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Life of Robert Flint.





THE  
LIFE OF ROBERT FLINT  
D.D., LL.D.







Photo. Hor. Wash. Edinburgh

THE REV. PROFESSOR FLINT, D.D., LL.D.

Frontispiece



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LIFE OF ROBERT FLINT

D.D., LL.D.

✓ BY

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"THE LIFE OF GEORGE MATHESON, D.D., LL.D."  
ETC.



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TO  
JANET JOHNSTONE FLINT  
THIS LIFE OF HER BROTHER  
IS RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED



## PREFACE

I DESIRE to express, in a word, my indebtedness to the many friends who so readily responded to my appeal for help in the preparation of this volume. To Miss Flint, in particular, I owe much. She unreservedly placed in my hands the Literary Remains of her brother and all the materials in her possession that might aid me in my task. She gave me, besides, much information regarding his early life and cleared up many points of doubt and difficulty. My thanks are also very specially due to Professor Wenley of the University of Michigan, U.S.A., for his brilliant contribution. It was a cause of much regret to me that the exigencies of the book necessitated its being broken up. I am under deep obligation to the well-known scholar Dr James Lindsay for his valuable chapter on Flint's "Contribution to Theism"; to Professor W. P. Paterson, Dr Flint's distinguished successor in Edinburgh University, for the chapter on his "Doctrinal System"; to the Rev. James H. Mackay, M.A., late Hastie Lecturer in the University of Glasgow, for his assistance in dealing with Dr Flint's voluminous foreign correspondence; to the Rev. A. J. Campbell, B.A. (Cantab.), and the Rev. John Anderson, B.D., for revising the proofs; to the Rev. George Scott, M.A., for preparing the Index; to my friend Dr William Wallace for again placing his invaluable literary experience and judgment at my service; and to the other kind friends, named in the text, whose

contributions have done much to lighten my labours and to enhance the value of the work. Such loyal support as they have given me has been due, I know, to their profound reverence and affection for the memory of Professor Flint.

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# THE LIFE OF PROFESSOR FLINT

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

ROBERT FLINT was born on the 14th March, 1834, at Greenburn, a cottage on the farm of Lammonbie, which is situated in the Sibbaldbie part of the united parishes of Sibbaldbie and Applegarth, Dumfriesshire. His father, as his name indicates, was of English extraction. The first record we have of his family in Scotland is an entry in the parish register of Kirkpatrick-juxta, dated 1783. This refers to the Professor's grandfather, and in a charming little autobiography which Dr Flint narrated to his students on the occasion of their presentation to him of his portrait, he told how his great-grandfather had come from Cumberland to Scotland and settled on the farm of Tinto in Lanarkshire. It would seem that a number of his grandfather's relatives had at that time emigrated from their ancestral home to New England, but his progenitor had decided to remain in this country, and evidently could not be persuaded to go farther afield than the northern half of the United Kingdom. There is a tradition that Cumberland was not the original home of the Flints. Traces of them are supposed to be found in the neighbourhood of Buxton, and it is not at all unlikely that at an early period some of them may have been found still farther south, perhaps in the Welsh county of the same name.

It is hard to say what inducements drew Dr Flint's great-grandfather across the Border and caused him to choose that particular part of Lanarkshire as his home. But the old Border feuds, which had for so many generations prevented intercommunication between the two countries, were now at an end, and the rebellion of '45, which dissipated for ever the dream of Scotland as a separate kingdom, restored the ancient connection between its southern counties and the northern parts of England. No record has been left of the life of the Professor's great-grandfather at Tinto, but it is clear that he must have followed those pursuits which he and his forebears practised in Cumberland. They lived on the soil, and it is not at all unlikely that he was drawn to the North through the trade in cattle which at the time had become common between the two countries. But even at that early day there were Flints who gave proof of those intellectual qualities which so greatly distinguished the subject of this Memoir. Dr Flint himself records that, between 1786 and 1893, twenty of the name of Flint were graduates of Harvard University, and still earlier, between 1664 and 1780, four who spelt their name Flynt. It must have been one of the latter, a Henry Flynt, who in 1738 was presented by his pupils with a silver teapot as a mark of esteem. He was fellow and tutor of Harvard. This heirloom descended through his niece to her grandson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and it is interesting to note that Professor Flint, when delivering the Stone Lecture at Princeton University in 1881, met Holmes, who claimed him as a kinsman. But others of the same name and stock are found occupying academic posts in Scotland, for in 1770 we find a Dr James Flint, a Professor in St Andrews, and he was succeeded in the professorship in 1810 by his son John. Flint's own

appearance indicated a dash of enterprise, and it was with a certain amount of pride that he once claimed connection with the Captain Flint of Stevenson's famous romance of "Treasure Island." In any case there was a Captain Flint held to be related to the family who was a genuine sea-rover, and who made a fortune by trading in rum and sugar. His career, however, had an unfortunate and untimely ending, for it was believed that he was poisoned at a dinner given in his honour; at all events he was found dead in his own cabin the next morning.

But while families of the name of Flint were to be found during the latter part of the eighteenth century in Edinburgh, West Calder, Dumbarton, St Andrews, and some other parts of Lowland Scotland, the Professor's immediate forebears were the only Flints who lived in Dumfriesshire. It must have been about 1780 that his grandfather, who was probably born at or near Tinto Farm in Lanarkshire, migrated to Dumfriesshire. He went there as a young, unmarried man. The distance from Tinto to the farm of Minnygap in Johnstone parish is not very great, some 40 miles up the Clyde and over the Summit into Annandale. Here we find him, in 1783, as a shepherd, for Minnygap was a hill farm. The next trace we find of him is in 1798, when he was on the farm of Stanshielrig in the parish of Kirkpatrick-juxta, and in the parish register there is the record that on the 4th of February of that year his son Robert was baptised. This was the Professor's father. He cannot, however, have remained beyond a year or two on this farm, because some fifteen months afterwards, on 13th February 1800, a daughter, Margaret, was born at Ingleston, a farm in the parish of Kirkpatrick-juxta, and on that farm he would seem to have remained as a shepherd for at least twenty years, and very probably

till the end of his life. There, a number of sons and daughters were born to him, most of whom in due course migrated to different parts of the country, only one of them, a daughter, so far as can be traced, remaining in Annandale.

Flint's grandmother was of pure Annandale stock. She was Janet Johnstone, daughter of a farmer in Mid-Murthat, in the parish of Kirkpatrick-juxta. Her family had been tenants of this farm for over two hundred years, and it now belongs to them. Little is known of either of the grandparents, but the fact of their having lived for so many years in one place, where they reared a large family of sons and daughters, is proof at least that they possessed sound characters.

Flint's grandfather had to face the problem which was a common one in his day : How could his children be educated ? There was no school in the near neighbourhood ; he had not the means to board out his children or to supply them with a tutor. But educated, he felt, they must be. Accordingly, he and his neighbours adopted the plan which was not infrequently practised in those days : they put their heads and their purses together and lighted upon a stickit minister or some impecunious student who would be glad of employment during the summer months, and of a pound or two to help him through his next session at the University. They were successful : the teacher's name we know not, but this we do know, that Flint's grandfather took a leading part in this business. In the Session Minutes of Kirkpatrick-juxta there is the following entry : " October 20. 1818. Granted Robert Flint to assist the Dumgree School this year, £1." The entry is in the handwriting of the parish minister, Dr Singer, and so highly did the grandfather value the assistance which the minister gave him in the education of his

children that he called one of them after him. Here we have some light shed upon the sterling character of Professor Flint's forebears. They were evidently imbued with the traditional Scottish love of learning, or, at least, of so much of it as they knew to be absolutely necessary for their children's mental and moral well-being. One is not surprised at the grandson developing into the great scholar that he became when we learn this much of his grandfather. Poor their children might be, but not ignorant : that was the old Scottish watchword ; and parents like the good grandfather were prepared to stint themselves and sacrifice much, that their boys and girls might be educated. A part of the emoluments of a teacher, thus employed, was his board and lodgings. There would be neither school-house nor residence for a school-master : an empty cottage or an outhouse belonging to the farm, or perhaps a room in one of the dwelling-houses occupied by the parents, might be used as the school-house. But the teacher usually resided in the family of one of his employers, and there is evidence to show that he lodged in Robert Flint's house. The father might be glad of such a lodger, for his children would get full advantage of all the instruction that he could impart ; and one of them, at least, the Professor's own father, profited by this advantage, for he had knowledge much beyond his station, had indeed a passing outlook to the ministry, and was able in any case to act as tutor to his distinguished son during the earlier years of his life. Here, then, on a hill farm in Annandale, far removed from any centre of education, we find in this shepherd's home that spirit which overcomes all difficulties, and that passion for knowledge which sowed in the minds of his son, and afterwards of his grandson, the seeds of a genuine love for learning.

The ancient parish of Dumgree, now divided between Johnstone and Kirkpatrick-juxta, in which Ingleston is situated, is not without its romance. The site of the old church and churchyard forms the scene of the Ettrick Shepherd's well-known ballad of "Willie Wilkins," and not far distant is the scene of Hogg's weird tale, "The Fords of Callum." One wonders if Flint's father and grandfather ever met the Ettrick Shepherd. That they did is not at all unlikely, for Hogg was shepherd at Mitchel Slacks in Closeburn parish, for a year or two, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, and as the two farms of Ingleston and Mitchel Slacks divided between them the northern and southern slopes of Queensberry, the two shepherds might have occasionally foregathered on the hill-top and discussed their respective herds. In any case Hogg must have visited Dumgree, for his intimate knowledge of the local surroundings of his two tales makes this clear, and who knows but he shared the hospitality of the elder Flint at Ingleston? The family may also have had some relation with even a greater than the Ettrick Shepherd, for there was living in 1790, in Closeburn parish, one Christina Kirkpatrick, married to a mason named Flint. She had, according to Sir James Stuart-Menteath of Closeburn, "a masculine understanding, was well acquainted with the old music and the songs and ballads of Scotland and having a fine voice and good ear, she sang them remarkably well." When Burns "dwelt at Ellisland he was accustomed, after composing any of his beautiful songs, to pay Kirsty a visit that he might hear it sung by her. He often stopped her in the course of the singing when he found any word harsh and grating to his ear and substituted one more melodious and pleasing." May this "mason named Flint" not have been a brother of the



Professor's grandfather? There is no record, as has already been said, of any other family of the name of Flint being at this time in Dumfriesshire, and if the shepherd at Ingleston had migrated there from Tinto, why should not his mason brother have found his way to Closeburn, which was not much farther distant? It is interesting at any rate to think, even though we cannot really know, that the Flints came into some relation with Scotland's two great singers, Burns and Hogg.

Professor Flint remarked on one occasion that his grandfather's family consisted of seven sons and four daughters. His own father was the second youngest, and settled, to begin with, in Annandale. But the others, both sons and daughters, left the district, and were to be found in after years so far apart as Glasgow, Tain, and Morven. The Professor's father chose at first the shepherd's lot, but he afterwards took up his abode farther down Annandale, and we find him at the time of Dr Flint's birth in the parish of Applegarth. He had married some time previously, his wife, Grace Paterson by name, being a daughter of Robert Paterson of the Dormont, in Johnstone parish. The mother, like the grandmother, was of pure Annandale stock, and there is some reason for believing that if not a lineal descendant of, she was yet related to, William Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England, and the hero or scapegoat of the notorious Darien Expedition.

Robert Flint and Grace Paterson were fortunate in the choice of their first dwelling. The cottage at Greenburn to which the husband brought home his young bride stands on the side of the road which runs from Nethercleugh Station to Sibbaldbie and Eskdalemuir, and is on the farm of Lammonbie, a dairy and arable farm. At the time of Professor Flint's birth, the tenant

was Mr Carruthers, whose son afterwards became minister of the parish of Falkirk, and in later years, when young Flint became famous, the old farmer was wont to point with pride to the cottage where the Professor was born, saying, "It was in that end."

The very name of Applegarth is a fair indication of the whole of that beautiful district, for it means an orchard, and one would not be surprised, on visiting it in the spring-time, to find it covered with apple blossom. It is a fertile valley, and we can well imagine the pleasure which Flint's father must have had in tilling those rich fields, set as they are in surroundings as fair as even a poet could wish. For almost within a stone's-throw of Lammonbie is the Dryfe Water, one of the most picturesque streams in Dumfriesshire, cleaving its way through a narrow, wooded valley and giving charm to the whole landscape. One cannot conceive a more favourable spot for the rearing of a young scholar than this cottage of Greenburn.

"You are not aware," said Dr Flint to his students on the only occasion in which he indulged in personal reminiscences, "that it was once as likely that I should be born in New England as in Scotland. But so it was. At the time of my father's marriage he was strongly urged by his American cousins to emigrate to America, and he was himself anxious to do so, but my mother's aversion to crossing the Atlantic prevented his carrying out his wish. If he had carried it out, perhaps I might have been educated at Harvard, but it would certainly not have been at Glasgow College." The father and mother, thus referred to, were destined not only never to cross the Atlantic, but never even to be separated from their son during all their long life. During the earlier years of the young boy's life the parents' roof sheltered him and their love nourished

him, but when in manhood he secured a house of his own, that house became their home. They accompanied him from Glasgow to his first charge in Aberdeen, afterwards to Kilconquhar, then to St Andrews, and last of all to Edinburgh; and as he drew his first breath under their roof, they drew their last under his. A sister, born some years later, and happily still living, remained the close companion and confidante of her brother during his whole life; and so ministered to by his parents and latterly by her, the great scholar was able to devote himself to those high themes which absorbed his whole interest, and in the developing of which he enriched the thought of his time.

The basal element in the character of both parents was their profound piety. The father was imbued with a deep sense of the value of knowledge, fostered in those early days when the schoolmaster lodged in his father's house. And the mother was shrewd and capable, a good manager, keen-witted, and with a native dignity which enabled her to take her place and to keep it in any society in which she might find herself. They had Scotch thrift and that "dourness" which refused to yield before the difficulties which at one time threatened to overwhelm them. But the spring of their characters, and that which gave colour to their whole life, was their deep religious convictions and genuine piety. It was this that enabled them to bear up and to go forward, to give the golden opportunity to their son, and, above all, to impart to him that simplicity, sincerity, and strength of character which impressed every one quite as much as his great ability and vast learning, and which made him a moral force in the life of his students and of the Church. Flint's father was a man of prayer. So long as his strength

permitted, it was he who conducted the devotions in his son's household, and among his neighbours and friends, in those early Annandale years, he was a real religious influence. It is not then surprising that Professor Flint on the occasion already referred to should have paid the following pious tribute to the memory of his parents: "I owe God boundless gratitude for the parents who were spared to be my companions for so many years, who never set before me any other example than one for good, and whom I cannot but regard as not only the first but the best of all my teachers. For to them I owe those primal elements of both intellect and character which have helped me most to attain all that I consider most worth getting." And on the same occasion he paid this tribute to his sister: "Nor can I be sufficiently grateful to God for the self-denying affection of a sister, who since my mother's death has relieved me from all kinds of cares which would have injured my usefulness."

The year in which Flint was born was also the year in which Edward Irving died, and Carlyle burned his boats and settled in London. All three were fellow-Dumfriesians and natives of Annandale. Only a few miles separated their birthplaces. Those two mighty Scots represented great movements in the religious and moral world in which young Flint was in due time to play his part. 1834 was also the year in which the famous Veto Act was passed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It was the beginning of the Ten Years' Conflict, in which Flint's father played his own modest part. These and other movements were only signs of the times. In the political world, electoral reform, both parliamentary and burghal, had roused keen interest and strong opposition, but the party of progress had triumphed.

Indeed, all along the line of national life there was great activity. The influence of the French Revolution was being felt in Scotland, and forces were let loose which, when they developed, it became the task of Flint and others to direct by a process of systematic thought into channels of steady national progress.

The child meanwhile was unconscious of all this, and lived for four years a happy life at Greenburn. Only one incident is recorded of this early period : it was told by himself, and sheds a bright light on the simple yet happy life of the Flint family. "The first thing I can distinctly remember is that of being lost. Of going along a road crying and of being stopped by a man on a white horse and taken on before him. That I remember most vividly, and then I remember no more ; but I was lost. I had gone toddling after my father, who was not aware that I was following him, and I had lost sight of him and taken a road to the south while he had walked northwards. My mother supposed that he had me with him until he returned without me, and then there was a hue and cry over the country-side, and after midnight I was found to be at Hillside, the house of Charles Stewart. He was the man on the white horse, and as he could not make out what my name was (' Botin '), he had taken me home with him, and the Miss Stewarts had taken me to bed with them, and I was not brought home till next day."

It must have been in 1838, after a residence of six years at Greenburn, that the Flints left. Their new home was on the banks of Evan Water, about three miles north-west from Beattock and four from Moffat. The elder Flint's sister, Mary, had married William Halliday, who resided in Glasgow, and his relative, John Halliday, had taken the farm of Rivox on the right side of the railway as one travels to Beattock and not far

from the Glasgow Road. Through this connection Flint's father was offered a post on Halliday's farm which he accepted. He was grieve, and exercised a general superintendence.

Rivox is a sheep farm, and the elder Flint's early training as a shepherd would stand him in good stead. The cottage which the family occupied is now in ruins ; the walls are still standing, but they are roofless. The farm-house of Middlegill is quite near, and other cottages and farm-houses are not far distant. But the cottage stands by itself and faces the hillside, looking south. A little burn runs behind and flows into Evan Water. The Flints must have found their new surroundings very different from what they had been accustomed to at Lammonbie. The situation is much higher, and the outlook much colder and less interesting. Hills surround one on every side, and a feeling of loneliness prevails. But with his work to do, a comfortable house to live in, and a better position assigned to him, the elder Flint must have felt that he had now secured a safe stronghold for himself and his family.

The new home had one advantage which must have strongly appealed to both parents. It was within a comparatively short distance of a good school. In 1838, Mr Peter Johnstone, proprietor of Harthope, built a school on the Glasgow Road, about four miles from Moffat, and, staffed by a succession of good teachers, it proved a blessing to the children in its neighbourhood. This school was taken over in 1849 by Mr Hope-Johnstone of Annandale. It was managed by a body of trustees of which the parish ministers of Moffat and Kirkpatrick-juxta were members. It is now under the control of the local School Board. The school, with the schoolmaster's house attached, forms quite a substantial feature in the landscape, and may be seen by

anyone passing on the railway. Young Flint was between four and five years of age when he went to this, his first school. He has left on record his reminiscences of this early period.

“ I remember my first goings to school. I was sent very early, and bigger children had charge of me. They utilised me as an excuse for being late, by saying that ‘ Bobbie Flint was aye tumbling.’ One day in returning from school I was left loitering behind them. A bull had got into the field through which the road led, and the children, when in safety themselves, had thoughtlessly insulted and enraged the bull until they remembered that I was behind them and then they ran to let my mother know, one of them saying that Bobbie would be ‘ deided ’ by this time. I was very near being ‘ deided.’ On turning an angle of the road I saw the bull and the bull saw me and made for me. Just when it was about up to me I heard my mother’s voice crying to me to come to her, and I waded through a small stream and was pulled over a dyke ; otherwise you and I would not have been here to-night.

“ When I first went to school I exhibited a great disinclination to learning, and I destroyed several two-penny books before I could read one, and my father was credited with saying that he would be thankful if I could ever read the New Testament. When I once fairly started, however, I showed myself not only eager to learn, but anxious to be at the top of the class. Now the way to the latter end was when any one made a mistake for those who noticed to stretch out their hand and cry ‘ Chaps ye,’ and if you were correct to take his place. This custom led me into a scrape the first time I remember being at church. It was in Moffat Parish Church, and my father, mother, and I and a servant were in a square seat with a table on which

books were laid. When the chapter came to be read I got hold of my father's open Bible, followed intently the reading, and at one point stretched out my hand and cried 'Chaps ye.' My father was equal to the occasion : he took me by the neck and put me under the table, whence in due time I was allowed to emerge a wiser though sadder boy."

Dr Flint refers to the rapid progress which he made as a scholar once his mind had wakened up. The late Dr Bell of Keig, Aberdeenshire, who was a fellow-pupil at Evan Water School, although some ten years older, bears witness to this. He wrote to me shortly before his death as follows : " Young as Flint then was—a mere child—I remember how we all liked him ; no one envied him, all were drawn to him, and he very soon gained the admiration of the whole school. He was the youngest, but by far the ablest ; talented, kind and modest. He came among us a perfect stranger, but he soon gained the esteem and confidence of us all."

One of the features of Scottish education in those days was the annual examination by the Presbytery. The brethren within the bounds came in great force and made a day of it. They usually were the guests of the minister of the parish in which the school was situated, or of one or other of the heritors, of whom many were keenly interested in the pupils and in the success of the school. The children gathered in their Sunday best, their mothers taking particular pains with their dress and appearance. It was a great occasion for them and an anxious and an exciting day for the schoolmaster. The brethren sat in chairs facing the pupils, listened to their lessons, and not infrequently put questions to them, many of the ministers having some favourite subject on which they liked to air their knowledge and eloquence. The schoolmaster usually



had in reserve one or two show boys or girls whom he had been carefully coaching for months past, and whom he called upon when the great day arrived for an exhibition of their mental gifts and graces. Flint, young though he was, proved himself to be the hero on one of those gala days. It was the practice of the schoolmaster to pick out the pupils who had the most retentive memories and set them to "learn by heart," as it was called, the hundred and nineteenth Psalm. Two of the Rivox youngsters competed, on the occasion referred to, for the coveted prize and the applause of the Presbytery. They were the youngest and oldest pupils in the school—Flint, who would be six or seven years of age, and another lad, who was fifteen. Flint gained the honour by repeating the whole Psalm without making a single mistake, but he suffered for his success. On the way home his rival, who felt incensed and disgraced at being beaten by so young a competitor, gave way to his wrath and administered to young Flint a sound thrashing.

When in the following year the brethren again assembled, the schoolmaster called upon Flint to give a fresh display of his powers. But the little fellow, remembering his experience of the past year, had prepared nothing and declined to enter the lists. His teacher with difficulty concealed his disappointment and chagrin, but he was only nursing his wrath to keep it warm, for when the brethren had departed he pounced upon Flint and gave him a sounder thrashing than he had met with on the previous year from his discomfited rival. Indeed, the schoolmaster, Mr Eskdale, so far forgot himself as to draw blood from the poor boy's ear and to inflict injuries from which he suffered more or less all his days. The little boy on his way home was met by his father, who, on learning what had taken

place, went direct to the house of the schoolmaster, who, on seeing him approach, surmising the object of his visit, escaped by the back door and took to the hills. His mother, who kept house for him, told the enraged father that her son was not at home.

Professor Flint speaks of having worshipped in Moffat Parish Church along with his parents. This would probably be a year or two before the Disruption, for the father was one of those who left the Church of Scotland when that event took place and became a member of the Free Church. But at Applegarth the family worshipped in the parish church, which is about two miles from Lammonbie ; indeed, the record of the Professor's birth in the Kirk Session Register is in the handwriting of Dr Dunbar, who was at that time minister of the parish. But the fervour and excitement of the Ten Years' Conflict made themselves felt in Annandale, as in every other part of Scotland. The older Border feuds and forays were now things of the past ; the Johnstones no longer vexed the Maxwells nor the Maxwells the Johnstones. The site of the bloody battle on Dryfe Sands between these two famous clans was not far from Greenburn Cottage, and the fierce encounter between the Johnstones and the Crichtons at the head of Evan Water was within an easy walk of the Flints' second home at Clofin on the farm of Rivox. Those stirring memories had all but faded away, and their place had been taken by the more recent traditions of Covenanting times. But interest even in them had begun to subside, and the valley was fast settling down to a period of peace and progress. A new movement, however, sprang up, fortunately bloodless in its results, but none the less powerful and exciting on that account. This was the religious and ecclesiastical propaganda laying claim to spiritual freedom which is so well

known as the Disruption. Annandale cannot have been stirred to the same extent as many other parts of Scotland, and this may have been owing to the fact that the majority of the parish ministers opposed the movement and refused to secede ; nevertheless many of their parishioners took another view and enrolled themselves among those who formed what undoubtedly was at the time the popular party, among them being Professor Flint's father.

The elder Flint took a leading part in the Disruption movement, first in Applegarth and then in Moffat parish. He was well qualified for the position. We have seen that he had more education than the majority of those with whom, through his occupation, he would be brought into close and friendly relations. He was a man of intelligence, and above all he was a man of prayer, profoundly religious and sincerely in earnest about those vital subjects which are of the supremest interest to the best minds. Small conventicles were held in his house, and although there may not be many living now who remember, with any vividness, the excitement which was engendered and the contention and division that sprang up even between friends and members of the same family, the records of the events are sufficiently well known to enable us to understand something of what was taking place in those humble cottages at Greenburn and Clofin. The high and eternal themes, with which this man of God wrestled, lifted him at once above his rank and placed him on an equal footing with every choice spirit that meditates upon man and his destiny.

Another and a much more important change was now about to take place in the Flint household. Matters had not been going too well with John Halliday, the tenant of Rivox, and he determined to leave his farm

and emigrate. This he did in 1843. The Flints were now forced to make another decision. Their thoughts were evidently now turning to Glasgow, and the elder Flint had a mind above the ordinary physical labour that a man with his training might expect. In short, by the aid of his brother-in-law he had secured a post as clerk in Dixon's iron-works on the south side of the river. We have seen that he had sufficient education and intelligence for such a post, and only a few weeks' experience would be necessary to qualify him for his new duties. Another factor weighed with the parents in coming to a decision. The intellectual ability of their young son had attracted the attention of his schoolfellows, and must have been regarded with hope and interest by his father and mother. Such a talent, as he evidently possessed, demanded a training which could not be provided either by Evan Water School or the parochial school in Moffat. In Glasgow every educational facility could be found. To Glasgow then they determined to go, and the assurance of occupation for the father, with the unbounded prospects for the son, would make them turn their eyes to their new home with keen expectancy.

The parents cannot, however, have contemplated the change without some regret. It was indeed a breaking with their past. They had been accustomed to pastoral and agricultural life all their days, as their ancestors before them, and they were now about to enter upon the life of a great city, about which they can have known little or nothing. It may be true that their existence, up till now, had not been without its own difficulties and trials. One has only to read the life of Principal Cairns, born sixteen years before Professor Flint, whose father was a shepherd in Berwickshire; or that of Robert Wallace, who was Flint's senior by

three years, and whose father was a working gardener in Culross, to see what these difficulties and trials were. Wages were very small, and they were paid chiefly in kind; but with plenty of meal and milk and potatoes, not to speak of the eggs and butter and bacon of which there would be no scarcity, the need for money was, after all, not so very great. The housewife spun her own wool, and provided her family with clothes and her household with linen. Every cottage, so to speak, was self-centred and self-contained, and the thrifty wife and mother would always manage, somehow, to make ends meet. It is difficult to conceive a better training of character than was provided in those old days in the homes of the Scottish peasantry.

Besides, the relations that existed, at the time of which we are speaking, between the farmer and his men were very different from what now prevail. We have seen how the grandfather had been for the best part of his life in one farm, and his son had not been eager for change. Master and man were on a much more equal footing than what we are now accustomed to. Many of the farmers' sons themselves were hired by neighbouring tenants, and marriages between the shepherd and the farmer's daughter, as in the case of Flint's grandfather and father, were quite frequent. Hence the position of the employé was much better than in our day, and among the rural population an equality existed which the social changes that have since taken place have broken down. It must then have been with fond regrets that the Flints left their old home and entered upon the fresh experiences which awaited them in Glasgow.

## CHAPTER II

### STUDENT DAYS

PROFESSOR FLINT's father had a sister resident at this time in Glasgow: Mary, the wife of William Halliday, whose father lived at Woodend near Wamphray. She was his youngest and favourite sister. She was also much beloved by the Professor's mother, and it was to her house that the elder Flint directed his steps on his arrival in Glasgow. The Hallidays resided at that time in Warwick Street on the south side of the river, and it was in that same street that the Flints took up house when they came to Glasgow. One can well imagine the bright hopes that cheered the father on his journey to the great city of the West. He had found what must have been to him congenial employment. The prospects in store for his brilliant son he felt were now more than assured, and he was to see again his favourite sister and her husband, William Halliday, who had stood by him and proved his staunch friend. But what must have been his disappointment and grief on entering his brother-in-law's house to find his sister lying seriously ill of typhoid fever. He was due to take up his duties at Dixon's iron-works in a day or two, but this and everything else was forgotten in his anxiety for his sister. And he determined to remain beside her, to assist in nursing her, and not to leave her until either all danger was passed or, alas! as happened, her illness took a fatal ending. She died within ten days of his arrival in Glasgow, and was buried in the Southern Necropolis.

It must have been with a sad heart that the elder Flint prepared to take up his new duties ; but he was now to meet with a fresh disappointment. He was a fortnight over-due, and the firm, despairing of his appearance, had filled up his post. Here, then, he was stranded in Glasgow. His house had been given up, and the furniture was being sold in view of the new settlement in Glasgow. There was no railway at that time between Beattock and Glasgow. Communication was only by coach and the carrier's cart, and it would have been a tedious and expensive business to convey the household goods and plenishings sixty long miles by road ; so, sold they must be. There is one old friend still living in Moffat who remembers the dispersing of Mrs Flint's goods and chattels. She was then a little girl of eight, about the same age as the Professor, and her father had the neighbouring farm of Ruthvenside or Griskine. This refined old lady can still go back in memory to that eventful year in the history of the Flint household, and clearly remembers how kind friends and neighbours purchased the various articles of furniture that the Professor's mother resolved to dispose of. One article in particular, the spinning-wheel, without which no thrifty housewife could in those olden days comfortably exist, she recollects being purchased and taken to Moffat, where it remained for many years. The mother could not possibly stay on at Clofin, nor could the father think of returning to Annandale. They had made their decision, and Glasgow must now be their home.

It was some time before the Professor's father got employment, but at last, through the influence of friends, he secured a situation with a firm in St Andrew's Square, and after the failure of the Western Bank, which ruined his employer, he started business

for himself in Stockwell Street, where he also took up house. Until, however, he got fairly settled in business he resided first in Warwick Street, and latterly in Coburg and Surrey Streets.

No time was lost in sending the future Professor to school. There were many suitable educational establishments in the near neighbourhood, but the one selected was St Enoch's Sessional School in Rope-Work Lane, which runs between Howard Street and Great Clyde Street. It was but a few minutes' walk from young Flint's home. St Enoch's was a famous school in its day; it was one of the largest and best conducted in the city. It had been founded by, and continued (until the Scottish Education Act of 1872) under the management of, the Kirk Session of St Enoch's parish; and the ministers and elders of that church deserve much credit for the educational facilities of a high order which they provided for successive generations of Glasgow boys and girls. It had a series of capable head-masters and masters, who prepared their pupils for business or the university. One of the most distinguished of the masters of Flint's day was Dr Clyde, who afterwards became the English master in Edinburgh Academy. He was the father of Mr James Avon Clyde, K.C., one of the most eminent members of the Scottish Bar, and Solicitor-General for Scotland in Mr Balfour's last government. Young Flint was a scholar under Dr Clyde, and both master and pupil were ever afterwards proud of the connection. Dr Clyde had a reputation far beyond the bounds of St Enoch's School and Edinburgh Academy. He was the author of a number of well-known educational works, and one in particular, "Clyde's Geography," was a class-book in many schools throughout Scotland. There can be no doubt that this distinguished teacher had considerable influence



on young Flint, and to him the future author of the "Philosophy of History" must have been indebted, in no mean degree, for the vigour and lucidity of his style, and his mastery of the English language.

It seems almost incongruous to link with the name of Dr Clyde that of the Rev. Robert Thomson as another of Flint's teachers. This clerical adventurer and unconscious humorist had started in the early 'forties "a school which he called an Academy," on the south side of the river. It was known as the Carlton Academy. Thomson had a chequered life. He played in his day many parts, of which school-mastering was only one. In his mid-career he courted parliamentary honours, and was for a short time member for the Kilmarnock Burghs. His election took place in the days of the hustings, and his victory was regarded very much in the light of a practical joke. There are still living those who remember him being carried shoulder-high by his triumphant supporters, Thomson taking it all in good part, and rejoicing in his success. It is needless to say that he never took his seat in the House of Commons. Another doubtful victory was his election to the parish of South Queensferry, and the dispute that arose over his appointment developed into one of the most famous cases in the history of the Church. He found a resting-place at last as minister of Wellpark parish, Glasgow, in which he laboured for many years. He kept himself well to the front by frequent anti-popish demonstrations and sermons, and he enlivened the proceedings of the Presbytery and of the General Assembly by violent speeches on his favourite theme. He was, however, accepted by his brethren in a kindly spirit, and his habits of obstruction at presbytery and other meetings were good-naturedly tolerated by them. Thomson never pretended to any great teaching powers himself ;

he simply acted as Principal of his Academy, and he had the good sense to surround himself with a capable staff. He made a specialty of modern languages, and it was under him that young Flint began the study of French, probably also of Italian, although it was not till a much later day that he took up German and Dutch in earnest.

A question in the eyes of the elder Flint of almost equal importance to the education of his son was the church with which he should connect himself. He had ample choice, for the Disruption had taken place, and many of the ministers in Glasgow had, with the bulk of their congregations, left the Church of Scotland and joined the Free Church. It was to the Free Church of course that he now belonged, and he selected a congregation in the near neighbourhood of his first residence in Warwick Street. This was Laurieston Church in Norfolk Street, the minister of which at the time was a Mr MacBeth, an evangelical preacher with popular gifts. The history of this church is interesting. It had its origin in a movement started by Mr Collins, father of the late Sir William Collins, and head of the well-known publishing firm. Mr Collins made an appeal in 1834 to the public of Glasgow to supply him with funds for the purpose of building twenty new churches in the city. Each church with its site was to cost £2000, and it was to have an endowment of £80 a year. The district to be assigned to it was not to contain a population of more than 3000, to whom the energy of the minister was to be entirely devoted. This was the ideal that Dr Chalmers had put before the Church when he was minister in Glasgow, some seventeen years previously. His intention, however, was to organise a Church Extension Scheme that would meet the growing needs, not only of Glasgow, but of the whole of Scotland.

It differed further from Mr Collins's in looking for aid from the Government, but, being disappointed in this, Chalmers had to fall back on the voluntary support of the public. Nor did it fail him, for in less than ten years he added 222 new churches, at a cost of over £300,000. It is well known that Chalmers received much encouragement from the success of the local effort started by Mr Collins, for the Glasgow Churchman secured within five months subscriptions which amounted to £22,000, and, before the expiry of eight years, he had the satisfaction of seeing the last of the twenty churches erected.

Laurieston Church was one of the last to be built by the Glasgow Church Building Society, as Mr Collins's association was called. Its constitution was approved by the General Assembly of 1837, but the building was not completed till 1841. It was in January 1842 that Mr MacBeth began his ministry, but within a year and a half's time he and his congregation cast in their lot with the Free Church. There now arose a peculiar case in connection with the Disruption movement. Laurieston Church, as in the case of the other churches erected by the Glasgow Church Building Society which had gone over to the Free Church, retained possession of the church property until February 1849, when, by a decision of the House of Lords, all the churches built under the auspices of Mr Collins were declared to belong to the Church of Scotland. The congregation accordingly had to seek a new home. They found a site in the Kingston district at the south-east corner of Paterson Street, at its junction with Morrison Street, where they erected what is now known as Union U.F. Church. Mr MacBeth was succeeded in 1851 by the Rev. Mr Philip, who continued until 1866, when he was appointed colleague to Dr Guthrie and Dr Hanna

in the ministry of Free St John's, Edinburgh. This, then, was the church to which Professor Flint's father attached himself when he came to Glasgow. His family accompanied him, and the Professor remained connected with it until he was over twenty years of age. His mother, however, who, in her own words, "could not see anything wrong with the Church of Scotland," used to worship, occasionally at least, in St Andrew's Parish Church, where Dr Runciman was minister. It was not in any sense a divided household : the mother did not quite share the father's strong views on spiritual independence ; but their good sense, and above all their profound piety prevented them from over-exaggerating those outward distinctions which, in the minds of good Christians, ought ever to occupy a subordinate place.

The increasing proofs of young Flint's ability, and the studious habits which he, even at that early age, was beginning to form, pointed in one direction. It was perfectly clear that he was not adapted either for trade or for business, and it was equally evident that he possessed those gifts which would bring him distinction in one or other of the learned professions. One could almost foresee what the choice of the parents would be. Their hearts were set upon their promising son becoming a minister. Nor can there be much doubt about young Flint's own inclination. His intense moral earnestness, carefully nourished and cultivated by his parents, would of itself draw him to the profession which afterwards became his choice. Besides, he must have felt that, in the Church as nowhere else, would his talents find full scope for their development. Accordingly, in 1848, at the age of fourteen, he was enrolled as a student of Glasgow University. We in these days feel considerable surprise at a lad becoming a student at so early

an age, but it was the custom at the time in Scotland. Indeed, not a few of Flint's own class-fellows were younger : some of them, as we know, matriculated at the age of twelve. The Scottish universities in those days were in some respects no better than secondary schools, and yet they somehow produced scholars of no mean distinction. The fact is that, as in Flint's own case, the curriculum frequently extended to ten years. A student who is now training for the Church seldom spends more than six years at the university, and, supposing he enters it at the age of eighteen, and leaves it when he is twenty-four, he would spend the same number of years on his education that Flint and many of his contemporaries did ; and the only question that has to be settled, after all, is whether four years at the university were more profitable in the way of intellectual training than four years now are at a secondary school. There can be no doubt, of course, that the higher standard which the preliminary examination demands of the modern scholar, before he can enter the university, has reacted upon the university itself and set the professors free to devote themselves to the higher branches of their Chairs ; but the old system had also something to say for itself. In any case, with its lengthened curriculum and its long summer vacations, it gave able students, who had a genuine passion for learning, the opportunity for developing their talents in those directions in which their interests lay.

The University of Glasgow has its roots deeply embedded in the past. It is the offspring of the Middle Ages and the child of the Church. It had during its earlier years a struggling existence, and by the time of the Reformation it had all but vanished. Fortunately for its future, it was blessed, in the second half of the sixteenth century, with its first great Principal, Andrew

Melville, who put new life into it. A long roll of distinguished scholars and professors have since adorned its annals, and from Melville's day until our own it may be said, that not only has it not looked back, but that it has gone on increasing in usefulness and in fame. It was housed, when Flint entered it, in the High Street; its first home was in the Rotten Row. The buildings of Flint's day were erected in the seventeenth century, and it took a hundred years for their completion. The citizens were proud of their College, and the buildings attracted by their beauty no less a personage than Sir Walter Scott, who, in "Rob Roy," speaks of them as "old fashioned," and praises the "solitude of the place, with grounds opening in a sort of wilderness, laid out in the Dutch taste with clipped hedges and one or two statues." Scott, though the greatest, was by no means the only writer who praised the "Old College" in the High Street. "Jupiter" Carlyle, Lockhart, Captain Hamilton, and A. K. H. B., among others, have described it. But the account which affords the best idea of the external appearance of the University buildings as they existed in Flint's time is A. K. H. B.'s, who was himself a student of Glasgow University. It will be found in his "Leisure Hours in Town," and refers to the period when Flint was still an undergraduate.

The stranger in Glasgow who has paid a visit to its noble Cathedral has probably, in returning from it, walked down the High Street, a steep and filthy way of tall houses, now abandoned to the poorest classes of the community, where dirty women in mitches, each followed by two or three squalling children, hold loud conversations all day long, and the alleys leading from which pour forth a flood of poverty, disease, and crime. On the left hand of the High Street, where it becomes a shade more respectable, a dark, low-browed building of three storeys in height fronts the street for two or three hundred yards. That is Glasgow College, for here as also at

Edinburgh the University consists of a single college. The first gateway at which we arrive opens into a dull-looking court inhabited by the professors, eight or ten of whom have houses here. Further down a low archway, which is the main entrance to the building, admits to two or three quadrangles occupied by the various class rooms.

There is something impressive in the sudden transition from one of the most crowded and noisy streets of the city to the calm and stillness of the College courts. The first court we enter is a small one, surrounded by buildings of a dark and venerable aspect. An antique staircase of massive stone leads to the Faculty Hall or Senate House, and a spire of considerable height surmounts a vaulted archway leading to the second court. This court is much larger than the one next the street, and with its turrets and winding staircases, narrow windows and high-pitched roofs, would quite come up to our ideas of academic architecture. But unhappily some years since one side of this venerable quadrangle was pulled down and a large building in the Grecian style erected in its place, which, like a pert interloper, contrasts most disagreeably with the remainder of the old monastic pile. Passing out of this court by another vaulted passage, we enter an open square to the right of which is the University library, and at some little distance an elegant Doric temple which is greatly admired by those who prefer Grecian to Gothic architecture. This is the Hunterian Museum, and contains a valuable collection of subjects in natural history and anatomy bequeathed by the eminent surgeon whose name it bears. Beyond this building the College gardens stretch away to a considerable distance. The ground is undulating, there are many trees, and what was once a pleasant country stream flows through the gardens. But Glasgow factories and Glasgow smoke have quite spoiled what must have once been a delightful retreat from the dust and glare of the city. The trees are now quite blackened; the stream, named the Molendinar Burn, became so offensive that it was necessary to arch it over, and drifts of stifling and noisome smoke trail slowly all day over the College gardens. There are no evergreens nor flowers, and the students generally prefer to take their constitutional in the purer air of the western outskirts of Glasgow.

It is in these western outskirts that the University is now housed. Her home is in Gilmorehill. Every stone of the old building has been carried away, and, with the exception of the lodge at the main entrance to the

present University and of the stairway that leads from the Professors' court to the Quadrangle, not a vestige remains. Flint's home in Surrey Street was within a few minutes' walk of the old College in the High Street, and thus he lived in the very heart of the educational facilities of the city.

But of much more importance than the external appearance of the University in the formation of Flint's intellectual equipment was the atmosphere of the University itself and the opportunities which it gave for culture. This is singularly well described in a valuable article which Professor Wenley has specially contributed for this Biography. I shall have pleasure in quoting from this article as the work proceeds, but in the meantime, and as a first instalment, it will be of interest to learn from one who has had so wide an experience of many seats of learning, both at home and abroad, what he thinks of Glasgow University as it existed when Flint was an undergraduate.

