that of “Strabane” necessarily fell out of the Remonstrant list, he having been its only representative. Fixed and Examination Committees were appointed, and their duties prescribed. A memorial was presented by Mr. Mitchel from the Narrow-water Congregation, detailing the extraordinary scenes of violence and persecution, before adverted to (p. 354), to which the gentle Samuel Arnold and his people had been subjected by the instigation and action of the Dromore Presbytery; and the facts having been heard by the meeting with general indignation, the Synod passed a strong

resolution pledging themselves to support Mr. Arnold and his people by every legal and Christian means. The similar persecutions in County Antrim were also exposed in a telling speech by Mr. Glendy. Dr. Bruce seconded a cordial proposal, that Messrs. Montgomery and Mitchel "be requested to publish their valuable discourses." The following interesting proceedings were next reported :—

"Mr. Glendy rose, and after passing different justly merited encomiums on Mr. Porter, the Moderator, Mr. Mitchel of Newry, Mr. Blakely of Moneyrea, and others, for their uniform, able, and eloquent support of the true principles of Protestantism," he continued—"But there was one man to whom they owed more than to any other; and he thought it was their duty, when served, to prove that they were not ungrateful. They would all anticipate him when he mentioned the name of Henry Montgomery. Of his talents and ability it would be superfluous to speak, where they were so well known and so highly appreciated. But he believed that Mr. Montgomery had suffered more indirect pecuniary loss than any man among them, by the calumnies that had been heaped upon them, and the injury thus done to him in his situation in the Institution. He had also suffered more in person than any other. He was a rallying point for them, to support and encourage them. There was no distraction, no difficulty, in which he did not take an interest as if he had been the personal sufferer. He (Mr. G.) had known him, in the depth of winter, and in the middle of storms, after undergoing the drudgery of teaching during the day, set out to Greyabbey, to consult and adopt means for the preservation of their congregation. Mr. Watson had acted well; but it was mainly owing to Mr. Montgomery that that congregation was preserved to us. Where was there a point of attack where his powerful pen and his eloquent tongue were not ready? In fine, the Remonstrants could never have succeeded as they had done without his assistance. He then moved—

"That the most cordial thanks of this Synod are due, and are hereby given, to our talented friend and brother, the Rev. Henry Montgomery, for his powerful and zealous advocacy, his unremitting and generous exertions, and for the valuable services which he has rendered to the Remonstrant cause.'

"Dr. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The Moderator, in conveying the thanks of the Synod to Mr. Montgomery, said that he had never felt greater pleasure than in discharging

that duty. He had enjoyed the private friendship of that gentleman from his youth, and he had witnessed his public career; and he could say that a vote of thanks had never been passed to an individual more truly deserving of the honour.

“Mr. Montgomery, in rising to make a reply, burst into tears, and failed in the attempt. He sat down, prevented, in a great measure, by his feelings, from uttering his sentiments. We could only collect the following sentence:—‘Moderator, I could have met my opponents with firm nerves, but I confess that I am totally unable to bear up under this expression of kindness on the part of my justly esteemed and long tried friends. I shall, however, endeavour, by my future life, to render those substantial thanks which I cannot now find words to express.’

“We have never (says the ‘Northern Whig’s’ report) witnessed a scene more deeply interesting than this.”

“A very flattering letter” was read and replied to from the Bolton Unitarian Association; and Messrs. Montgomery and Blakely reported numerous offers of aid and encouragement from persons of different religious sentiments in various parts of the United Kingdom. After votes of thanks to the First and Second Congregations of Belfast and to the Synod of Munster, an important Overture, destined to effect valuable ulterior consequences for the Non-Subscribing cause, was introduced by two of the lay gentlemen present—Mr. John Alexander of Newtownlimavady, and Mr. Leonard Dobbin of Armagh—and cordially accepted by the meeting. It was, proposing “to raise a *Presbyterian Fund*, the interest of which should be applied for the encouragement and support of injured or persecuted ministers and congregations—the assistance of new congregations—the endowment of a Professorship of Divinity—and other purposes connected with the maintenance of Christian rights.” Such was the origin of the “Fund for the Protection of the Rights of Conscience,” which Montgomery then supported in a powerful speech, and in the subsequent establishment of which we shall have occasion to show that he was mainly instrumental. After appointing a deputation to attend the next meeting of the General Synod and watch over the Remonstrant interests, and to endeavour to complete the financial arrangements connected

with the separation, the Synod fixed on Larne, County Antrim, for the next place of meeting; and the first meeting of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster concluded at five o'clock on Thursday.

So, at last, was the good ship "Remonstrant" launched by her gallant crew; and, freighted with her precious cargo of Christian Liberty and Christian Truth, with their invaluable complement of honesty, integrity, and piety, Scripture knowledge and ability, faith, hope, and charity, she hoisted her sails, weighed anchor from an unfriendly shore, and with a strong and favouring breeze, majestically sailed from port. Long, arduous, and stormy, changeful and perilous might be their voyage to the haven of their hope and rest; but her mariners were a devoted band; they knew and loved the Master whom they served; and with an abiding trust in the Almighty power presiding over the destiny alike of themselves, their vessel, and its freight, they could each and all most fittingly adopt the words which the poet Racine has put into the mouth of Joad, the righteous High Priest:—

"Celui qui met un frein à la fureur des flots,
Sait aussi des méchants arrêter les complots.
Soumis avec respect à sa volonté sainte,
Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte."

CHAPTER XXIII.

POLITICS OF THE REMONSTRANTS—MONTGOMERY'S SPEECH ON REFORM, AND LETTER TO O'CONNELL.

1830—1831.

Entertainments to Remonstrants at Derryboy and Greyabbey—Addresses of Messrs. Porter, Montgomery, and Blakely—Ministers of Munster Synod present—Remonstrance of Armagh Congregation—Reports of three Synodical Conferences—Politics of Remonstrants opposed to Tory Government—Discouraging Prospects—Address to King William IV.—Agitation for Parliamentary Reform—Political Crisis—Resignation of Wellington Administration—Succeeded by Whigs under Earl Grey—State of Ireland—O'Connell and Repeal—Montgomery's Letters on the Hertford Estate—First Statement of Tenant-right—Threatened Action for Libel against the "Northern Whig"—Montgomery and O'Connell become acquainted—Meeting against proposed increase of Stamp-duties—Great Reform Meeting in Belfast—The Speakers—Montgomery moves two Resolutions—His SPEECH ON REFORM AND THE BALLOT—Its Reception—Remarks of "Northern Whig"—His Article on "The State of the Country"—Hopes of the Repealers—Flattering Estimate of Lawless—Extreme Laudation by O'Connell—Their artful purpose unavailing—Letters in the "Northern Whig" against Repeal—Marquis of Anglesey re-appointed Lord-Lieutenant—Combat between the "Liberator" and the Viceroy—Revolutionary Crisis—Joint Deputation of the Non-Subscribing Bodies to address the Lord-Lieutenant—Arrest of O'Connell—The Address and Reply—Wrath of the Repeal Organs—The "Liberator's" Anger—MONTGOMERY'S LETTER TO O'CONNELL—Described—Sensation in Dublin—Exciting Scenes—Fury of Revolutionary Press—Gratification of Government—Letter republished—General Approval—Letters of Thanks and Congratulation—Dublin—Londonderry—Cork—Armagh—Newry—Position, Character, and Works of Montgomery—Review of his previous Life—Concluding Remarks of First Volume.

THE establishment of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster was celebrated by several public entertainments given to the Remonstrant ministers, especially by those which took place

soon afterwards at Derryboy, in the parish of Killileagh, and at Greyabbey. The former was held in a large tent erected in a field, and was reported as having been an imposing assemblage of the most influential laity of the various surrounding districts, especially those connected with the Remonstrant Churches, but including also many sympathisers from congregations of the General Synod and other "Orthodox" communities. The Moderator (Mr. Porter) and all the Remonstrant ministers, with laymen from many of their congregations, were present. The veteran Unitarian and reformer, Dr. Gordon of Saintfield, occupied the chair. The speeches of the evening were undoubtedly those of Mr. Porter (a powerful address, afterwards reprinted in broadsheet and extensively circulated), and of Messrs. Mitchel and Montgomery. The last thus alluded to the assemblage he was addressing:—

"When I look around me, and see those now assembled here, who are the substantial strength of the country—not, perhaps, the Corinthian pillars of the State, whose ornaments do not always indicate their stability; but the solid and substantial pillars of the country, the wealthy yeomanry of the land, on whom we can at all times rely—I do feel assured that the efforts that have been made to put down men, who for conscience' sake have perilled every worldly consideration, will not succeed. I rest assured, when I look on this most influential assemblage of the wealth and the information of the country, that there is a spirit abroad that will not submit to be trampled beneath the feet of aspiring men, who, to compass their ends, would shipwreck the liberties of the people, and put down by every dishonourable means the conscientious opinions of others."

The enthusiasm with which the several speakers and their addresses were received must have afforded great and timely encouragement to the Remonstrants on the threshold of their new Synodical career.

Similar was the meeting at Greyabbey, where the chair was taken by *William Montgomery, Esq., J.P.*, of Rosemount, the former instrument in the persecution of Mr. Watson, who now sought, by evincing the warmest interest in the Remonstrant cause, to atone for the acknowledged errors into which he had

been so deeply and designedly misled. The meeting was even more numerous than that of Derryboy. Here Mr. Blakely shone as the star of the evening. He spoke, in the absence of Mr. Porter, in reply to the toast of the "Remonstrant Synod;" his truly eloquent address, occupying an hour and a-half, was a fine specimen of manly and accomplished oratory, well worthy of himself and of his cause. The proceedings were varied not only by addresses from members of the Presbytery of Antrim, but also by the presence and speeches of two ministers of the Synod of Munster—the Rev. James Armstrong of Dublin, and the Rev. William Crozier of Clonmel—who brought the warmest assurances of sympathy from their brethren in the South for the Remonstrants in their arduous struggles, and earnest wishes for their success. Several times called forward, Montgomery as usual contributed his ready eloquence to promote the pleasure of the meeting and the interests of the cause which it represented. It was assuredly in every feature the celebration of a signal triumph of right over wrong—of the ultimate vindication of principle, justice, straightforward honesty, and injured innocence, against all the combined forces and utmost machinations of usurping injustice, misrepresentation, and persecution—even with the help of the abused civil power, cajoled into temporarily favouring their oppressive designs!

These important meetings were followed by others of a like nature amongst the congregations of County Antrim—recently so harassed by Orthodox disturbers of their peace—which helped to cheer their hearts and afford a welcome support under their trials. Sympathy with the Remonstrants became widely felt, and evidenced itself in various ways in several congregations still connected with the General Synod. Amongst others, the influential Presbyterians of Armagh once more gave significant token of their yet unchanged leanings, and sent forward a strong remonstrance to the General Synod at Omagh in June, 1830, which was slurred over, and finally, on some technical pretext, rejected by the Synod. Addressing the ministers and elders composing the Synod of Ulster, they announce themselves as

“members of the Session and Committee of the Presbyterian Congregation of Armagh, firmly attached to the Presbyterian Church, and *formerly connected with your body.*” “We have (they say) on a former occasion made known our sentiments, and our dissent from the Overtures passed in 1828. We are still of the same opinion respecting them. . . . From their principles we dissent; and in this we are joined by most of the enlightened Presbyterians throughout Ireland.” They then proceed, amongst other matters, to administer to the Synod a sharp rebuke in relation to their proceedings at Greyabbey, Ballycarry, and Warrenpoint, stating their opinion that the ministers and Presbyteries guilty of these offences should be brought up for judgment by the Synod; and they conclude thus forcibly:—
 “Rescind your Overtures, and become again the Synod of Ulster. *Until that period we never can become members of the body.*” It bore the following names of nine of the elders and the entire committee of the congregation—twelve in number—amongst them many of the most respected and influential citizens of Armagh:—

<i>“ Elders.</i>	<i>Members of Committee.</i>
Alexander Prentice.	William Carroll.
Hugh Kidd.	John Barnes.
William M’Williams.	Thomas Kidd.
Joseph Oliver.	John Kane.
Leonard Dobbin.	James Baxter.
James Magill.	Thomas Bell.
Benjamin Oliver.	William Dobbin.
Robert M’Bride.	William Boyd.
William Jamison.	John Gray.
	Andrew Maziere.
	John Mackey.
	William Barnes.

“ ARMAGH, 28th June, 1830.”

At this meeting of the General Synod, Messrs. Porter, Mitchel, and Davis attended as a deputation from the Remonstrant Synod to make a final arrangement respecting the Royal Bounty and the Widows’ Fund. Some extracts from the report, and

notice of this and subsequent conferences, in the "Bible Christian" for November, 1830, are here subjoined:—

"The Synod met on *Tuesday*, and the Remonstrants' deputation remained in attendance until *Saturday*, in hourly expectation of having those points settled which the Committee of 1829 were 'incompetent to decide;' but, after all their irksome attendance, they were informed that a new Committee, 'with full powers, was appointed to meet the Remonstrants in Belfast, on the 20th of July, to issue all matters in dispute!' They might have been told of this arrangement early in the week; but such a gentlemanlike course of procedure would not have comported with the uniform and studied system of delay and insult which had been undeviatingly pursued! The party that had violated no compact and inflicted no injury were to be teased and tortured at the caprice of those who had done *both*, and to bend in lowly supplication for their indefeasible rights.

"At length, however, the important 20th of July did arrive, and a numerous Committee of Remonstrants assembled, at great inconvenience, to meet their brethren appointed by the General Synod. They looked upon that day as the goal of their labours, and the end of their harassing conferences; but, lo! only *four* ministers of the General Synod attended, and these 'considered themselves too small a number to settle such important concerns!' This conference, therefore, in the usual mode, *ended in vapour*; and it was mutually agreed that the *two Synods* should meet in Cookstown on the 1st of September, to make a final arrangement of all matters still in dispute. The only *new* matter introduced at this meeting was certain propositions on the part of the General Synod's Committee respecting six Remonstrant congregations (of Glenarm, Cairncastle, Ballycarry, Templepatrick, Greyabbey, and Narrow-water, from which minorites varying from one-third to one-tenth had seceded and rejoined the General Synod), to which a reply was promised to be made at Cookstown. These propositions and the Remonstrants' answer will be found in their regular order.

"Behold, then, the 1st of September arrived, and the two Synods assembled in Cookstown amidst torrents of rain, as if the very elements had conspired to cast a congenial gloom over their proceedings. The minor men of the two parties occasionally interchanged a friendly greeting; but the leaders only scowled upon each other in hatred or disdain. Oh! what a meeting for ministers of the Gospel; and what have those to answer for who have excited such deadly animosity! The General Synod mustered between *thirty* and *forty* ministers, and

the Remonstrant Synod *eleven*. At present we have no time to enter into the details of the proceedings, nor to notice the various speechings, and sarcasms, and ingenious misquotations of Scripture which distinguished the principal actors. The first day was occupied in discussions respecting the Widows' Fund, when it was finally agreed 'to appoint a Committee to inquire into the expediency and practicability of dividing the capital amongst the contributors respectively belonging to the two Synods and the Presbytery of Antrim.' The two Synods held separate meetings in the evening to prepare replies to the propositions mutually submitted for their consideration. On Thursday morning, at *ten o'clock*, 'they met for the despatch of business,' the General Synod having been engaged from *six* in framing a response to the Remonstrants' demand respecting the Royal Bounty. We shall here repeat their demand, which was in the same words originally used in September, 1829 (see p. 348):—

“ ‘We require our brethren of the Synod to declare, that, on our ordaining a minister in any congregation now in existence, or which may be hereafter erected, their Moderator shall, in all such cases, annex his signature in the usual manner to the memorial for the Royal Bounty forwarded to him by such minister; and shall on no account whatever withhold his signature, when regularly certified of such ordination.’

“To this very simple, and, as we should think, *reasonable* request, the General Synod returned the following reply, which is not very long, considering that it cost nearly *six hours' warm labour*!

“ ‘Resolved—That, as the decision of the case submitted to the Synod in this proposal involves a variety of conflicting interests, which the Government of the country are alone competent finally to adjust, the Synod have resolved to lay before Government a full representation of the whole matter connected with the late separation; and do, therefore, feel incompetent to give a specific answer to Remonstrants' request, till the determination of the Government may be ascertained.’

“Now this is very pretty diplomatic language, which, being translated into plain English, means neither less nor more than this—That the reverend and evangelical gentlemen of the General Synod, having broken faith with their brethren, and passed oppressive and unchristian laws, by which the Remonstrant ministers and congregations have been *compelled*, as honest men, to separate from them, the worthy Orthodox divines of the Synod will do all in *their power* to enlist the *Government* on the side of persecution, to shift the odium of the iniquitous

act from their own shoulders to those of his Majesty's Ministers, and to rob the respectable laity belonging to the Remonstrant body of their just rights! So, so, gentlemen! The mask has at length fallen off! And have all your professions about 'wishing to do no injury to your brethren—to touch none of their loaves and fishes,' ended in this! You must *consult the Government* ere you perform an act of common justice; then, if they aid your designs, the work of spoliation will be *theirs*, and not *yours*; and, if they turn from you with merited disgust and indignation, you will pretend to be quite pleased that they have not assisted you in a gross act of public robbery!"

The Remonstrants, "quite dissatisfied" with the foregoing reply, further inquired if the Synod would join with them in applying to Government to allow the certificate of the Remonstrant Moderator to entitle the Remonstrant ministers to Royal Bounty in the same manner as those of the Moderators of the Synods of Ulster and Munster were respectively received. This the Synod, under cover of more fair words, declined to do. "The Remonstrants, notwithstanding the hopelessness of their pupils, still pursued their excellent system of *catechising*;" but were unable to extract from the Synod any more definite or satisfactory replies, though causing them still further to expose their hostile spirit and intentions. At length they came to the question of arbitrating as to the property of divided congregations; when the Remonstrants, in reply to the General Synod's demand, declared their intention of advising their people, in the case of the six congregations above mentioned, to offer fair compensation to the seceding minorities, on condition that minorities of Synodical congregations seceding to the Remonstrants might be declared entitled to similar compensation; but this conditional proposal the General Synod declined to accept.

"The preceding questions and answers, more especially relating to the Royal Bounty (says the 'Bible Christian'), elicited a great deal of conversation. Amongst the remarks made, we specially honoured the candour of two extreme Orthodox ministers, in stating 'that the Synod should act honestly, and confess the truth—viz., that they would endeavour to seize the Bounty of Remonstrant congregations *if they could*.'"

So terminated this unsatisfactory conference of the Synods ; and when it is considered that of the Tory Government then in power the Remonstrants were almost all the political opponents, while Cooke and all his following in the General Synod were their fiery supporters, the position of trying discouragement in which the Remonstrants were left as to the future worldly prospects of their ministers and people may be readily imagined. Yet even as the most violent of the theological storms through which they had passed had effected no change in their religious sentiments or expression, so no prospect of possible enmity on the part of a temporal Government could induce any alteration in the calm consistency of their political bearing. As they had been faithful in duty to God, so were they also prepared to be, when called upon, in their duty to their King and to their country.

Upon the accession of William IV. to the throne, the Remonstrant Synod, specially assembled, voted a loyal and congratulatory address—one sentence in which thus declares their sentiments, intentions, and hopes :—

“ We are firmly attached to the principles of the British Constitution, and to your Majesty’s illustrious House, under which we have so long enjoyed the blessings of Civil and Religious Liberty ; and whilst we shall continue to inculcate on the people connected with us a loyal and dutiful respect to your Majesty’s Government, a cheerful obedience to the laws, and zealous co-operation in every measure that may promote the peace and prosperity of our country, we look with confidence to your Majesty’s paternal care to protect us in the exercise of those rights and privileges which we have hitherto enjoyed.”

Sir Robert Peel, to whom the address was transmitted for presentation, replied that—

“ His Majesty was pleased to receive the loyal and dutiful address of the ministers and elders of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster in the most gracious manner.”

But the political exigencies of the times soon required a much sterner assertion of principles, and called to a very different field of action. The march of events subsequent to the repeal of the

Test Act and the passing of Catholic Emancipation, and the French Revolution of 1830, which overthrew absolutism, and placed on the throne a new and constitutional king, had prepared men's minds for further progress; and the cry of Parliamentary Reform—the motto of the Irish Volunteers of forty-seven years before—became the order of the day.

The extraordinary and almost absolute powers of the landed proprietors of the period, enabling them as a matter of course to return their own nominees to Parliament, and the increasing venality and corruption both of county and borough constituencies, made the necessity of Reform only too apparent; while the action of a new Parliament, containing a larger proportion than before of Liberal members, gave strength to the demand. The passions of the people became dangerously excited; tumults, incendiarism, and other forms of mob violence were manifested; and the popular clamour became loud and high. Against this the King's speech was strong and uncompromising; and the Duke of Wellington and the Ministry resolutely declared their determination not to yield, which was followed by scenes of extraordinary excitement in both Houses of Parliament. The Duke's advice to the King, from prudential reasons, not to attend the Lord Mayor's banquet, precipitated the crisis. London was panic-struck. A revolution seemed imminent; and on the 16th November the Iron Duke and the Tory Ministry were obliged to resign. The Whig Administration of Earl Grey succeeded, on the avowed principle of Parliamentary Reform.

In Ireland the condition of affairs at this time was truly alarming. The state of the land question, and the general relations of landlords and tenants, were simply disastrous. Tenant-right, or legal security, was unknown; while rack-renting and evictions were the rule almost everywhere on the one hand, and on the other were lawless combinations, desperate retaliations, and murderous outrages, especially in the West and South. The political demagogues of the period failed not to find their harvest in this state of the country; and by substituting for the just and moderate demand for Parliamentary Reform the more exciting

ery of Repeal, O'Connell had drawn into his following vast masses of the populace, and, with his myrmidons, was then laying a bold grasp on the reins of dangerously extensive social and political power.

Into the political arena Montgomery, in addition to all the other demands upon his thought and exertions—already, as we have seen, so numerous and pressing—threw himself with characteristic ardour, always advocating the people's rights with the full powers of his pen and tongue. In the "Northern Whig," during December, 1829, and January, 1830, appeared a series of three long articles—unsigned, but known to be from his pen—on the condition and management of the vast estates in County Antrim belonging to the Marquis of Hertford, delineating with extraordinary power, and a fidelity only too sadly true, the woful condition of a peasantry, from whom the last farthing was wrung by every conceivable means, to maintain a continental expenditure, on the part of the noble proprietor, which had become one of the marvels of the age, and had earned for him the deserved title of the modern Sardanapalus. The interest, mingled with astonishment, excited by these bold papers was immense. The claims put forward on behalf of the tenants—quite novel at the time—aroused the utmost indignation amongst the landlords, while they are believed to have given its first impetus to—if they did not originate—the cause of *Tenant-right* in the North of Ireland. An action for libel was entered, by order of the Marquis of Hertford, against the proprietor of the "Northern Whig;" but O'Connell having offered his services for the defence, the prospect of the anticipated revelations was so discouraging that the action was withdrawn. It was on this occasion that Montgomery and the great popular leader of the day first became acquainted with each other.

Shortly after, we find him engaged in the maintenance of another important division of popular rights. Extensive additions to the stamp-duties of the time were proposed by the Government, calculated not only to prejudicially affect various departments of commerce, but to militate with special severity

against the prosperity and circulation of the newspaper press—an additional tax on knowledge, in fact. Amongst the earliest movements to oppose the measure was a town meeting of the leading merchants and citizens of Belfast, in the origination and conduct of which Montgomery bore a distinguished part. The example was quickly followed by a general opposition in almost all the chief towns of the kingdom, and the obnoxious proposals were subsequently abandoned.

But it was chiefly to the cause of Parliamentary Reform, as dominating all other political necessities of the time, that he lent the great energies of his nature—believing it to be not only just and imperative in itself, but its speedy adoption to be an absolute necessity for the prevention of revolution and anarchy, which his soul abhorred. Accordingly, the great Reform Meeting in Belfast, on the 2nd December, 1830, witnessed one of his most impressive displays of oratorical power. The meeting, which was held in the Court-house, and presided over by Sir Stephen May, the sovereign, had been assembled by requisition, and is stated in the papers of the time to have been “by far the most important meeting that has taken place in Belfast for the last forty years.” “We can point,” says the “Northern Whig,” “with some pride to the array of talent which the meeting manifested; but with still greater gratification to the pure spirit of ardour which pervaded the immense assemblage of Reformers.” The list of speakers included the names—well-known and honoured in Belfast society—of Dr. Tennett; E. Getty, J. Barnett, and R. M'Dowell, Esqs.; Rev. H. Montgomery; J. Dunville, R. Montgomery, J. Sinclair, J. Simms, J. Currell, R. Grimshaw, J. Emerson, J. Munfoad (an old Irish Volunteer and patriarchal Reformer of fifty years' standing), W. Steen, M. Cross, R. J. Tennent, S. Archer, W. Tennent, W. Boyd, C. B. Grimshaw, and R. Gamble, Esqs.; and Drs. Kidley, M'Cormac, M'Kibbin, and M'Cluney. It is no little remarkable that in this list, as also in the requisition calling the meeting, Montgomery's was the only clerical name of any church appearing—a fact to which he made significant allusion in his address. A series of fifteen

resolutions were adopted, fairly covering the ground of Parliamentary Reform in all its leading branches. Of many vigorous and effective speeches may be mentioned those of the venerable Dr. Tennent, Messrs. John Barnett and Maurice Cross, and a noble, statesmanlike address of Mr. *James Emerson* (afterwards Sir J. Emerson Tennent), giving high promise of the distinction to which he subsequently attained. But beyond question and compare, that of Montgomery was admitted on all hands to be the speech of the day. Determined to go to the root of the matter, he had selected the advocacy of Vote by Ballot for his especial theme—the third resolution, which he moved on the subject, being as follows :—

“That, in a state of society consisting of various gradations, wherein individuals, however independent in *principle*, may still be affected in circumstances by those of superior rank or influence, it is essential, for the purity of election and the protection of the elector, that a system be devised by which his suffrage may be given with perfect security to himself, and that this can be obtained only by the adoption of Vote by Ballot.”

He was also the mover of the thirteenth resolution, which, however, he contented himself with prefacing merely by a few words. It was—

“That we strongly recommend to the attention of every class of the community the importance of abandoning all private and party dissension, and co-operating, at the present crisis, with unanimity and energy, for the purpose of conveying to the Legislature their conviction of the absolute necessity of introducing into the constitution of Parliament an amendment of the system of representation.”

The reception accorded to his speech on the third resolution may be conceived from the terms of the leading article in the “Northern Whig” of December 6, 1830, which, with its supplement of same date, contained the report of the meeting :—

“We have no intention of particularising the individuals who most distinguished themselves at our meeting ; but we feel it to be a public duty to notice the valuable service rendered to the cause of Reform by the Rev. H. Montgomery. He feels it to be the duty of his sacred

profession to do good; and, without attending to the mock caution under which so many are ready to cover their subserviency to ‘times and circumstances,’ he finds a fitting sphere for the exercise of his commanding talents in the assemblies of his fellows, who wish to elevate the political condition of themselves and others, to dry up the sources of public vice, and to spread happiness and plenty over the nation. We admire his eloquent and argumentative speech in favour of the Ballot—the essence of Reform; but we admire still more his plain, honest bearing, and his disregard of all considerations which would deter him from sustaining his part on occasions of such public importance. . . . The motion claiming the privilege of Vote by Ballot was received by the great assemblage, consisting of all creeds in politics and religion, with such almost frantic enthusiasm, as fully to prove that they regarded it as the only sure foundation of their political privileges.”

The speech itself being not only one of Montgomery’s finest, and containing an admirable outline of his political sentiments, but from the valuable illustrations it supplies of the real nature and principles of the British Constitution, and of true representative Government, would be unjustly treated by omission or curtailment. It is, therefore, published in full in the Appendix to this volume.*

The observations which Montgomery had intended to make when moving the thirteenth resolution at the meeting were published at length in the “Whig” of 13th December as an article, entitled, “The State of the Country;” and the vivid picture they presented of the wretched condition of the humbler classes both in town and country, contrasted with their just claims, was calculated powerfully to stimulate the Reform agitation.

This bold attitude assumed against the most powerful abuses of the social state seemed to have misled O’Connell and his coadjutors to indulge in the hope that they might win the talents of Montgomery to the advocacy of Repeal; and a system of very undisguised flattery was adopted, apparently with this object. A fortnight after the Belfast meeting, a long and extremely clever and plausible letter was published in the “Whig” from Mr. John

* Appendix H—“Speech on Parliamentary Reform and the Ballot,” 1830.

Lawless, O'Connell's right hand, and next to the "Liberator" himself the most prominent Repealer of the time, in strong commendation of the meeting as "the ablest and most eloquent discussion on the question of Parliamentary Reform which ever took place in this country." In this he refers to Montgomery as follows:—

"Eloquently and powerfully has that first and most *parental* principle of *voting by Ballot* been vindicated by your able and accomplished townsman, the Rev. Henry Montgomery, who comes down from the pulpit to blend the benevolence of Christianity with the practical policy of man—to communicate the light of the Gospel to the human mind—and to demonstrate, by powerful and unanswerable reasoning, that its minister never performs his duty so effectually, as when he holds out the lamp of Christianity to direct the steps of those who are anxious to lay down the principles of truth and justice between man and his governor, or between citizen and citizen. The saucy, pert fastidiousness, which would conceal itself from the public eye in the robe of an assumed piety, and refuse to co-operate in a great practical improvement of the social state, finds no place in the bosom of Montgomery. With him religion is the efficient minister of *utility*; and when he asserts his right on the *week-day* to make common cause with his countrymen in the promotion of a great worldly principle, he is only reaping the harvest of which he has sown the seed on the *Sunday*, and demonstrating the divinity of his theories in the pulpit, by the blessings which he practically promotes in his community with his fellow-citizens. It is, therefore, with unmixed delight I contemplate the public exertions of this able and eloquent divine; and, I need not add, I should lament the loss of such a man to any cause which I considered the best calculated to promote the happiness of our common country. Give me leave to say, sir, that in the letter I now write, I am to call not only the attention of the Rev. Henry Montgomery, but also the very distinguished talent and integrity by which he was supported on Thursday last, to that question which I regret to find not only industriously avoided by the majority of your speakers, but by *one* of them deprecated in a marked and particular manner—I mean the question of the Repeal of the Union."

In a strain of still more emphatic eulogy, O'Connell himself thus expresses his flattering estimate at one of his weekly "Repeal breakfasts" in Dublin on 21st December:—

“The North is arousing itself. The Belfast meeting was transcendently splendid. There never was anything which I read with greater pleasure than the speech of my *excellent and respected friend*, the Rev. Mr. Montgomery. He is a Unitarian clergyman—he and I differ widely as human beings can do in religious belief; but that never can produce dissension between us—he is answerable for his belief, as I am for mine. I know his excellence, his charity, and his purity of conduct; may God in heaven bless him! and never yet did I read a speech so good for the purpose for which it was intended as that delivered by my excellent friend, and never was an abler one pronounced at a public meeting. I could not help sighing as I hung over one passage in his speech, where he threw his whole soul into a eulogium upon the brilliant and glorious era of 1782. Oh! my friend, the Rev. Mr. Montgomery, will, I trust, aid me in accomplishing another era for Ireland, that of 1831, when we will make Ireland what she ought to be, an independent nation!”

But little they knew the man if they thought he could be caught by such obvious solicitations, or by any inducements which they or their mistaken cause could offer! His well-balanced mind had been too long accustomed to contend for *genuine freedom of thought* in other fields, not to recognise the distinction between the salutary reforms needful to secure the bulwarks of a true and constitutional civil liberty, and the wild and destructive licence of Repeal. His fitting answer to their crafty overtures was found in a series of letters which immediately after appeared in the “Northern Whig,” powerful and uncompromising in their opposition to the schemes of O’Connell and the Repealers. Two were signed respectively “A Member of the Reform Committee of Belfast” and “A Belfast Reformer.” The third was entitled, “An Address to the Roman Catholics of the North of Ireland, on the evils of agitating at the present crisis the Repeal of the Union, and on the line of conduct which it is their interest to adopt,” and signed “A Conscientious Emancipationist;” and the fourth bore the still more significant title of “Common Sense *versus* Daniel O’Connell.”

But the crowning answer was yet to come. Under the new Liberal Government of Earl Grey, the Marquis of Anglesey, the former popular Viceroy in the days preceding the Catholic

Emancipation Act, was re-appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. But this pacificatory step failed of its immediate purpose. O'Connell and his myrmidons waxed bolder than ever, formidable meetings were held, seditious addresses delivered, and his power over the masses seemed unbounded; till at length matters came to wear the aspect of a species of duel or single combat between the "Liberator" and the Viceroy. Proclamations from the Castle, signed "Anglesey," were met by counter-proclamations from the offices of the Repeal Association, signed "O'Connell," and all things seemed to betoken the advent of a speedy and violent outbreak. At this crisis a conference of the three Non-Subscribing Presbyterian bodies—the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Synod of Munster—took place, when a Joint Address was adopted for presentation to the Lord-Lieutenant, and a deputation, consisting of the following eleven ministers—Revs. Dr. Bruce, James Armstrong, H. Montgomery, Joseph Hutton, Dr. Drummond, N. Alexander, F. Blakely, James Carley, John Mitchel, James Martineau, and John Porter—and twenty influential lay-gentlemen, was appointed for the purpose. On the arrival in Dublin of the Northern members of this deputation, they learned that on the previous day O'Connell had been arrested by the Government, and committed to prison in the very plenitude of his power! Proceeding to the Castle, where they were most graciously received, the deputies presented the following well-timed address:—

*“To his Excellency the Marquis of Anglesey, the Lord-Lieutenant
of Ireland.*

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

“We appear before you as a deputation from the Synod of Munster, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, three distinct Presbyterian bodies; but agreeing in the maintenance of these principles, to us sacred and indefeasible—the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of human authority in matters of faith; and presiding over congregations which embrace a considerable portion of the intelligence, property, and respectability of the Protestant Dissenters of Ireland.

“We rejoice in the renewed opportunity of congratulating your Excellency on your arrival upon our shores. Attached by principle to our constitutional monarch and to constitutional freedom, we acknowledge a new claim of gratitude to the one and a new hope for the preservation of the other, in the re-appointment of a Viceroy so eminently qualified to be the pacificator of this agitated land.

“We deeply regret that, on your return to Ireland, your Excellency should find that measure of political wisdom and Christian equity, which dignified the close of the late reign, interrupted in its naturally healing operation. But we entertain a generous confidence in his Majesty’s present Government, that such further measures of just reform will be devised as will satisfy the reasonable expectations of the people of these realms; and we sincerely trust that no portion of our countrymen will long continue to frustrate the benevolent plans of a paternal administration by chimerical projects tending to violence and disaffection.

“Cherishing, both from hereditary descent and from personal conviction, the warmest attachment to the principles of the British Constitution, we feel it to be our duty, at the present crisis, to assure your Excellency of our firm and faithful adherence to the connexion existing between Great Britain and Ireland. We deprecate any measure or attempt tending to relax the bonds of that connexion, being convinced that the interests of both countries are identified, and their prosperity inseparably conjoined.

“We assure your Excellency, with grateful satisfaction, that, prompted by duty and inclination, both as subjects and as Christians, we shall use our best exertions to soothe the irritations and promote the harmony of our country. It is our fervent prayer that Almighty God may avert dissension and all other calamities from our native land, and grant success to such measures as your Excellency may adopt for promoting the peace, the prosperity, the permanent and substantial interests of the United Kingdom.

(Signed in the name and on behalf of our respective Synods and Presbytery,)

“EDWARD KING, Moderator of the Synod of Munster.

“WILLIAM BRUCE, D.D., Moderator (*pro tem.*) of the Presbytery of Antrim.

“HENRY MONTGOMERY, Moderator (*pro tem.*) of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.”

To which his Excellency was pleased to make the following Reply :—

“ You could not have given me a higher gratification than by embodying, in the Address with which you have honoured me, sentiments which I am proud to share with you.

“ I acknowledge the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of human authority in matters of faith. Firmly attached to that which I profess, I unhesitatingly respect the conscientious opinion of those of a different creed. It is the duty of man to live in amity with man, and to cultivate a kindly intercourse with his neighbour.

“ Again, I concur with you in the disappointment you express, that Ireland has not yet received, from the measure of justice conferred upon the Catholic population, all the advantages that are derivable from that act of ‘ political wisdom and Christian equity.’ But let us not despair. The great cause of religious feud is removed. It is true another not less furious source of agitation has been raging. This will subside. I say more—it is subsiding. There is nothing to prop it. Reason, national interest—general policy is against it. England and Ireland must stand or must fall together. This is the sentiment of every disinterested and reflecting mind ; of those who think for themselves, and who are not led away by the insidious sophistry of men, who, under the garb of patriotism, are the bitterest enemies of Ireland.

“ The sentiments you have so forcibly expressed of attachment to the King, and of a determination to support the Constitution and the integrity of the Empire, cannot fail to be highly acceptable to our most gracious Sovereign.

“ In respect to the flattering assurance of your confidence in my Government, I will only say that it will be my anxious care to deserve it ; and whilst the Legislature will be industriously occupied in devising measures for the general interests of the Empire, it will be my duty, as it is my inclination, to promote, by every means within my power, the peace, the comfort, and the prosperity of Ireland.

“ ANGLESEY.

“ *20th January, 1831.*”

The “ Northern Whig,” in its notice of this Address and Reply, says :—

“ We regard these two documents as of very great importance, particularly at the present moment. The public will recollect that the

men from whom the above Address proceeds have been the uniform and unshrinking advocates of independence and liberal principles, and that most of them have through a hot ordeal *proved* the sincerity of the sentiments which they avowed. Their rejection of the right of their fellows to restrain the free outgoings of the human mind brought down upon them a storm of persecution, from which they were enabled to escape only by nobly erecting the standard of religious freedom, under which they might cherish those rights that are alike the birth-right of all men. As politicians, so far as they publicly took part in questions of a political nature, they have been equally the friends of liberty ; and we believe there is not a man of them, or of the influential community whom they represent, who was not favourable to the great measure of Ireland's regeneration, which placed all her people of all creeds on an equality as citizens of the British Empire. And now, when they go before the representative of Royalty, they hold the same independent and manly bearing which previously marked their lives. Conscious of the soundness and justice of those great principles to which we have referred, they put them plainly and boldly forward as the distinguishing characteristics of their public lives. Those fundamental doctrines of right, for the advocacy of which they were subjected to injury and loss, are placed in the foreground. Catholic Emancipation is spoken of with gratitude, and Parliamentary Reform is urged with all the earnestness that is compatible with the forms of such a document.

“The Reply of the Marquis of Anglesey deserves to be hailed by all lovers of equal rights as a proud indication of the progress of their cause. We do not so much allude to his sound ideas respecting the true interests of Ireland, as distinguished from those pernicious measures which men ‘under the garb of patriotism,’ but who are the ‘bitterest enemies’ of our country, would force on us ; but more particularly to the expressions of genuine liberality in which he has fully recognised and vindicated the indefeasible privilege of all men to hold unmolested their own peculiar religious sentiments. We look on these facts as constituting one of the strongest guarantees of the overwhelming progress of justice and liberality which our country has for a long time witnessed. They are deserving of being hailed with enthusiasm by all independent minds, of whatever creed ; but to the religious bodies immediately concerned, they ought to be peculiarly cheering.”

It was indeed a proud day for the Remonstrants and their other Non-Subscribing friends, when their oft-denounced “*heresies*” of “the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment,

and rejection of human authority in matters of faith," the Government of the United Kingdom, through its distinguished and amiable representative, declared itself "*proud to share!*"

But the deputation were soon made to feel the weight of the Repealers' displeasure. Vials of wrath were quickly poured upon their devoted heads from the Repeal organs in Dublin and elsewhere, and scathing denunciations were hurled against them at every Repeal meeting. O'Connell himself, on his release a few days afterwards on bail, directed against Montgomery the full weight of his anger. At an aggregate Repeal meeting, on 26th January, he gave vent to his wrath in no measured terms; and he whom a few days before he had flattered, as we have seen, was now "arraigned as a paltry and pitiful slave—a fawning, cringing sycophant," &c. But, as before in his flattery, so now in his abuse, he only showed how little he knew of the man with whom he had to deal, or surely he had preferred to have voluntarily gone back to his prison and held his peace!

Montgomery replied in a letter dated 1st February, and filling several columns of the "Dublin Evening Post." The letter is given in full in the Appendix,* and will speak for itself; but it is safe to say that never, either before or since, did the character and pretensions of the great Irish Dictator meet with such a thorough and merciless exposure—never did any public man of any age receive a merited castigation more humiliating and complete! His admirable delineation of O'Connell's public career; description of his Parliamentary failure; depreciatory estimate of his abilities; contemptuous assignment of the highest professional reward to which, had he chosen to confine himself to the honourable exercise of his second-rate legal qualifications, he might possibly have hoped to attain; and the contrast with the position he then occupied, are *amongst* the best things, if not in their way *the best things*, he ever wrote; while his exposures of his hollow inconsistency, and vindication of himself and his fellow-Remonstrants, are done with surpassing power. The sensation caused by this letter was tremendous; the consterna-

* Appendix I—"Letter to Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P., February, 1831."

tion amongst the Repeal ranks on the sudden demolition of their Idol ludicrous in the extreme; and the satisfaction of all denominations of Protestants, and of all moderate Roman Catholics opposed to the views of the arch-agitator, proportionately great. The scenes presented in the streets of Dublin and around the newspaper offices on the first publication of the letter, and on the issue of several subsequent editions and of various editorial and other notices for and against, have been described by eye-witnesses as alike wondrously exciting and amusing. The fury of the revolutionary press knew no bounds, and both in Dublin and in the Provinces its conductors vied with each other in the strength of the abusive epithets employed. O'Connell himself never attempted a reply, and almost the only notice he is reported to have taken of the letter was at a Sunday Repeal meeting shortly after, where he remarked that "a Unitarian parson in the North had written four columns of abuse of him. He had not read the letter himself, but he might, perhaps, as he went along the road—that is, if he had leisure. But what he would say to the slave who wrote it—for he was a slave—'Let the galled jade wince, my withers are unwrung.'"

While the feelings of the mob, the newspaper writers, and the "Liberator" himself thus found characteristic expression, the letter had afforded high gratification in various influential quarters, and especially to the Government authorities. It *was stated* that the Marquis of Anglesey himself wrote to the Premier, to the effect that "a *young Presbyterian minister* in the North" had done more in a single letter to defeat and crush O'Connell than all the means which the Government had taken for the purpose. The letter was republished both in North and South. In the "Northern Whig" of February 14th it was reprinted in full, with the following editorial remarks:—

"The terrific castigation inflicted on Mr. O'Connell by Mr. Montgomery will be found in full in our issue to-day. Mr. Montgomery's reply will prove a lasting record of the terrible retribution men may incur by madly assailing the characters and motives of individuals who, by their public deeds and private virtues, stand far above the

malignant shafts of unprincipled assailants. Mr. Montgomery's letter created a most extraordinary sensation in Dublin. Mr. Hodgson has published it as a pamphlet in Belfast."

The pamphlet here alluded to, containing also the foregoing Joint Address to the Lord-Lieutenant, and his Reply, almost immediately reached a second edition.

Meantime, "from various quarters," as he himself subsequently stated, "and from some of the best men in the country, he received the most gratifying testimonials of approbation." From strangers as from friends, from Derry to Dublin and Cork, from Episcopalians, Methodists, and Orthodox Presbyterians, as well as from his own Remonstrant brethren, these tributes came. Of those that have been preserved the following may serve as illustrations:—

"MY DEAR AND RESPECTED SIR,—It may not appear obtrusive in an old pupil in the A. Institution to congratulate you on your triumphant victory over your late formidable assailant.

"Your letter to O'Connell has been read with the greatest avidity, and has given high delight and amusement at the Castle. General Freeman, speaking and writing of it, said 'that it is an admirable vindication of your character, and is *inimitable*.'

"Your name will now shine brighter in the contrast that you have put your sentiments on record with regard to 'agitation,' and your utter abhorrence of it. Many were disposed to think that your silence favoured Dissolution of the Union, or rather indifference to it.

"I trust, sir, that you will be long in possession of your health and faculties, and willing to descend from your sacred functions to chastise the wicked and turbulent.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"THOMAS SCOTT, *Curate of Finglass.*

"DUBLIN, 10, NORTH FREDERICK STREET,
25th February, 1831.

"P.S.—The *second edition* of your letter to O'C. is echoing through the streets to-day."

The next letter is from one whose name was afterwards long and favourably known in Belfast as a talented minister of the Methodist denomination:—

“LONDONDERRY, *February 26, 1831.*”

“DEAR SIR,—When any man of transcendent talent and vigorous mind unfolds his energies in behalf of *liberty of conscience*, the *right of private judgment*, and the *welfare of his country*, he commands the admiration, and ultimately secures the esteem, of every man in the community whose judgment is not blinded with *self-love*, and whose passions are not *perverted by petty party* prejudice. It is possible for such feelings to exist in the bosoms of thousands, whilst the object that elicits them may remain totally unacquainted with the individuals who entertain them. This is one of the ‘evils’ which exist ‘under the sun.’ Eternity, however, will be the period of evolution, when every good man will enjoy the exquisite pleasure arising from the approbation of God, and of all the high and holy.

“To me you are personally unknown, although I often wished to see you. I differ from you on some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel; and even in politics, I was an enemy throughout to Catholic Emancipation; and yet these things do not debar me from addressing you as I now do. It gives me pleasure to state my own approbation of your conduct at the present eventful period, and also to say, that among my numerous acquaintances of all parties, it is considered that your *tremendous delineation* of O’Connell’s character, inconsistencies, and agitations, has done more to bring the demagogue to his *real level* in public estimation than anything heretofore done or published in this empire. The ‘Evening Mail’ pursued him hitherto in his course like a ferocious bloodhound; but it remained for you to trample on his pretensions as a patriot, and slay this Irish warlock, not with a silver arrow, but with your pen.

“Excuse this liberty of one personally unknown, and believe me, with due respect, yours sincerely,

“DANIEL M’AFEE.

“To the Rev. Henry Montgomery.”

The esteemed Presbyterian minister of Cork writes as follows:—

“CORK, *February 28, 1831.*”

“DEAR SIR,—Permit one who, though a stranger to your person, is intimately acquainted with your character, evinced and adorned by the noble struggles you have made in defence of religious and civil liberty, to thank you for your admirable letter to D. O’Connell. With that popular leader I heartily concurred in the question of Catholic Emancipation, and admired his unwearied efforts and peculiar talent of organising, and by so doing giving effect to the public wish. I had

the honour of standing in rank with him among the friends to the utter abolition of slavery, and of uniting my feeble efforts in that glorious cause. Though differing from him with regard to the subject of the Repeal of the Union, yet I could not but allow that he had the full right of advocating by any rational and legal means a measure which appeared to him favourable to the welfare of his country. But when he showed himself to be a fierce political bigot, condemning all who presumed to dissent from him on that single topic, slandering and vituperating honourable men who had fought in the very front of the contest for freedom, and whom he had been accustomed to laud in sounding terms, merely because that, daring to think for themselves, they dared to *oppose* what he *proposed*; when he shamelessly presumed to hold up such men to the execration of the mob as traitors to their country; then I could not but give up any favourable opinion I may have before entertained concerning him, and heartily wished him exposed and overthrown.