“ We may infer that, as with many of his countrymen born into his age and station, and destined to eminence later, Flint's real life dates from undergraduate experiences. But the ‘ Old College ’ in the High Street of Glasgow was a far different thing from the complex machine devised by the Commissioners of 1888. ‘ During the latter part of the eighteenth century a formidable rival to the learning of Oxford and Cambridge had sprung up in the Scotch universities. These were teaching centres more after the manner of the foreign universities. They had been started on the model of the University of Paris or of the older Italian universities ; some had their origin in the educational movement which, especially in those countries where the doctrines of Calvin prevailed, accompanied the Reforma-



tion. All through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they stood in intimate relations with such continental centres of study as Paris, Geneva, and the Dutch universities. . . . The universities of Scotland, unlike those of England, instead of nursing an exclusive spirit, and encouraging only scanty intercourse between teachers and students of different centres, lived in constant exchange of professors and ideas . . . much in the same way as has always been the custom among the German and other Continental universities. Though this is destructive of that individual character of the university or college which is so highly prized by many English fellows, it is certainly more conducive to the progress of studies and of research, and it is the cause why, in the history of recent science, the universities of Scotland have played so much more important a part than those of England. . . . Whilst England has been great in single names, Scotland has certainly in proportion done more to diffuse modern scientific knowledge.’<sup>1</sup> The reason is plain enough. Seventy-five years ago the English universities excelled in one or two subjects, widely separated at that. The Scottish, on the contrary, ‘were universities in the true sense of the word. Their task was to cultivate the complete circle of knowledge.’<sup>2</sup>

“The result of the Scotch training which had such remarkable embodiment in Flint has been admirably sketched by the late Professor Chrystal of Edinburgh. Speaking of Aberdeen, he says: ‘The work in all the ordinary classes was very elementary. The course was the same for everyone, viz. the old seven subjects, plus a course of natural history which included both

<sup>1</sup> “A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century,” John Theodore Merz, vol. ii. pp. 267-8, 271-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 221.

zoology and a little geology. Yet there was a great variety, and if we did not get much of any one thing, all that we got was highly digestible, and men who went conscientiously through that course *carried with them in after-life*, for the most part, *an intellectual mark that was unmistakable*. When I went to the University of Cambridge . . . I found that the course there for the ordinary degree in Arts was greatly inferior in educational quality to the Scottish one. On the other hand the courses in Honours were on a very much higher standard, although they suffered greatly from the chaotic organization of the English universities.' He goes on to say: 'I have been frequently tempted to think that the three years I spent as an undergraduate at Cambridge were wasted years of my life; if they were to be valued merely by the amount of new knowledge acquired they were largely wasted.'<sup>1</sup> Such were Flint's origins. He was the last, or almost the last, of the great Scottish polymaths—the peculiar product of a system now gone for ever, to the sad loss of Scotland, as some allege.<sup>2</sup> For under present arrangements Flint would have been barred from the universities in all likelihood, and, had he succeeded in entering, he would possibly have been shunted into that short siding, a doctor's thesis. As it was, his outlook reminds one immediately of not a few who may be named with him, to orient the type, so to speak. Macquorn Rankine, William Purdie Dickson, and William Hastie in his own university; Alleyne Nicholson and W. Robertson Smith at Aberdeen; Spencer Baynes and Bell Pettigrew at St Andrews; S. S. Laurie at Edinburgh; and outside the professoriate, although none the less distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Proc. R.S.E., vol. xxxii. p. 479. (The italics are mine.)

<sup>2</sup> A graduate of Edinburgh, himself a remarkable man, thus reported to me, when on a visit from the old country, so recently as March 1913.

for this, men of the calibre of Dr John Brown, James Stuart, M.P., J. Hutchison Stirling, James Stuart Glennie, and Andrew Lang ; or Thomas Davidson, the reincarnation of the wandering Scottish scholar of the George Buchanan mould, who found his Collège de Guyenne in the United States, his chivalrous De Brissac in the late William James.

“ Even when a mere youth in Glasgow University, the spirit of the polymath was upon Flint already. And he bears powerful witness to its essential worth in the year after his resignation, with half a century of intellectual adventure behind him. ‘ Science is not sectioned into entirely unconnected sciences. In all the sciences there is a certain common nature, and among them are many ties of affinity and points of contact. . . . They form a whole, a system in which each of them has its appropriate place, and, so far from being sacrificed to any other, has a new dignity imparted to it by being referred to the final unity of reason. . . . Whatever may be fancied to the contrary the truth is, the researches of specialists are never very productive. Special investigations only enrich science to any considerable extent when they are directed and guided by enlarged views. . . . I do not deny that now and then by a lucky chance a mere specialist may come across something valuable—which wiser men than himself can turn to good account—but I do affirm the discoveries thus made are extremely rare. . . . We are all narrow by nature, and we require to have our narrowness guarded against and corrected, not confirmed and intensified. . . . The truths which lie *between* the sciences are as real and have equal claims to attention as the truths *within* the sciences.’<sup>1</sup> In this spirit Flint wrought from the outset, and gained authority

<sup>1</sup> “ Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum,” pp. v, 7, 14-15, 16, 24.

‘ By mere inevitable cumulance  
Of certainty and insight through the years.’ ”

A striking proof of Dr Wenley's estimate of the nature and value of the education supplied by the Scottish universities of Flint's undergraduate days is to be found, not only in the sentences which he has quoted from Flint's last work, but also in one of Flint's earliest writings, his essay on the "Relation of General and Professional Education," which won for him the Lord Rector's prize in 1858. This essay has never been published, but anyone who wishes to discover the norm of Flint's theological and philosophical views cannot afford to neglect it. It is, however, in relation to the purpose more particularly in hand that I now wish to refer to it. The author, who was only twenty-three years of age when he wrote it, displays a maturity of thought, a comprehensiveness of view, a certainty of touch, and a vigour of style which are certainly very wonderful in one so young, and can only be accounted for by the writer's native talent, earnest study, and, perhaps, above all, by the opportunity which Glasgow University afforded him of developing his intellectual gifts on every side. Flint was a student in Glasgow College for ten long years, five of which were spent in the Faculty of Arts and five in that of Divinity. He did nothing in all that time except read and study. His parents declined to burden him with any tutorial work ; they were by no means wealthy, but they wisely resolved, at whatever necessary sacrifice to themselves, to give their son every opportunity for self-culture. Indeed, so independent were they that they refused to allow him to accept several bursaries which had been offered to him by his professors, declaring that by right they ought to be presented to poorer students who might find some difficulty in pursuing their

course without some such aid. During the long summer vacations he attended extra-mural classes, studying botany, modern languages, and other subjects outside the usual college curriculum. In this way he acquired those habits of constant and incessant study which characterised him all through his life, and he began to amass that vast wealth of accurate knowledge on all subjects which made him one of the greatest scholars and best informed men of his time. Accordingly, we are not surprised to see him in this essay, which is a sort of treatise in itself, expressing views similar to those which we find in his latest work on the "Classification of the Sciences." He says :—

A man ought to act, not merely in obedience to some particular set of relations, but in obedience to all the relations under which he has been placed by the ordinance of the Creator revealed in his constitution. . . . A variety of exercises is necessary to perfect our physical nature, and a still greater variety to perfect our spiritual nature. The danger of exaggerated development of one power or gift to the neglect of another is made manifest at once in the life of the individual and in the wide field of universal history.

Even at this early age we find him writing with profound knowledge and keen interest on his favourite subject, the philosophy of history. He illustrates his main theme by a reference to the rise and fall of nations, and he detects the note of a strong nationality in the different races which had been welded together in the course of centuries, and in the multiplicity of interests which characterises it ; and he sees signs of decadence in a nation when it begins to specialise and to concentrate all its efforts on one pursuit. When the object of its interest is exhausted it has no fresh source of life and it consequently sinks and dies. He says :—

It is the nature of every isolated object of desire that there come a moment when it has no further sphere of exercise and consequent

no further power to elevate. Rome gains the world, all of it at least that is worth having, and Egypt grows as much as her soil will yield. There is nothing more to do, no more battles to fight, no more fields to break up by the ploughshare; all difficulties which require a struggle, which resisted the nation's realization of its aim have been overcome and have been crushed underfoot. Further advance is however impossible in the direction in which the nation has moved for centuries. . . . In these circumstances we may imagine for a community three and only three futures. The nation must remain stationary, alter its ideal, or retrograde. The first two are impossible; the only supposition remaining is the third.

Thus, and at so early a date, did he form his ideal of knowledge on the line that was encouraged and fostered by his scholastic environment. It is not then surprising that on the occasion of the dinner which his students gave him in connection with the presentation of his portrait he should look back with gratification upon his old college days and say :—

“When I think of my connection with Glasgow University I remember what I owe to my teachers, and not less to my companions, and can hardly wish that my course there had been other than it was. It was a course of almost unlimited freedom, but it exactly suited me, who had my time wholly at my own disposal, and who needed no stimulus to study, and therefore I have only reason to thank God that as a student I was never under the law of bondage, but enjoyed a freedom now unknown in our University, but which, so far as I am aware, did me no harm.”

It certainly did him no harm, and if he had been a student under modern conditions, or had been trained in the narrower sphere of the English university system, he would not have been the Robert Flint whom the world knew and admired. It is in keeping with the spirit which animated him then and all through, that we find him in this same essay breaking out in singularly

bold terms, in a lengthy footnote, on the defects of the library of his own University. One would think that he would hardly have hazarded in an essay, which was competing for a prize, to offend "the powers that be," but moral courage was ever a strong factor of his nature, and if his production chanced to fall into the hands of the librarian or of the library committee, they must have been startled by the defects in their institution which this young scholar pointed out.

"May I be permitted to suggest that our University library is not in the best state in regard to works embodying philosophical systems? In this matter of Cartesianism I know from painful experience its deficiency." And then he goes on to give a list of about twenty works or more, in French and Latin, which are conspicuous by their absence. He does not at all pretend to have exhausted the deficiencies, even in this limited subject of Cartesianism, and concludes thus, with a parting blow :—

These are but specimens. I could extend the list of deficiencies very largely. A fellow-student gives me an equally deplorable account of the state of matters in regard to all that concerns the times and persons of Scaliger, Lepsius, and Casaubon. All this might be remedied, one would imagine, without very much difficulty or much expenditure of money. Brucker would indicate what books were necessary belonging to the Cartesian movement.

Flint could not foresee that Professor Veitch, the greatest Cartesian scholar in Scotland, was to succeed "Logic Bob," and would no doubt make good the deficiencies of which he so strongly complained, if the evil had not been rectified before then, and as the result of his own criticism.

The mention of "Logic Bob" directs our attention to another of the formative influences that helped to shape Flint's mind and to determine his future. We

refer to his teachers in the University. Dr Wenley, who touches on this subject, does not, with two exceptions, hold a very exalted estimate of the professors who at that time taught in the "Old College." He does not think that they inoculated him with heady ideas.

"Ramsay, Professor of Humanity, was a vigilant drill sergeant, but with small regard to the Classics as a profound and 'formative criticism of life.' Blackburn, Professor of Mathematics, fresh from Cambridge, did not touch his students. Buchanan, known as 'Logic Bob,' who occupied the Chair of Logic and Rhetoric, was somewhat after the Dr Blair style—a playwright, a caustic critic of formal cultivation, an efficient narrow teacher, absolutely averse from originality and independence of thought, an incarnate *laudator temporis acti*. Fleming, familiarly called 'Moral Will,' who had been transferred from the Chair of Oriental Languages to that of Moral Philosophy, seems to have been a hodman amidst his brethren of the Scottish school and—there was no Professor of English Literature! The pulse of modern tendencies beat in Lushington, Professor of Greek, and in Thomson, afterwards Lord Kelvin, who had given a taste of the quality that was to enrol him high among the founders of Physics. But I have no evidence of any impression that Lushington may have had upon Flint, and can only quote Nichol, who records significantly: 'From the earliest time I can recall, I had the same feeling for him as I have now; from the first he wore that "weight of learning lightly like a flower," among pedants who wore heavily the little learning they had.'<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, Thomson is the sole personality among his teachers to whom Flint refers, so far as I am aware. He

<sup>1</sup> "Memoir of John Nichol," Professor Knight, p. 18.



speaks of the 'inspiration of the greatest of his teachers, the Professor William Thomson of the time, the Lord Kelvin of to-day and of all time.'<sup>1</sup>

"On the whole then Flint's course in Arts must have served to confirm him in the static things that were, rather than to turn him towards the dynamic forces so soon to be. And when he passed to the Faculty of Theology, this orientation was fated to further support. Weir, Professor of Oriental Languages, was the ablest scholar on the staff, but by the very nature of his subject—elementary Hebrew mainly—one could not expect him to supply much more than information. The *mythology* that still survives about Jackson, Professor of Ecclesiastical History (irreverently known as the 'Holy Ghost'), is not flattering to his professorial competence. Therefore I take it that Hill, Professor of Divinity, was the single theologian from whom Flint was likely to have obtained aught. And he was a thoroughgoing representative of the established order, nay, of an over-passed stage. The old Moderatism, dear to Burns, survived in him; he was a kindly, courteous, and many-sided gentleman; good taste and sound judgment *ad hoc* were his portion. For the rest his long suit would seem to have been the development of the obvious, as the obvious were then. It must all have been barren enough, and Flint was already seeking refuge in poly-mathic acquisition. In sum, the Scottish standpoint diluted from Reid by lesser folk was impressed upon him as the sole outlook possible, and, be it said, he never shook himself free from it altogether. How this affected him the sequel must tell."

Men still living, who studied under Ramsay and Buchanan, may not altogether share Dr Wenley's

<sup>1</sup> "Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum," p. v.

opinion of them as professors. While they may agree with him in his poor estimate of them as suggestive and inspiring forces, they may be inclined to insist upon the strength of their personality, and the discipline which they exercised as capable and instructive teachers. But a third exception, in addition to Lushington and Thomson, must be made, and that is Jackson. There are still to be found in country manses scattered over Scotland many who have a vivid recollection of the old Professor of Ecclesiastical History. The majority of them may confess that they profited little or nothing by his prelections. The rowdyism in his class was notorious, and had towards the end of his professorial career developed into a scandal. His favourite phrase was "principles and powers, properties and capacities," and any student, however ignorant, always managed to ride off in triumph, when being examined, by repeating this pet shibboleth. But there was evidently more in Jackson than met the eye or attracted the attention of the ordinary student. He was a nephew of Dugald Stewart, and naturally shared his philosophical presuppositions. He acted for some time as his uncle's secretary. His first appointment was the Chair of Biblical Criticism in St Andrews University, from which he had been transferred to the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in Glasgow. He has left no publication behind him, and one accordingly has some difficulty in discovering his conception of Church History and his method of teaching it. But in the University Calendar for 1872-73 there is a Prospectus of his Course prepared by himself, and, as Jackson undoubtedly had very considerable influence on Flint, the following extract may be important :—

The manner of the teaching in this Class is partly by lectures, partly by examinations, and partly by an Essay on some very general

view of the subject, for writing which the Students are exhorted to prepare themselves by special attention to, and reflection on, the preliminary lectures which are particularly devoted to an exposition of these general views, as well as the various phases in which they reappear in almost every subsequent lecture of the Course.

The matter of the Teaching of this Class would be better described by the terms Historical Theology or Theology Historically Developed, than by the term Church History, as the facts or phenomena of Church History are considered to have no other use or value but as indicating the law according to which the facts or phenomena of Theology produce the facts or phenomena of Church History, and those facts only are regarded as important which indicate the law of the reception or rejection of Theology, the law according to which the facts of Theology lead to certain general conclusions or doctrines; and finally, the law according to which the same facts lead to the adoption of certain means and apparatus for preserving the conclusions of Theology and impressing them on the minds of men, or Church Constitution and Church Government.

One can readily understand how, if Jackson lectured in much the same style as characterises this Prospectus, his students would fail to follow him and would amuse themselves, as students, under such circumstances, usually do. But if one studies it with close attention, and carefully balances every phrase and clause, he will find a meaning in Jackson's method and understand how a few of his students found his lectures valuable and even inspiring. He had evidently a philosophical conception of the subject; he looked upon Church History, and indeed upon all history, as the expression of spiritual forces, and saw in the varied, and often apparently contradictory course of events, the unfolding of the divine purpose and the evolution of a vast world movement. It is very significant that Flint attended Jackson's class during four sessions in succession. Only two were necessary for qualifying purposes. Indeed, during the first year after he left the Faculty of Arts, Jackson's class would seem to be the only one which he took in the Faculty of Theology.

This was in Session 1853-54, and, as we know from the prize list, he attended during the same session the Class of Natural History. He probably did not begin to study theology proper till the session of 1854-55. Flint, who was too earnest a student to attend any class oftener than was absolutely necessary, without having some very special object in view, cannot be supposed to have taken two extra sessions in Ecclesiastical History unless he had found Jackson's lectures interesting and helpful. This he must have done, for he was the most distinguished student each year, and gained all the chief prizes, both for examinations and essays. And, what is very significant, it was to his old professor that he dedicated his first published work, "Christ's Kingdom on Earth" (1865). The fact is, Flint's mind from the very first turned to the study of history. Jackson's was the only Chair in the University at the time that dealt with the subject, and the old professor evidently had a conception of it much wider than a denominational or even churchly one, and penetrated, or at all events tried to penetrate, to those principles which lie at the foundation of and govern all history. Have we not here the germ of Flint's great work on the "Philosophy of History"? It seems to me that it was at this time and in this class that his mind was directed to that subject, in the ample treatment of which he gained his first and, as some still think, his most lasting literary triumph. Is it not an echo of his old professor's teaching that we find in the "Advice to Students of Divinity," which he delivered at a much later date, and which forms the first chapter in his book "On Theological, Biblical, and other Subjects" (1905)?

The Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Cambridge once said to me that he regarded the title of his Chair as quite unaffected in meaning by the word Ecclesiastical; that he understood it to

mean just what it would have meant if it had been simply history. And from the religious point of view he was I think quite right . . . the *ecclesia* in its distinctively Scriptural sense is not a visible corporation at all, although it manifests itself wherever there is the working of spiritual life—in all spheres of human activity—in what is called State not less than in what is called Church. And the Kingdom of God which is so prominent in the New Testament is certainly not one in which Churchmen and their doings are described as having any exclusive or pre-eminent place. Church History may fairly be held to be history presented and studied not from the point of view of modern Churchmen, but from the New Testament point of view of the Kingdom of God, and from that point of view it is as wide as history itself because as wide as the whole providential and redemptive work of God as traceable in the history of mankind.

Jackson was well aware of his influence on Flint. On resigning his Chair he retired to St Andrews, and to the late Dr Andrew Gray of Dalkeith, who visited him there, he remarked, that of the many students who had passed through his class, there were not more than half-a-dozen who thoroughly understood him, but he was well satisfied, for of that half-dozen there were two who were carrying out his teaching, Professor Flint of St Andrews and Professor Stewart of Glasgow. Dr Stewart told me that, having heard so much unfavourable criticism of Jackson, he determined on entering his class, to find out if there was any truth in it. For the first three weeks of the session he listened attentively to the Professor's lectures and took notes most diligently. He was more or less in a fog all the time, but at last light began to shine, and he discovered the secret of the master. From then until the end of the session and during the next session he listened to him with growing delight, and, says Dr Stewart: "He was the one, of all my professors, that I should have liked to follow."

But there was another influence that may have had more effect on young Flint than even his professors,

and to it he refers in the address from which we have already quoted. He says: "When I think of my connection with Glasgow University I remember what I owe to my teachers and not less to my *companions*." There is undoubtedly much truth in this, for his companions were very able men, and many of them afterwards rose to the highest position in the professions. In a letter from Principal Grant of Queen's College, Kingston, Ontario, there is a reference to some of them. Grant informs Flint of his new appointment, and as he was to be Professor of Divinity as well as Principal of the University, he consults the Edinburgh Professor as to the books that might be found most useful for the work of his Chair, and proceeds:—

"Ever since I returned to Nova Scotia, seventeen years ago, I have been engaged in multifarious missionary and educational labours, trying to lay the foundations of useful institutions. Preaching often every day of the week, and engaged on committee meetings by night. Your life has been a very different one, but though our paths have diverged so much, our student life seems now to me as of yesterday, and I long to see you and talk over old times and men, Everett, Palmer, M'Pherson, Mee, the M'Leods (Donald, Norman, and John), etc., etc."

To these there falls to be added Dr John Kerr, Lord Kinnear and his brother, Dr John M. Ross of Edinburgh, Professor John Nichol, Rev. Dr James Brown of Paisley, Rev. Dr John Service, Sir James Cameron Lees, Principal Lang, Professor William Jack, George Rankine Luke, Edward Caird, the Right Hon. Lord Bryce, the Rev. Dr John Alison, and the Rev. Dr James C. Russell. These certainly form a most distinguished group. They were all Flint's contemporaries, a number of them his close friends and companions, and in the give and take

of college life, in the clash of debate, and in private talks one can easily imagine the quickening of thought and the rush of ideas with which they would inspire each other. It is to this period that Lord Bryce refers in a letter to Flint, written in 1893. "I remember you very well," he says, "as the most distinguished divinity student of my undergraduate days at Glasgow, and have often since wished we might meet." And another old class-fellow, the Rev. John Thomson of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, writes of "the early days that are left far behind when we walked and talked in the old Glasgow College Green." Students in those days were not harassed, as they are now, by frequent examinations. Quite a number of them, Flint included, never thought of taking a degree. The course of study extended over a much longer period; hence the untrammelled freedom which the young men enjoyed, and the leisure for reflection, for companionship, and for the exchange of ideas.

Miss Flint informs me that in their house in Glasgow they kept an open door, and hardly an evening passed without several of her brother's fellow-students coming in and having tea. The wise mother encouraged this friendly intercourse, and while the young men took full advantage of the hospitality provided for them, the more readily as many of them lived in lodgings, they never interfered with young Flint's studies. When tea was over he would turn to his books, and as they knew and respected his habits, the welcome which they received never stood in any danger of being withdrawn. It is clear that some of the young men, grateful to Mrs Flint for her kindness, were in the habit of inviting her son to their homes. It was in this way that Flint became acquainted with and gained the friendship of Professor Jack's parents, who lived at Irvine. On the

occasion of Mrs Jack's death in 1882, Flint wrote a letter of condolence to his old friend. In his reply Mr Jack says : " When I recall the great esteem my wife had for you in the days of your early promise it makes your kindness doubly dear, and your progress and advancement have confirmed our early and most sanguine hopes."

Flint's early promise, to which Mr Jack refers, was, judged by his success at the University, sufficiently striking. As he lived at home with his parents we have no letters in which an account might be given of his hopes and disappointments as a student. But there are assurances enough to testify that in his case there was no striving or crying, and that he gained his honours as lightly as he wore them. While he was a diligent student he never took his work too seriously, but was always bright and happy in his home and among his friends, and had plenty of leisure for domestic and social intercourse. All the same, no part of his time was wasted, every effort was devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, and if he gained prize after prize at college his aim was not so much University distinction as the mastering of all that could be known of a subject and presenting it in a clear and not infrequently elaborate form. He attached very little importance to mere class examinations ; oral ones he favoured, for by them the student and examiner could fully discuss the subject ; and one can understand the delight with which Flint would engage in such a discussion, and more than likely astonish and, perhaps, even confound his examiner by his knowledge. But as for written examinations, " My benison on them ! " he once exclaimed. Nevertheless he did not fail here, but, as the class prize-lists of those days witness, he earned, by means of them, his full share of distinction. The University records of the first part



of the period during which Flint was a student are not quite complete. But, taking them as they stand, they bear ample evidence to his remarkable success.

It was when he entered the philosophical classes that he began to prove his quality. In the junior division of the Logic and Moral Philosophy classes he shared the chief honours with his friend William Jack. In the Faculty of Theology he was by far the most distinguished student of his time; but it was in the writing of the essays for class and University prizes that he put forth his full strength. A number of these essays are still in existence, and one is struck by the thorough manner in which the subjects with which they deal are treated. They are written as if they were intended for publication. No difficulty is evaded: all the important theories are stated; every available source of information open to the young student is exploited, and the sharp, independent, though eminently fair, criticism with which readers of his works are so familiar, is seen in them. No statement or quotation is taken for granted, and many of the pages bristle with footnotes, referring the reader to the authors and their works, whose views are either accepted or refuted. One is also struck by the range of his knowledge. He was perfectly familiar, even at that early date, with the literature of his subject, and he quotes freely, not only from English, but also from French and Latin authors. German at this time he did not know, and, as he remarks in one of his essays, he "bitterly regretted his ignorance." In due time this was to be made good. He had also a thorough command of all the systems of Scottish, English, and French philosophy, and makes perfectly clear his attitude towards them. Nor in pure literature was his knowledge deficient. He frequently quotes from the ancient classics and shows an

intimate acquaintance with English literature, especially its more modern representatives, such as Shelley, Coleridge, Byron, Carlyle, and Wordsworth; the last of whom he describes as "the truest, divinest singer, of these last days."

The list of prizes which he gained for class and University essays may not be complete, but I have counted sixteen, a few of which may be mentioned. In 1854-55 he won the Cleland gold medal for an essay on the Relation between Natural and Revealed Theology; the University silver medal in 1855-56 for an essay on the Relations of Theology and Philosophy, and the Henderson prize for an essay on the Sabbath; and in 1856-57 he was again awarded the Cleland gold medal for an essay on the Messianic Element in the Prophecies, and the Ewing gold medal on the Partition of Poland; and in 1857-58 he won the Lord Rector's prize (given by Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton) for an essay on the Relation between General and Professional Education.

An amusing incident took place in connection with one of the essays. In a letter from the late Rev. George Scott, minister of Wallacetown, Ayr, and dated November 1890, there occurs the following passage:—

As I think of writing you, an old story of collision—so to say—between yourself and me comes dashing across my memory. I wonder if you remember the gold medal for the essay on the "Partition of Poland" at Glasgow, all these years ago? I had written the essay, but had left before the session was quite finished, and when my friend, waiting on to see the outcome of two essay efforts of mine, heard my name read out and actually became for five or ten minutes the holder of the medal, he felt rather peculiar, I can well believe, when the mistake as to envelopes, opened in error, had to be rectified, and the medal fell to its rightful owner, "Robertus Flint." I have often thought I could like to have met you in course of these after years to let you know of so crowning a specimen, had you wanted one, of the slip between the cup and the lip. I never regretted the work however in the essay, it opened up a field of

literature of which otherwise I should probably have known little, and it acquainted me with literary methods which have stood me in good stead in many a way since then.

Dr Donald Macleod; whose name almost equals that of his brother Norman as a household word in the Church of Scotland, looking back across the gulf of sixty years that divides him from those old days, briefly records his recollections:—

“Dr Flint and I were at Glasgow College together, but we were never class-fellows; he was about three years my junior, but I came to know him well as he was intimate with several of my student friends who used to gather in the picturesque court of the old university in the High Street. As I recollect him at that time he was pale and bore the impress of severe study. He was somewhat shy and stood rather aloof from the rowdy political groups which fought the Rectorial Elections. His intellectual power was even then recognised; and we all anticipated for him a distinguished future.” And Dr Robert Howie, late minister of the United Free Church in Govan, an ex-Moderator and as well known and as highly respected in his own body as Dr Macleod is in his, bears similar testimony: “My chief recollection of Flint in his student days, was seeing him carry off great bundles of prizes in different classes and especially in those of theology, and prizes for work done during summer vacation, for he was a keen, able, and very successful student, and took little interest in any of the sports or political organisations connected with the University.”

But Flint did not owe his success to any imitation or blind following of his teachers. Even then, as all through his life, he recognised no man as his master. It was not by mere written examinations which, as we have seen, he despised, that he gained his distinctions,

but by thoughtful and learned essays, in which he showed that independence of mind, respect for reason, and love for truth, which became the leading notes of his intellectual character. Although he may have been fed at the hands of Buchanan and Fleming on Scottish philosophy, he by no means lived on that intellectual diet alone. He analysed it, saw its defects, and looked out for more healthy provender. This is what he says in a remarkable essay on "The Relations of the Sciences":—

Psychology is yet very far from being thoroughly wrought out. Indeed, perhaps, the scientific study of it is only beginning. The greatest psychologists are undoubtedly the philosophers of the Scottish School. But even in their hands the science has been cumbered and perverted in two ways, First, By mingling together in inextricable confusion metaphysics with psychology, two sciences as radically distinct as mathematics from botany: Secondly, By the hypothesis of faculties—an hypothesis analogous to that of essences, vital powers, etc., in physics, and which was characteristic of what Comte has called its metaphysical stage. If psychology is to be studied scientifically the division into faculties must be given up. It is the science of the relations of the subject-objects in knowledge, and these relations must be traced as so many relations of succession, apart from every assumption as to powers and causes. All psychology must be resolved into laws of association. This view has been mine for a considerable time and it has become stronger since I learn that Mr Bain in his elaborate work on "The Senses and the Intellect," has, in treating on the intellect actually abandoned the sub-division into faculties and proceeds in his exposition entirely on the laws of association. It is right for me to say, however, that that part of his work I have not yet read and so cannot tell what has been the measure of his success.

Nor did he show any more consideration for the presuppositions of his theological teachers. He manifested the same independence in theology as he did in philosophy. Professor Hill was credited with being a faint echo of his father, Principal Hill of St Andrews.

He was even suspected of being considerably indebted to his respected parent for a good deal of the material of his lectures. In that case we can understand how the following extract from an essay by Flint on the "Mosaic Account of Creation" would present a somewhat fresh aspect of the subject to his venerable teacher :—

It is a fact which cannot be denied that all the apparent oppositions which had been considered to exist at any time between nature and Scripture have been removed only in consequence of the application of the principle that Scripture has for its exclusive object the disclosure of spiritual truth. It has not been, as it has been generally asserted, by a profounder and more accurate acquaintance with science. No : it has not been in that way, but it has been by science, as its own strength and evidence increased, forcing the theologian to forego his old interpretation of the written record, by compelling him to perceive that there is no scientific statement at all in the place where he previously imagined there was one. In every case of the kind in all past history the uniform result has been that opposition has been disproved only by showing that revelation has concerned itself exclusively with an aspect of things with which science has nothing whatever to do—that even when both have reference to the same fact or phenomenon the one views it exclusively in its supernatural and the other exclusively in its natural aspect and bearing. Now surely this is almost a demonstration that whatever has been will be—that difficulties can only be removed on the points which vex and harass these latter days in the same way which they have been removed in the past, namely, by showing, not the consent of science and revelation after which so many are straining, to the prejudice, to the alteration and perversion of the statement we believe of both the books of God, but by showing that while ever contiguous, that while religion surrounds science as a zone of beauty and a garment of spiritual glory, they never interpenetrate. This, we think, is the lesson that history, the mother of all wisdom, the common and impartial instructor of our race, most emphatically teaches both the philosopher and theologian.

There is one more influence to which reference must be made, Flint's civic and national environment. Dr Wenley touches on this. He says :—

“No slight effort of imagination—destructive imagination one might almost call it—is necessary to realise the cultural perspective of Scotland as it was during the plastic years of Flint’s youth, say, from 1848 until he undertook the onerous cure of East Aberdeen, in 1859. To begin with, we confront a world vastly less complex than our own. Glasgow had indeed betrayed many symptoms of coming commercial expansion, and could account herself a considerable city of some 300,000. But the complete displacement of society and of social values by industrialism was reserved for another generation; and the pressure of urban problems felt by Chalmers in the Tron and St John’s, and, twenty years later, by Robert Buchanan in the Wynds, had hardly become national, certainly not international. As the ‘Radical Rising’ (1819) showed, the pains of change had begun their onset. Nevertheless the new order had not reached the rank of a universal phenomenon compelling reflection. The middle-class industrial state, ripe for beatification as ‘triumphant democracy’ in the nineties, remained unconscious of itself, for its price in human wreckage did not yet appal. Flint’s ‘Socialism’ lay fifty years in the future, like Glasgow’s ‘million-footed streets.’ Briefly, the social eighteenth century lingered on the stage, slow to depart, because the means of its departure were still in the making.

“Again, as in the social, so in the intellectual realm, the dominant Scot of that day was tolerably sure of himself; in an expressive Americanism, he ‘knew it all.’ The reaction against Hume which had borne ‘safe’ thinkers to the seats of the mighty, persisted even to the third and fourth generations. Proofs abound. In 1826, at St Andrews, when Carlyle applied for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in succession to

Chalmers, 'it was enough that the candidate was described as a man of original and extraordinary gifts to make college patrons shrink from contact with him,'<sup>1</sup> and exclaim, 'Not this man but George Cook.' The Edinburgh outburst against Ferrier in 1856; the preference of Veitch over Nichol at Glasgow in 1864; Calderwood's success over Hutchison Stirling, and even Flint himself, at Edinburgh, in 1868, all point to a definite intellectual predisposition. Jeune and pointless as the fulminations of Cairns<sup>2</sup> may appear now, they gave vent to paramount convictions, and exerted decisive effect. Thus Ferrier was prophetic when he wrote: 'I could very well have trusted to time and the growing intelligence of the country for the correction of the misrepresentations of my assailants.'<sup>3</sup> And he spoke truer than he knew in those words: 'When I find that the patrons of the metropolitan University—the appointed guardians of the liberties of knowledge—have thought fit to impose a public prohibition on the progress of metaphysical discovery, . . . I feel that I have a duty to discharge, binding on me as a cultivator of philosophy and as one of the public instructors of the land. In a word, I consider myself summoned by circumstances to advocate the cause of the absolute independence of speculative thinking in opposition to the restricted dogma laid down, and acted on by the Town Council of Edinburgh.'<sup>4</sup> For as Smith alleged with remorseless pertinence, 'Mr Cairns's idea of a criticism on the "Institutes" seems to be that of a fell vengeance upon the devoted head of the destroyer

<sup>1</sup> "Thomas Carlyle," John Nichol, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> "An Examination of Ferrier's 'Theory of Knowing and Being,'" Rev. John Cairns, A.M., Berwick (Edinburgh, 1856).

<sup>3</sup> "Scottish Philosophy, the Old and the New: a Statement," Professor Ferrier, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

of Scottish psychology.’<sup>1</sup> Cairns was indeed ‘inexcusable’<sup>2</sup> and would deserve to be pilloried for all time—save that Scottish psychologism ruled the roost and believed thoroughly in its ecumenical office! Righteousness and truth were met together and, as usual, original thinkers had reason to exclaim, ‘Look out!’ All that Sir William Hamilton counted worthy of adoption and illustration, ‘this it was that had given Edinburgh a place and even a pre-eminence among the seats of intellectual philosophy in Europe.’<sup>3</sup> It did not occur to these good but self-satisfied folk that Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Comte, Beneke, and Herbart, to name but several of a host, had done their work. On the whole Scottish thought had sunk back into provincialism; nay, as Dugald Stewart’s strange lucubrations on Kant, Cairns’s absurdities about Hegel, and Mansel’s caricature of Schleiermacher<sup>4</sup> prove, it was impervious meantime to the notion of philosophical *Wissenschaft*. Alone among the professors Ferrier knew whereof he spoke; and to those experts in ‘common sense,’ the Town Council of Edinburgh, he was unsound<sup>5</sup>—as if heresy in philosophy were a possibility! Burns, with the poet’s care-free insight, came very near hitting the nail on the head:—

‘I’ve sent you here, by Johnie Simson,  
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on :—  
Smith wi’ his sympathetic feeling,  
And Reid to common sense appealing.  
Philosophers have fought and wrangled,  
And mickle Greek and Latin mangled,

<sup>1</sup> “An Explanation of Cairns’s ‘Examination of Professor Ferrier’s ‘Theory of Knowing and Being,’” Rev. John Smith, Assistant, New Greyfriars’, Edinburgh, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cairns, *l.c.*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Flint saw this in his “Agnosticism”; *cf.* pp. 626 f. (American edition).

<sup>5</sup> Cairns, p. 4.



Till, wi' their logic-jargon tired,  
 And in the depth of science mired,  
 To common sense they now appeal,  
 That wives and wabsters see and feel.'

"It is true that, by the time Flint matriculated at Glasgow, other influences had asserted themselves. Some of the *dii majores* of the nineteenth century had finished their labours. Shelley, Byron, Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth; and Jeffrey were dead. Brougham and Combe had seen their hey-day. Dickens had been a popular hero for years: "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," and "Henry Esmond" had seen the light. I doubt if any of them had struck home to *spiritual* Scotland; and, although "Modern Painters," "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," and the "Stones of Venice" were before the public, it is certain that they failed to penetrate the Scottish consciousness. Tennyson may have been coming to his own, but not as yet in his profounder moods. Browning, George Eliot, Hardy, Meredith, and Matthew Arnold, with their freightage of ideas; lay low upon the horizon or beneath it. In short, culture drifted listlessly in the doldrums of early Victorianism. Besides, as we shall see, Scotland had domestic worry and to spare. Carlyle limned the situation with his customary explosive picturesqueness. 'The beggarly history of poor *Sartor* among the blockheadisms is not worth recording or remembering! . . . We will . . . wrap up our MS. and carry it about for some two years from one terrified owl to another; published at last experimentally in 'Frazer,' and even then mostly laughed at, nothing coming of the volume except what was sent by Emerson from America.'<sup>1</sup> He was abundantly conscious of the value of the book, and superabundantly angry at the unconsciousness of the literary patrons of the time."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Thomas Carlyle," John Nichol, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Well, it would seem that Flint had not a more exalted opinion of the general and even special culture of his countrymen at this time than is to be found in the estimate just quoted from Dr Wenley. There is this to be said for him; that while he did not think that they knew everything "down in Judee;" he was convinced that he knew not a little himself. And this he might maintain without any youthful arrogance. In his prize essay on "General and Professional Education," he thus expresses himself on Scottish learning of his time:—

I thank with all my heart Professor Blackie for his exertions in favour of learning—learning in its genuine and catholic sense—in Scotland. The movement which he represents would do more for her real good, were it to succeed, than anything which has been done for her or by her, since the Union. May God speed it! Look what comes of the want of this learning. I lay it down as a fact, well known by all who are acquainted with our universities, that the highest result of peculiarly Scottish discipline is to be found in those who have imbibed most thoroughly the mental philosophy and theology taught in them—in the prizemen in these classes and, which comes to the same thing, the men of heaviest intellectual calibre among our clergy. What is the result then as seen in these men? They are strong-minded, logical, sharp men—without a doubt—Attack them on their own ground, and in the ordinary ways, and you will not find them flinch or fail. But they are rigid and one-sided. Their ground is narrow, their thoughts all run in beaten tracks. They are the last men you would expect to find forming a speculation as to the philosophy of history or venturing on the independent solution of a difficult problem either in social life or social science. Mingle with them. What interesting discussion is it that so entrances them? Oh it is on "justification by faith," or the "psychological analysis of imagination," or Dugald Stewart's view of "conception." I exaggerate nothing, set nothing down in malice: I would sooner expect a real advance of any psychical or social science, in process of formation, from a Paisley weaver than from one whose mind has imbibed only the dogmatic tuition of Scottish psychology, firmly convinced though I be, that it is the only psychology worthy of the name, a most genuine and admirable

branch of knowledge. It is not the thing itself that is at fault. The thing itself is an undying glory to our country. The radical error and vice lies in this, that it is unconnected with the past through learning. Drill your young men in Ritter and Preller,<sup>1</sup> make them stand examinations, oral examinations I mean (my benison on written ones) in Plato. Take up Des Cartes, study his system in his own works, and in those of his followers and opponents, and see if another class of men—much more hopeful—be not turned out.

It will thus be seen that young Flint had already stepped beyond the mental discipline that his University could give him. And this perhaps after all is the very best thing that any university enables its ablest students to do. It is in this way that progress lies. He himself records that; in order to write an essay on “Cartesianism” for a Philosophical Society to which he belonged, he read “two hundred old books in Latin and French,” and so thoroughly had he gone into the subject that, in taking it up in later life, he found little to change in the main lines of thought. Indeed, he had begun, even then, to interest himself in subjects that found no place in the ordinary curriculum of the Scottish universities. He had already risen above the more or less traditional and parochial conception of knowledge which found favour even among the learned in his own country, and to move in an orbit of thought with which they were far from familiar. For, looking back upon those old days after a lapse of nearly half a century, he says: “The European events which followed on the French Revolution of 1848—the democratic movements in Germany, the Hungarian War of Independence, and the struggles for a United Italy—had from the time that I was twelve years old a tremendous influence on me, to which I trace the attraction I have had for the study of history, an aversion to look at human affairs from

<sup>1</sup> I refer of course to their “*Historia Philosophiæ Græco-Romanæ ex Fontium Locis contexta.*”

a merely ecclesiastical point of view, and my interest in all great popular and national movements ; and for that too I thank God ! ” Thus early did he manifest a breadth of view and that sleuth-hound instinct for great things, for those subjects which have not merely ‘ a local habitation and a name,’ but which embrace the deep and common interests of humanity in the sphere of religion and the world of thought, which was to bear rich fruit in after years. In thus sending forth Robert Flint from her gates, Glasgow University, whether by her merits or her defects, did a great service to him and to his age.

## CHAPTER III

### PROBATION

WE now enter upon another stage in the *Lehrjahre* of young Flint. He had finished, or all but finished, his academic course, and, as he was looking forward to the ministry of the Church, he had one step still to take before he could regard himself as thoroughly equipped for the duties of the pastoral office. In other words, it was necessary that he should have an experience, however short, of missionary work, and that he should also act for some time as assistant under a capable minister in a large city parish. This was evidently the ideal that he set before himself, and he was fortunate in realizing it. During his last year in the Divinity Hall he acted as missionary under the Glasgow Elders' Association, and when on the eve of licence as a probationer of the Church of Scotland, he was appointed, first as missionary, and subsequently as assistant, to the Rev. Dr Norman Macleod of the Barony Parish, Glasgow.

It may be a surprise to those who have followed Flint's career so far to find him in the Church of Scotland. His father came out at the Disruption. He was at this time, and continued for many years to be, a stalwart supporter of Free Church principles, and an attached member of that Church. He connected himself with one of the congregations of that body when he came to Glasgow, and, as between him and his wife and children there was the deepest affection, every member of the family loyally followed him to Laurieston, and afterwards to Union Free Church. But in the early

part of his Divinity course young Flint began to doubt the advisability of his becoming a student in the Divinity Hall of the Free Church and a minister of that body. We have reason to know that this hesitation sprang from a distaste of the theological position of that Church. The intellectual atmosphere which pervaded it at that time was such as he could not freely breathe. He believed that in the Church of Scotland a more liberal spirit prevailed, and that in it he would find himself in more congenial theological surroundings. It is important, in connection with the stage in Flint's intellectual development we have now reached, that the religious, and particularly the theological, position of Scotland at this time should be passed under a brief review. A glance at the modes of thought which chiefly prevailed will enable us to understand Flint's attitude and action, and as he was just entering upon a short though brilliant career as a preacher, it may help to focus for us the forces by which his theological outlook was conditioned.

Scotland had just emerged from the throes of the Disruption, but its religious and ecclesiastical life was still strongly affected by the causes which produced that untoward and unfortunate event. Previous to 1843 the Church of Scotland had become divided into two parties, the Evangelicals and the Moderates, and the former, who represented sound and, as some now think, extreme orthodoxy, had gained the upper hand of the latter, who were held to be reprehensively lax in their theological views. Whatever force may have existed in the movement which created the Free Church was, during the period of Flint's youth and early manhood, directed towards a re-establishing of the old faith and Confessional theology, and the organising of the Church itself. In vital religion there may have been a forward movement; but in theological thought

the tendency was reactionary and directed towards an emphasising of those doctrinal points which, it was alleged, had been overlooked or practically forgotten by the other party which had been so long in the ascendant. The narrowness thus produced and strictness in interpreting cardinal doctrines were bound to be repellent to a young and eager student like Flint, who had already acquainted himself with most of the sources of theological knowledge available to him, and who had trained himself to try every doctrine at the bar of reason and truth. Theological productivity, under such circumstances, could not be looked for in the Free Church. Speculative thought was repressed, and it was not till a much later day that it was able to add to its reputation for piety a claim for scholarship and doctrinal advance.

The Church of Scotland, which had been sorely shattered by the Disruption, was busily engaged in putting its house in order, filling its empty pulpits with ministers, and making every effort to put fresh courage into the hearts of its dismayed people. It still had a leaning, however, towards the old Moderate position, and many of its leading ministers at this time were men of that school. But the forces which brought about the Disruption were not without their effect upon it. It naturally and wisely indulged in an honest searching of heart, and was not ashamed to profit by the sad experiences through which it had just passed. Hence there was now to be found in it a union of Moderatism and Evangelicalism; a respect for old ecclesiastical traditions, and an adherence to what was regarded as best in the constitution and doctrines of the Church, with a readiness to be affected by the warmer breath of religious fervour and zeal which so strongly characterised its rival. It was this combination which enabled it to

re-establish its position in the affections of the people, to repair its waste places, and gradually to build up strong and vigorous congregations in most parts of the country. It was not, however, any more than the Free Church, largely productive in theological thought. It had other work in hand, but it was possessed by a more liberal spirit. It had not to emphasise its doctrinal position as a reason for its existence, and it thus naturally recommended itself to young Flint as the Church in which he could find more freedom than in the one to which his father belonged.

It will thus be seen that Scotland merited Sir William Hamilton's sneer about its theology when he said, "Now for nearly two centuries *Scotland* compared with other countries may be broadly said to have been *without a theology*." This was written in 1836, five years after the General Assembly had deposed MacLeod Campbell of Row. It may be thought that the leaven which Campbell had placed in the heart of the Church would, by the time young Flint was licensed, have leavened the whole lump, and that the seed sown by Erskine of Linlathen would in the course of those years have borne fruit. Edward Irving, who was deposed by the Presbytery of Annan in 1833, and Wright of Borthwick, who shared a similar fate at the hands of the General Assembly in 1841, had also by their views been stirring the stagnant waters of Scottish orthodoxy; but the fate which befell them shows that the Scottish Church was not ripe for any new movement in theology, although in after years it was glad to assimilate what was true in the teaching of all four. The representative of Scottish theology during all those years was Dr Andrew Thomson. He focused the official mind of the Church; for it cannot be said that Dr Chalmers, with all his eloquence and influence, initiated any new movement.



He was certainly more in sympathy with liberal thought than Dr Andrew Thomson, but he stood silently by and made no effort to save MacLeod Campbell and Irving from their fate.

Nor was the Scottish Church visibly touched by the remarkable movements which had taken place in England during the first half of the nineteenth century. There is no evidence that, by the time young Flint had all but finished his academic training, the schools of thought which are associated with the names of Coleridge, Whately, Newman, Maurice, and John S. Mill had roused the Church from its dogmatic slumber; and it was not till some years later that orthodox Churchmen could look upon their countryman Carlyle as one whose works might be placed with safety in the hands of a young scholar. German theology which, through the labours of Pusey, Sir William Hamilton, Morrell, and Schaff, was being made known to English readers, and the works of German theologians themselves, which were being translated, did in due time break down our insular prejudice; but Scottish theologians, such as they were, had but a dim conception of the significance of German theology, and a treatment of it found little or no place in the curriculum of Scottish universities.

But a student like Flint, who read two hundred volumes in various languages in order to supply himself with material for the writing of a single essay, could be ignorant neither of the movements just referred to nor of the men who headed them. In a few years and under the leadership of such men as Robert Lee, John Caird, John Tulloch, and Robert Wallace, Scotland was to testify to its appreciation of the labours of those who were trying to put a new face on modern theology. And although Flint did not join in the movement, there is sufficient evidence to show that, while he was a student

of divinity, he was thoroughly cognisant of the forces that were soon to produce it. We find him at this early date quoting freely from Coleridge and Carlyle, approving of the former's belief in religion as rational, and of the latter's clear apprehension of the sovereignty and immanence of God. And although he did not accept in its entirety MacLeod Campbell's view of the Atonement, he strongly believed in the unity of religion and life, and shared Erskine of Linlathen's conception of religion as subjective, although he did not fall into the error of that thinker in divorcing it from external evidence or from those "proofs" which were afterwards so fully elaborated by Flint himself in his volume on Theism.

It can thus be readily conceived how a serious student like Flint, possessed of a wealth of knowledge exceptional for his years, with powers of thought equal to his learning, impelled by moral earnestness and with a conscience quick to take offence at the slightest deviation from truth, was bound to come into conflict with the official orthodoxy of his day; and that is what really happened. Before he reached his twentieth year he had to fight his battle of the soul, and he did not conquer without experiencing those mental pangs which have been the lot of all earnest spirits that have passed through similar troubles. What the particular nature of the conflict was, we do not exactly know. He has left no record. But in an address which he delivered to the Young Men's Christian Association, in connection with the East Church, when he was on the eve of leaving Aberdeen, he refers to this time of mental conflict in the following terms:—

Allow me to assure the young men of the East Church that while I think that they may easily find one who will give them more assistance and do them more good than I have done, that I scarcely

think that they will find one who can sympathise more sincerely with young men in their trials and dangers, their aspirations and efforts. Thanks to Providence and parental affection, I have never had any difficulties from without to contend with, but almost ever since I can remember, the great spiritual questions which agitate society, which harass young men most of all, sometimes even under seeming levity of disposition, have been of vital interest to me ; and whatever of solid footing in Divine truth I seem to myself to have found has been gained with a struggle and a pain which I thank God devoutly for ; so that with the deeper trials of young and earnest spirits I do feel in sympathy through every fibre of my being.

Now it seems to me that these are words which those who knew Flint in after years, when he was regarded as the "Defender of the Faith," might well ponder. A tradition had grown up round him which shadowed him forth as one who from earliest years had his feet planted firmly on the foundations of truth, and who had never felt these foundations sinking under him. While many have admired, and others have been grateful for, the masterly way in which he re-establishes the main doctrines of religion, very few were aware that his power was the fruit of a great conflict which raged in his student days, and that the firm land on which he stood had been reached only after struggling through the breakers. It seems to me that the knowledge of this should give additional interest and value to his writings, and cause them to stir the soul as well as to convince the mind.

The special form which this conflict took cannot, as has been remarked, be exactly known, but his sister well remembers the long and keen discussions which he had with his father on the subject of the six days' creation as recorded in Genesis, and as to whether the narrative was to be regarded as scientific truth or as religious teaching. The son advocated the latter, the

father the former view. There may not be much in this, but it is sufficient to indicate the cleavage which was taking place between the old and the new in Scottish theology, and how such a subject would lead to others of far-reaching consequence. It is significant also to note that young Flint's mind would seem to have been more interested in the possibility of religion itself than in those doctrinal questions which have sprung up under the Christian religion and in connection with the development of the Christian Church. The science of geology was the earliest to cause theologians to rethink their faith. It was soon to be followed by others which for a time seemed to threaten the destruction of that faith. It was with the forces thus let loose that Flint did battle all his days, and it will thus be seen that the subject of his first Baird Lecture was no after-thought, that the question of Natural Religion was of the profoundest interest to him from the very first. The great fact of religion itself lay, to his mind, at the foundation of all religions, the Christian as well as all others. And it was thus with the fundamentals, not of any particular religion, but of religion itself, that from first to last he mainly dealt.

This battle of the soul which gave the young thinker a clear and firm hold of divine truth had, as one of its results, an inability on his part to enter as a student the Divinity Hall of the Free Church. There was no theological college in connection with that Church in Glasgow until 1856. He must needs, therefore, go to Edinburgh, and his parents had all but made arrangements for his residence in that city. It was their intention that he and his sister should reside together, that he should go to college and she to school, returning to Glasgow for the week-end. But young Flint, on this as on most other occasions, showed a resolution which

was not easily overcome. He determined to put his case before the most responsible man in the Free Church, to state clearly his theological views, and to have a definite reply as to whether these views could be reconciled with the position of the Free Church or not. He was determined not to allow any misunderstanding to hamper his future conduct. He accordingly wrote to Dr Candlish, minister of Free St George's Church, Edinburgh, and leader of the body, clearly stating his position. The reply which he received was curt and unfavourable. It is said that in after years, when Flint rose to eminence, Candlish used to express profound regret at having dealt so summarily with Flint's letter. He excused himself on the ground that he was at the time exceedingly busy, and looked upon the letter as of no special importance. It was from a young student, and young students have often intellectual whims and fancies! It was, perhaps, just as well that things happened as they did, for if Flint had entered the Free Church Hall he might have been compelled to leave it or have been subjected to some such petty persecution as befell several of his fellow-students who entered the Theological Hall of the Free Church in Glasgow in 1856, the year in which it was instituted. It is not at all unlikely that, if Flint had determined on entering the Free Church, he would have left the Edinburgh College and joined the Glasgow one, for, at its opening, two years of his course were still to run. But there is one fact which might have militated against any such action, and that was the appointment to the Chair of Divinity and Church History of the Rev. Dr Gibson, minister of Kingston Free Church. Gibson was certainly of the old school, and he had been a bitter persecutor of the Rev. Mr MacBeth, the elder Flint's minister in Laurieston Free Church. Flint's father always

maintained that MacBeth was innocent, and Dr Gibson's hostile attitude might of itself have been enough to prevent the son from studying under him. Indeed, young Flint, in view of what afterwards took place, must have congratulated himself on his resolution to enter the Divinity Hall of the Church of Scotland, for, during the second session of his professorship, Gibson set in process a train of events which landed a number of his students before the General Assembly on the charge of heresy. Such an incident was almost unprecedented in the history of the Scottish Church, and it shows the narrow spirit which animated certain of the leading lights of the Free Church at the time. As the case passed through the different courts of the Church and caused a considerable stir, and as it throws a strong sidelight on the theological outlook at the time, it may not be uninteresting to give a short account of it in the words of one of the student-culprits, the Rev. Dr Howie, late of Govan, and ex-Moderator of the United Free Church. This I am the more inclined to do as Miss Flint insists in maintaining that Dr Gibson's action did much to confirm her brother in his resolution not to enter the Free Church.

The second year of my attendance in the Glasgow Free College, 1857-8, we who were students in Professor Gibson's class were asked by him to write an essay on the Unity of God. Several of us treated the subject as one of natural theology, and did so not only because it had been so treated in the class we attended the previous year, but also for reasons similar to those which many years afterwards are well stated by Professor Flint in his first Baird Lecture on Theism. We used arguments in proof of there being only one God similar to those afterwards used in a much more elaborate manner by him. But while we contended that the light of nature and the works of creation and providence prove the existence and so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, we also believed that they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary unto salvation.

Professor Gibson took exception to our mode of treating the subject on the ground that we thereby attributed to the reason of fallen man capabilities which it does not possess, and were virtually denying the Scriptural doctrine of human depravity. He denounced us so severely in his criticism of our essays in the presence of our fellow-students, that the report was circulated, especially by some of the Highland students, that a number of us were heretics. The class, which consisted of twenty-two students, became ultimately equally divided on the subject. To protect our reputations and our prospects as those who were studying with a view to the holy ministry, those of us who were most severely criticised submitted our essays to the Senatus, which refused to condemn our views, or us as heretics. Still persuaded that we had heretical views on the subject of human depravity, Professor Gibson perscribed as the subject of a second essay the "Scripture Doctrine of Human Depravity" with special reference to Chapter VI of the Confession of Faith. Several of the essays then given in were retained by him, my own among the number, in justification of the charge he had made against us in the class, probably with the view of having us dealt with in the courts of the Church; for the case was reported to the Presbytery of Glasgow. He thereafter published a pamphlet stating his views on the case and giving what purported to be certified extracts from our essays. We who were the accused students replied in a pamphlet in which each of us stated the facts in regard to himself and repelled the charge of heresy brought against us. We also pointed out that some of the alleged certified extracts from the essays were not correctly quoted in the pamphlet of the Professor and that others were improperly wrenched from their contexts. Ultimately the College Committee of the Free Church intervened in what had come to be well known as the "Glasgow Free Church College Case." The students were examined individually by the Committee and the essays were handed to it, and on its report the case came before the General Assembly of the Free Church in 1859. After a prolonged debate, in the course of which the late Principal Rainy made his first great speech in the Assembly, and made it in defence of the students, and the late Dr Begg made a characteristic speech in defence of the Professor, the Assembly by a large majority decided in favour of the students and declined to regard us as heretics.

It was necessary for Flint, once he had made up his mind to enter the Church of Scotland, to connect him-

self with some local congregation, for a certificate from a minister testifying to his connection with his Church had to be presented to the Presbytery each year before his entrance into the Hall. It was not, however, till 1855 that he associated himself formally with the Church of Scotland, thus showing that he delayed taking the step as long as possible. One can well understand his feelings at such a crisis, for a crisis it must have been to him. The deep affection and respect which he had for his father must have caused him to hesitate. He could not hide from himself the profound disappointment to his father which the step he was meditating would cause, and that he at last showed himself ready to make the sacrifice is a proof of the strong reasons which must have weighed with him. The Church with which he connected himself was St George's Parish in Buchanan Street, then under the ministry of Dr Craik. Mr John Lindsay, Town Clerk of Glasgow, has kindly furnished me with the following memorandum, the result of a search which he caused to be made of the official books of St George's, in order to discover Flint's connection with that church.

Robert Flint paid for sittings in St George's Church on 11 April 1855. This is the first entry in our cash-book. He continued to be a seatholder till 1857-58. The register for 1858-59 cannot be found, but the name does not appear as a seatholder in 1860-61. The number of the pew was 161 and the address at that time of the seatholder was 23 Surrey St. He had one sitting, for which he paid 10s. per annum.

We do not know the special reason which induced Flint to choose St George's. One might think that he would have gone to St Andrew's, where his mother was in the habit of occasionally worshipping. Norman MacLeod was then in the Barony, and he was the type of man that would naturally appeal to a young and



eager spirit like Flint. But Dr Craik was equally eminent in his own way. He had taken a deep interest in the educational enterprises of the Church, and he was at this time Convener of the Committee on the India Mission. He possessed besides two qualities with which Flint was by instinct in sympathy. He combined the best features of Evangelicalism and Moderatism. His son, Sir Henry Craik, says of his father that, "doctrinally he was inclined to the evangelical school, but in matters of Church government and especially in his later attitude generally he was distinctly a moderate. I often," he continues, "saw Professor Flint at my father's house. Flint was strongly attached to my father, who had an admiration for him and respected his metaphysical grasp, but I do not think that he shared it. On the other hand, I do think that they were akin in a readiness to recognise the standpoint of different schools. I think they shared the leaning towards the Moderates." Flint continued to worship in St George's until he was appointed assistant in the Barony. He taught in its Sunday-school and identified himself in every way with Dr Craik's ministry.

Theological students of those days had to study for four sessions in the Divinity Hall, but during the last session they were chiefly engaged in preparing and in giving in discourses, and, by mission and other kindred work, gradually equipping themselves for the more practical duties of the ministry. It was a wise plan. By it, young students were saved from being thrust into parishes without having had some experience of pastoral work. Assistantships were not then so common as they are now, and the extra year, which was thus utilised for ministerial training, was of considerable value. Flint, therefore, felt himself free, indeed per-

haps duty-bound, to take advantage of his fourth year in the Hall in order to gain experience for his future office. Accordingly, on the recommendation of Professor Hill, he was appointed missionary to the Glasgow Elders' Association in connection with the Church of Scotland, and entered upon his duties towards the end of August 1857.

The Glasgow Elders' Association has had a most useful and honourable record, and there have been connected with it, at one time or another, most of the leading laymen of the Church in Glasgow. It originated in 1854, and the Minutes, which have been most carefully kept, tell of its first meeting in words which may be quoted, as they show the intention of its original promoters.

Circular address to the Elders of Glasgow in connection with the Church of Scotland.

117 WEST REGENT ST.,  
GLASGOW, *Jan.* 2, 1854.

DEAR SIR,—At a meeting of Elders from the different Sessions held last Wednesday in the Religious Institution Rooms, John King, Esq. of Levernholm, in the Chair, the opinion was unanimously and cordially expressed that for various reasons, it is desirable that the lay members of the Sessions of the Church of Scotland in this city and suburbs should be better acquainted with each other, and it was resolved that to promote this object they ought to have an opportunity of dining together, which dinner, it was fixed, should be on Monday 23rd inst. in the Large Room of the Tontine, and a committee of which I act as Convener was appointed to make arrangements accordingly. To carry out these it would be obliging if you will intimate to me by a Note against Saturday 7th, whether you approve of this movement and if you will find it convenient to be at the dinner.

Tickets, including a pint of wine, 6s., may be had from any of the Committee.

Dinner to be on the table at half-past five o'clock precisely.

I am, Dear Sir, Your respectfully

(sigd.) THOMAS WATSON.

Both Mr King and Mr Watson, whose names appear in the Minute, the one as Chairman of the meeting and the other as Convener at the forthcoming dinner, represented families whose descendants still take a deep interest in the work of the Association and in the Church of Scotland. The dinner duly took place; a meeting was arranged for a subsequent date, and after being solemnly opened with prayer the Association was formed and arrangements made for defining its scope and drawing up regulations for the carrying on of its work. It was to have two special objects, one of which should be the "promotion of frequent meetings of Members of the different Sessions for mutual communication and explanation in regard to what was doing in their several parishes, while another object should be the promotion and extension of home-missionary efforts in destitute localities within the city and suburbs." After prolonged and careful consideration it was resolved that the second object could best be carried out by the selection of a "suitable district within which the labours of a missionary might with God's blessing be advantageously employed." The suitable district chosen was, from a social point of view, the very worst in Glasgow, and there is no doubt that it was for this reason it commended itself to the Association. It was one embraced within the following boundaries, viz., "From the Cross down Saltmarket Street and embracing both sides of that Street to St Andrews Street on the east and to Prince's Street on the west sides, respectively; thence along Prince's Street embracing both sides of that street to King Street; thence along King Street and Candleriggs Street embracing the east side of these streets north to Bell Street; thence along Bell Street embracing both sides of that street eastwards to High Street; and thence along the High Street em-

bracing both sides of that street situated to the south of the centre line of Bell Street, southward to the Cross.”

Those who remember Glasgow when Flint began his labours in the district assigned to him by the Elders' Association will fully appreciate the character of the work which he had to perform. It was about the hardest to which a young man could be set. The High Street and its immediate neighbourhood was the very centre of the slum district of the city, and in it were gathered together the worst dregs of society. The City Improvement Trust had not begun its operations, the old lands intersected by closes leading through a very labyrinth of dwellings were still standing, and it was unsafe for anyone, unless he were protected either by physical force or the sanctity of his calling, to penetrate them after nightfall. Most of the houses have long since been swept away and a new order has been established, but it required considerable courage on the part of the Elders' Association to select this district for their home-mission enterprise, and no less courage on the part of the young missionary who responded to its call. Flint had two predecessors, Mr John M'Kenzie and Mr Thomas Murray; each served for about a year, Flint's period of service extended to six months only. One would naturally like to learn how he acquitted himself in this new and difficult post. He was now twenty-three years of age, and until he accepted this appointment he had never discharged any task other than that presented by his studies. From his earliest years almost his whole time was taken up with learning, and so well did he take advantage of the opportunities which his father gave him both at school and college that he stood forth as the most brilliant student of his time. But here was a new and strange sphere of activity, which was sure to try his practical

ability and his power of dealing with human nature on its lowest side. No rose-water theory, either of a philosophical or a theological nature, would prove of any avail in settling the questions which now faced him, or in effectively discharging the duties which lay to his hand.

It is no exaggeration to say that he proved one of the most hard-working, painstaking, and successful missionaries that ever served under the Association. One of the duties of those who occupied Flint's post was to make a report, at the end of each year, of their labours, carefully tabulating the number and character of the visits which they made and of the services which they held in connection with the mission. I have examined and compared these reports, and while all of them are most creditable, his impresses one more than the others, and the marvel is how, with the work which he was doing at the University, writing essays and performing the necessary class-work, he was able to overtake so much work within so brief a compass of time. The report bears that, during the four months of September, October, November, and December 1857, he made 1736 visits, of which 134 were to the sick and 79 to the infirm. He thus made an average of 100 visits a week, and, in addition, he held 33 meetings, one on a week-night and another on a Sunday. The salary of £50 a year which he received was no measure of labour of this kind. Then, as ever afterwards, he was inspired by that moral earnestness, strong sense of duty, and devotion to his Master which marked his career to the very end. It was this which impelled him to throw himself so whole-heartedly into work which might have deterred most men, and enabled him to prove that he was as fit for the practical work of the ministry as for acquiring the knowledge of the ages.

His sister remembers a touching incident which shows how much he made himself beloved by the poor people whom he visited, and to whom he ministered. A young girl, beautiful for her station, had been mixed up in some midnight brawl and received such severe injuries, chiefly through burning, as to cause her life to be despaired of. A neighbour woman ran for the missionary so that some spiritual comfort might be given to the poor creature in her last moments upon earth. Mrs Flint, who answered the door, said that she could not trust her young son at so late an hour into so dangerous a quarter. To this came the reply, "Dinna be afraid, naebody would touch a hair of the dear laddie's heid." Flint in after years looked back with gratitude upon the experience which he had as missionary in the slums of Glasgow, and counted it as one of the reasons for which he should thank God in His Providential dealings with him. If it is the heart that makes the theologian, Flint then learned the necessary lesson; and his knowledge of, and sympathy with, working men and the unfortunate classes of the community, kept his mind in touch with those social questions with which he afterwards dealt so effectively in his great work on Socialism, and gave a tone to his preaching and even his teaching which made them so effective to his hearers.

A sentence or two may be welcomed from the thoughtful and vigorous report which he prepared for the Association at the end of the year. After referring to the difficulty of the work, the manner in which he had been received, the delicate handling with which some had to be dealt with, and the disappointment caused by the vain promises of others, he makes special reference to the most congested and hopeless district within his sphere of operation, and the principles which ought

to guide the missionary in labouring in such a locality.

I may state that I have shunned to a very great extent visiting certain back lands in the Saltmarket and Trongate—the Tontine Close for instance—inhabited almost entirely if not entirely by the most abandoned of the female portion of the community. The number of missionaries must be immensely increased—their districts must be much smaller—before they can possibly produce any very salutary effect on these depraved and wretched beings. The evil has reached so enormous a height that a special organization founded on an intimate acquaintance with its causes can alone be expected to deal with it with even the slightest chance of success. It appears to me that it would be foolish in the extreme for a missionary whose district is so extensive and populous as that under the care of the Elders' Association and where these unhappy beings are congregated together in horrid dens and in vast numbers, to attempt to include in his duties, already too weighty, the task of leading those who have sunk so low and who are surrounded by such an atmosphere of evil to live again human, or even approximately human lives. The fact is, a missionary in so extensive a district must be guided in the discharge of his duties by *probabilities*. If he can *probably* effect any good among *ten* of one class in the same time that it would take him to do good to *one* of another class the latter class must—however painful a matter it may be on grounds of moral expediency—be left uncared for. That is the principle on which I have hitherto acted; it is not from any belief that no good can be done among such persons that I have not visited them but from the conviction that comparatively little can be done in the present circumstances and with present agencies.

After referring to the danger of indiscriminate charity, and the belief that the mission is more successful in keeping respectable but unfortunate people from sinking down into moral degradation than in the more difficult work of reclaiming the already fallen and depraved, and expressing the pleasure which he had in ministering to the spiritual wants of the sick and the infirm, he concludes as follows :—

As I review the past I deeply feel how much more than what I have effected might be accomplished by one who could devote his

entire energies to the mighty work of mission labour. I have not done so—and never undertook to do so—a large portion of my time being necessarily devoted to those studies which form an indispensable part of my education for the Church. But I have not been slothful nor careless nor devoid of all zeal, and my success, at least my apparent success—for God alone seeth the heart—has been greater than I anticipated. Most earnestly I pray that my feeble and unworthy exertions may have been favoured by Him who alone giveth the increase, God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

In this manner did Flint begin the practical work of the ministry and prove the spirit that was in him. And not the least significant fact about it is that the sphere of his activity touched and partly embraced that with which the name of Chalmers was so closely identified when he was minister of the Tron Church, Glasgow. Thus early did Flint follow in the footsteps of the most notable Scottish Churchman of modern times. He was soon again to follow him in the Chair of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews, and in that of Divinity in Edinburgh.

The young student was now about to enter upon what, from one point of view, was to prove the richest experience of his whole life. He was appointed, on the 23rd of March 1858, missionary, and on the 24th of June of the same year, the date of his licence, as assistant to Dr Norman Macleod, minister of the Barony parish, Glasgow. This brought him into close contact with the most distinguished Scottish pastor of his time, and one of the best and greatest Scotsmen of any time. Little record is left of his work as missionary and assistant in that large and historic parish. He had as his immediate predecessor Norman's brother, Donald, who had just been ordained to the church and parish of Lauder. Macleod had at this time almost reached the zenith of his popularity and influence, and he had just completed the extensive and well-ordered organisa-



tion of his parish, which included a population of over 87,000. One of the schemes to which he had been devoting his energies was the planting of mission churches in those districts of his parish which were far removed from the Barony and where the population was considerable. Two of these had by this time been started, one at Kelvinhaugh and the other at Port-Dundas. Flint's work as missionary was chiefly in connection with these two stations, although he occasionally undertook duties in the congregation of the Barony itself. His salary was £60 a year, and, after licence, when he became personal assistant to Dr Macleod, it was raised to £70.

It was an honourable and trying position which young Flint had now reached and his sister well remembers the first time on which he preached in the Barony. The many friends whom he had made while missionary under the Glasgow Elders' Association flocked in large numbers to hear him preach and to give him, by their sympathetic presence, a hearty send-off. He could have gone to no better parish in view of his future work, for the Barony under Dr Macleod was the best organised church in the whole of Scotland, and the insight which the young assistant received into his methods, and the practical training which he got, were bound to equip him for the work of any parish to which he might afterwards be called. But the value of his appointment lay not so much in this, as in the glorious opportunity it gave him of living in daily contact with Norman Macleod himself, and of having his whole nature enriched by the personal influence and shining example of so great and so good a man. Flint, in the lecture which he delivered on Macleod in 1883 in connection with the Third Series of St Giles' Lectures, bears testimony to this. He says :—

During one period of my life I enjoyed the precious privilege of somewhat close personal intercourse with Dr Macleod. I have had many a long talk with him on the subjects which lay nearest to his heart and have seen him at times and in circumstances when he who was always free and open must have been at his freest and openest. . . . During the years 1857-9 in the forenoons, after he had gone through far more labour than most men could have accomplished in what they could consider as a toilsome day, he had one hour for rest and relaxation so far as that could be secured for him by vigilant and affectionate guarding. It was in itself characteristic of his genial and generous disposition that he should have allowed a simple student of theology with no claim on him whatever to share so many of these hours.

Nothing that Flint ever wrote glows with such enthusiasm as this lecture on Macleod. His critical spirit is for once in abeyance, and every line pulsates with approval and admiration. The very fact of this is enough to show how the character of Macleod had affected him, and how much in sympathy he was with the spirit of his chief. On the other hand, Norman must have found something very congenial in the company of this "simple student of theology," who evidently had formed a friendship with the minister of the Barony a year or so before he became his assistant. They differed in many ways, but they evidently thoroughly appreciated each other's good points, and the one and great bond of union between them was the "intensity of their interest in divine things." Among all the qualities which Flint declares Macleod possessed he places his "spirituality of mind, his religious earnestness and his piety," first. And those who in after years were intimate with Flint himself were similarly impressed by him. It was the "intensity of his interest in divine things," Flint declares, that presented itself most prominently to him in the hours of those forenoons, extending over more than two years, during which he met him so often.

There was hardly one of those hours in which his conversation was not chiefly of the very central realities of the Gospel. The wants of the soul—the Fatherhood of God—the manifestation of His love and righteousness in Christ—the significance of the Atonement—the need of grace—the power of prayer—the necessity and difficulty of self-surrender to the divine will—subjects like these and what he thought of saying in his sermons, and how passages of Scripture had struck him, were the subjects on which he habitually and with manifestly deepest feeling and conviction chose to talk. It has never been my fortune since to hear so much religious speech of the same precious kind and quality fall in private intercourse from any man's lips. . . . This zeal for the spiritual good of his fellows neither needs nor admits of any other explanation than that his own spiritual life was quickened and stirred by the Spirit of God. It was a very ardent and intense zeal ; it took up into itself and gave unity of aim to all his physical energies, intellectual capacity, affection of heart, and force of will, gathered together the separate threads of life, called forth to the utmost all his strength and resources, and enabled him to surmount difficulties which very few would have dared to face, and to achieve successes which might well have been supposed utterly beyond the attainment of any one man.

When one thinks of Flint's own life and career, so different in many ways from Macleod's, yet equal to his in its intensity, superabundance of labour, and constant and unswerving devotion to duty and self-imposed tasks, one feels, to use his own words, that, "it neither needs nor admits of any other explanation than that his own life was quickened and stirred by the Spirit of God." Ample testimony to this is found in what he was and in what he did. He came under Macleod's influence from a pious home where a pure religious atmosphere was breathed, and he was ready to have his early impressions deepened and confirmed by the new relationship in which he found himself. His intellectual gifts were of the highest, his power of work unsurpassed, his moral earnestness transparent, his mental endowments developed to the highest, through ten long years of faithful and arduous study ; and now as a crown to

his *Lehrjahre* he is brought into personal contact with Norman Macleod, to receive the impress of that noble Christian pastor's spirit upon his mind and heart. Well might he in after years count the "Barony assistantship," as one of the incidents in his life for which he should give "grateful thanks to Almighty God."

## CHAPTER IV

### EAST CHURCH, ABERDEEN

FLINT had not to wait long for a charge : within a year of his appointment as missionary in the Barony he was elected to the East Parish, Aberdeen. There were two ways in those days by which a minister might receive promotion : he might be presented by a patron or chosen by the congregation. The majority of churches were under patronage, but in a considerable number the election lay with the people, and it was not until the abolition of patronage in 1874 that popular election became universal. It was fortunate for young probationers like Flint, who had no special influence to support them, that the two alternatives existed. His chief, Dr Norman Macleod, it is true, was a powerful friend, and he was frequently consulted by patrons, but Flint was as yet comparatively unknown, and he had no personal acquaintance with any of the Scottish heritors in whose hands the right to a presentation lay. His brilliant college career and his already proved merits as a preacher and pastor were sufficient to recommend him for a hearing in any vacancy. Accordingly, when the Rev. John Marshall Lang, then minister of the East Church, Aberdeen, was presented to the parish of Fyvie, Flint applied for the vacant charge and was successful in securing a place on the leet. Dr Macleod, on being asked for his opinion, declared that "Flint was a noble fellow, and what whatever he undertook, he would do or die in harness." This strong recommendation paved the way for a favourable hearing on the part of the

congregation, who, interpreting Macleod's words in too literal a sense, expected to see entering the pulpit a young man of stalwart appearance and marked physical strength. To their surprise and momentary disappointment they found this "noble fellow" to be a slight and extremely pale and thin young man; and "a rough voice and provincial accent did not," it was stated, "improve the impression."

It was on the 16th of January 1859 that Flint preached as a candidate in the East Parish at the forenoon and afternoon diets of worship, and, as the custom then was, he had also to preach before the Presbytery, which he did on the 17th, the Monday following. The effect of his preaching, both upon the congregation and upon the Presbytery, was entirely favourable. There was no mistaking the impression produced. According to one description given at the time, he "made no attempt at oratorical display, but at once dashed into his subject with an intense earnestness and energy which at times thrilled through the heart like the sound of a trumpet." The right of appointment really lay with the Town Council, but, as customary in many similar cases, the right was waived and handed over to the congregation—not to the whole congregation, however, but, in this case at any rate, to the male communicants who were seatholders. It was well known that the majority of the kirk-session were opposed to Flint, probably on account of his youth, for his predecessor, although he proved eminently successful, was equally young and inexperienced, and finding the charge to be too heavy, he sought a change within two years of his appointment. The kirk-session probably thought that Flint would do the same. but the bulk of the congregation, and particularly the young men in the church, had been stirred to unwonted enthusiasm in support of the youth-

ful candidate, whom they elected by a triumphant majority. No unnecessary delay was experienced in introducing Flint to his new charge. He was ordained on the 3rd of March, and on the following Sunday, the 6th, he was introduced to his people at the forenoon service by Dr Norman Macleod, while he preached himself in the afternoon. The kirk-session met on the Monday evening following, March 7th, and it redounds to the credit of its members that, whatever their feelings may have been, they sank them, and gave the following hearty welcome, as recorded in the minutes, to their young minister :—

March 7th 1859 : welcome to the Rev. Robert Flint.

The session at their first meeting after the Ordination and Induction of Mr Flint desire to tender to him their most cordial welcome and to express their anxious wish to co-operate with him to the utmost of their power in the laborious and extensive work to which he has been called ; it being their fervent desire and prayer, that his ministry may be blessed by the great Head of the Church for the spiritual good of this congregation and parish and for his own comfort and best interests. To which expression of the sentiments of the session the Moderator made suitable response.

Flint had need of all the encouragement that could be given him. He was, to begin with, only in his twenty-fifth year, and although he had considerable experience both as a hard-working student and as a missionary in an extensive parish behind him, the important position in which he now found himself was bound to test his powers to their very fullest. Aberdeen stood then, as it still stands, abreast, if not in some respects in advance, of any other city or town in Scotland for ability and intellectual grit. It was the seat of an ancient university which had trained for the professions and for the higher work of the State and Empire many distinguished Scotsmen. Many of its professors were

among the most learned men in the country, and the intellectual atmosphere of the place was keen and sharp. Its churches, from the time of the Aberdeen Doctors, had been filled by men of high character and outstanding ability, and it naturally looked for equal qualities in their successors. There was another feature of the situation which made Flint's position harder still. The Disruption had practically emptied all the parish churches in the city of their congregations. Every minister went out, and left behind him but a fragment of the people. This had happened only sixteen years previously, and the ground then lost was far from being recovered.

Nor did the condition of the particular church to which Flint had been appointed make his task any lighter. It was a large building capable of accommodating some 1500 people, and any signs of failure on the part of the minister would be detected at once. To keep such a church full was what was expected of the new minister, and the thought of this alone might fill his mind with some misgiving, if not dismay. The very fact that three of his immediate predecessors had been men of the very first rank as preachers did not make his task any lighter. Dr Foote, who came out at the Disruption, was one of the leading ministers in the city. Practically the whole congregation followed him, only some sixty heads of families remaining behind. Before the close of the Disruption year, the Rev. Simon Mackintosh of Inverness was appointed his successor. It has been said that Mackintosh was without any exaggeration the foremost preacher of his time in Aberdeen. So deep an impression did he make upon the city that in 1848, while still a young man, his own University of Aberdeen conferred upon him the degree of D.D. He held the charge only for ten years, but he raised the



congregation from the ruin in which he found it to a sound and flourishing condition. The next minister who was to make his mark in the East Church was the Rev. John Marshall Lang. His career is well known : it both began and ended in Aberdeen, and it is sufficient to say that his record as minister of the East Parish was equal to that of his Principalship of the University.

While the task that lay before Flint was thus in every respect a difficult one, its very difficulties proved his quality, drew out of him his very best, put his powers as a preacher and his character as a minister to the proof, and showed not only to Aberdeen but to the country as a whole the exceptional man he really was. If the choice had lain with himself it is almost certain that he would have preferred a country parish, where, with only one sermon to prepare for the Sunday, he would have had ample time both for study and for the discharge of his ministerial duties. But most if not all parishes of the kind were under patronage, and as his influence in this respect, we have seen, was limited, he had no alternative but to accept an appointment which could come to him by popular election. He, however, braced himself for a supreme effort, and his remarkable success proved that he was "the noble fellow" of Norman Macleod's recommendation. It may be true that in the end he did almost "die in harness," but a kind Providence saved him from such an untoward fate for the inestimable benefit both of Church and country. Aberdeen really proved a touchstone; it tested his powers, and can thus take credit to itself for not a little of the ample reputation as a preacher, scholar, and thinker which the young minister of the East Church afterwards so richly achieved.

Flint was not long settled in his new charge when he was faced with the task of putting his ecclesiastical

house, so to speak, in order. The kirk-session, realising to the fullest the heavy duties which so large a congregation and parish imposed, supplied him with two missionaries, whose work was carefully arranged and superintended. They also considered the advisability of erecting a mission chapel for non-churchgoers in Virginia Street, and estimates were taken in and its cost calculated. Different associations existed which the minister periodically addressed, and such organisations as were deemed necessary for the good of the church and parish were kept in thorough working order. But a special difficulty, a legacy from his distinguished predecessor, had to be met and settled. This was as to the posture of the congregation during public worship. The movement for a change and, as its advocates maintained, for the improvement of forms of service and posture during worship had just been started in the Church of Scotland shortly before Dr Marshall Lang had left for Fyvie.

The head and front of the new movement was Dr Robert Lee of Old Greyfriars', Edinburgh. Every one acquainted with the ecclesiastical history of the period is bound to be familiar with the storm, the spirited and even violent debates, and, in some very conservative quarters, even the consternation which Dr Lee's proposals and practices created. On looking back upon the commotion which the movement produced in the Church and country, one is inclined to smile at the fears which were caused by such unimportant changes as sitting or kneeling at prayer in place of standing, and standing at singing in place of sitting. Very few of the ministers of the Church attempted to introduce Lee's more drastic practice of read prayers. Mr Marshall Lang favoured the new proposals up to a certain point : he recommended and introduced into the East Church

changes of posture at public worship. His proposals met with a storm of opposition, and it was while the tempest was still raging that Flint began his ministry in the East Church. He had not been long settled until petitions came pouring in upon him and the kirk-session from the congregation, demanding an immediate meeting for the purpose of considering the subject. At first the kirk-session attempted a compromise: they declared that in view of unanimity the only change that could be contemplated was standing at singing. But another opportunity was to be given to the congregation to state any objections by members sending in their names and addresses to a committee that was named; the matter, it was further stated, was not important; and all this the moderator was to intimate from the pulpit. The congregation, however, was not to be appeased, and the session finally pronounced against the "introduction of any alteration in the modes of worship hitherto observed in the East Church, and counselled all to submit for the sake of unanimity." Peace was thus restored, and Flint was specially thanked by the session for his judicious handling of the whole business.

The unity and peace which now existed in the congregation, and which augured hopefully for a happy and successful ministry, found their counterpart in Flint's own heart and home. Never did a minister enter upon the high duties of his calling with a greater singleness of purpose. His one aim was the good of his people and the glory of God. A similar spirit pervaded his home. He had never since his birth been separated from his parents, to whom he was united by the closest bonds of affection and reverence, and he resolved on his appointment to Aberdeen to take them and his

sister with him, so that they might all be together as in the early days of Dumfriesshire and the more recent days of Glasgow. His father and mother had sacrificed much and ventured still more in order that he might receive the best education which his native land could provide, and that his undoubted talents might meet the recognition which they so richly deserved. Nor did his father fail him when he renounced the ministry of the Free Church, to which the elder Flint was so deeply attached. The profound respect which father and son had for each other's character and opinions enabled them to bridge this gulf which threatened separation, and to preserve them in closest sympathy in spite of that and of any other difference which might arise. It was, therefore, a source of great joy to Flint now to be able to provide a home for his parents, who had so lovingly sheltered him since his life began, and to take them into surroundings and into a position which, from their innate tastes and temperament, he knew would be much more congenial to them. However simple their lives had been and however hard their labours, they must often have sighed in those anxious years that marked their residence in Glasgow, where there was much that was bound to be repellent to their natures, for such a life as now under Providence opened up for them, through the success of their son, in the city of Aberdeen.

It was at No. 9 Affleck Street that the Flints took up residence. The house had been sought out for them by young Flint's fellow-student, the Rev. George S. Mee, who two years previously had been appointed minister of John Street Baptist Church. The numbers have since been changed, and the stranger has difficulty in finding out the particular house in which the Flints lived. The patriarchal customs which

had long prevailed in the pious homes of the Scottish peasantry remained unbroken in the home of the young minister of the East Church. The father was still the head of the household, and continued to conduct family worship as he had done when his son was a boy at school and a student at the University. Nor was there any alteration made in the custom when that son became Professor of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews and Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh University. The father remained the head of the house until he died. There is surely something touching and beautiful in all this. One of the greatest scholars of his day, a man of world-wide reputation, the leading theologian of Scotland, sits humbly at the family table and kneels reverently at prayer while his aged father, a simple peasant, conducts the devotions of the household. One can scarcely credit the tradition that certain of his congregation resented this habit of the Flint household. They thought it was derogatory to the position of their minister that he should not be the head of his family as he was of his church, but it is to be hoped that the lesson which he thus taught them bore fruit at last.

The elder Flint, we have already seen, was a strong Free Churchman, and the fact of his son being appointed minister of an important parish in the Church of Scotland did not alter his views nor his religious habits in the slightest. It sounds almost incredible to be told that during all the time of his residence in Aberdeen he never worshipped in his son's church. He attached himself to the ministry of the Rev. Dr Macgilvray of Gilcomston Free Church, and every Sunday he worshipped there, no doubt to the scandal of many of his son's congregation. Here again we get an insight into the perfect confidence that father and son had in each

other. As the fact of his son becoming a minister of the Church of Scotland made no change in the father's affection, so the fact of the father continuing his connection with the Free Church made no alteration in the son's love.

An incident which reflects on the bigotry of those days, and which at the same time is a proof of Flint's independence and affection for his father, is described by Professor James Cooper, one of Dr Flint's most distinguished successors. "Flint had on one occasion exchanged pulpits with Dr Macgilvray, no doubt to please his father. His chief elder, one of the leading men of the city, objected to the innovation and took upon himself, quite unwarrantably, to call a meeting of session. All the elders were assembled in their venerable meeting-place, St Mary's Chapel, in the ancient crypt of St Nicholas, when Mr Flint arrived. 'Good evening, gentlemen, what is the reason of this meeting?' 'We wish to speak to you about your having a dissenter in your pulpit last Sabbath.' 'Oh! is that it? good evening': and away he went without constituting the session, and leaving them better acquainted, alike with their minister and with his legal rights. They took care not to 'try it on' again with him." Dr Cooper continues:—

I had not gone to Aberdeen, even as a student, till after he left, and never heard him preach as minister of the parish, but Mrs Cooper used, as a little girl, to stay with aunts in Aberdeen who attended the East Church, and she distinctly remembers Dr Flint in the pulpit—his pale face and the constant use of his extended fore-finger to impress his points. As to his matter, the only thing she recalls—but she recalls it very vividly—is his impressive statement: "I have no sympathy with the idea of a God who cannot be angry." He did not care for society, nor was parish work his forte, but his pulpit power and intensity were extraordinary. His sermons cost him much labour to prepare: that for the afternoon was never quite

finished when Sunday came, and he remained in the vestry to complete it between services. The course of Expositions of the Parables, afterwards published under the title of "Christ's Kingdom on Earth," in 1865, was heard with great interest. These he redelivered, doubtless with modifications, as part of his Divinity Course at Edinburgh where, on an occasional visit to his class-room, I heard him read one of them. Not being able to agree with his view of the Church, I remember speaking about it to my own divinity professor, Dr Samuel Trail, who told me that my difficulty was felt by him and others when the sermons were preached, and, again, when they were published.