“This my wish you, sir, have accomplished, not only in my opinion, but also in that of many enlightened Catholics as well as Protestants. Sir, we thank you. We regard you as the champion who has overthrown the mighty political giant!

“A few of us united to print five hundred copies of your able letter for distribution in town and country, of which we take the liberty of sending you one as a specimen of the form in which we have done it. May God long continue to you your health, strength, and capacities of usefulness and enjoyment, that you may see of the desire of your soul to your increasing satisfaction.

“With sincere respect and esteem, I subscribe myself, dear sir, your friend and brother in Christ,

“WM. JILLARD HORT.

“To the Rev. H. Montgomery.”

From the “Remonstrants” of Armagh came the following gratifying acknowledgment:—

“ARMAGH, 14th February, 1831.

“REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—On behalf of ourselves and our Remonstrant brethren in this quarter of the vineyard, we beg leave to return you our most sincere thanks for the manly, candid, and honest sentiments contained in your letter in the ‘Evening Post’ of 10th inst., in reply to the attack made on you by Mr. O’Connell. And we feel truly grateful for the dignified manner in which you have repelled the falsehoods which have been so unjustly charged against your rev. brethren and friends.

“To the Rev. Henry Montgomery.”

This letter bore the names of twenty-one of the leading citizens of Armagh—all but four being the same as those signed to the Armagh Remonstrance to the General Synod (see pp. 412-13). It was accompanied by the following letter from Leonard Dobbin, Esq. :—

“*ARMAGH, 14th February, 1831.*”

“*DEAR SIR,—*On the other side you have our humble tribute to your just claim on us, which would be much more numerous had I delayed for that purpose; but anxiety to testify our respect induced me to lose no time. You may make use of the document as you think proper. I never was so gratified as on reading your letter. —I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

“*LEONARD DOBBIN.*”

“*Lord C—*is delighted beyond measure with your letter. If it is published as a pamphlet, I have no doubt *T—* would sell a vast number of them here.”

Last, but not least, were the warm-hearted appreciation and encouragement of his friend and brother, the Rev. John Mitchel :—

“*NEWRY, 22nd February, 1831.*”

“*MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,—* Your letter to O’Connell has been of essential service in many ways, and the virulence which it has called forth from the O’Connellites will do you no harm. You have with you all the virtue and intelligence of the country. I would have written sooner, but knew that you were likely to be pestered with letters. I have deeply sympathised with you through all these struggles, but never entertained any fear of the result. You stand upon unassailable ground; you are well able to maintain it; and, thank God, there is nothing either in our cause or in our characters that needs fear the fullest exposure. May God bless, direct, and strengthen you in the defence of truth and right.

“*Mrs. M. desires me to offer you her cordial thanks for your unshrinking exposure and castigation of wrong-doing. Present my kind regards to Mrs. Montgomery, and believe me, as ever, yours most affectionately,*

“*JOHN MITCHEL.*”

The son of the Lieutenant of Volunteers and farmer of Boltanconnel, single-handed, had humbled the pride and shattered the ambitious projects of the great Dictator and idolised political

chief of the Irish disaffected people, and thereby had laid under deep obligations of gratitude the Government of his country. He had done more—he had previously declared in the presence of her chief governor the principles of religious liberty of the Remonstrant Church, which he had mainly established, and had heard them repeated by the Viceroy as views which he was proud to share. He had thus virtually secured, by a twofold bond, the recognition of his Church—the formal announcement of which by the Government he knew must shortly follow—and provided for the temporal well-being of her ministers and people, despite the utmost efforts of a leagued army of foes. He had earned and received, notwithstanding his Unitarian faith, the thanks and respect of the whole Protestant community of his native land, and of multitudes of the wiser and more moderate of his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. He had achieved all this and more without lowering by a single line the erect and noble front of manly independence, which, when a youth of less than one-and-twenty, he had brought with him from his father's home; upheld undimmed by speck or stain through every trial in all the intervening period of his eventful career; maintained undaunted through eight long years of stormy Synodical conflicts against a host of foes; rendered illustrious on many a memorable field against the combined and formidable leaders of Orthodoxy; and finally impressed deep in the heart and indelibly on the front of the Remonstrant Church, sacred to religious truth and liberty, of which his brethren grudged not to accord him the name and honour of the founder. But he had done yet more. Son of the worthy man who “wished that he might live to see Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation,” but “died without the sight”—*he* had seen the latter become the law of the land, with the proud satisfaction of knowing that to its accomplishment he himself had contributed no small, unimportant, or unacknowledged part; while in regard to the former, casting to the winds every thought of gratifying or offending the great landed and titled powers, or of consulting the interests of time-established institutions and ancient corruptions of the day, he had

thrown himself with all the might of his unfettered powers of intellect and speech into its recent brilliant advocacy; and he could now rest in the assured conviction that he had contributed a full share to its speedy and eventual success—and that a few months more must witness the introduction, and no long time thereafter the consummation, of the great healing measure of Parliamentary Reform. He, the son of the Irish Volunteer and the brother of United Irishmen, while remaining entirely faithful to his early training, alike religious and political, had manifested in his own person and conduct the necessary connexion between true liberty and loyalty; and, overthrowing in fair single combat the arch-revolutionary agitator of the day, he, the humble Presbyterian minister, had come to be for the time, from the most lordly mansion to the lowliest Protestant household, perhaps the most respected, if not also the most truly popular man in Ireland.

And here for the present we may fittingly leave him to rest for a time on the honours he has fairly won, till in a succeeding volume we resume the history of his eventful life, and trace its varied scenes and chequered fortunes to its close.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

SPEECH OF THE REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY, M.A., ON THE DECLARATION
OF FAITH, PROPOSED AT THE MEETING OF THE SYNOD OF ULSTER
IN STRABANE, JUNE 29, 1827.

MODERATOR, in coming forward to address you on the present occasion, I cannot avoid feeling that I do so under many disadvantages. The man who has the multitude at his back, who sails upon the full tide of popular favour, has an easy task to perform in vindicating his opinions; for there is a sympathy in the breasts of his auditors which gives energy and life to all that he utters. But the individual who ventures to stem the current of public feeling, who goes forth in his frail bark against the rolling waters, has only a cheerless and hopeless prospect before him. Such is my situation at present; yet although I may be driven back by the stream, or overwhelmed by the tempest, I cannot see the Synod of Ulster rushing forward in the dangerous confidence of security to what I consider destruction, without boldly pushing forth to warn her of the shoals and quicksands to which she is approaching.

A Presbyterian, by education, and feeling, and conviction; a Presbyterian, because I consider the principles of our Church essentially favourable to the great cause of Civil and Religious Liberty, I should be unworthy of the privileges which I enjoy, if any contemptible view of personal convenience or temporal interest could prevent me from expressing freely what I strongly feel. I wish, however, to approach this important subject in a serious frame of mind, and in as calm a manner as the agitations of the last four days will permit. But, as I am sensible that the ardour of debate, and the very nature of an extemporaneous address, may carry me beyond those mild and decorous bounds which the character and station of this assembly require to be observed, I commit myself to the judicious correction of the Moderator. I feel it the more necessary to do so, as I, and those who

think with me, have had our opinions treated by several speakers with terms of unmeasured obloquy and reproach. The gentlest epithet applied to us has been that of *heretics*. I never expected to hear the word used in a *Protestant* assembly; but its reiterated application on the present occasion has taught me that no mode of faith can change the evil propensities of human nature, and that the hateful passions of men are never so malignant as when they put on the sacred garb of religion. Those, however, who have adopted this vulgar system of abuse, which only reflects discredit upon themselves and the cause which they espouse, have not the merit of originality in the course which they pursue. The attaching of odious *names* to opinions and persons marked out for persecution has always been the favourite plan of the exclusively righteous. I feel unwilling even to allude in this heated assembly to the most glorious Being that ever appeared upon earth; but we well know that the Redeemer of the world was brought to the cross under the accusation of *blasphemy*, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles was reviled as a *heretic* for preaching the truth dictated to him by the Holy Spirit. Paul “confessed that after the manner which they called heresy worshipped he the Lord God of his fathers.” I cheerfully make the same admission—I own that after the manner which the majority here “call heresy” I do worship my Creator. But I am not the more in *real* error on that account; for I believe no member of this Synod will say that *numbers* prove “sound doctrine.” If such a position were tenable, woe be unto Protestantism! Indeed, Moderator, except for the credit of this body, I care not by what name I may be called; neither shall I retort upon my opponents the invidious epithets which might easily be applied, being determined not to sacrifice the best part of Christianity, its spirit of infinite benignity and love, to the support of a party, or the maintenance of speculative opinions.

Mr. Cooke has been courteous enough to compliment me as possessing “talents, acquirements, and eloquence of no ordinary kind;” and to say that *he* thinks more highly of *my* abilities than I do of *his*. For the first part of his eulogium, however unmerited, I feel grateful; though probably I ought to consider it only as the *tact* of an ambitious general, magnifying the power of his enemy, merely to enhance the glory of certain victory. With regard to our comparative estimate of each other’s talents, I hope he is correct; for, knowing how highly I appreciate *his* abilities, I should be proud to stand even *higher* in the estimation of so competent a judge. But admitting his compliment to be sincere, in how awkward a situation does it place himself, in con-

denning my opinions! He grants me a mind *capable* of judging, and concedes that I possess literary acquirements adequate to enlighten and direct my judgment; and yet (most strange to say!) he declares that I do not understand the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, which he avers is clearly revealed in every page of the New Testament! How this alleged force of intellect and extent of information can be reconciled with my alleged ignorance of the plainest proposition of Revelation, it is not for me to determine; but as I feel grateful for his courtesy, I freely give him the full benefit of his argument.

I am not, however, more surprised at Mr. Cooke's granting to me all the attributes which are usually considered necessary to enable a man to form correct opinions, and then declaring that I am in dangerous error, than I am at the humble estimate which he seems to make of his own talents, while he proposes to guide the opinions of others by a religious test or declaration. How a Church that considered itself *infallible*, or an individual who believed himself *inspired*, could make such a proposition, I can readily conceive; but how any man, or body of men, admitting fallibility of judgment, and laying no claim to inspiration, can be guilty of such an audacious attempt "to lord it over God's heritage" (the conscience), I do confess I have no faculties to comprehend. As there is a *possibility* of error wherever there is human *fallibility*, in how awful a situation must those stand who either require or give assent to that which *may* be "the commandment of men," instead of "the truth of God!" It is vain to tell me that "this is only a declaration of opinion, not a test of belief." It is a distinction without a difference; for what a man *declares* at the bidding of his fellow-man he virtually *subscribes*. Now, I do say, without fear of rational or Scriptural contradiction, that any body of fallible men who demand assent or subscription to any declaration or test of faith, in *human language*, under the fear of any penalty, or the hope of any reward, are trenching, not merely upon the fundamental principle of Protestantism, "the right of private judgment," but also upon the sacred prerogative of the great Head of the Church. "Who art thou," saith the Apostle, "that judgest another man's servant? To his own master let him stand or fall." And elsewhere we are instructed that "one is our master, even Christ, and all we are brethren." How dare those very Presbyterians, who declaim most loudly against the usurpations of Popery, who call upon the Catholics to read their Bibles, to despise their priests, and to extricate themselves from the trammels of their Church—how dare they, in the face of common shame and common consistency, to turn upon their brethren, and to attempt to place "the

yoke of bondage" upon their necks! When I witness such an attempt, I blush for the weakness or the wickedness of man; but I will neither be a partaker in the shame nor in the crime. So truly do I detest all human interference in matters of conscience, and so awful have been its effects in the world, that were you this moment to lay before me a human creed, every word of which I believed, I would not subscribe it, lest I should thereby sanction the interference of man with the sole prerogative of the Redeemer. Indeed, what are all such attempts but a manifestation of the impious vanity of man, pretending "to be wise above what is written," and to reveal the will of God *more clearly* than it has been revealed by the Spirit of Truth? Sir, I will subscribe no creed but the Bible; I will account for my views of it to no human tribunal but my congregation; and when this world and its evil passions shall have passed away, I pray to Him "who alone can keep me from falling," that I may not be altogether unprepared to answer for my faith to the great Head of the Church.

I admit that this body has the *power* to pass any declaration which it pleases, and to demand any submission of its members which it pleases; but I deny that it has any Scripture warrant for doing so. And if, Moderator, you should persevere, what will be the consequence? You may make *hypocrites* of the weak, and the crafty, and the worldly; you may make *martyrs* of the firm, the upright, and the sincere; but every child who hears me must know that you cannot change the conviction of a single mind, or alter the feeling of a single heart. Suppose you pass your declaration, and I refuse my assent or signature, which as an honest man I must refuse, you will probably say to me, "we can no longer give you the right hand of fellowship;" but, if I *subscribe* your creed, though you *know* I do not *believe* it, then you will receive me as a brother in the Lord. How revolting, then, is this project to every virtuous feeling of the human heart! You will spurn the hand which is pure as the mountain snow, whilst you clasp, with the grasp of friendship, that which is black with the stains of perjury! Woe be unto the Presbyterian Church, if ever the day shall come, in which falsehood and dissimulation shall be bonds of union, whilst truth and sincerity shall be cast out of her counsels!

And for what is all this tyranny to be exercised, this disgrace to be incurred, this wound to be inflicted on religion? Why, that we may not be liable to the accusation of having "a diversity of opinions amongst us!" That is to say, we do differ, and we know that we shall continue to differ, but we will hold out false colours to the world, we will cast dust into the eyes of the multitude, and try to make them

believe that "there is peace where there is no peace." This may seem very fair in the eyes of some, but to me it appears to be rank Jesuitism and hypocrisy. Yet this alone can be the "*unity*" for which many are such strenuous advocates. I do not think so meanly of their understandings as to believe that they aim at any other kind of uniformity. *Uniformity of faith!* Oh, that such a phrase had never been heard by the ears of man—that such a vain idea had never flitted across his imagination! What dungeons has it crowded! what tortures has it inflicted! what oceans of innocent blood has it shed! what tears of widows and of orphans has it caused to ascend in sad memorial before Heaven! Leaving its mightier horrors, what havoc of integrity has it produced in the ordinary walks of life! what lips has it sealed against the utterance of truth, or opened to the utterance of falsehood! what private and political oppressions has it sanctioned! what barriers has it opposed to the progress of religion, and the regeneration of a world! *Uniformity of faith!* Why, two of us can scarcely agree respecting the most ordinary occurrences of life. On the subjects of literature and philosophy, manufactures and commerce, government and laws, there is an endless diversity of opinions. And can we, then, possibly expect to be exactly of one mind on "the high and deep things pertaining to salvation?" So long as human nature is constituted as it is, varying in dispositions and talents, subject to all the influences of education, society and interest, a vast diversity of religious tenets must necessarily prevail. Nothing less than the immediate interposition of Heaven could produce perfect uniformity. And when we consider that such uniformity never has been attained, it would be a libel on the Deity to suppose that it is essential to the salvation of His people. Such an impious supposition would imply that an all-wise and gracious Being had given a religion to his creatures inadequate to produce the effects for which it was designed. But I do not require to urge this upon Presbyterians, who spurn at the idea of "exclusive salvation," and rejoice to think "that many shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

Were uniformity of faith, however, *desirable* (which to me seems exceedingly doubtful), I am persuaded that creeds, and confessions, and other "devices of men" are not the means adapted to produce it. The very Churches which taunt us with our varieties of faith, and reproach us for permitting the disuse of our "ancient standards," have as great diversities of opinion in themselves as prevail amongst us. We might fairly turn upon them, and say, "Physicians, heal your-

selves!" It is as notorious as the sun at noon-day, that the Established Church, at this very moment, is divided into two great parties of Arminians and Calvinists, not to speak of minor divisions. I have seen a low Arian, if not Socinian work, written not many years ago, as I have been told and believe, by a dignitary of that Church, turning the doctrine of the Trinity and Archbishop Magee's view of the Atonement into contempt and ridicule in the most indecorous manner. And we all know that, from Tillotson down to the present age, many of the brightest ornaments of that Church have wished that "she was well rid of the Athanasian creed." Do I mention these things from any invidious feeling towards the Established Church? By no means. I believe the clergy of that Church to be a very respectable body of divines; many members of it are amongst my best friends; and some of the most pious Christians I ever knew were of its communion. But I consider the state of that Church as a striking proof of my position, that uniformity of *creed* does not necessarily produce uniformity of *faith*. And when, on a previous day, I spoke of a few of the clergy as showing themselves anxious about the dismissal of Mr. Porter from the Clerkship, and interfering in the settlement of a Presbyterian congregation, I meant no reflection on the clergy of that Church as a body. If some of them became "busybodies in other men's matters," I am convinced that ninety-nine out of one hundred of them would condemn such injudicious interference as much as I possibly could. But whilst I thus express my respect towards the Established Church, I trust I shall be pardoned for not falling into that extreme courtesy (so common amongst us of late) which would exalt her above the Church to which I conscientiously belong. I would hold it disgraceful to continue a *Presbyterian*, if I preferred the doctrine, discipline, or worship of *any* other Church; and I freely confess that I should place very little value upon a compliment from any man who told me that he considered *my* Church superior to his *own*, whilst he remained in that which he disapproved.

If we turn to the Church of Scotland, it will not afford us much stronger proof of the efficacy of a uniform creed. There the Confession of Faith reigns in all its glory; yet I have been told (and I speak under the correction of Mr. Carlile), that there is not on earth a body of men of more diversified religious sentiments than the ministers of the Church of Scotland. Nay, it has been more than hinted that the very seats of learning are not free from heresy. Rumour tells a strange tale of a subscription scene in one of those venerable seminaries. When a Professor was elected, who was pretty generally known not to

be so Orthodox as John Knox, the person who presented the Confession of Faith to him for signature, simply enough asked him if he *believed it?* This the learned gentleman very well knew “was not in the bond.” “You have nothing,” said he, “to do with that; hand it here, and I’ll *sign* it.” There may be persons who admire this mode of producing a uniform and Orthodox faith; but to me it seems awful to think that a man should be excluded from the ministry, or any other office, for avowing the *truth*, who would be considered duly qualified for admission by putting his solemn signature to a *lie!*

I was wrong, however, in saying that there is no Church in which uniformity is to be found. There is one which, at least, boasts of being the same, in every age and clime and country—the Catholic Church. But are those who most strenuously press forward this declaration admirers of the beautiful uniformity of *that* Church? I suspect that, whilst some of them would not join me in my cordial wishes to see the benefits of the British Constitution extended to our Catholic countrymen, they will all unite with me in admitting that the uniformity of the Catholic Church powerfully tended to bring on “the gross darkness” of the middle ages, to retard the Reformation, to clog the wheels of science, and thereby to arrest the progress of civilisation. The fact cannot be conceded—the uniformity of Catholicity has spread darkness over Spain and Italy, and the noxious weeds of atheism and infidelity have sprung up under its shadow in the fair and fertile regions of France. This, however, in my mind, would have been the effect, though probably in a less degree, of any other system of faith which had attained equal power and extension; for it seems to be an ingredient in the nature of all Churches to delight in the exercise of authority where they have power, and to follow, as a natural consequence of uniformity of faith, that inquiry should cease, and the independence of the mind be annihilated. The truth is, controversies and discussions, which can only arise from diversity of opinions, seem to be as necessary to preserve the knowledge and energy of religion, as the motion of the waves to purify the waters of the ocean; but the misfortune is, that in “the strife of words” the spirit of the Gospel is too frequently lost.

I put it, then, to the Synod of Ulster, whether in the pursuit of a shadow, a visionary uniformity, they will trample upon the right of private judgment, the very foundation of their Church, and wilfully “lay a snare for the feet of weak brethren.” A curse lies upon him “who causeth a brother to offend;” and I ask, is there a man in this house who does not believe that, if the declaration be passed, some will

assent to it with the lips, but not with the heart or with the mind? I beseech you to pause, before you commit an act which must "cause some to fall." "Lay not the flattering unction to your souls," that the sin will lie solely at the door of him who shall make an insincere declaration. Every man who is concerned in passing it will be "a partaker in his sin." I can readily conceive what a struggle of nature there may be in many a heart, where the best feelings of humanity will be dragging the unhappy victim different ways. If he assent to a creed which he believes not, he is for ever degraded in his own estimation; he shudders in the presence of his God. But he is a husband and a father; and if he resolve to put on the high unbending port of a martyr, and to utter that which will make a bigoted multitude expel him from his congregation, what must be the conflict of his spirit! Unqualified for any other profession, perhaps in the wane of life, "to dig unable, and to beg ashamed," he sees, in prospect, his comfortable home made desolate, the partner of his bosom in tears, the children of his affection crying to him for that bread which he can no longer give! I ask any person that has in his bosom "a heart of flesh," can he wonder if the most powerful feelings of nature should overcome the stern commands of conscience? Can it create surprise, if the unhappy man should say, "I will not leave HER desolate, whom, in the fond fidelity of my heart, I solemnly swore to protect; I will not leave the pledges of our love without the sustenance of nature, without the means of education. No; I will make this hateful declaration; I will cast myself upon the mercy of Him who knows the pangs of my heart; I will wear my knees in secret prayer; I will wet my pillow with tears of penitence; and if all be too little to procure pardon for my offence, I may die without hope, but not without the consolation that I have sacrificed myself for objects dearer to me than life!" Oh! let us not call such a man a wretch or a hypocrite; he is a husband and a father! Let us rather make the case our own, and not "cast a stumbling-block in his way." Let us not send him into the pulpit, from which nothing but the voice of sincerity and truth should ever be heard, with a heavy conscience, and a falsehood upon his soul! If we do, his blood may be required of the authors of his crime.

But it may be alleged that I underrate the firmness and virtue of our ministers. Possibly I may. And what is the reward proposed for those that will maintain their integrity? Why, you will kindly cast all the odium you can upon them in these fanatical times; you will distract their congregations, turn them adrift, if you can, and give them the charity of the world for their portion. But you will not have

many thus to endow. Those may be courageous who are free from danger, and very upright who have nothing to forfeit by their integrity. But I shall recall to your minds a passage in the history of a man, with whom no individual here would dare to put himself in competition. I allude to the virtuous and illustrious Cranmer, the father of the Reformation in England. In the awful reign of Mary, his love of life prevailed over his integrity, and he was induced to sign a paper condemning the Reformation. This sacrifice, however, did not save him; for having degraded, they resolved to destroy him. Being led to the stake, and the devouring flames kindled around him, he stretched forth his right hand, and held it in the flames till it was consumed, repeatedly calling out in the midst of his sufferings, "O that unworthy hand!" Who then shall boast of the firmness of ordinary men, when he who was bold enough to rebuke the eighth Henry yielded for a season to his fears?

There will, I admit, be a few honest men, whom you may have the comfort and glory of exposing to inconvenience or injury. But your triumph will be very limited; for if you pass your test, I calculate that many will very soon perceive their errors. Amongst the first to rush forward to sign it, I suspect, will be a man who told me, "that if worldly interest and popular applause ran as high in favour of New Light as of Old Light doctrines, he did not believe there would be above *half-a-dozen* Orthodox ministers in the Synod." This may be an erroneous estimate, but he is proud of being a particularly accurate man in his calculations. Next to him in the race will come, I should suppose, another eminent divine, who yesterday accused a better man than himself of blasphemy; but who has, nevertheless, a very comfortable idea of the compressible nature of a ministerial conscience, as I have heard him declare, "that he only required to know a minister's congregation, in order to tell his creed." Oh, what a pure body the Synod of Ulster will soon be, and how much of one mind, if you but give them a good confession!

But I have been told that all this is proposed in pure kindness, in order to bring back the stray sheep into the true fold. This, I am bound to believe, is all true, as the principal promoters of the plan are no doubt superior to ordinary Christians. But whilst the *motive* may be approved, I must say the *means* seem but ill adapted to the end. There is a kind of resistance in human nature to the exercise of authority where no title to exercise it appears. There are some minds not very accessible to the logic of majorities, and which cannot comprehend the meaning of a threat from their equals. I tell you plainly

and sincerely, if you think us in error, you must take other means to convert us. Uncharitable denunciations, and unwarranted attempts to coerce our consciences, will rather wed us to our opinions. I shall venture to tell you a fable in proof of this position. In ancient times, as the *Sun* and *Wind* were chatting together, they beheld a traveller passing over a plain with a cloak upon his shoulders. Just for a frolic, they laid a wager as to which of them could soonest deprive him of his cloak. The Wind was to have the lead; and, mustering all his strength, he blew east and west, north and south, in the most violent and ingenious manner. But although the poor traveller was nearly blown down, he would not part with his cloak; the stronger the blast, he just wrapped it the more closely about him, and held it with the more determined grasp. At length the Wind exhausted himself by puffing, and gave up the task; when the Sun, who had retired behind a cloud, gently and gradually looked past the skirt of it upon the traveller, who held his cloak tightly for a while, remembering the rough usage he had experienced. But as the storm was past, and as the day became genial, he gradually relaxed his hold; the Sun put forth stronger beams; the cloak was thrown open; the traveller paused; the Sun poured forth the full tide of his splendour and his heat; the cloak gradually descended from the shoulders of the traveller, and he stood, subdued and melted, in the glorious presence of the God of Day! The Wind is the fury of persecution: the Sun is the genial influence of Christian love. The cloak of error, if such there be, will only be held more tenaciously in the hurricane; but in the gentle calm of kindness, in the hour of friendly intercourse, it may be laid aside for ever. There is a pride in the human heart which resists compulsion, though it will readily yield to love.

I see on the other side of the house a gentleman who has long been a leading member of this body, and who has lately distinguished himself, both from the pulpit and the press. I refer to my friend Mr. Stewart, whose sermon in defence of Orthodoxy I hold in my hand. In the preface to this discourse, he tells the world (what I knew long ago) that he was first a Calvinist in his boyhood, that he was afterwards very sceptical on the doctrine of the Trinity, and that it was only in the year 1825 he turned his attention to the Bible, to see if it contained what he *now* calls the fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures, which, unless a man believe, he is on the very verge of Atheism. Now, had the proposed declaration been brought forward in 1824, Mr. Stewart, as an honest man, could not have signed it. He might then have been "cut off as a rotten branch;" and that very act of severity

would in all likelihood have confirmed him in error. But see the happy consequence of kindness and moderation! He, who might have continued an Arian, a Heretic, a semi-Atheist, peculiarly dangerous on account of his talents, is now the zealous champion of Orthodoxy, and one of the powerful enemies of Catholic error! What *has* been *may* be. In two years, if you do not “lop us off,” Mr. Porter or myself may be edifying the world with dissertations against our present opinions!

But consider farther, if you pass this declaration, you must extend it to probationers as well as ministers. Now you tell the people that they have a right to choose their own pastors; but if they should not like a Calvinist, where are they to procure a teacher? I presume they must either submit to your dictation, or remain without a minister, which would be rather a singular way of consulting their rights and privileges.

Mr. Cooke and others have been pleased to denominate those who differ from them “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” This implies that we have assumed a false character. So far as I am concerned, I treat the insinuation with contempt. But I do admit there are in this body “wolves in sheep’s clothing”—men who have lived with us in Christian communion, who have pretended to entertain for us Christian friendship; but who now, when they are confident in numbers, turn upon us, and would devour us. These are the *real* wolves.

But we have also been compared to soldiers entering a garrison for its defence, and afterwards turning our arms against our companions. Surely Mr. Cooke intended this as a hit at himself and his partisans. I came into the garrison with the same colours which I now wear; I have always kept them flying; and whether I remain in it or be driven from it, I shall keep them aloft, so long as I have an arm to bear them. There are, however, traitors amongst us—men who came into the fortress on the avowed condition of mutual toleration and forbearance, and who engaged with us to defend it against the common enemy. But now that they think *themselves* able to maintain the bulwarks, they treacherously turn their arms against their comrades, and would drive them out defenceless upon the world. These are the *real* traitors.

Mr. Cooke’s similes are only to be equalled by his charity. He has given us a new version of Christian unity. He has talked a great deal about unity of the Spirit, meaning “unity of the Spirit’s testimony.” These are idle words, which sound in the ear without conveying any idea to the mind. Every ignorant enthusiast, down to the lowest

dregs of fanaticism, talks most presumptuously of "the testimony of the Spirit," and appeals to his own feelings as a proof that he is right. But when Mr. Cooke says that he is only to love those of his own creed, and to view those who differ from him as he would regard robbers, I tell him that he is listening to the testimony of his own passions, not to the Spirit of Truth. There were persons of old who loved only their own tribe and nation, "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others;" but our Saviour showed that the poor Samaritan understood the nature of brotherly love infinitely better than the priest and the Levite. It may be said, this was only an act of charity to the body; but surely, if we are bound to love "that which perisheth," we are much more constrained to love "that which endureth for ever." It is one of the greatest evils of our unsanctified contentions, that they tend to restrict the charity of the Gospel, which enjoins us to "love *all* men, and to do good unto *all* men"—even that charity which the Apostle declares to be superior even to faith and hope.

I have not entered into any defence of my peculiar tenets (though I believe them to be capable of a rational and Scriptural vindication), because I know that such a course would only widen a breach which is already too large. But I can assure you, that whatever my opinions are, I hold them in great humility, under the most profound sense of my own weakness and liability to go astray. In coming to the conclusions at which I have arrived, I can truly say that I have sought light and direction where alone they are to be obtained. I have never read the Scriptures with a view to ascertain their meaning without first imploring the gracious assistance of the Divine Spirit to free me from prejudice, presumption, and error, and to lead me to a right understanding of the truth. Neither have I ever sat down to write a sermon, or any religious discourse, without praying to God that I might be enabled faithfully and truly to interpret His holy will, and to instruct His people. And I can further say, in perfect sincerity, that I never enter a pulpit without a profound sense of my responsibility; nor do I ever venture to address any people until I have secretly and fervently entreated the protection and guidance of Heaven. I may not have asked with becoming humility, and devotion, and faith; but I trust I have asked in sincerity. And if I be yet in error, I believe God will enlighten my mind; if I be right, I trust He will grant me fortitude to maintain my integrity, in despite of unmerited obloquy, and "to speak boldly the whole counsel of His will." For myself, and those who think with me, I feel that I am entitled to claim at least the humble

merit of being *sincere*. The world may consider us *fools* for not conforming to its maxims, and pursuing its gains; but it would require the malignity of a demon to call us *knaves*. I believe, though many of my brethren be in error, that simple error is not a condemning sin; and I sincerely hope that the great Shepherd may collect his sheep from many folds. If I thought that all who differ from me were to go down to destruction, I could not enjoy one hour's happiness.

I conclude by entreating you not to enter upon a measure at variance with the true principles of your Church, and which must eventually end in division and weakness. For myself, I have, as you all know, nothing either to hope or to fear. "But for my friends and brethren's sake, I would say, peace be within your Zion." Arianism has been persecuted, frequently unto blood, for fifteen centuries, which must prove that it cannot be subdued by mere human power. This, however, is certain, "if it be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot prevail against it."

APPENDIX B.

CHARITY SERMON FOR THE HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, PREACHED BY THE
REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY, M.A., IN THE MEETING-HOUSE OF THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, BELFAST, DECEMBER 30,
1827. *

“To do good and to communicate forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”—*Hebrews* xiii. 16.

Y N attempting to plead the cause of Christian Charity in this liberal and enlightened town, I am fully aware that no idea can be introduced which is not already familiar to the minds of my audience. Every topic has been exhausted by the eloquent advocates that have preceded me ; the richest gifts of the understanding and the fairest flowers of the imagination have been liberally presented at the hallowed shrine of Benevolence. Were I to consult merely my own acceptance as a preacher, this might be a matter of regret ; but when I consider the important cause in which I am engaged, it becomes a subject of congratulation. From the experienced liberality of my auditors, I look around with the calm certainty of a favourable reception. I feel that I am not about to strike an untried instrument, but one whose chords have been repeatedly harmonised by *master hands*. There is no greater error than to imagine that the fountains of charity in the heart become exhausted by opening up numerous channels through which their refreshing waters are fully distributed to the thirsty and the faint. On the contrary, I am persuaded that, like the miraculous stream which issued from the rock of the desert when struck by the wand of the leader of Israel, they are perpetually renovated by the holy influence of Divine grace, and gush forth with increasing purity and abundance. The many valuable institutions reared and supported by your munificence afford the amplest proof of the accuracy of this statement. From your venerable Poorhouse down to the humblest follower in the train of benevolence, there is an energy and vitality about them totally unknown to similar establishments in other places which are supported out of public funds or the revenues of the nation. The success of the cause, therefore, which I am this day to plead, does not depend upon any casual impulse of compassion which I may be able to awaken, but

* See p. 169.

upon fixed principles of beneficence, invigorated by exercise and matured by time.

Were we left to the mere instruction of reason, we should find it exceedingly difficult to reconcile the evils which afflict humanity with the perfect wisdom and goodness of the Creator. When we see the good man overwhelmed with misfortunes, whilst the wicked enjoys unbroken prosperity; the useful and virtuous removed from the scene of their labours, whilst the idle and profligate are left as a burthen and curse to society; the sorrows produced by ambition, sensuality, and malice; the calamities arising from pestilence, famine, and all the "skyey influences," "the thousand natural shocks which flesh is heir to,"—when we behold these things, the unaided eye of reason dwells with a mournful despondency upon the wrecks of so many hopes and enjoyments, and wonders that the favoured creature of God should seem but an outcast and alien in the very land of his inheritance! But what reason could not discover in ages, nor explain in volumes, religion at once unfolds. She tells us that mercies and chastisements are dispersed by the same Almighty hand; and the whole difficulty of reconciling the evils of life with the wisdom and goodness of God is at once removed by the glorious doctrine of Immortality, and the blessed assurance that our present life is only a scene of preparation. Indeed, it appears to be one of the most ordinary proceedings in the providence of Heaven to render the sorrows of humanity the prelude to its enjoyments, to connect the chastisements that humble with the reformation that exalts, and to ally the most appalling terrors with the most blessed hopes! Even Death itself, the last and most dreaded evil of shuddering nature, is not without its consolations. That the awful change, indeed, cannot be, and should not be, contemplated with indifference, must be admitted. Oh, no! To close the eyes for ever upon the fair earth, the blue sky, the glorious sun, and the busy world of animated beings—upon the smile of love, the tear of sympathy, and the ten thousand endearing offices of kindred and affection; to have the ear sealed for ever against the accents of man, the cheering tones of friendship, the sweet voices of the faithful partner and the beloved child!—oh, my friends, however strong in faith, however fortified with hope, however animated by charity, these things must for a moment pass over the heart with an icy chillness. An aspiration *may* ascend to Heaven "that the cup would pass away;" but the believing spirit, instantly re-assured, and resting upon the strength of the Redeemer, exclaims, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done!" From that moment the bitterness of death is past; and even the afflicted relations catch the solemn inspiration of

the triumphant Christian, and almost cease to mourn over the departing mortal, in the deep and the holy conviction that he is so soon to inherit the glories of immortality. Often have I wished to place the unbeliever beside the death-bed of a devout and rational Christian. I would not grapple with his doubts; I would not argue with his philosophy. I would simply point to the scene before him; and I do entertain a strong persuasion that the religion which can thus deprive death of his sting and the grave of its victory, and connect the deepest sorrows of humanity immediately with its highest hopes, would eventually steal into the citadel of his heart, and teach him to acknowledge that it is the offspring of infinite wisdom and benevolence.

And if the noblest attributes of the Divine character may thus be vindicated in permitting the greatest sorrows of nature, we can have no difficulty in reconciling the ordinary calamities of life with the same adorable perfections. When we behold in the sad privations of thousands around us the fulfilment of the Divine declaration, "that the poor shall never cease out of the land," we never apprehend that anything has miscarried in the gracious designs of Providence. We look upon this very condition of affairs as wisely intended to perfect the character both of the poor and of the rich—to lead the former to cultivate patience, humility, resignation, and all the suffering virtues; and to teach the latter that they are not the real *owners* of their splendid possessions, but merely the stewards of God's providence, and bound to relieve the indigent, to succour the oppressed, to instruct the ignorant, to promote plans of public usefulness, and to bind up the broken heart. Instead of dispensing all His favours immediately from His own benignant hand, He renders one portion of His creatures the agents of His bounties to another; and thus unites them together in the bonds of kindness and gratitude as partakers of a common nature and common hopes.

If, however, we consider the extent of our influence upon the happiness of others, we will find it exceedingly circumscribed. The anguish of guilt, remorse, "and all the fiercer tortures of the mind," we cannot heal; we cannot uproot the baneful passions of men that prey upon the vitals of society; we cannot restore greenness to the heart which has been long withered by despair; nor can we arrest "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," "the arrow that flieth by day." Alas, alas! my fellow Christians, whatever may be our desires, we feel ourselves unable to *do* more than drop the tear of impotent pity over the greatest evils that afflict our unhappy race. The few calamities within the reach of our assistance are chiefly those

attendant upon poverty. Though we cannot “pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,” nor restore the lost integrity of the heart, we may clothe and feed the naked and starving frame; though we cannot cancel the vices and follies of past years, yet by friendly aid and timely counsel we may rescue the victim of penury from farther degradation and shame. And just in proportion to the scantiness of our means of doing good, should be the diligence of our exertions to employ them to the greatest advantage.

The *duty* of providing for the poor is, indeed, universally admitted; but to devise the best *means* of effecting so desirable an end has for ages puzzled the sagacity of philosophers, statesmen, and divines. Acting upon the erroneous principle of deducing general conclusions from particular facts, we have had nearly as many theories as writers on the subject of pauperism. Each has sent forth his panacea; but the disease still continues to rage in the vitals of society with unabated violence.

One heartless political economist and divine (Malthus) has proposed to roll back the tide of nature, to resist the earliest commandment of Heaven, to reduce and limit the rational offspring of the Creator, and to narrow the triumph of redeeming love! Whilst he admits that nature has spread an abundant banquet for *all* her children, he would permit only the affluent and independent to seat themselves at her table. Should the poor and the unfortunate approach the bountiful feast of their common parent, he would tell them “that they are unbidden guests, that the seats were pre-occupied; and that although there was abundance before them, they had no right to enjoy it.” Or, in other words, he would impiously say to the rational offspring of God, that they had no right to the common bounties of His paternal providence; and annihilate one portion of the population, that the remainder might revel in unnecessary or fatal enjoyments. But the curse of nature is upon his system; and he might as well attempt to roll back the spheres of heaven in their orbits, as to oppose the course of Providence in the peopling of the world.

A more benevolent class of theorists have lately arisen; but they are violently agitated by the panic of a redundant population. They would not, however, exterminate the poor; they would merely banish them. But were their system feasible, it is not practicable. On a narrow scale, it would accomplish nothing; on an extended one, it would not be carried into effect. . . .

Perceiving these difficulties, some excellent men have recommended a modified system of *poor-rates* as most likely to remedy the evil.

This I consider the most exceptionable of all modes of providing for the poor. . . .

All that I have read, and all that I have seen, unite in producing the strongest conviction, that the best possible substitute for this objectionable tax upon property is found in the voluntary associations of benevolence for the support of such valuable institutions as your House of Industry. On the one hand are avoided all the evils of mendicity—its idleness, its hypocrisy, its dishonesty, its personal and moral degradation; on the other hand, the still *greater* evils of a *pensioned* pauperism are warded off—its laziness, its insolence, its ingratitude, its total destruction of the renovating principle of independence. Some difficulties must attend every system which has to operate on human interests and passions; but I firmly believe that that for which I now plead unites a greater number of advantages, with a smaller proportion of evil, than any other plan that has ever been devised by the ingenuity of man. It does not mercilessly doom the poor to starvation in the very storehouse of Nature's abundance; but it does tell them that they must submit to the law of fallen humanity, and "eat their bread in the sweat of their brow." It does not doom them to banishment from the green and fertile fields of their native land, where their earliest affections were awakened, and their latest visions shall linger; but it firmly says to them, "He that will not work when he is able and has opportunity, has no right to eat when he is inclined!" It renders charity what it ought to be, a free-will offering; it preserves the natural links of kindness and gratitude between the rich and the poor; it is calculated to unite in its favour the suffrages of the philosopher, the patriot, and the philanthropist, by producing the greatest amount of good at the least possible expense; and preserving the better principles of individuals, whilst it is beneficial to public morals.

I know it has been urged that the system of voluntary contributions cannot reach the heart of the mere worldly speculator, nor open the hoards of the miser, whilst it presses heavily upon the funds of the conscientious and humane. Very true—humanity has always been disgraced by some sordid wretches, who worship mammon as their god, who feel no compassion, and who neither dedicate any portion of their time nor their means to the service of mankind. I do believe, however, that no community of the same extent has ever possessed fewer characters of such a contemptible description than that in which we live. The current of public opinion runs so strongly in favour of a generous liberality, that few, were they ever so inclined, would have the hardihood to resist it. But still, *should* there be some who,

wrapping themselves up in the sordid mantle of affected wisdom, may sneer at the exertions of those whom they mockingly denominate "*public men*," because they disinterestedly devote a portion of their time and their means to the benefit of their species, you can *want* their countenance and co-operation! The ranks of benevolence are neither thin nor feeble. They are marshalled by hoary veterans, who enjoy the green old age of virtue, the approbation of their own hearts, the esteem of their fellow-citizens, and the applauding smile of heaven—men of whom it may truly be said, as it was declared of the servant of God "in the olden time," when the ear hears them, it blesses them; when the eye sees them, it gives witness unto them: because they have delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish hath come upon them; they have been eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and fathers to the poor, and they have caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. In the train of those honoured leaders in the hosts of benevolence, press forward the middle-aged and the young—all unbought champions in the holy cause of charity—mingling the prudence of manhood with the zeal and energy of youth, in warring against the fatal dominion of ignorance and vice and misery. There may be a few cold hearts that will not cheer them onwards by bidding them "God speed;" there may be, though I know him not, some wretched miser who will withhold from them the supplies of benevolence. Let him keep his sordid hoards; there are abundance of generous hearts and liberal hands to make up the deficiency. Let his gold continue to be his god, and his own vile self his world. We would not entail the evils and degradation of compulsory poor-laws upon a whole nation, in order to wring from the reluctant hands of a few despicable wretches that useless trash which they value above their own souls! Nor is it necessary that we should do so—the grasp of death is more powerful than even that of the miser; and though he may expire with the keys of his coffers clasped in the last convulsive pang of nature, his heirs will rifle his hoards; and the streams that for a season were diverted from their natural channels, will now return to fructify society, in the reward of industry or the support of want.

But it has been further urged that "the miser's contrast"—he who squanders the patrimony of the indigent on personal gratifications, or "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world"—is a legitimate object of compulsory taxation for the support of the poor. It is, I fear, a lamentable fact, that those to whom God has been most bountiful are seldom the most grateful to the Author of all good, or the most bene-

ficient towards their unfortunate fellow-men. Occupied with the enjoyment of so many mercies, engaged in the gratification of every desire, carried about in the vortex of vanity or dissipation, it cannot be expected that in general their thoughts and affections should be directed with the same regularity and tranquil devotion towards the great source of all enjoyment, as the sentiments of those that are placed in the humbler and more retired scenes of life. On the other hand, they know little of affliction and destitution but the name. Surrounded from childhood to age with crowds of attendants, and all the comforts of their splendid mansions; or, when they go abroad, rolling along in their gorgeous equipages through the anxious world of human toil and human sorrow, the hovel of disease, and the dismal abode of nakedness and famine, are only presented to their view through the dim and distant medium of description, as in the painting of a panorama or the pages of a romance. It is not, therefore, a matter of reproach to those exalted individuals, nor ought it to be a subject of surprise to others, that, generally speaking, they devote less of their time, and proportionally less of their means, to the various offices of charity, than those humbler individuals whose rank and avocations place them more immediately in contact with the ignorance, vice, and misery of the world. It is not that nature has bestowed upon the affluent hearts less generous or less kind, but that fortune has placed them at a distance from those scenes where their nobler sympathies would be awakened into energy and life; it is not that they would behold more than others the house of mourning and desolation without a tear, but that the most distressing objects of human wretchedness are seldom presented to their view! Upon this evident principle, it has been calculated by some of the most accurate writers on pauperism that infinitely more is contributed towards the support of the poor by the mere labouring classes themselves than by all the nobility and gentry and merchants of the land. It is true that their contributions do not appear in the lists of periodical subscriptions and benefactions which support the public institutions of charity; but their doors are always open to the houseless wanderer, their hearths are ever free to the cold and desolate, their scanty meal is freely shared with the hungry, or their humble contribution of necessaries placed in the hands of misery. These lowly but generous hearts are diffused, like the blessings of Providence, over the entire surface of the country, alleviating every day, nay, every *hour*, the miseries of thousands whose wants the lordly and regulated charity could never reach, whose wounds the hands of public bounty could never heal! But the splendid abodes

of affluence are thinly scattered over our unfortunate land, their lofty portals are not open to the poor, and the periodical supply, how munificent soever it may appear, would altogether fail to meet the general and increasing demand. Do I say these things to cast a stigma upon the noble and the affluent? God forbid. There would be no difficulty in pointing out *some* who are honourable examples of personal exertion in the cause of humanity, and many whose countenance and support of every charitable and patriotic institution demand our warmest approbation. At the same time, I would proclaim it aloud to the wealthy and great, with the fearless sincerity which becomes my office, and the ardent zeal which accords with the holy cause which I advocate, that, *as a body*, they are less liberal in *proportion to their means* than any other class of the community—less liberal than they themselves imagine—less liberal, I am persuaded, than they would wish to be, did they duly estimate the blessings of their own lot, and the pressing claims of their unfortunate brethren! I tell them that the arbitrary institutions of worldly rank, the splendid arrangements of worldly vanity, the unprofitable pursuits of personal gratification, and even the formation of high establishments for their children, must not stand between them and the mighty duties which they owe to others by the immutable dispensations of Providence. I would remind them that they totally mistake the genius of that thrice hallowed religion which God has given to smooth the paths of man in this world, and guide him on his way to heaven, if they imagine that their prayers may ascend unaccompanied by their *alms* as an acceptable memorial before the eternal throne! I would invoke their most serious attention to that sacred volume, in which the most affecting and animating appeals are made to their hearts and their consciences, their hopes and their fears! It is thus the record runs—“Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in *him*?” Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works,

ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life!" And is not indeed the whole volume of inspiration imbued with the spirit of brotherly kindness and charity? I come not, then, merely in the weakness of man to plead for the wants of man; I come in the strength of a righteous cause, and with the authority of Heaven, "to charge you that are rich in this world to be ready to distribute and willing to communicate." I would not entail the curse of a pensioned, insolent, and heartless pauperism upon my native land, in order to seize upon the revenues of your ambition, or your vanity, or your mistaken self-interest. I would appeal to you rather as men—as patriotic men, as Christian men—to make such a use of the many and important talents committed to your care, that the Lord when He cometh may call you faithful servants, and permit you to enter into His joy!