Dr Flint's later visits to Aberdeen were rare, but they were always immensely appreciated and he never failed to command a crowded congregation or deeply to impress his hearers. He came down to preach for me on the occasion of the dedication of the organ in the East Church when he delivered one of his great discourses on the text, "Come unto Me all ye that labour," etc. The picture he drew of a toiling world was tremendous; and indeed I felt he had made it so prominent as somehow to obscure the divine tenderness of the Saviour's invitation. But the argument he based on it for the deity of Him Who could make a promise of the kind and fulfil it was powerful in the extreme. Dr Flint, who joined with the late Professor Milligan in recommending me for the East Church in 1881, it is perhaps needless to say, was not a member of the Scottish Church Society, but at two of its Conferences, at Glasgow and Aberdeen, he contributed papers, and when I thanked him for his valuable countenance he said—"Oh I don't see much wrong with you, and I am glad to do anything I can to encourage the study of revealed theology."

Flint put his chief strength into his sermons. From the number of discourses that I have in my possession, all of them preached in Aberdeen, it is clear that he must have written, with great regularity, two every week. Each would take about half an hour to deliver, and all of them are clearly conceived, carefully arranged, and fully thought out. What chiefly strikes one, on reading them, is their absolute sincerity and truthfulness. It was evidently the author's purpose to find out for himself what God's will is as revealed in Scripture,

to make that plain to the minds of his hearers, and to drive his message home to the hearts and consciences of all. When one learns of the intense and passionate earnestness with which he delivered his sermons, one is at no loss to understand the profound impression which he made. There were many in the East Church in those days who longed for the return of the Sunday in order that they might hear their minister preach. He adopted a method which may be strongly commended, especially to every young preacher. He did not select texts at haphazard, or wait until some inspiration or suggestion seized him. He deliberately set himself to preach right through one or other book of the New Testament. He did not necessarily take up one verse after another, but blocked out the contents of the book he had selected, and taking the most pregnant verse or passage, he made that the subject of his discourse. This always kept a theme before his mind upon which he could constantly dwell. Indeed, one can see how, after a discourse was finished, the thought of the new one would be already well developed in his mind. In this way he went through the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles to the Corinthians and Colossians, and the General Epistle of St James. He wrote also a number of sermons on the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Book of Proverbs, and the Revelation of St John. There are very few corrections in the manuscript, and the handwriting is so clear and distinct that it would be an easy matter for anyone to redeliver them. The discourses on the Parables to which Professor Cooper refers were preached on week nights. They are much more elaborate than his ordinary sermons. It was for this reason, probably, that he decided to make them a special feature of his ministry, and also because he had the



intention of afterwards working them up into book form.

But there is one feature of his conduct of worship while he was minister of the East Church and afterwards at Kilconquhar that deserves to be specially noted, and that is the supreme importance which he attached to the devotional part of the service. I have before me as I write three notebooks, all of which are filled with prayers that he composed during his ministry in Aberdeen. He must have written a fresh one for every Sunday. These prayers would of themselves stamp him as a remarkable man—remarkable for his absolute belief and trust in God, and for the closeness of his walk with Him and childlike confidence in His will. The deep and sincere piety of Professor Flint impressed every one who knew him. His was a constant communion with God; and no one ever acted more faithfully than he on the profound conviction that his life was one of absolute consecration and service to God. Nor should this be wondered at. He was surrounded from his earliest years by an atmosphere of prayer. His father's gifts in this respect excelled the son's. This is the testimony of Miss Flint; and many who shared the culture of the son were as glad as he to join in the family worship that was so beautifully conducted by the father. It seems to me that as this feature of Dr Flint's ministry is not so well known, or at all events, not so clearly remembered as his preaching, it may be well to print a few brief extracts from the prayers which he was in the habit of delivering when in the active ministry of the Church. Indeed, a selection from the number which are still in existence might form a volume that would be welcomed by many.

*Adoration*

O Lord, we desire to humble ourselves before Thee this day and to adore Thy great and holy Name. We would remember Thee as the God of Creation. At Thy word the whole system of natural things came into being. The universe has its glory and its beauty from Thee and speaks to us in a thousand ways of Thy transcendent character. Day unto day uttereth speech ; night unto night showeth knowledge concerning Thee. There is no people, no language, no region of the earth where the voice of Thy manifold works is not heard proclaiming Thy Wisdom and Thy Goodness. And we would remember that Thou hast not forsaken what Thou hast made, that Thou dost preserve and govern what Thou hast created. Thy Providence is over all, so that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground unless Thou willest it, and the very hairs of our head are numbered. Man has ever been Thy special care, O God our Father, and his history wonderfully manifests that the ordinances of Thy will are wise and merciful. In ways that we can but dimly trace, Thou art ever guiding the whole course of human actions to the accomplishment of blessed and glorious purposes, overruling for good the very wrath of Thine enemies, and gradually reducing all things under the government of thy Son, the Man of Thy Right Hand.

*A Supplication*

O Almighty God, our most Holy Father, teach us to pray, teach us how to pray, and what to pray for. Aid us to lay our prayers before Thee by revealing to us the real wants of our nature, our dependence upon Thee for all the mercies we enjoy, and the boundlessness of Thy mercies and love. Forbid, O God, that though we often deceive ourselves, yet that we should attempt to hide ourselves from Thine all-seeing gaze : but let us in simplicity and godly sincerity worship Thee in spirit and in truth.

*A Thanksgiving*

We adore Thee that, in the fulness of time, Thou didst send forth Thy Son that we might receive the adoption of sons. We rejoice in the condescension which led Him to assume our nature, to dwell with men, to be in all things like unto His brethren, though without sin, and that we are encouraged to come and learn of Him and thus to find rest to our souls. May we have grace to ponder the example He has set before us, to follow in His steps, to feel as He felt that it was meat and drink to do the will of our Father and His Father, of our God and His God ?

*A Confession*

O Lord, this we pray for as the first and best of blessings, that our life may be hid with Thee in Christ. Hitherto we have been far too much engrossed with man and perishable objects. Our lives have been full of worldly cares and pervaded by selfishness and defiled by sin. We have not had the body and the world in subjection; we have been slaves to them. O God, save and deliver us. Give us freedom from the captivity of sin, but make us servants unto Thee; for this is true freedom.

Flint led a retired life in Aberdeen. This was in keeping with his nature, even although the heavy duties of his office had not compelled him to avoid all public engagements and social entertainments. But he did not shrink from any call upon his services, if he was convinced that it was his duty to respond. We find him accordingly addressing various meetings both of a congregational and a public nature. The speeches which he made on these occasions were all carefully prepared and fully written out. They bear witness, for one thing, to his practical good sense and sympathetic interest in every good movement. Like Dr George Matheson, he would seem to have put as much honest work into an address for a mothers' meeting as into one of his best sermons. Nothing evidently was left to chance. I have counted twelve of these addresses delivered to various associations and agencies, and they are all models of what such addresses ought to be. The only recreation which he allowed himself was on the Saturdays, when he went down to the beach, which was quite near to his own house, to meditate by the sea, and occasional country walks. He worked at high pressure, and one is not surprised that the strain at last began to tell.

Two events happened during his ministry in Aberdeen which showed that he was beginning to make his mark.

The first was an invitation to preach before the British Association, which met in Aberdeen in September 1859. This was a great honour. He was the youngest of all the ministers in the city; he had only been in charge of the East Church for a few months, and yet he was selected for this distinguished service. It was all the more distinguished from the fact that the Prince Consort had been elected President of the Association for that year. This of itself drew to Aberdeen many eminent men of science. The Prince took a deep and personal interest in the meetings, and delivered, on the 15th of September, his address as President before a gathering of 2500 people. In the following week, the Queen and he entertained the philosophers at Balmoral. It was on Sunday 18th that Flint preached his sermon. He chose as his subject, "The Earth is the Lord's," based upon two texts, Gen. i. 1. and Ps. xxiv. 1, 2. In his first book, published shortly after he went to St Andrews, and entitled "Christ's Kingdom on Earth," this sermon has the place of honour, and he also included it in the volume of "Sermons and Addresses" which he issued in 1899. It well deserves the estimation in which the author evidently held it. It may indeed be said that it is one of the best sermons that he ever wrote. The members of the British Association were much impressed by it; so much so that on the following day they sent him a letter expressing their appreciation and requesting that it should be published.

British Association, Aberdeen Meeting, 1859.

COMMITTEE ROOM,  
SECTION D,  
Sept. 19, '59.

DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned members of the British Association, having heard with much pleasure your sermon of yesterday

morning on the relations between Nature and Revelation, and being of opinion that it should be widely circulated, hereby request that you will kindly allow it to be printed.

H. T. STANTON.

J. CLARKE, F.G.S.

WM. JARDINE.

H. D. ROGERS, F.R.S., *Glasgow.*

The other event was an invitation to preach before the Missionary Association of Aberdeen University. The discourse was delivered in his own church on the 24th February 1861. He chose as his text Luke xii. 43: "Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." It also was published at the urgent request of the students, and in the Dedicatory Letter to the members of the Association the preacher says: "It is by every right yours, and I dedicate it to you with this sincere assurance that although you might have found many an abler and wiser counsellor than I have been, you could not have found one who cherishes a deeper interest in your welfare or who prays more fervently for it."

What chiefly strikes one on reading these two discourses is the independence of the preacher and the absolute sanity of his point of view. He assumes the rôle of the Christian apologist and throws over both scientists and students the robe of the Gospel. It might be thought that he would have been influenced by his audience; that in the one case he would have glorified Nature and in the other Culture. True he does so, but only after he has related both to a higher truth—the idea of God, and the revelation of God found in Christ Jesus. Every truth that is not related to this supreme truth tends to become one-sided and exaggerated. Both Nature and Culture are meaningless, unless they are seen in the light of God. Have

we not in this the central thought of what afterwards came to be known as the speculative theism of Flint—the system which he indicated rather than elaborated in his article on Theism in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and in the concluding chapter of his great work on Agnosticism? Addressing the Members of the British Association, he says :—

I must enter a protest against two great mistakes which men have on the subject of Nature's teachings. The first is the mistake of those who expect far too much from Nature. They seem to think that if the spirits of our pent-up, toil-worn, city workmen could only be brought into contact with the clear skies and green fields, most diseases of their souls would be healed for ever. They seem to think that that of itself would purify and ennoble them; that it would bring them to truth and holiness; that in fact, it would, by a strict necessity, bring them to God. Alas! they who speak thus know not what man is. They forget in particular these two things about him—the gross darkness and the deep perversity of his heart.

They forget his ignorance, his gross darkness of mind. That makes Nature a sealed book to thousands. There is not a syllable in all her pages the spiritual meaning of which they can make out. They see certain characters written there, but it is in an unknown tongue; and what avails it that a writing is full of instruction and wisdom if the ability to read it be wanting? True, there “are sermons in stones, and books in running streams,” but notwithstanding, to all but one in a thousand, a stone is just a stone and no sermon—a running stream is just a running stream and no book. The greatest of our recent poets says :—

“ One impulse from a vernal wood  
 May teach us more of man,  
 Of moral evil and of good  
 Than all the sages can.”

And *that* is as admirably true as it is admirably beautiful: but then you must be a sage and a good man, or “an impulse from a vernal wood” will teach you absolutely nothing. In fact here is the truth which is forgotten. We must know God and love Him before we can see natural things with any clearness and profit.

And then turning round and addressing those to whom he was more particularly speaking; the distinguished scientific members of the British Association, he boldly declares :—

Now this intellectual darkness rests not only on the minds of the ignorant and untaught. You will find men who are most eminent in science as dead to the religious truths conveyed in the voices of Nature as the rudest peasants. And indeed there is nothing very wonderful that it should be so. We see what is precisely similar to it in many cases. We see men who appear to get by a single glance at the meaning of the most profound and obscure and difficult things in one department of knowledge, quite incompetent to get by any labour beyond the very surface of things in another department. . . . Thus the man of science no less than the workman or the merchant needs to be on his guard against that ignorance, the issue of which is practical atheism—utter blindness to the divine meaning of creation. . . .

But there is a contrary and more prevalent error. It is the undue depreciation of Nature. It is the forgetting that it has got spiritual uses at all; that it has any real place in our religious education. There are, it is to be feared, many very good men who make this error; who think and act often as if the universe were but a stall for provender—a place merely for growing corn and wine in; who never realise that it, too, is a revelation and that if Nature be not complete without the Gospel, neither is the Gospel complete without Nature. But surely this glorious universe was never made merely to satisfy the lower or animal wants of our souls—to fill us with food when hungry, with drink when thirsty. No, it speaks to everything that is highest and holiest in us, it should be approached with profoundest reverence, it will do little for us before we come to Christ, but there is no over-rating what it will do for us after we come to Christ.

The question which he put to the students in the sermon that he preached on behalf of their Missionary Association was: What is the chief end, the true destination of man on the earth? He rapidly passes in review the different replies that have been given, quoting in particular those of Plato, Locke and Goethe; the last of whom found an answer in the harmonious

cultivation of all our powers. He finds their solutions to be unsatisfactory, and discovers the true answer in the Bible which substitutes for the notion of *development* that of *responsibility* and for the notion of *culture*, that of *service*. "Thinking to honour education," he says, "we begin by giving culture a place it is not entitled to, and then we find that because we have assigned to it a primary position instead of a secondary, we must really do dishonour to education itself." And he continues :

Every precept of Scripture proceeds on the supposition that the responsibility for service should be the deepest feeling of our heart, even as fidelity of service must be the highest and completest praise. We utterly discard the teaching of Scripture, we abandon entirely its spirit when we make culture displace service or even include it, instead of comprehending culture under service. Service, life not to ourselves but to God, that, believe me, my hearers, is not only the noblest and holiest thought that can possess man's heart, but the most comprehensive also, and, indeed, is the noblest and holiest only because the most comprehensive. It is by including all, every faculty and every act, body and soul, thought, feeling, and deed, general culture and special, justice and benevolence, worship and business, that it sanctifies all. Displace it from its rightful position of honour and supremacy, and some portion of life will be robbed of the sacredness due to it.

Having developed this thought, and having shown how in the idea of service, as the true end of man, there is room and justification for the special professions, he passes on to the discussion of the science in which those whom he was specially addressing were most interested, namely theology, and after having pointed out that the chief business of students is hard study, he remarks :

And never has God called any generation of students more urgently and solemnly to earnestness in study than He is now calling you. There are troubles ahead of us, storm and conflict loom in the dis-



tance, and our clergy more than in any former period of the world's history would require to have worked hard as students to be able to play with heavy weapons, and to look any kind of infidelity, heresy or hostile criticism calmly in the face. Never was there an age more difficult for them to quit themselves like men in. They would indeed require to be heavily and completely armed.

And then he passes on to make certain statements which must have been startling at the time to those who heard them, but which show the working of his mind and foreshadow the future great teacher of the Queen of the Sciences.

The most rudimentary conception of there being either science or progress in theology has not in general entered into the minds even of those who profess to teach it. "Theology is unlike all other science," I have heard it said, "it is unprogressive, it is all in the Bible and God makes no more additions to it now." And many people have said this and it is printed in books, and multitudes believe it. But you might just as well say, "There can be no progress in science. It is all in creation and God has for a very long time ceased to make any addition to *it*." The Bible is no more theology than the world is science. Revelation is neither to be compared nor contrasted with science. Revelation corresponds not to science, but to nature. It is not science but a source of science, and it is an inexhaustible source of science. To aver the contrary, to teach that it is already exhausted and all its truths are embodied in any system raised by human industry and genius, however great, must, it seems to me, not only discourage its students but throw dishonour on its Author. So far from theology being perfect as a science, I am convinced that as a science it has scarcely begun to be cultivated.

When this sermon was published he appended to it a series of learned and useful notes in which he discussed, among other things, the need for scientific method in studying theology. Indeed he declared that a doctrine of method is one of the great wants of the age. In developing this thought, he falls foul of the "Essayists and Reviewers," of whom he says :—

It will require stronger hands than theirs to tear the great characteristic truths of Revelation, the massy pillars of the whole Christian fabric on which salvation for time and eternity depends, from their places either in God's dispensations or in men's hearts; but we give them an undue advantage if we do not show them that these truths are the *laws* of all the facts of Revelation as well as *dogmas* drawn from texts or Revelation. The sweeping generalisations of an Ewald and a Renan, so far as obnoxious, may triumphantly be met and disposed of, but certainly not by the contemptible historical criticisms represented in such a work as, *e.g.* *Candlish on Genesis*.

The whole of this Address is remarkable in itself, and pointed, as nothing which the young author had as yet done, to his future career in the Church. It clearly marked him out for an appointment, sooner or later, to a chair in one of the universities. It impressed among others, Principal Tulloch, to whom Flint sent a copy and from whom it, at the same time, drew the following interesting letter:—

ST MARY'S COLLEGE, ST ANDREWS,  
March 22nd, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to thank you for your sermon on the "Duty of Divinity Students." I am very much impressed by its general ability and value, and shall take care to recommend it to some of our students.

I have been working for years, although in a very imperfect manner, at two of the points to which you allude, viz., the correlation of Nature and Revelation, and of Science and Theology, and the subject of Theological Method. No two points can be more important in the present state of teaching, both in regard to Theology and Science generally. The first point, however, involves many difficulties and necessary considerations as to what revelation is. Is the present Bible commensurate with it, etc. ?

I think you are not quite fair to the "Essayists and Reviewers" in your allusion to them. I happen to know something of the origin and aim of the volume, and whatever may be thought to be the real purport of some of the Essays, such as Baden Powell's and Williams's, the aim of most of the writers, I have reason to think, was as much conservative as destructive, and, in some of the Essays, it seems to me it is only a very prejudiced reader that can deny this

aim. The panic in England on the subject of the volume has been excessive and discreditable, and there are many who have no sympathy with much in the volume, such as Stanley, who are strongly of this opinion. Intelligent people will ere long be ashamed of it and of nothing more than the indiscriminating and foolish conduct of the Bishops. When do you move southwards ?

Flint acted on Tulloch's hint, and when the sermon was published again the reference to the " Essayists and Reviewers " did not appear ; even the severe cut at Candlish was also graciously left out.

The question with which Tulloch closes his letter shows that Flint had by this time been virtually presented to his next parish, that of Kilconquhar. As a matter of fact he had been offered it about six months previously, in October of 1860, shortly after his predecessor, Professor Milligan, had been appointed to the Chair of Biblical Criticism in the University of Aberdeen, although the actual presentation was not placed in his hands till August 1861. It was not, however, till the beginning of January 1862 that Flint was inducted as Milligan's successor. The patron was the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, and the first indication which Flint had of the proposal to offer him the charge was contained in the following letter which he received from Sir Coutts Lindsay.

11 GROSVENOR SQ.,  
*October 26th 1860.*

DEAR SIR,—I think you are aware that the Rev. Mr Milligan has been lately appointed to the Chair of Biblical Criticism at Aberdeen and that this appointment obliges him to resign his present ministry of Kilconquhar Parish, which he will finally leave in June next. Lord Crawford has placed the Patronage of Kilconquhar in my hands, and I believe I shall do justice both to the parishioners of Kilconquhar and to the trust placed in my hands by Lord Crawford by making you an offer of the Cure.

I understand from Mr Milligan, who is very desirous to see you named as his successor, that such an offer is likely to be agreeable to your present views, and I trust sincerely that he is not misinformed in this respect.

The stipend ranges from £350 to £500, with a glebe and manse, and what is also important, the parish is quiet and well conducted and little divided by religious differences.

I believe Mr Milligan's appointment to the Chair at Aberdeen will not deprive us of his services till June next—it would, however, be very desirable in case you accept the presentation that you should become known to your future parishioners as soon as possible, which can easily be done by preaching at Kilconquhar once or twice in the course of the winter. I enclose this letter to Lord Lindsay with a request that he will read and forward it should he approve of its contents.—Believe me, Dear Sir,

COUTTS LINDSAY.

The congregation of the East Church made a determined effort to keep their minister. They held a meeting at which it was agreed voluntarily to assess themselves in order to increase his stipend; but without avail. He felt the charge to be too heavy for him, especially in view of the wider outlook that he saw opening up before him towards a University career. This was the secret wish of his heart, and Kilconquhar undoubtedly offered the very opportunity which was necessary for the prosecution of those studies which would fit him for a professorial Chair. His brethren of the Presbytery were also loth to part with him, and their regret found expression through the Rev. Dr Forsyth, of the West Church, who from his position and character acted as their leader. At the meeting of the Presbytery which loosed Flint from his charge, Dr Forsyth expressed the regret of the members at the prospective loss of their young and talented friend, as they were unwilling to part with one so highly gifted.

Yet he found it easy to enter into the feelings of their young friend in desiring a sphere where he would have more leisure for pursuing

those studies to which he was so devoted, than he could possibly do in a city charge, such as he has held here. It is exceedingly gratifying that during the short time he has been in the East Church he has succeeded in securing to himself so strongly and so greatly the attachment of his people. He came originally to a much divided congregation, and it is a high testimony to his talents and to his indefatigable industry and perseverance that he should so thoroughly have commanded their respect, affection, and esteem.

Flint in reply said : “ It may be expected of me that I should make a few remarks at this time. I may say in reference to this matter,” he continued,

that I have not had any doubt as to what was my proper course. Whatever others may have been, I have been very much dissatisfied with the way in which the duties of the East Parish have been discharged since it came under my superintendence. I could not conceal this from myself, nor could I do otherwise than to desire to have a charge, the duties of which I might perform somewhat less inadequately. Yet it is not without great depression of spirit indeed that I can think of severing from my present congregation, from the people of my ordination vows, for whose spiritual welfare I have been very anxious, and who have uniformly been kind and indulgent to me. I shall be sorrier at leaving Aberdeen myself than anyone else can be. I shall soon be forgotten here, I dare say, but I shall never forget Aberdeen. Till the last hour of consciousness I shall vividly remember the time I spent here. In regard to my fathers and brethren in the Presbytery, I will only say, that, I trust, as a very quiet member who has not willingly given any offence to anyone of them, and who would willingly, had it been in his power, have obliged any one of them, they may be able to think of me, at any rate, without censure, as I shall always think of those of them whom I have had the happiness to know, with respect and affection.

The Session of the East Church was not behind the Presbytery in their appreciation of their minister's talents and services, nor in giving expression to their deep sense of regret at his departure. At the last meeting at which Flint acted as their moderator, December 12th, 1861, they endorsed the following resolution in their minute-book :—

The Session, with reference to the intended translation of the Rev. Mr Flint to the pastoral charge of the Parish of Kilconquhar, now before the Reverend the Presbytery of Aberdeen, desire to express their very grateful sense of the value of his ministry whilst pastor of this Church and parish, and the warm esteem and admiration which they entertained towards him, both as regards his excellent qualities as a private friend, and his distinguished talents as a preacher of the Gospel. And they now tender to him their earnest wishes that he may enjoy every comfort and happiness in his new sphere, and that the divine blessing may attend all his labours.

It was on the last Sunday of 1861, December 29th, that he preached his farewell sermon to a crowded congregation; his text falling to be the two concluding verses of the last chapter of the General Epistle of St James through which he had been preaching for some time. He said:—

It is now nearly three years since I came among you; they have been to me years of considerable labour and of much anxiety, but I have nothing to complain of against you, on the contrary I have to thank you for much forbearance and indulgence to a most defective discharge of duty. I have had constant self-reproach because of my not having done more. I have never in thought reproached you, nor had cause to do so. The reason which has induced me to take the step which separates us is neither want of affection on my part to you or any doubt of yours to me. It is that I have been made ever more and more sensible that so weighty a charge requires a greater strength than mine to bear it, that neither in mind or in body am I fitted to meet its legitimate demands.

One of the things which I am most sorry for is, that I have never been able to see you all in the way of regular visitation. I have repeatedly made attempts to do so and always after a short time have abandoned them. This has been very painful to me. I must plead, however, that in a large town charge systematic visitation is scarcely possible, and that there are several circumstances which make it in this charge specially difficult. There is, first, that the parish and the congregation are very distinct, the parish being almost exclusively a very poor district and not even an average proportion of the congregation coming from it, so that visiting the congregation has scarcely anything to do with visiting the parish, and visiting the

parish scarcely anything to do with visiting the congregation. Then there is the large absolute number of persons composing the congregation, and still more, there is the fact that most of these are unconnected with one another; are so many separate units. The number of families holding above three sittings is singularly few; fewer I should imagine comparatively than in almost any other church, and then there are very many attendants, very many communicants even, who have no sittings at all.

These circumstances almost preclude visitation, and indeed I am quite convinced that it would be a grave mistake in the minister of this congregation to look upon congregational visitation as other than a subordinate part of his work. For even if he could visit all his hearers once a year that would ill compensate them for having God's word slovenly expounded and feebly enforced, on the fifty-two Sabbaths of the year. The congregation was formed by the preaching of one whose name I have heard mentioned among you so often with affection that I shall never repeat it without respect—this congregation, I say, was formed by the preaching of Dr MacIntosh, and certainly it has arrived at the stage where it can only be maintained, in even its present prosperity and efficiency, by preaching. Still, it is not in the nature of any man, with any earnestness, with any affections, to be able to preach Sabbath after Sabbath to the same persons, and yet not to wish their personal acquaintance and not to be grieved when he finds it impossible to make it.

But whatever the defects of my ministry have been, I repeat that I am conscious of having never entered this pulpit without wishing to instruct and profit, to convert and save you. I have taught you according to the light I had myself, I have not kept back from you what seemed to me useful to you from fear of giving offence. I have sought to bring you to try all things and especially your own lives by God's word, to receive and obey it through the help of God's own spirit. Therefore I would venture to hope that God may have blessed my ministry, short and feeble as it has been, to some of you, and that you may be able to discover some ground for not regretting the time I have spent in your city.

Therefore, too, I would venture to urge you to continue in the things that ye have heard. Man passes away, but the Divine truths he may have happened to give utterance to, do not; they abide for ever. It will be pleasing, doubtless, to be able to think that one is kindly thought of by those whom you can never fail to take a lively interest in. Still, I would not ask that you remember with kindness myself, who may so soon have done with this earth,

and be insensible alike of its love or hate. But I would ask you and beseech you, by the mercies of Christ, to remember what I have taught you and what has approved itself to you as the word not of man but of God. For "the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

To linger over words of farewell is, however, alike painful and unprofitable. Farewell, therefore, and God keep and bless you, and send you peace and prosperity abundantly from on High for His own name's sake and to the praise of His own glory, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Flint left Aberdeen on Wednesday 1st January 1862, three days after preaching his farewell sermon.



## CHAPTER V

### KILCONQUHAR

KILCONQUHAR must have proved in many ways an ideal parish for a man like Flint. It is beautifully situated in the East Neuk of Fife, bordering on Elie and stretching inland towards Ceres, with Largo on its west and Anstruther on its east side. It has a number of villages and hamlets dotted over it, and at the time of which we are speaking it must have had a population of considerably over 2000. The land is fertile and well-wooded, and there is a number of mansion-houses still occupied by descendants of ancient families. It thus possessed in Flint's day a mixed population of landed gentry, farmers and cottars; with the Parish Church as the centre of the united life of the whole community. The Manse is beautifully situated, facing the south and looking down upon Kilconquhar Loch, a lovely sheet of fresh water, wooded on three sides, and very deep in places. Swans haunt it still as in the days of the Witch of Pittenweem when—

“ They tied her airms ahint her back,  
And twisted them wi' a pin,  
They took her to Kinneuchar Loch  
And threw the limmer in.  
And a' the swans took to the hills  
Scared wi' the unhealy din.”

The Parish Church, at the west end of the village and within a stone's-throw of the Manse, is a handsome Gothic edifice with about a thousand sittings, and a

square tower eighty feet high. Not the least attractive feature would be the large garden and extensive glebe, some fourteen acres in size, which afforded occupation for the minister's father and gave him an opportunity of renewing the pastoral habits of his early manhood and youth. Indeed, all the members of the family must have found their new surroundings to be of the most congenial nature, and had not Flint's ambition and inclination inevitably drawn him to a Professor's Chair, one could not imagine a more fitting sphere for a pastor and a scholar. His ministry in Kilconquhar was to be shorter even than that in Aberdeen, but he threw himself into the duties and activities of his office with equal energy and zeal.

The custom still existed in his day for the minister to make pastoral visitations of the different villages and hamlets in his parish, and to hold services in them for the benefit of the people. This, of itself, would take up many an afternoon and evening, for such places as Colinsburgh, Largoward, Williamsburgh, Liberty and Earlsferry, all in the parish, had to be visited in this way. But the mornings and forenoons would be, as a rule, at his own disposal, and Flint made full use of his new and much prized advantages, resumed with intense eagerness the studies which had been more or less broken by his crowded ministry in Aberdeen, and steadily began to prepare himself for the academic career on which his heart was clearly set. On visiting Kilconquhar, quite recently, I came into friendly converse with some still living who distinctly remember his ministry among them. Two things stand out clearly in their minds; the power and intensity of his preaching, and the exalted consistency of his life. One ancient worshipper, who, as a youth, was in the habit of hearing him, described him to me as "a mad

preacher," and declared that when he descended from the pulpit he was "a' in a splash o' sweat." He also assured me that the elders, concerned about their minister's health, and fearing that his energy in the pulpit might impair it, remonstrated with him. Another, an old dame, casting her thoughts back to those early days, spoke with emotion of the almost dread solemnity of the Communion service, as conducted by Flint; and what impressed her most was the moments of silent prayer in which he asked the congregation to engage before dispensing the Holy Sacrament. Others referred to a series of sermons which he delivered on the Lord's Prayer, and others again, to the monthly services which he conducted in the school for the children of the parish. This last was a very special feature of Flint's ministry in Kilconquhar, which merits even more than a passing reference. It reveals a trait in the great scholar's character of which the public who know him only by his learned works can have no knowledge; and yet those who were intimate with him will not be surprised at the deep interest he took in little children, for he himself, far more than most men, had the childlike heart. Once a month then, he gathered the lambs of the flock round him in the village school, conducted a service for their special behoof, and preached to them sermons which he prepared with as much care as those which he delivered to their parents. Quite a number of these sermons still remain, and they are models of what such sermons ought to be. And on reading them one is inclined to envy the rising youth of Kilconquhar who received every month such wholesome, spiritual, and intellectual fare.

Flint's sermons, as the villagers still aver, occasionally flew over their heads like the birds of paradise, but the

more thoughtful, and better educated, were in the habit of coming long distances to hear him, and as the numerous mansion-houses in his parish were occupied, as a rule, by cultured owners or tenants, he was never without an appreciative audience. He held in the summer-time a second service in the Parish Church, and quite a number of visitors to the different watering-places in the neighbourhood were in the habit of worshipping in Kilconquhar Church. Among those who were his frequent hearers were Mr William Baird of Elie and his family. They were not parishioners of Flint's, but Elie House is within easy distance of the Parish Church of Kilconquhar, and as there is a private walk along the side of the loch, it must have been a pleasant experience on a charming Sunday morning for Mr Baird and his family to wend their way to hear the young minister who was making such a profound impression upon the district. Flint and Mr Baird became close friends, and from this period dates the admiration which the Baird family, as a whole, ever afterwards entertained for him. Mr J. G. A. Baird of Muirkirk, a son of the late Mr William Baird of Elie, has a fresh recollection of those Sunday morning walks, but as he was at the time a very youthful worshipper, one is not surprised to learn that the impression of the service which still remains with him is of the unconscionable length of the preacher's sermon. Mrs Wallace of Glassingall, a niece of Mr William Baird's, who frequently visited her uncle, writing long afterwards to Professor Flint, to invite him to stay with her on the occasion of his preaching in the Cathedral of Dunblane, which she herself so generously restored, says: "I am looking forward to renewing our acquaintance. I am afraid to say how many years it is since I used to walk from Elie House to hear you preach at Kilconquhar,

but I ever remember how much help and pleasure I had on those Sunday mornings.”

Professor Henry Cowan of Aberdeen writes in the same strain. “My early reminiscences of Professor Flint,” he says, “relate to the summer of 1861, part of which I spent in Elie. Kilconquhar Church, to which he had been recently translated from Aberdeen, was not far distant, and I repeatedly found my way thither on Sunday forenoons. When the ‘Kingdom of God’ was afterwards published, I at once recognised two of the sermons in that volume as having been preached in my hearing at Kilconquhar. I was then only a boy, but I have a vivid recollection of the deep impression made upon me. I felt that the preacher was a man with a message from God, and that he was delivering himself prophet-like of a ‘burden.’ A second-year Arts student could not fail to be impressed by the force, lucidity, and logical precision of the discourse, and the simple country people who formed the chief portion of the congregation manifestly realised that a man of power was in the pulpit, and listened with conspicuous attention. When I came to Aberdeen, eight years later, the memory of Flint’s brief ministry there was still fresh as well as fragrant. The hard-headed but warm-hearted Aberdonians were exactly the kind of people among whom the mingled strength and tenderness of his character and ministrations would most readily be developed. Aberdeen and its appreciation left their mark upon him, and he left his mark on Aberdeen.”

While Flint’s preaching thus proved so highly attractive to his hearers, one exception must be noted, and this no less a personage than the Lord of the Manor. Sir John Bethune, who afterwards made good his claim to the Earldom of Lindsay, and who resided in

Kilconquhar House, happened to be in church one Sunday when Flint delivered his famous discourse on "The earth is the Lord's," preached for the first time before the British Association at Aberdeen. Sir John was somewhat eccentric, and held extreme views on the rights of property. He thought that the following passage in Flint's discourse attacked those rights, and it was with manifest impatience that he listened to it. "On the origin of property I believe," declared the preacher, "the Bible throws little light."

The difficulties on that point seem insuperable. The discussions on it have always appeared to me as unsatisfactory and intangible as those on the freedom of the will. But this it certainly shows, that it is impossible for a man to hold anything as his absolute property, that by no price or labour can you purchase an absolute right in a thing. If you believe, or say, that because you have inherited an estate, or even because you have bought it with the wealth which you have earned by the hardest labour of body or of mind, it is *yours*, to do with it as you please; or that you are anything more than the steward of it, you contradict most directly the truth that the "Earth and its fulness are the Lord's." You say they are *yours*, not *His*. If a State law, or a political economist, encourages you in your opinion, it is none the less false. God is strictly speaking the sole proprietor in the Universe. He made the earth and its fulness and allows us to enjoy them as stewards—to occupy until He come. We are not at liberty to use anything for our own purposes. Everything must be employed for the common good of all, for the greatest glory of God.

This teaching was too much for poor Sir John; it was too high, and he could not attain to it. The tradition is that at the conclusion of the discourse he rose and left the church and did not return to it during Flint's ministry. As a matter of fact, however, he remained to the end of the service, but for a time joined himself to the Free Church at Elie. The incident made a profound impression upon the villagers, nor did it lessen, to say the least of it, their admiration for Flint.

Flint as a rule shrank from public controversy, but when he did intervene he struck with a force that at once commanded attention. There were two occasions while he was at Kilconquhar on which he entered the lists, and both times with an effect that drew upon him the eyes of men well fitted to guide public opinion. The first of these was at a meeting of the General Council of Glasgow University on the 29th of October 1862. A report of considerable importance, as to the institution of Summer Classes in Arts within the curriculum, was submitted to the members. It anticipated by more than forty years the regulations which are now in force. It consisted of two parts :—

1. Winter Session, to be reduced to five months, and a Summer Session of three months ; and the course for the M.A. degree to be limited to three years.

2. The second Tuesday of October and the second Tuesday of April to be the date of the beginning of each course.

The Rev. Dr Smith of Cathcart, who was the Convener of the Committee, moved, and Professor Douglas of the Free Church College seconded, the adoption of the report, which, after a long discussion, extending to six and a half columns of the *Daily Mail*, was unanimously approved of.

Flint, who had evidently come specially from Kilconquhar to Glasgow to take part in the meeting, intervened at the close of the discussion. He remarked that the Convener of the Committee

was an able and scholarly man, and there were gentlemen on the Committee known even in the world of letters, but the report itself, as to expression and grammar, was one of the most extraordinary documents he had ever seen (“ Oh, Oh ! ”). There were few sentences in it where there was not some villainous violation of English (“ Hear, Hear! and Oh, Oh ! ”). There were pages, such as 14 and 15 (cries

of "Vote"), that they certainly could not accept without using the language of the report itself and "consigning themselves to the exposure of a helpless and hopeless but not inconspicuous duncery." He thought that on that ground alone they could not accept the report. If however anything in it was to be accepted he thought it ought to be discussed section by section. He was in favour of delay.

The Rev. Dr Smith remarked that no doubt the gentlemen who had drawn up the report would be happy to spend half an hour with Mr Flint to receive instruction (cries of "No, No!"). He had not heard many objections to the conclusions, and they alone were before the Council.

Flint's speech attracted the attention of, among others, his old College friend John Nichol, afterwards so well known as the brilliant Professor of English Literature in the University of Glasgow, who wrote to the speaker the following letter :—

THORNBANK, ASHTON, *by* GREENOCK,  
Nov. 1st, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have seen a report of some very appropriate remarks of yours at a meeting of the Glasgow University Council, as well as a letter written this morning to the *Daily Mail*. I wish to know if you are my friend, Mr Flint, formerly of Aberdeen, and, if so, I wish to write to you again or to meet you and renew our acquaintance. The report of the Committee is in my opinion one of the most disgraceful, or, rather, one of the most ludicrous productions, that ever went through a Scotch press. Yours very truly,

JOHN NICHOL.

*P.S.*—Address here till the 13th of this month, afterwards to 43 St George's Road, Glasgow. I make no secret of my opinion either of the manner or matter of the Committee's report.

Flint's letter of 1st November to the *Daily Mail*, to which Nichol refers, is as follows :—



## THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

## TO THE EDITOR

SIR,—I shall consider it a favour if you will allow me to explain why I ventured on Wednesday last, even at the risk of giving offence, to call the attention of the General Council of Glasgow University to the style in which the report on Summer Sessions was written. Nothing, I readily admit, could have justified my doing so if that report had not been so ungrammatically and fantastically expressed as to be a mere burlesque; a joke if considered in itself, but an insult considered as a document laid before a body of educated men. As a proof that this language is in no degree exaggerated or unjust, allow me to make a single quotation. It is rather long, but I am sure your readers will find it very amusing:—"Provision for close instruction is perhaps most needed in the classes of Humanity and Greek. However this may be, the general remarks on the subdivision of classes that the Committee has to offer, in the first place, will have reference, chiefly, to the classes in these two departments of instruction. Afterwards the Committee will have something to say having a general reference to such classes as have a course of lectures for a basis with correlative examinations.

"Now if we are to study the effects of such a subdivision within a class much above a hundred students as would present recognisably different grades of progress in the students we must bring before the mind at least three nearly equal sections, such as the advanced, the middling, the backward. Practically however we may choose to have no more than two divisions by making the advanced a prominent minority and uniting the middling and the backward; or by making the backward a prominent minority and uniting the middling and the advanced (!!!) To distinguish the advanced in a large class has nothing of novelty in the proposal, but to distinguish the backward would be indeed a novelty (!!!) The case of those that without a fault of their own have to struggle against the want of any advantages would be painfully aggravated by anything that would consign to exposure on the benches of a hopeless and helpless, but not inconspicuous duncery. The distinction would stick for life. Away then with whatever would create in every considerable curriculum class, an academically recognised section of dunces (!!!)."

Now, Sir, I ask you, and through you the public, if it were decent to lay a document written from beginning to end in that style before the Council of any university? I ask you, and through you the

public, if it were not calculated to place the Council and the University before the world in a most ridiculous aspect? I ask you, and through you the public, if anyone with the honour of the University in which he had been educated sincerely at heart were not more likely to protest, even at the risk of giving offence, against such an insult, than to speak of the ability of a document which has, as I happen to know, been sent by different persons to professors in more than one university as a literary curiosity—the latest and strongest illustration of the necessity for University reform. I am, etc.,

R. FLINT.

GLASGOW, *October 31st, 1862.*

One can well understand how such a document, thus severely and justly criticised, would, from its very style, be enough to damn any proposals, however necessary and praiseworthy. The long period that elapsed between their inception and accomplishment may thus partly be accounted for. Flint's criticism must have made the authors of the report feel, to say the least, very uncomfortable. While casting ridicule upon their work, it reflected infinite credit upon himself. It was at once a tribute to his courage, his honesty, and his ability.

The other occasion referred to, on which Flint took part, while at Kilconquhar, in public controversy, was in the autumn of 1863. It arose from an address delivered by Bishop Wordsworth of St Andrews at the annual meeting of the United Diocesan Synod of St Andrews, Dunkeld, and Dunblane, in St John's Episcopal Church, Perth. The Bishop's deliverance was fully reported in the *Scotsman* of September 4th, and it gave rise to a correspondence which continued unabated for a month. Wordsworth's address was on his favourite theme of Episcopacy versus Presbyterianism, the Divine Right of the former, and the possibility of the union of the two through the absorption of Presby-

terianism by Episcopacy. He took as his text a statement which appeared in *Good Words* in the preceding July. The statement was contained in an article by Dr Caird, who had recently been appointed Professor of Divinity in Glasgow University, on the "Co-operation of the Laity in the Government and Work of the Church." Speaking of Church government, Caird declared :—

I do not believe that there is to be found in the Bible any prescribed and definite Church polity, any form of Church government rigidly and unalterably stereotyped for all future ages. I am persuaded that while the great truths on which the existence of the Church is based are immutable and everlasting as the infinite mind from which they emanated, yet that the forms of worship and arrangements of government and discipline, under which these great truths are to be propagated and professed, have been by the great Head of the Church left indeterminate and flexible.

Wordsworth, in criticising this pronouncement, affirmed that "the Church, even the Presbyterian Church, has never accepted such a view, but, if this view is held by Presbyterians, if they attach no Divine Right to their system of Church government," they ought to have no difficulty in joining the Episcopal Church, which believes its government to be founded on the Word of God. "When it shall become known," he concludes,

that Presbyterianism has ceased to claim the authority of God's Word for the divisions which it unhappily has caused in the Christian Church, and when it is found that the most esteemed ministers of that body have begun to contemplate as possible a modification of their system, both of worship and government, surely we may trust that they may well feel bound to surrender what they may hold by this slight tenure, and thus open the way to all the blessings of inter-communion of the Church established in England and in Ireland.

A number of the letters which this statement provoked came from the pens of parish ministers, two

of whom strongly supported Wordsworth's position. Several Episcopalians also backed him up, and it almost looked as if the case was to go by default, when Flint intervened on the 16th September with a long and brilliant letter which absolutely changed the fortunes of the controversy. He wrote another letter on 23rd September, and a final one, which appeared on the 5th of October. He signed himself "A Third Parish Minister." Replying directly to Wordsworth, he said :—

He (the Bishop) forgets that Caird's argument, that there is not to be found in the Bible any prescribed and definite Church polity, is of older date and has met with greater favour in the Church of England than in Scotland. He is quite erroneous when he says that this is a view which his Church has never accepted. The point has certainly found defenders in his Church from Stillingfleet to Whately. . . . The Bishop maintains that Dr Caird's view has all at once become popular among us, that Presbyterianism as a body has at length seen the error under which it has laboured so long. While it is true that many liberal and many of the youthful minds of the Church, I myself among them, are quite willing to subscribe to Caird's views, there are yet many who maintain the Divine Right of Presbytery, and union with Episcopacy would mean schism and mischief. . . . The logic is very strange which demands that those who hold no church polity to be divine ought to cling to one, Episcopacy, founded on the knowledge of Divine authority and to surrender what they hold by so slight a tenure. . . . The suggestion of Union is altogether Utopian. Union means for many in the Church of Scotland treason to their most cherished traditions. Our people will not tolerate Prelacy. Scotland is at heart thoroughly Presbyterian. Her aristocracy is not and will never be. . . . Suppose these difficulties have been overcome and our Bishops are here amongst us from England, and some created out of old parish ministers, they would soon find the Presbyterian leaven hard to expel, and that what succeeded in England was a miserable failure in Scotland.

Professor Mitchell of St Andrews, who had been reading the correspondence with deep interest, sent the following letter to Flint :—

BRECHIN, 25th September 1863.

MY DEAR MR FLINT,—When I was in St Andrews on Monday, Dr Tulloch said to me you were “A Third Parish Minister,” and I beg most sincerely to thank you for your manly and able letter. I trust you will not let off your pretentious and patronising opponent *yet*. His attempt at getting off as to Whately is as ingenious as uncandid, and I suspect as to Stillingfleet is only less so, while the withholding of any frank admission that there has been a large and influential party in his own Church who have held the sentiments you have attributed to them would, I am sure, be characterised by the old Archbishop as a remarkable instance of that conduct which, I think, under the name of “Phenakism” he reprobated in the leaders of the Oxford movement. The Bishop cannot be ignorant of the fact that there have been men in his own Church, from the days of Queen Elizabeth downwards, who have held the views of Whately. He may be ignorant of the fact that it was mainly on the ground of such opinions King James and his creatures sought to introduce bishops into our Church, but I trust you will remind him of this too. In regard to what he alleges with regard to Stillingfleet you will know far better what to reply than I.

You never spoke a truer word than when you said, that union in the fashion they seek it, means separation from a majority of the ministers now in the Church and their people—and I may add years of fierce and distracting controversy. May God save us from such and preserve to us our present quiet and enable us to preserve and improve it in earnest work. Yours ever cordially,

ALEX. F. MITCHELL.

The intense tone of Professor Mitchell’s letter is not to be altogether explained by the correspondence that was filling the columns of the *Scotsman*. There was a movement at work of which the present controversy was only a symptom or sign. The advance which was being made by the Church of Scotland in theology and particularly in forms of worship, with which the names of Tulloch and Robert Lee were respectively associated, suggested the idea in some sanguine minds that a union might be possible between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church, and

schemes were set afoot as a basis for negotiation. Neither Mitchell nor Flint, it is perfectly clear, favoured such proposals. The obstacles in the way they clearly saw were insurmountable, and Flint in his third and final letter makes this sufficiently plain. Bishop Wordsworth had been evidently much impressed by Flint's two previous letters, and gathering from one of them that the writer was but a young man, compliments him on his scholarship, saying: "Your correspondent to whom I have been replying describes himself as 'a young man,' and it is much to his credit that he brought together within so short a compass many important points." Flint in his final letter thus expresses himself:—

The two letters in your columns from Bishop Wordsworth have been entirely occupied with a few statements in mine. The Bishop now holds that Caird's view has never been accepted by the Church universal. Surely the Church of England is part of the Church universal. When I quoted Stillingfleet and Whately it is not to be understood that these are all who once held these views. It is neither three nor three times thirty of Church of England divines who have held this truth before, and the passage referred to by the Bishop does not prove that Stillingfleet ever retracted this principle. . . .

The statement that always and everywhere with one exception until the 16th century the divine appointment of the three orders was maintained—*i.e.* of Episcopacy—is more assertion without proof. It assumes that the apostles held it, that in the succeeding generation episcopal government was not only general, but universal, that in the Middle Ages there were no voices raised against the confessedly then prevalent view, which was partly the sign and partly the cause of the spiritual dearth and darkness which abounded. Bishop Wordsworth was hasty when he says that only one dissented in these centuries from Episcopacy and that a grossly discontented and immoral person, but what about Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Œcumenius, Theophylact, who all recognised the primitive identity of Bishops and Presbyters? If it be true, I repeat, that many of the most learned

and liberal adherents of Episcopacy and Presbytery have abandoned the idea of a *jus divinum*, then the Bishop's defence of Episcopacy against Presbytery seems absurd. . . .

I regret exceedingly the agitation for a union between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. It can do no harm to the latter, which has nothing to lose, as it is still the miserable failure it has always been ; but the very discussion of the question is hurtful to us and if persisted in is ruinous. We have had controversy enough, God knows, and why should we have more? Does fidelity to Christ force us to rend and tear one another and to destroy our old and venerable Church by our wretched factions? If she has only peace within her walls I am sure she will have prosperity.

While Flint was thus devoting himself to his pastoral duties, making use of his greater and much-prized leisure for earnest study, and keeping an eye upon and taking part in the academic and ecclesiastical movements of the hour, he was at the same time engaged on what he must have regarded, for the time being, as his most important work, the preparation and elaboration of those discourses which formed his first book, "Christ's Kingdom on Earth." This work, to which reference has already been made, was not, as a matter of fact, published until a year after he left Kilconquhar (1865), but it was begun at Aberdeen and continued and finished in his country manse. The substance of the volume is a series of eight sermons on those parables of our Lord, beginning with the Sower and ending with the Net, which illustrate His conception of the Kingdom. Four other discourses are included, three of which had been previously published, the first, in 1859, on "The Earth is the Lord's," the eleventh, on "Christian Citizenship," and the last, on the "Duty of Divinity Students." The second has for its subject "Rest in Christ." The most important of these discourses, from our point of view, is the one which introduces the main subject of his volume. It

is on the "Nature of the Kingdom of God on Earth." In it we have Flint's views of the mission of Christ, which, according to the writer, was not to found a Church but to establish a Kingdom. He falls foul of those who would identify the Kingdom with the Church, maintaining that the former is the truer, as it is the broader notion of the two. Criticising this error and also the purely formal and unworthy conception of the Church itself which is commonly entertained, he says: "The most common and not the least pernicious of the erroneous notions entertained about the kingdom is that of those who imagine it to be the Church, and the Church an outward organization, a society represented by certain recognised officers and courts, by synods and assemblies, councils and convocations, and things of that kind. In the eyes of such persons the power and progress of the Church so conceived of is the measure of the power and progress of the kingdom of God, and the rights of its courts are co-extensive with the crown-rights of Christ."

Now I cannot think this opinion correct, it seems to me that the Church so understood is very distinct indeed from the kingdom of God. It seems to me that the kingdom of God has been advancing just as the Church has been retrograding in power. The kingdom of God we might almost say has made its progress at the expense of the Church. When the Church had its greatest power the kingdom of God had almost vanished from society. Society has been brought more and more into the kingdom of God as the Church has gradually ceased to claim any direct and immediate control over it. The Church of the darkest period of the Middle Ages included within itself all the elements of social life and exercised authority over them all. Its decisions were laws everywhere, and over everything. But as it emerged from the Middle Ages one form of human activity, one social institution after another, separated from it, asserted its independence, and made good the assertion.

The writer then proceeds to illustrate this by what took place in Western Europe generally from the



fifteenth century downwards, and points to the history of the Church of Scotland as a noteworthy example.

The Church of Scotland for very long concentrated within itself most of that power which is now exerted by various separate and distinct agencies—as by the press, by public meetings, by poor's boards, by town councils, by Parliament, no less than by the Church courts. The unhappy splitting up of our Church by controversies into many denominations has without doubt immensely and perhaps unduly weakened the ecclesiastical power of each denomination, and even of them all combined ; but if the Church had remained intact, if there had never been such a thing as dissent from it, the direct power of the Church over the nation would, notwithstanding, have diminished. The progress of the people in civilization, their growing activity and energy, the application of other organs and agencies for the expression of their thoughts and purposes, would of themselves have, infallibly, in process of time, brought about the result which we now witness. The warfare of sects has only hastened what was inevitable, although we may safely say it was the very last thing any of the sects desired. But man proposes and God disposes. The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice.

Flint then asked the question : “Seeing that the Church has lost its authority over these things for ever and her loss has been the world's gain, are we to conclude that all these things have become atheistical, irreligious, unchristian, because they have separated themselves from the Church, asserted rights of their own, and jealously guard these rights ? ” “Assuredly no,” he replies, “for the Church is not the kingdom of God,” and then continues :—

These elements of social life in separating themselves from the Church have not separated themselves from the kingdom of God. Nay, by the very act of rejecting the control of the Church they set aside the mediation of the Church between them and the kingdom of God and secured for themselves as a portion of their independence the right of standing in immediate contact with the word and kingdom of God. Before their independence they were related to the kingdom of God only through their connection with the Church ;

now since their independence they may justly claim to be portions of the kingdom of God, each one of them as much a portion of it as the Church itself.

We find a striking expansion of, or rather comment upon these, to some, startling words, in a passage in the late Professor Bruce's volume on the "Kingdom of God," published almost thirty years after Flint had preached his discourses on the same subject. Flint and Bruce had much in common, and in no way did they resemble each other so much as in their detachment from every form of ecclesiastical influence. "A good many," says Professor Bruce,

are asking such revolutionary questions even now, (Is the Church of any use ; were it not well that it perished that Christianity might the better thrive?) and it is foolish for Churchmen simply to be shocked and to characterise them as profane. The Church is only a means to an end ; it is good only so far as it is Christian. There is no merit or profit in mere ecclesiasticism. Whatever reveals the true Christ is of value and will live. Whatever hides Christ, be it pope, priest or presbyter, sacraments or ecclesiastical misrule, is pernicious, and must pass away ; but we may hope that there will always be enough of Christ's spirit in the society which bears His name to keep it from becoming utterly savourless and to bring about such reforms as may be necessary to make it serve the end for which it was instituted. Should this hope be disappointed, then the visible Church, as we know it, must and will pass away, leaving the spirit of Christ free room to make a new experiment, under happier auspices, at self-realization. To be enthusiastic about the Church in its present condition is impossible ; to hope for its future is not impossible, but if it were, there is no cause for despair. Christ will ever remain the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, and the kingdom of God will remain a kingdom that cannot be moved.

One can readily see from Flint's conception of the Kingdom and his attitude towards the Church, how any objection that might be made to his appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews on account of his being a minister would have little or no

force. His culture was too wide and his thinking too deep for any ecclesiastical system to harness him with its trappings. Indeed even for a theological Chair such a spirit as he manifested in his first book was eminently suited. As we know, it enabled him, when such an appointment did afterwards come, to treat the special subjects of his Chair with an independence and freedom from any narrow sectarianism, which commanded the admiration of his students, and drew to his class aspirants towards the ministry from most of the Protestant Churches at home and in the Colonies. Indeed, with the exception of two lectures which he published on "The Church Question in Scotland," it would be difficult for anyone to gather from his writings to what denomination he belonged. Breadth of view was thus a characteristic which marked him from the beginning to the end of his career.

Professor Cooper, in his short sketch of Flint's ministry in Aberdeen, indicates the surprise which was caused to many by the author's views on the Kingdom and the Church. Such views, however, have been growing stronger and spreading more widely during the half century which has elapsed since they were published, and the Church as an institution is much more seriously on its trial now than it was then; the Modernist spirit, which is so marked a sign of the times, is compelling the thought, if not the axe, of reform to be applied to all Churches. It is that same spirit, according to Flint, which is found in a true conception of the Kingdom of God, and it is because the Church has not known its own place and done its own work and understood above all its relation to the Kingdom of God that it has fallen into so many errors. But for such a misunderstanding, "the world," he says, "would have been spared the divine-right theories of Episcopacy,

Presbytery and Independency—which would have been a great gain and comfort to the world. But for such error it would have been spared also to a great extent if not entirely the controversy on the Headship of Christ, which has raged so long and fiercely in our land—a controversy now hopelessly unintelligible—a chaos out of which no intellect can bring sense or order.”

The Church would also have been saved from the absurdity and injustice of contrasting itself with the world, when by the world is meant the kingdom of evil. He makes short work of the arguments in defence of the Church as a purely spiritual organ, without any visible body or any relation to the government or courts of the land. “It is not more certain that every Church with its courts is in the world in the sense of having a local habitation and a name on the earth, than that the world as the kingdom of Satan is in every Church, even the purest.” From this error also rises the evil of Churches having their attention constantly concentrated on themselves, their own constitution, their own rights and privileges, instead of on their own work. “But what else can be looked for when the Church is confounded with the kingdom of God—when out of the Church it is assumed that there is only the kingdom of evil?” And striking at a controversy which was raging at the time, he exclaims: “These miserable controversies become momentous matters then—life and death struggles for Christ’s kingdom. If Christ is to be King at all, the notion is, He must be King here, for he is King nowhere else. But O by such blind contests, what a contemptible kingship we get for Him! a mere acknowledged special kingship over Church courts, including a virtual denial of His real kingship everywhere.”

And referring, in fine, to the demand of the Church to take positions with regard to the State which it cannot maintain, and claiming the right to inflict even civil injuries upon its ministers in virtue of the standards of belief to which they have vowed adherence, he says :

The Creeds and Confessions of most Churches, however doctrinally correct, are of an extent and minuteness of definition objectionable, not only on the ground of perpetuating disunion between equally sincere Christians, but as capable of being made, in the hands of unscrupulous or excited majorities, formidable instruments of terrorism and repression. Now, it is only through clear recognition of what its relationship to the kingdom of God is that a Church can adjust itself to the other agencies and powers of society and know what its own sphere is ; where consequently it is requisite to yield and where to resist—where, when, and how.

The Christian State according to Flint is as much a part of the Kingdom of God as the Church, and at times even more so, and any Church that refuses its protection to its members not only repudiates their rights, but flouts the State and even violates the laws and condemns the spirit of the Kingdom itself.

The discourses which compose this volume are full of sound and original teaching on the subject with which they deal, and they are expressed in clear and idiomatic English which at times rises to eloquence. They are not, however, to be accepted as specimens of Flint's ordinary preaching. They were evidently composed for a special purpose. He issued them as a manifesto of his teaching to the more thoughtful public, and at the same time as a proof of his powers and qualifications for a professorial chair. If this was his object, as I think it chiefly was, he was not mistaken in the result. His ordinary sermons, however, and even those which he afterwards preached on special occasions, were, as a rule, simpler in thought and briefer in form, although the fundamental truths

which they inculcated were in essence much the same. Flint was a great preacher and even a popular one, although I do not think that he ever aimed either at greatness or popularity, for his one and only desire was to expound the truth and enforce it on the minds and hearts of his hearers. It is perfectly clear, all the same, that he thoroughly understood not only the aim but even the art of preaching, and cultivated the latter for the sake of the former with much care. This can be seen both from his sermons and their effect, and also from two papers, one of which he published in his volume "On Biblical, Theological, and Other Subjects," and the other, which was read (but never published) at the Scottish Church Society Conference at St Andrews, on the 31st January 1900. The first paper deals with the subject of Public Worship, and the second more particularly with the sermon.

Flint emphasised strongly the extreme value of every part of the service being clearly conceived and carefully prepared. He attached as much importance to the prayers, the selection and reading of the lessons from Scripture, and the choosing of the Psalms and hymns for praise, as to the sermon itself. Indeed he advised his students to invert the usual order of preparation, and to compose their prayers, and study the Scripture lessons for the Sunday, before they even began to write their sermon. He believed that, somehow or other, the sermon could take care of itself and be finished in time, whereas the preparation for the other parts of the service might be in danger of being entirely neglected. We have already referred to his own habits in this matter: his prayers, for one thing, he at all events regarded as of equal importance to his sermon. It may be interesting to learn his views as stated in the unpublished paper, just referred to, on

Worship and Preaching. Insisting upon the necessity of careful preparation of public prayers, he says—

It may be known to most of you that Dr Chalmers, when Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh University, always wrote and read the prayers with which he opened his class. During the latter years of my Professorship in the same class I followed his example, and I regret I did not do so from the beginning and commence my immediate preparation for the class work for the following day by drawing up a prayer appropriate to it.

Then, as to the reading of Scripture, he remarks :—

It is impossible that any man can read properly a chapter which he has hurriedly selected on the Sabbath morning or perhaps looked up in the vestry before going to the pulpit. Some men may be able to preach well *ex tempore*, but no man will ever read well *ex tempore*, for good reading means good interpretation, and good interpretation means patient study.

He impatiently brushes aside the attempts of those who depreciate the value of preaching. He characterises all such attempts as “foolish.” The greatest religions of the world have been founded by preaching and mainly spread by it. “We need not,” he says, “be afraid that the word of the Lord either written or spoken will cease in the future to be what it has been in the past : one of the mightiest factors for good alike in the lives of individuals and in the histories of societies.”

It does not follow however that since preaching may and should be valuable and powerful, every preacher may assume his preaching to be valuable and powerful. There is unfortunately much preaching that is of little value and very weak. No preacher has a right to regard his preaching as so excellent that it is above all criticism.

He then issues a warning, especially to young preachers :

Preachers, and especially young preachers, are apt to get from their hearers a great deal more praise than is good for them, and much that is exceedingly harmful to weak heads, whereas neither

young nor old preachers and especially not the former seldom get enough of useful and suggestive criticism. If a preacher be met with praise for his preaching, let him cut it short, say, by the most original or interesting remark he can make on the state of the weather.

He evidently could not tolerate the habit of some ministers of preaching their old sermons without revision.

Whenever a minister can, without compunction, preach his old sermons, just as they were written years before, the time has come when he should be seriously thinking of retirement.

Nor had he any great faith in popular election.

The satisfaction of the hearers is no true test of the value of a sermon and of the end of preaching. They are often pleased when they should not be so, and displeased when they have no good reason to be so. Congregations in search of a pastor not unfrequently choose the worst preachers on their lists, quite convinced that they are the best. Glittering superficiality is often more esteemed than solid worth. Flowing periods, unfamiliar words, and a sonorous or well-modulated voice have often made almost entire meaninglessness and unintelligibility attractive, at least for a time, to people who were far from suspecting their own lack of intelligence. Even buffoonery in the pulpit has helped to fill churches, although it is very doubtful if it has contributed to the progress of the Gospel, and it is certain that among the Old and New Testament preachers there were no buffoons.

Although one of the most learned men of the time, he could not speak too severely of those who forsook the proper function of preaching and chose as their subject mere philosophy, science, history, politics, social theories. "All those," he says, "who choose such themes are extremely silly."

Surely for six days of the week we have quite enough of all that, and surely there is something more important even than all that. The power of the pulpit will most certainly not be increased by ministers forsaking their own glorious work of preaching the Gospel for that of lectures on lower themes.



Nor had he a very high opinion of popular eloquence.

Preaching, aiming as it does at instruction, persuasion, and practice, must, no doubt in order fully to attain its ends, be a kind of eloquence, but there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that eloquence appearing in a pulpit under the form of a sermon is good preaching. The barest, baldest discourse may be a better sermon than the most eloquent one. Pulpit oratory is a wretched substitute for good preaching. The eloquence of the pulpit must be an eloquence which despises eloquence. There is no more hopeless sign of a preacher than an obvious striving after eloquence. In preaching speech is merely the means by which the preacher seeks to bring the hearers in their whole natures under the power of gospel truth.

He would have the preacher under all hazards respect his own individuality, and had a strong suspicion that training in elocution simply tended to destroy that individuality. The elocutionist he thought could do little for the preacher, indeed he believed him to be a cause of real danger.

If the elocutionist over-magnifies his office he is apt to make the weak brother weaker still, by making him stagey and conceited. The strong are not likely to have recourse to his aid; they will prefer to trust to the guidance of nature and, wisely I believe, even should she sometimes seem to lead them wrong. Chalmers's thick and broad pronunciation, Candlish's shrugging of his shoulders, and Caird's swaying of his arms, were of course of themselves defects for which nature, left to herself, was responsible; but they did not prevent all three being most effective preachers and the first of them, indeed, in all probability the greatest pulpit orator Scotland ever produced. Any elocutionary drill which would have removed those defects would very likely, just because they were constitutional peculiarities of strong characters, have had something of the same effect that Delilah's cutting of Samson's superfluously long hair had on the Hebrew hero.

The man who could write thus about preachers lived up to his ideals, and if he had continued as minister of a charge he would easily have taken his place among the very first preachers of his day in Scotland. The

men among his contemporaries whom he would have had as friendly rivals were Norman Macleod, John Caird, John Tulloch, Thomas Guthrie, Robert Wallace, A. K. H. Boyd, James Macgregor, and George Matheson. Flint differed from every one of them. He owned no man as master, but kept true, if ever anyone did, to his own individuality. The first time I heard him was in the autumn of 1876, in the chapel of Glasgow University. He had just been appointed to the Divinity Chair in Edinburgh. His coming was looked forward to with deep interest by the students, and a very large congregation was present to hear him. He had a most striking and arresting appearance; above the middle height, thin, pale, with a mass of dark hair hanging over a high and broad forehead. His only facial adornment was a somewhat heavy moustache. Altogether his appearance was more military than clerical, and certainly it was as a soldier of truth and of righteousness that he fought and lived all his days. He looked absolutely without pretence, and was equally void of any false humility, and, from the first word he uttered to the last, one felt that the speaker was every inch a man, conscious of and earnest about the message which he was delivering, and absolutely regardless of any adornment or show either in manner or delivery. He had a powerful voice, which he used with telling effect, and the only gesture in which he indulged was the occasional uplifting of his right arm and an emphatic movement of hand and forefinger. He used few if any illustrations, indulged in no purple patches, nor did he require to. He went right to the heart of his subject, which was "Truth," and expounded it with an intellectual grip and moral earnestness which not only riveted the attention of the congregation, but powerfully impressed it.

Many testimonies are on record, all bearing witness to his eminence as a preacher. Dr John Hunter, late of Trinity Church, Glasgow, writes : “ My recollections of Flint as a preacher are those of a boy of 11 or 12. He impressed me very much ; his earnestness and intensity were of a kind with which I was not then familiar. Churches and sermons were a great attraction to me in my boyhood. I must have heard Flint ten or twelve times. I heard him in his own church in Aberdeen and also in two Congregational churches. It was a rare thing in those days for a parish minister to recognise Dissent : it revealed him to be a man of wide sympathies. I may add that I heard him preach the sermon to the British Association. I can recall the crowded church on that occasion ; the appearance of the preacher—his pale, delicate, almost consumptive look.” The late Professor Robertson Smith met Flint at Bonn, and he declares that the latter’s “ personality and preaching attracted him greatly.” Professor Jack, in the obituary notice of Flint in the *Glasgow Herald*, says that “ Flint’s congregation in Aberdeen were justified in thinking of him and comparing him with John Caird.”

In St Andrews, Flint’s popularity as a preacher was quite equal to his high reputation as a professor. He had no warmer friend while there and ever afterwards than the parish minister, Dr A. K. H. Boyd. The author of “ *The Recreations of a Country Parson* ” was not in the habit of writing effusively about his contemporaries in the Scottish Church ; even Principal Caird fared badly at his hands, and the great Norman Macleod does not escape scatheless. But about Robert Flint he invariably writes in the most enthusiastic and even affectionate manner. Boyd, in his “ *Twenty-five Years of St Andrews*,” speaks thus of Flint as a preacher :—

“ He had been a parish minister of the Church, and

he continued to preach occasionally in St Andrews, always attracting a great congregation. With the mass, his popularity was greater than even Tulloch's. There was no particular grace of matter or manner, it was down-right strength and grasp of the subject. . . . On the Sunday before Flint departed from St Andrews he preached in the Parish Church. It was an ordinary afternoon service, but the church, which seats 2500, was densely crowded : a memorable sight even to such as have often seen it. Mrs Hanna, the daughter of Chalmers, was wont to say that Flint reminded her of her father more than any other preacher she had heard."

Flint's career as a preacher may be said to have closed with his ministry at Kilconquhar, although he was in demand on special occasions, particularly after he went to Edinburgh. The discourses which he delivered on these occasions he afterwards gathered together and published, along with other sermons and papers, in 1899, in a volume to which he gave the title, "Sermons and Addresses." Anyone who desires to learn the substance and form of Flint's preaching will be amply repaid by a perusal of this book. He will find in it nothing unworthy but much that will be illuminating and helpful in the highest degree. Those discourses were much appreciated when delivered, especially the one which he preached before the University of Glasgow in December 1884, on "The Claims of Divine Wisdom on Young Men." Seldom has a greater tribute been paid to any preacher than was done to Flint on this occasion. The students in each of the four faculties of Arts, Law, Medicine, and Theology sent in largely signed petitions to Principal Caird, asking him to use his good offices with Professor Flint to permit them to publish the sermon. Caird backed up the petitions with the following letter :—

THE UNIVERSITY,  
GLASGOW,  
*December 20, 1884.*

MY DEAR DR FLINT,---The students were much impressed by the sermon with which you favoured us the other day in the College Chapel, and are anxious to possess it in a permanent form. A deputation of them brought me yesterday the accompanying petition and asked me to back up their request, as I now very cordially do. They suggest that you might either publish the sermon yourself or allow them to do so. A bookseller here, they say, would gladly publish it, should you permit him to do so, on his own account. May I ask your favourable consideration of their earnest and respectful request ?

The Rev. Dr Butler, minister of Galashiels, who was a student of Divinity at the time, and who heard the sermon, thus records his impressions :—

Over the long interval of twenty-nine years I still recall with vividness and freshness Professor Flint's sermon in the chapel of Glasgow University, and to all of the large congregation of students then present, it was an intellectual stimulus, a deepening of personal conviction, and an awakening of spiritual life. It exhibited a striking combination of dogmatic grasp, personal faith, philosophic culture, with warmth of religious feeling and beauty of literary expression, and with one voice of indebtedness and reverence, we all received it. It was the message of an earnest, profound and influential thinker, who was recognized as such by all the Churches, and it deepened the help many of us had already received from his published works.

As to "impressions" of that sermon, I would say that the greatest was the great professor himself. He told of what he had himself seen, and personally experienced ; personality was revealed, and we seemed to clasp hands with a teacher who spoke to conviction : he stood before us as a man, dwelling in a citadel of experience, which no contingent events could shake ; he had a deep possession of the hope and faith which he commended to his hearers.

His delivery was simple and sincere, without any of the adornments of oratory, but it gripped, penetrated and subdued ; it left an impress, and life was different after the delivery of that transparent and convincing sermon. If we could say after it with Pascal that the heart has its reasons which the reason knows not, many Divinity students could after that hour say also with Robert Bruce of Edin-

burgh, "God first called me to my grace, before I obeyed my calling to the ministry." Many a ministry has been since strengthened by that sermon and messenger; message and manner have been often recalled from that great day in Glasgow University Chapel—Dec. 7, 1884. Such a day only appears after long intervals, and

"Through such souls alone  
God stooping shews sufficient of His Light  
For us in the dark to rise by."

We have thought it best to include in this chapter all that may be deemed necessary to be said about Flint's labours as a minister and his reputation as a preacher, for, after leaving Kilconquhar, he entered on a new field of work which absorbed all his talents and his energy.

## CHAPTER VI

### ST ANDREWS

THE Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of St Andrews had become vacant through the lamented death of Professor Ferrier on the 11th June 1864, and the Curators were determined that every effort should be made and every care taken to secure a worthy successor to so distinguished a man. Ferrier was one of the most eminent metaphysicians that Scotland has produced, and his popularity as a professor was equal to his originality as a thinker. The attractiveness of his personality had endeared him to his colleagues and his friends. His death was felt to be a severe loss to philosophy and to the University of St Andrews, whose reputation as a seat of learning he had greatly enhanced by his brilliance as a thinker, lecturer, and writer. He had occupied the Chair for nearly twenty years, and at the time of his death he had no compeer as a philosopher in Scotland. He had broken away from the traditional school of thought and had introduced a new standpoint and fresh methods in the treatment of his subject. This of itself drew upon him general attention, and made him a marked man among the metaphysicians of the country.

Those responsible for the appointment of a successor were of one mind as to the absolute necessity of securing the best man possible, and their determination found expression at the hands of Principal Tulloch, himself one of the Curators, "who vowed," as Mrs Oliphant declares, "with very comprehensible warmth, that no mean

man if he could help it should step into Ferrier's place." The candidate who at first was most favoured was Thomas Spencer Baynes, who, at the time, was assistant-editor of the *Daily News*. He was regarded as the greatest pupil of Sir William Hamilton, before either Veitch or Fraser, and had besides the great advantage of a regular literary training. The second candidate was Thomas Hill Green, a famous Balliol man, who afterwards attained to great distinction as a philosopher and the leader of a school of thought at Oxford. The third candidate was Robert Flint, minister at Kilconquhar.

Flint, as we have already seen, was becoming well known as a man of outstanding ability and force of character, and the proximity of his parish to St Andrews had drawn him into friendly relations with a number of the professors in the ancient University. Certain of them were in the habit of visiting him at his manse and of occasionally attending his church in order to hear him preach. Two of them, in particular, Professors Mitchell and Shairp, might now be counted among his friends and admirers. It is very doubtful if he would, of his own accord, have applied for the vacant Chair; indeed it was not until after considerable pressure had been brought to bear upon him that he consented to do so. The man who influenced him most in this respect and who made every effort to secure his appointment was J. C. Shairp, at the time Professor of Humanity at St Andrews, afterwards Principal of the United College, and Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Shairp had, like Flint, been a student at Glasgow University and a close personal friend of Dr Norman Macleod. He went to Balliol College, Oxford, as a Snell Exhibitioner, and after acting for some time as a master at Rugby he returned to Scotland to take



up the duties of the Chair to which he had been appointed at St Andrews. He was one of the representative Scotsmen of his time, and did much to uphold the reputation of his native country for scholarship and culture. Ferrier had been dead for about a month when Shairp wrote to Flint :—

EDINBURGH, *July 5th* 1864.

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me to take the liberty of asking if you have ever thought of offering yourself as a candidate for our Moral Philosophy Chair, now vacant? Without any communication with others, but merely from my knowledge of you and of the qualities required for that Chair and the needs of our College and University, my thoughts have turned towards you as one of the fittest men for it whom I know. I have heard several men named as probable candidates, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that I should prefer you very decidedly to any of those whom I have heard named. Unless some man of very great and tried eminence, both as a thinker and as a Christian thinker comes forward, which I do not believe at all likely, I shall be glad to do my best for you, simply out of regard to the true interests of our College. If some unexpected luminary should emerge, of such strong brilliance that I felt constrained to bow to his claims, I should at once tell you so frankly, but as things now stand, and as I believe they are likely to stand, I am very desirous that you should come forward. Should you do so and things remain as they are I shall feel called on both to write you a strong testimonial should you wish this, and to make known my opinion of your fitness to those members of the University Court who will care to hear it. Please let me hear from you soon.

Professor Mitchell had also been interesting himself on Flint's behalf and advocated his claims with Principal Tulloch. In Mrs Oliphant's *Life of the Principal*, there is the following letter from him to Dr Mitchell :—

TÜBINGEN, *August 4*, 1864.

As to Mr Flint becoming a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy I should be very glad indeed if he came forward, and with the opinion I have of his philosophical powers I should give his claims the most favourable consideration, but with such a candidate

as Spencer Baynes in the field, who has shown himself to be a man of great philosophical capacity, and whose literary merits are also conspicuous, I question whether any influence should be used with Mr Flint to urge him to come forward. Such powers as his are sure of a professional field somewhere, and it is open to question whether theology in some of its departments is not, rather than philosophy, his appropriate field. The matter however is one for himself to determine. . . . I have received strong testimonies in Mr Green's favour from Dean Stanley and others, but we may have enough of even such good things as "Balliol men."

Flint yielded at last to the solicitation of his friends and announced his candidature for the Chair. The following sentence from a subsequent letter by Professor Shairp will indicate how opinion has changed since his day. "There are two, if not more, of the members of Court to whom your being a clergyman will be rather a recommendation, and to the others I don't think it would be the least objection." As things stand at present the fact of a candidate being a clergyman would decidedly be against him for any Chair that is not purely theological. I do not think that at the present moment there are more than three or four ministers who occupy a University Chair in any other faculty than that of Divinity. Professional life has now become so specialised, if not secularised, that it is thought that ordination perverts a man's views and causes him to treat his subject from a prejudiced standpoint. But there was a real difficulty which his friends had with Flint; he shrank from calling upon and canvassing for their support the members of the University Court, and Professor Mitchell had to encourage him to discharge this disagreeable duty by writing, on the 1st October, to the following effect: "I would most strongly urge you to call on the members of Court you have not seen before it meets again. I dislike such things as much as you do, but in justice to yourself



MISS FLINT



as well as for the good of the University I beg you will not allow yourself to be deterred from undertaking them.”

Each of the three candidates was strongly backed, and Principal Tulloch, whose influence in the Court was very considerable, while quite favourable to Flint, was evidently committed to Baynes, who was an older man, and had already made his mark ; but the question, as Mrs Oliphant remarks in her *Life of the Principal*, “was solved in a highly satisfactory way, by the settlement of both of the favoured Candidates at St Andrews — Mr Baynes being appointed to the Chair of Logic which fell vacant during these discussions by the translation of Professor Veitch to a similar post in Glasgow, and Mr Flint succeeding Professor Ferrier. Both appointments were thoroughly successful.”

This was the third University seat with which Flint, who was now only in his thirtieth year, found himself connected, and he was destined ere long to reach what many would regard as the height of clerical, if not professorial ambition, by being appointed to the Chair of Divinity in the fourth, and only other, University in Scotland, that of Edinburgh. St Andrews must have appealed to him, as it still appeals to many, as the most ideal of all the seats of learning in Scotland. In some respects its history vies, in interest and romance, even with that of Edinburgh. It was for many centuries the centre of the ecclesiastical life of the country, and its ancient ruins still speak of its former glories. Some of the most famous names in the annals of the Church, such as those of Bishops Wardlaw and Kennedy, Cardinal Beaton, and Archbishop Hamilton, are associated with it, and, not less, those of George Buchanan, John Knox, and Andrew Melville. Its very traditions

would be an inspiration to such a man as Flint, who possessed the historic sense in a unique degree. Then, closely connected with his own Chair, and as his immediate predecessors, were there not the distinguished names of Thomas Chalmers and James Frederick Ferrier? It may be true that its University had during the eighteenth century fallen somewhat into the background, and that few names of outstanding merit adorned its annals, but with the opening of the following century it began to show signs of revival and, at the time of his appointment, it had in the ranks of its professoriate scholars who could easily hold their own with any in the country. It was now beginning to put forth those efforts which have since been amply crowned with success.

What need is there to describe the charms of this grey city by the sea?—they are known to all true Scotsmen. Year after year thousands visit it, to drink in the memories of the past and what, perhaps, in these strenuous days is of equal importance, a store of health for the future. Within recent years those signs of decay and neglect which in the earlier part of the nineteenth century marked it and saddened the hearts of all true patriots have been swept away, and while improvements have been made in keeping with the demands of the modern spirit, the ancient landmarks have been left untouched, so that in no other city in Scotland can one find the old and the new mingling so closely together. It provides an epitome of Scottish history from the earliest times to the present day. Flint took full advantage of the long stretches of links that line St Andrews Bay, and the numerous roads that reach inland, for the indulgence of that pastime of which he was fond: those long walks which refreshed him after the strenuous work of the

day, and invigorated him for the evening and midnight task that still lay before him.

The social life in which he now found himself must also have been singularly congenial. At the head of the Divinity School was Tulloch, the Principal of St Mary's, still in the very prime of life, and busily putting a new face on Scottish theology. There too was Dr Mitchell, then Professor of Hebrew, but soon to be transferred to the Chair of Church History, where he proved himself to be the most learned ecclesiastical historian in Scotland. Shairp too, who had so much to do with Flint's own appointment, and who was afterwards to be promoted from the Chair of Humanity to the Principalship of the United College, one of the most cultured men of his time, was also ready to welcome him; and, within a year or two, and chiefly through Flint's own influence, there was to be added to the social life of the city, as minister of the parish, the genial A. K. H. B., in whose bright pages there lives again the very spirit and body of those times, a picture of Scottish university and clerical life such as cannot be found elsewhere. In these pages we find Flint, among the other celebrities of the place, playing his part, and interchanging courtesies with the distinguished men, both at home and abroad, who loved to visit St Andrews.

No man, however, was more independent of his environment than Flint; and however much his present situation must have been to his mind, his business after all was to teach philosophy, and to this high task he bent himself with all the single-mindedness and deep sense of duty for which he was ever so conspicuous. His favourite subject had, at the time of his appointment, emerged, like St Andrews itself, from the neglect from which it had suffered during the earlier part of the nineteenth century. "At the time of Stewart's

death," says Professor Laurie of the University of Melbourne, in his able book on "Scottish Philosophy in its National Development"—

philosophy in Great Britain was in a state of decadence. The impulse given by the scepticism of Hume and the common-sense philosophy of Reid had well nigh passed away; and the loose eloquence and enthusiasm of Thomas Chalmers and John Wilson were as powerless to awaken a genuine interest in philosophic questions as the drier prelections of some of their colleagues in the Scottish Chairs of Metaphysics or Ethics. In 1829 Thomas Carlyle, reading the "Signs of the Times" from his retreat at Craigenputtock, expressed his belief that in Great Britain, while the physical sciences were engrossing more and more respect and attention, the philosophy of mind had "finally died out with its last amiable cultivator, Professor Stewart." In the universities of England and by the general public, philosophy was almost entirely neglected. Sir William Hamilton, writing in 1830, declared that the contrast between the resurrection of philosophy in France under the influence of Cousin and Jouffroy, and the apathy of Great Britain, was anything but flattering to the latter. "All interest in these speculations," he added, "seems now to be extinct." The testimony of J. S. Mill in 1835 was equally emphatic as to the intrinsic value and the actual neglect of philosophy. While the universities had neglected their duties, philosophy, he complained, had been "falling more and more into distastefulness and disrepute among the educated classes in England," till beyond the bounds of mathematical and physical science there was "not a vestige of a reading and thinking public engaged in the investigation of truth *as* truth, in the prosecution of thought for the sake of thought." The complaints of Carlyle, Hamilton, and Mill were the necessary prelude to the removal of the apathy to which they bore witness.

Three decades had passed since these complaints were made, when Flint began his work as a teacher of philosophy in St Andrews, and much had happened in the interval. Hamilton himself was the first to stir the sluggish pool of Scottish thought and to found a school, or, at any rate, to attract a body of disciples, who with varying degrees of loyalty acknowledged him as their master. His philosophy of the "Uncon-



ditioned," after passing through the hands of Mansel, fell at last into those of Herbert Spencer and Huxley, who regarded him as the father of Modern Agnosticism. Mill and Bain, again, on the one side, and the Cairds in Glasgow, supported or led by Green of Oxford on the other, represented two antagonistic schools of thought which were not without their influence. Somewhat apart from them all and greater than any of them was Ferrier, who followed an independent course, claiming, when charged with being influenced by Kant and Hegel, that his philosophy was Scottish to the core. It is unnecessary in the present connection, seeing that the subject is dealt with so fully in the succeeding chapter, to do more than by a reference to Flint's Introductory Lecture, to point out his attitude towards his predecessors and to current thought, and to give a brief sketch of how he intended to treat the subject to which he was about to devote himself.

It was on the 14th of October that Flint was elected to his Chair, and he delivered his Inaugural Address on the 16th of November. Only a month was thus at his disposal for putting his academic house, so to speak, into order and preparing his Introductory Lecture, a difficult task under any circumstances, but one which in his case must have been harder than usual. He had for the past six years been so much engaged with the duties of his ministerial office that little time was left to him for purely philosophical study, and this he frankly admits in his opening sentences. But the Address as a whole gives one the impression of being the work of a man who had devoted his whole life to the subject. In conception, in form, in maturity of thought, in certainty of touch and even in beauty of style, it is quite equal to anything that he ever afterwards produced.

After a passing reference to the importance of the subject of his Chair, to his own deep sense of responsibility, heightened by his comparative youth and inexperience, he passes on to pay a glowing tribute to his immediate predecessor, Professor Ferrier. "There is more to humble than to exalt," he remarked, "in the fact that, at twenty-eight years of age, the last six of which have been spent in a position where only a partial attention to philosophical studies was legitimate, or even possible, I find myself placed in a Chair which has been rendered illustrious by the occupancy—in the person of Dr Chalmers—of the greatest and noblest, perhaps, of all modern Scotsmen—and in the person of the late Professor Ferrier, of one of the most original and subtle of thinkers, and one of the most graceful and eloquent of writers."

On the loss which this University has sustained by the death of my distinguished predecessor, I need not dwell. It was not my happiness to be personally acquainted with Professor Ferrier, but I know from the concurrent testimony of his colleagues and his students that he was singularly manly and kind, courteous and lovable. The rich variety, the delicate polish, the nice adjustment of his powers of mind, are conspicuous in all he wrote, and exceedingly admirable, and exceedingly rare. Never perhaps have philosophy and poetry, the abstruse in thought and the beautiful in expression, been more perfectly combined.

He then proceeds to indicate certain excellences in Ferrier's character, and places first the entireness of his mental consecration to philosophy.

It might have been thought that a professedly demonstrative system would have drawn no inspiration from feeling and been devoid of the graces of fancy. But, on the contrary, into such a system he poured all the treasures of a most opulent nature so that nowhere, perhaps, out of Plato, have humour and irony, imagination and eloquence, been so marvellously mingled with logical processes and metaphysical inquiries. Philosophy obviously

possessed him in his whole being, and therefore all his powers were at her service. The higher regions of speculation being those where his spirit found its most congenial home—the pure ether of that upper world being to him as the breath of life, health, and exhilaration—not intellect alone but every faculty played freely there, and found at once exercise and enjoyment.