I trust that the middle and humbler classes of my auditors will not consider themselves in their own narrower sphere as exempted from the duties which I have endeavoured to impress upon the affluent. Indeed I do not *believe* that they will. Engaged in the active and useful pursuits of life, accustomed to prudence and regularity in all their concerns, industry becomes the handmaid of charity, and they discharge their debts to the poor with the same honourable punctuality and good-will as they meet the engagements of their business or profession. To such persons, moreover, we are almost exclusively indebted for what is infinitely more valuable than money, and without which, indeed, pecuniary aid would eventually become worse than useless—the vigilant, unwearied, and judicious management of our public institutions. No individual who reads the reports of our various establishments can dispute the accuracy of this statement as regards the great mass of our industrious citizens. There may be a few—and I am sure there are but a few—of those whose persevering exertions have been crowned with the blessing of an indulgent Providence, that are less liberal than they ought to be. If any such now hear me, I beseech them to consider who it is that made them to differ, who hath swelled their stores, and to remember that the continued blessing of Heaven can rest only upon those who obey the will of Heaven. The language of inspiration is—"He that watereth others shall himself be watered; the liberal soul shall be made fat; cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days; give a portion unto *seven*, yea, unto *eight*; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." It is not the extent of our offerings, but the liberal proportion which they

bear to our means, and the kind feeling from which they emanate, that renders them acceptable to God. The two mites of the widow were, by our blessed Saviour, set above all the costly gifts which were cast into the treasury of the temple.

I am well aware that all appeals for compassion and liberality may be met by the hackneyed evasion, that the destitute have little claim upon our bounty, as they have generally been reduced to their present miserable condition by their indolence, profligacy, or folly. I do not deny the truth of the accusation; for, by the wise decree of Heaven, to deter men from evil, vice and misery are inseparable companions. *Sin* was the cause of the *first* sorrow and will be the cause of the *last*. But if we saw an unfortunate brother struggling for life amidst the waves of the ocean, or clinging in agony upon the brink of a precipice, would we refuse to rescue him from his awful situation until we had regulated the balance between his virtues and his crimes? The very anguish of his soul, and the very hopelessness of his condition, would remove every consideration but that of his sorrows, and the necessity of yielding him relief. Surely, then, in the more permanent evils of poverty and sickness, we will not refuse our consideration to the sufferer because he may lie under the double curse of penury and crime! Were he the victim of unavoidable misfortunes—were he conscious that ruin had overtaken him without his own bidding, a light would arise amidst the darkness of his desolation to cheer him forward on the wretched journey of existence. But to him who looks upon the pale and heart-broken countenance of his faithful partner, upon the naked and emaciated bodies of his children, upon his cold hearth and his uncovered bed, and is forced to exclaim, in the agony of his soul, “All that is *my* work; but for me that pale face might still have been blooming, these starving and neglected children might have been growing up in the paths of usefulness and honour, this desolate abode might have been the home of cheerfulness, and plenty, and hospitality!”—oh, my fellow-Christians, into the cup of wretchedness which such a man is doomed to drink, there is infused a double portion of the gall of bitterness and wormwood of despair! We may not aid him with that interest and cheerfulness with which we would bestow our mite upon virtuous poverty; yet still he is our brother, our sinful but unfortunate brother; and it is equally the command of nature and of religion “that we should not hide our face from our flesh.” Thoughtless and indiscriminate bounty may be justly condemned; yet should I prefer even it to the cold, rigid, calculating, philosophical charity which “plays round the head, but comes not near the heart.” Oh, it

is not thus that the holy and merciful *God* has dealt with our frail and erring race. When the whole world “was sunk in trespasses and sins,” did *He* withhold His compassion because of their iniquity? No; He saw them guilty, but He saw them miserable; and the inexorable Judge was lost in the long-suffering and compassionate Father. In the very depth of their pollution, in the very midnight of their despair, He sent forth the beloved Son of His bosom to renovate fallen humanity, to teach the doctrines of righteousness and grace, and to seal the everlasting covenant of mercy with His own precious blood! But leaving this most glorious display of the Divine compassion, which of us could claim even the ordinary blessings of nature as a debt of right? We *have been* sinners, we *are* sinners, persevering and wilful sinners; yet the increasing bounties of Providence have been showered down upon us, not merely in an abundance equal to our wants, but in a profusion which enables us this day “to do good and to communicate.” And shall we, who have been forgiven ten thousand talents, be inexorable to our fellow-servant that owes us but one hundred pence!

Nor will the common plea that the poor are ungrateful excuse our stinted charity, any more than the allegation that they are worthless. I admit that in general they *are thankless, scandalously* thankless. What then? Are we on this account to permit them to starve, or to steal, or to plunge into deeper gulfs of misery and vice? Would this be just towards them? would it be wise with regard to ourselves? Would their desolation and crime, however merited, augment our happiness or prosperity? Oh no! If we would merit the title of Christians, we must act from higher motives than any expected return of gratitude from the poor or applause from the world. We must be content with the simple recompense attending the conscientious discharge of our duty. If we look beyond ourselves, we will be perpetually mortified and disappointed; if we look within ourselves, “we shall in nowise lose our reward.” And, after all, who are we, that dare to exclaim against ingratitude—we, who are every day unthankful to the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation—we, that have so often abused His bounties, neglected His service, insulted His majesty, and “lightly esteemed the Rock of our salvation”? Truly, it is wonderful that we should feel so much offended with our fellow-mortals for undervaluing the few temporal favours which we have been able to confer, whilst we ourselves are every day practically ungrateful for all the blessings of time and all the hopes of eternity!

I have heard a scene of human wretchedness depicted which I think would silence the rigid censures of the poor on account of their ingra-

titude or folly. It was not amidst the congregated heaps of misery and crime, in the noisome alley of the crowded town; it was in a little glen, in a peaceful and retired part of the country, which smiled in the freshness and abundance of nature, and seemed the last spot of all the earth in which one would have expected to find the sad abode of indigence and misery. Yet there, in a ruined hovel, which had once been a snug and happy cottage, resided a family of seven persons. They were not natives of the place; and as they hid themselves as much as possible from observation, the humble inhabitants of the vicinity knew little of their circumstances, and nothing of their history—though it was evident they had seen better days. The scanty fund which they had brought with them soon became exhausted, and every disposable article of furniture and apparel was gradually sacrificed, in a neighbouring town, to satisfy the imperious cravings of nature. With a like irresistible progress, despair and want, and the canker-worm of consumption, had been corroding the mind and the body of the hapless husband and father. When my friend saw him, he was extended upon a little straw; and the dim light of one broken pane showed the ravages of death upon his face, as he turned his sunken eye upon a pale female form that kneeled in all the hopeless agony of desolation beside his pallet, and with the one hand clasped an emaciated infant to the exhausted fountain of nature in order to stifle its mournful wailings, whilst with the other she administered to the sufferer the cooling water of the spring—the only medicine which her poverty enabled her to procure. This was the wife of his bosom, dear to him in the day of his prosperity, when youth and loveliness glowed upon her face, when her gentle voice and angel smile made a paradise of his happy home; but tenfold dear to him now, as the soother of his sorrows, clinging around the ruins of his fortunes and his hopes with that unwearied fidelity which is known only to women; and dear to him, above all, as the mother of those pledges of love, whose famished looks call upon him for that sustenance which he can no longer procure. I need not proceed with the picture; the sequel is easily conceived. And did the honest rustics of the neighbourhood stop to investigate the *cause* of all this calamity? Did they turn away when they learned that the departed sinner had expired with the heavy guilt of a ruined family upon his soul; and when they heard, perhaps, that his partner had abetted his extravagance and folly? No; they were not political economists and moralists enough to do this. In the simplicity of their hearts, they dwelt only upon the scene of wretchedness before them; and with a holy emulation, they vied in feeding the hungry, clothing

the naked, renovating the ruined habitation, and “causing the widow’s heart to sing for joy!” And if such a scene could take place in the very autumn of nature’s abundance, in the peaceful retirement of the country, how much greater distress must frequently occur in populous towns and crowded cities! At the very moment when the princes and nobles of the land are squandering thousands upon the vanities and follies of life, planning dresses and entertainments to pamper pride and stimulate the jaded appetite of luxury, thousands of their fellow-Christians, almost under their very eyes, are pining in hopeless poverty, or sinking to premature graves, from want of the common sustenance of nature. If any sound from the splendid regions of vanity ever reaches the abode of destitution, it is the wild and mingled voice of revelry; if any light ever beams upon the dwelling of the wretched, it is a transient flash, which, as the gay cavalcade rolls along, flares as unprofitably from its torches upon the hovel of misery as the rays of the gorgeous sun upon the charnel-house of death!

If, however, there be some to whose sympathies in behalf of others the advocate of charity may still plead in vain, he possesses yet another argument which may even reach *their* hearts. I do believe there is no principle more capable of a complete vindication than this—“That the rational exercise of benevolence is the most refined self-love.” The beneficent wisdom of the Creator unites and harmonises all our duties; and I am persuaded that we are never so judiciously attentive to our own interests and happiness as when we are discharging the great offices of integrity and truth and humanity towards our brethren of the dust. In the charity which at this time claims our more immediate attention, I omit the meaner comforts and conveniences which must accrue to yourselves in being freed from the hypocrisies and disgusts and impositions of mendicity. I go at once to higher and to nobler principles: I appeal to your own hearts as to the pure and immediate gratification accompanying the very act of benevolence. I ask you with confidence, Did you ever wipe away a tear from the eye of misery, or light up a smile on the cheek of despondency, or carry consolation into the house of mourning, or vindicate the cause of the injured, or cheer the exertions of honest industry, or perform any one of the thousand courtesies and charities of life, without experiencing an immediate joy and satisfaction in the very act of virtue? Truly, my Christian brethren, you have been highly favoured in being made the dispensers of God’s bounty, in being so amply permitted to enjoy “the luxury of doing good,” and to feel the delightful truth of the Divine declaration—“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

The pleasure which we derive from the performance of benevolent actions is rendered perpetual by the gratification which we experience in reflection. It is the distinguishing privilege of virtue that *her* deeds alone bring happiness in review. No human being ever reflected with real satisfaction upon a purely selfish, wicked, or malevolent action. The wildness of lust and the madness of revenge may yield a delirious and demoniac joy at the moment of perpetration; like the mystical book presented to the apostle in the vision of the Apocalypse, they may be sweet in the mouth, but the flavour that remains behind will be as gall and wormwood. The tranquil and permanent applause of our own hearts can only be secured by useful and benevolent lives. To infuse balm into the cup of others is the surest way to give a perennial sweetness to our own; to feed the hungry will give the truest relish to our repasts; and to spread the couch of the unfortunate will give the downiest softness to our own. Oh! my fellow-Christians, with what delightful feelings can we retire from scenes like the present, in comparison with those who follow the mere pursuits and amusements and vanities of the world! We return not to our homes with jaded bodies, jealous hearts, wounded spirits, bitter feelings, or sad remorse for fortune squandered or time misspent. No: we return with minds exhilarated, with hearts improved, with the humble consciousness that we have been "honouring God with our substance," and with all the kindlier sentiments of our natures warm and glowing in our breasts. And when we shall enter our peaceful homes, and behold the happy images of our own hearts reflected from every object around us—our fires brighter, our apartments warmer, our tables more comfortable, our families and friends more agreeable than usual—our souls will go forth in purer gratitude to the Author of all good, who has enabled us at so small a price to purchase so much happiness. And when we shall bow ourselves down in our wonted veneration before the throne of grace, the reflection that "the blessing of them who were ready to perish" is upon us, will give a holier fervour to our devotions, and "our prayers and our alms will ascend together as a memorial before God."

Few persons, however, are contented to rest satisfied with their own approbation: the esteem and love of the wise and good are objects dear to every virtuous heart. These cannot be conciliated without acts of charity. No rank, no talents, no acquirements, no possessions, can secure real respect to the niggardly and heartless. I know one venerable agent of active benevolence in this very town, whose head has grown hoary in the cause of humanity, that commands more of the

cordial esteem of his fellow-citizens than all the selfish money-getters and all the ostentatious money-spenders it contains.

And if this position be true with regard to man, who may have some excuse for acquiring a little harshness from the conflicts of a selfish world, it applies with double force to the character of woman, whose most precious ornament is a gentle and benevolent heart. She may enter the gay assembly with the sunny brow, the sparkling eye, the glowing cheek, and the elastic step of youth ; she may tread in the natural pride of conscious loveliness amidst crowds of flatterers ; but still, in such a situation we perceive something of the world clinging around her, and feel that she is not moving in her most attractive sphere. Let her, however, be seen gliding gently along to the dwelling of poverty, softly entering the chamber of disease, raising the voice of consolation, or affording the support of nature, and we instantly perceive that she has resumed her native character—the being who only claimed our admiration, now secures the genuine approbation of our hearts !

Added to all these considerations, there is something, I conceive, in the spirit of the times, which renders our assembling together on such an occasion as the present peculiarly salutary and important. I arrogate not to myself the office of a censor or a judge ; I blame no man for his conscientious convictions, or his honest avowal of them ; yet I trust I may be permitted to express my regret that the honourable emulation of sects, which formerly animated zeal without diminishing charity, has of late in many places assumed a harsher character, and that the purifying breeze which is so conducive to energy and health has in a few places swelled into an angry storm. I do feel, therefore, “that it is good for us to be here”—met together in peace on the ground of our common nature and our common hopes. Charity is of no sect and of no party. She is a blessed emanation of Heaven—above the passions, above the interests, above the pollution of the world ! Pure as the uncorrupted source when she springs—the universal friend of erring and sinful man—she keeps aloof from the strife of words, and the arrogant assumptions of imperfect creatures ; but her serene countenance beams with a holy triumph when she beholds brethren under her benignant sway dwelling together in unity. The contributions of different sects, flowing in like tributary streams, will mingle in the great current of benevolence ; whilst every meaner name, for a season at least, shall be lost in the glorious designation of *Christian*. The sacrifices with which God is well pleased we come forward to offer upon the same imperishable altar of Christian love ; and

our prayers and our alms are mingled together in their ascent before the same everlasting throne of righteousness and mercy. And as we mingle our hands and our hearts in acts of benevolence *here*, may we not entertain the delightful hope that our souls shall be mingled together in the enjoyment of redeeming mercy *hereafter*? Oh, I would not resign this blessed hope for the wealth of the universe! It sheds a more benignant radiance over the Divine aspect, it gives a more extended triumph to redeeming love, it awakens a livelier satisfaction in beholding the countenance of my fellow-man! And praise be unto the Most High, it is not an illusion; it rests upon the sure and certain record of inspiration; for “of a truth, God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation (and much more in every *Christian sect*) he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.”

The Gospel unites the charities of *time* with the happiness of *eternity*, thus conferring an infinite value upon all our generous exertions. Judgment will be determined by this criterion (see Matthew xxv. from 31st verse). Nay, are we not assured that “he that giveth but a cup of cold water” to a child of wretchedness, in the name of Christ Jesus, “shall in no wise lose his reward”?

But if the sacred cause of charity may be thus advocated in the abstract as the friend of human happiness, temporal and eternal, I conceive that its claims in the particular case which has brought us together are of the most powerful and interesting kind. I do not call upon the exercise of your munificence for distant objects, or for doubtful goods; the objects are at hand, the advantages have been proved. I honour those fervent Christians who zealously press forward to raise the glorious standard of the Cross amidst the savage regions of Africa, and in the islands of the mighty ocean. From the bottom of my heart I wish them “God speed;” yet I should be wanting in Christian sincerity, if I did not press upon my auditors the paramount claims of the poor and destitute in our native land. The sphere of human usefulness is exceedingly limited and circumscribed. If, in the honourable enthusiasm of our minds and the expansive benevolence of our hearts, we attempt with our feeble energies and puny means to reach distant objects and execute lofty designs, we almost invariably find that the humbler good which might have been accomplished in a narrower sphere has been sacrificed in pursuit of an unsubstantial vision. In what way would it profit the great cause of Christianity itself, were a few peaceful Hindoos converted to a nominal, or even real profession of the Gospel, whilst the means expended on the distant object would have prevented a much greater number of our fellow-Christians at home

from sinking into the depths of misery and crime? It is a principle of common sense, that every man is bound to provide for his own family before he attends to the wants of others; and it is equally evident that his kindred, his friends, his neighbours, his country, have, in their several relations, the most natural and powerful claims upon his exertions. This is not merely the dictate of sound reason; it is also that of Divine revelation—"He that provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his *own house*, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Upon this principle your House of Industry was established nearly twenty years ago. The increasing trade and manufactures, as well as the liberal character of your town, had collected a vast crowd of indigent persons from all quarters of the country. Some of these obtained employment, but the vast majority were cast upon the casual charity of the liberal and humane. The natural consequences followed—mendicity, with all its crying evils, preyed upon the vitals of society; pauperism ceased to be a reproach, and beggary became a trade. The young were trained up in habits of idleness, hypocrisy, falsehood, and plunder; the vigorous and active, who could have amply supported themselves, lived in idleness and profligacy upon the industry of others; whilst the aged and infirm feigned an increase of decrepitude, to impose upon the compassion of the credulous. Many of you must remember how every window was beset at the hour of your meals—how every door was blocked up during the season of business—how every corner was obstructed by insolent vagrants—how your very equipages were surrounded, and your domestics corrupted, and every contagious disease carried into the bosom of your families. The most worthless were always the most clamorous; and the sums extorted in various ways, by their arts and importunities, are not to be computed. These sums were usually expended in profligacy and folly; and I have been told that no mind could imagine the shocking scenes of drunkenness and infamy which passed in the abandoned receptacles of those wretched beings. Industry groaned under the pressure of such a burthen, decency blushed, morality sighed, and religion loudly called upon her votaries to do away with such pollution.

The call was answered—your House of Industry was established—vagrancy disappeared from your streets, idleness and profligacy were swept from your lanes and alleys, and the cabin of the poor became the asylum of peaceful and virtuous labour.

This great work of social and moral renovation was accomplished by

the simplest and the most salutary means. The inhabitants appointed a Committee of thirty-three individuals, and placed liberal funds in their hands to carry forward the objects of the institution. The committee allotted to twenty-one of their number the irksome but most important task of visiting the habitations of the poor, reporting the number and condition of their families, their means of support, time of residence, and capacity for labour. This task being accomplished, it was found that some were totally unable to work, and required to be entirely supported; that others were partially employed, and only required partial support; and that many were both able and willing to work, who had neither the implements nor materials of industry. Two sub-committees were appointed—one to superintend the distribution of provisions, the other to regulate the department of industry. It is evident, however, that it would have been equally impolitic and impracticable to attempt supporting the whole congregated mass of vagrancy and vice which had been collected from the four winds of heaven. A limit with regard to residence was necessarily fixed—at first to seven, but afterwards to five years. The unfortunate beings who had been residents for a shorter period were not altogether abandoned. Temporary relief, and the means of returning to their native parishes, were liberally afforded. The Committee immediately commenced their operations. The Committee of Distributions minutely examined every case, and judiciously apportioned the rations of fuel and provisions to the wants of the several families—never allowing less than would sustain nature, and never granting more than, added to the utmost extent of their own possible earnings, were absolutely necessary for their support. With sickness or unavoidable want of employment, they increased their supplies; with returning health and employment, they diminished or discontinued them altogether.

The Committee of Industry were not less zealous and judicious in their arrangements. They found that females had generally the greatest difficulty in obtaining employment; and they felt, like honourable and sensible men, how important it was to preserve for them that purity of heart and character without which the fairest work of God upon earth is the most forlorn and degraded object in creation. They therefore, most wisely, most humanely, connected the principal arrangement of their department with the various branches of female industry. The only branch which has continued to do well is *spinning*. Wheels are supplied and flax distributed on the guarantee of respectable persons; and where a good use is not made of those means of industry, the gift is resumed, and the privilege withheld. For the support of the Industry Depart-

ment, £600 a-year has been usually allotted; and a small advance above the common market-price of labour is always granted to the industrious pauper. Thus the honest spirit of independence is not lost even in the midst of poverty; the heart is not permitted to rust in idleness, nor the soul to be contaminated by vice. Add to these considerations that many families receive temporary assistance under the heavy pressure of sudden calamity; that the convalescents from the Fever Hospital are supported until the return of strength; and that hundreds of miserable and disappointed beings every year receive temporary supplies of food at the house, and money to carry them to their respective homes.

Under these wise arrangements the House of Industry has proceeded for many years (having sometimes 500 families, or 2500 individuals, receiving rations—besides all temporary calls), diffusing a portion of happiness, preventing an extent of crime, preserving a spirit of independence, and adding to the peace and comfort of the community, in a manner altogether beyond the scope and sphere of any other charity, however ancient and valuable.

At this present time—373 families are receiving rations; 335 received temporary assistance last year; 263 money to carry them home.

Weekly rations—meal and potatoes, 1023; soup, 1830; coals, 622; being 3475 in the week, or 180,700 in the year, besides temporary relief to 598 families, and spinning-wheels to 815 females.

The aggregate relief of human beings (including helpless age and helpless infancy) may be estimated *daily* as exceeding 3000 individuals.

And what are the mines of wealth that supply the means for the promotion of so much good and the prevention of so much evil? Why, they have been subscriptions and donations, and the proceeds of sermons, amounting for several years past to little more than £1000 a-year! How such pigmy means have accomplished such gigantic ends, I am at a loss to conceive. It seems almost as if a gracious Providence were performing a perennial miracle in aid of the unpensioned and indefatigable exertions of our valuable fellow-citizens. Indeed, the labours of the Committee seem to me capable of themselves of accomplishing anything within the reach of human industry. Many of them curtailing their necessary hours of business; all of them giving up much of their precious time in domiciliary visits to the poor, in weekly meetings at the Institution, in arranging the plans of industry, inspecting the minutest part of the general economy, investigating the claims of applicants, and superintending the distribution of rations—I hold them pre-eminently entitled to the gratitude of the community.

For twenty times the trifling sum which Providence enables me to bestow, I would not undertake the irksome and painful drudgery performed by that Committee.

Indeed, I am convinced it is to the generous and unpurchased zeal of our excellent committees that we owe the admirable and economical arrangements of all our charities. A distinguished military officer, some years ago, whose pursuit of arms had not lessened the generous sympathies of his nature, inspected a number of our charitable institutions. Pleased with the arrangements, but seeing a large committee at the Poorhouse, he calculated, from his experience of other places, that the expense must be enormous, and requested to know the salaries of the chairman and other members. Being told that their services were all gratuitous, he exclaimed, "I see the reason of the superior condition of your public establishments; they are not managed by the jobbers of a corporation, but by the voluntary services of honourable citizens."

You will not be surprised, however, to hear, when I mention one or two circumstances, that the Committee of the House of Industry, with all their zeal and prudence, have not been able to preserve it from the brink of bankruptcy.

The disastrous year of 1825, with all its mercantile and manufacturing difficulties, is fresh in your recollection; the scarcely less disastrous year of 1826, when all articles of food for the poor were at least doubled in price, cannot be forgotten. These two years totally consumed all the stores which had been accumulated; and I regret to say that the annual subscriptions, instead of rising to meet the increased demand, have miserably declined. In 1809 they were £1347; last year, £621. To continue the rations to the hungry poor, the Committee were obliged to borrow from the funds of the Industry Department, which in consequence is unable to purchase flax to supply the spinners; so that one valuable branch is nearly cut off. And even with this aid they would not have been able to keep the poor off the town, but for the liberality of a distinguished friend of humanity, who lent them £123. This sum, with rent and other charges now due, leaves them in debt upwards of £200. Formerly, at this season of the year, they had stores of flax, meal, coals, and potatoes sufficient for the pressing exigencies of the winter and spring. At present they have no flax, no meal, no potatoes, and but a short supply of fuel. The annual subscriptions will not come in before the month of May. Here, then, they have the four heaviest months of the year before them, with a present demand for 3500 rations in the week, and pressing applications for more. What have they in prospect to discharge their debt and to

meet this demand? Nothing, absolutely nothing but your generous contributions this day! I do hope, when you reflect upon the melancholy falling off in the annual subscriptions to this invaluable charity, that you will this day act as feeling yourselves in a large arrear to its funds. The decline has not been owing to any bad management of the directors, or to any diminution of the great sources of benevolence in your hearts. The truth is, the excellent administration of the Institution has principally tended to lessen its funds. So much has been done with small means, so completely have the evils of mendicancy been removed from your sight, so prudently have the necessities of the indigent been supplied in their own homes, that you have never dreamt of the possible return of the annoyance and misery and vice which called forth your liberality eighteen years ago! But believe me, though the waters of bitterness did all back their waves at the bidding of sacred charity, and have not for years washed over the very base of your habitations, they will return with the overwhelming spring-tide of calamity, unless you raise high and speedily the mound of Christian munificence against the coming inundation!

Nor will it be sufficient that you this day double or treble your ordinary contributions (as I am convinced many of you will do) to avert an immediate and pressing evil. It will be necessary, at the annual period of collection, to keep in mind the total exhaustion of the funds of the very best of your excellent charities, because of the extent of its operations and the efficacy of its means. And when the worthy men who devote their precious time to the cause of humanity, and who deserve our heartfelt thanks for their disinterested exertions, call upon us for our mere pecuniary contribution, I trust we shall not receive them with a scowl upon our brows, or put them to the pain of repeated solicitation.

But I know I need not tease you with arguments or threaten you with consequences; for I remember the munificent donation which you sent a few years ago to our suffering brethren in the South and West, and the noble exertion which you made in the midst of mercantile distress to relieve the poor who were cast out of employment. A good cause is all that is required to claim your attention; and no man ever had a better than that which I have feebly endeavoured to advocate this day. I know that I have a friend in every breast before me, and that I cannot plead in vain. The courtesies and kindness and hospitalities of life which have blessed your happy homes during this festive season, must have predisposed your hearts to gratitude towards God and benevolence towards man. And I am persuaded that at this

inclement season—in this very midnight of winter—when the hollow blast shall moan round your peaceful dwellings, as if to remind you at once of the general sorrows of humanity, and the peculiar comforts of your own lot, you will have the delightful consciousness of reflecting that the cold, the hunger, and the wretchedness of some humble habitation have been alleviated by the bounty of your hands!

Besides, my fellow-Christians, this is an admonitory season. Another year of our brief and uncertain existence is on the very eve of its termination. It has swept along in its fleeting course over the miserable wrecks of ten thousand fleeting comforts and joys and hopes. The young, the strong, and the affluent have made their bed in the narrow house by the side of the aged, the decrepid, and the poor. Some friendly forms have vanished from our own paths; eyes that dwelt upon some of us with the pure beam of hallowed affection have closed for ever; and some of the great lights of the world have disappeared as the meteor's flash. *We* are yet in the land of preparation; but that another annual revolution of time shall not elapse without beholding some of us called hence, is almost as certain as that we are now here. To whom shall the summons come? Alas! we know not; but the very uncertainty of our lot admonishes to redeem the time which we enjoy. And I do not believe that we could close one year, or prepare to begin another, with any more acceptable offering to the God that has preserved us, than the cheerful dedication of a part of the abundance with which He has blessed us to alleviate the sorrows of our fellow-men. It has been beautifully said, that “whoever lifts up another's downcast head, and binds up another's broken heart, performs religion's most affecting ceremony; that an errand of mercy is the holiest of pilgrimages, and the purest sacrifice in the sight of Heaven is benevolence to man.”

I do, therefore, solemnly invoke you all, by the tender mercies of the God of love, and by all your hopes of acceptance in the Redeemer, that you deal liberally with the poor this day, as a bountiful Providence hath dealt liberally with you! More especially I do implore the female part of my audience to consider what an awful calamity it would be, should 800 of their own sex, in the dead of winter, be cast idle from having the sources of industry cut off! Man may wrestle with the elements, and earn a scanty subsistence by outdoor toil; and in the midst of his destitution, should he fall into crime, it may be forgiven; but woman deprived of domestic industry has no resource, and when *she* falls, “she falls like Lucifer—never to hope again!” I well know the influence of those to whom I now appeal; and I am per-

suaded they have “the will, united with the power, to succour human woes.” Believe me, the brightest diamond that could sparkle on your breast is the tear-drop of pity; and your noblest triumph over the heart of man would be leading it to offices of mercy and compassion!

Would to God that an advocate were here who could lay hold of the generous sympathies of all your hearts—an advocate worthy of the magnitude and beneficence of the cause! Then would you not rest satisfied with a stinted and narrow charity—a predetermined and regulated offering! O for the return of the days of that mighty master of the human spirit, who relaxed the iron grasp of the miser, made the worldly calculator *inlute with his pencil* tenfold the sum which he previously intended to present, swelled the treasury of benevolence with the very ornaments of vanity, and melted the varied multitude of discordant names and ranks and creeds into one mighty mass of living charity and Christian love!

APPENDIX C.

SPEECH OF THE REV. H. MONTGOMERY, M.A., AT THE MEETING OF
THE GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER AT COOKSTOWN, JUNE 28,
1828.*

MODERATOR, two circumstances render it difficult for me to arrange and conduct my arguments upon the important question now before you in the manner which I could desire—The first is the difficulty of catching and reducing into order the desultory reasonings of my opponents; and the second, that many of the remarks which I intended to introduce have been anticipated by those on my own side of the house. I shall, however, proceed with as much regularity as circumstances permit, and fearlessly lay before you my sentiments upon a subject involving not merely the character and stability of this Church, but likewise the interests and influence of Christianity itself.

I shall set out upon a principle which I consider to be unassailable—viz., that religion is entirely a matter between man and his Creator, excepting so far as one human being may lawfully endeavour to influence another by friendly counsel and instruction. Farther than this no earthly power has a right to extend; to one Master alone all are accountable; and as no man can stand in my place to answer for my principles and conduct before the tribunal of my Judge, I shall never regulate my views of Divine truth by the opinions of fallible mortals, nor permit them to interfere with that faith which is to direct my conduct and to hallow my heart. For instruction, if I be in error, I would be grateful; with courteous admonition I would not be offended; but to authoritative decisions I never shall submit, for I should thereby renounce the unalterable allegiance which I owe to the sole King and Head of the Church.

It has been said “that Arians hold that there is nothing essential in Christianity.” If this assertion has been made in ignorance, I pity the persons that have used it; if in wickedness, and with a deliberate purpose of misrepresentation, I hope that I can forgive them. I am bound, however, to say, that it has not a shadow of foundation in truth. So far from alleging that there is *nothing* essential in Christianity, we distinctly hold *everything* to be essential which God

* See Chap. xi., pp. 190-3.

has been pleased to reveal. But I shall tell you what we do say—that those doctrines, concerning which there have been interminable and bitter controversies amongst Christians, cannot be the *fundamentals of religion*. We rest this opinion upon the most profound veneration for the all-perfect and adorable character of the Supreme Being. We believe that in all things He can adapt the means which He employs to the ends which He desires to promote; we feel satisfied that He could have no difficulty in suiting the language of His revelation to the capacities of those for whose benefit it was communicated; and we necessarily infer that no principle can be fundamental which is not explicitly revealed. I would put it to my opponents to say what conception they must form of the justice and benignity of God, who aver that He has left matters essential to the salvation of His creatures in such a woful state of uncertainty, that scarcely two men can agree in their explanation of them. Would not this be to impeach both the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, and to render Him accessory to the destruction of His people? And that the doctrine of the Trinity is one of very doubtful character, I can easily prove from the variety of opinions entertained upon the subject, even by the Orthodox themselves. The copious extracts read by my friend Mr. Blakely from the works of the most eminent divines of the Established Church, amply testify that amongst them there is no unity of sentiment; and in a volume lately published by one of the most intelligent members of this Synod, the doctrine of the Trinity is freely admitted “to be a doctrine of *inference*, and not of *explicit revelation*.” Mr. Carlile was too ingenuous to contend for triumph instead of truth; and he has candidly admitted what a determined controversialist would have kept out of view. Whilst we hear on all sides in this house that the Trinity is *the* fundamental doctrine of Christianity, he freely admits “that he would not place a doctrine of inference upon an equality with one of explicit revelation.” With him, therefore, there must be other doctrines of superior importance; for certainly there are many expressly revealed. But in the conduct of the Orthodox members of this Synod last year at Strabane, we have an irresistible proof that they were not agreed amongst themselves regarding their assumed fundamental principle. After disputing for hours about “substance” and “essence” and “person,” they were at length compelled to adopt a sentence from the Shorter Catechism, about the terms of which no two of them agreed; and when the whole affair was over, one of them very gravely said to another, “*Your Orthodoxy is not my Orthodoxy.*” Yet, in the face of all these facts, Mr. Elder had, yesterday, the hardihood to assert,

“that no man could read a chapter in the Bible without seeing the doctrine of the Trinity clearly revealed.” If the matter be so *very* clear, is it not strange that he did not point out to his brethren the mode of expressing the doctrine in the *language of Scripture*? Such a step would have been courteous to them and charitable to us; for in that case we would have cordially joined in their declaration.

That the doctrine of the Trinity may be one which, as Mr. John Brown asserts, the most ignorant person can most easily embrace, I do not pretend to deny. Presumption is a natural consequence of ignorance. Vanity of heart, unchastened by accuracy of judgment, has led to the most arrogant assumptions. It is not when men are illuminated by the spirit of Divine truth that they presumptuously dictate creeds to their brethren, but when they are blinded by their own prejudices and passions. The wise and the enlightened are always distrustful of their own judgments; whilst the weak and the un instructed are almost universally positive and dogmatical.

The fact is, it was this ignorant vanity of man which first led to human interference in matters of faith, obscured the lustre of Divine truth, and paved the way for all subsequent corruptions. In the apostolic ages, when there was no creed but that which came from on high, when there was no interference with opinions save “the counsels of love,” Christianity went forth in its native purity and simplicity, captivating the hearts and adorning the lives of men. But the moment that earth attempted to patronise the religion of Heaven—the moment that the Empire of Rome took Christianity under its protection—that moment corruptions commenced, “the fine gold became dim.” Priests and governors dictated modes of faith and forms of worship; and, in order to sanction the assumption, laid claim to infallibility in determining the counsels of Heaven. Under this pretence arose a power more extensive and more terrible than any that ever influenced the destinies of the world—a power that equally held in thralldom the cottage and the palace; that almost extinguished the light of literature and science; that took away much of the genuine substance of religion, and left but shadowy forms and ceremonies in its room. The argument of the *majority* having a right to coerce the *minority* was urged with equal justice then, as it is now; might constituted right; whilst racks and dungeons and flames confirmed her decisions and preserved uniformity.

Upon what principle was it first attempted to change this scene of things? Why, upon the simple and rational and Scriptural principle, that every man has an inalienable right to take up his Bible, and to

form his own conclusions regarding the things which belong to his duty here and his prospects hereafter. Upon this immutable principle the Reformation commenced ; and happy would it have been for the world had it continued as it began. But, alas ! the leaven of Popery has been more or less infused into every Church. No sooner did Protestants acquire power, than they began to trench upon Christian liberty ; they wrested the scourge from the Church of Rome, in order to apply it to the backs of their brethren ; they wrote creeds, appointed ceremonies, and connected civil interests with religious professions, until every division of the Protestant Church exhibited a miniature of the great establishment from which it had dissented. The right of private judgment, indeed, was still talked of, and even praised, as I have heard done in this house, by those that are treading it in the dust ; but with such persons it consisted then, as it does now, in exercising the right to judge both for *themselves* and for *others*. To assist Mr. Morell, and those who glory in the licentiousness with which you trample upon your own laws, I refer to a passage from the “ Code of Discipline,” to enable the world to form some judgment of the distinguished discrepancy which exists between your principles and your practice :—“ The power possessed by the teachers of the Church amounts to no more than this, to search the mind of the Spirit speaking in the Scriptures, and to produce Scriptural authority for what they teach.” “ It is the privilege, the right, and the duty of every man to examine the Scriptures for himself ;” but “ in exercising the inalienable right of his own judgment, the Christian does not refuse to admit light, or to receive assistance from his teachers ; he only refuses to acknowledge subjection to any authority but the word of God ; and before he assent to any doctrine, he claims the right of examining the Scriptures for himself, that upon their authority he may rest fully persuaded in his own mind.” Holding out these incontrovertible principles, you claim the praise of liberality, “ you keep the word of promise to the ear ;” but, acting in direct opposition to them, “ you break it to the hope.” You may speak of the Church of Rome as you will, but in comparison with you, she is honourable and consistent. She claims infallibility, and consequently denies the right of private judgment ; but with a monstrous inconsistency, you admit your fallibility, whilst you demand a submission which nothing could authorise you to claim but an absolute freedom from the very possibility of error. I do ask, in sober sadness, how any class of Protestants can acquit themselves to their own consciences and the world, who assert that their brethren have a right to search the Sacred

Records, and to deduce from them their own conclusions ; whilst at the very same moment they endeavour to curtail their privileges, and to put them to serious inconvenience for the mere exercise of their natural and Christian rights ?

I do aver that your whole Overture is directly opposed to the first principles of the Reformation—the right of free inquiry, without penalty or privation. Should it be passed into a law, not a single student can be educated, or licensed to preach, without risk of injury, and submission to human authority in matters of faith. If you persevere in this measure, you should change the whole system of education for your candidates. Instead of prescribing, as at present, an extensive course of ancient and modern literature previous to their entering college, and several years' study of philosophy and science subsequently to their entrance, in order to enlarge their views and increase their capacity for forming accurate judgments, you should limit their education and cramp their understandings, lest they be led to incur penalties by venturing to think for themselves. And when they enter the Theological Class, instead of directing their attention to the *Bible* as the rule of their faith and the anchor of their hopes, your Professor should advise them to study nothing but “the accredited standards of the Orthodox Churches,” by which their competency for teaching is eventually to be determined. Besides all this, he ought studiously to conceal from their view the progress of Christianity, and the various sects that have arisen in the Church, lest some heresy, such as Arianism, should appear to their minds as rational and as Scriptural as Calvinism itself. This would be the honest and manly course to pursue. No false ray of light would shoot across their minds from too free an inquiry into the meaning of the Scriptures ; they would be taught to build their faith upon the *safe* foundation of the “accredited standards ;” and in all things they would be well prepared for due submission to their spiritual guides. But to enlarge and disenthral their minds, as you do at present, by literature, philosophy, and science ; to tell them that the Bible, and “the Bible ALONE, is the religion of Protestants ;” that they are bound to study it, and have a right to form their own opinions of its doctrines—to do all this, and much more, to produce a manly and independent mode of thinking, and then to turn round upon them in the end, and to expel them from your church, if all their views do not precisely accord with yours—to act in this manner is surely equally tyrannical and unjust. Their time, their toil, their means of support—all are lost, because you have taught them to *think*, and they have chanced to think differently from you !

These Overtures, however, would not only impose a virtual subscription to human interpretations of Scripture which may or may not be agreeable to the Word of God, but they would impose this submission to man's authority in a form more objectionable than was ever proposed in the darkest age of the Church. Were a candidate for the ministry obliged to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Confession of Faith, he would at least be able to make up his mind, and to ascertain the full extent of the sacrifice required of him; but coming before your projected Committee for licence, he would be subjected to an ordeal for which no human being could make due preparation. He would be exposed to the caprice of a many-headed monster, having as many opinions as members, all living in jealousy and collision with each other. No matter into what plicancy he might school his conscience, it would be almost impossible for him to escape. He might as well sail between Scylla and Charybdis, as hope at once to please Mr. Johnston, the smooth Arminian, and that staunch Calvinist, Dr. Wright. Whilst attempting to gain favour with the one, he would require to cast a side-long glance at the other, and also to watch the various minor movements of the extraordinary beings to whose humours his destiny in life must be in a great measure subjected. But, bad as this is, it is not the worst. This strange compound will necessarily change its features every year; so that at one time the majority of its faces may wear the stern, unbending lineaments of Calvinism, and at another the softer looks of liberal Arminianism. I am not much inclined to submit to human authority; but were I compelled to do so, I should much prefer placing myself under the power of the Pope, to coming under the control of your projected Committee. I might study the character, and accommodate myself, in due time, to the caprices of an individual; but to the ever-changing medley of passions and prejudices and opinions of which your Committee must necessarily be composed, no man could ever be conformed. The only consolation which I enjoy in contemplating this ecclesiastical monster is, that as it is not similar to anything that ever existed in air, or earth, or sea, I am fully convinced that, in its own turbid and jarring elements, it will carry the seeds of its dissolution, and speedily pass away from the world.

One argument much relied upon by our opponents is, that every society has a right to make laws for the government of its own members, and for the admission of others to its privileges. There is some plausibility, but no solidity in this. No society has any right to make a subsequent law in violation of a previous compact. Now the

projected Overture would be a direct infringement of those liberal regulations under which we entered the Synod of Ulster; and if you take from us any power or privilege which we then enjoyed, you are guilty of a gross breach of faith. So much for your power of making laws affecting those already in your body; and now a few words respecting those who claim admission. On this point I assert that you have no power to make any laws but such as are in accordance with the clear and express Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of His Church, the Bible is its constitution, and we are subjects bound to obey the laws of His kingdom. Our sole business, therefore, is to regulate our conduct by the laws contained in the statute-book; for it is evident that we have no right to alter any law, either to benefit ourselves or to injure others. Upon this principle I shall amply prove that you have no right to refuse admission to any individual of sufficient attainments and irreproachable life who holds such religious opinions as I entertain. "To the Law and to the Testimony" I bring the matter for trial; and I refer you to the Acts of the Apostles, 8th chapter and 37th verse. You will there find the terms on which the Ethiopian was admitted to baptism by the Apostle Philip. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest; and he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*; . . . and Philip baptised him." Now, does not every Arian believe this with all his heart, and will you dare to refuse admission into the Synod of Ulster to men who would have been admitted into the holy ordinance of baptism by an inspired follower of the Lord? I refer you farther to the First Epistle of John, 4th chapter, where you will find explained the manner in which we are to *try* the spirits of men. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. . . . Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." But where is the Arian who does not most joyfully and most gratefully confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? Yet, in direct opposition to God's Word and to their own knowledge, some of our brethren have had the hardihood to brand us in a public journal with the appellation of "Antichrist and Men of Sin." I now call upon those ministers and that journal to retract the groundless calumny which they have circulated against men, to say the least, as respectable and as Christian as themselves! I shall only refer to one passage more (though

I might easily multiply quotations) to prove that, according to Scripture, we are entitled to the same privileges as any other members of this Church. The passage is, 1 John iv. 15—"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Could language be stronger than this? And yet, although, holding my opinions, solemnly "*confessing that Jesus is the Son of God,*" the Spirit of God may dwell in me to enlighten my understanding and sanctify my heart, Mr. Elder and Mr. Dill have the modesty and good feeling to allege that I am not holy enough to associate with *them!* I put it to you, fathers and brethren, is it honest, is it seemly, is it Christian in you to prescribe stricter terms of communion than those appointed by the Spirit of God, or to put men to inconvenience for maintaining opinions which would have gained them free admission into the Churches of the Apostles?

But it has been asked by Mr. Morell, "Where shall we stop? shall we admit all professing Christians, Socinians, Catholics, &c.?" I answer, We should just stop with our guide—with the Holy Scriptures. If we go one step farther, we shall be involved in the mazes of conjecture; and, endeavouring "to become wise above what is written," we shall be lost in endless perplexity and doubt. Upon this ground I would refuse to hold communion with those Churches that have "decreed rites and ceremonies" not prescribed in the Word of God; because these are "the inventions of men," and I know that woe is denounced upon those who add to the Scriptures, or detract from them. To show that my opinions on this subject are countenanced by eminent authority, I shall give a short extract from two distinguished writers. In proposing to do this, I know that I shall subject myself to the sneer and cant of modern times, which would represent learning and talent as incompatible with a knowledge of Divine truth. In one of those miserable inflammatory productions with which the country is inundated at present, the author says "he would value the opinions of Milton, Newton, and Locke no more than that of *three illiots!*" I do not envy the intellect which, puffed up by overweening vanity, could undervalue the opinions of a Newton, whose gigantic mind unfolded the laws of Nature; or those of a Locke, who explored the mysteries of the human understanding with unrivalled skill and power. I would not, however, idolise intelligence, though I would profit by its assistance; just as I would read a commentary to assist me in understanding an obscure text. The first of the authors from whom I shall read a short passage is the illustrious Chillingworth—a name dear to Protestantism and to truth. "It is this presumptuous imposing of the

senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men upon the general words of God (and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation); this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God better than in the words of God; *this deifying our own interpretations*, and enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the words of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein Christ and His apostles left them—which is and hath been the only fountain of all the schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal; the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ (*ridente Turca nec dolente Julio*). Take away this persecuting, cursing, and damning of men for not subscribing to the *words of men* as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but Him only; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it, and let them that *in their words disclaim it*, disclaim it likewise in their actions—take away, I say, this tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only; and as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may well be hoped, by God's blessing, that universal liberty thus moderated may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and UNITY."

To the same purpose we find the opinion of Locke:—"But if they say that the articles which they require to be professed are consequences *deduced* from Scripture, it is undoubtedly well done of them who believe and profess such things as seem unto them so agreeable to the rule of faith. But it would be very ill done to obtrude those things upon others, unto whom they do not seem to be the indubitable doctrines of the Scripture. And to make a separation for such things as these, which neither are nor can be fundamental, is to become *heretics*. For I do not think there is any man arrived to that degree of madness, as that he dare give out his consequences and interpretations of Scripture as divine inspirations, and compare the articles of faith that he has framed according to his own fancy with the authority of Scripture."

Yet this madness, which Locke thought scarcely possible, is now looked upon by many as the perfection of human wisdom!

Mr. Barnett has inquired in the language of Scripture, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" I would just ask him, "Agreed in what?" is it in faith, in all the shades of doctrinal opinions, and in all their views of Church government? If this be his inter-

pretation of the text, I would advise him instantly to leave that Orthodox seat in which he is now sitting; for there is not in it a single man who in all points agrees with him, nor probably any two that agree with each other. Surely, then, the agreement required cannot be Mr. Barnett's visionary one, but a real practicable unity—a unity of kind affections and forbearance—a unity of design to promote the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. I admit, however, that there is a very powerful bond of union amongst our opponents in one sense—they have agreed to lay aside all their own points of disputation for a season, and to concentrate their forces for a joint effort against the unfortunate Arians. Dr. Wright, although he says “it cuts him to the heart to think that there is an Arminian in this Synod,” nevertheless joins “hand in hand” with Mr. Johnston, and other known Arminians, to make war upon the common enemy. This shows great prudence. The Goths and Vandals of old united in overrunning Italy; and when they had accomplished their primary design, they fought with each other for the spoil. So will it be with you; when you have subdued us, you can turn your arms against one another to prevent them from rusting through inaction; and in the end we may have many divisions.

There is one consideration which I would most earnestly and solemnly press upon you, my brethren, on the opposite side; and I think I shall not press it in vain. You all admit that you are fallible and sinful as individuals; and you admit that no possible combination of fallibles could make an infallible; for although in chemistry amalgamation frequently changes the nature of substances, yet in Church Courts I believe it will be found that the mass will partake of the same properties as the different ingredients which compose it. Is it not, then, possible, with all your confidence in the soundness of your own conclusions, that you *may be wrong*; that you may at this moment be giving all the weight of your influence to perpetuate *error*; and that “haply you may be fighting against God,” at whose tribunal you will one day be answerable for the measures which you are now taking to arrest the progress of truth? If this be *possible*—if, from the nature of man, it be exceedingly *probable*—I do beseech you, for your own sakes and ours, to follow the advice of Gamaliel:—“Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this work and this counsel be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, you cannot prevail against it.” It sounds very well to talk of “supporting the cause of God and truth;” but you should remember that this is taking for granted the very subject of dispute—viz., whether truth really *be* on your side.

If it be, God will sustain His own cause, without such violent efforts on your parts. The mole that raised a hillock to support a fortress was less presumptuous than men, when they speak familiarly of protecting the cause of Heaven. I entreat you rather to attend to the great Christian principle of doing unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Now, suppose that at this moment the majority of this Synod were Arians, and that the tide of popular feeling was flowing as strongly in their favour as it is now doing in yours—I ask, would these circumstances convince you that you were in error? No such thing; you would be then as satisfied of the truth of your opinions as you are at this moment. How, then, would you feel were we to take such steps as you are now pursuing, to eradicate your opinions, to fill your pulpits with Arian ministers, to expose conscientious Calvinists to inconvenience, and to prevent any Orthodox young man from receiving licence to preach? Would not the whole kingdom resound with the voice of your just complaint and indignation? All we ask, then, is evenhanded justice; let our opinions have fair play; let young men be licensed with their true characters, and let the people choose or reject them as they think it right.

There is nothing more remarkable than the direct opposition which often exists between the words and the actions of men. This contrast is peculiarly manifested in religion. The right of private judgment is a pleasing and fertile theme at controversial meetings, and at Bible societies, where all sects meet together, as they ought to do. But let the declaimers come into another situation, and the very right which they so strenuously press upon Catholics they will deny to Protestants; and the Bible, which they put into men's hands without note or comment, they will declare to be inadequate to lead them to salvation, unless they adopt their views of its doctrines. In the same manner they speak most humbly of themselves, declaim about the weakness and fallibility of man, and then act in a way which nothing but immediate inspiration could justify. I have been led to these observations by a statement of Mr. Barnett, who said that he would admit no man to the Lord's Table that did not think as *he* did on doctrinal subjects. I never heard any sentiment with more pain. If Mr. Barnett be, as he will freely admit that he is, a fallible and sinful man, I would seriously ask him how he dares to stand between any man and his Redeemer, and to render his opinions the standard by which to measure all who desire to become "soldiers of the cross"? It may be, in this uncertain world, that an individual rejected for no moral offence, but simply for supposed error of opinion, should never

have another opportunity of testifying his faith and his love by a devout communion ; and I do appeal to Mr. Barnett whether he can altogether enjoy the approbation of his own mind in reflecting that he has prevented an individual so circumstanced from strengthening his hope, confirming his repentance, and perhaps closing his eyes in peace!

Mr. Cooke says that "we should all wear the same livery." Now I hate livery, because it is a badge of subjection to man. The livery of sects creates as much disturbance as the livery of parties. And, after all, outward conformity by no means implies internal resemblance. Even externally, however, Mr. Cooke's friends will wear but a motley aspect ; the collar, and perhaps the sleeves of their livery, may be the same, but the body and the skirts will be as patched and diversified as the pantaloons of Harlequin. Stern Calvinism, moderate Calvinism, Arianism, and many fainter shades of difference, never can present a uniform appearance. Variety, indeed, is the immutable law of nature. If we cast our eyes over this fair earth which we inhabit, how beautifully is it diversified with hill and dale, with lakes and plains, with oceans and continents, with woods and rivers, with the wildness of nature and the richness of cultivation ! In all the extended surface presented to the eye, we cannot find two trees, two animals, nor even two blades of grass exactly alike. And if we turn to the beautiful canopy of heaven, we perceive that "one star differeth from another star in glory." When I look around upon this assembly, and contemplate "the human face divine," I see the same principle amply recognised in the infinite diversity of feature, expression, and intelligence presented to my view. And could I penetrate the hearts, and enter the secret recesses of the minds by which I am surrounded, what an endless variety of emotions, and passions, and opinions would I behold ! To attempt, therefore, by human legislation to produce an absolute agreement in religious sentiments, would be to rise in rebellion against nature, and consequently against "nature's God." Wherever such attempts have been made, and just in proportion as they have succeeded, the beauty and the power of religion have declined. In turning the eye back upon the course of time, what a deep and melancholy gloom broods over those ages, in which the power of man imposed creeds and confessions, and daringly interfered with the prerogatives of Heaven ! The state of our Church before our late contentions has been compared to the Dead Sea. The comparison will not stand examination. There was no deadness or stagnation amongst us ; there was diversity of mind, but unity of heart ; there was an honourable maintenance of our own opinions, and an equally creditable

forbearance with regard to the conscientious convictions of others : we met and parted like men and Christians ! But if the proposed measures could succeed, then there would, indeed, be a dead sea of Presbyterianism : inquiry would cease ; the salutary agitation of conflicting opinions would be done away ; and one unnatural and unwholesome calm would reign over the whole extent of your Church. But I rejoice in the certainty that this cannot be : there are conflicting elements amongst yourselves ; and the various sects with which you are intermingled will not permit you to stagnate in heartless inactivity.

The proposed measures are eminently calculated to violate the rights of the people. You tell them that the privilege of choosing their own pastors is one of the greatest which men can enjoy ; but should your Overture pass into a law, this privilege will be only a name. Whatever may be their views of gospel truth, you will permit them to elect no pastor but one that has been measured by the standard of faith erected by your Committee. But they may obtain a minister, you say, from the Presbytery of Antrim, or from England. Very true ; but will you ordain him ? By no means. Then must they lose their bounty, to which, as contributors to the general revenue of the country, they are fairly entitled ; and their ministers must be excluded from the important advantages of the Widows' Fund. Now, is it not a monstrous inconsistency to tell the people that they have a right to choose their teachers, and then to inflict upon them a pecuniary mulct for the conscientious exercise of their privileges ? I appeal to the representatives of the laity, who have come hither to assist in the passing of laws for the curtailment of our liberties, whether they may not be forging heavy fetters for themselves and their children. That they have an unquestionable right to judge for themselves "in the things pertaining to their own salvation," I most cheerfully admit ; but I do put it to their modesty, their discretion, and their Christian feeling, whether as unlettered men (which they generally are), and educated under the influence of strange prejudices, they should attempt to force their opinions upon ministers of the Gospel, who have spent a long series of years in education, and reading, and study of the Scriptures, to qualify them for the proper discharge of the duties of their important and awfully responsible situations. I greatly mistake the honest and manly character of the Presbyterian laity, if this appeal shall be made to the elders without effect.

I come now to a very painful but necessary part of my duty—namely, to refute the calumnies uttered against our opinions by Mr. Elder and others in this house, and which have been most industriously

circulated in the world. We have been directly charged with being "no Christians." We shall not fling back the uncharitable denunciation upon our accusers; though we might remind them "that if any man have not the spirit of Christ" (the spirit of charity and love), "he is none of His." We appeal from the harsh and prejudiced judgment of our fellow-sinners, to the justice of that God whom we adore, and to the benignity of that exalted Saviour, who is the anchor of all our hopes, and who knows that we love Him in sincerity and truth. "It is a light thing for us to be judged by man's judgment;" for we know "that so long as our hearts condemn us not, we may have confidence towards God." To our unjust accusers we would only say, "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself." It has been said "that we must look upon our opponents as idolaters." God forbid. We brand none with odious epithets on account of their conscientious belief: we do not consider them idolaters. We believe that they worship as we do "the one God and Father of all;" and that, in their own minds, they have some way of reconciling the worship of the Trinity with the first great principle of revelation—the *absolute unity of God*. I have heard nothing but Arian prayers since I came to this Synod; nor, indeed, at any other time. In your devotional exercises, the three great Beings engaged in the gracious work of salvation are uniformly kept distinct, save at the very conclusion; and as I know that "none can find out the Almighty unto perfection," I shall never accuse any man of being an idolater, because he does not exactly entertain my views of the Divine nature and perfections. Let others judge me as they will: "I judge no man."

The inconsistency and absurdity of another charge preferred against us—namely, that we are both *Atheists and Deists* at the same time, has been powerfully exposed by my friend Mr. Blakely. No man acquainted with the meaning of words could seriously bring forward such an accusation; but the object being to inflame the multitude, Atheists and Deists will produce as much mysterious horror as any other terms which they do not understand. It is melancholy, however, to think that Christian ministers should have recourse to such arts; for surely the cause of truth cannot be promoted by deliberate misrepresentations; neither is it "lawful to do evil that good may come."

But according to Mr. Elder, "we deny the Lord that bought us," and consequently are exposed to the penalty of "bringing upon ourselves swift destruction." Such a shocking and unfounded imputation only reflects disgrace upon its author. We know too well the forfeiture

attached to denying our Redeemer to be guilty of such base ingratitude and folly. We know "that if any deny Him before men, them will He deny before His heavenly Father." We know "that there is none other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we can be saved, than that of Christ Jesus." We look up to Him with unbounded gratitude as "the new and living way by which alone there is access to the Father." He is the hope of our salvation as well as of yours. I can say, with as much sincerity as any man in this house—

"Jesus, my Lord, I know His name,
His name is all my boast ;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost."

Is this "robbing the Saviour of His crown of glory"? Is this "denying the Lord that bought us"? I am almost ashamed to feel indignation against slanders which only merit contempt.

But it seems "we trust for salvation to our own good works." Where Mr. Elder learned this I cannot conjecture ; but perhaps his acquaintance with New Light ministers is more extensive than mine. This, however, I do say, that I never knew any man arrogant enough, or rather mad enough, to claim salvation of God as due to his own merits. Alas! sir, no man can look into his own heart, or trace back the turbid course of his own life, without being deeply sensible that he cannot stand upon his own righteousness in the presence of that infinitely holy Being, "who chargeth even His angels with folly, and in whose eyes the very heavens are not clean." But I shall tell you what we do say—we maintain that principles are only valuable in so far as they lead to practice, and that faith is important only as the forerunner of works. We do not consider that religion consists in an empty name—in a vain and self-righteous profession—in the use of technical theological terms—or in despising others ; but in the discharge of the great duties of piety and morality, by which we honour God and benefit mankind. We believe that *faith* without *works* is of no more advantage to the individual possessing it than the gold of the miser in his coffers, or a mine of wealth in the centre of the globe. Nay, more ; we believe that the faith of the Christian which leads not to virtuous practice is not merely useless, but destructive ; inasmuch as its possessor neglects duty, or sins against the light, and thereby becomes "worse than an infidel." We believe that works are not only the evidence of faith, but the very end and object of faith ; in accordance with the whole tenor of the Gospel and

the clear design of revelation, which are intended “to turn us from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” We believe, however, that our works must be sanctified by the motives which faith supplies, and that we cannot approve ourselves to God by either faith or works singly, but only by both united. In fact, we hold faith, or right principles, to be the foundation, and works, or right practice, to be the superstructure of the Christian edifice; and yet that after all we can do, we are still “unprofitable servants,” and must finally rest upon grace alone.

This leads me to notice the last calumny, which has been uttered against us by Mr. Elder—“that we put our hopes of salvation in a *mere creature.*” Sir, we do nothing of the kind: we rest our hopes of final acceptance with God neither on our own works nor upon any mere creature, but upon the unbounded mercy and compassion of our heavenly Father, as revealed unto us in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I trust to the candour and honesty of Mr. Elder and his friends, that they will now retract their calumnies, and endeavour to disabuse the minds of their people by acknowledging their errors and misrepresentations.

Had we escaped with the groundless invective of plain prose, we might have considered ourselves happy; but, woe is me! the artillery of the muses has been brought to play upon us from the heights of Parnassus, and we are likely “to be damned to everlasting fame” in “immortal verse.” A poem, entitled “The Thinking Few,” has just burst upon the delighted world. I do not know whether it may most properly be called lyric, epic, or tragic—perhaps it is rather a combination of the beauties of all the three. Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt, the subject is admirable, for I myself am the hero. This precious production, which attacks the right of private judgment with the utmost virulence through many pages, surely cannot be the offspring of an Orthodox Presbyterian minister, as is generally asserted; but must be the child of some Catholic priest.* From the beginning of the world until the present time, every villain that has disgraced humanity is represented as having been an Arian. The author should

* I owe an apology to the Catholic priesthood for even hinting *ironically* that any one of their body could be guilty of sending forth so base and so talentless a production. Oh, no! oppressed though they have been by unjust and impolitic laws, the humblest of their fraternity possesses too much Irish *intellect* and Irish *heart* to be the author of such a work. I have never concealed my disapprobation of the Roman Catholic Church; but I always wish to speak as I feel, kindly and respectfully, with regard to my Roman Catholic countrymen.

have gone just one step farther back (as I understand he did in a sermon), and represented the *father of lies* as the first Arian. He has, however, commenced with *Cain*—who, it seems, was a staunch Arian—and traced the doctrine through every murderer, suicide, robber, and infidel, down to Carlisle and Taylor. The majesty of the verse is well suited to the dignity of the subject; the variety of the phraseology is only equalled by the copiousness of the thoughts. In as many pages we find this beautiful stanza three times repeated:—

“For in their minds there is a lodgment
Of all the right of private judgment.”

Were it not that time is precious, I could read you the whole work with great pleasure. Where all is so unique, and so perfect in its kind, it is difficult to make selections: I must, however, content myself with one passage, which affords a fair specimen of the author's exquisite skill, both in poetry and science:—

“I will illustrate this position
By algebraic definition—
A Deist is an Arian Theist;
An Arian is a well-cloaked Deist;
And every *thinking* Arian Theist
Is just—a Unitarian Deist;
Hence, if you take away the cloak,
We have the cuckoo plus the gowk,
And not the leopard minus zebra,
If you do understand algebra.
Or, if your Euclid be in use,
The square of *Paine's* hypothenuse
Is equal to a square that's Arian,
And also one that's Unitarian—
And thus it is our Northern people
Can measure any Arian steeple.”

I would not have noticed so wretched a production (which is equally devoid of taste, of talent, and of truth), were it not that it manifests the spirit of the times. I know that it was carried in manuscript into the houses of persons belonging to a most respectable Arian minister; and the author, I have good reason to believe, has disgraced both himself and us by *selling* it in this very house of *worship* during our present meeting. I trust, also, that the notice just taken of it may be the means of raising it to a tenth or twentieth edition; for I never saw any production so well calculated to injure the cause which it pretends to advocate.

I have been told that the object of the proposed measures is a

friendly one towards us, and designed to prevent a division of this Synod. With some I believe this to be really the object; but with others I am persuaded the design is to render us so uncomfortable as to induce us to retire of our own accord, or to remain with you in a state of degradation. This is not a manly and straightforward course. Were you to commit an open act of aggression, were you to expel us as heretics, we should retire with the advantage of public sympathy; but by encouraging us to remain, and to give our countenance to what we consider unscriptural and tyrannical regulations, you would eventually degrade us, both in our own estimation and that of the world. To this we can never tamely submit; for we know better what is due to our principles and characters. I may here answer the question put by several of you—"Why then do we remain with you, when you so plainly say you do not like us?" My answer is very simple—We have no dislike to you, although "you have despitefully used us." We consider you to be in great, though not in damnable error; and we are willing to stay with you for a season, in the charitable hope of eventually bringing you round to sound views and Scriptural measures. We believe that our opinions are so accordant with right reason and the Word of God, that in the end they must triumph over error and prejudice: we hope that a "little leaven may leaven the whole lump;" and we shall remain with you so long as there is any prospect of success, in order to do you good. But should our hopes be deceived, and should our consciences tell us that we are wrong to associate with you, I trust we shall know what is due to ourselves, and to the cause in which we are engaged.

One thing has struck me powerfully during this debate, namely, that not one of you has maintained the doctrine of exclusive salvation; whilst many of you have cheerfully admitted that we are respectable men, and that you anticipate the happiness of meeting us in heaven. This is liberal and Christian; but do you not see in what an awkward predicament this liberality places you? It seems our principles are adequate to accomplish the ends of religion in this world—to make us pious and virtuous men; and, what is infinitely more important, to prepare us for happiness hereafter. But if so, how can you reconcile it with consistency to act as if those were unworthy to be members of the Synod of Ulster who are qualified for "the society of the just made perfect"? The truth is, the heart often reasons more correctly than the head; and I most cordially reciprocate every generous sentiment that has been expressed. I do firmly believe that, through the infinite mercy of God in His beloved Son, many of us shall meet in a better

land, where we shall be astonished at the prejudices, and ashamed of the passions, that have agitated and divided us in life.

I do not know that my brethren on the opposite side will give me credit for sincerity, when I say that, for their own sake and the reputation of their creed, they ought not to press these measures; but I do honestly assure them that the proceedings of last year have brought great suspicions upon many, and excited doubts respecting all. When a man professes to believe a creed which is prescribed to him under the fear of any penalty or the hope of any advantage, his sincerity is never above suspicion; but if he freely hold certain views of doctrine without any such inducements, no man can doubt his integrity. Lying under no temptation to hypocrisy, he cannot be accused of deceit: he may be wrong, but he is honest. The moment, however, that a large body of men, infinitely diversified in capacities and attainments, profess to believe in one common standard of faith, that moment doubts and surmisings commence. No one suspects that any member of the Presbytery of Antrim, or of the Independent Church, does not hold the opinions which he professes; but could as much be said for the Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, or our own Church? It was upon this principle that the celebrated Bishop Shipley advocated, in the House of Lords, the repeal of the disgraceful statute which made it felony to impugn the doctrine of the Trinity. "I am not," said he, "afraid of those tender consciences which scruple subscription, or lead men to profess a scanty creed, for I am convinced they believe what they profess; but I do much fear those men that have an extensive faith—who believe everything and subscribe everything." There never was more practical wisdom, nor a greater knowledge of human nature, displayed in the same number of words; and I can assure you that it is thus many of the intelligent laity just now think of the ministers and licentiates of this Church. When you professed less, you got credit for more.

But a still greater evil has arisen from your past proceedings, and must be increased by your present measures. I mean that the preaching of the Gospel has very generally been diverted from its legitimate channel. Controversy, controversy, interminable controversy, is the order of the day. Ministers, to remove suspicions from the minds of their people, and to gratify the prevailing taste, are constantly dwelling upon "debatable land;" whilst probationers have no hope of success unless they show themselves powerful in "the strife of words." Even in our own assembly, what has been spoken of since we met—but *opinions!* Not a word about practice; not a syllable about correcting

each other's vices and follies, or reforming the morals of our flocks. This is very different from the conduct of "the great Preacher of Righteousness:" very different from the course prescribed by the Orthodox Apostle Paul to his son Titus, when he sent him forth as a messenger of grace. He did not exhort him to decry morality, or merely preach it occasionally as a sort of decent adjunct to abstruse doctrinal harangues. No; he enjoined him to make virtue the sum and substance of his preaching—"these things I will that you affirm *constantly*, that they which believe in God might be careful to maintain *good works*; for these things are good and profitable unto men." No doubt he preached, as every minister ought to do, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" as the foundation of the sinner's hope, and the groundwork of the Christian's holiness; but he never forgot the end of all preaching—the restoring of the sinner "from dead works." How different is the prevalent system of public instruction in these latter days! and how awful is the responsibility of those who turn the attention of the multitude from the duties of life to the controversies of men!

In answer to all these arguments, for a milder, a more rational, and a more Christian course of procedure, we are told "that a great ferment exists amongst the people, and that something must be done to allay it." Very true; a great ferment does exist. The prophetic words of our Saviour, who foresaw that the evil passions of men would pervert the benevolent object of His mission, are fully verified—"I come not to send peace upon earth, but a sword." Were that ancient philosopher alive, who, in the commencement of the gospel dispensation, exclaimed, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" he might now, with equal propriety, ejaculate, "Behold how these Christians hate one another!" But whatever ferment exists, *we* are not to blame. You kindled the conflagration, and you are bound to extinguish it, without molestation or injury to us. We have broken no compact; we have never interfered with your opinions; we have raised no unjust clamour against you. The existing evils are of your own creation, and you have no right to make us the victims to appease the wrath which you yourselves have excited. The condition of our hapless country is deplorable; the state of our own Church is distressing; but my friends and myself are guiltless of these calamities. Let those answer for them who produced them; "we have neither lot nor part in the matter."

How strange it is that the favoured work of God upon earth is that being in all nature which seems least to answer the design of its

creation! I was never more forcibly impressed with this melancholy fact than upon the evening of Monday last, when travelling over the beautiful district of country between Dungiven and this place. The glorious sun cast his golden mantle over the mountains, and the valleys reposed in shade; the song of cheerfulness ascended from the peasants at their toil, whilst the children were joyfully collecting fuel for the bonfires and festivities of Midsummer's-eve. As far as the eye could reach, innumerable flocks and herds were browsing in peace upon the green pastures, and the very air was impregnated with myriads of animated beings. Throughout the wide extent, around and above me, all was life and tranquillity and happiness. Not a single sound of sorrow smote upon the ear, nor a single object of misery passed before the eye. In the midst of that glorious temple of nature my soul instinctively ascended in devout aspirations of adoration and gratitude to the benignant Author of such extended and diversified enjoyment. I felt happier in my own existence, and in that of all animated creatures; and I did not believe there was a being upon earth whom such a scene would not have soothed into tranquillity and benevolence. In this, however, I fear I was mistaken; for in journeying on through an ever-varying scene of beauty and happiness, I think I did discover one object uncongenial with the time and the circumstances and the place. It was a Christian minister travelling to the scene of our meeting. His eye dwelt upon me, but not in friendly recognition; his face was towards me, but no smile played upon his features. My heart sank within me, to think that men, and Christian men, should have been the only beings who, on that glorious evening, were deficient in kindly affections. Oh! surely such things are not congenial with our country, nor with our religion. Nature has given us a fair and fertile abode—Providence has blessed us with generous hearts and liberal hands—and the Gospel of peace has long been the inmate of our dwellings. Why, then, is our country a universal theatre of contention? Why are Christians of the same communion arrayed against each other? Why? Because men presumptuously interfere with the conscientious belief of their brethren, and spend that time in forming plans of annoyance which ought to be dedicated to offices of peace.

I do appeal to my brethren whether these be times in which any Church, and especially any Presbyterian Church, should occupy itself in devising schemes for the curtailment of Christian liberty? Is it in the nineteenth century, when even Catholicity is evidently relaxing her grasp, when the established clergy and the Legislature have given

a signal proof of the progress of liberal opinions in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—is it at such a time that we should retrograde and surrender the fundamental principles of our Church? If we do, a death-wound will be inflicted upon Presbyterianism; division will follow usurpation; weakness will succeed division; and though individuals may chiefly suffer in the beginning, the Church must suffer in the end.

From the excited state of public feeling, and from the observations of many ministers and elders, I think it is evident that we are not at present in a proper condition to come to a sound and impartial conclusion upon the important subject before us, which involves the very constitution of our Church. I therefore do entreat my brethren to pause, and to allow these weighty matters to lie over for consideration, as enjoined by the salutary regulations of our “Code of Discipline,” for at least one year. In the meantime the popular ferment will have time to subside; and I now beg leave, in great seriousness and sincerity, to propose a plan to our opponents which, I firmly believe, would ultimately lead to the triumph of truth. I know that my opinions have been grossly caricatured and misrepresented; and it is possible that in our hands yours may have suffered in the same way. Now, whilst we continue without any regular channel for the mutual interchange and explanation of our opinions, these misconceptions must be perpetuated. From the very nature of men, the pulpit will increase, instead of diminishing misapprehensions. Confident in his own views, every minister will necessarily bring them forward with the greatest possible force; whilst, without any impeachment of his honesty, he may not introduce the strongest arguments of his opponents. If this be the case, under the most favourable supposition, how much less chance is there of truth being ascertained where ignorance, prejudice, or dishonesty is concerned! The press in its present state will not be more effectual. The multitude of trashy, virulent, and unprincipled pamphlets that are put forth, and which are read only by partisans, have no tendency but to inflame the passions and mislead the mind. That calmness, seriousness, and deliberation, which are necessary for the investigation of truth, can never be attained under such a system. The contending parties must have the means of deliberately comparing their opinions with each other, and with the Word of God, and also of correcting any mistakes or misrepresentations that may occur, before justice can be done to both sides. Such an investigation might show us that we do not differ so much as we now imagine, and thereby bring us nearer to each other; and, at all events, it would make our respec-

tive systems be better understood. In order to accomplish this most desirable end, I propose, seriously and affectionately—*That a monthly publication shall be issued, at the mutual expense and under the mutual management of Calvinists and Unitarians, in which each party shall occupy the same number of pages (say 30 or 50) with articles in support of their peculiar opinions, either original or selected, as they may deem expedient.* Such a work would be eagerly read by all parties; the sparks of truth would be elicited by collision, and the ancient piles of error would be consumed. *Falsehood* is only dangerous when she walks forth alone: having a bold air and confident demeanour, she awes the timid and imposes upon the weak; but she cannot long appear in the presence of her lovely rival, *Truth*, until the counterfeit is detected.

To my Calvinistic brethren such a proposal must be peculiarly acceptable, as it will afford them free admission into what they call the dominions of error; for I here pledge myself that we will place the publication within reach of all *our* hearers, provided they will do the same with regard to *theirs*. We will most sincerely thank them, if they can convince us, by sound argument and the Word of God, that we are wrong. In the triumph of truth we shall most heartily rejoice: it is all our aim: and if they prove her to be on their side, we shall instantly desert the ranks of her enemies, and join the cohorts of her friends. *We* can have no motive for clinging to error: the applause of the world, the fashion of the world, the interests of the world, are all upon the opposite side. And I can assure you that we are not so destitute of the ordinary feelings of men as to prefer, without good cause, an angry sky and barren rocks to bright and fertile regions. On the voyage of life, we would much prefer sailing before the gentle breeze of popular favour, to being “tossed by the tempest of evil tongues;” but we know that “favour is deceitful,” and whatever may befall us, we shall not at least “make shipwreck of our integrity.”

I am confident my proposal will not be declined by our opponents upon the futile pretext of not desiring to circulate what they are pleased to call “poison;” for they know that their powerful antidote will go along with it. We might just, with as much reason, call their opinions “poison,” but we are so confident of the efficacy of our own remedies, that we have no fear of its effects. If, in bringing our separate systems to the standard of the Word of God, the comparison should be in our favour, no doubt we will be gratified; but should the result be against us, we shall still be pleased; we shall cheerfully confess our error, and heartily embrace the truth.

I do, therefore, most earnestly entreat this Synod to pause, and to adhere to its own established and salutary laws. Delay in so important a case cannot be dangerous ; but precipitancy may involve the most deplorable consequences. Whatever may be the result of my appeal, however, I shall never cease to be sincerely grateful for the patience, the kindness, and the attention with which I have been heard through so tedious and desultory an address.

APPENDIX D.

LETTER OF THE REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY, IN REPLY TO THE REV.
HENRY COOKE, ON SYNODICAL PROCEEDINGS, AUGUST, 1828.*

IT is not surprising that religion, which involves the highest interests of men, both temporal and eternal, should seriously engage their attention, and occupy their hearts; neither is it remarkable that on so high and important a subject they should be led from their various capacities and circumstances to entertain, on some points, a diversity of opinion. Were religious controversies conducted under the guidance of a Gospel spirit, I am persuaded they would do much good; they would animate zeal, without diminishing charity; and extend the empire of truth, without any material injury to individual interest or social tranquillity. Such a mode of conducting controversy, however, is more to be desired than expected. The interests of the world and the passions of men trench even upon hallowed ground; for the pages of history, written in blood and tears, amply testify that no wars have been so ruthless, no persecutions so horrible, no controversies so profligate and bitter, as those carried on in the outraged name of the religion of peace and love. Weak and degraded as human beings are, there is still remaining a sufficient impress of the divine image, to make them abhor open villany and undisguised persecution. No man would dare boldly to say, here is a neighbour whose prosperity I envy—whose reputation I would wither—whose influence I would destroy; or, here is another upon whom I would be revenged for a number of private disputes, who stands in the way of my interest and ambition, or who does not choose to take *my meaning* of the Bible. No; bad as human nature is, such an avowal would not be tolerated: but the very same sentiments, cloaked under the guise of religion, sent up the mingled shrieks and burnings of human victims from the bloody altars of Paganism, and tarnished the bright and glorious name of Christianity, by the smoke of ten thousand Christian martyrs; whilst the deluded multitude were taught to believe that a God of merey was gratified by the miseries of His creatures. The same sentiments, in the progress of ages, developed themselves, under the milder name of

* See Chap. XII., pp. 214-15.

Protestantism, in fines and imprisonments, in confiscations and banishments, in civil penalties and social degradations. The same principles, in the end of the last century, in the very heart of Protestant England, roused an infuriated multitude to burn the dwelling, the valuable apparatus and library, and the meeting-house of the Christian philosopher of Birmingham—yea, and his very life would have fallen a sacrifice to their bigoted fury, had he not, with extreme difficulty, effected his escape. Such sentiments, in latter times, have disorganised the frame of society in our native land—converted the salutary emulation of sects into the bitterness of anti-Christian hatred—divided happy religious communities, and even invaded the peace of the domestic circle.

There may be men who look upon these things with pleasure, as there were of old, those “who sleep not unless they made some to fall ;” but I confess that, upon my heart, they come with an icy chillness, which even the firmest confidence in the righteous providence of Him “who maketh the very wrath of man to praise Him,” cannot altogether remove. That “the offence hath not come” by me, or by those with whom I generally act, is some consolation. We have broken no compact—we have violated no law—we have trenched upon no man’s rights—we have attempted to shackle no man’s conscience. In all the conflicts of late years we have *never* been the aggressors : indeed, for a considerable time we did not even stand upon the defensive, hoping to disarm hostility by our meekness, and desirous to preserve the unity of the Church, by every sinless compliance with the wishes and prejudices of our brethren. Since we have been compelled to defend ourselves from calumnious imputations, and to resist the violation of the sacred principles of Christian liberty, we have the testimony of our opponents, and the witness of the world, that we have not disgraced our peaceable profession. I can most truly say, that were I only *personally* concerned, the gross misrepresentations of my views, which have been sent forth to the public, would not call from me a single sentence of reply : I would trust to my character, and to the sound understanding of that part of the community whose good opinion I value, for an ample refutation. But, as the long premeditated attacks upon me have been mixed up with violent efforts to undermine what I consider a great Christian principle, I shall, however reluctantly, cast myself into the arena, in spite of the fearful odds of numbers and popularity and talents arrayed against me. For such a conflict I have little inclination, and less leisure : I feel deeply sensible that I can neither do justice to myself nor to the principles which I advocate, in a few hours of desultory study, snatched from the season

of repose ; yet it shall never be said that I sacrificed the great cause of Christian liberty to personal convenience, to indolence, or to indifference.

I shall commence my strictures with the speech of Mr. Cooke ; not because I consider him in any sense superior to Mr. Stewart, but because he is looked upon as the Goliath of his party, and because he has repeated almost all Mr. Stewart's arguments as if they were his own. Mr. Cooke has been so mingled with all the late proceedings of Synod, and has thought fit to ornament his oration with so many sarcasms and personal insinuations, that I fear it will be impossible to review his arguments without in some degree following his example. This I shall avoid as far as I can, consistently with the interests of truth ; but I shall not mar an argument out of any affected delicacy towards a man who has for years past spared neither private individual nor public body that came in his way. To his public acts and character alone I shall allude : with his private walk and conversation I have no concern. Whilst I shall endeavour not to be justly chargeable with want of charity, I shall not hesitate to call things by their right names, remembering the denunciation of the prophet, "Woe unto him that calleth good evil, and evil good."

The very *title* of the speech is a type of its character ; it disingenuously purports to be a "reply to Mr. Montgomery." Such a host of columns in small type, marshalled under regular figures, must appear very wonderful and imposing as an extempore answer to a single speech ; but what is the fact ? Not more than one-third of it even pretends to be an answer to me. A short account of the tactics of the campaign (Mr. Cooke has nearly infected me with a military taste) will show that there is more in this than may at first sight appear. Before I went to Synod, I understood that two great batteries were to be opened upon me, and I was not long there until I had confirmation of the alarming fact—at least with regard to one. There were whispers afloat about some terrible thing that was to be done to my speech at Strabane ; his friends looked important ; upon his own brow "deliberation sat, and public care ;" and two or three days before I spoke, he gave distinct intimations of an exposé which he intended to make on the subject of confessions, &c., and which now forms a prominent part of what he calls a *reply*. At length I ventured to attack the formidable Overture, and when I had finished, Mr. Stewart opened a vigorous fire. It was evident, however, that I had approached in a direction which he did not expect ; several of his balls fell short, some went over my head, and a number of his guns only flashed in the pan. I cheerfully confess, how-

ever, that he proved himself on the whole a brave and honourable soldier, that some of his guns were skilfully directed, and that no man of "his livery and regiment" could have defended the post so well. I now expected a fresh attack ; but, behold, moderation was the order of the day ; Mr. Cooke "waived his right of speaking, on condition that others would do the same." This was judicious ; for Mitchel, Davis, Glendy, and several other powerful men, were ready for the conflict. But mark the sequel. After four days' deliberation, when the Synod was exhausted, when no man had time to reply to him, contrary to all precedent and all law, he spoke for nearly two hours upon subjects which had never been before the Synod, upon questions that were settled, and finally upon the business of next year ! A considerable part of what he then delivered, and a great deal more, he has now ventured to send forth to the world, under the title of a "reply to Mr. Montgomery." This is a very dexterous way of leading the public (nine-tenths of whom may never see my speech) to believe that I have been *answered* ; whilst in reality, as I shall presently show, not one of my arguments has ever been wounded by the mighty shock.

Mr. Cooke commences his speech, in exact imitation of Mr. Stewart, by whining forth a complaint against the misrepresentations of the public press ; but the journalist accused of so great a crime has triumphantly established the accuracy of his report. It is very singular, however, that after bringing such an accusation against the press, Mr. Cooke should have been guilty of issuing to the world so remarkable a misrepresentation of *himself*, as that contained in what purports to be "an authentic report" of his speech at Cookstown. To accuse a public paper of misrepresenting him, after the lapse of twelve months, and when the recollection of particular words and phrases must have become indistinct in the memory of those that heard them, was no great exertion of courage ; but to give a new version of his speech at the end of a fortnight, when the whole affair was green in the minds of men, and to call it "an authentic report," is the act of no ordinary personage. That a considerable portion of the report is given literally as it was spoken or read, I freely admit ; for several omissions, and a great change of language in those parts which were delivered altogether extemporaneously, I bring no charge, well knowing that such things are unavoidable ; but for the introduction of entirely *new matter*, containing heavy accusations and bitter insinuations, which were not even *hinted at* in his speech, I consider myself bound to arraign him at the bar of public opinion. To some of these points I shall advert as I proceed ; in the meantime taking his speech as it was given to the

world, as a digested and deliberate exposition of his opinions and projects. Except as a mere matter of character, its authenticity, or want of authenticity, is a thing of no importance; its contents are the real subject for consideration.

After writing a column of matter concerning his evidence before the Commissioners of Education, and other subjects equally uninteresting to the public, Mr. Cooke avers that the Synod of 1824 "*unanimously* contradicted Dr. Bruce's statement" respecting the progress of anti-Calvinistic sentiments amongst its members. This is an error; the majority, and I believe the very great majority, alleged that Dr. Bruce was mistaken in his views; but several members thought then, and think now, that although clamour and misrepresentation may have contracted the *nominal* boundaries of anti-Calvinistic opinions, there has, nevertheless, been a *real and substantial* progress of such sentiments amongst the Presbyterian population. Thousands who had never occupied their minds with theological distinctions, have been led to serious inquiry, and, consequently, to the adoption of what I firmly believe to be rational and Scriptural opinions. I have at this moment documents in my possession, amply proving that in places generally supposed to be the least likely to admit such sentiments, they are "making silent and extensive progress." I am beginning to suspect that it is the very consciousness of this fact which has roused all the zeal of latter times for the suppression of free inquiry; but it will not do, even though Mr. Cooke and Mr. Morell should sneer for the thousandth time, with equal wit and originality, at the "march of intellect." The people are beginning to think, and they will go on to think, with the Blessed Volume for their instructor, in defiance of popes and councils, of conclaves and synods. They will, notwithstanding all the arts which are used to keep them in spiritual darkness, and to confirm their prejudices through the medium of their passions and interests, eventually believe that the New Testament is as valuable as the "Confession of Faith," and that the inspired apostles were as able "to explain the mind of the Spirit speaking in the Scriptures," as even a Committee of the Synod of Ulster, sitting under the auspices and guidance of Mr. Cooke. I do not applaud the instruments, nor do I approve of the means which are used, but I firmly believe that the late tyrannical measures of the Synod of Ulster, will, under the good providence of the merciful Father and Friend of all, gradually advance the cause of "pure and undefiled religion," by leading men back from the opinions of imperfect creatures to the simple and sublime truths of the Gospel. Individuals may suffer, ignorant multitudes may be urged

on to close the doors of meeting-houses against their ministers, without allowing them an opportunity of refuting the gross and wilful calumnies circulated against their opinions ; nay, a minister of the Gospel, and if we believe his own tale, a “regenerated” one too, may exult in these things ; and when he hears that, as the first fruits of his labours, innocent women and children, and men who are too honest to sell their consciences “for a morsel of bread,” are about to be driven from house and home, he may piously and humanely exclaim, “Ah ! more of that to them !” Yes, these things may be ; but there are men ready to make the sacrifice ; and as “the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church” in earlier days, so will the Christian fortitude and sincerity and integrity of these later confessors give lustre and energy and success to the cause of liberty and truth.

Mr. M'Cance of Comber, a man of undisputed evangelical sentiments, of long standing in the Church, of irreproachable life, and of great ministerial faithfulness, nobly threw himself into the gap of Christian liberty, at the last Synod, and in a speech which no individual has even attempted to answer, defended the great principles of Protestantism, and severely reprobated the arrogance of “comparative boys, in dragging aged and venerable men from their distant homes to bear testimony.” Upon this last sentiment Mr. Cooke made a tremendous attack ; but in his “authentic report” he has done himself great injustice ; he has, through pure modesty, reduced a piece of the finest eloquence to mere milk and water insipidity. He reports in one place that “he wished I had been made a painter, instead of a divine.” This he did *not* happen to *say*, though it is very probable he *did wish* it ; and I am sure I almost wished it myself for a few minutes, that I might have given to the world the true image of a Christian martyr ! Oh, with what enthusiasm he shouted forth his indignation against those dastardly men, who refused to profess their belief in the creed which he chose to impute to them—how he “gloried in proclaiming *his* opinions to the world”—how little *he* valued the smiles or the frowns of men—and how joyfully *he* would come “even to the stake in defence of the truth !” And firm determination sat upon his open brow, and “a love of complacency” dwelt upon his benevolent countenance, and his hands were clasped and elevated, and he seemed undaunted by the discordant shouts of those around him ; and I could almost have fancied that the flames were beginning to ascend, and that a Latimer or a Ridley was before me ! But just at that moment, an intelligent elder in the seat beside me exclaimed, “Well, that is too bad ; to hear a man boasting of his courage, in avowing popular and patronised

opinions; of his integrity, in professing what is conducive to his interest and gratifying to his ambition; and of his willingness to become a martyr, with three-fourths of the people, and all the power of Church and State, at his back!" The scene instantly changed, without the aid of "Aladdin's wonderful lamp," and I saw but an ambitious actor, "tearing nature to tatters," and reaping the merited applause of a set of turbulent boys in the gallery.

Mr. Cooke grievously complains that notwithstanding his disinterested support of profitable opinions, and the hazards which he has run in openly avowing them, with power at his back, and promotion in his front, some persons have called him "fanatic and enthusiast." If any persons accused him of being either the one or the other, they did him great injustice; but no such accusation, I am convinced, was ever brought. Both his partisans and opponents know him too well to prefer any such charge. His entire proceedings have manifested far too much calculation and prudent arrangement, to afford even the shadow of a plea for such a groundless imputation. I certainly have heard his name occasionally coupled with no very complimentary epithets; but the man who would venture to call him either fanatic or enthusiast, would justly become the object of universal derision.

His next effort is a very bold one. Like a true theological *Cobbett*, he turns round with the utmost effrontery upon the principles which he has been advocating for years, and which he has been pressing upon others as incontrovertible. When a poor Roman Catholic is to be turned against his priest, or an impression to be made at a Bible Society meeting, "the right of private judgment" is quite a divinity; but when a brother Protestant happens, in the exercise of that right, to think differently from Mr. Cooke, it instantly becomes an object only to be *sneered at*—"a mere idol, a phantom king;" and he gravely assures us that, "up till this hour," he is ignorant of what it can possibly mean!" But he alleges "the fault is not his; for no member of Synod has condescended to explain it." This assertion must have been made in mere forgetfulness; because Mr. Cooke cannot be ignorant that "the right of private judgment" has been explained by a member of Synod, in whom it was "condescension" to do so, if his own words deserve any credit; by a man who has modestly informed the world that "*God and truth are with him*, and the prayers of ALL good men are with *him*," by a man who, last summer, in the presence of a theological teacher, applied to *himself* the sacred words of the Redeemer, "Wherever two or three are met together, there am I in the midst of them!" No person can doubt the competency of such

a man "to explain what is meant by the right of private judgment;" and here are his words, written with his own hand, and printed under his own inspection—"It is the privilege, the *right*, and the duty of every man to examine the Scriptures for himself. In exercising *the inalienable right of his own judgment*, the Christian refuses to acknowledge subjection of conscience to *any authority but the Word of God*; and before he assent to any doctrine, he claims the right of examining the Scriptures for himself, that upon their authority he may rest thoroughly persuaded in his *own mind*!" This admirable definition of the right of private judgment was penned by *the Rev. Henry Cooke*, and unanimously sanctioned by the Synod of Ulster in 1825; yet, strange to say, the writer informs us in 1828, "that until this hour he is ignorant of what it can possibly mean." Alas! it is ever thus that men involve themselves when "they forsake the onward path." In vain does he endeavour to subvert the great fundamental principle of Protestantism, "*the sufficiency of Scripture, and the inalienable right of every man, on due inquiry, to form his own opinions with regard to the doctrines and precepts of the Bible.*" His multitude of "*ifs*," his puny quibbles upon the words "*right and wrong*," which are not worth exposing, and his quotation of texts, which really make against him, all prove to what straits he is reduced in his determined opposition to the plainest principles of Christian liberty. The truth is, even Mr. Cooke's talents are inadequate to the support of such a cause: he has no firm ground, either of reason or Scripture, on which to stand. I defy him to produce a single text authorising any man, or body of men, to prescribe rules of faith or modes of worship to their fellow-disciples; whilst, on the contrary, the whole tenor of the New Testament, as well as many explicit declarations, deprecate the arrogant assumptions of fallible men over the consciences of their brethren, inculcate the free exercise of individual judgment, and exhort believers "to maintain the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free."

Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that Mr. Cooke should endeavour to divert the minds of men from the main question at issue to extraneous subjects. It must be in the recollection of many with what pomp and violence he brought forward, at Cookstown, a sweeping charge against his opponents, of "dealing deceitfully with the Scriptures" by misquotations. He assumed an awful look, as if he had been about to crush the impious wretches in the dust, and the populace anticipated some amazing triumph of their champion. The charge was broad, general, and terrible; evidently intended to fix obloquy and suspicion upon every man who opposed him. I knew the

trick, and I defeated it. In spite of the disgraceful clamour of his violent partisans and his own reluctance, I forced him to specify the misquotations, and to name the individuals who had used them; when, lo! “the mountain brought forth a mouse!” It turned out that Dr. Wright had omitted *four words* at the end of a verse which did not bear upon the subject, and which, cast into either scale, could not weigh the value of a straw in deciding the point at issue. Every man who knows Dr. Wright is aware that he “rejoiceth in the truth,” at least as much as Mr. Cooke, although he certainly does manifest it in a different temper and spirit. In the “authentic report” this affair is greatly changed and moderated; but the charge of misquotation still disingenuously goes abroad to the world in all its *generality*, so that it may be fixed upon *any* man, or *every* man, that opposed him. Dr. Wright could have no design in his “defective” quotation: could as much be said in vindication of the *many* defective quotations of his accuser? Take one example, which he perpetually quotes to prove the Deity of Christ—“God manifest in the flesh”—and here he uniformly begins and ends, “quoting defectively” in both, and also omitting “was” in the very clause itself. The whole verse runs thus (1 Tim. iii. 16)—“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Now every Christian believes that in our blessed Saviour, “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person,” “God *was* manifest in the flesh;” but to men of plain understanding, it might require even a greater theologian than Mr. Cooke to prove that the supremely perfect, holy, and glorious Being, “who fills heaven and earth,” and before whom the cherubin and the seraphim constantly worship, required to be “justified,” or *could* be “received up into glory.” It would appear then, after all, that “defective quotations,” nay, even *garbled* quotations, are very convenient, and quite allowable *on the right side!* Did time permit, I could readily bring forward many other instances of a similar nature. Let it be understood, however, that I have not introduced this subject for the sake of controversy. The comparative merits of conflicting dogmas are not the point at issue, but simply the authority of Churches, the object of Confessions, and the late proceedings of the Synod of Ulster.

With regard to the right and authority of the Church to prescribe terms of admission and grounds of exclusion on account of erroneous doctrines, Mr. Cooke brings forward an imposing array of seven argu-

ments, and a great many citations from Scripture. There is, however, a fatal defect at the very foundation of his structure. He does not tell us *what* Church possesses these rights, or whether they may not be possessed by *all* Churches. If *one* Church only enjoy such distinguished privileges, its claim to the distinction, or, in other words, its infallibility, ought to be fully established; in which case an immediate submission to its authority would be the necessary consequence. But if *all* Churches possess this right, then are there as many distinct and opposite *rights* as there are Christian sects and communities in the world. On this principle, error has just as good a right to interfere with truth as truth has to interfere with error; and, according to Mr. Cooke's own words, "what men have a *right* to do, they cannot be wrong in doing, and therefore cease to be accountable." This is quite a pleasant doctrine, and opens up a fine field for the exercise of the amiable and benevolent propensities of man. In every sect the majority have a *right* to tease and annoy the minority, under pretence of "trying their spirits;" and should the progress of time change the balance of power, and give the influence of numbers to the opposite party, they will have a perfect *right* to denounce and proscribe the very opinions formerly entertained by many of themselves. Suppose, for instance, that Mr. Cooke should change his opinions, as many equally determined champions have done, and that by his powerful talents and influence he should lead a majority of the Synod to embrace his views, it would be extremely edifying to see him "trying the spirits" of Mr. Elder and Mr. Dill, exhorting them "to maintain sound doctrine, to be of one mind and one judgment" with him, and "not to bring in any other Gospel." In such a case, the very texts and arguments which he now uses would be equally applicable as they are at present; and, I dare say, their effect would be the very same. The gentlemen alluded to would very naturally inquire, "Who made *him* a judge in such matters?" They might well say to him, in the language of inspiration, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who art thou? We are commanded not to have *many* masters; for one is our Master, even *Christ*, and all we are brethren." Perhaps they might even go farther than this, and tell him that he was "an Atheist, a Deist, a blasphemers, an idolater, and a denier of the Lord that bought him!"