He next pays a high tribute to Ferrier's independence of thought, the speaker laying equal claim, at the same time, to this virtue, and declining to commit himself to his predecessor's positions.

Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the principles, method, and results, of his speculations no one at least can fancy, for a moment, that in his adoption of them he was swayed by any undue deference to external authority. Authority, whether of the many or the few, went for as little, perhaps, with him as it ever did with anyone. He certainly cannot be charged with the neglect of this cardinal duty of the philosopher—rigidly to demand of every doctrine that it justify itself to his own mind. His relationship to Sir William Hamilton showed how even sincere affection combined with high respect could in no wise move him to forego the rights of his own reason. And herein he has left us an example.

The speaker was equally impressed by Ferrier's resolute determination and endeavour to trace a principle through all its windings and into all its consequences.

The most remarkable feature, perhaps, of the Institutes is the extraordinary variety of the applications made of the primary proposition of the Theory of Knowing. When it was called "a barren generality," the reply was "Considering *that*, it is wonderful what a large family it has. This is a sort of Irish barrenness." Now, I am aware that grave doubts may be entertained as to the accuracy of the deductions from it—as to the *legitimacy* of this undeniably numerous family; but with these doubts, just or unjust, I take here no concern.—I only point out for approval and imitation the habit of mind displayed—the habit of tracing principles as far as light enables us to follow them.

Last of all he mentions this excellence—singular clearness of expression.

Professor Ferrier never left room for reasonable doubt as to what he meant. He wrote as with sunbeams. Many metaphysicians appear to consider that to be intelligible is the most unphilosophical and unpardonable of offences. But these are of the owl rather than of the eagle sort, and I confess I prefer an eagle to an owl, notwithstanding the great and, perhaps, deserved reputation which the latter bird enjoys for wisdom—in the dark. Clearness of language must have its source in clearness of thought. It had so in Professor Ferrier. We find it in the exquisite finish of every sentence.

Having thus paid a handsome and graceful tribute to the memory of his predecessor, Flint devotes the rest of his Address to a brief and general survey of the province of philosophy which it was henceforth his duty to explore.

As that province is of vast extent and inexhaustible wealth, I shall not seek to pass beyond its natural limits into surrounding fields of intellectual labour, however inviting. More strictly than has been usual in the Chairs of Moral Philosophy in our Universities I shall confine my instructions to Moral Philosophy. But Moral Philosophy I must understand in its widest sense, excluding from its consideration no moral phenomena whatsoever. I define it accordingly as the Philosophy of Man's Moral Nature, Moral Relations, and Moral History. This definition gives us the three great divisions of our science. To construct, in accordance with the strictest requirements of a sound scientific method, a Philosophy of the Moral Nature of Man, a Philosophy of the Moral Relations of Man, and a Philosophy of the Moral History of Man—that no less and no more is the task of the moral philosopher. As comprehending a Philosophy of the Moral Nature of Man, Moral Philosophy is in immediate contact with Psychology; as comprehending a Philosophy of the Moral Relations of Man, with Metaphysics and Theology; and as comprehending a Philosophy of the Moral History of man, with the Philosophy of History.

The lecturer then goes on to expound in greater detail what he has thus stated as the scheme of study which he intends to carry out, drawing attention, in particular, to certain innovations which he intended to introduce, namely, the exclusion of irrelevant

history and of irrelevant psychology, and his intention to devote himself to a more thorough investigation of our moral being. He expresses, however, his adherence to the psychological method, but is determined, at the same time, not to fall into the mistake committed by Sir William Hamilton, who failed to keep psychology separated from metaphysics. "This error," he remarks, "along with the apparently inordinate attention bestowed on the mere naming, definition, and arrangement of the faculties, as compared with that as applied to the discovery of those real laws in which alone true mental science consists, leaves me with great regard for Sir William Hamilton but little of a Hamiltonian." He follows Chalmers in insisting upon the duty of the moral philosopher to deal with Christian ethics, declaring that to stop short with an exposition of pure ethics would be arbitrary. "The revelation of God in Jesus Christ," he continues, "places us in new relations to Himself, and imposes on us new duties, and acts, in far more numerous and powerful ways than natural religion, on all our relations and duties. To trace how through its distinctive truths it does so is the special problem of a Christian ethics. Higher than this Moral Philosophy cannot rise, but it is only when it has risen thus high that it can pretend to be the guide and rule of moral life for Christian men. Pure ethics is the highest conceivable moral law for an atheist; theological ethics for a deist; Christian ethics for a Christian." He then concludes:—

This rough sketch I have to offer as a sort of programme, not of the work of a session but of whatever may remain to me of life. I hope, if God will, to be able to add, each session, some addition, however small, to each of its three principal divisions—not attempting to do too much, in order that the little accomplished may be the more solid and durable.

The Very Reverend Principal Stewart of St Andrews, who was a student at the time, heard Flint's Inaugural Address, and subsequently studied under him, has kindly furnished me with the following interesting and valuable contribution :—

“ The Session 1864-65, in which I entered the University of St Andrews as a student, saw two important changes in the Faculty of Arts. Dr John Veitch, the Professor of Logic, who had been transferred to the corresponding Chair in the University of Glasgow, was succeeded in St Andrews by Thomas Spencer Baynes ; and James F. Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy, who had died during the previous summer, was succeeded by the Rev. Robert Flint, minister of Kilconquhar. Though he had not yet published any book, Mr Flint came with a high reputation, founded mainly upon Lectures on philosophical subjects which he had delivered, and his work as an able and thoughtful preacher. I was present at his Inaugural Address on 16th November 1864, in the United College Hall, and was much impressed by its power and promise. Of about middle height, with a somewhat pallid face and goatee beard, with a nervous frame, deep eyes, and a firm, almost staccato, utterance, he was calm and dignified. He looked older than his years ; indeed it was with a start that one heard him say that he was only twenty-eight years of age. He rather surprised the students when at the end he gave out for the first day's study the first chapter of Fleming's ‘ Manual of Moral Philosophy. ’ ‘ He means work, ’ was murmured on many sides. And the next day's criticism of Fleming showed that he meant to work himself, and meant the students to do so also. From the first he both interested the students, and commanded their respect.

“ In 1866 I became, in the ordinary course of the curriculum then followed, a member of his class. The work was done almost entirely by means of Lectures ; and I have no recollection of a textbook being used for oral examination. At the hour of lecture, the Professor entered and made his way to the pulpit-like desk placed somewhat high against the wall. After a short prayer, he dictated some six to ten brief paragraphs containing the substance of the lecture. After the dictation they were read over, and for the next thirty minutes the lecture itself was delivered with great vigour and incisiveness. Professor Flint seldom at that time occupied the whole hour. The lectures were divided into several short courses which were given on special days of the week. The courses delivered in my year were on ‘ The History of Morals in China and India,’ ‘ The History of Moral Thought in Greece ’ (including the Homeric Poems and the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle), ‘ The History of Moral Philosophy in England,’ ‘ The Philosophy of History,’ ‘ The Philosophy of Man’s Moral Nature,’ ‘ The Relation of the Sciences to one another,’ and ‘ The Metaphysics of Ethics.’ They were all in the highest degree stimulating as well as informing. They exhibited our Professor’s profound scholarship, but they were critical rather than constructive, and historical rather than systematic. A finer piece of criticism within brief compass could scarcely be found than the five dictated paragraphs in which he dealt incisively and effectively with the five chapters of John Stuart Mill’s ‘ Utilitarianism.’ Four Essays were prescribed during the session on the following subjects : ‘ Morality in the Homeric Age,’ ‘ What is Man’s Chief End, so far as it can be discovered by an Examination of his Nature ? ’ ‘ What are the Leading

Divisions of Moral Philosophy ?' and 'Utilitarianism.' No fewer than fourteen examinations were held between 22nd November 1866 and 12th April 1867. As there were about thirty students in the class, the reading of Essays and Examination papers alone must have been a task of considerable magnitude, but it was always most conscientiously performed. Professor Flint was then and always a man of enormous industry. He told me that he could master a German book which he had then in hand, of a couple of hundred pages, in a night or two, and the amount of reading done for some of his later books must have been immense. He had a fine memory, though he appeared to make abstracts of most things read, and his lectures were the result of patient re-writing and re-casting of his material. He had little power of extemporaneous speech, and on the few occasions on which he tried it in the class, it was not a success. But, as an old woman once remarked of Flint's great predecessor, Dr Chalmers, he was a 'fell reader.' As a student, I heard him preach several of the sermons contained in his volume, 'Sermons and Addresses,' in the Town Church of St Andrews. The huge building was always crowded; he held the congregation deeply interested in discourses packed with thought; and, though he never lifted his eyes from the paper, the whole man preached to the very tip of his vibrating little finger! His peculiarities of pronunciation which were often remarked upon, and sometimes ridiculed, became almost dear to his hearers; they were part of the man himself, and we would not have been without them for anything. It is very curious however that so able a man should never have noticed them himself.

"During the four years which I spent in St Andrews after I had left his class, I had the privilege of being



a frequent visitor in his house in the evenings, and had many conversations with him. On one of these occasions we referred to the question of read *versus* delivered sermons. 'I early made up my mind,' he said, 'that I had no power of extemporary speech, and I felt that the time occupied in committing a sermon to memory would be much better spent in elaborating the thought.' He was very kind to his students, and gave no little offence to some of his colleagues by his sympathy with the students in the matter of Kate Kennedy's Day, an annual *Saturnalia*, the fun of which would have been comparatively harmless if it had been less frowned upon. I owed to him my appointment as assistant in the East Church, Aberdeen, soon after my licence, and he was good enough to introduce me to the parish of Mains and Strathmartine, preaching the sermon on Prov. iv. 26, which is one of those in the volume already mentioned.

"As an example of what he meant by 'elaborating the thought,' I may refer to a conversation I once had with his mother, a clever and delightful old lady, whose pride in her gifted son was charming to behold. She told me that when in his parish the Communion season came round, he was never in his bed from the Wednesday to the Sunday night. I remarked that he must have been dreadfully worn out. 'I never saw him look so happy,' was her smiling reply.

"After he went to Edinburgh in 1876 I naturally saw him less frequently, but was privileged to retain his friendship. During those strenuous years he was building up a European reputation. I was present at the dinner given in his honour by his students and friends, when his portrait was presented to him. It was most interesting to listen to his recollections of

his early life, given with characteristic naïveté and enjoyment. I saw him twice after the cloud had fallen upon him which darkened his latest years, and though the brilliant intellect was no longer there, the sweet simplicity of nature which had all along characterised him was perhaps even more conspicuous.

“All who ever knew him, or even knew of him, admired and respected him for his great abilities and profound learning; those who knew him intimately loved and venerated the man.”

“He means work”: such, remarks the Principal, was the impression made upon the students by Flint’s Address, and it was a true one. He lectured both on Moral Philosophy and Political Economy; five days each week on the former, and two, Tuesdays and Thursdays, on the latter subject. From the very first he proved a great success, and A. K. H. B. only voiced the general opinion when he said, “There can hardly ever have been a better Professor in any university in this world. A quiet, worn, recluse student, by pure force of high qualities he gained an extraordinary popularity with the undergraduates. . . . Students have odd ways of expressing their admiration of those set over them, but when a distinguished graduate stated that ‘every lecture was a ripper,’ I understood he meant very high praise indeed.” I am fortunate in being able to give the impressions of one of those distinguished graduates, the Rev. Stewart Burns, minister at Hawick. He studied under Flint at a later date than Principal Stewart, and had the benefit of listening to him when the Professor was at his best.

It is now forty years ago since I was in Professor Flint’s class of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews, but the memory of it remains very clear and vivid. Most of us attending the class were perhaps too

young to get the full benefit to be derived from his lectures, but I am sure that in the case of many, seeds were sown which produced good fruit in the after years.

### *His Method*

Every good teacher follows the method that he finds himself most effective and advantageous ; for what one can do with great power, another feels is something he must not attempt. I shall try to set forth the method adopted by Flint in his teaching and lectures in the Moral Philosophy class, and I understand he followed a similar method when he went to the Theology chair in Edinburgh. Every student was soon aware that the professor was himself intensely interested in the work of the class. And how much that means in the way of securing interest from the students ! We have had professors who seemed to fail, not from want of scholarship, but because they were not themselves greatly concerned in what they were professing to teach. There are professors, too, who seem to expend most of their energy on outside things and interests, and come rather tired and indifferent to the class work. In such cases there is very little likelihood that the students will make much response. It was different with Flint. He showed great physical energy in delivering his lectures, but behind that we all soon saw the man intensely interested in what he was setting forth. He gave us of his best. He never came with his mind pre-occupied with other things. Of course he had other things to attend to than the work of the Moral Philosophy class. He was preparing his great book on the "Philosophy of History." He would be pursuing the studies that in time yielded the notable "Theism" and "Anti-theistic Theories." But that did not mean that his class was to suffer. He always came fresh and powerful to it.

### *A Slave to the Paper*

It might have been said about Flint, what is said about some preachers, that he was "a slave to the paper." When he emerged from his room and took his place at the desk, everything was read in the closest way. He never made a pause to give a passing explanation on a passage in his lecture. The whole was delivered with all his powers of vigorous eloquence. He usually opened with the words, "Take down the following abstract," giving a short synopsis of the lecture for the day, which we could write out *verbatim*. Then came the lecture, delivered in the way I have mentioned, of which we took notes as best we could. It might

be said that the close reading from MS. would prevent the lecturer from getting close to the students. Doubtless, this would be the result with many who adopted his method; but in Flint's case, the vigour of the reading and the intensity of the lecturer made his words go home. I am sure there would be few University classes where the interest and attention were maintained so well as they were in his class. So little did the professor trust himself to speak apart from the MS., that even when announcing the class list at the end of the session the words were read as part of the day's lecture. Very likely he would have said that the method of lecturing he adopted was the one that he felt was the best for him, that if he had adopted another method, he would not have been nearly so effective. And doubtless altogether the result was brilliant.

#### *Contrast with Tulloch*

There was another great professor at St Andrews, to whom reference in this connection may be made, who had a method of lecturing very different from Flint's—I mean, Principal Tulloch at St Mary's. Tulloch gave his lecture, reading it quite slowly, and frequently pausing to give an explanation or add a comment. Those explanations and comments we often felt were most illuminating. And then next day he devoted the first quarter of the hour (getting up one of the class for examination) to a most interesting talk on the lecture of the previous day, specially referring to events and opinions, which we might see recorded in the newspapers, as throwing a vivid light on the theological controversies of a far-back time. Flint and Tulloch were both living and distinguished teachers, and each followed the method that he felt would make his powers work to most advantage.

#### *A Great Scholar and Critic*

Of course, we students were signally impressed (as well we might) by the wide range of Professor Flint's scholarship and his trenchant powers as a critic. It was plain to us all that he was both a great scholar and a great critic. The two things are not always combined in the same individual. What wonder, then, that we should all with one mind acknowledge his intellectual supremacy! An important part of the course dealt with the history of ethical systems, both in this country and abroad. How full and elaborate and fair was the account given of each! The lecturer had not been content with second-hand notices, but had gone himself to the sources. How great the labour he had patiently gone through! If we did not

know then, we came in time to know that Flint had earned an European reputation for scholarship in philosophy and theology. When one reads the "Theism" and the "Anti-theistic Theories" and the "Philosophy of History," and gathers from the Notes the materials that had to be prepared, and the books that had to be examined and mastered, ere his own proper work could begin, one can only admire the conscientious thoroughness and patience of the man. For Flint never dealt in mere vague generalities. When he spoke of men and books, he had the firmest grasp of what he was speaking on. But, in addition to the anxious care with which he described the views of other thinkers, he was very powerful in estimating their value. If his own moral system was not fully developed, he had certain great principles, by means of which he saw clearly the strength or weakness of other systems. His Moral Philosophy course was thoroughly critical. It was this quality in it which made it most delightful and useful to us. The criticism was easy, trenchant, and not infrequently took a humorous form. It will easily be understood that the professor was specially eager and emphatic in pointing out to us the grave defects of the theory of the origin of conscience associated with the names of Mill and Bain. It was with the strongest aversion that he turned from that view; and yet he pointed out to us that, even if conscience had the lowly origin these thinkers ascribed to it, that in no way affected its testimony and authority. Bain's "Moral Science" was used in the class, chiefly for written examinations; but the questions put usually included a direction to us to examine and criticize the views of the author on particular themes. Another great feature of the class was the Essays we were invited to write, and these were expected to be of considerable length. It was understood that the professor did not think any the less of an essay, because it dealt critically with a position he had himself maintained in his lectures. But he must have been frequently highly amused at the temerity and crudeness of these efforts.

#### *His Moral and Spiritual Earnestness*

I have referred to the way in which we all very heartily acknowledged Flint's intellectual supremacy; but we all learned, in addition, to see the moral and spiritual earnestness of the man. It was plain that the moral things that he examined and analysed in his lectures, dominated his life. I remember an eloquent passage in which he impressed on us how important it was, even in the search for truth in high matters of philosophy, to cultivate moral realities and ideals.

In the course of the session I attended, an occasion presented itself which the professor used with great effect in the way of urging us to live on a high moral plane. He had been informed of some "copying" that had taken place at a written examination. On an early day thereafter, the class was startled and impressed when, delivering the words as if they were part of the day's lecture, he referred to the subject, scathingly commented on the lowness of the practice, and very earnestly asked us to make the following of conscience a supreme factor in our lives. In certain matters of university life which emerged at the time, in which it seemed right to the other professors to enforce stern discipline on the students for giving play to too ardent spirits, Flint stood apart from his colleagues, holding that they were making too much of the matter and were dealing with it in a foolish way. He could distinguish (and we thought all the more of him for it) between what was wrong and what was merely boisterous in the life of young men.

#### *The Call of Theology*

The best years of Flint's life were not to be given to philosophy. In due time, theology claimed him, and he obeyed the call. He was shortly to leave the St Andrews Moral Philosophy Chair for the Theology Chair at Edinburgh, as Chalmers had done before him. Some expressed great surprise that Flint should have been willing to pass from the comparative freedom of a philosophy chair to enter the "bonds" which they associated with theology. And yet it was perfectly plain that for him there were no such bonds. He sincerely held theology to be the Queen of the Sciences, and it was in no half-hearted way he entered on his theological work. What he had done in philosophy would give him greater power to deal with the problems that were now to claim his attention. Very many will be the men who will gratefully look back on the influence of Professor Flint as a powerful stimulus and inspiration.

Both the Principal and Mr Stewart Burns refer to Flint's sympathy with the students in the matter of Kate Kennedy's Day, and the offence which he gave to some of his colleagues as a consequence. A student, now a well-known minister of the Church of Scotland, who took part in one of those *Saturnalia* in the early 'seventies, once gave me a graphic and very pleasing account of the Professor's conduct on that occasion.

A great procession of students, some of them mounted on horseback, others following in vehicles of every description, and the larger number on foot, escorted Kate, who along with her cavaliers was decked out in variegated hues of regal splendour, and marched through the ancient city, animated by the exuberance of youth and bent on a boisterous though innocent frolic. The citizens of all ranks and classes viewed the motley procession with the keenest interest, entering heartily into the spirit of the day. But most of the professors' houses that were passed had their windows barred and shuttered and their doors locked against a possible bombardment. As the cavalcade passed along, apt expressions were heard, characterising the learned inmates according to the estimation in which they were held by the students. But when they came to Professor Flint's house they found the blinds up and the door open. The procession stopped, Kate's squire dismounted, handed her gallantly from her steed, and convoyed her with all due deference to the Professor's door. There Flint received them with due respect, invited them into his dining-room, regaled them with wine and cake, placed two sovereigns in the gallant's hand with which the students might drink his health, gave his arm to Kate, escorted her with the profoundest respect to her prancing palfrey, and bade the cavalcade adieu, amid the thundering cheers of the delighted processionists.

Flint cannot be said to have begun, he simply continued, in St Andrews those studious habits which characterised his working career to the very end. He was sixty-nine years of age at the time of his retirement, and he published several books after that period ; so that, if one calculates his working career from the

time when he went to school until his last volume issued from the press, a long roll of nearly seventy years marks his strenuous life, surely a record that has very seldom been surpassed in the lives of literary men. He told me one on occasion that when working at high pressure or, in other words, when living up to his normal habits of study, he contented himself with five hours of sleep each night. He usually began work every morning at half-past six o'clock, and after breakfast, which was at nine o'clock, he continued his work until his class hour at the University. This, both in St Andrews and in Edinburgh, was one o'clock. He then returned to lunch, after which he had an hour or two's walk, this practically being his only exercise. He then had afternoon tea and continued his labours till dinner, when they were again resumed and protracted to beyond midnight.

Even during the summer vacation he allowed himself little or no relaxation; it was then that he wrote his great books. During the winter session he almost wholly confined himself to his class work, giving to his students of his very best, and, if one can judge from the numerous courses of lectures, filling something like eighty large notebooks, that he delivered, his winter studies and labours must have been of an absorbing character. The public can judge of his recess studies by his published works; only his students know of the exacting care and toil with which he composed his class lectures. They are all most carefully written out, many of them without an erasure, thus testifying to patient revision, and composed in a style suitable for publication. On reflecting upon all that he accomplished, one is overwhelmed by the magnitude of his labours and achievements, and yet, on meeting him, he was the least preoccupied of men :



he could throw aside his work and enter into friendly conversation, putting himself without an effort on a level with his guest, and seasoning his table-talk with a rich, dry humour.

There was, however, one indulgence which he did allow himself. From the time he went to Kilconquhar until he left St Andrews he visited the Continent almost every summer, and during the Edinburgh period he spent most of the long vacation in some rural retreat, usually in Scotland. It was in 1863 that he paid his first visit to the Continent, and he was accompanied on that occasion as on every other by his sister. They proved the most companionable of travellers, shared each other's tastes, studied foreign languages together, and exploited all the scenes of interest in the places of their temporary sojourn. Flint, as one might expect, was not an ordinary tourist. While enjoying the changing scenes and fresh and even strange experiences that he met with, he was never without the scholar's interest in all that he saw. The literature, the art, the politics, and the institutions of every town and country which he visited, he studied and understood, thus both enriching his mind and enabling him to deal, with all the greater power, with those theories which bulked so largely in his masterly review of the "Philosophy of History in Europe," many of them capable of being fully understood only in the light of such knowledge as he was thus rapidly acquiring.

One of the most enjoyable hours that I ever spent was in listening to a conversation between him and Professor Hastie. It was in the manse of Wanlockhead, where Flint happened to be my guest for the night. Hastie had travelled quite as much as Flint, and had the same keen and intelligent interest in all

that he saw. The subject of conversation was art, suggested by an engraving of one of Raphael's works that hung on my study wall. This directed the attention of both to the particular picture-gallery in which the original stood, and one after another many of the great picture-galleries of Europe were passed under review and each masterpiece discussed and criticised. I was simply amazed at the wide and accurate knowledge of the two men. One would have thought that art had been their sole study during their lifetime. The wealth of knowledge, the keenness of insight, along with the subtle criticism displayed by both was a marvel to me at the time, and has been a cause of wonder to me ever since. If I did not realise then, I have fully realised since, that I had as my guests in the humble manse of that upland village probably the two greatest scholars, and certainly two of the ablest men in Scotland.

The first visit was to Paris. Flint and his sister lived in a large pension in the Champs Elysées. They repeated their visit the following year. A year or two afterwards they were in Paris again; this time they heard of a better place in the Bois de Boulogne kept by a German. Flockie was their landlord's name, and not the least attractive feature to commend both himself and his rooms was that he was an exceedingly good teacher of music and of languages. At the time of the war he had to leave the country and started a boarding-house in Sydenham near London. Flint was evidently fond of Paris and of the French. There must have been something in his nature that unconsciously drew him more to our friends across the Channel than to their neighbours and rivals across the Rhine. As will afterwards be seen, the closest of his foreign friends were French, and the

very fact of his having devoted the second edition of his "Philosophy of History" to France, and having spent on the revision, expansion, and production of the book such an intensity of labour, can be fully accounted for only by his deep interest in the subject and his sincere regard for the people.

Flint was most active during those visits to France. While he was in Paris he attended lectures at the University, continued his study of French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Spanish, and took advantage of every opportunity of equipping himself for the series of great works that he was then meditating. It was during those days, and far away from St Andrews, bent on pleasure as some might have thought, that he was both training himself and acquiring the material for those masterpieces in philosophy and theology that he afterwards gave to the world. He did not, however, confine his visits to France; a number of his summer vacations were spent in Switzerland and in Germany. It was in 1867, while residing with his sister at Bonn, that he met Professor Robertson Smith, at the time a student. They lodged near to each other and had daily intercourse. They had frequent walks together and formed a friendship which bravely stood the test of the trial which the younger man in a few years had to pass through. We have already noted Robertson Smith's admiration for Flint's preaching, and while Flint had no sympathy for many of the far-fetched theories which threatened to bring the Higher Criticism into disrepute, he had nothing but commendation for the sound scholarship and patient research of a man like Robertson Smith, which threw a new and true light upon many pages, both of the Old and New Testaments.

A number of the letters which he and his sister

wrote are still in existence; they were usually addressed to their mother. Flint invariably writes to her as "my dearest Mother," and almost as invariably concludes "Your loving Son." His letters are brief. He was not at the best much of a correspondent, contenting himself for the most part, especially in his letters home, with a short, although a frequent account of his own and his sister's doings. In 1870 Flint and his sister were in Berlin. They stayed in Schmelzer's Hotel, which was "principally filled with actors, actresses, officers, and soldiers." He writes on the 19th of July to his mother as follows:—

The town is in great excitement owing to the outbreak of war between France and Prussia. I fear it will be a dreadful war, but we shall keep out of the way of it. It is very monstrous, I think, that there should be any war, but both nations seem bent on it. I was present to-day at the opening of Parliament in the Cathedral, but it was so full that it was impossible to hear or see almost anything.

Miss Flint, referring to this time, remembers speaking about a war between France and Germany in the hotel at luncheon time, and that "by dinner time the soldiers all came in with their heads shaved. They said war was declared." Continuing, she remarks:—

Next morning we had a telegram from Currie & Co. saying the last boat for Leith would leave that evening and advising us to start at once. Our clothing was at the laundry and we had to take it wet in the box, just as it was. We had a most hurried departure.

We find the two travellers again on the Continent two years afterwards. In 1872 they went direct by Dover and Calais to Paris, finding the crossing somewhat rough and disagreeable. Their stay in the French capital was short; they arrived there on the 8th June, and by the 19th of the same month they were in Berne in Switzerland. They did not find

that town very attractive, "less to see in it perhaps even than in St Andrews. The view of the country on the other hand is the finest we have ever seen, but we get that in the utmost perfection from our windows." Within ten days they were in Germany, visiting Zürich on the way. They settled this time in Munich. Writing to his mother, the Professor says :—

We succeeded, after a good deal of wandering, in getting lodgings where we now are, in the Maximilian Strasse. We have taken them for a month. The street is the most fashionable in Munich and there is interest enough in looking out at the window. We shall however have to get our dinner and supper where we can, as they do no cooking for us here. Munich is quite a wonderful town; the most beautiful buildings are met with at every step. I have no doubt we shall enjoy it. The place is swarming with soldiers. It is dreadful that a nation should be so given up to war and so full of a mischievous spirit. I hope this military pride will have a fall and the military system get broken up. If Christianity be true and brotherly love and justice themselves not humbug, such must be the case some day.

This was written at the close of the war, and Flint but reflects the impression made upon all travellers to Germany at that time. It was on the 26th of June that he saw the report of Dr Norman Macleod's death in the *Times*, and was "much surprised and very sorry." He thus records his impression of a sermon :—

Last Sunday we heard one of the finest sermons we ever listened to, from a Roman Catholic priest. It was the only very good sermon we had heard since we left home, and much better even than what we hear at home. The English Church sermons we get here are nearly worthless, and so indistinctly spoken, that we can follow the German much better.

They thought they would like a taste of German village life, so by the 31st of July we find them in the neighbourhood of Wurtzburg. They were not impressed. In a joint-letter they thus record their experiences :—

The week here has passed on the whole pleasantly although village life in Germany is rather strange. The work-people here are very poor and more stupid, I think, than with us. We were at a great festival on Monday and very many people were as intoxicated as they could well be with mere beer and the country wine. We were in Wurtzburg on Sunday and spent a pleasant evening with a Professor Hoffmann. There was another Professor there, a Professor Lutterbeck from Giessen, and none of them could speak English. It is very rare to find anyone who has not been in England, who can. The greatest trouble we have had here is the want of cleanliness of the people. Even at the Inn the cooking is so bad in this respect that it is scarcely possible to eat the best food. To-day we shall get a cleanly dressed dinner because we are going in to Wurtzburg.

By the 8th of August they were in Frankfurt *en route* for London and home.

But we must now go back to 1866. St Andrews University was, as I said, recovering from the somewhat backward position into which it had fallen, but its financial resources were still comparatively scanty and afforded little means for expansion and development. Men of power and with a laudable ambition among its professoriate naturally looked for a wider field where their talents would have more scope and their efforts be more generally appreciated. One accordingly finds a certain amount of restlessness among its ablest professors at this time, a commendable desire on their part to secure Chairs in other universities, particularly in those of Glasgow and of Edinburgh, which were larger centres and gave opportunities for usefulness which the two smaller universities, especially that of St Andrews, did not enjoy. Accordingly, when the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow fell vacant by the death of Professor Fleming, Flint offered himself as a candidate. Glasgow was his own University, and Fleming had been his teacher. He had already made his mark, and his chances of success

were considerable. Letters of encouragement were received by him from influential quarters, and he determined to take his chance. The situation, however, was somewhat complicated. Shairp, who had so heartily befriended him in his candidature for his present Chair, was also an applicant for the Glasgow one, and Principal Tulloch had also thoughts of entering the field. Norman Macleod found himself in a difficulty: his interests were divided between Shairp and Flint, and he adopted a neutral position, allowing both to print his former testimonials, but taking no active part in the election. He resolved to make no move, and only to give his opinion if it were asked. Two of Flint's fellow-students were also candidates, John Nichol, Professor of English Literature in Glasgow, and Edward Caird, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and brother of the famous Dr John Caird, Professor of Divinity in, and afterwards Principal of, the University of Glasgow. Dr Caird's influence told, and his brother received the appointment. The new Professor was a strong Hegelian, and soon became the leader of that school in Scotland. He rapidly rose to a position of great eminence as a lecturer and a writer on philosophical subjects, proved one of the most successful and popular professors in the University, and was as much admired by his students as was Flint himself.

Flint's candidature on this occasion was only an incident in his career, and was evidently not taken too seriously by him. But two years afterwards, in 1868, he was induced to stand for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, rendered vacant by the death of Professor Macdougall. Flint, probably remembering the experience of his predecessor, Professor Ferrier, on a similar occasion, was not very eager to submit his name. But strong pressure was brought

to bear upon him, chiefly by Professor Crawford, whom he was afterwards to succeed in the Chair of Divinity, by Sir James Simpson, and others, so that after much hesitation he applied for the vacant Chair. It is impossible in these days to appreciate fully the keen interest that was taken, not only by the friends of the competing candidates, professors and members of the learned professions, but even by the intelligent public, in the election to a professorship in the Scottish universities. Party, ecclesiastical, and personal feeling sometimes ran very high, and numerous letters filled the columns of the daily press, advocating or discounting the claims of the different candidates. For one thing, there are so many professors and lecturers now and such a vast variety of subjects that the public gets somewhat bewildered and the individual is lost in the mass. Further, so many other interests have sprung to the surface of the national life that purely academic persons and concerns do not bulk so largely in men's minds as in former days. In addition, and this perhaps affords the chief explanation, owing to University Reform, the personnel of the electing body has been changed. The University Court, which now bears the responsibility of deciding on the merits of rival candidates for most of the Chairs, is a much more representative and intelligent body than that which had the power in Flint's St Andrews days. It is larger and not so easily "got at," and although for all such appointments intrigue is not invariably absent, its decisions are guided, on the whole, by a disinterested desire to do the best for learning. Many of the Chairs, however, are still in the patronage of the Crown. Politics, in such cases, largely determine the result.

Flint's reputation, even at this early date, stood very high. It is true that he had not, so far, published any-



thing beyond the volume which has been already noticed; but his fame as a Professor in St Andrews had begun to spread, and a course of four lectures on the "Progress of the Philosophy of History," which he delivered in the previous year before the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, made a great impression, gave a proof of his quality, and a foretaste of the works which were afterwards to appear and which were to give him more than a European reputation. It must be admitted that the candidates who offered themselves for the vacant Chair proved formidable rivals. They were Dr Hutchison Stirling, Sir Alexander Grant, Simon S. Laurie, and Flint, all of whom, strange to say, although none of them secured the Chair, afterwards received appointments in Edinburgh University. Sir Alexander Grant became Principal, Dr Hutchison Stirling, Gifford Lecturer, Dr Laurie, Professor of Education, and Flint himself, Professor of Divinity. It is morally certain that unless intrigue had prevailed Flint would have received the appointment. The advertisement of the Chair notified that no testimonials would be received after the 1st of June. At a meeting of the Curators, however, held on the 4th of June, from which two of Flint's strongest supporters were absent, Mr Adam Black, the well-known publisher, begged that time should be allowed to Dr Calderwood, who had not so far offered himself as a candidate, to send in his testimonials, adding that he "had a very high opinion of him, his son being well acquainted with him, and having told him that Sir William Hamilton had selected him, on one occasion, to read his lectures." When it was pointed out that according to the public announcement no testimonials would be received after the 1st of June, Mr Black replied that "this condition should not be insisted on, so as to deprive the University of a candidate." The words

just quoted are from a letter by Mr Milne-Home, one of the Curators, who was present.

It requires no extraordinary amount of intelligence nor a lengthened experience of wire-pulling to understand the full significance of Mr Black's action. Dr Calderwood was a U.P., and the law laid down by the Curators themselves was to be broken in his favour. Here then an important appointment is once more to be decided by sectarian jealousy and ecclesiastical bigotry. It is perfectly certain that Dr Calderwood, to whom no blame attaches in this matter, had he had any reasonable hope of the Chair, would have applied in good time, but he had been so unsuccessful in his candidature for the Glasgow Chair of Moral Philosophy, two years previously, that he calculated that he had no chance for the Edinburgh one against such strong opponents. It was not until after the date for sending in testimonials had expired and under pressure brought to bear upon him by certainly one of the Curators, who along with the other Dissenters in the body thought Calderwood the only presentable candidate belonging to their persuasion, that he hurriedly put his testimonials together, some of them it is understood unsigned, so great was the haste, and applied for the Chair.

Flint, who was informed of this action on the part of the majority of the Curators, wrote the following letter addressed to the Clerk, but on the advice of a friend he withheld it :—

10th June 1868.

SIR,—I have heard that a majority of the Curators of the Edinburgh University at a meeting on the 4th, extended as a favour to Dr Calderwood the time advertised for giving in testimonials of fitness for the Professorship of Moral Philosophy. This has very greatly surprised me and I beg to be allowed, most respectfully, to say, that I cannot but regard it as a breach of faith to the Candidates and an act tending to throw suspicion on the purity of the election.

Although any extension of the time advertised could scarcely be maintained to be necessary, since that had been a period of five months duration, it is not to that extension in itself that I take objection, but to the secrecy and partiality of the exception resolved on, to its being made without a public announcement, so that other candidates could only hear of it by accident, and in favour of a particular candidate, certain to have the advantage of starting with a strong backing without, and even with friends within, the Curatorial Court, and of whom some may entertain the opinion that he is more likely to succeed through a sudden and secret movement being made on his behalf than if his claims were submitted to the light of public criticism as long as those of other candidates have been. My strong conviction that in various respects the Curatorial Court is a weak point in the constitution of the University made me most unwilling to become a candidate even for the honour of the Moral Philosophy Professorship in Edinburgh, and, in fact, my reluctance was in the end overcome only through the pressure of gentlemen connected with the University of a different religious denomination from my own. I became a candidate on the faith that the conditions published by the Curators would be strictly observed, and I think if they be not so observed I, as well as the other able gentlemen, who have been in honourable public competition with me, will have great reason to feel aggrieved.

Flint here expresses dissatisfaction with the constitution of the Curatorial Court, and so well he might, for of its seven members, four represented the Town Council, and only three the University. It was the Town Council members who were responsible for Calderwood's appointment, and they allowed their sectarian prejudices and political bias to overrule whatever judgment they may have had in such matters. The three University representatives, the Lord Justice-General Inglis, Sir James Gibson Craig, and Mr Milne-Home, voted for Flint. The matter so far as Flint is concerned might have ended had it not been for the injudiciousness of Mr Adam Black. Numerous letters appeared, severely criticising the conduct of the Curators, and he was foolish enough to reply, endeavouring to justify his own conduct at

least. But not content with this he took it upon himself to criticise the qualifications of the unsuccessful candidates, particularly of Flint, as compared to those of Dr Calderwood. His letter is most inept. He gave it as his opinion that "Dr Stirling was the most powerful metaphysician among them all." Why then did he not vote for him? He then remarks that the "contest was between Professor Flint and Dr Calderwood"; but if Calderwood was so strong an opponent why was it necessary to smuggle him in as a candidate, secretly, and *after* the last moment? According to Mr Black's own showing, if there had been no intrigue Flint would have got the Chair. He feels it necessary in view of all this to justify his conduct, and he does so by declaring that the "Professor of St Andrews, though highly appreciated by his colleagues, had given the jury no evidence that he is known in England or abroad." Well, if Mr Black had waited a few years that defect would have been remedied, for by that time Flint, of all the candidates, was the best known abroad. Besides, are not Scotsmen as good judges of the qualifications best suited for a Chair as Englishmen or Frenchmen? And then he maladroitly reveals the inwardness of the whole movement by affirming that "as to Professor Flint's recommenders there may be three or four Dissenters, but so far as I know them I see only one."

Mr Black's letter appeared on June 23rd, and in opening his newspaper on the morning of June 29th he must have been very sorry indeed that he ever wrote it; for it contained a reply from Flint which was absolutely crushing.

LAWPARK, ST ANDREWS,  
June 26th, 1868.

SIR,—I greatly regret that the letter of Mr Adam Black in the *Courant* of Tuesday, and the *Scotsman* of Wednesday has made it impossible for me to remain, as I would gladly have done, entirel

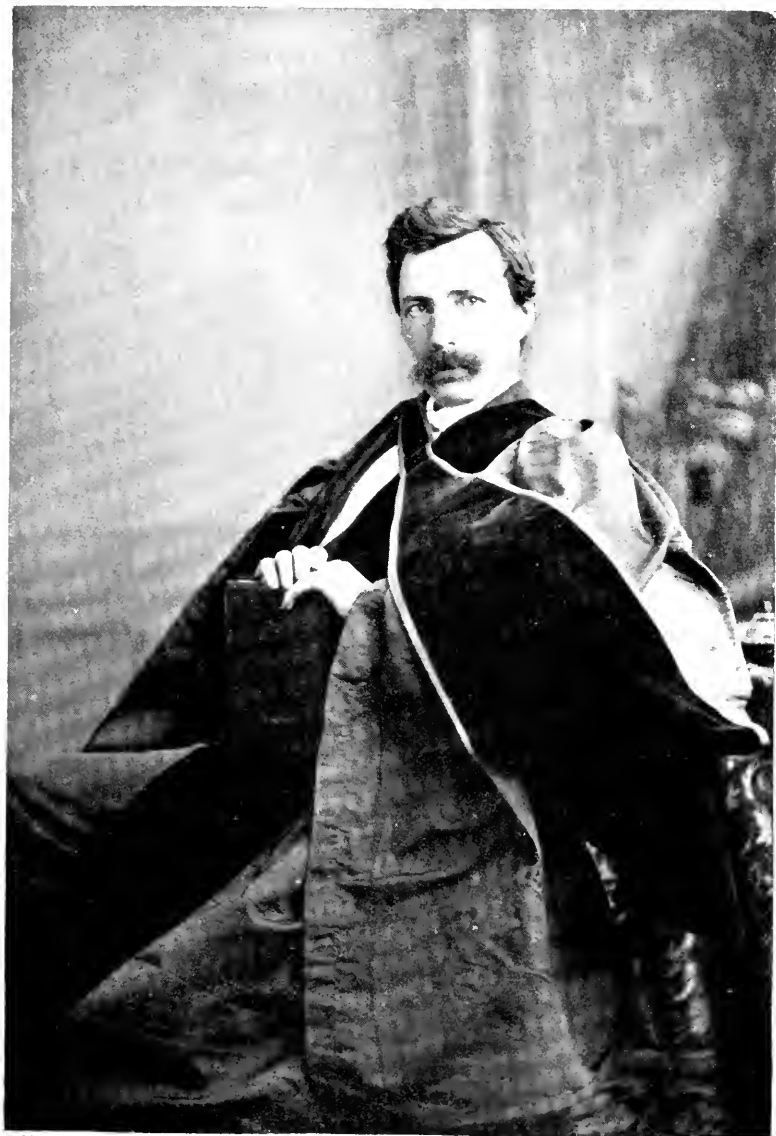


Photo. Rodgers, St. Andrew.

PROFESSOR FLINT

TAKEN THE DAY HE LEFT ST. ANDREWS, 1870



silent on the recent election to the Moral Philosophy Chair in Edinburgh. I am not aware that a University patron ever before felt it his duty to criticise and depreciate after an election the claims of an unsuccessful candidate, merely to repel certain personally annoying anonymous newspaper attacks; and I am sorry to have to inform Mr Black that in doing so—in sensitiveness as to his own reputation—wantonly trying after his function of judgeship was completely over, to injure that of another, who had given him no provocation and done him no wrong—he has forgotten the first principles of gentlemanly feeling and behaviour.

Flint then traverses the ground already covered by us, characterising, as it deserved, the manœuvring which brought Dr Calderwood into the field and the Curators' breach of faith with the candidates, the public, and any others who might aspire to the Chair, by secretly extending the time-limit for receiving applications, to Dr Calderwood alone. He then inserts in his reply the letter of 10th June already quoted, which he wrote but was advised not to send to the Clerk of the Court, and then continues:—

Although Mr Black has compared my claims in the most unfair and unbecoming way with those of Dr Calderwood, that is a point on which I can only touch. It would not be decorous of me to say anything against Dr Calderwood and still less to advocate any superiority of claim which I may suppose myself to possess. Mr Black has me at an advantage there of which I cannot but think that he has ungenerously made the most. I may, however, even in my position, say that the duty of the Curators was not merely to judge according to testimonials but also, to the best of their ability, to test testimonials, and that by their act of 4th June the Curators of the Town Council deliberately shut out the light in which alone they could test the testimonials of the candidate for whom they voted; that the principle on which I proceeded in obtaining testimonials was to ask them from no one, the worth of whose testimony the Curators could not ascertain if they wished to do so, and from no one who had not had very ample means of knowing me; that the distance between St Andrews and Edinburgh is not so great, nor the position of a professor of Philosophy in St Andrews so very obscure, but that if I had been certain the Curators had been all

anxious to do their duty I might have dispensed with printing certificates altogether ; that if strength and relevancy from competent persons are the qualities which should weigh in certificates mine will not be found wanting ; that if foreign testimonials should decide, those of Dr Stirling and Mr Laurie are much more emphatic and definite than those of Dr Calderwood ; and that any man that writes a book, good, bad or indifferent, may get in return for the courteous presentation of his volume, from all parts of the world, and all sorts of men, compliments similar to, and perhaps even stronger than, those on which Mr Black and others have laid so much stress. I say nothing as to whether the compliments paid to Dr Calderwood on his book are deserved or not, but I do say that the importance attached to them by Mr Black and Bailies Fyfe and Russell is preposterous, and that if Chairs are henceforth to be decided on the ground on which these gentlemen profess to have decided that of Moral Philosophy, some of the ablest professors in Scotland can have no chance against any smart young graduate from Oxford or Cambridge, or anybody who has written a book, however mediocre.