I do not deny, however, that every preacher of the Gospel is bound "to speak with great boldness" what he believes to be the truth. He who acts otherwise, is, in my mind, the most despicable of all characters; not only "lying unto men, but unto God." In this I go with

my opponents to the fullest extent ; but my chief ground of accusation against them is, that their principles and proceedings strike at the very root of this candour and sincerity. So long as a man stands in awe of the great Head of the Church alone ; so long as he is guided in his public ministrations solely by what he conceives to be the true meaning of the sacred records, he will be a sincere and honest instructor. But the moment that he submits his principles to the test of any human tribunal, knowing that it has power to befriend or injure him, in proportion to his conformity or want of conformity with its views of Christian doctrine—that moment he becomes the servant of man, forfeits his independence, and lies under powerful and perpetual temptations to preach what is palatable and profitable, rather than what is just and true. I do firmly believe that from such causes thousands of men have been induced “to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience” to the perpetuation of error, the injury of truth, the establishment of ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, and the degradation of man. I will not say that it is impious, but I do say that it is vain, for Mr. Cooke to allege, because the Saviour of the world and His inspired apostles interfered with the religious opinions of men, that, therefore, the Synod of Ulster possesses any such right. The same assumption and the same argument would equally vindicate the encroachments of all Churches and all sects. The only legitimate interference which any Church can exercise with regard to its members, on the ground of opinions, is friendly advice, temperate admonition, and sound argument.

But, says Mr. Cooke, in his fourth plea for Church authority, “error in any of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel is destructive of the Churches.” Now, supposing this were admitted, what tribunal is to determine the doctrines which *are* fundamental? No one denies that there are such doctrines ; and every individual believes that *he* holds them truly, and that those who differ from him are in error. Are we, then, to look for the settlement of this question to Churches? They are all equally dogmatical in support of direct contradictions. The Catholics say, “We are the persons to decide upon fundamentals, and we have settled that matter at the Council of Trent.” “*You* determine it!” exclaim the Lutherans ; “no, *we* have decided it in the Confession of Augsburgh.” “Not at all,” say the Calvinists ; “the honour of doing that was reserved for us at the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly.” “You are *all* wrong,” says the Church of England ; “the essential and fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are only to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles.” “We are extremely

anxious," say the Synod of Ulster, "to pay every deference to the Church established by *law*; but we humbly suggest that *twenty-five* members of our own body, with Mr. Cooke at their head, are the only persons who can infallibly settle the whole affair." It appears, then, that from Churches we cannot derive satisfactory information; and I fear that an application to individuals would not mend the matter; for it is notorious, and admitted, that even the Synod's Committee, who are to regulate the faith of the principal part of the Presbyterians of Ulster, are very far indeed from being agreed amongst themselves.

Now, under these circumstances, it is a very deplorable thing for the Churches, and also for individuals, if error in what Mr. Cooke is pleased to term "fundamentals" be indeed "destructive." How many millions of millions of our fellow-creatures must have gone to destruction in the days that are past—how many must be "on the high-road of perdition" at the present moment—and how many may go to ruin in the time to come! Common humanity would lead one to hope that there must be some mistake in the matter; and the wisdom, the truth, and the benevolence of God confirm the expectation. It is truly amazing, and truly melancholy, if, upon points ESSENTIAL to the salvation of His rational and favoured offspring, God have so mysteriously and imperfectly revealed His will as to leave them subjects of interminable controversy and contention. Such a supposition may be entertained by others; but I thank the Father and the Friend of all that I have never so regarded "His goodness and His truth." Upon this subject an obvious fact seems to be unaccountably overlooked—viz., that man's *fallibility* applies to his judgment concerning *fundamentals*, as well as in all other matters. It is a question whether the dogmas *called* fundamentals be doctrines of Christianity; and if doctrines, it is still a question whether they be fundamentals. Both these questions are disputed, and on both men may be mistaken. Were I to reject what I myself regard as essential and fundamental doctrines, I would certainly be wrong; but this is not alleged. It is never pretended that both parties hold the doctrines in question to be fundamental. Well, then, what is to be done? Why, my opponents have a right to convince me that I am in error if they can; but, *during* the controversy, they must remember that they too are parties upon trial, and not both parties and judges at the very same time. Let them, *if they can*, convince me that I am wrong, and I shall be grateful for their exertions; but until they have done this, it would be a *petitio principii*, a mere begging of the question, to take it for granted that I *am* wrong; for that is the very point at issue; and I have just

as good a right to impute error to them as they have to charge it upon me.

It seems strange that these obvious principles are never taken into account by those who attempt to prescribe the bounds of Church-fellowship. Whatever may be their professions, they *act* upon the principle of infallibility; for I defy them, upon the ground of common sense or common justice, to put me to any inconvenience for holding opinions which, according to their own admission, *may* be right in opposition to their opinions, which, on the same admission, *may* be wrong. There is no escaping from the horns of the dilemma: if they be *fallible*, they have no right to injure those who do not embrace their opinions; if *infallible*, they are bound to establish their authority upon incontrovertible evidence. So long as I admit the Divine authority of Scripture; so long as I believe that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh;" that He "is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world," I fearlessly assert that they have no Scripture warrant for excluding me from communion, or from any ecclesiastical privilege. They may allege, indeed, that I attach a different meaning to those phrases from that which they deduce; but I do this in the exercise of my own Christian liberty. I take what I believe to be the clear meaning of the Holy Spirit, and I am no more responsible to them than they are to me. If ever this indefeasible principle be surrendered, then all the persecutions of heathenism were justifiable, and every dominant sect of Christians would exercise only a legitimate authority in tyrannising over those who dissent from its opinions. This may be very good Orthodoxy, but it is bad Protestantism, and worse Christianity. But still, to reconcile us, I suppose, to all this, we are told five or six times, in quite an oracular manner, that "Calvinism and Arianism cannot *both* be the doctrine of the Gospel." The oracle might have added, however, that although both cannot be *true*, yet both may be *false*; and many estimable men, possessing tenfold the talents and erudition of either Mr. Cooke or myself, have been of this opinion. I do not agree with Humanitarians any more than I do with Trinitarians, believing, as in most other cases, "that truth lies between;" yet when I see men of gigantic powers, untainted integrity, and exemplary lives arrayed on both sides, I learn at once a lesson of diffidence and charity.

I cannot conclude my review of Mr. Cooke's mighty arguments in favour of Church authority, and the right of human interference in matters of faith, without showing to the world the manner in which a person who pretends to be under the immediate influence of the Holy

Spirit deals with the *words* of the *Spirit*. In quoting 2 Tim. ii., he says that the 21st verse relates to the 17th, concerning *doctrine*, whereas it relates entirely to the 19th and 20th, concerning *practice*. He then adds, as if it were part of the 21st verse—"Yet a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject"—a sentence which is not in the same *chapter*, the same *epistle*, nor even written to the same *individual*; but one which immediately follows an apostolic injunction directly opposed to his views and proceedings—"Avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." After quoting from Titus—"A man that is an heretic reject," he instantly cites from Timothy—"From such withdraw thyself," as if it were a clause of the same verse. But I suppose the words of 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5, were too descriptive of some existing men, and certain passing events, to suit his purpose. They are these:—"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: *from such withdraw thyself.*" Is there here, or in the whole epistle, a single word about heresy or heretics? Not one. We are commanded to separate from men of corrupt hearts and profligate lives; but not from those that differ from us in religious opinions. Had I leisure to follow him through his other quotations, I could readily show that they are "wrested" pretty much in the same manner; but I desist from the sickening detail, and proceed to attack his mighty array of three columns on the subjects of creeds, confessions, and declarations.

On coming to this point, I cannot refrain from expressing my gratitude to a merciful Providence, for the complete triumph which the genuine principles of Christian liberty have gained in argument during the last century. Even their secret enemies are now their professing friends; and we may reasonably hope that, in due time, men will cease to practise what they are ashamed to defend. Mr. Cooke utterly surrenders the *authority* of creeds, or confessions, or declarations. I am gratified to quote his very words:—"We impose nothing; for imposition implies power, with pains and penalties for refusing compliance. Were a man to sign a Confession of Faith again and again, I should not consider him one whit better qualified for the ministerial office than before his signature. To employ any ecclesias-

tical punishment whatever, against any man's opinions, never once entered my mind. I do confess, I cannot understand how any man is dragged to give testimony, when there is no pain, no penalty, either to the announcement or refusal. Creeds are not made to add to the Word of God, or to be considered as a declaration of what God has said."

Now, as Mr. Cooke is "an honest man," and not like poor Mr. Montgomery, who is a sad "equivocator," and places "no value upon simple truth," there can be no possible doubt that he sincerely holds, and has always acted upon, the admirable sentiments so clearly expressed in the above sentences. It might be supposed, then, that the whole matter was ended, and that a league of perpetual amity was actually signed with his own hand. But this is not exactly the case; for even Mr. Cooke's roses are not entirely free from thorns, as we shall see anon. A new idea has been suggested to his mind on the subject of creeds, by a Mr. Paul, who has conferred upon me the *honour*, and upon himself the *profit*, of placarding my name, in large letters, through every corner of Ulster. That this gentleman only used my name as a net to catch flies, is evident from his publication, which is about every thing except the speech he pretended to review. He quotes, indeed, about three sentences which, as in interest bound, he mangles and misrepresents; and the rest, not of course from inability, but out of pure gratitude for the service he expected me to render him, he has permitted to escape unscathed. I can assure him that if, at any time, my name can benefit him to the amount of a single shilling, he is perfectly welcome to use it, and even to send his secret emissaries into the houses of my humbler hearers, in order to effect his purposes. Were I enlisted in any cause which such attempts could injure, I should certainly consider it unworthy of defence. Well, then, to this doughty champion Mr. Cooke is indebted for an idea, with which he seems so wonderfully delighted, that he makes it the leading feature of many columns. The most condensed form in which it appears is the following:—"The *sole* purpose of a creed is to show what a man believes, or what a Church believes. *Every* thing beyond this comes under the head of abuse. When we call upon a man, then, for his creed, we merely ask, what does he believe? And I can see no principle, either of politeness or religion, that forbids the question, nor any principle of honesty that entitles any man to refuse a reply. All we ask is to know the *meaning* which you attach to the words of the Bible." Now all this seems very dove-like, and sounds sweetly; but is it a sad pity this "*sole* purpose of creeds" had not been understood long ago. What oceans of blood would it have saved; what civil pro-

scriptions would it have prevented; what enormous ecclesiastical tyrannies would it have restrained! Pure modesty must have induced Mr. Cooke to sneer so often at “the lights of the nineteenth century,” for he and his friend Mr. Paul afford eminent instances of “the march of mind.” They have discovered what all the creed-makers of fifteen centuries never suspected—viz., that Confessions of Faith are *solely* intended to gratify a little innocent curiosity; or, as Mr. Cooke prettily and playfully expressed it at Synod, “I think so now; pray, what do *you* think?” And are *all* the honeyed accents which have fallen upon our ears, about “no penalties, no pains, no injuries, no ecclesiastical punishments, verily and indeed the words of *truth*?” If so, then the records of the Synod of Ulster, for the last five years, are chiefly composed of fictions and lies; the reports of the Parliamentary and Education Committees are but mere fables; and the columns of the public journals record documents which are only forgeries and impositions. But the subject is too serious for irony. Mr. Cooke well knows that there is a certain portion of the community upon whose credulity he may draw at will, and another portion that will at least affect to believe him; yet surely it is a bold venture, in the very teeth of so many public records, to say that he never dreamt of attaching any pain or penalty to religious opinions different from his own. I need only refer, in refutation of this, to the Presbytery of Antrim, the Synod of Munster, the Belfast Institution, the late Synods, his envenomed attack upon Mr. Porter, and his conduct towards Mr. Mitchel—one of the best, ablest, and most faithful ministers that ever adorned any Church. That many of his projects have failed is happily true: the Institution has yet both students and an endowment; Mr. Porter retains his Clerkship; and the excellent pastor of Newry, with his wife and family, has not been turned adrift upon the world. What credit is to be attached to his declaration, “that it never entered into his head to employ any ecclesiastical punishment whatever against any man’s opinions,” will be farther evinced by his own Overtures at the last Synod. “If any person thus licensed be afterwards found not to preach the doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, &c., &c., or to avow any principles in opposition to these doctrines, he shall not be continued in fellowship with this body”—that is, *degradation*, the very *highest punishment* which the Synod can inflict, is to be the immediate consequence of *daring* to think differently from Mr. Cooke. Let him reconcile his gentle declarations with his disgraceful Overture, if he can; and then let him reconcile his Overture with common sense, with common humanity, with Protestantism, or with the Gospel—if *he can*.

He is a very ingenious man ; but all the sophistry in the world could not extricate him from the palpable contradiction of his own printed statements ; or from the outrageous tyranny of *degrading* a faithful, zealous, *honest* minister for declaring what he believes to be “ the whole counsel of God,” in the legitimate exercise of “ the inalienable right of his own judgment.” I really am shocked when I contemplate such a picture of human inconsistency ; and consider that, under the influence of popular clamour, the Synod of Ulster has been dragged into an apparent approval of such monstrous enactments.

But we are told over and over again, “ surely the Church has a right to tell the *meaning* which it attaches to Scripture, and to require its members to declare the meaning which *they* hold to be true.” The former I admit ; the latter I deny. Every minister is certainly bound to give to the members of his own congregation the most explicit statement of his views of the Bible ; but as he is neither the teacher of his brother ministers nor their flocks, he lies under no obligation to satisfy them. To the Head of the Church and to his own people alone he is responsible. The root of the error into which those fall, who advocate the power of Ecclesiastical Courts, lies in mistaking the meaning of the word *Church*, as it is used in the New Testament. They seem to think that it was some kind of clerical conclave or synod ; whereas it never has any such meaning, but either signifies the whole body of believers, or a particular congregation. Whatever power therefore originally rested in the Church “ to try spirits,” or in other words, to judge of the doctrines of teachers, is now solely vested in distinct worshipping societies, and not in presbyteries or synods. To the Synod of Ulster I owe no allegiance in matters of faith ; their meaning of Scripture may be true, or it may be false ; and if they lay any penalty upon me for not adopting their views in opposition to my own, they are guilty of an act of tyranny, by requiring blind submission to their own fallible interpretation of the Sacred Records. It is only “ throwing dust into men’s eyes,” therefore, for Mr. Cooke to say that demanding an assent to the Church’s *meaning* of the Bible is different from subscribing a written creed. The only difference between them is that a written creed is much less exceptionable than the changing, capricious, and prejudiced meaning of a variable public body.

“ But have I not told you repeatedly,” says the patron of this notable discovery, “ that it never entered into my head to attach any punishment to a dissent from my meaning of the Bible ?” Very true, he has said all this, and many more courteous things ; but then he is so given to sarcasm and irony, and solemn jesting, that I must rather

look for his meaning in his actions than in his words. Let us then see how he would treat a student claiming licence. He would doubtless commence by asking what was the *meaning of the Bible* upon the four grand fundamental doctrines. But perhaps the young man might labour under some apprehension, and say—"Now, sir, if my meaning do not exactly accord with yours, what will be the consequence?" "The consequence! Oh, sir, no consequence at all; I assure you on the word of 'a Calvinist without any moderation,' that no penalty shall follow; and besides, you have it under my hand 'that it is your inalienable right to exercise your own judgment' in such matters. Do you think I would punish a man for doing his duty?" Assured by this kindness, the candidate might venture to hint that, like my friend Mr. Stewart, "he entertained considerable doubts concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity," or some of the other fundamentals. Upon such a disclosure the gentle tone of encouragement would be changed into the harsh voice of condemnation—"Begone, sir, you are totally unfit to be a minister; you don't adopt my meaning of the Bible; you 'bring in another Gospel;' you are a very presumptuous young man, and puffed up with the vanity of human reason." Should the student remonstrate, and say—"You know, sir, I have only exercised my inalienable right; my education has cost much labour and expense, my parents will be heartbroken by my rejection; you said you would inflict 'no penalty;' and besides, you are a Protestant, and not a Pope." This would only farther excite his virtuous indignation. "What, sir, do you attempt to bind me by the rules which regulate the conduct of ordinary men; have I not contradicted myself, and been contradicted by many of the most respectable men in society, a hundred times, and yet always remained in the right? What do I regard your expenses and your parents? I tell you the right of private judgment is a mere 'idol,' 'a phantom king,' 'the spawn of French philosophy,' and 'Protestantism' has nothing whatever to do with it, except in Catholic discussions! I'll teach you, and others through you, to dispute my meaning of the Bible. With the aid of Mr. Morell, I have exalted the character of the Synod of Ulster, by showing it that the most solemn enactments are only made to be broken. Go home, sir; I am determined to have uniformity in *my* Church!" And on his way to a sorrowful home, might not the unfortunate young man say—"Is this Presbyterianism? Had I been a liar and a hypocrite, I would now be a licensed preacher of the Gospel of truth; but because I am an honest man, I have been dismissed as unfit for the service of Him 'who loveth purity in the inward parts.'" But the salutary example made of such an

audacious person will not be lost; it will prevent others from falling into the like condemnation; the Synod will be freed from all private-judgment students; "the march of mind" having entirely ceased, will no longer be sneered at; the Presbyterian Church, in the lapse of a few years, will be fed only by pastors equally distinguished for their talents, their integrity, and their independence!

Having witnessed the fate of a contumacious student, let us attend for a moment to that of a placed minister, who, from reading the Bible, and prayer, and serious inquiry, may renounce any of the opinions of Calvin, or of the Synod's Committee. If any man shall, by searching the Scriptures according to the commandment of God, become "fully persuaded in his own mind" that Calvinism is not Christianity, "and avow any sentiments opposite to those entertained by the Synod's Committee, he shall no longer be continued in fellowship with that body." In this admirable arrangement, due care is taken, as usual, of the interests of the hypocrite; the penalty is attached to the avowal, and not to the holding of erroneous doctrines. Let a man be but an Orthodox preacher, whilst privately he is known to be an infidel and a debauchee, and he is quite worthy to be continued in "fellowship;" but let another Mitchel or Davis arise in the Church, enlightened as he is pure, and faithful as he is intrepid, and let him preach what in his soul and conscience he believes to be "the truth as it is in Jesus"—that moment he forfeits his title to fellowship, has the brand of heresy fixed upon his forehead, must surrender his congregation, and cast himself and his family upon the coldness of the world! Should he venture to remonstrate, and say—"My hearers are satisfied with my doctrines;" it will be replied—"So much the worse; they are labouring under a soul-destroying leprosy, and must have an Orthodox physician." But, says the victim—"My innocent wife and helpless children! Do think of them!" "Ridiculous!" exclaims Mr. Cooke, "we are thinking about souls, and not about bodies; besides, did I not prove to demonstration, at Strabane, in answer to Mr. Montgomery's absurd pathos on this subject, that because you are an honest man, your wife will be delighted to see you return to her, covered with unmerited poverty and degradation, without the means of procuring food or raiment, education or establishment, for the very heart-strings of your existence. Were you a knave and a hypocrite, like some persons whom I know, she might have just cause to mourn over your situation and the prospects of her family; but as you are 'an honest man,' the greater your sufferings the happier she must be." Cogent and Christian as these arguments are, the poor man does not

instantly yield, but replies—"Am I not a respectable and virtuous character, a zealous and faithful minister? then wherefore degrade me?" "Ah! my dear sir," says Mr. Cooke, benignantly, "that is the very rock upon which you split; your respectability and your morality are your destruction: look at a few of my most strenuous supporters, and you will find no such things. Do quit your morality, for it only makes you vain; and look into my 'authentic reply' to Mr. Montgomery, where I rejoice that it is rapidly becoming obsolete, as a remains of heathenism; whilst religion is fast coming round to be viewed merely as a matter of opinion!" But still the husband and father clings to the support of his family, and alleges "that he has not yet been convicted of error by any competent tribunal." "What!" says Mr. Cooke, "are there not three to one against you in the Synod, and twenty to one in the world! How can you resist so conclusive an argument!" "Why," rejoins the pertinacious culprit, "there were ten thousand to one against 'the Author and Finisher of our faith;' there are at this moment five to one against Christianity; and amongst professing Christians there are still three to one against Protestantism." "This is mere sophistry," says Mr. Cooke, "as I constantly call every argument which I cannot answer; the majorities to which you allude were wrong, but mine are always right." Unable to resist such powerful reasoning, the poor man is driven to his last refuge. "Well, supposing that I am in error, it is not presumptuous nor intentional." "That is nothing to the point," replies his irresistible antagonist, "for Mr. Stewart, at Cookstown, out of Mr. Paul's pamphlet, completely proved, in answer to Mr. Montgomery, that even honest error is highly dangerous, if not damnable." "Yes, but Jeremy Taylor, Paley, and Chillingworth are of a different opinion; the last of them says—'If I be desirous to know the truth, and diligent in seeking it, and yet, through human infirmity, fall into error, that error cannot be damnable.'" "I value their opinions," says Mr. C., quoting from his friend Carson, "no more than I would do those of three idiots!" "Well, then, perhaps you will believe the New Testament, when it says—'He that knoweth not his Lord's will, yet committeth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.' 'I obtained mercy,' saith St. Paul, 'because I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief.' 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'" "I tell you, sir," says Mr. C., "you are a troublesome fellow—you use 'Scripture language,' and not my meaning of it; and therefore 'you shall not be continued in fellowship with this body.'"

But a great deal of merit has been taken for not expelling the anti-

Trinitarians at present in the Synod. For this act of common honesty and common justice we are indebted to the genuine Christians of the Orthodox party—the Wrights, the Carliles, the Hays, the Reids, the Parks, and the M'Caldins of the Synod. We owe nothing to Mr. Cooke and his immediate partisans. Were it in their power, by exclusion or degradation, to wrest our congregations from us, I am persuaded we would not “be continued in fellowship” for a single week. This may appear uncharitable; but I speak on the warrant of their repeated public and private declarations, as well as of their public and private acts. Wherever a few discontented individuals could be found in a congregation, emissaries have gone amongst them—they have been supplied with preaching in breathless haste, and no misrepresentation has been too gross which was considered likely to detach a single hearer from his minister. In proof of this, I may refer to Newry, Banbridge, Newton, and Anaghlonge. That their success has not been commensurate with their wishes and exertions is no merit in them; but redounds to the praise of the able and estimable men whom they have endeavoured to ruin. And when they dared not to propose our expulsion at the last Synod, they procured the enactment of a law fixing an unmerited stigma upon our opinions, depriving us of our Christian and Presbyterian rights, making us apparent accessaries to the suppression of our own conscientious principles, and tending to degrade us, were we base enough to submit to it, in the estimation of the world. To us it is no comfort that they have disgraced themselves more than they have wounded us; for we are sorry to see ministers of any creed engaged in proceedings injurious to the cause of our common Master. I am not ashamed to speak indignantly upon such subjects, remembering that the prophet denounced the self-righteous of the ancient times who said unto their brethren, “Stand off, stand off, for we are holier than you;” remembering also that in latter days “woe” was pronounced upon those “who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others; who laid heavy burdens upon men’s shoulders, and sought to have glory of the world.” For many, very many of my Calvinistic brethren in the Synod I entertain sincere esteem and cordial affection; and I can safely say, in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, that there is not in the world, of any sect or of any name, a single individual towards whom I cherish one unkind feeling on account of his mere religious opinions. From persons of all denominations I have received many proofs of courtesy and good-will; with individuals of almost every sect I live in habits of intimacy and friendship; and when the turbulent scenes of this

feverish world shall have passed away for ever, I trust that I shall meet with myriads of worthy persons of all creeds in a holier and a better land. But these feelings do not preclude a resolute self-defence in a righteous cause, nor a determined resistance to all encroachments upon Christian liberty, and a fearless exposure of the principles and practices of the aggressors.

I proceed, therefore, to animadvert upon another grand fallacy of Mr. Cooke's—viz., that human creeds and explanations enable men more clearly both to understand the Word of God and each other's views of its meaning than the language of Scripture itself. Now this position I consider utterly untenable; for it alleges that a perfect standard may be measured and regulated by an imperfect one. The creed is a thousand times more likely to misrepresent the Scriptures, by leading men blindly to acquiesce in human interpretations, than the Scriptures are likely to be elucidated by the creed. In fact, creeds and confessions have been the great bulwarks of error and superstition in all ages. They have sanctified every corruption; they have been the chief instruments of all sectarian and political persecutions; they have prostrated the energies of the human mind before the vain idol of human authority; and they have led deluded mortals "to forsake the fountain of living waters, and to hew themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Had it not been for them, Christendom would have been spared ten thousand scenes of horror; and were it not for their baleful influence, our own wretched country would not at this moment, from the centre to the circumference, exhibit nothing but one wide prospect of hatred and contention. Were it not for them, the children of the same Father and the disciples of the same Master would not be separated from each other by barriers and enclosures "of men's device;" but, merging all human distinctions in the one glorious appellation of Christians, would live together as one great family of brethren. How any man, therefore, can say that those things which have defaced the simple beauty of the Gospel, and so materially impeded its blessed influence, have been friendly to the cause of truth, is quite amazing; nor is it almost less wonderful that they should be said to enable men to know each other's opinions. Some satirist, reprobating human disingenuousness, has said that "words are intended to conceal our thoughts;" and this is pre-eminently true with regard to the language of creeds. Under the mask of a uniform confession, with worldly fame and emolument attached to insincerity, and temporal odium and loss standing forth as the consequences of integrity, all possible varieties of Christian doc-

trine, and even rank infidelity itself, may securely lurk in the very bosom of the same Church. A creed may go a considerable way to show the opinions of an honest man; but just in the same proportion it acts as a screen for the hypocrite. Were men left free, without the influence of interest or penalty, to express their sincere views of evangelical truth, we might sometimes feel compelled to dissent from their opinions; but we could never doubt that they were teaching what they firmly believed. Under present circumstances, however, there are many men of whose real sentiments I know no more from the creeds which they have subscribed than I should from the fashion of their coats. Do I by these observations intend to cast any reproach upon the honest professors of what are called Orthodox opinions? By no means; for I freely admit that there are very many such in the world—men of apostolic zeal and purity, whose indefatigable exertions and exemplary lives justly entitle them to universal praise and respect. But even those excellent men are rendered liable to the suspicion of insincerity by the uses to which human formularies of faith have been too frequently applied. With regard to Mr. Cooke's oracular maxim—"that men are infallible interpreters of their own opinions"—it has not the slightest foundation in fact. To say that they are, would be to give them a power which he seems to deny to the Spirit of Truth, when he insinuates that the Word of God is "equivocal," even on fundamental doctrines. But the truth is, human beings, from the poverty of language, and the imperfection of their powers, are very frequently unable "to interpret their own opinions." Hence, although "without equivocation or mental reservation," the ministers of the Established Church all subscribe the same articles and canons, yet they are almost equally divided into two conflicting parties of Calvinists and Arminians. Hence, also, according to Mr. Cooke's own admission at Strabane; there are two Orthodoxies amongst those who made the very same declaration; and whilst he says that certain Churches "are sowing the same seed, though in different enclosures," Mr. Barnett, his fellow-believer, positively asserts that one at least of those Churches "is a limb of Antichrist." See, then, with what wonderful infallibility men are able to interpret their own opinions, and how admirably those very individuals agree amongst themselves who are constantly dinning into other people's ears the necessity of being "of the same mind, and of the same judgment." I may in this connexion rectify a mistake of Mr. Stewart's, in his reply. He says that, in answer to Dr. Wright, Mr. Johnston of Tullylish "denied that he was an Arminian." Mr. Johnston did no such thing; he is too conscientious a man to disavow

his known and real sentiments; he only denied the use of a certain expression which Dr. Wright attributed to him; so that in reality my argument about divisions in the Committee did not "fall to the ground," but remains erect and unshaken to the present hour.

Mr. Cooke alleges that "it can be no hardship for any honest man to tell what he really thinks upon religious subjects." Now all this sounds quite fairly; but let us see how the case really stands. The moment that a minister refuses his assent to any one of the doctrines prescribed by the Synod, that moment he is branded as an *Arian* or *Socinian*. The multitude are taught from pulpits, and speeches, and pamphlets, to recoil from him in horror, as "worse than a murderer; as an Atheist, a Deist, a denier of his Saviour, an enemy of faith, a corrupter of Scripture, and a destroyer of souls!" It matters not that all these atrocious accusations are as false as they are malicious, and that his life may be as pure as his doctrines are Scriptural. Will an inflamed and deluded multitude wait to inquire into the real merits of conflicting opinions? Just as much as the mob that pursued the unfortunate dog to which the Quaker gave "a bad name," waited to inquire if he was really "mad." No; acting upon the worst tendencies of human nature, they yield a ready assent to the calumnious charge, whilst they either refuse to listen at all to the explicit refutation, or listen with a pre-determination not to be convinced. It is no wonder that this should be the condition of the populace, when Mr. Cooke has the effrontery to assert, under the cloak of an insinuation, that a man whose veracity and integrity are unimpeached, "equivocates with the Bible, and places no value upon simple truth!" But these have ever been the arts of dominant factions in religion. Paul was "a setter forth of strange gods," according to the orthodoxy of heathenism; "he has spoken blasphemy," said the priests (concerning the Redeemer of the world), and the multitude instantly shouted forth—"Away with this fellow; crucify him, crucify him!" Such principles of action were never better understood, nor more successfully exerted, than in the present age. Whilst it is well known that probably not a single man in existence holds the exact tenets, or even the principal tenets of Arius, yet his entire system, with innumerable distortions and additions, is imputed to every man who is not a Calvinist or a Trinitarian. Such a practice is both disingenuous and unjust. For my own part, I care not that I were called a Mahometan, or a Buddhist, for my people are guided by things and not by names; but the nickname of Arian, unjustly attached to many ministers, merely because they venture to judge for themselves, is calculated to do them irreparable injury, in the

minds of the ignorant and unthinking. The plain English, therefore, of Mr. Cooke's gentle solicitation, "Pray, now, do tell us what you think?" is just this—"Do, now, be so kind as to give us an opportunity of misrepresenting and abusing your opinions; we know that you have been preaching honestly what you believe, and that your people have been well pleased, both with your doctrines and deportment; but we entertain a strong hope and expectation that if you only give us a little plea for calling you a few names, we shall be able, out of pure love, to do you a good deal of mischief; for it is very probable that many of your flock will believe our assertions, in preference to the testimony of their own ears, and understandings, and experience." But then, there is no persecution in all this; "for it is only letting the people know the real doctrines of their ministers." There is a vulgar saying, "that circumstances alter cases;" and I do remember the time when Mr. Cooke and his partisans bawled out, "Persecution! persecution!" merely because the friends of the Belfast Institution, the Synod of Munster, and Mr. Armstrong, exposed his gross misstatements to the world; or in other words, "were honest enough to tell the truth." Yes, and I do further remember with what fervour and bitterness he once "prayed to be delivered from the tender mercies of the Arians," purely because the pastors of Geneva requested Cæsar Malan "to tell what he thought;" and then told him "he could not be continued in fellowship with their Church." But now it seems that nothing is persecution, save fines, or imprisonments, or death. Happily, in this sense we can have no persecution; but if a man be injured in his business, his character, or his profession, as far as his opponents have power to injure him by unjust clamour and misrepresentation, is there not in this the very essence of persecution? I think no man who does me all the injury he can, for not inflicting more. "He takes my life, who taketh that which doth support my life;" and the man who robs me of my fair fame, and, as far as in his power, deprives me of the means of supporting my family, solely because I differ from him on disputed dogmas of theology, and whilst I have committed no moral offence, may settle the matter as he can with God and his own conscience.

Having dwelt at such length upon the general grounds and principles taken up by Mr. Cooke and his adherents, as considering them in reality to be the great point at issue between the contending parties, and the only point worthy of public attention, I shall dismiss, as briefly as possible, the least agreeable part of my business—viz., his attack on my speech, and the misrepresentations and insinuations with which it is mingled. It is of no consequence to the public whether he or I be the

abler man, or which of us has the greater talent for wounding and humbling his antagonist. I readily yield him the palm in both; he is a practised combatant; his weapons never get time to rust; for, like some of Ossian's heroes, "he has fought in his thousand fields." But it is a matter of some moment, that a public cause should not be wounded through any unfair assault upon a private individual, who is more or less identified with it. For this reason, and this alone, I shall notice those portions of the "Reply" which more immediately relate to myself.

He commences his attack with a sarcasm, perhaps a merited one, calling me an "admirable tragedian," because I ventured at Strabane to compassionate the wife and children of an honest man, who, under the misrepresentations of priests, and the wild clamour of a deluded multitude, might be driven to desolation. This, no doubt, was a great weakness; but I am only a poor "heretic;" I have not yet acquired the enviable talent of sneering at human miseries; nor has the sublimity of my faith raised me altogether above the charities of nature. Nay, and what is worse, I am almost certain that I shall remain an impenitent offender in this matter. But is it from a Christian minister, a Christian husband, and a Christian father, I am to learn that the unmerited sufferings of an "honest man," the sorrows of a faithful wife, and the destitution of a helpless family, are merely subjects of merriment or contempt? With Mr. Cooke, indeed, I agree in one thing—"that no wife would be sorry to see the return of an honest man!" No, blessed be a gracious Providence! I am sure that in the midst of his virtuous struggles, she would strain him to her heart with a holier affection, and exhort him "to be of good cheer." In the bright day of prosperity, the description of the poet may sometimes be applicable to woman—"uncertain, coy, and hard to please"—but in the season of suffering and calamity, her unwearied fidelity and unshrinking fortitude put the boasted energy of lordly man to shame. The thorns which, during the last two years, Mr. Cooke has strewed over many a pillow, have been removed by the gentle hand of an upright and virtuous wife; and I can tell him, that at this moment, there is not in the Province a minister, whom his plans have placed in circumstances of jeopardy or trial, that is not cheered in the maintenance of his integrity by the partner of his affections. And such are the beings whose certain sorrows and probable destitution are but subjects of mockery to a minister of the Gospel!

Mr. Cooke is certainly a very ingenious man; for, either finding my real arguments too strong, or despising them as too weak, he fabricated

a sort of arguments of his own, which he called mine—just strong enough to make a show of resistance, and give a glory to conquest. At these “buckram men” of his own creation, “he passed and thrust” with all the skill and courage of a second Bobadil; and when he put one of them down, he looked round for applause, seeming to say—“Now, wasn’t that a gallant lunge! See, I have put one of Mr. Montgomery’s picked men *hors de combat!*” And sure enough, he was not disappointed: his junior troops almost cracked their voices with shouting, and nearly burst their sides with laughter. The veterans, indeed, looked somewhat glum, seemed to think it was but child’s play, and some of them left the house. His first attack in this way was upon the following position of mine:—“Religion is entirely a matter between man and his Creator, excepting so far as one human being may lawfully endeavour to influence another by friendly counsel and instruction.” Now this position may be either true or false; but, such as it is, he is welcome to another twelve months to frame an answer to it. He was pledged, however, to put me down: great things were expected; and as he did not find it convenient to answer the whole, he thought he would try a part; so to work he went upon the first clause of the sentence alone—“Religion is entirely a matter between man and his Creator.” Upon the very instant he was informed that he quoted falsely; and, in proof of this, he was afterwards referred to the report of my speech in “The Belfast News-Letter,” which he must have read previously: but it was all in vain. Right or wrong, down I must go; and he proceeded, with a great deal of very pretty verbiage, to which he has since considerably added, proving that “a minister really had a right to preach to his people, and a father to instruct his children!”—the very things, with others, for which I had amply provided in the clause of my position, which he thought it prudent to omit. There was, however, some apology for his acting a little oddly at the time. Just before he commenced his oration, he had been most *disinterestedly* employed for two hours in labouring to overturn the very Regulations which he had himself sanctioned for the management of the New Congregation in Belfast. But really, as my friend Mr. Stewart said, “his task was no sinecure.” He made one assertion; Mr. Henry of Connor said “no:” he made another; Mr. Glendy denied it: a third; Mr. Charles Thomson refuted it: a fourth; Mr. Wallace disproved it: a fifth; Mr. Hugh Montgomery upset it: a six or seventh; and Professor Thomson completely overwhelmed him with a whole mass of documents and proofs. So perfect was the discomfiture, that even the Rev. Ambidexter Poole, who

first told us that he was regenerated, and then held up both his hands to injure an old fellow-student by a false vote, slunk away from supporting him! Not being an "equivocator," as I am, he certainly deserves well of the Presbyterian people for the personal sacrifices which he made on the occasion, solely, as he repeatedly averred, in defence of their rights. I learn that he is likely to be rewarded; and no matter what may be the extent of the recompense, he certainly earned it dearly. That, under the foregoing circumstances, he should have persevered in misrepresenting me at the time, in order to regain a little ground, was not wonderful; but I do say, that subsequently and deliberately to publish his misstatement to the world, "without note or comment," is the act of no ordinary man.

He next alleges that I used these words—"I will be accountable to no man in matters of religion, as no man can be accountable for me." Now I did use, very nearly, the idea contained in this sentence, and I am willing to abide by it; but I may as well give my own words—"To *one* Master alone all are accountable; and as no man can stand in my place to answer for my principles before the tribunal of my Judge, I shall never regulate my views of Divine Truth by the opinions of fallible mortals." How does he answer this? Why, he says, "If by accountable you mean that no man can be made a substitute for you, so that he may perish and you be saved, I freely admit its correctness." Now this is precisely what I both meant and said. Well, then, is the matter settled? Not at all; he comes in with one of his convenient "ifs"—if by accountable I meant something which no man could for a moment suppose I meant, then he would answer me; and upon this mere creation of his own fancy, he commences a very excellent lecture upon ministerial faithfulness and responsibility, in every word of which I concur, and by which, I hope, both the writer and the reader, as well as their congregations, will be benefited. The awful responsibility of the pastoral office can never be too deeply or too forcibly impressed upon the minds of ministers; and I am truly sensible that I have not felt it as I ought. But, imperfect as my sense of duty may have been, it has still been adequate to prevent me from keeping back from my people any part of what I believed to be the truth; and perhaps it has also tended to make me speak more plainly on many subjects, than mere worldly prudence would recommend in present times.

He next treats us to a very pretty piece of writing about "the Great Square of Madrid, the Inquisition, a proud Castilian, and a poor Presbyterian minister." Having said nothing upon the subject myself, and

having heard nothing upon it before from Mr. Cooke, so far as I recollect, I confess I do not understand it. I think, however, from the breaks and points with which it is ornamented, that it must be full of wit, if I had any creed to tell me its "meaning." I wonder if the eloquent author, who seems almost covetous of martyrdom, would "glory" altogether so much "in telling his opinions" in the Great Square of Madrid, as he does in the Synod of Ulster. Spain would be a fine field for the labours of so intrepid a missionary; and it would be quite edifying to see him exchanging courtesies with every priest he met—"I think so; pray, what do you think?"

The author next attempts the justification of Mr. Barnett, in excluding from the Sacramental Table every man who does not come up to his standard of faith. I reiterate my charge, and say, that Mr. Barnett, unless indeed he be infallible, acts most unjustifiably in preventing any member of his congregation, solely on the ground of opinion, from coming to his Saviour in the most solemn ordinance of religion. Should it turn out at the Day of Judgment that his hearer was right, and that Mr. Barnett himself was wrong, I ask, how will he be able to answer to the Great Head of the Church for shutting out a man from ordinances on his own mere whim, and without any warrant from Scripture? "Oh, but he has such warrant," says Mr. Cooke, and refers to two texts in proof of it. Why did he not quote them? Just because they distinctly disprove the things which he alleges. Both texts relate exclusively to conduct. "If any man be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a drunkard, or a railer, or an extortioner: with such a one, no, not to eat." "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; but let a man examine himself," &c. Now, I do ask, is there one word about a man's belief in all this, or any power given to Mr. Barnett to examine him? No: the man is to "examine himself, and then to eat that bread and drink that cup." Having now turned his own Scripture weapons against him, I would next inquire, has he practised himself what he approves in Mr. Barnett? Has he not regularly admitted anti-Calvinists to the communion in his own meeting-house? Has he not had known and avowed Arians or anti-Calvinists as his ordinary clerical assistants? Has he not repeatedly, and at no very distant period of time, received the sacred symbols, not only from Arian, but also from impure hands? Let him answer in the negative, if he can: and, if he cannot, let him establish his consistency and veracity. I put the matter home to him—"yea or nay?" We shall see whether the great physician and healer of the Church has not him-

self been rioting in the very excesses of spiritual debauchery, which he so solemnly denounces as "destructive!"

In the course of my observations at Cookstown, I mentioned, in illustration of the unhappy consequences arising from our unhallowed disputes, that on my way to Synod, a brother minister, with whom I never had any personal difference, behaved towards me with a great want of ordinary courtesy and civility. This was the simple fact; and I did lament that the withering influence of religious partisanship should thus blight the charities of nature in the human breast, amidst one of the most beautiful scenes of the natural world. In reply to this, Mr. Cooke pours forth a torrent of frothy bombast, calculated to cast an air of ridicule over the very bounties of Providence; and then hints, pretty plainly, that the whole scene was conjured up by my own bad heart, and that I hated, simply because he was a Calvinist, a man who was as mild as the summer evening's breeze. That "the milk of human kindness" does not flow through my heart in the same full tide that swells the gentle bosom of Mr. Cooke, is very possible; but that I should dislike any man, purely on account of his being a Calvinist, is very strange. Why, many of my best and kindest friends in the Synod, and in the world, are Calvinists. It is no part either of my nature or my creed to think ill of any man, or to injure any man on account of his conscientious opinions. Calvinism I do consider to be an erroneous system, and the harsh and persecuting spirit of many of its professors has given it a bad name; though no creed is fairly chargeable with the misconduct of its supporters. But it seems I was guilty of "the master charge of absurdity," in saying that "the Calvinistic minister had cast a gloom over the festivities of nature;" and so I would, if I had uttered any such nonsense: but "the master charge" is entirely one of Mr. Cooke's own making—"a rhetorical artifice." No, sir, thanks be to Providence, all the Calvinists in the world, were they even so disposed, could not "cast a gloom over the festivities of nature." A few of them, who bring unmerited reproach upon the rest, may tease and injure their fellow-Christians, and disturb the peace of society for a time, but the great world of life and nature is beyond their influence. The sun will shine in glory, and the earth will smile in beauty, and myriads upon myriads of animated beings will continue to enjoy the unfading bounties of a benignant Providence, when they and their names and their proceedings shall have perished from the records of the world.

But all his tirade about Calvinism was only introduced to prepare the way for a tremendous assault upon the speech which I made at

Strabane. It is wonderful how rapidly people sometimes change their minds. At Strabane he overwhelmed me with compliments; my speech "was one of the most brilliant ever delivered in the Synod, or probably in any other assembly; and they were still under the influence of the wand of the powerful enchanter." Now all this was extremely obliging towards me, and gained for himself the praise of candour and magnanimity at the same time; but alas! when the public (influenced probably by his high recommendation) seemed to be rather of the same opinion, the scene was instantly changed—the "enchanter" became a "bitter reviler," and "the most brilliant speech" was only a bead-roll of false and abusive invectives. No man is more sensible than myself, that my humble exertions on that occasion were greatly overrated, and that they have since been rewarded by an enlightened and generous public, infinitely beyond their deserts. But at the same time, the irrepressible jealousy and mortification so frequently evinced by Mr. Cooke and one of his adherents at Synod, as well as by others of the same tribe, in poems, pamphlets and advertisements, amply prove that the splendid testimonial of public feeling and public opinion, lately connected with my name, has not been without effect. It has clearly established two things—that a large portion of the most respectable and influential laity of all denominations disapprove of the proceedings of the Synod of Ulster; and that honest men, conscientious in defending their Christian privileges, will not be trodden in the dust. That such things should have been gall and wormwood to Mr. Cooke, and that he should have endeavoured to depreciate the individual principally connected with the manifestation of them, is not at all surprising; but that his passion and chagrin should have so far overcome his tact and prudence, as to urge him to make assertions which thousands know to be without the shadow of foundation, is a singular proof of human infatuation. He quotes detached words and scraps of sentences from my speech at Strabane, and connects them by phrases of his own, which completely change their meaning, and then cries out, "See how he has abused the Calvinists!" Upon the same plan of quotation, I could make the Apostle Paul speak blasphemy, and convert the most solemn address to the Deity into the most horrible imprecations. But it is not wonderful that a man, whom I have already convicted of misquoting the words of Paul to Timothy and Titus, should, in a difficulty, make free with the words of an ordinary brother. I need not defend what I said at Strabane; the public have set their seal of approval upon it; its moderation has been almost universally admitted; and many Calvinists and others usually denominated Orthodox, would

scarcely have joined in rewarding its author, had he poured forth the abuse upon their own principles, with which he is unjustly charged. Take just one sentence as a fair example of his veracity and ingenuousness; he says I accused the Calvinists with "having falsehood and dissimulation for their bonds of union." Now what did I really say? Why, speaking of the invariable tendency of human creeds to produce hypocrisy, I merely said, "Woe be unto the Presbyterian Church, if ever that day shall come, in which falsehood and dissimulation shall be bonds of union, whilst truth and sincerity shall be cast out of her counsels!" And is there another Christian in the world, except my accuser, who would not re-echo the sentiment which I expressed? The truth is, had my speech been such as he misrepresents it, "it would not have haunted his visions by night, nor been as an adder in his path by day."

I need not waste a word upon the very clear and satisfactory paragraph which proves that my friends and myself really tyrannise over Mr. Cooke and his friends. Everybody must see that he has the better of me in this; for it is universally the case, no doubt, in human affairs, that the weak oppress the strong, and the minority outvote the majority! But I may venture a reply to a question which he here puts, and has put so often, that I am sure he thinks it "unanswerable." Wishing, however, to be a man of "politeness," I will do my utmost that it shall not remain "unanswered." He says—"You allege that the Bible is your creed—we ask you what Bible? The Arian Bible, the Socinian Bible, or the plain Old Light Bible?" My plain answer to this wonderful poser is—I never heard of these three Bibles before; I never knew that Arians, or Socinians, or even the Old Lights had written a Bible. I know but one Bible, which "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." This is my creed; and I am pleased to think that it enjoys the approbation even of Mr. Cooke; for, if I be not mistaken, it is the very creed which he and his brethren sent forth, "without note or comment," to instruct Protestants, to convert Catholics, to Christianise heathens, and to prepare souls for eternity. If it be adequate of itself, without any human explanation attached to it, to accomplish all these mighty purposes, who shall say that it is not sufficient for me? Come now, Mr. Cooke, you are "an honest man," no "equivocator," and very fond of asking questions; I should hope, therefore, you will not hesitate to answer one or two very plain ones. The Bible which you send to the heathen is either a sufficient or an insufficient rule of faith and practice. If it be sufficient, what

more is required? If it be insufficient, why do you send it without the necessary amendments? Answer me, now, according to your own requisition, "in plain, intelligible human language." I can tell you that the Bible by itself, when neither worldly interest nor prejudice is concerned, is extremely apt to make anti-Trinitarians. A very evangelical young lady told me, a few days ago, what I am sure was very true—"That she certainly never could have found the doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible, if it had not been pointed out to her." Look to it, sir, lest both Christians and heathens should, through your instrumentality, be led into "soul-destroying heresy." I fear, after all, you must admit that the Catholic hierarchy are right; and it is both shameful and inconsistent in your party to raise such an outcry against them. But I suppose, by all his knotty questions, Mr. Cooke only wished to know whether I believe his meaning of the Bible or that which the language of inspiration conveys to my own mind? Now, with all due deference, *his* meaning of the Bible is no more to me than his meaning of the Koran. If it accord with my views of the Word of God, I agree with it, but not because it is *his* meaning; if it differ from the express revelation of Scripture, I utterly renounce it as a mere "human invention," "an idol," "a phantom king," "another Gospel." If he wish to know more, I tell him—I believe all that any human being can believe, and all that I think I shall be responsible for believing—viz., that which, after the most diligent and prayerful inquiry, and under the most awful sense of accountability, my steadfast conviction leads me to consider as "the mind of the Spirit speaking in the Scriptures."