The fairness with which Mr Black has judged between Dr Calderwood and me may be inferred from his insinuation that I have only one certificate not from an Established Churchman when, although certainly not brought together with any reference to ecclesiastical denominations, there are 4 from Free Churchmen, 2 from Episcopalians, and one from a Baptist ; in his putting Dr Calderwood's *reading* of lectures on a level of my *writing* of them, and omitting all reference to political economy, which I have taught for three years and with which, so far as I am aware, Dr Calderwood professes no acquaintance. This is a theme however which I gladly leave and on which not even such provocation as that of Mr Black will again induce me to speak. With Mr Black I am now done, although not from want of having more to say. No Curator has so disappointed me as he. The conduct of no other Curator has left in my mind so unfavourable an impression. The only good which can come out of the transaction on the 18th is the withdrawal from the Town Council of the power of exercising University patronage. It is not a right, it is scarcely a decent, thing, that men of the social status and degree of education of two at least of the representatives of the Town Council should have anything to do with the appointment of professors, and only when narrowness is the measure of breadth and darkness comprehends light will such men judge aright as to the fittest teacher of what is an essentially liberal and catholic thing



—“divine Philosophy.” Should the late election contribute in any degree to the downfall of the Town Council *régime* any vexation it may have caused me and those similarly treated will not have been quite useless.

Most readers of Flint's letter will cordially endorse the opinion of his friend Professor Crawford. “Your letter is so admirable and effective that no one can possibly take exception to it, and I don't think old Adam will venture to make any rejoinder.”

Nor did he.

## CHAPTER VII

### “THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY”

THE days of pluralities in the Church of Scotland were not quite over when Flint received his appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews University. He had, indeed, no intention of taking advantage of any liberty that might be allowed to him in this respect, but he did not feel under the necessity of giving up the church and manse of Kilconquhar until he could make satisfactory arrangements for his residence at St Andrews. He could not, for one thing, secure a suitable house until May of 1865, and he and his sister took up lodgings in No. 9 Bell Street. His father and mother remained at Kilconquhar Manse, and Flint provided a licentiate for the Sunday services and pastoral duties. Once a month, however, on the Friday, Flint and his sister walked the eleven miles over the hills to his old parish, and remained until the Monday, walking back again in time for his class at one o'clock. On these visits he invariably preached in Kilconquhar Church. It was not till the month of August that the household finally settled at St Andrews. Flint's first house was Law Park, an old house finely situated on the Mount Melville Road. He afterwards removed to Eden View, looking over to the railway station, and finally to Abbey Park Villa, a large house in Abbey Walk.

The young Professor, after the first year or two of arduous toil was over, had his class lectures well in hand, and he began to turn his attention to certain

of those literary projects which he had long cherished. In a letter to him, of date August 30, 1866, from Dr John Muir, we read: “I am very much interested to receive the sketch which your letter contains of your philosophical projects. As regards your wish to obtain information from me on points connected with the moral ideas of the Indians, I can only say that, so far from regarding it as a liberty on your part to propose to ask me questions, I shall esteem it, not merely as a compliment to be asked, but what is far better, as a privilege to have it in my power to aid any scholar like yourself who is, as I consider, wisely and with a proper breadth of view endeavouring to illustrate his subject by a reference to a literature so little known as that of India.” Again, in a testimonial written for him in connection with the Edinburgh Chair by his old student friend Dr John Kerr, we find the following paragraph: “A considerable portion of the time that has intervened since he became professor in St Andrews has been directed to the composition of what will prove to be

most valuable work on the ‘Relations of the Sciences to one another, to Philosophy, Morality and Religion,’ advertised more than a year ago, but which unfortunately cannot appear in time to be available for his present candidature.” Here we find Flint harking back on his first love, the subject set as an essay in the Natural Philosophy Class by Lord Kelvin. What was first in thought became last in fact; his work on the Classification of the Sciences was to be the final product of his pen.

The subject, however, on which he was to write his first important and, as some still think, his greatest work was determined by an invitation which he received in 1866 to lecture at the Philosophical Insti-

tution, Edinburgh. Whatever may be the position assigned to those who appear before the members of that body at the present day, there can be no doubt of the eminence of the lecturers and the honour that was attached to the position at the time when Flint delivered his lectures. Many of the most distinguished names in science, philosophy, politics, art, and theology are associated with that institution, and to receive an invitation to lecture before it was a high honour in itself. From 1867 to 1874, the St Andrews professor delivered twelve lectures at the Philosophical Institution: four in February 1867 on the "Progress of the Philosophy of History," two in December 1868 on the "Philosophy of History in its Later Developments," two again in January and February of 1871 on "Thomas Hobbes," other two in February 1873 on "Spinoza," and two in February of 1874 on "John Stuart Mill." He was pressed to deliver a lecture on Hume in 1876, but the new duties of the Edinburgh Chair and the work involved in the preparation and delivery of his Baird Lectures compelled him to decline the invitation.

The course of lectures which he was thus asked and agreed to deliver helped him to make up his mind on the subject of what afterwards became his first important book. It is perfectly clear from the preface to the "Philosophy of History" of 1874 that he had even then conceived a scheme of writing what, when completed, was to be a System of Natural Theology. He says: "The work was begun and has been carried on mainly as an introduction to other studies which have longer occupied my thoughts." And what these studies were he tells us in his "Agnosticism," which was published in 1903, where he remarks: "The present volume is part of what was many years ago

announced as meant to form when completed a System of Natural Theology which would deal with four great problems :—(1) To exhibit what evidence there is for belief in the existence of God ; (2) To refute anti-theistic theories ; (3) To delineate the character of God as disclosed by nature, mind, and history, and to show what light the truth thus ascertained casts upon man’s duty and destiny ; and (4) To trace the rise and development of the idea of God and the history of theistic speculation.” He did not live to finish this vast undertaking although, if he had been able to deliver his Gifford Lectures, he would have done much to complete the scheme, for they were to deal with the last section. The first and second parts he did indeed amply treat of, and the third may be said to have been attempted in his two great books on the “Philosophy of History” and “Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum.” Hence the volume which was advertised as early as 1867 on the “Relations of the Sciences” may also be regarded as a preparation for the projected series of works that were to complete his great scheme, and, in a note on page 22 of the 1893 edition of the “Philosophy of History,” he would seem to have been looking forward to dealing with one of the other problems involved in (3) when he says : “That he intended to expand and supplement the paper which he published in the *Princeton Review*, November 1878, on ‘Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum,’” and his two articles on the “Classification of the Sciences,” published in the *Presbyterian Review*, in July 1885 and July 1886, so as to form an Introduction to Philosophy. All this must be regarded as a preparation for dealing with the third problem of Natural Theology, the delineation of the character of God as disclosed by nature, mind, and history. As

he himself says elsewhere, once all the attempts made to trace the course of human thought in its endeavours to explain history had been reviewed and criticised, "the general survey may be comparatively brief."

In dealing with the other three problems of Natural Religion, theism and anti-theistic theories, and the rise and development of the idea of God, little spadework had to be done; the ground had already been amply prepared by an army of toilers. But the third problem was comparatively speaking a new one, and in one of its departments, that of history, Flint himself was a pioneer. Hence it was that he felt himself under the necessity of opening up the subject in his two elaborate works on the "Philosophy of History," and he rightly felt that it was only after what had been attempted in this field had been historically treated that any valuable results could be arrived at. Accordingly it may be said that in a sense he completed his great scheme, for enough can be gathered from his two works on the "Philosophy of History" to show what his conception of the character of God was as derived from history; from his volume on "*Scientia Scientiarum*," to exhibit his conception of the character of God as disclosed by nature; and from his "Agnosticism" and other works that deal with, or touch on, purely philosophical matters, what were his views of the character of God as disclosed by mind, and to show what light the truths thus ascertained cast on man's duty and destiny. His article on Theism in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* gives a full, illuminating, and very significant forecast of what would have formed the subject of his Gifford Lectures—the idea of God or the philosophy of Religion. It seems to me that it would be a comparatively easy task, and one well worth doing, to give, even though

in a brief form, Flint's treatment of the four great problems of Natural Theology. It is perfectly clear that during the first years of his professorship at St Andrews, if not even at an earlier date, he conceived this grand scheme, and resolved to make the completion of it his life's work. Principal Tulloch accordingly was not far wrong when he remarked in his letter to Dr Mitchell regarding Flint's candidature for the St Andrews Chair, that he “questioned whether theology in some of its departments was not, rather than philosophy, his appropriate field.” Accordingly when he was invited to lecture at the Philosophical Institution it was simply a matter of choice with him as to which of the great problems that he had already been revolving in his mind he would deal with now. Influenced, no doubt, by the nature of the Institution, which was philosophical, and the character of the lectures which he would be expected to deliver, he selected for discussion the problem which he states as third in his scheme, or at all events one section or aspect of it; but in place of dealing with the philosophy of history itself he feels bound to do that spade-work to which we have already referred, and to break the ground in such a way as to make it possible for a philosophy of history to be written.

In the testimonial which Principal Shairp gave to Flint for the St Andrews Chair he remarked that “his mind is of that solid and penetrative cast which has led him naturally to the study of the greatest authors and the deepest problems of thought.” He was thus in the first instance but following the lead of his own nature in conceiving the series of great studies which we have now briefly sketched. At

the same time he manifested a practical instinct, for the whole intellectual movement of the times was towards a questioning if not an uprooting of the fundamental beliefs with which natural theology deals. In religion, in philosophy, and particularly in science, there was great unrest, and the leaders in the different departments of man's intellectual activity were reaching forward towards positions which seemed to threaten not only the ancient dogmas of the Christian faith, but the very basis of man's belief in those primal verities which make life for earnest-minded men thinkable and possible. Hence Flint did not concern himself with merely writing apologies for the Christian religion; he went, if it may be so said, to a foundation deeper even than that, and upon which it rests. He determined to prove not only the possibility but the necessity of religion itself, and to demonstrate the existence of God and the belief in a divine order in nature, in history, and in man's own life. To accomplish this he felt bound to cover the whole field of natural religion, and if the continuity of his professorial life had not been broken by his thoughts and energies being directed to a new field of study through his appointment to the Edinburgh Chair, there can be little doubt but that he would have realised his purpose. As it is we must be thankful for what he did accomplish, and even his uncompleted task points to the way in which succeeding labourers, animated by his spirit, should walk, and to the goal which they should strive to reach.

It says not a little for the directors of the Philosophical Institution that they had the courage to select a lecturer who was to give in rapid succession four long addresses on a purely philosophical subject; it says also much for the Edinburgh public of that



day that they should have attended in such large numbers, and not the least credit is due to the lecturer himself that he was able to attract audiences that steadily grew in size and to hold their attention riveted to the very end. Indeed, so great was the success of the four lectures which he delivered in the spring of 1867 on the “Progress of the Philosophy of History” that he was invited back the following year to give a course on the same subject, the particular theme which he chose on this occasion being the “Philosophy of History in its later developments.” Flint, however, it ought to be remembered, was no ordinary lecturer. He was as strong and vigorous on the platform as he was in the pulpit. On looking at him one would think that he was the very last man to make an impression; his pale face, spare form, and shy appearance betokened anything but the orator, and yet when he stood up and faced his audience he spoke out with a clearness and force that commanded instant attention; and the evident mastery of his subject, the clear marshalling of his arguments, his wealth of knowledge, lightly handled, his intellectual earnestness, and the force and vigour of his delivery made him a speaker worth listening to. His command over his audience, from first to last, was complete. At the beginning of the fifth lecture, which was on the systems of Comte and Hegel, he apologetically and humorously prefaced his address with the remark, “Though he would require to tax their patience a little, yet as he understood even the ladies of Edinburgh were rapidly becoming metaphysicians, perhaps they might be able to endure an hour’s speech about Comte and Hegel. It is clear that his audience, and “even the ladies,” were able not only to endure but to enjoy the lecture; for one who was present

says that, "the address, though treating from first to last of metaphysics, was exceedingly interesting throughout, though it occupied an hour and a half in delivery."

It is not necessary to give more than a brief account of these six lectures. They traverse much of the ground that was afterwards so ably treated in his book, for which indeed they paved the way and were a preparation. They dealt, perhaps more than the first edition of his "Philosophy of History" does, with the question, whether history should be regarded as a subject of a science or a philosophy, and he would seem to have devoted considerable attention, in one of them at least, to Vico and the philosophy of history in Italy. But apart from that there is little if anything in them which may not be found in his published works. Indeed, in the preface of the 1874 edition of his "Philosophy of History" he says: "The substance, or perhaps I should rather say the germ, of the following work was delivered in two series of lectures at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. With the exception of some pages on Comte and Hegel little has been directly transferred from the lectures to the book." That may be, but they cover most of the ground and so put him in a position for handling his subject in the masterly fashion which was soon to bring him distinction and fame.

It was in June of 1874 that the book was published by William Blackwood & Sons, who were the publishers of all his works, with the exception of the volume on Socialism. As early, however, as 1867, the date of his first course of lectures at the Philosophical Institution, Flint had the subject well in hand; indeed, as we have seen, it had attracted him as a student, and

indications of its absorbing interest to him occur in his first book, “Christ’s Kingdom on Earth.” Accordingly he must have spent something like ten years on the preparation of the volume, and could thus apply to himself the motto from Shakespeare which he prefixed to it: “Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.” It was thus that he produced all his books. Nothing left his hands until it had received all the patient thought and care that he could give it. “Thorough” is the word that might be inscribed over everything that he wrote. The volume has long been out of print. In the preface to the 1893 edition he says that at that time it had been “out of print for nearly a dozen years, during which it has only been known through the excellent French translation of the late M. Carrau.” It can now be procured only in the public libraries or seen in private collections; so difficult is it to obtain a copy that an advertisement which I made for one a year ago failed to receive any reply. In these circumstances, if for no other, it is advisable to give a brief sketch of its contents, character, and scope.

It bears three titles: first, “The Philosophy of History”; secondly, “The Philosophy of History in Europe, Volume I.”; and thirdly, “The Philosophy of History in France and Germany.” Now these three titles, it seems to me, give a brief but complete description of the work as he conceived it and intended to finish it. He proposed to wind up his elaborate study by stating his own philosophy of history, and he further proposed to deal not only with the efforts that had been made to explain the laws of order that exist in human affairs, in Italy and in Britain as well as in France and Germany; and thus to give a complete sketch of the philosophy of history

in Europe. But the unity and completeness of his plan remained unrealised, and all that we have is, as Dr Wenley remarks, "a monumental torso." The book itself consists of three parts. First, the Introduction, extending to sixty-two pages, then Book I., which deals with France, covering 268 pages, and Book II., which deals with Germany, and which runs into 276 pages. He states in the opening sentences of the Introduction the aim of the work. "One result of this inquiry," he says,

should be to afford a clearer view of what the philosophy or science of history is than any definition or general description could do. I mean to pass in review the more famous of the many attempts which have been made within the last century and a half to discover the laws of order which regulate human affairs, and to indicate what appear to me their chief merits and defects; and if I accomplish with the slightest measure of success my purpose, the conceptions of the reader as to the character, scope, and the method of the philosophy of history, as to what it ought to do and how it ought to do it, should be constantly increasing in definiteness and accuracy as inquiry itself advances.

He declines to give a definition of his subject or even a precise description of it, believing that it would be an error to limit the scope of his undertaking by too narrow a view of the laws of order. He maintains that it would be a mistake to apply to the moral world the ideas of law and order which are applicable to physical nature "without any modifications corresponding to the essential differences which distinguish mind from matter." He contends that the truest course to follow is to review in detail the attempts that have been made to form a philosophy of history, and that it is only after this task has been honestly completed that any definition of the subject is possible. Having thus made his purpose plain, he discusses the origin of the

philosophy of history and the gropings after a perception of law and order in human affairs to be found in the literature of India, Greece, and Rome. He then deals with its manifestation among the Jews and in Christianity, singling out for special distinction St Augustine’s “*De Civitate Dei*,” declaring that “it contains a nearer approximation to a philosophy of “history than will be found in any other patristic or scholastic treatise,” and he sums up his review of it in the following words, which give an indication, as Dr Wenley also notes, of what his own views on the philosophy of history really were :—

Still, with all its defects it was a vast improvement on previous doctrines, or rather, on the previous want of a doctrine. The ultimate and greatest triumph of historical philosophy will really be neither more nor less than the full proof of providence, the discovery by the processes of scientific method of the divine plan which unites and harmonises the apparent chaos of human actions contained in history into a cosmos ; and the first attempts, however feeble, to trace such a plan, marked the dawn of a new era of thought.

The “processes of scientific method,” which, he declares, must be followed in this field of study, he states in the following sentences :—

Sciences differ greatly from one another as to the number of facts which they require for a foundation, as to the number of observations they must have to start from. In some, the phenomena are comparatively simple and obviously bound together by laws productive of order and harmony ; in others the phenomena are comparatively complex, and the connections among them exceedingly latent, abstruse, difficult to trace. Astronomy is a science of the former kind—geology of the latter ; and that is one reason, and not the least powerful reason, why the one is so ancient and the other so recent. But no science has facts so complex, so diverse, so mobile, so intermingled to deal with as that of human history—manifestly none needs the same multiplicity of observations, so extensive and varied a range of experience.

He then takes up and deals at considerable length

with the other factor in "the scientific processes." In the quotation just made he insists upon facts, but he immediately remarks that facts are meaningless without ideas and that the "growth of history towards a scientific stage has been partly the consequence and partly the cause of the growth of certain ideas, without a firm and comprehensive grasp of which no philosophical study or conception of history is possible. . . . Without facts no ideas. Without ideas virtually no facts; nothing that is a fact for thought; nothing that the mind can make use of." The most important of the ideas that he thus declares to be necessary for a philosophic conception of history are those of Progress, Unity, and Freedom, and the remainder of the Introduction is taken up with a discussion of them.

Book I. deals with France. The philosophy of history in that country dates from the second half of the sixteenth century with the publication of John Bodin's "Republic" in 1567. Flint declares him to have been the first French author who took a philosophical survey of history. After touching on the influence of Cartesianism on historical study he passes on to a discussion of Bossuet and Montesquieu, Turgot, Voltaire, and Condorcet. He then takes up the Theocratic School, which was a reaction against the various democratic stages of heroism and horror which marked the Revolution, and under it expounds and criticises the theories of De Maistre, De Bonald, De Lamennais, De Eckstein, and Ballanche. He next deals with Saint-Simon and Fourier, the chief representatives of the Socialistic School, and passes on to treat at considerable length the party of Compromise, whose leading thinkers were Cousin and Jouffroy. This party, whose philosophy was eclectic, had its counterpart or rather complement in a band of doctrinaires whose chief representative

was Guizot. The Socialistic School had further exponents in Bouchez and Leroux. He then comes to the founder of the Positive School, Auguste Comte, and finally to the Democratic School of Michelet and Quinet; of De Tocqueville, Odysse-Barot, De Ferron, and Laurent.

In Book II., which deals with Germany, Flint had not the same historical landmarks to guide him. In the third of his first course of lectures at the Philosophical Institution he drew a contrast between the distinctive features of the French and German intellect, as manifested in their respective philosophies of history. In France, he said, the philosophy of history is subordinated to politics, in Germany to religion and metaphysics. This accounts for the natural rise of the different schools of thought in France, whose philosophy of history has just been sketched. We see how the one sprang up after the other in response to the political movements of the time, so that, in a sense, the treatment of French thought embraces a discussion of French politics and French history. There is thus a sequence in the different chapters of the portion of Flint's book which deals with France that makes it more or less a united whole. But when he comes to Book II., which deals with Germany, he has not the same historical data to guide him, and the chapters fall more into the nature of separate studies. It is not so easy to trace the connection between the movements in theology and metaphysics as in history, at all events they do not give the same clear guidance, and this explains the difference so far as apparent continuity is concerned between the respective chapters of the two main parts of the volume.

After discussing the progress of historiography in Germany, he treats in twelve chapters the principal

attempts which had been made in that country philosophically to comprehend and explain the history of mankind. He begins by grouping together Leibnitz, Iselin, Wegelin, Schlözer, and Von Müller, in a chapter which bears the title "The Rise of Historical Philosophy in Germany." As Leibnitz flourished towards the close of the seventeenth century the philosophy of history in Germany was nearly a hundred years later in making its appearance than in France. He then devotes a chapter to Lessing and another to Herder. Kant and Schiller he groups together, but separate treatment is given to Fichte and Schelling. The school of Schelling is then discussed, its chief representatives being Stutzmann, Steffens, and Goerres. This is followed by three chapters which deal respectively with Frederick Schlegel, Krause, and Hegel. He then returns to Schelling in his later development, in sympathy with which were the works of Bunsen and Lasaulx, and concludes with a discussion and criticism of the theories of Laxarus, Lotze, and Hermann.

This sketch gives but a very slight impression or conception of the extent, nature, and character of the book. It was the first attempt of the kind, and it was universally admitted that it was a noble performance, and that it handled the subject in a masterly fashion. Philosophies of history, as the book itself sufficiently indicated, existed in abundance, but a history of them enriched by luminous exposition and acute and sound criticism had not made its appearance until the publication of Flint's volume. With the exception of Ferrier no occupant of the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of St Andrews had ever produced so striking a book, and certainly none of his predecessors had ever accomplished anything which displayed such



extensive and profound scholarship. The publication raised him at once to a foremost place among the thinkers and writers of his native land. All the leading journals devoted unusual space to reviews of the book, and from their number two may be selected for special reference, both on account of the representative character of the journals themselves and of the ability of the authors.

Mr John Morley, now Lord Morley of Blackburn, devoted a whole article to Flint's book in the September number of the *Fortnightly Review*, of which he was at the time the editor. It will be enough in the meantime to give his general estimate of the volume, and I shall refer later on to a few of his criticisms. He begins by remarking :

Professor Flint shows that he has some very considerable qualifications for the task which he has undertaken. First and foremost he has the gift of being candid and fair in the highest degree. We scarcely know a writer who, in dealing with a subject so overflowing with temptations and opportunities of passion or partisanship, manifests such thorough justice of intellect. He passes in review a great many opinions from which he strongly dissents and a great many thinkers of whom he cannot manifestly approve. Yet we cannot mark a sentence, where this dissent leads him ever so little beyond the strict relevances of the matter in hand, nor a sentence where a disapproval carries him further than the strict limits to which the substance of the complaint fairly allows him to go. Of course this is only saying that Mr Flint is honest and deals with his subject in a serious spirit. But nobody who knows and, perhaps, we may say, nobody who has set himself to write a book involving much discussion of other people's opinions will think honesty and seriousness common-place merits. Most writers wish and mean to be honest, but to fulfil the wish an amount of moral and intellectual discipline is needed to which only the few know how to submit themselves. One cannot love truth by merely willing it in a general way. In the second place, Mr Flint has acquired the wide learning which his subject demanded. His reading has been most extensive, and the list of his authors, so far as France and Germany is concerned,

is remarkably complete. The union of so much industry with such evident fairness of intention gives his book a distinct and highly honourable attraction even to those who may wish that its scheme had not been quite what it is.

The second of the two notices is one that appeared in the *Spectator* in November, and is believed to have been written by Sir Frederick Pollock, at the time a young barrister in London. Like Lord Morley's article it deals critically with Flint's book and raises objections not unlike those that appeared two months previously in the *Fortnightly*. But the writer in his opening sentences pays the following handsome tribute to Flint and his volume:—

Professor Flint's book is at once very able and unsatisfactory. It is so thorough and laborious that it might have been written at a German instead of a Scotch University. We congratulate the students of the University of St Andrews on the learning and the ability displayed by the Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy. He reviews the attempts that have been made in France and Germany to explain philosophically the history of mankind, and we doubt whether England contains half-a-dozen men qualified to discuss with a knowledge equal to his own the judgments which he passes on the crowd of eminent or great thinkers who have striven to trace the laws that run through history. He seems to have read everything of the slightest importance that has been written on his subject in Germany and France. He has certainly read much that is as destitute of importance as the gossip of a watering-place, and he is almost painfully anxious to do justice to the meanest of the toilers that come in his way. Nor is his critical power less than his industry. A keen and independent critic with a Calvinistic eagerness to let no pretension pass unchallenged, he is most effective when he is most controversial.

Shoals of letters came pouring in upon him from eminent friends and distinguished contemporaries, but the following from George Eliot may be regarded as of the greatest interest. It was written in August 1874, and addressed from Redhill to Mr Blackwood. One

questions, if when she wrote it, she had reached that passage in the book which speaks somewhat slightly of George Henry Lewes ; it is in the introduction to the discussion of the views of M. Cousin, and is as follows : “ He (Cousin) has himself described in the famous Prefaces to the two first editions of his ‘ Fragments ’ the successive steps in his philosophical career, with a candour which should have rendered impossible such a caricature of it as Mr Lewes has thought proper to give in his ‘ History of Philosophy.’ ” But even though she had read thus far she was broad-minded enough to appreciate the book. This is what she says :

“ We are enjoying this lovely retreat. I am reading aloud to Lewes the work you so kindly sent us of the St Andrews Professor, which we both admire for its thorough fairness from his point of view and masterly grasp of the subject.”

But what must have delighted Flint most was the recognition that his book received at the hands of distinguished scholars and thinkers on the Continent. It raised him at once to an international position. Such eminent Germans as H. Ulrichi of Halle and R. W. Roscher of Leipzig ; such representative Frenchmen as F. Tillon and Paul Janet of Paris ; such learned Dutchmen as Van der Wyck of Groningen and Wynne of Utrecht ; such a thoughtful Italian as Diodato Liroy of Naples ; and such a scholarly Spaniard as A. Moret all recognised the importance of the work. Reviews of it appeared in the leading philosophical and historical journals on the Continent—the most important being one in the *Critique Philosophique* by Pillon, another in the *Tigdspeigel* by Dr Wynne, and a third in the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* by Ulrichi,—a translation of it in two volumes was made into French, and another into

German was projected, but owing to the publishers failing to come to an agreement, the proposal had to be dropped.

Reference has already been made to Flint's sympathy with the French mind and nation, and to the contrast which marked his attitude to German thinkers. The difference, it seems to me, can be easily accounted for. He approved, to begin with, of the inductive method which characterises, for the most part, French thinking. He had a great reverence for facts, and his own scientific spirit led him to place stress on experience and observation, and he found the qualities which he thus admired to be more prominent in the works of French than of German writers. He had also an equal reverence for ideas, and held firmly to the belief that no progress can be made in science or philosophy without speculation. But he always insisted upon testing ideas by facts. He had no sympathy with those who, like Hegel, start with an idea and by a process of dialectic spin a theory of the universe without reference to facts or, at all events, without an honest attempt to see whether the idea can account for and explain all the facts; and who, if a sacrifice has to be made, would prefer that it should be the facts rather than the idea. It is in this way that much of his adverse criticism of many of the German philosophers can be accounted for, and it also explains his more sympathetic attitude towards French thought. The personal equation, of course, has to be taken into account. He was by nature more drawn to French than to German character, and his experience of what may, without any disrespect, be called German "bumptiousness," which was fed and fostered by the war and the triumph over France, displeased him. He found that it coloured even their philosophical works, and it roused a certain intellectual pugnacity in him

which found expression in not a few vigorous and telling onslaughts on theories which he believed to be unsound.

That this difference was perceived by the two nations themselves is made sufficiently plain by interesting letters which Flint's book drew from a distinguished German and an equally distinguished Frenchman. The last of the German writers dealt with by Flint is Conrad Hermann of Leipzig, who is criticised, and not very sympathetically, as a Hegelian. Hermann, who must have been an uncommonly fine fellow, takes the criticism quite kindly, and sends to Flint the following letter :—

LEIPZIG, 28th June 1874.

. . . Although you are not always of my opinion, still I am very willing to recognise the objective and unprejudiced criticism of my views. No writer can expect that his way of grasping the subject should be shared simply by others, and it is enough if at least some aspects of it are recognised and appreciated.

Flint in his closing sentences on Hermann, which are indeed the concluding sentences in his book, makes the following somewhat provocative remark : “ But he (Hermann) seems to me to have at times sacrificed truth and justice to what at present passes current in Germany for patriotism—a Teutomania far more rooted and widespread in Germany than Chauvinism in France, and not less irrational or pernicious.” To this Hermann replies in the same letter :

I am by no means so “ fanatic a Teuton ” that I do not know how to appreciate the help of other races and especially that of Englishmen and Scotsmen. It may appear to you at present as if German patriotism was somewhat too boisterous, but that is easily explicable. We have only lately found ourselves again in the position and with the character of a nation. I shall much enjoy the fuller reading of your book, and, as regards the unprejudiced search after truth, I believe that the British and the German minds will unite as friends and be mutually complimentary.

The distinguished Frenchman who detected and warmly appreciated Flint's sympathy for his nation was Paul Janet, a well-known philosophical writer whom Flint places in the Eclectic School. He also speaks highly of him in his "Theism," where he characterises his "Les Causes Finales" as containing the "ablest and most adequate discussion of the various problems suggested by the indications which organic nature gives of design that has yet appeared." Flint also wrote a preface to the English translation of this work by the Rev. W. Affleck.

PARIS, *December 12th*, 1874.

I have read your work with great interest and request your permission to send you in return a volume of much less importance but bearing on your subject—"The Philosophy of the French Revolution." It has, as you will see, certain points of contrast with your studies. I am especially charmed with the share you give in your book to French writers on the philosophy of history. I await with impatience the continuation of your fine work, and I hope you will count me among those for whom it is destined.

This letter must have been very pleasing to Flint. It was the first recognition of him in France. It also indicates what may have partly led to it; a certain French predilection which would be welcome at a time when they were very much down on their luck.

Such were the opinions of a German and a Frenchman, each representing the best minds in his own country. It may be interesting to learn what a distinguished Dutchman thought of Flint's book, and no man whose opinion would be more respected at the time, and even still, could be found than Dr Van der Wyck, Professor of Philosophy at Groningen, and later at Utrecht. He is an amiable and able man, one of the few of Flint's foreign contemporaries and correspondents still living, and one who has had considerable influence

in Dutch philosophy. In a letter which he sent to me a year ago he refers to his old friendship with Flint which remained unbroken in spite of some differences. He says, “ I remember very well that Flint and I were vehement antagonists in the days of the South African War, as I was a Pro-Boer, and Flint tried to justify by all means the politics of the English Government, and even the extermination-camps where thousands of mothers and children perished, and so the future of the African race was endangered seriously. Notwithstanding that difference of opinion we remained good friends, and I admired him for his learning, his sincerity, and his great ability.” Van der Wyck, having received a copy of Flint’s book from his friend, Dr John Muir, wrote to the author :—

GRONINGEN, 13th July 1874.

Pardon me for not speaking in broken English but in my mother tongue, since I know that you have taken the trouble to learn Dutch. . . . I have read your book with profit and pleasure. I admire and envy your wide reading. You possess at the same time the remarkable gift of giving in a few words a clear representation of an involved and sometimes dark system, like that of Hegel ; a talent that truly stands a professor in good stead, for one cannot demand of students that they should follow a thinker like Hegel in the lofty flights of his speculation, and yet they must receive an impression from their professor of what that gigantic but daring genius has aimed at. I need not say that I share in full your sympathy for Lotze. I agree also in the main points with your view of Comte. To your general view of the philosophy of history I am prepared to give my assent. But where should I end were I to point to all in your work that has interested me and gained my approbation ? Instead of giving you a dry catalogue let me again offer you my hearty thanks, and my high appreciation of your instructive and learned work.

It seems to me that this is the right place in which to give a brief account of the second edition of this important book. It did not appear in its revised and

greatly enlarged form, until twenty years afterwards, but the connection between the two editions is so close that it would be a mistake to notice them separately. The contrast will also throw light upon any movement of thought that may have taken place in Flint's mind in the interval. He himself in the preface to the 1893 edition gives a sufficiently full account of his reasons for publishing it. He says :—

Almost twenty years ago the Author published a volume in which he endeavoured to describe and criticise the principal attempts which had been made in France and Germany philosophically to comprehend and explain the history of mankind. Had he not been called soon afterwards to a position which required for a considerable number of years almost exclusive devotion to a different order of studies, that volume would have been followed by one dealing in a similar way with the course and succession of historical philosophies in Italy and England. But before he could resume the work he had become so convinced of the necessity of altering and enlarging his plan as well as endeavouring to improve the execution that he has allowed the volume which he had published to remain out of print for nearly a dozen years during which it has only been known through the excellent French translation of the late M. Carrau.

Now he believes himself to be able to make his work, instead of simply a connected series of studies, a real and comprehensive history, and if life and strength be granted to carry it on steadily, although not perhaps rapidly, to completion.

The volume, apart from the Introduction, deals entirely with France, and it was the author's intention to treat the philosophy of history in Germany, England, and Italy in three additional and distinct volumes. This was a task that he might have accomplished if he had begun it sooner and had been left undisturbed in the prosecution of it, but to attempt it at sixty years of age with all his other work pressing on him was, as he himself no doubt believed, impossible. He had been made, some nine years after the publication of the first edition, a Corresponding Member of the



Institute of France (21st May 1883), an honour shared by his predecessor, Dr Chalmers, and conferred upon very few of his English contemporaries. The distinction was worthily earned and as heartily given. Seeing that the book, which is indeed a treatise, dealt entirely with France it was natural that its appearance should evoke much interest in that country. One of the first to hail it was M. Daresti, the President of the Academy, and author of a “History of France,” which Flint says, “shows much research and ability.” Flint as in duty bound sent him a copy of the book which was acknowledged with gratitude. “I am convinced,” he says, “that you have treated this great subject with profound knowledge and remarkable impartiality. Foreigners are perhaps better situated than we are to judge of what has been written in France. They are not so much taken up with persons, and see l’ensemble of things. The copy you have given to the Academy will certainly be presented at the meeting on Saturday next, and I have no doubt that it will be received with all the favour that it merits.” M. Bouillier, a member of the Academy whom Flint notices and criticises among the writers of the Eclectic School and author among other works of the “History of Cartesianism,” thanks him for having spoken of him in his book and for the appreciative way he had done so. His two friends, M. Mézières and M. Caro, send letters full of admiration, and M. St Hilaire says, “I was much touched as a Frenchman with the attention you have given to the writers of our country.” Renouvier, of whose views Flint approved so highly, and to which reference will be made later, is naturally very appreciative. “I send you my warmest thanks and the expression of my gratitude for the great honour and pleasure you have done me in sending me your fine

work on the ‘Philosophy of History.’ But above all I can hardly express my feelings at the approbation my works receive in this book, at the account given of them with such fidelity and in terms of praise by no means common—especially as most of its judgments will no doubt go down to posterity, remarkable as they are for their independence and elevation. Your praise, I must say, rather overwhelms me, but it also encourages me much in the bold enterprise for one of my advanced age of continuing and completing my work on the ‘Philosophy of History.’”

It was, of course, highly praised in the French Press, and one or two extracts from the notice of it in the *Revue Philosophique* by Tillon may be quoted, partly for the reason that they give in brief compass some of the main differences between this edition and the first.

M. Robert Flint published in 1874 an interesting and learned work on the “Philosophy of History” in France and Germany, of which M. Ludovic Carrau has given us, in 1878, an excellent French translation. He has recently brought out a new edition of the first part of this work, an edition greatly enlarged (700 pages instead of 330) and enriched with analysis and criticism so important as to form an entirely new book, in which nothing is omitted of the labours devoted to the philosophy of history in France and in Belgium and French Switzerland. I have quoted on another occasion in the *Critique Philosophique* some passages from the former edition on Guizot, Auguste Comte and Quinet, in which M. Flint shows that he is opposed, and quite rightly as it seems to me, to historical fatalism and optimism. I will notice here what he has added to his former study and which forms a valuable complement to it in the volume we are dealing with. It is that which bears in Chapter VI. on the Liberal Catholic School, especially on P. Gratry; in Chapter VII. (Socialistic Schools) on Louis Blanc and Proudhon; in Chapter VIII. (Eclectic School) on Javary and Bouillier, and Barchou de Penhoën; in Chapter IX. (Democratic School) on Benoëw; in Chapter X. (Naturalism and Positivism) on Renan and Taine. The whole of Chapter XI., which treats of the Critical

School represented above all by Cournot and by Renouvier is new and finally the greater part of Chapter XII. in which we have an exposition of the philosophical doctrines of Altmeyer, Tiberghien, Thonissen, De Colin in Belgium ; and of Vinet, Secretan, De Rougemont, in Switzerland.

It is impossible to give a résumé of such a work as M. Flint's. I shall confine myself to a reference to two passages which are well fitted it seems to me to make one acquainted with the spirit of the work. The first on Taine, the second on Renouvier.

It is known that Taine explains the movement of history by race, medium, and moment. M. Flint rejects this theory of the three historic factors. He shows very clearly that it is a superficial view to stop here and that neither race, medium, nor moment can be considered as primary explicative principles. . . . Another quite fair criticism of the historical doctrine of Taine which the English writer makes is that the expressions *organism*, *organic development*, are constantly employed without being clearly defined. . . . That which characterises the historical doctrine of Renouvier and gives it, in my opinion, at once its originality and high value is that it brings to light the variations in the moral consciousness among different nations, and races, and at different epochs ; that it shows the relation between these variations and corruptions and decline, rise, and progress ; that it makes it the principle itself of sociological diversities, and thus regards the philosophy of history as a moral theory of history ; and that it opposes this conception to all physical theories of history expounded and upheld by the philosophers of the 19th century. The judgment of M. Flint regarding this doctrine is strikingly noteworthy.

To this may be added the fuller treatment in the second edition, as well as the greatly improved handling, of Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, Quinet, and Auguste Comte. The account of Comte in particular is excellent, although it would have been a more interesting thing to set down a parallel between Comte and Hegel in which Comte does not always suffer (p. 582).

It is in the Introduction, however, that we find the fullest treatment. In the first edition the Introduction ran into 62 pages ; in the second edition it covers

170 pages. There is much fresh matter in it of great interest and value, as well as an expansion and elaboration of old matter. So important indeed are the changes and additions that this part of the book is practically new, and in it one sees Flint at his very best. But the most interesting portion is where he replies to certain criticisms that were passed on the earlier volume, particularly to those levelled at it by Lord Morley. The *Spectator*, too, had some faults to find as well as other journals, and the more important of these are fully and fairly answered in the edition of 1893. Flint does not resile from a single one of his positions; he defends them successfully at every point.

The change of title in the later volume ought first of all to be noticed. He describes his book as a "History of the Philosophy of History," giving it the sub-title of "Historical Philosophy in France and French Belgium, and Switzerland." The book, he would have its readers to understand, is a history of a special form of speculation.

The process to be studied is one of thought and speculation. But this, as has been indicated, does not prevent its being also as strictly one of history as any external or visible process whatever. The theories of thinkers are in an obvious sense as much historical facts and realities as births and deaths, treaties and battles, the changes of dynasties and the revolutions of peoples. What men have thought about history is thus itself a section of history; and like all that is history, it should be treated in the first and chief place simply as history; that is, should be studied solely with a view to discover precisely what it is and how it has come to be what it is. This must be steadily borne in mind throughout the present work. Our primary and main aim is to describe an historical process in a truly historical spirit and manner.

Flint, however, was not content with this. He thought that something more should be done, and

that the theories which he passed in review ought to be criticised. But he took the utmost care that the views of the different writers should first of all be stated with the most scrupulous impartiality, exactitude, and care, and then the reader could be left to judge of the value of the criticisms. It is this twofold aim of exposition and criticism that marks off the following passage from an almost similar one in the first edition.

I mean then not merely to pass in historical review the more famous of the many attempts which have been made within the last century and a half to discover the laws of order which regulate human affairs, but also to pronounce judgment on the truth or falsity of what is essential and characteristic in them, and to indicate their chief merits and defects. If I accomplish this twofold purpose with the slightest measure of success the conceptions of the reader as to the character, scope, and the method of the philosophy of history, as to what it ought to do and how it ought to do it, should be constantly increasing in definiteness and accuracy as the inquiry itself advances.

He then refers to one of the main objections raised against the first edition. “ He does not,” remarks Lord Morley, “ say what is the philosophy of history, nor does he distinguish it from the science of history.” Flint is indifferent as to which term is used; he regards both as equally applicable; still, he is willing to make a distinction, and thus to remove all objections.

I cannot see any objection to employing the terms science and philosophy interchangeably. Rigidly and continually to distinguish them is not only what no one does, but what no one should do, inasmuch as it tends to lead readers to overlook the intimate connection and community of nature of science and philosophy. If we are resolved to use the word philosophy only in its strictly appropriate and technical sense, we must bear in mind that there is but one sense which can either historically or logically make good its claim as such. And in this sense philosophy is not contra-distinguished from the sciences, but comprehensive of them—not a branch

or branches of knowledge growing alongside of other branches, but the root and trunk out of which all the branches grow, and the life by which, and the crown to which they grow—not the rational appreciation of particular aspects of the intelligible world but of that world as a whole. In a word philosophy in this sense is the knowledge of knowledge, the science of the sciences, universal not particular science. . . . The only mode of distinguishing between science of history and philosophy of history which seems to me at all admissible is that which assigns to the science of history the task of ascertaining the course, plan, and the laws of history itself, and to the philosophy of history that of tracing the relations of causation and affinity which connect history with other departments of existence and knowledge. But such science and philosophy are so plainly of the same nature and each is so manifestly feeble and imperfect without the other, that there can only be an occasional call to separate them and ordinarily they ought to be combined, whether under the name of science or philosophy it matters little.

Another objection was that Flint had not begun with a theory of his own and then criticised all the theories he passed in review in the light of it. He contends that to follow such a plan would serve no good purpose. He says that to “criticise the theories of others by any theory of my own, although it might undoubtedly be a very ‘concise’ process, could not be a really effective one owing to its manifest injustice. One theory of history ought not to be judged of by another, but by its conformity or non-conformity to the facts of history and the laws of reason. These are the only criteria by which I deem myself entitled to judge the theories which may come before me.”