My argument with regard to the endless diversity of human capacities, attainments, characters, and circumstances, and the consequent absurdity of expecting an absolute uniformity of faith, remains without a scar, although both my powerful antagonists shattered their spears against it. They did all that men could do; but nature, and history, and fact, and experience are not easily overcome. To make a recovery, however, from this failure, Mr. Cooke got up a very pretty little flourish about the rights of the people. But it soon appeared that he only meant the rights of the Calvinists; for as to any congregation that refuses to be fed by a shepherd of his choice, it may either want altogether, or go to the Presbytery of Antrim or Synod of Munster. In this, as in many other things, he only echoed Mr. Stewart. Now let me ask these gentlemen what they would do were neither of those two bodies in existence? Would they then ordain a minister of the people's own choice? Not at all; and in such case, where would be

the bounty and the Widows' Fund? Both would be lost. Let them not, therefore, attempt to back out of a bad argument, and to shuffle off the just odium of a tyrannical proceeding by taking the benefit of a contingency whose existence is no merit of theirs, and but for which every congregation would exercise the right of election under the penalty of a heavy pecuniary fine, and many other grievous privations. Talk of the rights of the people, indeed! Their rights are to be the slaves and tools of the clergy. There is, besides, in another point of view, something exceedingly disingenuous in speaking of congregations joining the Presbytery of Antrim or Synod of Munster. Mr. Cooke is a man of uncommon foresight. Everybody wondered why he turned so suddenly round upon two bodies, with whose members he had long associated, not only in the sacred socialities of private friendship, but likewise in their ecclesiastical proceedings. Their religious opinions were always known; their conduct to him was unchanged; and there is scarcely a man in either of the two bodies whose literary attainments, ministerial fidelity, and moral worth would not, if divided amongst them, adorn "a wilderness" of Mr. Cooke's immediate adherents. Then why did he turn upon them without warning and without offence? The why is "plain as way to parish church:" he wished so to bespatter and abuse them, to hold them up as maintaining such anti-Christian doctrines, that congregations belonging to the Synod of Ulster would rather submit to any annoyance than connect themselves with such horrible bodies! This ingenious device has certainly succeeded to a considerable extent; but I rejoice to say that the Presbyterian people are beginning to think that men who most faithfully discharge all the duties of their private and public stations, may not be "so very far from the kingdom of heaven."

I said at Cookstown, and I repeat the assertion, "that the spirit of the times has turned in many places, and especially amongst young ministers, the preaching of the gospel from its legitimate object, the establishment of a holy life upon a sound belief, to the controversies of words 'which minister strife rather than godly edifying.'" I do still maintain that, whilst the foundation of Gospel preaching should ever be "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," the end of it ought to be the enlightening of the minds, the purifying of the hearts, and the reformation of the lives of men, in order to prepare them for heaven. It is melancholy to hear ministers of the Gospel decry the preaching of morality, as if men were not wicked enough without such encouragement. I ask, did our blessed Saviour upon the mount, in that heavenly discourse which ought to be the model of all human efforts,

preach any one of the Synod of Ulster's four cardinal points of faith? Was it not eminently and exclusively a moral sermon? When Paul reasoned before Felix, did he preach the dogmas of Calvinism? No, "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Yet Mr. Cooke ventures to write these words—"A moral sermon is only a more polished mode of preaching the mere principles of condemnation. I delight to hear a young minister's sermon rise above the grovelling puerilities of a mere essay on ethics!" And did the Redeemer of the world then "preach the mere principles of condemnation"? And were the "ethics" of St. Paul nothing but "grovelling puerilities"? If anything could exceed the force with which Mr. Cooke places his argument before us to show the fatal tendency of preaching good works, and the dreadful guilt of error, it is the following faithful extract from a very popular and much admired Calvinistic publication:—"The loathsome prostitute, rotting in some cell in Dublin, or polluting a ward in an hospital, is, as to guilt, an angel of heaven compared to the learned, the ingenious, the virtuous Dr. Drummond. I solemnly declare I would rather meet God as Thurtell the murderer than as Dr. Priestley, the renowned and amiable champion of Socinianism." The hand trembles whilst it writes; and yet what must be the condition of a country, and the state of religious feelings, when any man has the hardihood to publish, and multitudes have the spirit to applaud such sentiments! And is this really the condition of Dr. Drummond—the amiable, the excellent, the powerful, the intrepid, the eloquent advocate of the rights of conscience and the privileges of man? I do not assent to all his religious opinions; but I heartily honour the zeal and intrepidity with which, in no ordinary times, and under no ordinary discouragements, he has come forward to vindicate the immutable principles of Christian liberty. Such is my esteem for his character, and my conviction of his sincerity, that although he has been rudely assailed by the peer and the prelate and the polemic, "I solemnly declare" I would rather "cast in my lot" with him than with his slanderer.

My proposition of a joint publication has sadly posed those gentlemen who are so eager that everybody should know his neighbour's real and genuine opinions; and I can tell them that before all is over it will puzzle them more; for in spite of all their swagger and airs of infallibility, the people are beginning to suspect that "there is something rotten in the state of Denmark," when they dread a fair, dispassionate, and serious comparison of their views with those of their opponents. Even Mr. Stewart could not get out of the difficulty: he

floundered sadly. His "potato" was not good: "farina" sounded well, and so did "deleterious;" but although the people held themselves bound to laugh at a pretty joke, entirely intended for their entertainment, it was clear they did not believe there was anything "deleterious" in their favourite root. His "poison you my people, and I'll poison yours" did not succeed much better; for the people saw plainly that when the poison and antidote were both to be swallowed together, the antidote, if it were really stronger, must render the poison harmless. Well, then, after four days' cogitation, out came Mr. Cooke's famous simile of "Arian fir and Calvinistic oak;" and we did laugh, and think it very fine. But, unfortunately, it did not apply to the case in any degree; for Mr. Montgomery never proposed to build a house in conjunction with Mr. Cooke; he proposed that each should build as good a house as he could out of his own materials; that people should see the progress of the buildings, and, when they were finished, take up their abode in that which they preferred. This was a very simple proposal, but it did not please; it was deemed safer to build at a distance; to raise a prejudice against "Arian fir," though new and strong; and to boast of "Calvinistic oak," even though it might be crazy and rotten. A very singular circumstance in this case, and in that of Mr. Blakely's challenge to Mr. Dill, is this—that the gentlemen who now entertained such a horror of "poison," and of "other gospels," had not the least objection to introduce amongst their people, in the same pamphlet, the poison and other gospels of the Roman Catholics. In this, however, I suspect they were judicious; for "New Light" poison may be more dangerous than the old virus of the Church of Rome. To keep up an ignorant clamour against opinions (which, if fairly stated and rightly understood, would appear at once rational and Scriptural), by incessant and excessive misrepresentations through the agency of pulpits, pamphlets, public spouting matches, and private whisperings, is a much easier, and possibly a much more honourable task, than to meet them in open argument face to face before the world. The people, indeed, may think it somewhat strange, that those who used to taunt others with being afraid to avow their opinions are now not over-anxious to explain their own, except when they do it all their own way! In this connexion, however, Mr. Cooke gives us a very pleasant piece of news, which I am sure will be exceedingly welcome both at Killileagh and other places—viz., "that he intends to retire to some sheltered valley, and to feed the flock committed to his care." I do earnestly hope that he will faithfully adhere to this determination.

I come now to the most painful part of this unpleasant review, and I shall dismiss it with all possible brevity. He says, "Mr. Montgomery has written, and his friends have published to the world, that Mr. Cooke said at Strabane, 'that he was only to love those of his own creed, and view those who differed from him as he would regard robbers.' Since misrepresentations were first made, the instance before us was never surpassed." And then he goes on to speak of a number of things which he did say at Strabane, and denies that he used the word "robbers," or uttered any such sentiment. Let it be observed, Mr. Cooke has written deliberately, and published under the name "authentic," that he did, at Cookstown, before the Synod, charge me with "unsurpassed misrepresentation!" And, as no farther notice is taken of it, the world is left to conclude that I lay down silently under the accusation. Now what will the public say, when I solemnly assure them that the whole of this portion of his "authentic report" is a mere *afterthought, a perfect fabrication*; that at Cookstown he neither used the words which he states, nor in the most distant manner even hinted at any idea conveying such a charge! Does any man suppose for a moment that, if he had done so, I would have allowed him to proceed with a single sentence until I had repelled his accusation? He made no such charge; and, if he had, it would have been utterly groundless. I recollect perfectly myself, and I have had my recollection confirmed by that of others, that at Strabane, after a great deal of verbiage about "the Spirit's testimony," he divided love into two kinds—"a love of complacency, and a general love of man, as man." The former he said he could only entertain towards persons of his own religious opinions; and the latter, to those who differed from him, even as he could do to a robber. I took down the word at the time, and it still remains in my pencil notes; but the thrill which it sent through my heart when it was uttered, rendered all other record unnecessary. I comment not upon this affair.

His "authentic report" is judiciously mixed up with a great many political allusions, a few of which we had at Cookstown. They will no doubt tell in the proper quarters, for when a man has succeeded in any line of policy, he is right to continue in the same course. The most odious feature of the present times is, the connecting of high religious professions with the most deadly political animosity—as if love to God were best evinced by unkindness towards man. Mr. Cooke's declaration, "that Orthodox Presbyterians were opposed to Catholic Emancipation," did more to bring about this condition of affairs amongst the lower class of the Presbyterian population, than all other causes put

together. It operated like electricity on the multitude, who conceived that their reputation for soundness in the faith was involved in their dislike of their Catholic brethren. It is not wonderful, therefore, that all his ordinary writings, and, if rumour speak truly, several of his more serious compositions, abound with such things as "glorious Constitution, British valour, land-fights and sea-fights, dying soldiers and sailors," and many other pretty things of a similar nature. At the last Synod he manifested a considerable vacillation for some time in his political creed. He first said "that he had a spice of the Tory in him," and then that he was a Puritan : at one time "he was a determined friend to the civil Constitution ;" but when the Address to the Lord Lieutenant expressed "a veneration" for it, he said he had no such thing, for there were several parts of it which he did not approve. I almost feared that he would turn Radical or Jacobin ; but at last the full tide of loyalty returned, and he did so belabour some poor men whom he called "political blacksmiths and joiners and varnishers !" Some persons thought that this was a sly hit at his Synodical opponents, on whom he desired to draw down the suspicion of Government, by representing them as persons "who wished the total dissolution of the Constitution !" He is not a random striker ; let him tell us, then, who those traitors are that entertain such rebellious projects. If his insinuations had no meaning, they were a piece of misplaced rant and trash ; if they applied to his opponents, he knows that they were as baseless as they were vile. With the exception of Catholic Emancipation, to which we are zealously attached, on the ground of political right and religious liberty and love of country, we defy any man to say that we have ever interfered upon any political question. There are "political mountebanks" in the Synod, but not amongst us ; for our loyalty is as unimpeachable as it is patriotic and disinterested. I confess I have heard many whisperings during the last year which have terrified some timid ministers and congregations, that we were to be marked out to Government as unworthy of public aid ; and the writings of Mr. O'Driscoll and Dean Blakely prove that such benevolent projects have been entertained in some quarters. I do hope, for the credit of human nature, that they never were entertained by any member of Synod. "This would be the unkindest cut of all." What ! not satisfied with unmerited public clamour and social persecution, are we to be marked out as enemies to the State ? It cannot be—it cannot be ! But if it were, there never can be a Government in Protestant Britain that would be base enough to act upon the suggestion. And if there should, the poorest of us, with the consolation of honest hearts

and the sympathy of generous minds, would still be able to reach the end of our weary pilgrimage.

To several other points in Mr. Cooke's speech, as well as in that of Mr. Stewart, I intended to advert ; but want of time and space prevents me. If I have in some places been severe, let it be remembered that we have never been the aggressors—that we have been grossly misrepresented—denied the Christian name, and denounced as “ the enemies of souls !” Repeated and powerful assaults I still expect ; but I shall never shrink from a conflict, however unequal, when I believe that I have a good cause, and am sure that I have a good conscience.

August 14th, 1828.

APPENDIX E.

SPEECH OF THE REV. H. MONTGOMERY, M.A., AT THE MEETING OF THE
GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER AT LURGAN, JULY 3, 1829.*

MODERATOR, I stand before you in a much more interested—
AA I shall not say interesting—situation than most of the gentlemen
who have already addressed you. I appear before you in a threefold
capacity—as a minister of this body, as a member of Committee for
examining the testimonials of candidates for the Moral Chair, and also
as a Proprietor of the Institution. If to these be added the official
situation which I hold as a resident in the Institution, and the
influence of that situation upon my prospects as the father of a large
family, it will not appear strange that I should entertain strong feelings
when any attempt is made to injure a place with which I am so
intimately connected. You will, therefore, pardon me if I take the
liberty of following the wandering observations of the gentlemen who
spoke yesterday, and of giving free expression to the sentiments of my
heart. I defy my opponents to show that, in any one instance, I, or
those who are in the habit of acting along with me in this house, have
been the aggressors; but I hold that it is not inconsistent with my
sacred office to give expression to an honest indignation, and that it is
no way unworthy of a member of the church to attempt to throw back
the false and foul aspersions which were yesterday heaped upon the
Institution. I believe, on the contrary, that I would be guilty of a
positive dereliction of duty, were I not, in common with the feeblest
reptile that creeps on the face of the earth, to act in conformity with
the laws of self-preservation, and show that I participate in that spirit
which pervades not only human nature, but even the lower orders of
creation.

It was stated by the gentleman who brought forward the resolutions,
that he would have been very anxious to hear Dr. Wright's arguments
for the original motion, though he thought it not likely that they
would have converted him. I have little doubt that the doctor would
have found it extremely difficult to make a convert of the gentleman,
for, if I am not very wrong informed, the condemnation of that

* See Chap. xvii., pp. 304-310.

Committee had been determined upon twenty-four hours previously. Now, such a manner of prejudging questions affecting the characters of individuals may perhaps be very fair in the estimation of certain extraordinary men; but I will tell you how men of common understandings would have felt themselves bound to act. Instead of coming hastily to a conclusion, before they had examined evidence upon which to rest that conclusion, they would have given notice of their intention to investigate into the merits of the case; they would have waited until all the circumstances and all the testimony had been brought clearly before them, and then they would have endeavoured to form an impartial opinion. This would have appeared to be the natural and the honest course; but I was told, on good authority, and I can produce that authority, that the condemnation of your Committee had been determined upon before "one jot or one tittle" of evidence had been submitted.

But we are informed by the gentleman, that it is with the utmost reluctance and pain and diffidence he comes forward with a measure that may imply a censure upon the conduct of any individual. What an amiable gentleman this is! Witness his extreme candour in the manner in which he has prepared his resolutions. Witness his entire want of all pertinacity, when he urged upon the respectable deputation from the Institution that the whole of the resolution of the Synod had not been recognised as long as a syllable of it was omitted; when he defied any grammarian to say, upon the common laws of language, that "the resolution" did not mean every word of it; and that, although he was told the spirit of it had been fully adopted, this could not satisfy him, because some of the words had been left out. His reluctance, too, was extreme, and his fear of injuring the feelings of others indescribable, when he made the most tremendous attack upon Dr. Thomson and the electors of the Institution that was ever made on any men. And he smiled, too, so benignantly when he was addressing this house; and I have been told that his smile was most majestic; and I can have no doubt of it. You have heard of the vampire sucking the life-blood of its sleeping victim, and flapping its wings over him, that his sleep may be prolonged till the work of death is completed. Mr. Cooke smiled, and the house seemed to hang upon the majestic smile; but the laugh was only the forerunner of the plunge of the dagger. I have been guilty of the crime of going to the theatre, and on one occasion I had an opportunity of witnessing the performance of John Kemble. I saw him in the character of *Zanga*, in "The Revenge," when the dupe of his

machinations lay stretched before him, and he stood upon his fallen victim, and smiled at his prostrate enemy. Such was the smile of the gentleman, when he thought he had triumphed over the Institution, and beheld it levelled to the dust.

But who are these Managers of the Institution who have been assailed with such violence ; who have been represented as little better than a pack of unprincipled scoundrels ; who are prepared to abuse the deputed right of election, by allowing themselves to be influenced by private interest and religious prejudices, in opposition to the principles of the charter of the Institution, and their own solemn obligations ? They are gentlemen of the very first respectability, of the highest moral and literary attainments ; merchants, whose characters stand high before the public ; some of them arrived at the age of seventy, and whose names have never been sullied by a single disreputable action, until this foul stain has been attempted to be affixed to them. I shall not ask who is the man that becomes their accuser ? I shall not venture upon any comparison. He is an Orthodox minister.

We have been told that, *ceteris paribus*, the electors will always prefer an Arian Professor. This assertion rests not on the matter of fact, but is merely the vain imagination of the individual, for I shall call it by no other name. It has been contradicted in the most direct manner by Dr. Thomson ; and it has been shown that a Calvinist would be preferred, because he would be calculated to give more general satisfaction. But we have been reminded, for the tenth or twentieth time, of the election of Mr. Bruce ; and it has been asserted that the superior scholar was rejected, and the inferior chosen, merely because he was an Arian. Of Mr. Bryce's literary qualifications I entertain a very high opinion, and I never think of him but with respect. I am sorry that any comparison has been instituted between the two gentlemen, because I know it must be invidious ; but let it be recollected that the comparison has been forced upon me. I assert, then, that the alleged superiority is not founded in fact. Such a thing never was conceded, and it never can be conceded. The highest literary and classical authority that was present, when there was an opportunity of making a comparison, was decidedly in favour of Mr. Bruce's superiority as a scholar ; and I can appeal to a Professor now present, whether there was not a division of opinion on the subject amongst the Faculty. I do not myself pretend to be eminently qualified to judge on the subject ; but I am at least able to form an opinion ; and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that Mr. Bruce is the superior scholar. He may not have attempted to make so great a display of his informa-

tion; but I say that, as to critical knowledge and powers of discrimination, there is not, in my mind, any ground of comparison. Let it be understood, also, that Mr. Bruce passed the most difficult examination, with the exception of that for a Fellowship, which is undergone in any college, when he succeeded in obtaining a Scholarship in the University of Dublin. Why, then, will any one venture to depreciate the literary acquirements of that gentleman, and repeat to us for the tenth time the same unfounded assertions? Equally unfounded is the assertion that he was put in by the Arians; he was put in by the Orthodox. It may appear strange to those who are not aware of the fact, and it is a subject which I choose to touch with delicacy, but I pledge myself to convince any one who will take the trouble of calling on me in private, that Mr. Bruce was put into the Institution by the highest theological influence in the Synod. Let it never, then, go abroad to the world that he was appointed because he was an Arian, though he was elected in preference to Mr. Cooke's favourite candidate.

Hinc illae lacrymae!

Mr. Ferrie also, it seems, was elected merely because he was an Arian. Is there a shadow of evidence to prove this? Is there an item of proof to show that the Boards of Managers and Visitors had the slightest cognisance of his religious opinions beyond the testimonials of which your own Committee approved? Had they not your own sanction for everything they did? Your Committee had declared Mr. Ferrie eligible, and placed him immediately after a distinguished member of your own body. It was natural for them to conceive the candidate who stood next on the list was acknowledged to be superior, though courtesy would make the Committee put a member of the Synod at the head. I do not say that this was a proper, but it was a very natural deduction. Under these circumstances, were they not bound to elect the man whom they believed to be the best qualified for the situation? But, supposing that the wish of the Synod had been more decidedly expressed, still you would have no just reason to complain. The Institution was not founded by the Synod; it was built by the contributions of all sects; and if there be a sect who contributed less to it than any other, it is the Orthodox Presbyterians of Ulster. The fundamental principle of the Institution is the election of Professors by a regard to their moral worth and literary attainments, without regard to peculiar religious opinions. You knew of this principle when you formed your connexion with the Institution. With both you and the public the Managers and Visitors have kept their faith. You may break your faith with them; but you may rest satis-

fied they will not break through a fundamental regulation, which has been recognised by the Government, and recommended by the Commissioners of Education Inquiry. They will not surrender to a sect what was meant for all.

We have been told, however, that the exercise of this privilege was corrupt, and that the Managers and Visitors elected the inferior man on inferior testimonials. Ninety-nine out of a hundred in Presbyterian Ulster, it is said, would have given their suffrage to Mr. Carlile. This assertion would be worth some sort of attention, had Presbyterian Ulster seen the testimonials of the candidates; but as it is, without meaning any disrespect, I would say you might as well propose to poll the Caffres or the Hottentots. I am aware how invidious comparisons are; but the comparison has first been instituted, and is forced upon us by Mr. Cooke and by Mr. Carlile himself. Mr. Carlile has come forward with a chivalrous daring that would do honour to the days of Christian martyrdom. In coming forward to arraign the electors, he shows a hardihood which I admire, though I cannot imitate. He casts all personal feeling overboard. He stands upon the deck, regardless of the conflicting elements of public opinion, and anxious only for the safety of the Church. Mr. Cooke tells us that Mr. Ferrie has scarcely any other testimonial than "a round robin" from the College of Glasgow. I shall say nothing of the delicacy of this phrase applied to the Principal and eleven of the most distinguished Professors of Glasgow University. They have been alluded to in a manner which makes want of courtesy a minor matter of complaint. Signing their names in "a round robin," as if they were doing some act of infamy, is not the greatest charge against them. Five of these are ministers of the Established Church of Scotland; sixteen other ministers, including the late Dr. Taylor, of whom Mr. Cooke spoke so becomingly, together with Dr. Rankin, and others, have signed Mr. Ferrie's testimonials. And yet "not one Orthodox man has signed Mr. Ferrie's testimonials!" This may be so; but I will give you evidence that they are Orthodox; and though I cannot produce two witnesses, here is one that has been useful to me on many occasions. In the speech which Mr. Cooke delivered last year in the Synod, and which has been published by authority, we have the following words:—

"The Church of Scotland has also been adduced as an example of the inutility of public confessions. We were told last year, by a member of this House who may be presumed to be well acquainted with the state of the Scottish Church, that it is infected with the disease of Arianism, or even Socinianism, to no inconsiderable amount;

and is as much diversified in religious sentiment as we ourselves can possibly be. I cannot presume to speak of the Church of Scotland as matter of personal knowledge. Yet I know most of the ministers of Edinburgh, either personally or by religious character; I have a similar acquaintance with many of the ministers of Glasgow and its neighbourhood; and so far as my acquaintance extends, and it is not inconsiderable, I feel enabled to enter against the statement alluded to my decided protest. I have no doubt the individual who made it did honestly believe it; yet I am bound, on the knowledge I have of the Church of Scotland, to say I do not believe it."

It had been hinted by me that heresy prevailed to a considerable extent in the Church of Scotland, hedged in as she is by creeds and confessions. You see with what Orthodox zeal Mr. Cooke here denies my assertion. But now, when a different purpose is to be served, he insinuates the heterodoxy of the Glasgow professors who signed Mr. Carlile's testimonials, by showing that there is not one of the whole phalanx of Orthodoxy among them. He is not content with insinuations; he broadly *asserts* that no Orthodox individuals certified for Mr. Ferrie. Against this assertion I will give you another testimony, if possible still more convincing. In the evidence given by Mr. Cooke before the Commissioners of Education, we have the following:—

"Do you conceive there are at present any preachers in Glasgow who avow and inculcate Arian principles?—I never knew of any.

"Never; at any time?—No.

"Do you believe there is at present any preacher at Glasgow, who, by his silence upon certain points of Christianity, would leave you as little dubious as by the direct inculcation of his opinions, that he maintained Arian principles?—I have reason to suspect there is one such in Glasgow, but I should not say whether Arian or Socinian; I am rather inclined to suspect Socinian; but as to any overt act or declaration, I never knew any on the part of any preacher now in Glasgow. There was a Socinian preacher there some years ago, but I think he has removed from it. I consider Glasgow unpropitious for the growth of either Arianism or Socinianism.

"Are we to understand there is no avowed Arian minister in Glasgow?—Not that I know of, or, with the exception mentioned, ever heard of; if there be any, their character must be very obscure.

"Is there any considerable number of avowed Arians in Glasgow!—There may be some; but I do not know anything of them. I never heard Arians mentioned as a prominent or even existing party. I

knew of some Socinians who at one time had a preacher there ; I believe they have no preacher now."

Here we have it sworn by Mr. Cooke on the Holy Evangelists, not only that there are no preachers in Glasgow who inculcate Arian principles, but that there are none who, by their silence, would give suspicion of their Orthodoxy. I give you no private testimony—no hearsay whisperings. If he has sworn the truth, he has no right to cast even the shadow of a doubt upon the Orthodoxy of the ministers who have certified for Mr. Ferrie. I will give you a little more. [Mr. Montgomery read some other extracts to the same effect.] It may easily be seen how well this testimony answered the purpose at the time it was given. The object, then, was to show how much safer the students would be in Glasgow than in Belfast. The professors and preachers, nay, the very air of the place, was favourable to Orthodoxy ; but now they are all a knot of heterodox round-robiners. This looks like a man who can blow hot and cold out of the same mouth ; though I cannot, with decorum, lay any such charge against a clergyman.

Mr. Carlile also has his testimonials. He has published them—not before the election, but after it was over—not for the information of the electors, but to show to the world what a treasure had been lost to the Institution. But among these there is not the name of a single individual who taught him, or helped him to an idea. He has not even a "round robin" from Glasgow College. He has not a particle of testimony to his Orthodoxy from Dr. Magill or Dr. Chalmers, or any of the others, for the want of which Mr. Ferrie is charged with being heterodox. According to Mr. Cooke's opinion, here is a want greater than all the abundance ; and were I inclined to draw inferences from silence, I would say it strengthens an opinion which I have formed from Mr. Carlile's writings, that he is no more a believer in the Trinity than I am. The signatures to Mr. Carlile's testimonials are twenty-three in all, including a "round robin" of respectable members of the Synod of Ulster. It was very important, no doubt, to put the name of the Archbishop of Dublin first. But what is the testimony of his Grace respecting Mr. Carlile's qualifications ? Why, just that he knows nothing of Mr. Carlile personally. He merely states what he has heard of him. He gives a testimonial to his literary character, couched in such terms as I would scarcely use were I giving a certificate of character to a servant with whom I had parted on bad terms. [Cries of "Read, read !" Mr. M. here read the testimonial of his Grace.] There is another from the Archbishop of Tuam, equally vague and indefinite. I need not read the one from Dr. Sadlier. I do not speak thus of Mr.

Carlile's testimonials to depreciate his literary character, which stands deservedly high in public estimation; I do not say that he is not qualified to fill the Moral Philosophy Chair. I speak thus because it has been asserted that the electors chose the inferior candidate, in defiance of the most convincing testimony of the superior qualifications of the man they rejected. If the comparison be invidious, we have, as I have said, been compelled to make it that we may defend our integrity; and I feel no hesitation in saying, that with my views of the comparative merits of the two candidates, I would have been ashamed had I given my vote otherwise than I did give it. It has been again and again stated, that Mr. Carlile was rejected because he was the candidate supported by the Synod. I firmly believe that he was rejected on no such grounds. His being an Orthodox member of the Synod did not injure him. He may have been injured by Dublin gossip. The electors may have heard something with regard to his temper, which might lower their estimation of his fitness to be a Professor of Moral Philosophy; or some of them may have received an impression, from personal observation, not favourable to his assiduity. Mr. Carlile, on one occasion, preached a charity sermon in Belfast for the Fever Hospital. Some individuals thought he did not do justice to the subject. It was evident, they said, that he came unprepared; and they afterwards said they feared that a man who would come unprepared after a special request being made to him to preach for a public charity, might prove a negligent and indolent Professor. These surmises were made by some, and they may have influenced the opinion of the individuals who entertained them; but the existence of them afforded no ground for impugning the integrity of the electors, or impeaching the purity of their motives.

Mr. Cooke has stated that a gentleman in the house had said one of the electors told him he voted against Mr. Carlile merely to give a blow in the teeth to the Synod. I now call upon Mr. Cooke to bring that gentleman forward, and let him name the individual who used the expression.

Mr. Bellis here said that the gentleman who made the statement was Mr. James Barnett, his elder; but that he had been obliged to return to Belfast the evening before.

Mr. Montgomery—I will not deny that there may have been feelings of irritation with some, on account of former supposed ill-treatment received at the hands of the Synod, which have not yet altogether passed away. There may be wounds which are not yet cicatrized. It might be wrong that such feelings should still exist,

and I can easily conceive it possible that they would not be without their influence. But if this be true on the one hand, it is so not less on the other, that many individuals voted for Mr. Carlile because he was recommended by the Synod of Ulster. I know one who told me that it cost him two sleepless nights, as he wavered between his desire to vote for Mr. Carlile, for the sake of personal friendship, and a conviction that he was bound to vote for Mr. Ferrie, whom, in his conscience, he believed to be the superior candidate.

The electors are not solitary in the castigation they have received. By way of variety, the Committee have been made to suffer collectively and individually. Mr. Cooke made a tremendous attack on Mr. Wauchope, because he believed Mr. Ferrie to be Orthodox from his having subscribed the Westminster Confession of Faith; and we heard a great deal about Judas Iscariot, and were favoured with the candid and fair and charitable insinuations which these words can convey. I had hinted, it seems, that Mr. Ferrie might be an Arminian. The Committee are forthwith involved in a dilemma. If Mr. Ferrie was an Arminian, and had signed the Westminster Confession, he must be a rogue, as no one but a Calvinist could sign such a creed; and no Arminian could be considered in that light. So says Mr. Cooke now; but I call forward my witnesses again. In his evidence before the Commissioners, page 147, we have the following:—

“In point of fact, would the condition of the subscription to the Confession of Westminster have the effect of excluding Arians altogether from the ministry?—Yes, it must.

“No person could subscribe that Confession and be an Arian?—No, he could not; it is impossible he could be anything but a Calvinist; it is beyond all question the most strict of all confessions that have been written.”

Observe here, it is not merely said that no Arian could sign the Westminster Confession, but that no man but a Calvinist could sign it. “It is impossible he could be anything but a Calvinist.” And yet Mr. Wauchope is to be sneered at, because he relied on the man who had subscribed to this confession, and whose soundness in the faith was certified by men who had signed this confession. Mr. Ferrie may since have changed his views, and yet not deserve the cognomen of Judas Iscariot; but how was Mr. Wauchope to know this? The Principal and Professors of Glasgow College, and the ministers of the Established Church of Scotland, who signed Mr. Ferrie's testimonials, may be all heterodox, as Mr. Cooke has not only insinuated, but also roundly asserted. But how was Mr. Wauchope

or the Committee in blame for believing the evidence brought before them? But then I hinted Mr. Ferrie might be an Arminian, and this should have excited in the minds of the Committee a suspicion of his Orthodoxy. But what says the witness? In the Appendix to the Fourth Report of the Commissioners is the test which Mr. Cooke deemed expedient should be signed by the different Professors of the Belfast Academical Institution. It consists of ten articles; five more in number than the five points of Calvinism. Mark the following questions, and the answers given by Mr. Cooke:—

“But still you think an Arminian Presbyterian and a Calvinist Presbyterian could sign it?—So I conceive; Calvinism, fairly understood and correctly explained, I take to be the doctrine of the Bible; but Arminianism, as generally taught in modern times, seems to me to concede every point essential to Calvinism. I have, on another occasion, stated to this Board, that I considered there was a marked distinction between the primitive Arminians, called Remonstrants in Holland, and those who in modern times are called Arminians in these countries. The primitive Arminians taught a great deal of Pelagianism; the modern Arminians generally teach as much Calvinism. The doctrine of original sin, of the necessary priority of Divine grace in conversion, and of justification by faith alone, appear to me to concede Calvinism, by consequence, in all its essentials.”

Now if modern Arminianism “concedes every point essential to Calvinism,” why should my hinting that Mr. Ferrie might be an Arminian be a proof of his heterodoxy? Even if I had directly said—nay, shown proof that he was an Arminian, why should the Committee be blamed for holding opinions to be Orthodox which, Mr. Cooke says, “concede Calvinism, by consequence, in all its essentials”? It answered Mr. Cooke’s purpose to assert, in 1825, that signing the Westminster Confession would exclude from the ministry every man but the Calvinist. It now serves his purpose to insinuate, what I do not controvert, that men may change their opinions—that subscription does not preserve the purity of the Church of Scotland; and to talk about Judas Iscariot, and to lead us to believe that the Committee should be censured for supposing it possible an Arminian could be Orthodox—the very thing that is sworn to be quite practicable in the evidence which I have read.

Mr. Cooke has pressed forward another statement, intended to involve me in a contradiction. Those who have often rolled in the mire cannot bear to see their neighbours with unsoiled coats. It has been stated by a respectable elder, that I said in the Committee,

speaking of Mr. Ferrie, "I believe he is not what I would call Orthodox, nor what you would call Orthodox." The former part of this sentence I did say, the latter part I did not. In fact, to have done so would have defeated the object which I am represented as having in view. If I wished to impress the Committee with the idea that Mr. Ferrie was Orthodox, it would be a strange oversight to add the latter clause of this sentence. But Mr. Cooke has pressed forward this statement for no other object that I can perceive, than because I denied it. He has said he would prove it from the mouths of two witnesses. I now call upon him to produce them.

Captain Rowan here rose, and said he was firmly convinced that Mr. Montgomery had used the expression, and he thought Mr. Dobbin was of the same opinion.

Mr. Dobbin said he could not charge his recollection with what had been said, and could not take on him to say whether Mr. Montgomery did or did not use the words, "nor what you would call Orthodox."

Mr. Wauchope was convinced Mr. Montgomery used the words, "he is not what I would call Orthodox;" he believed Mr. M. added, "he may be an Arminian;" but he did not think the other words were used.

Mr. Stuart of Downpatrick thought the words must have been used. He was not present himself; but he met his friend, Captain Rowan, a few hours afterwards, and he told him that Mr. Montgomery had so expressed himself.

Mr. Dobbin then said he could not speak positively, but it was his belief that Mr. Montgomery had used the words in dispute.

Mr. Montgomery—I think Mr. Dobbin has improved in his testimony.

Mr. Dobbin complained of this as an impeachment of his veracity, which he indignantly repelled.

Mr. Montgomery—I have no intention of impeaching Mr. Dobbin's veracity; and if I have given him offence, or hurt his feelings, I am sorry for it, and ask his pardon. I merely wish to repel a needless attack on my own veracity. I do not say Captain Rowan is not speaking from his conviction. I do not say that it is not possible I may have said what he has stated; but it is not probable. My object was to obtain from the Committee a testimonial for Mr. Ferrie. The first part of the sentence might have served this object, but it would have been madness to have used the latter.

I now come to that part of Mr. Cooke's speech in which he says the

silence of Mr. Ferrie's testimonials respecting his Orthodoxy should have alarmed and raised the doubts of the Committee. We heard this silence compared to a voice from the grave, which should have spoken trumpet-tongued in our ears. In one respect, I grant, it may now give us a warning. It shows us the fearful interpretation which can be put upon silence, and the opportunity it affords for throwing the vilest imputations on the character of an absent man. The character of an absent man has been treated in a manner unparalleled in the history of any court. The direct attack, the invidious insinuation, the bitter gibe, and the atrocious calumny, have all been employed to effect his ruin. But what silence is there in Mr. Ferrie's testimonials that was not in those of all who had been previously elected? There was the same silence in the testimonials of Dr. Young. In fact, it is only of late years that peculiar views of theology have been considered as the best passports to literary eminence, and all worldly emoluments. Sound Orthodoxy is everything; genuine piety and rational religion are terms of reproach; and extensive learning, pure philosophy, and splendid talents are nothing more than inferior attainments. And what is this Orthodoxy, which is to be the essential, if not the sole recommendation to the Moral Philosophy Chair of the Institution? It is something which, by the very laws of the Institution, the Professor is bound not to inculcate on his students. The act and compact which he has sanctioned prevent him from directly or indirectly interfering with the religious sentiments of the students. Mr. Cooke has shown how the heterodox Professor may evade his obligation. Of the Orthodox man of probity I entertain no such opinion; and I am firmly convinced this essential qualification for the Moral Philosophy Chair, so far as regards his students, can only be like a light, useless and unseen.

If there be silence to be blamed, it is the silence of Mr. Cooke himself. He knew Mr. Ferrie to be an Arian, or a Socinian, or a Neologist, or something which was not one of these, but a thing more dreadful than any. He saw how matters stood; yet he did not warn the electors. He concealed what he knew even from the Synod's Committee. He did not stand forward and raise his voice as he did when Mr. Bryce was a candidate. He looked on, though he saw the electors approaching the verge of a precipice, and yet he would not put forth even his little finger to prevent them from taking the awful plunge. And now when they are fallen, he mingles his triumph with insult. He charges the Managers and Visitors of the Institution with ingratitude—the lowest grade of depravity and meanness—a vice so vile that no one can be found who would acknowledge himself guilty of it. Were the

Managers and Visitors ungrateful, when, at an expense of £20,000, they established a seminary which brought education home to your doors? Did the Institution prove itself ungrateful, when it was offered the patronage of Government, and unlimited wealth, if it would break its connexion with you? Did the Institution prove itself ungrateful, when it preferred struggling through all the difficulties in which its fidelity to you involved it, to the patronage of power and the smiles of a court? Or is it the Synod that has been ungrateful? For seven years the Institution has been struggling with difficulty through its devotedness to you; and instead of cheering and supporting, you have been straining every nerve to injure it. Like the serpents that came out of the sea, and entwined around the body of Laocoon, you have wreathed your strangulating folds around the Belfast Institution, and now you are hissing over its head. But still, forsooth, the Managers and Visitors must be charged with ingratitude, because they did not elect the candidate you set forward. Does gratitude mean the sacrifice of honesty? Does it imply that men should forfeit their integrity? Does it imply that the elector shall vote just as you suggest? Does it imply that because you give up a power which never should have been granted, and which never will be recognised, men are therefore to surrender their consciences? If this be the price at which your friendship is to be obtained, it is too dear—it never will be paid. Even were it a debt of gratitude, it would be a crime to discharge it. But I tell you I will speak plainly, and I care not how it will be received, for it is the truth—I tell you that the obligation is all upon the one side. The Institution is a seminary which has dealt liberally with all, and particularly with the sons of Presbyterian ministers. I ask you how your sons were received into it? I ask you to do justice to your own honest feelings, and repeat what you have frequently acknowledged, and give expression to those sentiments which the heart of a parent will dictate, and say how your children have been treated at that seminary which you are called on to subvert, and with what hospitality they have been received into the bosom of the families of the very men upon whose conduct you are asked to affix the stigma of reproach.

And what is this mighty concession which you have made, and of which Mr. Cooke boasts, when he says that you were the masters of the Institution, and had your feet upon the necks of its Managers and Visitors? Let us be plain; it is best to be so. You conceded a right which, as I have said, never would have been recognised. The influential members of your body had meetings. It was known to

them that the Institution never would accede to the terms proposed when the Government grant was offered. It was known to them that the men who had been instrumental in founding it would rather see it levelled with the ground than see the property of the public made the prize of a party, and that which was meant for the world made the slave of a sect. The Synod knew this, and they knew that if they made no compromise their Professor's salary would be lost. It was then that some who will claim praise for their moderation—nay, who in proud humility will lament their too easy good-nature—gave up a shadow for what they hoped would be a substance—they gave up the *veto* which never would have been acknowledged for their *avisamentum*, which, coming in its insidious shape, would readily be received. They could not storm the citadel, for it was defended by men who would not surrender their integrity; but they would send forth a flag of truce, and they would get within the walls in the guise of friendship, and grasp upon the first favourable opportunity of seizing by stratagem what they could not obtain by force. This is the light in which the world will view your conduct if you persist. They will say that you wished to acquire indirectly the power which you could not obtain, nor even attempt to obtain, without odium. They will say that though you affected to disclaim a *veto* over the Institution, you became frantic when your slightest hint was disregarded. They will say that you wished to put into its chairs the influential members of your body, and make its offices and emoluments an appendage to the Synod of Ulster.

The conduct which is proposed to be pursued towards the Belfast Institution is such as the honest feelings of the world never would sanction. Its prejudices must therefore be pressed into the service. The Institution must be represented as being tainted with Arianism, and Arianism must be depicted in the most disgusting colours. It is for this reason that we have heard Arianism resolved into a thousand similes, equally correct, equally courteous, and equally Christian. First, it was a soul-destroying leprosy; and then it became a house, and required to be whitewashed, I suppose, by the great Master Mason; and then it turned into the waters of Sodom, and then it became "Dead Sea fruits, that change into ashes;" and then—but it is useless to proceed. It was variable as Proteus himself, and in every form equally odious. And what are we who are thus attacked through our opinions? Are we liars, or false accusers, or unkind husbands, or negligent fathers, or unfaithful pastors, or bad neighbours? Or what are our accusers, or in what does Nature give a superior impress to

their understanding? In external form we differ not much from our brethren of mankind. Has the Almighty set the seal of His displeasure on the countenance of my friend on my right (Mr. Porter), or has He given any peculiar dignity to Mr. Cooke, that he should speak so hardly of us. I have been told by some of that gentleman's admirers, that when he smiles, his smile is angelic. I am not disposed to dispute this; but when the Almighty has affixed no outward mark of His displeasure on any of His creatures for belonging to a peculiar sect; when He has given us—as I praise and bless His name that he has—kind friends and affectionate flocks; when He is pleased not only to bear with our infirmities, but to bless and prosper our labours, why should a puny fellow-mortal stigmatise our opinions, and liken them to the disgusting leprosy, and the envenomed poison, and the fearful contagion? Why should weak, erring, blind, ignorant, and fallible man judge so harshly of his brother, when he knows that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? Before that tribunal I hope to appear. By Him who is the great King and Head of His Church I look forward to be judged; but before the tribunal of no other will I stand.

But leaving those figurative expressions, which have been so charitably applied to Arianism, what is the real, the substantial danger which you dread from the Belfast Institution? Orthodoxy must be a very tender plant if it must be so sheltered, and shaded, and pampered. The religion which was first promulgated by a few poor fishermen, and went forth conquering and to conquer, required no such adventitious aids; and when an inspired writer has said, "try all things, prove all things," poor, indeed, is the compliment you pay to your opinions, when you say, that if any others are thrown in the way of the inquiring mind, your tenets will be forsaken. I never would condemn a system of belief for the practice of those who profess it; but there are cases in which we may judge of the opinion by the practice. What, I ask, has been the practice of the loudest shouters among those who have denounced the Institution as a den of Arians? Have they not sent their own sons to repose under the Upas tree, to breathe the infected air, to drink of the waters of Sodom, and to eat of the Dead Sea fruits? Can the world believe men to be in earnest, when their practice is so opposed to their profession? And what credit is due to this overweening anxiety for the spiritual welfare of the rising generation, when the very men who express it expose those who are nearest and dearest to the danger which they warn others to avoid? Why do not the enemies of the Institution lay aside their metaphors, and speak plainly at once?

They say, we will have “no chaff;” we must have the solid corn. Go on, then, if you wish to follow where they lead; reap where you have not sown, and gather where you have not strawed; make the Institution your own; drive out every man, no matter how high may be his literary attainments, if he will not bow to your mandate. But this you cannot do. There are men who have the management of the Institution, who would rather see it levelled with the ground than made a citadel of sectarian bitterness. You may injure, you may destroy it; you may ruin a seminary which promises to be a blessing to the country, where the rising generation may meet and drink from the pure fountain of knowledge, and, as they look on each other’s faces, imbibe principles of forbearance and affection and kindness, before the unfortunate political and religious dissensions which exist in this country have estranged them from each other. You may ruin the Belfast Institution, but the infamy of the deed will descend upon the heads, and brand the memory of those who made a waste where they could not establish their usurpation. I speak warmly, but I cannot help it. I am ill in health; but though I should lie down, when I have done, upon the bed from which I was never to rise, I must give vent to the feelings of my heart.

I come now to a subject which I shall not call painful, because it would be untrue, and I do not wish to be guilty of hypoerisy; but it is at least disagreeable; and I am sorry that the course of this debate should have forced me to take it up. I feel it necessary to offer some observations on Mr. Carlile’s speech, and I cannot but regret that circumstances should have brought us into contact so early in this meeting, as prejudices may operate against me at present in consequence. But as I feel conscious that I am acting upon public grounds, I shall not hesitate to express my opinions freely. It is somewhat strange that Mr. Carlile should have so much changed his views, as he seems to have done, in supporting the present measures. He may perhaps have reasons sufficient to satisfy himself, but I apprehend his former opposition to Mr. Cooke and his present co-operation will scarcely admit of explanation sufficient to bring conviction to the minds of others. Another statement of his is not likely to gain more credit. He tells us he is not smarting under his late disappointment; and that if he had been elected Professor of Moral Philosophy, he would have received no addition to his respectability. It may be so; but why all this great excitement about a matter of such little moment? and where the necessity of publishing a series of testimonials after the thing has been decided? What cause is there, too, for a man who is so per-

fectly at ease on the subject, to take up a brother candidate's testimonials, and attempt to tear them to tatters? I confess I never was more astonished in my life than when I heard that Mr. Carlile was coming over from Scotland with all manner of rumours calculated to produce distraction. I was told so, but I could not believe it. I had known and respected Mr. Carlile, and I firmly believed that he would be the very first man to interfere in allaying any bad feeling that might arise on the subject. "No," said I, "it is altogether impossible. If any angry opposition be offered to the election of Mr. Ferrie, so far from fomenting it, Mr. Carlile will come forward immediately, and pour the tranquillising oil of Christian charity upon the agitated waves of the Synod of Ulster." Such was my decided conviction; and I was thunderstruck when I found that he had arrived with a whole cargo of rumours about the means resorted to in order to obtain the election of Mr. Ferrie. We have been told of a very active canvass having been carried on. Now the plain truth is, that the exertions were not confined to one side; and that whatever Mr. Carlile may have done himself, his friends were by no means idle. I could mention the agent of a very influential nobleman who had been applied to on the subject. This I think all fair, and I mention it with no other object than to confirm what I have stated. But the electors are charged with being directed by another influence. Mercantile speculations, narrow calculations of base gain, are said to have directed them in their choice. With most of these gentlemen I am intimately acquainted; and I assert that it is not possible to point out any men more truly respectable. I have been lately in England, and I know that in that country the merchants of Belfast are regarded as standing at the very head of their profession; and yet these are the men who are charged, as if they were a set of peddling shopkeepers, of selling their consciences for filthy lucre.

But why need we wonder that the Belfast merchants should have been subjected to such foul slander, when even the Professors of the University of Glasgow are not allowed to escape. Mr. Carlile stated that they have a direct pecuniary interest in putting down the Institution. Now I just ask, against what body of men is this charge preferred? A body of men, whose character and talents are calculated to place them among the very first literary characters in the world, are charged with the degrading crime of attempting to put down a seminary, with the prospect of a trifling pecuniary gain. The very love of learning, if they are not worse than the beasts of the field, would make them anxious not only to see a seminary in Belfast, but to see number-

less other similar places of education flourishing over the world. But if they have the heads or the hearts of honest, independent men, they will call upon the man who ventured to make the statement to account for the rash charge at some other bar than this. Oh, is it possible that they could be guilty of entertaining such an idea for one moment? I appeal to those in this house who have drunk at the fountain of knowledge, under the care of that most admirable man, Professor Milne, if such a statement can gain any credit in this place; that individual who was the first to lead the mind of the student to form habits of thought. I speak with peculiar ideas of veneration of that man, for I believe that it was in his class that my mind was first taught to think; and that, under God, I owe mainly to him whatever strength of character I possess, and whatever name and reputation I may have in the world. I know that many who hear me could echo the sentiments which I have now expressed. It is painful to hear it stated that such a man would wish to injure a place of public education, to sink a literary establishment, in order to pocket sixty or seventy pounds a-year! If he were base enough to entertain the idea, and could look forward to a long period of life, he might have hopes of enjoying the benefits of such a plan; but, in the course of nature, that venerable septuagenarian, that man of seventy, must retire from the busy, bustling stage of life long before Mr. Ferrie could do any evil to the Institution. He has been charged with paying marked attention to Mr. Yates, when a student in his class—of introducing him to his friends, and showing them his essays. Now in all this there is nothing extraordinary. Mr. Yates was a young man of high promise, and his character in the world has proved the accuracy of the opinion formed of him in his youth. Although I differ as much from the opinions which he holds as from those of his great antagonist, Dr. Wardlaw, yet I cannot but admire the talents which he has displayed in that celebrated controversy. The attention paid to this distinguished student, and son of an English minister, may be easily explained by considering the kindness of Professor Milne's heart, and his admiration of genius; but it would not do to take a plain and obvious motive which lay at hand upon the surface. The gentleman must dive for one into the mud, and ascribe the circumstance to a desire to propagate Socinianism.

An attack has been made upon Mr. Ferrie because he is stated to be a rational preacher. It appears extraordinary that the truths of the Gospel should not be considered rational; and one would almost suspect that this had been intended as a side stroke at his own party.

There was one part of the attack with which I was greatly distressed. Not content with laying charges against Mr. Ferrie as a preacher, he turns round to misrepresent the New Light preachers of this country, alleging that they never refer in their public services to heaven or hell, to sin or punishment, to eternity or judgment. I need scarcely wonder at this, for Mr. Carlile has published a chapter in his book nearly as charitable as this. Now I say, wherever such statements are made, whether in a printed book or in an unpremeditated speech, they must proceed either from inconceivable ignorance, or from wilful misrepresentation. If there be any ministers more likely than others to inculcate these doctrines, they are unquestionably those denominated New Light. Our own people, who know our ministry, and who are acquainted with our private walk and conversation, know the falsehood of such charges; but in this age of party rancour and strong prejudice, such groundless assertions are greedily grasped at. Reports, however vague, are readily taken up to the injury of those whose doctrines and conduct are misrepresented; but I do beseech and charge you, unless you wish to blast our reputation, to sow dissension in our congregations, and leave our families without support, not to malign us by unworthy and undeserved aspersions. If I were to judge of Calvinism from what I heard yesterday in this house, and from what I have frequently heard elsewhere, I might be ready to charge against it as much unchristian virus as could be ascribed to any other system; but I feel that it would be unjust to charge against a system what is only the fault of the individuals. I blame not the system; I blame the heart of man, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." There are some peculiar opinions of Calvinism, which, when misunderstood, may be injurious, but with the well-informed can have no bad tendency. Some of my best and dearest friends are Calvinists. There is a man in this house, and my heart almost prompts me to lay my hand on his shoulder; he is a Calvinist, and I believe that God never made a more upright man, or one more estimable in all the relations of life. Shall I then condemn the opinions from which I dissent, as if they were chargeable with what I know to arise from the ebullition of evil passions? No. Though my brethren will not let me hold communion with them, I am still ready to stretch out to them the right hand of fellowship. I trust, when we have laid aside the garb of frail mortality, we shall meet in that better and happier world, wondering at our own sinful folly in having disputed and excited strife where all should have been harmony and love. I am weary of this contest which has been continued from year to year. If we can-

not live in peace with you, at all hazards we will leave you. I will not continue in a state of constant turmoil with my brethren. I have human passions and frailties, and sometimes I cannot control my temper when my principles are misrepresented, and the Institution with which I am connected is assailed through my person. But if I know the rock on which I have once suffered shipwreck, it is my own fault if I am cast upon it again. If we cannot live together in peace, in the name of God let us part in peace. For myself, I have no fear as to consequences. My people know my opinions; and I have no doubt of their faithfulness and affection. Some of my brethren may be injured; but He that catereth for the sparrow will not let the children of the sufferer for conscience' sake come to want. The cause of God and truth will finally prevail; and though I cannot approve of the individuals who excited them, I feel convinced that the storms which have raged among us will purify the Church, and have their result in the triumph of those opinions which I believe in my conscience to be true.

APPENDIX F.

“THE CREED OF AN ARIAN.” BY THE REV. H. MONTGOMERY, M.A.
1830.*

Y BELIEVE that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a full, perfect, and explicit revelation of God's holy will ; that they are the only infallible standard of faith and duty ; and that they are eminently calculated to promote the dearest interests of men, as rational, social, and accountable beings. These Divine records unite with the voice of reason and of nature in proclaiming the great truth which forms the foundation of all religion—*that there is but ONE ETERNAL GOD, infinite in power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice, mercy, and all other possible perfections.* Upon this immovable basis I rest my faith and my hope. A departure from this great principle led to all the superstition and idolatry of ancient times, which were so offensive to the Divine Being ; and all the corruptions which have tarnished the lustre of Christianity are connected with mistakes upon the same important subject. I cling, therefore, to the unrivalled supremacy of **THE FATHER** with a fidelity which cannot be shaken. To say that He has a partner on His throne, or an equal in His administration, would be, in effect, to deny that He is almighty, to assert that there are more gods than one, and to remove that entire and devout reliance which the soul experiences in the cheering contemplation of His uncontrollable power, unerring wisdom, and inexhaustible goodness. I heartily rejoice, therefore, in believing that the *unity* or *oneness* of God is not only the most important, but also the plainest principle of religion. On some minor points the evidence may not be so ample ; but this sublime truth shines forth in the order and harmony of the universe, and appears with infinite splendour and beauty, as the sun and centre, illuminating and holding together the entire glorious system of revelation. It runs through every page of the Blessed Volume like a line of light ; so that quoting all the passages which prove it would be a superfluous and an almost endless task. To show, however, that my faith stands, not on the wisdom of man, but on the testimony of Heaven, I shall cite a few verses for edification :—

* See Chap. III., p. 41 ; and Chap XXI., p. 389.

Exod. xx. 3—“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (See Deut. v. 7.)

Deut. iv. 35—“Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God : there is none else besides Him.”

Deut. vi. 4—“Hear, O Israel : the Lord our God is one Lord.” (See Mark xii. 29.)

Deut. xxxii. 39—“See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me.”

Isaiah xlv. 5—“I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no god beside me.”

Matt. xix. 17—“And He said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is, God.”

John xvii. 3—“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

Lest any mistake should arise with respect to the meaning which I attach to these portions of Scripture, let it be distinctly understood that, in the literal and ordinary sense of the words, I believe in *one God*, as *one being*, *one person*. I dare not presume to speak like my Calvinistic brethren, with what appears to me an irreverent familiarity, of the Divine “essence or substance ;” to use the unscriptural term “Trinity ;” or to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one being, in direct opposition to the proper use of language, and to the express declarations of God’s Holy Word, which represent them as three distinct and glorious persons, graciously engaged in promoting human salvation, under the separate characters of God, and Mediator, and Sanctifier.* The God of the universe and of the Bible, whom I devoutly worship, is the same gracious Being who is emphatically called by the apostle “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In His glorious character there is a harmonious union of all the attributes which constitute perfection—rendering Him an object of equal veneration and love ; by whose constant presence we are cheered, and by whose ever-watchful and unfailling providence we are supplied with every blessing.

Whilst I devoutly believe, on the sure warrant of Scripture, that “there is one God,” I equally believe, on the same Divine authority, that “there is one Mediator between God and man.” This glorious Being, who is called the Saviour and the Son of God, is repeatedly represented in Scripture as enjoying the most intimate union with the

* In this tenet of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, he differed from the generality of Irish Non-Subscribers, by whom it is regarded as the spiritual *influence* of God, and not as a person or being distinct from the Father.

Father “before the foundation of the world,” as existing “before Abraham,” as “coming down from heaven,” and as proceeding from “the bosom of the Father.” Though I cannot agree with my Trinitarian brethren that the begotten Son was His own eternal Father, I can as little agree with that truly respectable portion of my Unitarian brethren, who maintain that He was only a prophet exalted far above Moses by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was given unto Him without measure. On this subject revelation alone can be our guide; and surely nothing can be more unequivocal than the terms in which it speaks of the pre-existing dignity and glory of our blessed Saviour. He is represented as far above the archangel; as dwelling “in the bosom of the Father;” as being “the image of the invisible God, and the first-born of every creature;” as “the beginning of the creation of God;” and as passing over angels, to take upon Him “the seed of Abraham.” To all this it may be added, that the Father by Him “created all things, visible and invisible;” that He “was made flesh and dwelt among us;” that “without Him was not anything made that was made;” and finally, that He was the glorious Being “whom the Father appointed heir of all things, and by whom also He made the worlds.” But whilst these and multitudes of other portions of holy writ fully testify the pre-existent glory of our Divine Master, and animate our souls with gratitude for His amazing condescension in coming to seek and to “save sinners,” the sacred records are equally ample and explicit on the subject of His subordination to the Father. This great doctrine, which equally vindicates the *unity* and *supremacy* of God, runs through the whole of the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation. It is the constant theme of our blessed Lord Himself. When He taught the most sublime truths, He always referred to God as the author. “As my Father taught me, I speak: He gave me commandment what I should speak: the words that I speak, I speak not of myself.” In the same humble and reverential spirit He ascribes His miracles and works to the power of God—“The works that the Father hath given me, bear witness of me: I must work the work of Him that sent me: the works that I do in my *Father's name*: all power is given unto me of my Father.” On some points, however, He had not received instruction and power from the Father. When questioned respecting the destruction of Jerusalem or the day of judgment, He replies:—“Of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only;” and again, “to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.” Upon

another occasion He says:—“I came not to do mine own will, but the Father’s that sent me.” Nothing can be more devout and humble than His supplications—“Our Father which art in Heaven: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt;” and, when about to leave His disciples, He says:—“I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.”

The apostolic writings are filled with texts, maintaining in the clearest terms the unrivalled supremacy of the Father, and the glorious office of the Mediator—“Him hath God exalted, with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour: Ye are Christ’s, and Christ’s is God’s: To us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ: The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all: now a mediator is not a mediator of One, but God is One!” Many hundreds of texts, of similar import with the preceding, might be introduced; but farther evidence cannot be required by those who pray to God through the Saviour; who look upon Him, not as the offended Father sitting on the throne, but as the interceding Mediator at the right hand of God; who with the eye of faith see him, like Stephen, standing at the right hand of the Father; or who, in the Book of Revelation, behold the Lamb standing before the Father’s throne, in the midst of the four-and-twenty elders, and saying—“Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints!”

Unless, therefore, I cast off the authority of Scripture, renounce the use of my understanding, and reject the plainest expressions of language, I cannot avoid believing what I do believe, that the Lord Jesus Christ existed in transcendent glory and intimate union with the Father before the foundation of the world; that He came from the Father to our earth as a Divine messenger of grace and truth; that after submitting to a painful and ignominious death, He rose again and ascended into Heaven, “where He ever sitteth at the right hand of God, making intercession for us,” and second only to Him who is all in all; and finally, that in the fulness of the time, “He shall come in the glory of His Father, with all His holy angels, to judge the world in righteousness.”

I believe that the object of His mission was most merciful and beneficent; being directed to promote the best interests of men, temporal and eternal. To accomplish this gracious design He communicated the

most sublime and interesting views of the Divine character, unfolded the grounds and sanctions of duty, struck at the root of evil in the human heart, enforced all His precepts by the irresistible argument of His sinless life, taught the blessed doctrine of repentance, "brought life and immortality clearly to light," and finally submitted to an ignominious death upon the cross, in fulfilment of prophecy, in confirmation of His divine sincerity, and in obedience to the will of His Father. The death of our blessed Lord evidently forms the grand feature in the Christian dispensation. It is the frequent theme of ancient prophecy, the ever-recurring subject of apostolic reference and gratitude, and occupies the songs of angels in the Book of Revelation. In fact, it seems to be the key stone of the arch of Christianity, without which the entire system would lose its stability and beauty. On this point, indeed, all sects are agreed; but with regard to its influence upon the salvation of sinners, various opinions have long existed. I do not believe with the Calvinist in the doctrine of various atonement—or, in other words, that the sins of men were imputed or transferred to Christ, who suffered in their room and stead, to render God placable, and "to satisfy Divine justice." I do not believe this, because guilt is personal, and cannot be transferred. Punishment might be inflicted upon the innocent instead of the guilty; but this would not remove the stain of moral turpitude from the offender; and instead of satisfying justice, it would itself be essentially unjust. Were a human tribunal to permit convicted criminals to escape the penalties justly due to their offences, and to punish innocent and virtuous men in their room, would not the whole world exclaim against such a violation of the plainest principles of equity? Yet such is the charge imputed to the Deity in Calvinistic creeds! I do not therefore believe in their doctrine of "Satisfaction," because it impeaches the Justice of God: and I farther reject it, because it robs Him of His Mercy and Free Grace. If justice be satisfied, mercy has no act to perform; and if the debt be paid, the gift of pardon cannot be free! Besides, to allege that God is not placable is to deny the most adorable perfections of His nature, to say that He is not "Love," and to deprive Him of the praise and glory to which He is justly entitled as the beneficent Author of the all-merciful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. I also reject this doctrine, because it necessarily encourages men to commit sin, under the idea of impunity through the transfer of their guilt. In these views I am supported by the express declarations of Holy Writ:—"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the

Lord.” “The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon *him*.” “As I live, saith the Lord, I will by no means clear the guilty.” “Every man shall bear his own burthen.” “I will judge you every man according to his (own) works.” To these clear declarations of Scripture it is unnecessary to add the words of fallible men; yet in times like the present, when human authority has too much weight with many, I am not sorry to find my views confirmed by the testimony of Archbishop Magee, who says—“A strict vicarious *substitution*, or literal equivalent, is not contended for, no such notion belonging to the doctrine of atonement.” He further declares—“That the death of Christ was never deemed by any who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of the atonement, to have *made God placable*; but merely viewed as the means through which to bestow forgiveness; the notion of infinite satisfaction being a calumny on our Church.” Besides, the terms “imputed sin,” “imputed righteousness,” “vicarious punishment,” and “satisfaction,” are not to be found in Scripture.

In what way, then, it may be inquired, do I look upon the sufferings and death of the Redeemer as pre-eminently conducive to our salvation? I believe them to be so in many ways; and, amongst others, in manifesting the love of God, “who spared not His only-begotten Son,” but made “the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings”—in proving the Divine benevolence and sincerity of our blessed Lord—in drawing our hearts and souls to Him and His commandments as our suffering Master—in the fulfilment of ancient prophecies—in establishing the Christian dispensation, and in preparing the way for His resurrection, and showing the certainty that we too, and all mankind, “shall be raised from the dead.” I believe that His death is eminently calculated, from the preceding and many other circumstances, to promote the moral reformation of man, and thereby to RECONCILE US unto God. In this true and literal sense of the word *atonement*, as implying reconciliation with an offended Father through the death of His well-beloved Son, and our consequent moral regeneration, I most firmly believe the doctrine; and in these sentiments I am convinced that the most enlightened of those termed Orthodox will cheerfully concur. I do not say, however, that there is not more, *much more*, in the death of our Saviour than all that has been stated. I freely confess that such views, important though they are, would seem too poor for the glowing and energetic language in which that most interesting event is constantly mentioned in the sacred Scriptures. In the counsels of the

Divine mind, and in the economy of salvation, the sufferings on Calvary may be accomplishing plans of infinite benevolence which we at present are not permitted to scan ; but of this I am certain, that a knowledge of these plans is not essential to salvation, or they would have been clearly revealed ; and I desire not “to be wise above what is written.” Upon another point, also, I am fully satisfied—that the death of Christ is not intended to interfere with our moral responsibility, to remove the penalty from ungodliness, to encourage presumptuous hopes, or to make us “continue in sin, because grace hath abounded.” On the contrary, I firmly believe that the death of our blessed Lord will rise up against the persevering and impenitent offender as an additional ground of his condemnation ; for “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is an ample and perfect Saviour, fully adequate to the desires and wants of all who put their trust in Him ; “for it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell”—inasmuch “as God hath exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour ; for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” I joyfully, therefore, accept of Him as “the way, the truth, and the life,” through whom alone, as a Christian, I can “come unto the Father.”

I believe that our first parents offended God by sin ; and that, as descended from them, we inherit a frail and corruptible nature ; but I utterly reject the Calvinistic doctrine of *Imputed Guilt*, as contrary to reason and Scripture, and as derogatory to the justice and paternal character of God. We may be involved in the consequences of Adam’s sin, without being involved in its guilt—just as the children of a profligate father may suffer from his vices, without being morally tainted with his crimes. Misfortune is transferable, but guilt is not. To constitute criminality in the sight of any rational being, the offence must be the voluntary act of a rational agent. I repudiate, therefore, the Calvinistic doctrine of the damnation of infants, not elect, which all future ministers of the Synod of Ulster must teach on pain of deprivation, as equally abhorrent to the character of God and the best feelings of humanity. A tree or a stone would be as much, and as justly, the object of punishment, as an infant or an idiot. Even were my head convinced, I am persuaded my heart would not allow me to believe that the happy infant, imbibing the gushing fountain of nature, and smiling in the face of its happier mother, is the object of “the wrath and curse” of the wisest and best of beings ! But, blessed be God, there is no occasion on this subject for a conflict between the

understanding and the affections ; for the sure record of Scripture is benignantly emphatic and explicit : “As I live, saith the Lord, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.” “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

I believe that man is an accountable being, that he will hereafter “stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to answer for the deeds done in the body,” and, consequently, that he is a free agent, having power to choose the evil or the good. Upon no other principle can responsibility be founded. If, as the Calvinists maintain, his entire will and actions be under the *irresistible control of an eternal and unchangeable decree*, he is no more an object of just praise for virtue, or of just condemnation for vice, than the inanimate clod of earth upon which he treads. Agreeably to this doctrine, “the benevolent Howard” and the infamous murderer should be equally objects of our condemnation. How thorough-paced Calvinists can, in conformity with their own system, condemn a man for any crime, I am unable to comprehend. Yet, generally, no men are more equitable ; fully proving that their natural sense of justice is too strong for the conventional errors of their creed. “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,” said the servant of God to the children of Israel. Had a man of Synodical Orthodoxy been present, he would have told him—“In vain you exhort them, for they *cannot* choose.”

I believe, as God is the father of all men, and “would have all to be saved,” and invites all to accept of salvation, that the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination, or Election, is derogatory both to His grace and to His truth ! If, according to the present creed of the Synod of Ulster, “some men and angels be predestinated, by the decree of God, to everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death ; and if their number be so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished ;” and if this be “without any foresight of faith or good works, or any other thing in the creature ;” if all this be true, faith is useless, virtue is but a name, the commandments of God are an idle mockery, and the very coming of the Saviour could be of no avail. I shall not dwell upon the nature and consequences of so astounding a doctrine ; but express my joyful belief, that as our blessed Lord invites “all to come unto Him who are weary and heavy laden,” all have the power to come, if they will, and to receive “rest unto their souls.” If we be finally excluded from the kingdom, we may rest assured that our exclusion will not be the result of an “eternal decree,” but of our own obstinacy and folly. “I have no pleasure,” saith the

Lord, "in the death of the wicked; but rather that he should turn from the evil of his ways and live."

I believe with the apostle James, that "faith without works is dead, being alone;" yet I as firmly believe with the apostle Paul, that "by the works of the law (alone) no flesh shall be justified." Faith and works must go together, as *cause* and *effect*: they cannot in the Christian be separated, without rendering both unavailing. Yet as all have sinned, and come short of their duty—as no mode of belief can produce absolute holiness—we can never rely for final acceptance either upon our faith or our works, or upon both united; but simply and entirely upon the unbounded grace and mercy of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I do not believe with the Calvinist in "the utter damnation of the heathen world." The justice, the mercy, and the Word of God rise up against this awful doctrine. Equity demands that they should be judged according to their knowledge and opportunities, and by that "natural law which God hath given them." Neither do I believe that salvation will be confined to the members of any Christian Church, or the professors of any peculiar creed. I firmly believe that many of all creeds and all churches "shall be brought to see the salvation of the Lord." The Divine Being is not the God of a sect or a party, but the Father and the Friend of all; the Lord Jesus is not the Redeemer of a few, but "the Saviour of all men" who will accept of His love. "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved;" "*Many* shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." I do not say that all theological systems are equally conducive either to the temporal or eternal interests of mankind, for I am persuaded that they are not; but I do believe that even the most erroneous creed will not shut out a good and sincere man from an humble mansion in the Father's house! In these views I may be far wrong; but I am certain I feel more pleasure in believing that even my opponents and enemies may be saved than they have in believing that I shall be damned. May the Spirit of grace purify our faith, enliven our hope, and enlarge our charity!

The foregoing is a feeble, but faithful sketch of the religious belief of one holding the doctrines usually denominated Arian. It is the creed of *one man*, written very hastily, without the advice, or assistance, or correction of any other human being. He does not know that, in the world, any other man holds the same sentiments; but of this he can assure the public, that his creed is one of the *very worst* of

the “modern heresies.” Perhaps some who have been taught by clamour and misrepresentation to look upon Arianism with horror may find it very like their own, and fully as much resembling the truth of the Bible as even Calvinism itself.

APPENDIX G.*

[*Pressure of other matter has compelled the postponement to Vol. II. —to which, in point of time, it more properly belongs—of the important Sermon on “Christ the Saviour,” intended to have been published in this Appendix.*]

* See Chap. xiv., p. 246.

APPENDIX H.

SPEECH ON PARLIAMENTARY REFORM AND THE BALLOT, BY THE REV.
H. MONTGOMERY, M.A., BELFAST, DECEMBER, 1830.*

SIR, I have been requested to assist in the important proceedings of this day, and to propose the next resolution for the consideration of this most numerous and influential meeting. Before adverting, however, to the main subject on which I intend to address you, I feel it necessary to notice a remark which fell from yourself, in opening the proceedings of the day. You stated, that whilst the requisition was numerously and respectably signed, the names of several individuals, usually found in the ranks of the reformers, were wanting—probably because they considered it inexpedient to agitate a question about to be submitted to the Legislature by the Government of the country. Now, sir, it ought to be known that the requisition was got up when the late Administration was in power, and immediately after that memorable declaration of the now deposed Premier, against every species of reform, which filled the whole empire with dismay and indignation. At that period, the gentlemen to whom you have adverted refused to sign the requisition, because reform was hopeless; subsequently they withheld their signatures, because it was likely to succeed! It is not my province to attempt to reconcile those conflicting pleas; but I may be permitted to ask, when are the people to express their wants and their wishes, if the hostility and favour of Government be equally barriers against the propriety of petitioning? As the subjects of a free state, we should not regard the feelings of Government upon questions of vital importance to our country—we ought to do our own duty, fully, freely, and temperately. The present are not times, when we are surrounded by revolutions, and living in the midst of combustible materials, to stand in the polite indifference of uninterested spectators. We must both speak and act, if we desire to keep ruin from our doors. It is ridiculous to say that this will embarrass the Government. Sir, it will strengthen their hands. Cheered in their course by the loud and determined voice of the universal people, they will be able to accomplish their plans of national

* See Chap. XXIII., pp. 420–22.

regeneration, in defiance of all the interested opposition of the profligate and the corrupt. Nor is it less absurd to say, that we ought not to meet, lest we should increase the spirit of agitation. Were we even so inclined, we could not prevent agitation. There is a spirit abroad which we may restrain and regulate, but which we cannot destroy. The only question is—whether we shall have a rational, prudent, and constitutional agitation, by those who represent the intelligence and property of the country—a movement which will terminate in prosperity and peace; or the wild and ignorant agitation of a suffering multitude, which may end in universal anarchy and ruin! Agitation there will be—there ought to be, until the rights of the many prevail over the interests of the few. Quiescence under wrong is too frequently considered to mean acquiescence in oppression; and I am fully persuaded that, without “the troubling of the waters,” we shall never witness “the healing of the people.” To another point I am compelled to allude in my own vindication. Mine is the only clerical name, of any Church, which appears in the requisition that has called us together. Whether this singularity be an honour or a reproach, I shall not venture to determine. Perhaps my clerical brethren are right in their new-born, cautious abstinence from all political concerns; but there was a time (and one in which many persons think that the spirit of the Gospel was not less prevalent than in our own religious age), when Christian ministers of all denominations, and especially Presbyterian ministers, marched in the very van of the hosts of Liberty! I allude to the glorious era of the Irish Volunteers, when our country arose in its splendour and its might, and, by declaring the national will, established our national freedom. I am proud to be the advocate, this day, of that great principle of morality and justice—Vote by Ballot—which was triumphantly maintained, forty-seven years ago, by the Rev. Dr. Bruce, at the great Dungannon Convention; although, at that period, argument was conquered by numbers. Were that enlightened divine here this day, who then raised his youthful voice in defence of liberty, and who has so long resided amongst us, equally distinguished by his learning, his virtues, and his loyalty, he would, I am persuaded, witness the signal triumph of his early principles in the almost unanimous adoption of his opinions. I might forcibly plead this honoured example as a justification of my occasionally mingling in political affairs; but I take even a higher ground—I lost not my right of citizenship when I become a minister of the Gospel; and I feel that I should be deserting even my clerical duties, if I did not, in these alarming times, raise my

feeble voice in the advocacy of measures of justice, which may prevent the shedding of torrents of human blood and the wide desolation of my native land. When I contemplate the horrors of civil war, from which we have been rescued by that great measure of national and Christian justice—Catholic Emancipation—I shall never cease to respect the name of Wellington. Many of his acts I was compelled to disapprove; but, cast down though he has been from the pinnacle of power by the irresistible force of public opinion, I do not hesitate to declare that he saved Ireland from ruin—that he accomplished what I firmly believe no other man in the British empire could at the time have accomplished—and that to him is owing, that the green fields of our country are not at this moment crimsoned with the blood of her children. Whatever may have been his demerits in other respects, this one act must for ever endear his name to every true-hearted Irishman; and the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (though not affecting Ireland), must give him a further claim upon the gratitude of every Protestant Dissenter. The great measure of justice to Ireland, by placing all her children upon a perfect equality in the eyes of the law, has been one important step towards the practical union of the different parts of the empire; and I firmly trust that the present enlightened Administration, by a seasonable attention to the rights, privileges, and wants of the people, will annihilate every lingering wish after a separation, and prove that the union of all is not only most conducive to the consolidation of national power, but also to individual and general prosperity. God forbid that we should ever see the dying embers of sectarian and party rancour fanned into a flame; and our generous countrymen, instead of cordially uniting to advance the interests of all, wildly wasting their energies in order to secure the ascendancy of a part. I equally abhor all ascendancy—Catholic, Protestant, or Presbyterian—amongst countrymen and fellow-subjects. I wish to see no ascendancy but that of industry, intelligence, moral right, and liberty—in short, the ascendancy of the people, united, happy, and free! (These sentiments were received with immense cheering.)

I come now, sir, to the more immediate business that has called us together. We believe that there is something wrong in the British Constitution, for it does not promote the great end of good government—the happiness and prosperity of the many. I know how dangerous it is to say a syllable derogatory to our “blessed Constitution.” With many good people there is a kind of talismanic charm in the very word: they seem to consider the Constitution as some sort of sacred

relic transmitted from our forefathers, and preserved like the Divine laws of ancient times in the Ark of the Covenant. This species of ignorant veneration has been very convenient to statesmen: whenever an abuse or an iniquitous law, exercised for the benefit of the few, was sought to be corrected, there was an immediate outcry about the ruin of our "glorious Constitution!" The people are beginning to know that there is no mystery in the term constitution; it simply means the whole body of the laws—the machinery by which Government exercises its functions. As such it has been undergoing perpetual changes; and we are of opinion that it requires many and great ones to make it answer the end of its creation. We believe that there are in it defects which render it in some cases useless, and in others mischievous; and we are desirous of seeing it renovated and repaired. We believe, also, that its principles are better than its practice. The distinguishing principles of the British Constitution are, government by King, Lords, and Commons—responsibility of public officers—and a due regard to the rights and interests and liberties of the whole people. I am not going to discuss the question whether a limited monarchy be, in the abstract, the very best of all possible forms of Government. I believe, from our habits and feelings and institutions, it is the best for us; and we will rest satisfied with it as it ought to be. Give us a King elevated, as he should be, by his principles and station, above the petty turmoils and interests of the world; regulating as a mainspring the machinery of the State; equally curbing the rapacity and ambition of the aristocracy and the inconsiderate wildness of the multitude. Give us a House of Lords exalted, as it ought to be, by its wisdom, its dignity, and impartiality; suitably checking the ambition of the King, watching over the great landed interests of the country, and curbing, when needful, the waywardness of the people. Give us a genuine House of Commons, fully, freely, and honestly representing the wishes and wants of the democracy; keeping both the King and the Lords in check by a salutary watchfulness over the public expenditure. Give us such a reality of an efficient limited monarchy, and we ask nothing further; but the people are becoming too much alive to their own rights to be contented with less. The days are gone, and gone for ever, when kings, and lords, and aristocratical commoners could, with impunity, form an unholy league against the interests and liberties of the great mass of the people. The theory of our Constitution is good—that the three estates should act as a mutual check upon each other. So long as a just equilibrium is maintained, so long we have a good Government and a happy country; but whenever the

balance is destroyed, then is the Constitution practically annihilated. Should we ever have the misfortune to see a King the mere puppet of the nobility, or a House of Lords the mere tools of the monarch, or a House of Commons merely echoing the voice of the peerage—that moment the people ought to stand forth in their constitutional majesty, proclaim the mighty truth “that all Government ought to be exercised, on the sole principle of its institution, for the general good, and not for the advancement of particular interests,” and demand, with irresistible firmness, the honourable fulfilment of the great national compact.

So jealous is the Constitution in principle of the interference of peers in the election of commoners, that it is declared to be a breach of privilege for any peer to intermeddle in an election. Nay, so far is this constitutional jealousy carried, that during the time of an election no peer is permitted to be within four miles of the county town! This is the principle, but what is the practice? Do we not all know that peers not only interfere in the choice of members for the Lower House of Parliament, but that, by their simple will and influence, they return the majority of the House of Commons—thus rendering it, not what it purports to be, and ought to be, a separate and independent branch of the Legislature, but a subservient second chamber of the House of Lords! So jealous we are of aristocratical influence in name, whilst we basely submit to it in reality.

We meet with no man bold enough in the present day to deny in words that the people should be represented; but how few of our lauded proprietors are there who practically admit of the unrestricted exercise of this great right! I go not to the boroughs—those sinks of pollution, those foul stains upon the morals and character of our country—I appeal to your proud, landed, county representation. When the enlightened, honest, and patriotic Charles Brownlow had the moral courage to avow his changed convictions upon the subject of Catholic Emancipation—when the yell of Orangeism was raised against him from one end of Ireland to the other—when the grateful Catholic peasantry would almost have kissed the ground upon which he trod—how did the Orange county of Armagh vote at the subsequent election? The Orange candidate, Colonel Verner, was supported generally, even by the Catholics residing upon the estates of Orange landlords; whilst the staunch Williamites upon the Charlemont, Brownlow, and other properties, returned the emancipating candidate by an overwhelming majority! I need not refer, in illustration of the same fact, to the late elections for Antrim and Down. The scenes there exhibited are fresh in all

your recollections ; and yet these are our boasted moral, religious, and enlightened counties ! Who can look at these things, and dare to talk of freedom of election, or to say that the people are represented ? No, sir ; according to the working of our present system, the tax-eaters, the great landlords and borough-mongers alone, are represented, and not the tax-payers, the industrious commonalty of the realm. I abhor this system as a subversion of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, as contrary to the plainest maxims of human justice, and as giving a destructive preponderance to the aristocratical branch of the Legislature. Sir, I would deprive the rich man of none of his just rights, but I would prevent him from treading upon the consciences of the poor. I am jealous of wealth and power ; their tendency ever has been to corrupt the indigent, and to trample upon the weak. This unhallowed tendency I would counteract by giving the democratical part of the Legislature its natural and necessary influence. I entertain no fear of the democratic portion of the State acquiring too much power ; we are assembled here to-day because it has hitherto possessed far too little. When did the House of Commons plunder the aristocracy to provide places, and pensions, and sinecures for the poor ? Never ; but can it be as truly averred that the industrious have never been plundered to satisfy the ambition and cupidity of the rich ? I am, therefore, anxious that the democracy of these realms should obtain their natural rights as guaranteed to them by the theory of the Constitution. We ask no favour, no boon : we demand that which it is equally a matter of justice and expediency to grant. Yes, sir, the safety of the country calls aloud for reasonable, ample, timely concessions to the just claims of the people. By refusing just rights, an awful spirit may be engendered, which, when once in motion, will not stop at the barriers of natural equity, but sweep away, in its wild, headlong course, all that is sanctioned even by unquestionable right. The friends of reform are the enemies of revolution. The sufferings of the people are making them politicians and calculators of privileges. They are beginning to complain of the niggardly hand with which the public money is withheld from purposes of public usefulness, whilst it is lavishly squandered upon objects of vanity or profligacy. When anything is wanted for the benefits of the people, economy is pleaded ; whilst the very next day, perhaps, a sinecure or pension of ten times the amount is given to an individual. We were ten years in getting a paltry grant of £1500 per annum for the Belfast Institution, which was conferring the greatest blessings upon Ulster ; but at the very same instant the pampered, aristocratic attendants and menials of

George III. were receiving £40,000 a-year out of the public treasury. I do not wish to excite odium against the affluent, or those in power; but these are open, daring, crying abuses; and the people should plainly, manfully, and moderately declare that they will not allow such a system to be continued.

But how is a change to be effected? Will the aristocracy unite to curtail their own pleasures and privileges? The hope is vain. The evil must be remedied by sending into the House of Commons genuine representatives of the people, instead of the mere echoes of the nobility that now make an idle mockery of representation. But can this be accomplished under our present system of voting? We have the theory, but not the fact of representation. We say that freeholders have a right to vote. Now, sir, a right, in its very nature, implies the privilege of doing an action without incurring a penalty. A penal right is a contradiction in terms; and the very meaning of the word franchise is free, uncontrolled choice. To say that a man has a right to vote for a representative, and then to punish him for exercising it, is an insolent mockery both of justice and common sense. What, then, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, is the freedom practically enjoyed by our voters? Why they are perfectly free to vote—just as their landlord commands them! If they dare to murmur, some kind agent or gentle bailiff gives them a hint that they hold their farms by life leases, that men's breath is in their nostrils, and that, perhaps, other tenants more grateful to a good landlord may be found! A few intrepid men may be proof against this rhetoric. I have known some who kept a conscience and died in destitution. But with the great majority it is all-persuasive. They shout lustily for the man they hate, "give their sweet voices" at the word of command, dance gaily to the music of their chains, and call out to every passer-by, "Don't you see that we are freemen!" It would be a decent, charitable, Christian act for landlords, instead of assisting at the performance of such debasing and demoralising farces, to drive into the county in due state—put the Lord-Lieutenant or Governor of the County in the chair—take a good dinner—get mellow with champagne and claret—make pretty speeches about the British Constitution and the freedom of the people—and then pull out their lists of registered voters, some five, some fifty, some one hundred, and place the numbers under the names of the respective candidates—finishing the whole drama of election by the simple operation of addition and subtraction. Would not this system save the tenants an amazing deal of trouble and degradation, and, perchance, of crime? Would it not, in many cases, save the

landlords themselves from the infamy of compelling their unfortunate tenantry to sell their country and their consciences for a morsel of bread? I go not to corrupt open boroughs—to Carrickfergus and its hundreds of compeers—I take the present system, in its most favourable state, in our great counties—and even there it corrupts almost all concerned. In fact, in its various ramifications and influences, it contaminates the whole body politic. It suppresses public opinion—demoralises the peasant—makes a tyrant of the landlord—puts slaves and speculators into Parliament—corrupts the navy and the army—and fills the country with placemen and pensioners. Nay, the very sanctuary is not free from its pollution—it is a powerful engine of Church preferment—it places mitres upon the heads of those who have no other qualifications but their political phiancy—and, worst of all, it sometimes poisons the very fountains of justice by placing upon the judgment-seat, as the arbiter of men's lives and fortunes, a mere political prostitute and slave!

Against so infamous a system every Christian and lover of his country is bound to raise his voice. How is this to be overthrown? By two very simple powers—the extension of the elective franchise; and, above all, vote by ballot. The former of these will be discussed by other speakers: to the consideration of the latter I now solicit your attention. An ancient philosopher, speaking of the power of the lever, observed “that, if he had a lever of sufficient length, and a prop upon which to rest it, he could move the globe by the power of his single arm.” Such an amazing power, in political affairs, would be vote by ballot. Give me but this single reform, this simple political lever, and I engage, in a very few years, completely to raise up the mighty incubus of corruption that has so long pressed with a deadly weight upon all the vital energies of the country. I hold it to be a political axiom, that if men have a right to vote, they should have every facility of exercising their privilege, without the undue influence either of hope or fear. This freedom from corrupt influences can only be secured by secret voting. Whenever this shall become universal, and not till then, we shall have honest electors and honest representatives. It is not the mere forty shilling or ten pound freeholder who requires to be defended from corrupt influences: the man of property, who would indignantly exclaim against the poor wretch who sold his vote for five pounds to purchase food or clothing, might quietly do the same thing to obtain a living in the Church or a cadetship in India for one of his family. The Ballot, and the Ballot alone, will put an end to all this corrupt traffic in consciences, both amongst the great and little vulgar

of the land. This is so self-evident, that every man feels its truth ; and to me it would scarcely seem more teasing and preposterous to be called upon for proof of my own existence than to prove that the Ballot and honest voting must go hand in hand. However, as there are still a few of the aristocracy and their retainers who wish to keep the people in real slavery, whilst they amuse them with the idea of nominal freedom, I have culled all their arguments, or rather hollow pretexts, from the press and conversation ; and I shall now proceed “to scatter them into thin air.” The fact that the highest legal authority, and one of the most powerful minds in the empire, has only been able to oppose the Ballot by shallow sophisms, is the best proof that it cannot be resisted by sound argument. I have heard that a learned gentleman is about to favour us this day with his sage counsel : I sincerely hope that he may ; but, in the mean time, wanting his objections, I must deal with such as have been propounded by others.

“The Ballot would destroy the bold, manly, independent spirit of the people.” “God forbid,” said Mr. Brougham, “that I should ever live to see the day when an Englishman shall be afraid to come forward and give his vote before the world !” This was very pretty and very rhetorical on the part of the learned gentleman ; but I am certain he and his friends must have laughed heartily at the sarcastic joke which he passed upon Parliament. He could not have been in earnest. Bold and independent spirit, indeed ! I shall not speak of the bold and manly spirit of our pot-wallowing and freemen boroughs : I will take the objectors on their highest ground—a county—even our free and independent county of Antrim. Behold, then, a posse of our bold, manly electors hanging upon a hired coach, distinguished by such a label—“Lord Belfast’s Friends,” or “Mr. M’Donnell’s Friends”—and obsequiously attended to Carrickfergus by the bailiff. There they are received by the under-agent, or some attorney’s clerk, and carefully conducted to the tally-room and the booth, where they “give their sweet voices” in presence of the agent. Thence they proceed to the houses of free entertainment, eat and drink like a parcel of mendicant paupers, shout for a man about whom they care not the value of a straw, and return home upon a filthy coach, amidst drunken drivers and bailiffs ! You know that the picture is not overcharged ; though I am free to admit that many honourable men did not stoop to such degradation. And this promotes a bold and manly spirit, and keeps alive the flame of public liberty ! No, sir ; it galls and breaks the spirit of men ; it extinguishes the very embers of public liberty. It is easy for men in the midst of affluence and security to talk of the

poor dependent elector "boldly voting in the face of his landlord"—voting his wife and family adrift upon a cold and merciless world! It is worse than mockery, it is insult, to talk thus of the helpless tenant; and the shamelessness of it is doubled, coming from men, as it usually does, who cannot resist the very smiles of the great—who, living in perfect temporal independence, yet sacrifice their political integrity to a cold pressure of the hand, or a heartless banquet in a lordly hall! The peasant should despise the frown of the lord who can make him a homeless beggar; but the man of fortune may honourably truckle and cringe, in order to enjoy his hollow approbation! Do I, however, blame the wretched peasant on account of the degradation into which he is compelled to sink. God forbid: I pity him from the bottom of my heart. I am myself a husband and a father; and I pray that I may never be placed between the dreadful alternatives of ruining my innocent family or sacrificing my conscience that they may obtain bread. No, sir, I blame not the victim; I look upon him with compassion, as I do upon the ruined object of the vile seducer's arts; but I abhor the system under which his integrity is broken down, and I condemn the landlord who has been the instrument of his seduction. The hollowness of the pretext about a manly spirit is, however, ludicrously illustrated by the conduct of the very men who use it. In all their own associations and clubs—literary, hunting, drinking, or agricultural—they constantly vote by ballot! Bravery is an essential requisite in the poor farmer: he ought to look proud and desperate in the face of the man who can render him a beggar; but noble lords and worthy gentlemen ought to be afraid of each other, though they cannot be curtailed of one single earthly enjoyment. It is an excellent thing for the poor man to defy the frown of his oppressor; but a mighty silly thing for the rich man to look with indifference upon the powder and ball of his equal! Oh, let it never again be said that open voting sustains the manly spirit of the elector: it degrades him in every way; but especially in his own estimation—which is worst of all.

"The Ballot would destroy the just and natural influence of landlords." That I boldly deny. It would annihilate their unjust and unnatural influence. True, the landlord could no longer act the tyrant, and secure the vote of his slave; but I fearlessly ask, has the proprietor any natural right to the conscience of his tenant? In all the proper relations subsisting between them—in respect, fidelity, observance of engagements—the tenant ought to render, and will render, a due deference to his just and considerate landlord; but in the exercise

of his elective franchise, he stands in a different relation; he owes it as a sacred duty to his family and to his country to support the man whom, in his conscience, he believes best fitted to advance the interests of the State. Should his landlord therefore demand his vote against his conviction, he is bound to say—"I made no compact of this kind; my vote I owe to my country, and my conscience to my God; in all things honest I will obey you, but here you have no right to command, and I have no right to obey." Under the present system, the greatest tyrant is most certain of obedience; or, in other words, of profiting by an unnatural influence: under the operation of vote by ballot, he would lose all his unrighteous power, and be forced, in self-defence, to become what he ought to be—the father of his people. Wanting the unhallowed influence of mere terror, he would seek for the hallowed influence of affection; and, in diffusing happiness around him, he would establish peace in his own breast. His wide domains might not be covered with wretched hovels and fawning slaves; but would he not have more genuine pleasure in beholding everywhere around him happy faces and smiling cabins, the humble abodes of innocence and peace? Our landed proprietors are generally the praiseworthy patrons of education and religious societies; they desire to see the Bible in every house. This is well; but I put it to their understandings and their Christian feelings, are they not undermining the principles of religion, and counteracting the precepts of the Gospel, when they demand from their tenants the sacrifice of conscience during an election? Would not both parties be great gainers by a complete removal of all temptation? Besides, an excellent landlord might be a very bad judge of the best member of Parliament. Take, for instance, Lord Donegall, to whom we all most cheerfully concede the honourable title of "the best of landlords," and of whom, in his social character, we can never speak without sincere respect. Now it is possible, though perhaps not probable, that his lordship might propose as a candidate a fool or a knave. Ought the electors upon his estate, in such a case, to vote according to his will? Everyone must answer—No. Just as little right would he have to demand support for a candidate whose political principles and conduct were displeasing to the people. The loss of outward homage no proprietor need dread. The shame of our peasantry is too much obsequiousness to wealth and power. My spirit has often burned within me, when I saw a venerable patriarch of the fields standing uncovered, and his grey hair streaming on the winds of winter, in presence of a fellow-mortal inferior to himself in all the essentials of manhood! One thing more, in this relation, the Ballot

would accomplish—the knave would no longer prosper by his sycophancy, nor the honest man suffer for the maintenance of his integrity. The representatives also would be improved. Tried by their actions instead of their acres, having to rely for future support upon their Parliamentary conduct, and not their worldly connexions, they would be compelled to do their duty, and to secure permanent support by those qualifications which conciliate esteem.

“The people desire the Ballot as a cloak for their own cowardice.” Having annihilated the two grand objections, I shall dismiss this and all the rest in a very summary way. Let it be admitted that the peasantry are cowardly—that they are not sufficiently “brave” to surrender, without a tear, the home of their fathers, the cabin in which they were born, the roof which has been consecrated by the dearest conjugal and parental affections—let it be admitted that they are not “manly” enough “to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm,” without a shelter, without money, without employment, without friends! Admit all this, and what is our duty? Shall we compel them to become knaves, because they wanted fortitude to become martyrs? If we saw the halt and the maimed toil on their weary journey, ought we to cast stumbling-blocks in their way, still farther to impede their course, and then mock them with the slowness of their progress? No, sir, we should benevolently clear all obstacles out of their way, in compassion for their infirmity; and thus should we deal with the dependent elector. If he want moral fortitude to bring ruin upon his head, we should remove the temptation to sacrifice his conscience. Perhaps it would be well that he should nobly starve; but as he may not be of the same mind, as he may want courage to rush unarmed into the midst of danger, I think it could be no great harm to cover him with the shield of the Ballot! Truly, it is sickening to hear some men talk of the cowardice of poor electors. I never knew one of them that would not cringe, and contract his soulless body, and mould his features into sycophantic obsequiousness in the presence of his superior in rank and fortune; and yet such a reptile will talk of manhood!

It is alleged that “the Ballot would not prevent perjury, hypocrisy, and falsehood.” Very possibly the Ballot might not prevent all these crying evils; but, in comparison with the present hateful system, it would lessen them a thousand-fold. Bribery would cease; for no man could calculate upon the vote of a wretch who had received the wages of corruption. The villain who would sell himself to one party, would sell himself with equal readiness to another. With bribery, perjury would cease; they are inseparable twins, an unholy offspring, generated

by ambition upon the present corrupting system of open voting. Were there no bribes, there would be no daring profanation of the sanctity of an oath. Even falsehood would gradually disappear; for where breach of promise could not be detected, pledges would not be required. Not so at present. During the late Down election, did not several landlords compel their tenants to break solemn engagements, entered into with their own sanction? Junctions would cease—great lords would soon find it vain to attempt making close boroughs of great counties. They might unite; but the people would follow the dictates of their own minds. Let it be granted, however, that some hypocrisy would still exist—that some would promise on one side and vote on another. The hypocrisy here would at least produce no public evil. The falsehood would lie at the door of the offender; but, as he would vote honestly, the community could not suffer. Now the present system, in the majority of cases, is a practical falsehood from beginning to end. They vote against their convictions, they sell their country for personal convenience, they lie unto God, though they may observe a hollow promise before man.

It is farther objected, “that demagogues would be sent into Parliament.” This might possibly be the case, in some rare instances, were the suffrage universal. I wish well to the humblest of the people; but, I do believe, that in the present state of information and feeling amongst the humbler classes, the elective franchise would neither benefit themselves nor their country. I wish to see property and intelligence largely and fairly represented; and America and France afford glorious examples that vote by Ballot can secure the best interests of nations. The former rivals the oldest states in power, and is almost unburdened with debt; the latter banished a tyrant from the throne, and elected a patriot monarch. Such are the wonderful practical results of the honest and simple system of Ballot.

But it is alleged “that the secret could not be kept.” Does not this admit that, if practicable, it would be desirable? The reason is worthy of the highest seat in the House of Lords—“Men would tell their wives, and wives would tell their neighbours, and neighbours would tell the landlord.” This is a very pretty process, and shows that the Lord Chancellor approves of conjugal confidence. In this excellent sentiment I entirely concur; and declare my conviction, that it would be well for most families if wives were treated with more confidence, and exercised more influence. So high is my opinion of their discretion, that I have no fear of their blabbing any secret that would turn themselves and the dearest objects of their affections adrift

upon the world. Indeed, it is almost a shame to waste words upon such a mere shadow of argument.

The last objection is that "the Ballot will prevent men from showing their attachment to persons and principles." Ay, "there's the rub." This is, I solemnly believe, "the root of the matter" with the few voters who are still opposed to the Ballot—it would prevent them from parading their sycophancy and servility before the world. As to the aristocrats, they oppose it on the evident principle of self. They must give a nominal representation, and they wish to render it practically useless. I have seen a fine, sleek, polite cat deal with a poor trembling mouse with great gentleness and courtesy. She would allow it to move about, quite a freeholder, to a certain extent; but whenever it attempted to enter its hole, out flew the wily paw of its gentle guardian. Just in the same manner many of our great landlords desire to play and sport with their tenants. They are freeholders and freemen, no doubt, but they will not let them escape into the cover of the Ballot.

I intended to refer to history to prove that vote by Ballot had been often sought, and sometimes enjoyed in England; but I have already detained you too long; and this meeting will look less to precedent than to right. The frightful scenes just exhibited in Liverpool, where the public papers aver that 3400 electors have been bribed; the oppressions at Newark and Stamford, the ten thousand perjuries and crimes that attend every general election, the sickness and corruption of the whole body-politic—all these things cry, trumpet-tongued, for change to alleviate the sufferings of man, and avert the anger of Heaven. The principal towns and counties of the empire are calling for the Ballot; and the voice of the universal people must and will be heard.

I shall conclude by saying that I have come forward this day because I love my country and my kind. I wish to leave my children the subjects of a free State. Worldly goods it will not be in my power to bestow; but I solemnly declare that I would rather leave them penniless in the enjoyment of Civil and Religious Liberty, than possessed of millions of silver and gold in a land where their consciences would be enthralled, and their natural rights invaded. Whilst a gracious Providence gives me power, I shall raise my voice in vindication of Civil Liberty; for if there be tyranny in the State, there will ever be intolerance in churches: and I shall also strive for religious freedom; for where bigotry reigns in the sanctuary, there will not long be liberty in the State. I am no wild innovator—no revolutionist. I wish not to see the Constitution overthrown; I would have the ancient and venerable fabric repaired, and such additions made to the

structure as are required by our circumstances and times. God forbid that by an obstinate neglect of these it should be permitted to fall in ruin upon our devoted heads !

[“It is impossible for us to convey any correct idea of the effect which Mr. Montgomery’s splendid and powerful speech produced on the meeting. We have preferred giving his address without interrupting it by marking the frequent and strong expressions of approbation with which it was received ; but we never did witness a more perfect example of the mastery of eloquence over the human feelings.”—
“Northern Whig.”]

APPENDIX I.

LETTER TO DANIEL O'CONNELL, ESQ., M.P., FROM THE REV.

H. MONTGOMERY, M.A., FEBRUARY, 1831.*

SIR,—Many of my friends can testify how intensely mortified I felt a few weeks ago by your fulsome panegyrics. Smarting under your degrading adulation, I was disposed to exclaim with Phocion, “What foolish thing have I said, what wicked thing have I done, that *he* should praise me!” Last week, however, you washed away the stain of your approbation by a torrent of abuse; and my character has regained that station which, I am proud to think, it long held in public estimation. For almost twenty years I have been the consistent, uncompromising enemy of arbitrary power and exclusive laws upon the one hand, and of wild democratical theories and anarchical projects on the other. The supercilious tyranny of an aristocracy is hateful; but the ignorant, heartless despotism of a mob is a thousand times more appalling. In consequence of my unconcealed sentiments upon these subjects, I have neither been a favourite with aristocrats nor demagogues; but I thank God that I have lived to obtain the approbation of a numerous and influential class of my countrymen who are equally removed from both extremes—men who have been the unswerving advocates of equal rights and honest laws; men who, in the worst of times, discreetly preserved themselves from the contamination of faction, whilst, by the powerful moral influence of their wisdom and their virtues, they restrained the unhallowed fury of parties; men who, in co-operation with others of similar sentiments and character throughout the empire, will press onward the great cause of national regeneration, to the equal discomfiture of those worthless beings that would perpetuate abuses for the benefit of the few, and of those still more unprincipled wretches who, to gratify their own malignity or ambition, would, without cause, involve their unfortunate country in all the horrors of a sanguinary revolution. It was, sir, from your intimate knowledge of the fact that my name is associated with the sentiments of the enlightened and influential body

* See Chap. xxiii., pp. 429–34.

of men to whom I have referred—the consistent, temperate, and patriotic reformers of Ulster—that you meanly stooped to the lowest, fawning sycophancy, in order to avert the indignant expression of the opinions of independent Irishmen with regard to your wild and criminal schemes of agitation, and falsely to impress upon the minds of the people of Great Britain and the South of Ireland, that the liberal reformers of this Province were ready to follow the wheels of your triumphant chariot. This despicable trick only hastened the catastrophe which you dreaded. The liberal Dissenters of Ireland, from North to South, who to a man had been the zealous advocates of Catholic Emancipation, and who are at present no less united in the great cause of rational and effectual reform, promptly threw off the incubus of your praise, and amply proved that, whilst they are the uncompromising friends of liberty, they are equally the determined enemies of anarchy and confusion. Their Address* to the Lord-Lieutenant, coming from men of intelligence, property, and moral respectability—from men who have ever been equally distinguished by their sincere regard for the just prerogatives of the Crown, and their strenuous maintenance of the indefeasible rights of the people—from men who have never fawned or crouched; who have never concealed one opinion, religious or political, which they truly entertained, or feigned one sentiment which they did not feel—such an Address, at such a time, gave the first death-wound to your destructive projects. Had it emanated from Orangemen, it might have been regarded as the offspring of party hatred; had it proceeded from members of the Established Church, it might have been represented as the work of those who desired to perpetuate a selfish monopoly; but coming from the liberal Dissenters of Ireland, the hereditary and proverbial assertors of freedom, whom you had endeavoured to represent as participating in your sentiments, it operated like a talisman upon your chimerical scheme of agitation, and dissolved the charm by which so many of the people had been held in delusion. Were anything wanting to prove that our Address was both well-timed and efficacious, it would be found in the ungoverned, ridiculous, and malignant fury into which it has driven yourself and your myrmidons of the press. You know, you feel that it materially tended to turn the tide of popular opinion; and the current is now running against you with a rapidity and a force which you have no power to stem.

At this moment you afford a melancholy but instructive lesson to all who would gratify a depraved ambition, or advance their selfish

* See pp. 425–27.

interests, by sacrificing the peace and prosperity of their native land. Although you have lauded me with a disgusting meanness in order to involve me in your snares, and abused me with a reckless malignity to gratify a disappointed resentment, I can assure you that I entertain towards you, at this moment, no sentiment but a feeling of compassion, mingled with irrepressible contempt. It is impossible to consider what you *might* have been, and to behold what you *are*, without almost forgetting your follies and offences in contemplating the deplorable effects of your fatuity. Sir, you *might* have been a respectable, useful, and influential man. The circumstances of the times, the anomalous condition of your native land, and the peculiar tendencies of your own mind, all conspired to raise you above the crowd of ordinary men. Although nature had not bestowed upon you an understanding of the highest order, you were gifted with a tact, an address, and, above all, an unbounded self-confidence, which enabled you to display to the greatest advantage whatever talents you possessed, and frequently to take the lead of abler men. Hence you were placed—by popular opinion at least, if not by your brother barristers—in the first class of the legal profession. With such a reputation and such qualifications, you were eminently calculated to become a popular leader, and to rally round you the affections of an injured and degraded people. Even when you went astray (and your aberrations were not few), every generous mind was disposed to put a charitable construction upon the actions of a man smarting under unmerited privations, and struggling for the attainment of his natural rights. Whilst several of your schemes were so wild and injudicious that many of the best friends of Emancipation frequently doubted your sincerity, *you* still retained your pre-eminence, although much wiser and better men were cast into the shade. Finally, when that great act of national justice was consummated, which restored the Catholic to his inalienable rights in his native land, you were hailed with almost universal acclaim as the sole instrument of the great deliverance. Had you then manifested a conciliatory disposition—had you been inclined to forget and to forgive—you would have entered Parliament with the amazing moral power of public opinion at your back; and although your mind is essentially unstatesmanlike, and utterly incapable of taking enlarged views of national policy or the general interests of the world, you might have rendered essential service to your country in the minor details of business and reforms of law. In due time you might have worn with honour the peaceful robes of a Baron—perhaps the *Chief Baron*—of the Exchequer, by the side of your old friend, Mr. Leslie Foster; and,

dying in honoured age, there might have been inscribed upon your tomb—"THE BENEFACITOR OF HIS COUNTRY."

Sir, I almost forget your unmeasured and unprovoked abuse, when I contemplate the golden opportunities of usefulness and honour, of Christian peace and enduring fame, which you have sacrificed to a reckless and destructive ambition. There is no mystery, however, in your rise, and as little in your fall. The hour of Catholic Emancipation was the meridian of your glory; and from that hour your sun has been rapidly going down. At that period you made several natural, but egregious blunders. Surrounded by sycophants, constitutionally arrogant and vain, and living upon the dainties of flattery as your daily fare, you imagined that you had created the circumstances which gave you importance—forgetting the simple fact that circumstances had *created you*. But for the wrongs of the Catholics of Ireland, Daniel O'Connell would, in all likelihood, never have attained to a higher rank than that of a jovial, second-rate barrister. Ages of unjust and inpolitic exclusion had prepared the people for your harangues: the soil was ready for the seed. You seemed to forget that in such a condition of society, or, indeed, in any condition, no superlative talents are required to constitute a successful demagogue. If he possess abundance of effrontery, a due portion of inherent vulgarity, a reasonable acquaintance with the worst parts of human nature, a decided talent for fawning and bullying, as may suit his turn, and a total disregard of means, provided they be calculated to promote his ends, he may become an admirable leader of the rabble, without genius, without taste, without general attainments, and without honesty.

About the same period you fell into another error, under whose unhappy influence you have laboured ever since. You assumed to yourself, and continue to arrogate, *the sole and undivided* merit of Catholic Emancipation. All the Protestants, all the Dissenters, all the Catholics, all the eloquence of our most illustrious statesmen, both living and dead, and all the public writers of the United Kingdom, had "neither lot nor part in the matter!" So at least you have stated a thousand times in such modest phrases as these—"I emancipated Ireland—I gave you freedom—I made Wellington tremble—I sacrificed my interests for yours!" Now, sir, this may be all perfectly true, and I do not wish, unnecessarily, to pluck a single feather from the eagle pinions of your soaring vanity; but I am bound to express my own decided conviction that *Emancipation would have been sooner granted if you had never been born*. The plans of agitation which you organised from time to time; the dissension which you

sowed at one period among the Catholics themselves; the abuse which you heaped upon all who ventured to dissent from your opinions—all these tended to alienate the minds of friends, to embitter the hostility of opponents, and to retard the hour of disentrainment. The great excitement in which you glory, and of which you boast as having been the immediate cause of Emancipation, is one to which I wonder how you can advert without shuddering. You had brought our unfortunate country to the brink of an awful precipice, and the fatal plunge was prevented *by no merit of yours!* Had not General Thornton behaved with exemplary forbearance, and Mr. Lawless with a discretion superior to that of his employers, an international war would have commenced at Ballybay; and in the prosecution of your projects, the green fields of our country would have been crimsoned with the blood of her deluded children! Whether the just alarm excited by that event accelerated the progress of Emancipation, or whether, as some allege, the immediate cause may be traced to the state of our foreign relations, I do not pretend to say; but, for my own part, I am unable to conceive how you can rejoice in being the organiser of measures which had almost plunged your native country into civil war!

Why do I mention these things? To show the origin of that overweening vanity which has brought so much degradation upon yourself, and prevented the restoration of amity and peace in this unfortunate land. When re-elected for Clare, you would not retire to enjoy the endearments of your family, the society of your friends, and the temperate applause of your fellow-citizens. No; you sighed for the shouts of your darling multitudes, you commenced a new career of agitation, you disgusted all the best friends of Ireland, and you entered Parliament only to be shunned and despised as a restless demagogue. Your Parliamentary course has exhibited the most remarkable failure and degradation upon record. There was an expectation excited by your reputation as a popular orator: you rose—the House was still as death, and you began to address a society of gentlemen; but you were out of your natural element, there was no mob to cheer you; you dared not to swagger, and to denounce men to their faces whom you had abused amidst the huzzas of your ignorant multitudes—your heart sunk within you, and you slunk down, a pitiable spectacle of mortified ambition. All your subsequent efforts were equally abortive; and you have now obtained the distinction of speaking more frequently and with less effect than any other member of the House of Commons. Nor is this the worst that has befallen

you. You have been brought to a strict account for many of the daring and unfounded assertions by which you calumniated private and public characters in order to inflame the minds of the ignorant populace. Mr. Doherty, whom you call a "fourth-rate lawyer," repeatedly trod you in the dust; Mr. Peel covered you with contempt; Mr. George Robert Dawson completely foiled you; and, in fact, you have not measured swords with any member that did not easily disarm you. The humiliating exhibitions which you made caused even your enemies to pity you. But, as you told your partisans on your return to Dublin, "the vile press did not report you!" Oh! what crying injustice in that "infamous London press," to cause a mild, modest, gentle Irishman to *appear* to have been detected in awkward misstatements, and to have been defeated in every conflict, when, in reality, he ever spoke the truth, and was always victorious! I have not the smallest doubt but your charge against the press is every whit as *true* as your pretty tale of Lord Fitzwilliam's Ejectments, or Mr. Conway's Pension, or the tolerable offer which the present Administration made you, of a Chief Justiceship for yourself at home, and a Judgeship for your son-in-law in India! You are literally an *honourable* gentleman; for, as you say, "you are bound in honour not to give up your authorities" for these wonderful statements! In fact, "to do so would bring ruin upon your informants," and you therefore generously take the martyrdom upon yourself!

Was I wrong then, sir, in saying that you are an object both of compassion and contempt? All the flattery of your toad-eaters, and all the shouts of your Dublin mobs, cannot prevent "the still small voice" from whispering in your ear that you are a fallen, and a justly fallen man. With such a knowledge deeply seated in your own breast, what would have been the part of true wisdom and genuine fortitude? A verbal expression of contrition could scarcely have been expected; but practical repentance might have been manifested, and your lost honour, at least in some degree, regained. You could have ceased to agitate upon ruinous and distracting questions; you could have inculcated peace instead of discord; you could have recommended a cheerful obedience to the laws, instead of pointing out expedients to evade them; you could have given a fair trial to the new Administration; and you could have laboured to cement the union of Irishmen in the paramount cause of reform. Had you pursued this course you might have been a happy man. You would not have been tortured, as you now are, with a brain of fire, and a heart boiling like a cauldron with angry and unhallowed passions; you would equally

have wanted the title of arch-agitator and arch-enemy of your native land. But instead of following a course which wisdom, patriotism, Christian charity, nay, even well-considered selfishness would have pointed out, what have you done? Sunk in the House of Commons, put down by men whom you hated and despised, exposed as an audacious vendor of slanderous fabrications, you resolved to show to the world that if you were powerless and contemned in Parliament, you had still influence sufficient to embarrass an honest Government by exciting a turbulent and insurrectionary spirit amongst the ignorant portions of your countrymen. You dexterously drew upon the credit of your former popularity in a good cause to aid you in propping up a scheme of agitation equally bankrupt in principle and character. What was it to you that the dying embers of party spirit were again to be fanned into a flame; the stability and confidence of commercial interests broken down; the expenses of Government heavily augmented by increasing the standing army, the militia, and the yeomanry; the very intercourse of social life embittered; merchants and manufacturers reduced to ruin; the labouring classes brought to desolation; and the ignorant multitude prepared for outrage and rebellion! All these, and a thousand other calamities, were as nothing, provided they enabled Daniel O'Connell to beard the Government, and to have his name, in praise or censure, the theme of every tongue.

“This, if not victory, was yet revenge!”

In carrying forward this mad scheme of vengeance, to gratify inordinate vanity and mortified ambition, you have amply illustrated the melancholy fact that men can do much mischief who are comparatively powerless in doing good; and that, when an individual engages in projects unsanctioned by wisdom and virtue, he involves himself in a labyrinth of inconsistencies and errors from which there is no escaping. This is the humiliating situation to which you have unhappily reduced yourself at the present moment. There is scarcely a principle which you ever advocated that you have not since deserted; nor a friend of Catholic rights whom you have not alternately lauded and abused. The Marquis of Anglesey, the high-minded representative of our patriot King, whose generous sacrifices so materially contributed to advance the cause of Emancipation, has been the object of your incessant, cold-blooded, indecent vituperation. The enlightened and intrepid editor of the “*Evening Post*,” for whose invaluable labours the entire kingdom is indebted, has been assailed with the blackest ingratitude and the foulest calumny. The “*Northern Whig*,” which

so ably advocated your claims when every other journal in Ulster was either silent or hostile, has been attacked with unequalled meanness and malignity. J. D. Latouche, one of the best men and best patriots in Ireland, who stood by you with unyielding fidelity in the worst of times, has become the object of your envenomed reproaches. And even the humble individual who addresses you, and who lays no claim to any merit save that of an abiding, enthusiastic love of his country, has not been able to escape from your furious reprobation. I should not condescend to notice your attack, did it not contain a base and unfounded insinuation, which some persons who do not know me might believe, even though it comes from *you*; and had not your contemptible "Swiss," of the agitation press, supported it by statements and allegations, as unfounded in fact as they are vile in principle, with regard to myself and the truly independent religious body with which I esteem it to be my highest earthly honour to be connected. The statement of our case, besides, will bring you and your supporters more fully before the public; and every illustration of your principles and conduct must tend to quiet agitation and to produce national blessings. I shall place your praise and reprobation in the form of a regular Dr. and Cr. Account; although I am duly sensible that the balance of censure is greatly in my favour.

DANIEL O'CONNELL, ESQ., M.P., SPEAKETH.

DR.

CR.

Dec. 21, 1830.—"The North is arousing itself. The Belfast meeting was transcendently splendid. There never was anything which I read with greater pleasure than the speech of my *excellent* and *respected* friend, the Rev. Mr. Montgomery. He is a Unitarian clergyman; he and I differ widely as human beings can do in religious belief; but that never can produce dissension between us—he is answerable for his belief, as I am for mine. (Hear.) I know his *excellence*, his *charity*, and his *purity of conduct*; may God in heaven bless him! And never

Jan. 21, 1831.—"What do these Presbyterians expect to *gain* by their address? Oh! they want *Regium Donum!*"

Jan. 26, 1831.—"For the honest Presbyterians I entertain the greatest respect; but for those—for that man whom I once called my friend—for the Rev. Henry Montgomery, I entertain the most sovereign contempt. I called him my friend; he is no longer a friend of mine. I boasted of his friendship in public and private, but I arraign him now as a paltry and pitiful slave, for his conduct to-

yet did I read a speech so good for the purpose for which it was intended as that delivered by my *excellent* friend, and never was an abler one pronounced at a public meeting." (Loud and continued cheering.)

January 15, 1831.—"The ever patriotic George Ensor will respond to your call; the brilliant light of the genius of the Montgomery of Belfast may then shine on the route that leads to the legislative independence of Ireland." (Cheers.)

towards me while a prosecution was still pending over me. But he is a reformer—a Belfast reformer; and this is his love of liberty! Henry Montgomery, you are no friend of mine. I despise you, fawning, cringing sycophant." (Loud cheers.)

Now, Mr. O'Connell, "look upon *this* picture and upon *this*." Why, sir, Hamlet's mother was not more capricious than you are. "*A little month!*" "Your bosom friend a bright genius, and a paltry, pitiful slave!" I was totally unconscious of any change in myself; nay, I verily believe that I did not lose my personal identity between the 21st of December and the 21st of January; and I am perfectly certain that, during the whole of that time, and up to the present moment, I never altered my mind with respect to you and your measures of agitation. Many persons can testify that there are two celebrated characters of whom I have never changed my opinion—William Cobbett and Daniel O'Connell. In the *zenith of your glory* I thought, I spoke of you precisely as I do now. It required no penetration to estimate your character. A good cause, for a short period, threw its brightness around you, and dazzled many eyes; but to any man accustomed to look deeper than the surface, a dark *nucleus* of selfishness and vanity was distinctly visible. And why, sir, did such an amazing revolution take place in your sentiments with regard to me in the brief space of one month, nay, of six days? Why? Solely because, in the exercise of my free judgment and natural rights, I ventured to express my opposition to your wild schemes of anarchy and national ruin. "This was the head and front of my offending," and for this I am no longer a "bright genius," but merely a "fawning, cringing sycophant!" *You* dare to talk of liberty of conscience and of speech! Are you not ashamed? Has not Henry Montgomery as good a right to deprecate a Repeal of the Union as Daniel O'Connell

has to advocate the dissolution of that connexion? Sir, your wild and wicked denunciations of every man who has the honesty to oppose your revolutionary projects have eminently tended to strengthen the hands of wholesome government, and to consolidate the national connexion between Great Britain and Ireland. The striking exhibitions which you have given of your temper and designs, even in the midst of your impotency, amply prove what you would be capable of executing had we “a domestic Legislature,” with Daniel O’Connell as “the *bully* of the bad house,” and a Dublin mob and armed soldiery to enforce his decrees! You would not then rant and rave and gnash your teeth in impotent fury; the honest men whom you now denounce as “paltry, pitiful slaves” would be speedily converted into “traitors;” and the bare whisper of opposition to your brutal tyranny would be the prelude of confiscations, dungeons, and scaffolds. I solemnly declare that if I could anticipate the probability of a domestic Government composed of men like-minded with yourself, or subject to your control, I would prepare to fly with my family to the deepest wilds of America, rather than submit to the galling yoke of a heartless, profligate, iron despotism.

I shall not stoop, sir, nor do I require, in this country, to repel your infamous accusation of my being “a sycophant and a slave.” You have, with your characteristic fatuity and want of honour, selected a charge the farthest possible from TRUTH. If I have been remarkable for anything in life, it has been for a spirit and demeanour which rather braved the frowns than courted the smiles of earthly power. In the very Address which has evoked your spleen, we stood in the firm attitude of free-born men and Christians before the representative of a temporal monarch. We compromised, we kept back no sentiment, religious or political, which we ever entertained; and I have good reason to believe that our tribute of respect and confidence was the more graciously received by a generous nobleman, because it emanated from men who did not forget the respect due to themselves. I tell you more, sir; I never was the bond slave of my own degrading passions, nor the contemptible sycophant of a mob! Are you not ashamed to apply the words “paltry and pitiful” to an honourable and irreproachable man, who has raised himself to a station of honest independence by his *own exertions*?—you, who are at this moment lying under the unequalled degradation of supporting a disgraceful splendour by “paltry” pence extorted from the starving paupers of your native land! Whether you may be “unable to *dig*,” I cannot pretend to say; but I am certain that “to *beg* you are not ashamed.” “Paltry.

and pitiful!" Why, sir, such epithets are your own peculiar property; and even the meanest agitator in your train will never dispute your title to their sole enjoyment.

But it seems, according to your own allegation, and that of your satellite "Argus" in the "Freeman's Journal," that I went to Dublin with an Address "in order to crush you while a prosecution was hanging over your head." Now, sir, this is a pretty, mawkish appeal to public sympathy; but it happens to be of the O'Connell school—utterly destitute of foundation! The Address was drawn up by the Northern Synod and Presbytery ten days before your arrest; sent up to Dublin for revision by the Synod of Munster; and a copy of it placed in the hands of the Lord-Lieutenant four days previously to your being taken into custody! I did not even hear of your arrest until I arrived in Dublin, in company with several of my brother deputies from this Province. I did not go to "crush you" in the hour of your misfortune; I went to state that the liberal Dissenters of Ireland abhorred your proceedings, even whilst you were in the plenitude of your power, at the very time when you had, with *Bobalil* courage, "defied Lord Grey," insulted Lord Anglesey, and exhausted the vocabulary of Billingsgate in abusing the young and talented Secretary for Ireland. "A prosecution pending over you!" No, sir, we went "to brave the lion in his den," when you seemed more like the Autocrat of the Empire than a peaceable and loyal subject—when, from the appalling rumours that reached the North, we should not have been surprised had the entrance to Dublin been barricaded ere we approached the city. You well knew, when you uttered the calumny, that we were incapable of acting from the motives which you ascribed to us.

But this, sir, is not the only slander invented by yourself and your myrmidons of the incendiary press. In one of your own speeches, in the editorial remarks of the "Freeman's Journal," in the letter of "Argus," and in a Northern print, which I shall not condescend to name, we are repeatedly and distinctly charged with acting from venal and corrupt motives, in order to advance our own pecuniary interests, by obtaining Royal Bounty. Whatever injury this accusation may inflict upon us, it gives a deeper wound to the characters of those that have preferred it. The man who, without evidence, impeaches the motives of his brother, proves that he is himself capable of acting upon the principles which he imputes. I never knew a man who talked of all the world as rogues that was not himself "an arrant knave." The insinuation of base motives is the vilest of all slanders, because it is the most unmanly, and the most difficult of refutation. The sincerest

worshipper might be branded as a hypocrite, and the purest patriot condemned as an interested speculator. Some have been malicious enough to aver that *you* have set the country in an uproar merely to collect *the farthings of the poor*, and to give a fresh impulse to the "O'Connell Fund;" and you well know how difficult a thing it would be for you to wipe away the gross imputation, although your patriotism may be as pure as the untrodden snow! The Remonstrant Presbyterians, however, are more fortunately circumstanced. Although you and your retainers take it for granted, as an axiomatic truth, that none but "villains" can oppose your projects, there are still some persons in the world who will look a little into evidence before they bring in their verdict. To such individuals, not to you, I appeal in vindication of myself and my ungratefully calumniated brethren.

The "Freeman's Journal" asserts twice, and "Argus" once, "that we are a body of *avowed Arians*, and were *driven* from the Synod of Ulster." Both these assertions are as directly opposed to truth as the east is to the west. So far from being a body of avowed Arians, we have constantly *disavowed* any such bond of union; and we were *not* expelled from the Synod of Ulster. Many ministers, holding our religious views, are still members of that body; and had we been so inclined, we could have remained in it until this hour. The simple facts of the case are these. In the years 1827 and 1828, the majority of the Synod of Ulster violated their own solemn laws, trampled upon their own established usages, broke the compact under which we entered the body, and departed from the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, by erecting human standards of faith. Against these encroachments upon our Christian rights and liberties we contended, we remonstrated, we appealed. During those conflicts, our opponents raised against us the cry of *heresy*; and when this unjust accusation failed in its intended effect, they truly and more injuriously branded us with the epithet of Catholic Emancipators. Certain fanatics had the ingenuity to identify *Orthodoxy and Orangeism*, and thus to array against us two of the most powerful engines of hostility—religious bigotry and political intolerance. Thus encompassed with difficulties, without the least prospect of being able to remain in the Synod of Ulster, some of our own hearers discontented, and the Duke of Wellington, who held in his hand the disposal of the largest portion of our earthly support, apparently irreconcilable to Emancipation—how did we act? Did we shrink from the open and manly avowal of our religious and political opinions in the face of peril? No, sir; we trusted in God, and in the strength of a righteous cause; and every Remonstrant minister

in Ulster was a fearless emancipator, although many of them had their congregations rent in twain by the intrigues of a political faction, and all of them had their Royal Bounty placed in jeopardy by their faithful adherence to the dictates of conscience. And these are the men upon whom you, a Catholic, and your slanderous co-agitators, now turn round and brand them as time-servers and sycophants! As I have been specially singled out for abuse, I am compelled, even at the risk of being called an egotist, to enter upon a special vindication. You will recollect the commencement of the year 1829. From the effects of your agitation, the zeal of the Orange and fanatical party, and various other causes, your prospects were involved in midnight darkness. Lord Wellington had almost insulted the Duke of Leinster, and the Marquis of Anglesey (your idol *then*) was about to be recalled on account of his conversion to your cause. At that very period I had occasion to visit some of the principal towns in England. Did I forget my country? Did I fail to proclaim your injuries and vindicate your rights? No, sir; identified as I then was with the Remonstrant cause in its hour of greatest peril, and well knowing that my name was familiar to some in power, "I cried aloud and spared not," in vindication of your natural and Christian privileges. When I returned to Belfast, there was a meeting of the Catholics of the County Antrim to petition for Emancipation. I shall never forget that day; I looked around for the crowds of Presbyterians who had formerly cheered such assemblies. I saw a few honoured and venerable faces, but there was a melancholy defalcation; and the spirit of despondency brooded over the meeting. Did I, too, sail away upon the ebbing tide of desertion? Did I listen to the prudent counsels of those who told me "that if I raised my voice in that assembly I would ruin the interests of the Remonstrants"? Did I attend to the admonitions of friends who told me truly of the *hundreds I had lost*, and the *thousands I would lose*, as a public teacher, by arraying against myself the power, the fashion, and the opulence of Protestant Ulster? No; Unitarian and Presbyterian though I am, I ascended the steps of a Catholic altar; I had brought cheering tidings across the channel for my Catholic countrymen; I poured forth my whole heart and spirit in their cause, and drove away the demon of despondency that had frowned upon their assembly. For that and many similar exertions I obtained all that I desired—their cordial affection and esteem; I lost but what I expected—a considerable portion of worldly patronage and worldly pelf. And yet, sir, you and your abettors have the baseness and audacity to accuse a man of sacrificing his conscience, in the midst of security, for some paltry

“prospective gain,” who, in the midst of perils, cheerfully surrendered the almost certainty of thousands in vindication of your rights. I blush to be *compelled* to speak thus of myself and my concerns; but it is notorious that I suffered greater pecuniary loss than any other Protestant in Ireland by my uncompromising advocacy of Catholic Emancipation. Yet you, sir, because I have been honest enough to join in reprobation of your follies, have had the black ingratitude to raise against me the war-whoop of faction in a Catholic assembly—ay, and it was answered with *cheers!* I will venture to assert that the cry found no responsive echo amongst the Catholics of Ulster; and, unless I greatly err in my estimate of their hearts, your assault upon me has been chiefly injurious to yourself.

My vindication of the Remonstrants, however, from the charge of selfish sycophancy, is not yet complete. Failing, in spite of their patient efforts, to bring the Synod of Ulster back to its principles and laws, they had, as honest men, but one course to pursue. They, of their own free, voluntary motion, *retired* from a body in which neither they nor their people could any longer enjoy perfect liberty of conscience. Now, sir, did they take this step with all due regard to their pecuniary interests? Did they, *before they retired*, go to the Government and stipulate for the continuance of their *Regium Donum* in their new connexion? No; they obeyed the imperious commands of conscience, with whose prerogatives neither kings nor governments have any right to interfere: they *first did their duty*, irrespective of temporal consequences—they retired from the Synod, and then laid their case before the Wellington Government, who viewed it as they ought, and continued the Remonstrants in the full enjoyment of all their previous immunities. But while they were thus protected by the equitable authority of the State, many of them, in defence of conscience, have been subjected to such politico-religious persecutions by their former brethren, by tyrannical landlords, and by heartless enthusiasts, as would almost bring tears even into *your* eyes. Do you not blush, sir, that you have accused *such men* before the world of servility, selfishness, and meanness, because they honestly exercised their civil rights, and expressed their deep and abiding convictions upon a subject vitally affecting the interests of their country? They have no favour to ask of Government. They have sought—they do seek no new emoluments—no additional advantages. They are satisfied with the peaceable, uninterrupted enjoyment of those privileges which they have always possessed. In withdrawing from the ecclesiastical domination of the General Synod of Ulster, they have not been

actuated by any sentiments of hostility towards that body ; they have invaded none of its rights ; and the only desire they have expressed to the Government is, that such an arrangement of their common affairs may be effected as will be equitable for all parties, and injurious to none. You perceive, then, sir, how “a plain tale can put you down.” I have replied to your dark and unworthy insinuations by an irresistible array of unquestionable facts ; and if anything *could* lower you in the estimation of good men, it would be your ungrateful return for the disinterested services of the steadiest friends of Catholic Emancipation.

Having repelled your attacks upon myself and the religious society with which I am more immediately connected, I now come to as foul an attempt to excite the *odium theologicum* as ever disgraced the pages of a venal party newspaper. I refer to the following sentence from the “Freeman’s Journal” :—“The men who have addressed the Marquis of Anglesey on this occasion are composed of Arians, Socinians, Deists, Infidels, *et hoc genus omne* in Ireland—not one Christian professing the Trinity belonging to any of the three bodies.”

Now, sir, since man first used language, the same number of words never contained a statement more diabolical in its object, or more atrociously false in its details. The writer states, in the commencement, that we have certain privileges in jeopardy, and that we addressed the Lord-Lieutenant in order to assist us in securing them. He knows that, if we jeopardised any civil immunity, it *must* have been from a faithful adherence to the dictates of conscience. Ought not every man, therefore, to rejoice in the prospect of our being able to escape temporal penalties on account of our Christian fidelity ? Does the “Freeman’s Journal,” the leagued friend of *Emancipated Catholics*, the boasted advocate of equal rights, proceed upon this equitable and honourable principle ? No ; but being fully aware that there is a powerful fanatical and intolerant party in the country, that the members of the Government are necessarily connected with a “Trinitarian” Church, and that, if pusillanimous, they might feel it embarrassing to do justice to a body containing avowed “Unitarians,” the *liberal* journalist zealously endeavours to injure our civil rights on account of our conscientious religious opinions ! He wishes, at the same time, to destroy the just influence of the firm and unanimous expression of our sentiments upon a great public question affecting the vital interests of our country. The annals of public profligacy contain no blacker record. Nay, I am in error ; the editor of the “Freeman’s Journal” may be a Trinitarian, and his mind imbued with prejudice ; but what

can be said for the conductor of a Northern paper, *himself a Unitarian, and a communicant at the Lord's Table in a Unitarian Remonstrant meeting-house*, who has basely joined in the unhallowed outcry against his own principles and party because he has yoked himself to your chariot of agitation. Behold, sir, how your schemes diffuse contamination around you! Is it then your *private* feeling, which has been thus incautiously expressed by your minions, that the value of a man's political opinions is to be estimated by the Orthodoxy of his religious creed? When Unitarians marched in the van of the Emancipators of Great Britain and Ireland—while there was the most distant prospect of enlisting them, by fawning and trickery, in your wild projects of national disorganisation—they were your “dear friends, your enlightened friends, your honest compatriots;” but now, “*hæc quantum mutati ab illis!*” they are only fit to be ranked with those vile miscreants, the opulent merchants of Dublin, at whom the “Freeman's Journal” “will teach the very dogs to bark in scorn!” Mr. O'Connell, “this is too bad;” you ought to teach your instruments to use more fact and discretion; the mask should not be dropped too soon; you ought first to be at the head of a “domestic Legislature;” and then you could speedily put an end to all “heretical pravity,” and the expression of all disagreeable political sentiments. True, you advocated the emancipation of the Jews, who are usually considered both “Unitarians and Deists:” but then they are not Irishmen, nor Unitarian Christians! I am wrong, however, to indulge the bitterness of irony when I ought to be affixing the brand of FALSEHOOD upon the entire statement of the “Freeman's Journal.” He audaciously asserts “that the three bodies are composed of Arians, Socinians, Deists, and Infidels;” and that “there is not one Trinitarian Christian belonging to them.” Sir, I do not believe that there is *one Socinian* in Ireland; and with regard to the Deists and Infidels, if there be any such, who for worldly interest attach themselves dishonestly to Christian societies, they would not be so unwise in their hypocrisy as to join an unpatriotised and persecuted sect, “everywhere spoken against” by the power and fashion of the world. Such men would rather nestle, and you know they do nestle, in the warm places of ancient, established, and powerful churches. We may be in error, as we lay no claim to infallibility; but we are at least sincere and honest in our profession of unprofitable truth. Had we been otherwise, we should not have incurred the trials and penalties to which we have been exposed; and I firmly believe that the members of the three calumniated bodies, both lay and clerical, can boast of a sincerity of faith and a purity of

life unsurpassed by the members of any other church upon earth. I do not affect to conceal that the majority of us are *Unitarians*, generally misnamed *Arians*. Personally, I glory in the appellation of *Unitarian*. I rejoice to participate in the sentiments of prophets and apostles, of confessors and martyrs—in the opinions of Newton and Milton and Locke—in the principles of the ablest and best defenders of Christian truth! But if Unitarianism be a crime which emancipated Catholics believe ought to be punished with civil proscription, we do not all fall under the condemnation. In direct opposition to the “Freeman’s” assertion that “no Trinitarian belongs to any of the three bodies,” it is a notorious fact that several Trinitarian ministers, and many Trinitarian members, *do* belong to their communion. What then, sir, do you now think of a cause which thus looks for support to wilful misrepresentations, and invites the countenance of civil penalties and social persecution? Whilst Orthodox Trinitarians were branding the Catholics with the awful charge of idolatry, did we ever join in the unchristian accusation? No; we viewed you as our suffering, injured fellow-Christians; and involved ourselves in serious temporal loss in our generous struggles to break the fetters which bound you. I rejoice, however, at this timely manifestation of the spirit of your party; and should you ever become the head of a domestic Legislature, and the “Freeman’s Journal” the organ of Government, I shall endeavour, with all possible celerity, to remove at least one heretic and his family from the influence of your “paternal sway.”

Before I conclude, I must briefly advert to a few special personalities of your friend “Argus.” He condescendingly calls me “his patron, his model, his boast.” Now I know not whether any part of this be true. Most probably I *have* been his “*patron*,” as, in the spirit of the genuine “O’Connell School,” he has abused and misrepresented me for being honest; but I hope that I have not been his “*model*.” I am not aware that I ever set an example of turning upon my friend with the fabled ingratitude of the viper, or that I ever wilfully misrepresented the sentiments and conduct of my fellow-men. “Argus” says “that I *fell sick* when appointed to wait upon the late Lord Castlereagh, on the affairs of the Belfast Institution—that I preferred the solitude of my chamber to a distinction so debasing.” He seems to praise me for an alleged act of impious hypocrisy, in feigning indisposition whilst a merciful Providence was blessing me with health! Sir, I repudiate the odious imputation—the entire statement is a *malicious fiction*—I never was appointed to wait upon Lord Castlereagh, and consequently I could not have committed the disgraceful and impious act which has

been laid as a charge against me. Not less dastardly and unfounded is the insinuation of "Argus," "that I was sent for by Government as being worth purchasing;" and that "I signed an Address in which I did not concur." Our Address, sir, was a spontaneous, free-will offering upon the altar of our country's peace; and I had a large share in drawing up the document.

One other calumny alone I shall refute. He says—"Colleagues and second bounties are convenient and comfortable. You live four miles from your parish; and you have public duties in Belfast requiring your constant attention." The plain English of this malignant insinuation is, that I joined in a measure against my conscience and my country in order to promote my personal interest and convenience. Sir, my whole public and private life rises up in refutation of the audacious slander. In Ulster I require not to cast off the degrading imputation; but there are other places where my character is not equally known; and I do not wish my Southern brethren to be wounded through my side. True, sir, I have lived for the last thirteen years about three miles from my congregation; and this fact I consider the proudest boast of my life. The generous attachment of a flock whose intelligence and moral purity are my pride, whose unparalleled kindness has enabled me to secure for my family the inestimable blessings of independence and a good education, is at once my highest honour and my most abiding consolation. Though the shepherd has not been always amongst them, they have never gone astray; "they have increased and flourished in the land;" and so long as they are willing to receive the humble but affectionate tending which I am able to bestow, "my right hand shall forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," before I shall ever commit the hallowed task of their oversight to other hands. I look forward with unspeakable delight to the period—perhaps no distant one—when I may be able to reside constantly in the midst of them; endeavouring to repay, by unwearied diligence and affectionate attention, a debt of gratitude which I am proud to acknowledge, but which I shall never be able to discharge. What! commit the generous people of Dunmurry to a stranger's care! The base insinuation fills my breast with an indignation which I cannot repress.

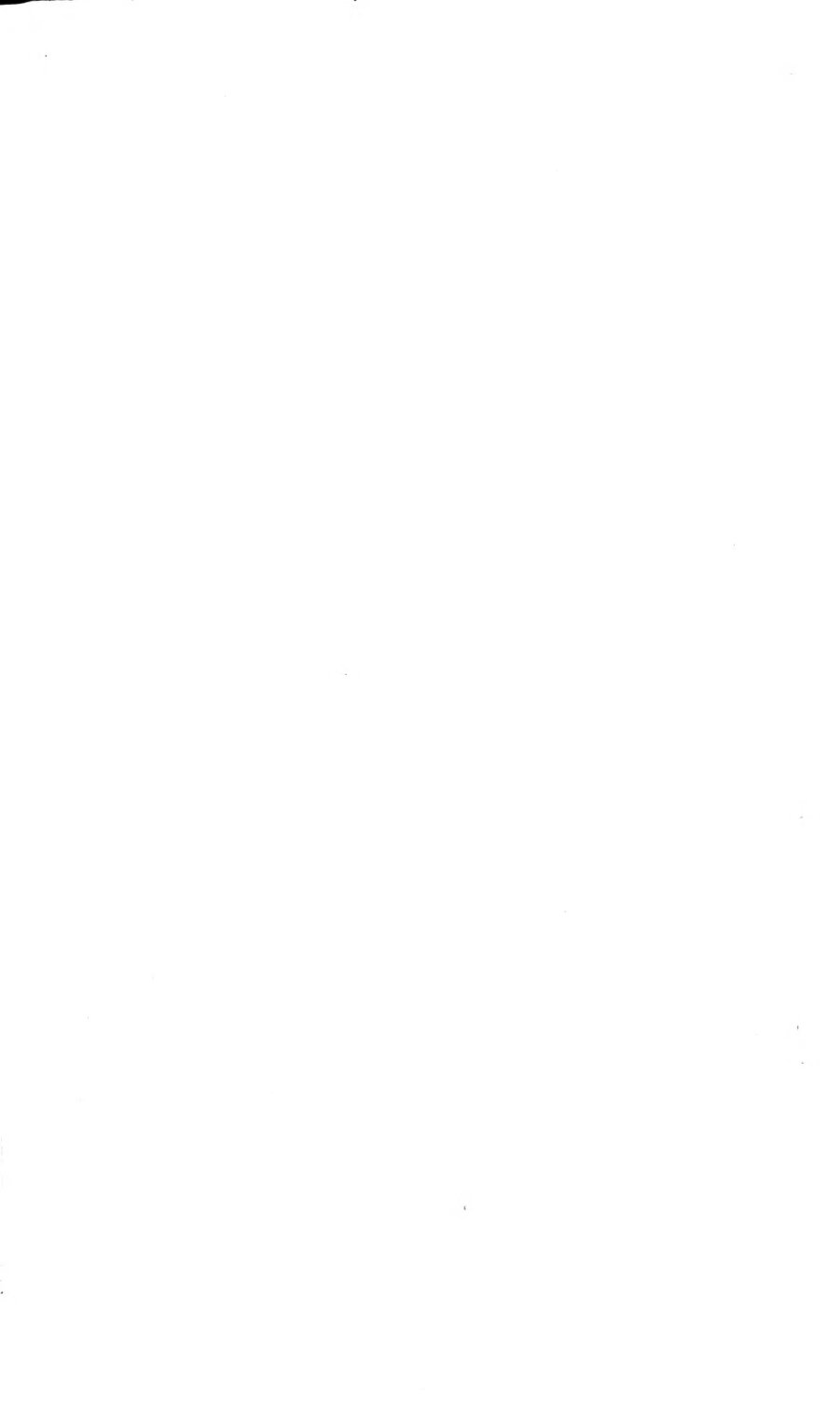
Now, sir, a word in conclusion more immediately to yourself. Be advised by one who, in very truth, bears you no ill-will. Give up your wild and impracticable projects; they cannot succeed—they ought not to succeed. Believe me, sir; I know the feelings of society, both with regard to yourself and your projects, much better than you

yourself can do. You are doubly deceived—first, by your own vanity and ambition ; and, secondly, by the crawling reptiles that surround you. You are encircled by men whose interest it is to delude you—miserable *satellites*, who, possessing no light in themselves, are fain to reflect the rays of the great luminary of agitation. I tell you sincerely, the virtue, the intelligence, the moral power of the country are all arrayed against you. The shouts of the lowest Dublin rabble, who would equally follow in the train of the bellamite, neither constitute the *Vox Dei*, nor the acclaims of the people of Ireland. Be persuaded, sir, to devote your popular talents to feasible plans of public usefulness, and you will yet regain much of what you have justly lost in the estimation of your country. Should you persevere in your present course, I may, perhaps, at some future time, expose the absurd nature and ruinous consequences of your ill-digested schemes. In the meantime, I remain, sir, yours, &c.,

H. MONTGOMERY.

BELFAST, *February 1, 1831.*

END OF VOL. I.



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