The only other criticism that he thinks it worth while to answer is one raised against his method of procedure which is national and not universal. It may be contended, he remarks, that the natural and philosophical method must be one which would begin “by tracing a complete sketch of the intellectual development of an epoch, and then without reference

to the difference of nationalities bring together all that the epoch has done for what one is accustomed to call the philosophy of history.” He admits that he began on this plan but found it unworkable. He found that he had to leap from one country to another and that this effectually destroyed the unity of the work and the continuity of the narrative. Besides he believed that too much importance cannot be attached to nationality. It is still, he believes, the “most permanent, comprehensive, and potent of historical factors.”

“It alone so acts on and with the various general elements of civilisation as to give them real existence in a concrete and organic unity. It is to a people what individuality is to a person and therefore to history what individuality is to biography. Wherever character tells much on the development of thought no other power can compare in influence with it, and its force is not a decreasing one. In spite of superficial appearances to the contrary, nationalities are not disappearing but increasingly developing and characterising themselves. As the individual steadily attains to clearer self-knowledge and greater freedom and power in the manifestation of his true self, so each growing nation is seen gradually to enter more fully on the possession of its genius, and gradually to reveal more distinctly what its character and capacities are. The advancing unity of civilised humanity is reflected in and attained through the increasing originality and self-activity of the nations which are its constituent members.

It was Flint’s intention, as we have seen, to state at the close of the last of the projected four volumes of his monumental work, his own theory of the philosophy of history. But in dealing with the views of M. Renouvier he finds himself so much in harmony with him that he practically adopts them and thus anticipates what he might have said on his own account. Seeing that such a statement was unfortunately never made by him it is of prime importance that his account of Renouvier’s position, or at all

events the summary which he gives of it, should be fully stated. "I shall offer," he says, "no criticisms on his (Renouvier's) historical doctrine. It is one to which in all its fundamental principles and positions I assent. I do not know any other writer with whose views on the chief problems of historical philosophy my own are so much in accordance. And he has, in my opinion, rendered to that philosophy one service so inestimable that in any account of its development his name deserves to be placed in the very foremost rank of its cultivators."

He has shown far more profoundly and conclusively than anyone else the closeness of the connection between history and morality, that neither is intelligible or realisable without the other, that history is an ethical formation, and morality an historical production. He has made apparent by a critical analysis of the historical process itself that it is in the exercise of rational freedom that societies as well as individuals have risen or sunk, elevated or debased themselves. He has disclosed the manner in which families, tribes, and nations, have acquired for themselves a common character, fixed habits and manners. He has explained how *ethic races* are formed and of how much greater significance they are for the understanding of history than merely *ethnic races*, or the external causes which originate or modify these latter races. He has refuted in a way at once original, profound, and conclusive those theories which represent history as a mechanically necessitated product, or an inevitable dialectic movement, or a simple organic growth, or the natural consequence of a struggle for existence between individuals and societies, or a fundamentally economic evolution. He has proved it to be, on the contrary, an essentially ethical creation, the formation of the world of humanity by free individual wills, always conscious of moral law, while always working in given conditions of time and of space, of heredity and solidarity, and always influenced by interests and passions, by physical and spiritual surroundings.

Flint's reputation, by the time the second edition of his great work was published had become so thoroughly established, the book itself was of so vast importance, displaying as it did such exceptional erudition, and



historical and philosophical talent of the highest order, that it drew to it the attention of the learned world and was honoured by elaborate and handsome reviews in nearly all the leading magazines and journals. Many distinguished men wrote to him letters of hearty congratulation, and his colleagues were proud of the fresh lustre which he had shed upon their University. One of his correspondents, the Right Honourable James Bryce, now Lord Bryce, an old fellow student at Glasgow College, remarks upon one feature of the book which deserves special mention. After declaring that Flint had treated his subject with a “thoroughness and penetration hitherto unequalled in Britain,” he remarks, “I am greatly struck by the way you convey much of the intellectual history of the country.” This is a singularly true observation, and it is quite clear from the preface that Flint himself had such an object in view, for he says, “Believing that in few, if any, spheres of activity our national tendencies and characteristics are more clearly discernible than in that of historical thought, the author hopes that the present volume will be found to be to some extent a contribution to the history of France as well as of the philosophy of history.” This feature undoubtedly gives an additional interest and value to the book, and affords an insight into the course and meaning of the history of France which makes the volume, even apart from its special purpose, both attractive and helpful to every thoughtful reader. Flint’s two great works on “Socialism” and “Agnosticism” were still to appear, but nothing that he had hitherto done equalled in conception, thoroughness, and execution, this monumental work which Professor Hastie described as a “great triumph and a lasting success. Fortunately,” he adds, “you have the moderated spirit that can bear it. Surely

you are entitled to feel some pride in leaving such a bit of work to the future world.”

A recognition of Flint's supreme position in the field which he had made his own, that must have gratified him and which must still be of interest to all admirers of genuine talent and undivided aims, is given in the following letter which he received from Lord Acton.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
*November 26th, 1896.*

MY DEAR SIR,—The Syndics of the University Press are preparing a general History of Modern Times in twelve volumes to appear between 1899 and 1904. They desired me to draw up a plan and have made me editor. It is in their name that I venture to ask you to co-operate with us.

Our intention is to bring together all the best historians living, here or in America, and to give each one the subject he knows best. That we may conclude well and with effect I have proposed that the last chapter should be on operative philosophies of History, on condition, of course, that you consent to write it. The work, assigned to many writers, and destined for all readers, will be kept aloof from philosophies and systems. We should make up for that at the end, and I fancy you would make it clear why that abstinence was a wise one by your criticism of writers.

It will not be required for some years, and I hope that your second volume will have appeared and that our request will not interfere with your arrangements.

To us it will be very important to have the advantage of your name and authority. There will be no such chapter if you should inauspiciously decline.

Flint, unfortunately, was unable to comply with this request, and the Cambridge Modern History was completed, without the chapter which Lord Acton, in the event of his declinature, would entrust to no other writer.

Let us again pick up the chronological sequence of Flint's life. The first edition of his "Philosophy of History" was published in June 1874, and the month of July found him and his sister in Geneva. There they

remained for three months thoroughly enjoying a well-deserved holiday. The Professor had been appointed to the charge of the Scots Church for the summer, repeating an experience of the same kind which he had had in Dresden some years previously. His duties were light, he had to preach on the Sundays to a mixed congregation of English-speaking travellers, who for the most part were birds of passage; and during the week his whole time was practically at his own disposal. They took up their residence at Madame Picard's, 2 Place de la Metropole, and Flint, according to his custom when from home, wrote frequent and brief letters to his mother. He tells her that they found the “journey via Paris short but pretty expensive,” adding, “the last of my guineas was gone when we reached Geneva.” A St Andrews Professor of those days was by no means overburdened with the emoluments of his office. It was a case of spare feeding and high thinking for most of them. Matters have very considerably improved financially since those days. But whether this has had as a result increased mental activity and productivity is like every other question open at least to discussion. The young author was naturally interested in the reception accorded to his book by the press, so he writes, “I hope my father continues to look at the *Scotsman* and *Courant*, and that he will send us any notice which may appear.”

The letter you sent me along with your own was from a Dutch Professor and is very complimentary. I preached yesterday in the fine old Cathedral where Calvin and other great Reformers used to preach; it is a very big building, but unfortunately the Scottish congregation is very small. I was yesterday no less than five times at Church, and Janet was four times.

A distressing accident which cast a gloom over the little English colony occurred during their visit.

We have just come back to-day from Lausanne. The passage was not at all pleasant as it rained the whole time, and we got considerably wet because every man here smokes like a steam-engine, and so we could not stay in the cabin. The weather was very fine at the time we were at Lausanne, and we would have enjoyed ourselves very much if a sad accident had not cast a gloom over us during our stay. The master of the house in which we lodged, Mr Hallet—an Englishman—got from England on Tuesday morning a life-preserver, and went to the Lake to try it. He was brought home drowned. He leaves a widow and two children. I was at the funeral on Thursday. You can imagine how sad this has made us. A great many accidents occur on the Lake of Geneva and Janet and I shall trust ourselves to it only in the ordinary steam boats, not in any of the small boats which are apt to be caught and upset in squalls.

Flint and his sister made good use of their opportunities, visited all the places of interest within reach, and climbed the mountains. Miss Flint did not find them so trying as the Scotch hills, which she declares are “not only more difficult but even more dangerous, as there are roads made here right up to the top.” It was while he was at Geneva that Lord Morley’s article appeared in the *Fortnightly*, and he writes to his mother to instruct his father to get that number and have it sent to him by book-post. A request also reached him about the same time from his friend and colleague, Professor Crombie, which seems to have amused him very much. He says, “I certainly would on no account be a ‘best-man’ to Dr Crombie or anybody else. I am not a lively enough person for such an office.” Flint, however, had too modest an estimate of himself as a “lively person,” for he would seem at this very time to have been enjoying himself in a manner that would not altogether have unsuited him for the position which his colleague wished to assign him. For in a letter which he received towards the close of the year from a Russian with whom he had foregathered at Madame Picard’s

he would seem to have had a very good time indeed at Geneva. His friend and correspondent was M. Gabrieloff, who had been tutor to the Russian Princes, and he thus reminds Flint of the pleasant days they had together.

We are now in mid-winter. In looking at the streets and roofs covered with snow we think of beautiful Switzerland and speak of the gay after-dinner talks on the balcony at Madame Picard's Salon on various topics, and our promenades with our intimate companions, yourself and the two Misses A !

Even a philosopher must sometimes unbend.

Their holiday was now coming to a close. It was nearing the end of September and they turned their steps homewards. They journeyed by Frankfurt, sailed down the Rhine and travelled straight to London, where they stayed a fortnight. They reached St Andrews by the middle of October, in good time for the Professor to prepare himself for the winter session.

Flint's hands were now full of work that he had been invited and pressed to undertake. So early as February 1874 he was appointed Baird Lecturer, and during his visit to the Continent that summer he no doubt would be revolving in his mind the subject of his forthcoming lectures. Another source of interest and also of remuneration he found in the inauguration of *Mind*, a Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy, edited by George Croom Robertson, Professor in University College, London. The first number of the new Journal appeared in January 1876, and to it Flint contributed several critical notices, and reviews of foreign philosophical magazines. His translation to Edinburgh interfered with his work for *Mind*, but he continued to contribute occasional papers to it for many years. He wrote for the first number a critical notice

on Bretano's "Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte," and a review of German, French, and Italian Philosophical Journals. To the July number he contributed an article on "Associationism and the Origin of Moral Ideas." He asks: "Can the fact that man distinguishes right from wrong be explained by the association of ideas? This is the question which I mean to discuss and which I feel compelled to answer in the negative." He, however, still acknowledges the wide range and influence of association in mental economy. He contributed to the second number an article on the "Distinctions between Thought and Feeling" based on the distinction laid down in Fleming's "Manual of Moral Philosophy." It is perfectly clear from the following letter, which at the same time throws some interesting side-lights on the conduct of the Journal, that the Editor highly appreciated Flint's co-operation and contributions:—

SAVILE CLUB, LONDON,  
4th January 1876.

MY DEAR FLINT,—I enclose a cheque for £14 in payment for your various contributions to No. I. I am extremely obliged to you for them and hope you will not slacken in your co-operation. If, besides the notices of magazines, you have any notes or critical notices for No. II. I shall be very glad. Also I shall be very glad always to receive any information or suggestions from you. The scrap of news you sent about Herbart I would have made use of if there had been room; it shall go into No II. Copies have been sent to all the philosophical journals, and I am to receive copies of them in return. These shall be at your disposal if you want them, but I suppose you see most of them already. The reason why I have arranged for an exchange of Journals is that I might be able to keep my eye on new books, facts, etc., mentioned in them. My looking through the journals will of course not interfere with your reports. Have you been able to make out anything about the Italian journal or journals? I understood from Hodgson that a new one was started last year. You will see I have promised some notice on Italy in next number. Can you help me in that?

It was with some alarm that the anxious editor heard of Flint's appointment to the Edinburgh Divinity Chair, and while congratulating him he expressed his satisfaction that he was not to lose him as a contributor. He says: “I congratulate you on your appointment, but I am at the same time very glad to be confirmed by your note in my hope that you are not to be less of a philosopher than here-to-fore.” And with some quite excusable jubilation he adds, “2000 copies of No. I. have now been printed, 500 after the first 1500.” His hopes, however, regarding Flint were not to be altogether realised, for while the professor of Divinity never ceased to be a philosopher, the field which his new appointment set him to cultivate necessitated his curtailment of such work as the Editor of *Mind* naturally demanded.

In the next chapter an estimate is given of Flint as a philosophical thinker by Dr Wenley.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HIS PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHING

It is more or less true that the innermost personality of every man, particularly of every exceptional man, presents, if not a paradox, then a contradiction or, at least, competitive interests. And Flint was a good illustration of the last. Not that he experienced any such mental war as has wrecked many, or caused them to fall short lamentably. So much is perfectly plain. On the other hand, his immersion in scholarship made heavy drafts upon the strength and time which, otherwise, might have been given to fundamental, reflective thought. Alongside of this, too, another impact was not without effect—decisive effect, as I judge. The ideas and theories rendered familiar to him by his multitudinous studies were often of a kind inimical to the philosophical equipment with which he began. The old analytic or descriptive psychology was passing away, and, under stress of the idea of development, the introspective limits were in process of rapid deliquescence. Thus, Flint never gave his full power to speculative problems and, equally, he never mediated thoroughly between the principles of the Scottish philosophy and the antagonistic methods of modern evolutionary thought, which he knew so well. I am convinced that this furnishes the main clue to his intellectual temperament. It also serves to explain why many of his contemporaries did not regard him as a philosopher primarily—indeed, failed to estimate him at all!



All things considered, Flint probably derived little from the social changes and the intellectual foregleams that were destined to turn his country topsy-turvy within his own life-time. Further, internal evidence renders it doubtful whether he was much affected by one prominent service of the Scottish philosophers during this period—the diffusion throughout Scotland of “a taste for elegant literature.”<sup>1</sup> So, the more we must insist that, after the passage of the Veto Act (1834), Scotland writhed in the throes of a terrific ecclesiastical struggle, which divided, and long continued to divide, the father “against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” The intellectual shibboleths, no less than the practical, resounded in the universities, serving at once to distract attention from the larger issues of modern thought and to confirm the psychologism erected as a barrier against “scepticism.” Hugh Miller, deserting his geology for the nonce, exercised wide influence through the *Witness* newspaper. Candlish, with narrow, if specious legalism, attacked F. D. Maurice, and other philippics of similar tendency were let loose everywhere. There can be no question that the section of Scottish society whence Flint sprang was not merely fascinated, but limited and deflected by the strife, although it was also stimulated in the studies to which Flint gave himself,—with an *arrière pensée*, however. The disputes, so bitterly fought that, in some respects, they impoverished the country spiritually, penetrated to the very hearthstone of the Flint family. Robert Flint, the elder, supported the Free Church enthusiastically, and carried his wife with him,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. “The Scottish Philosophy,” James M’Cosh, p. 301.

somewhat unconvinced, as it would seem. Naturally, then, Flint was destined to the ministry of the evangelical organisation. But its arbitrary narrowness repelled him and, Candlish being either too preoccupied or too dogmatic to reassure him, he faced paternal opposition, and gave himself to the National Church. Norman Macleod, who had come to the Barony in 1851, confirmed him in the wisdom of his choice. It is open to little doubt that, apart from his omnivorous reading in philosophy and theology as a student, and his interest in science, aroused by Thomson, the aftermath of the Disruption exerted more influence in determining the norms of his intellectual outlook than any other episode of his youth. And, as I have attempted to indicate, this made for reinforcement, never for reversal, of the traditional Scottish philosophy. Likely enough, too, it gave Flint his chance to enter the career of scholarship. For, with high probability, the intellectual temper of Scotland at the moment had something to do with his selection over T. H. Green, for the professorship of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews. I have been so informed, on excellent authority. Accordingly, we must try to understand the parts played by philosophy and theology respectively, from their mating by Reid till their mutual signs of dissatisfaction in Hamilton, who did not live to see whither he was heading.

In his article on Dugald Stewart, M'Cosh says : "It is very evident that the Scottish academic metaphysicians of last century [*i.e.* the eighteenth], while they pay a dignified respect to Christianity, have not identified themselves with its profound peculiarities."<sup>1</sup> Returning to the subject later in the same work, he declares : "Hitherto there has been a severance, at times an opposition, if not avowed yet felt, between

<sup>1</sup> "The Scottish Philosophy," p. 299.

the Scottish philosophy and the Scottish theology. . . . The reconciliation between the philosophy and the religion was effected by Thomas Chalmers, who has had greater influence in moulding the religious belief and character of his countrymen than anyone since the greatest Scotsman, John Knox.”<sup>1</sup> This allegation, puzzling at first sight, and inaccurate in some respects, had relevant basis. Before Hutcheson’s professoriate at Glasgow (1730–46), academic philosophy in Scotland had remained mediæval alike in matter and language, while theology, such as it was, had been harsh and grim, often coarse and repulsive. Hutcheson “disputed no dogma, and taught no heresy as he discussed the beauty of moral virtue, descanted on the ‘harmony of the passions’ and the dignity of human nature. . . . As he spoke on these themes, Calvinistic dogmas seemed to lose all their meaning; the orthodox doctrines of the Kirk, of the total corruption of human nature, of reprobation, of salvation by faith alone, became to his audience strangely unreal.”<sup>2</sup> About the same time, Campbell, of St Andrews, could venture into the open against “those who were ever ‘consulting at the throne’ and ‘imploping light,’ and attributing their own emotions to divine communication.”<sup>3</sup> In short, the Moderate party was afoot. And, although the old creed stood fast, a new temper arose alongside and outside it. As a later consequence, “warm friendship allied David Hume, the amiable sceptic, with Dr Jardine, the fine Evangelical, as well as with the Moderates, Carlyle, Home, Blair, and Robertson. . . . Charming compliments are exchanged by Hume with his reverend

<sup>1</sup> “The Scottish Philosophy,” p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> “The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century,” H. G. Graham p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355.

opponents in Aberdeen, Professors Campbell, Gerard, and Reid.”<sup>1</sup> In this generation, “men of wide culture—like Blair, Carlyle, Robertson, and Reid—left theology utterly alone.”<sup>2</sup> By Flint’s time, thanks to the Disruption, the pendulum had swung back.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, from Hutcheson to Veitch (d. 1894), a perfectly definite climate of opinion prevailed, governing the relations between the philosophical and the theological spheres.

In the early nineteenth century, philosophy was even more a national than a personal affair. The once intimacy and exchange of ideas between Scotland and France had slackened, thanks, perhaps, to the excesses of the Red Terror. Nay, Scotland, Germany, and France were going their own ways—the Critical Philosophy and the French Revolution having created conditions unthinkable to the Scot. Indeed, the three countries knew little of intellectual activities outside their own borders. For example, despite the fact that, somehow, he lost his religion in the Tweed, when he went South, James Mill (1829) was ignorant of German philosophy, as Bain shows in his biography. Thus, Scotland kept to her psychology, Germany developed constructive metaphysics, and France oscillated between mathematical and sociological interests, to find haven in a smooth eclecticism. The result was that, from the German standpoint, Scottish philosophy fell under the imputation of being unscientific and uncritical. It offered no ultimate metaphysical creed. Chalmers, speaking of Stewart, exposes the implication aptly: “I attended his lectures regularly. I must confess I have been rather

<sup>1</sup> “The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century,” H. G. Graham, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

<sup>3</sup> Compare what Flint himself says about the Moderates (“Socialism,” pp. 476 f.).

disappointed. I never heard a single discussion of Stewart's which made up one masterly and comprehensive whole. His lectures seem to me to be made up of detached hints and incomplete outlines, and he almost uniformly avoids every subject which involves any difficult discussion." If this were the great Stewart, what can Flint have received from Buchanan and Fleming? M'Cosh himself comments in the same tenor: "We have seen in the cases of Stewart, Brown, and Mackintosh what difficulties those trained in the Scottish metaphysics had in comprehending the German philosophy and accepting the truth."<sup>1</sup> Plainly, the German method, *zu Ende denken*—to attain first principles, and not to rest content with description of phenomena, albeit psychological phenomena—was conspicuous by its absence. On the contrary, it was the habit to divide the philosophical field into special disciplines, quite after the manner of the natural sciences. Descriptive psychology and intuitional ethics formed the centres of activity. Now, just as the natural sciences accept a "nature" from common experience, so psychology and ethics may assume a body of correct knowledge in the spiritual world, furnished by the ordinary consciousness, by "wives and wabsters." That is, they may appeal to custom or tradition, and still exploit their own problems. As I have said in another context: "On this basis, the books of the mind could be kept by double-entry, and so the central problem could be dismissed or, as was the fact, relegated to the background."<sup>2</sup> The consequences for the relations between philosophy and theology are perfectly obvious.

<sup>1</sup> *L.c.*, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> "Kant and His Philosophical Revolution," p. 35. Compare the whole chapter.

M'Cosh has neatly summarised the situation for ethics: "The metaphysicians had shown that there is such a faculty in man as the conscience; and the conscience proclaims that man is a sinner, while the Bible provides a forgiveness for the sinner in a way which honours the moral law."<sup>1</sup> And, generalising, one may add, that ordinary experience, "consulting at the throne" and "imploing light," assures man (1) of a world which has a *creator*, (2) of an individual *soul*, and (3) of an immortal *destiny*. Therefore, it is at once unnecessary and dangerous to train with the Germans, and set all the truths of Christianity "in rigid philosophical framework, or to absorb them all . . . as by a devouring flame."<sup>2</sup> The "revealed" and the "natural" may be separated with perfect propriety, nay, to great gain.<sup>3</sup> So, the Scottish school, "keeping to its own field, that of inductive psychology, allowed the students to follow their own convictions, evangelical or rationalistic, but training all to a habit of skilful arrangement and exposition. It enabled and it led the theological professors to dwell on the relation between the truths of God's Word and the fundamental principles of human nature; to lay deep and solid foundation for moral principle, to impart a moral tone to their teaching in divinity, and to expound, clearly and wisely, the arguments for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul."<sup>4</sup> *Mutatis mutandis*, it would be difficult to give a better characterisation of Flint's method. Nay, we can detect traces of the essential attitude of mind itself even so late as 1899.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *I.c.*, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> M'Cosh, *I.c.*, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Flint's mature attitude to these presuppositions is to be found on pp 355 f. of his "Agnosticism" (American edition).

<sup>4</sup> M'Cosh, *I.c.*, pp. 268-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf.* "Sermons and Addresses," pp. 312 f.

Distinct tendencies—advantages, if so you please—ensued. Philosophers, having appealed to the *consensus gentium*, particularly for confirmation of the activity and unity of the “soul,” eviscerated by Hume, could proceed to deal, more or less empirically, with psychological phenomena and with moral judgments. They could relegate the metaphysical pre-suppositions to the theologians, who, again, were able to expound them confidently, undisturbed by yeasty philosophical qualms. This, very briefly, is the fundamental and home-thrusting difference between the Scottish and the continental schools (the German particularly) in the first half of the nineteenth century. For while, in France, the Revolution had shaken the authority of the social order, and, in Germany, the “all-destroying” Critical Philosophy had smashed the metaphysical assumptions of Newtonianism, and of its spiritual analogue, Deism (often mistaken for Theism by the insular mind); in Scotland, the established social and intellectual norms maintained themselves, affording a base-line that never came in question, at least in “respectable” circles. Nay, the Scottish ecclesiastical cataclysm tended to turn the clock back as concerned both. No doubt this conferred certain benefits upon philosophy and theology, but at a price. Scotland has exhibited notable symptoms of distress in adjusting herself to modern thought. So long as her sons have confined themselves to special disciplines, whether in science, philosophy, or theology, they have made noteworthy contributions. But no whole-hearted siege of the ultimate problem has come from them as yet. They have never spoken out, just because their national *ethos* has not permitted. All these characteristics bit deep into the mental habit of every man educated in one of our

universities before the Caird brothers assumed their Chairs at the University of Glasgow (1863, 1866). So much so, that not one of them realised the end of the philosophico-theological truce as proclaimed by Mansel (Hamilton's spiritual child), in his famous Bampton Lectures (1858). Had Mansel been spared to a green old age,—he died at fifty-one,—he might himself have done more than sow the wind. As a result, then, there was a niche for the polymath; a place for acquisition; a mission for the double refraction process. Indeed, the key to Flint's activity and cast of mind is to be found in the possibility of acquisition in special spheres, to the postponement of the troublesome question of the ultimate constitution of any universe that can properly be *man's* universe. It ought to be noted, that the prevalent philosophical anarchy, or perhaps we had better say eclecticism, must have had influence in the direction of this postponement.<sup>1</sup>

A whiter, braver soul than Flint never lived. But the age would not allow his moral courage and mental resource to be enlisted in an attack upon the final citadel. So, if one is to do him justice, far more to

<sup>1</sup> A contemporary and impartial judgment may suffice to intimate as much. The late Professor Masson, of Edinburgh, writing in 1877, thus closes the third edition of his "Recent British Philosophy": "On the whole, my impression is that the struggle in Systematic British Philosophy, apart from Didactic Theology, is not now any longer, as it was in 1865, between Hamilton's System of Transcendental Realism *plus* a Metaphysical Agnosticism relieved by strenuous Faith, and Mill's System of Empirical Idealism *plus* a Metaphysical Agnosticism relieved by a slight reserve of possibility for Paley after all, but between Mr Spencer's Knowable Cosmical Evolution blocked off from an Unknowable Absolute, and some less organised Idealistic Philosophy, describable as British Hegelianism. But, apart from these two camps, there cluster the Comtists by themselves; and between the two camps, looking into each and borrowing from each, but refusing to belong to either, or to house with the Comtists, move those vagrant Agnostics who still choose to rely mainly on more or less of constitutional postulation." Cf. my Introduction to J. Veitch's "Dualism and Monism," pp. xxiv-xxxii.



accord him sympathetic appreciation, all these subtle cross-currents, apt to be forgotten, must be kept in view constantly.

Indeed, I have been compelled to emphasise the historical *milieu*, for the very reason that, thanks to the appearance of other forces, Flint scarcely received his due sometimes. The extensive sale of his Baird Lectures witnessed his appeal to the layman, beset by sore dubiety at the moment, or to theological students, who stood in no need of a physician, being, perhaps, too closely shepherded already. He did not reach the philosophers *von Fach*, and his studies were not of the kind to arrest the attention of the critico-philological school, then entering upon its vogue in Britain. Moreover, it is futile to surmise what might have happened had he taught from the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh, where he would have been brought into contact with a far wider constituency. As things were, he was cut off from students intended for the ministry of the Free and United Presbyterian denominations, an incalculable loss to all concerned. Further, as the occupant of a "confessional" chair, he was not only suspect for some, but could have no scholastic relations with the ablest philosophical students among his younger countrymen, the men to whom the torch had passed on ere his death. In any case, his mental development might have been different. Accordingly, there were those who inclined to consider him something of a phenomenon—a curiosity. Thanks to these conditions, as I judge, he suffered, if not a certain neglect, at least a lack of full appreciation—his extraordinary attainments were applied in a circumscribed field. I never heard him make the most distant reference to this, much less complain; these moods were foreign to one so modest. But I

felt the tension, and felt that it spelled no slight loss to my contemporaries. I am keenly aware that it was an incalculable and permanent loss to me.

I suppose that, by common consent, Flint is to be remembered primarily for his work in the philosophy of history. Alas, that he has left a monumental torso! While it is my personal opinion that the weightiest expression of his views was reserved for his "Agnosticism," the trend of his mind is exhibited most *continuously* in the historiographical books. They are important, too, because they intimate a great deal about their author by indirection. And, as I am concerned rather with his general position than with his contributions in detail, I turn naturally to "The Philosophy of History." In 1874, Flint made his bow to the world of scholarship with a work which bears two title pages, as follows: "The Philosophy of History in Europe, Volume I.," and "The Philosophy of History in France and Germany." The Introduction of 62 pages aside, the body of the book is divided almost equally between the French and the Germans—266 and 277 pages respectively. Flint's plan for the continuation having altered after his translation to Edinburgh, and other duties having interposed, the sequel lagged. At length, in 1893, he published another volume, bearing the general title, "History of the Philosophy of History," and the specific title, "Historical Philosophy in France, French Belgium, and Switzerland." The title pages have no volume imprint now. But, in the Preface, Flint expresses the hope that he may complete the work by parallel studies for Germany, Italy, and England. I am informed that the Italian section is well advanced, and I hope that, even if incomplete, it may be printed. The "Vico" of 1884 whets one's appetite. The volume

of 1893 omits the Germans entirely, and offers a much elaborated account of the French, 531 pages being substituted for the previous 266. I cannot but conclude from this, and from personal intercourse with Flint, that he preserved the Franco-Scottish tradition. At all events, it is clear to me that he felt more at home with the French than with the German *Geist*. Significant as this is, it is no less significant that Lotze was the conspicuous exception. I think the facts are capital for an estimate of Flint. The characteristics of the French genius attracted him; he found the Germans less congenial, particularly those of them who bulked largest with his contemporaries. I therefore wish to show that, from his youth up, reasons abounded for his prevalent negative attitude. His Gallic affinities, especially with the French "spiritualists," and, to some extent with Renouvier, who stands to French philosophy very much as Lotze to German, are quite plain. And these, again, are connected with his admiration for Leibnitz, who, once more, led him back to Descartes. "The expository talent for which French writers are so distinguished"<sup>1</sup> won upon him.

From the time of M. G. Lewis ("The Monk," 1795), who supplied the public with sensations in the grotesque and vulgar, German literature began to be noised abroad in England. Lewis had fed on "Werther"—"you must not be surprised if I should shoot myself one of these fine mornings"—and, characteristically enough, translated Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe." Unfortunately, he was responsible for the vogue of Kotzebue, whom he, and others of gross taste, mistook for a representative German author. The "Sturm und Drang," too, had considerable influence, as we know from Scott,

<sup>1</sup> Flint's Preface to Affleck's translation of Paul Janet's "Final Causes" (1883), p. ix.

who translated "Götz" (1799). Affected by the same movement, Henry Mackenzie addressed the Royal Society of Edinburgh—of all grave bodies!—on Schiller's "Robbers," which he calls "one of the most uncommon productions of untutored genius that modern times can boast."<sup>1</sup> But, manifestly, all these works were of temporary moment, and Henry Crabb Robinson was entirely right when he pointed out: "You know nothing about German literature. Kotzebue's and Iffland's plays are not German literature."<sup>2</sup> The marrow of German thought was to remain "*caviare* to the general" in Britain for many a long day.<sup>3</sup> So much so that, as late as 1883, Flint's colleague, Blackie, could write: "The Englishman—and I include my brother, the Scot, here under the general name—is characteristically a man of action, not of contemplation. His habit of mind is constitutional rather than philosophical: his religion more ecclesiastical than spiritual, his statesmanship guided more by external expediency than by internal principle. . . . The German is the reverse of all this. He is cosmopolitan in his range, contemplative in his habit, and emotional in his temper. When two

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. R.S.E.*, 1788, April 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Monthly Register and Encyclopædian Magazine*, vol. i.'p. 397.

<sup>3</sup> The tortuous story of the mediation between the German and the British mind is still to be written. It would furnish some lamentable, and many amusing, instances of obtuseness. My colleague, the eminent Goethe scholar Prof. Ewald Boucke, remarked to me, some time ago, that the British attitude towards German literature in the first sixty-five years of the nineteenth century might be set down to "race-prejudice." I imagine that ignorance of the language had much to do with it, and current taste. Thus, the *Edinburgh Review* says: "Thirty years ago there were probably in London as many Persian as German scholars" (vol. xxii. p. 201); and, as late as 1830, such was taste, that Taylor declares, "Kotzebue is the greatest dramatic genius that Europe has evolved since Shakespeare" ("Historic Survey of German Poetry," vol. iii. p. 102). The *Transactions of the English Goethe Society* contain some materials towards a review of the intercourse. See also G. Herzfeld, "William Taylor of Norwich. Eine Studie über den Einfluss der neueren deutschen Literatur in England" (Halle, 1897); and Sellier, "Kotzebue in England" (Leipzig, 1901).

such opposite types come near enough to provoke a mutual estimate, they produce a clash. . . . And in this way the English . . . too often make this recognition through an atmosphere of misconception and prejudice.”<sup>1</sup> Left-handed as this is in places, particularly to those of us who knew Flint well, it describes the middle wall of partition that separated the British from the German mind, Carlyle a lone exception, till Flint was a man of thirty. Thanks to the English romantic movement, there had been some coming and going between 1788 and 1850, when the intercourse slackened. But, on the whole, the tale of the traffic is not creditable to British perspicacity. Emphatically, social, moral, and theological preconceptions barred the way, to say nothing of æsthetic canons in “polite literature,” borrowed from France. We all remember how Coleridge thought Schiller superior to Goethe. The sage of Weimar, as the symptomatic complaint runs, had “want of religion and enthusiasm.” William Preston, speaking before the Royal Irish Academy, refers to Goethe as the “great patriarch of the terrible and ferocious school.”<sup>2</sup> Charles Lamb, who knew no German, splutters: “How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies!” And Coleridge, duly impressed, declines Murray’s offer, that he should translate “Faust.” The *Quarterly Review*,<sup>3</sup> the *Edinburgh Review*,<sup>4</sup> and lesser magazines go off into astounding diatribes or misconceptions. As a consequence of widespread delusion, if not enmity, we find that G. H. Lewes, in his “Life and Works of Goethe” (1855) is compelled to assume an apologetic tone.

The reasons are evident. “Considerations of decency,” for silence or omission, and “revolting familiarity

<sup>1</sup> “The Wisdom of Goethe,” p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. R.I.A.*, vol. viii. pp. 15 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* vol. xii. p. 144; vol. lii. p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf.* vol. lii. p. 252.

in the treatment of sacred subjects," such as Lord Francis Leveson Gower<sup>1</sup> proclaimed from the house-tops; "the tone of careless familiarity with which things divine are spoken of," as Blackie<sup>2</sup> protested, were judgments representative of a view inborn, and likely nurtured in Flint. It made no odds that these same things were to be found in Holy Writ. Moreover, Scottish philosophical and theological predilections cannot but have induced distinct bias. We have seen what the Scottish philosophers took for granted. But, in German thought, these same metaphysical objects precisely were the principal matters of inquiry. For they belonged neither to a supernatural nor to a supernal universe; their place, and their justification, if any, must be found in the development of human insight here below. Hence, when the floods rose, British theologues and preachers took to translating eclectic, prolix, conciliatory, or dexterous treatises, a majority of them by-products of temporary Teutonic disputes. The books that stand out to-day as of permanent significance were left, for the most part, in the innocuous original. Or, when one of them did receive English dress, like the first "Leben Jesu" of Strauss, it achieved a *succès de scandale*; the unimportant "mythical" theory was trumpeted, the real problem overlooked. And we may as well confess that brother Scots took a prominent hand in this naïve display of obliquity. When, in 1873, a distinguished group of scholars and theologians proposed translations of "the best results of recent theological investigations on the Continent, conducted without reference to doctrinal considerations," we find them saying: "The demand for works of this description is not as yet so widely

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Faust, a drama by Goethe, and other translations from the German" (1825).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Faust," Part I. (1834).

extended *among either the clergy or the laity* of Great Britain as to render it practicable for the publishers to bring them out in any considerable numbers at their own risk.”<sup>1</sup>

Nor had German technical philosophy, despite its already vast literature, percolated much into the English tongue. Willich's translation of some of Kant's minor works dates from 1798; Richardson printed his "Kant's Metaphysical Writings" in 1836; Semple "The Theory of Religion," in 1838, and, in the same year, Heywood produced the "Critick," as he called it; a second edition was put on the market in 1848. Meiklejohn's translation of the second edition of the "Critique of Pure Reason" appeared in 1855. Mrs Sinnett translated Fichte's "Destiny of Man" in 1846, while Smith's version of the "Popular Works," with a "Memoir," was printed in 1848-9, but another edition was not needed till 1871. I am unaware to what extent the youthful Flint may have made use of these, or other, extant translations, nor do I know when he became a student of German. Nevertheless, it is fair to conclude that something may be inferred from the curious statement in the first "Philosophy of History." "Hegelianism is rapidly dying in Germany. It is making some converts at Naples, is studied at St Louis, and *talked about at Oxford.*"<sup>2</sup> The phrase, "talked about at Oxford," is most meaningful. Evidently Flint was in ignorance of the great change that had been coming over the English university for fifteen years. He did not know that, in the Old Mortality Society,

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this document is bound in vol. i. of the translation of Keim's "Jesus of Nazara" (1876). The italics are mine. Flint's name is absent from the committee. But it is not possible to draw direct inferences from the omission, as he may not have been invited to join. John Muir, the Sanscrit scholar, was the moving spirit.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 501-2; the italics are mine.

founded at Balliol in 1857, "T. H. Green preached Hegel with the accent of a Puritan."<sup>1</sup> Seventeen years is a fairly long interval, and Oxford is not very remote! Nor can he have gathered anything from Ferrier, who died in the summer of the year in which Flint entered upon his St Andrews Chair; nor from Meiklejohn, who came to St Andrews only the same year that Flint left for Edinburgh. We are compelled to conclude, therefore, that he approached the Germans in his own way, and from the point of view which, as I have tried to show, all the circumstances conspired to create in him.

Accordingly, taking this "circumambient atmosphere" into account, it is nowise surprising that he should have committed himself to some incautious comments which, thanks to their publication in 1874, were bound to be cast in his teeth.<sup>2</sup> The *Zeitgeist* is proverbially ironical, and, had he reprinted the same words in 1893, they might well have counted less. And I have reason to think that he did not reprint them, because the influx of know-nothingism in theology (it was still to come in philosophy), a movement particularly unpalatable to him, had altered the position, if not his own convictions. Able to cast a backward glance, I judge he saw

"Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget."

The remarkable thing is, that starting from these cultural presuppositions,—“closer than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet,”—Flint should have contrived, not merely to master an enormous and, in many ways, uncongenial literature, but to exhibit, all in all, catholic sympathy and genuine objectivity. In itself

<sup>1</sup> "Memoir of John Nichol," Professor Knight, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "The Philosophy of History in France and Germany," pp. 177, 435, 440, 472, 525, 531, 534, 537, 579, 590.



this was a splendid achievement, and, I repeat, one for which he has never had sufficient praise. He transcended many of the limitations, not to say prejudices, thrust upon him during his formative years. And I think that he himself furnishes the clue to the apparent riddle. I find that, in my copy of the "Philosophy of History" (1874), I have marked the following passages, and noted that they contain the most direct statement of his standpoint as it was at that period. The first occurs at the close of the examination of Augustine's "De Civitate Dei": "Still, with all its defects, it was a vast improvement on previous doctrines, or rather on the previous want of a doctrine. The ultimate and greatest triumph of historical philosophy will really be neither more nor less than the full proof of providence, the discovery by the processes of scientific method of the divine plan which unites and harmonises the apparent chaos of human actions contained in history into a cosmos; and the first attempts, however feeble, to trace such a plan marked the dawn of a new era of thought. Almost the one respect, certainly the chief respect, in which mediæval historiography is superior to the classical is, that it is pervaded by a doctrine of universal and particular providence, the principles of which, drawn from Scripture, are eternally true, whatever mistakes may be made in applying them."<sup>1</sup> Again, the same principles are implied negatively in this: "It is consistent with it [Hegelianism], so far as consistency can be predicated of such a system, that it should be able to incorporate any moral or religious doctrine—able to deduce the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, the Lutheran doctrine of the sacraments, and even the Romanist doctrine of the immaculate conception . . . — and yet, even while doing so, to leave it doubtful

<sup>1</sup> p. 22.

whether there is a God or a future for the individual soul.”<sup>1</sup> Of course, this is the perspective already noted as integral to the Scottish philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Now, Flint literally *brought* himself beyond it, as it were, by way of an eager appetite for phenomenology. “The human mind and its history are in themselves more intelligible than the physical world and its evolution, and may be expected when scientifically studied and philosophically interpreted to contribute more to knowledge in general and to religious knowledge in particular. Matter is the stage prepared for the drama of the spirit. There is, we may be sure, more significance in the drama than in the stage, and what that significance is will be brought more fully to light.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, despite his philosophical antagonism to the German idealistic succession, he pays numerous tributes to the learning, insight, and mastery of German labourers in the historico-critical field. Here is the keynote: “For every one ecclesiastical historian which France or England could produce, Germany could produce fifty as good or better.”<sup>4</sup> His capacity to enter into the descriptive researches and the critical valuations of his authors is so facile that it fails him in but one case—that of Comte,—whose phenomenology he seems to have mistaken for a philosophy at the moment. The *amende honorable*,<sup>5</sup> perhaps the most impressive alteration in the edition of 1893, therefore intimates something with respect to Flint’s own position.

In this connection, one might aptly apply to Flint

<sup>1</sup> p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Flint’s article, “Associationism and the Origin of Moral Ideas,” *Mind* (O.S.), vol. i. pp. 321-34; “Agnosticism” (Am. edn.), pp. 468 f. (1903).

<sup>3</sup> “Agnosticism,” p. 322.

<sup>4</sup> “Philosophy of History” (1874), p. 342. Cf. pp. 404-5, 496, 507-8, 511 (foot), 576, 595; and Flint’s Preface to Hastie’s translation of Pünjer’s ‘History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion,’ pp. vi-vii.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. “Socialism,” p. 133.

himself what he set down about Mosheim and the Göttingen-Jena group of the eighteenth century. They "endeavoured to do justice to all parties, and to find sense in all systems; and whose works are characterised not only by this admirable impartiality, but by an unwearied diligence in the collection of materials. . . . The chief defect in the writers of this school was want of philosophical insight into the organic development of the past, and into the working of the deeper and more pervasive factors of history."<sup>1</sup> Precisely "the *organic* development of the past," in its permanent and essential causes, left him cold. And he never warmed to it, as the following, written late in life, indicates: "Perhaps the most promising of the later applications of the argument [*i.e.* the cosmological argument] is that which rests on the results obtained by a philosophical study of history, and which seeks to show that the goal of the evolution of life, so far as it has yet proceeded, is the perfecting of human nature, and the eternal source of things a power which makes for truth and righteousness."<sup>2</sup> I infer that the survival of eighteenth century dualism was too strong to be overcome.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there was, as I have said, a great compensation in Flint's phenomenological interests. Indeed, so much so, that he might well have exclaimed with Karl Hase: "It is not my business" (Hase was addressing his students) "to recoil in horror from this or that thought, or to express it with embarrassment as being dangerous; I would not forbid even the enthusiasm of doubt and destruction which makes Strauss so strong and Renan so seductive." Yes, there was strength and, some-

<sup>1</sup> "Philosophy of History" (1874), p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> "Agnosticism," p. 653.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., e.g., "Agnosticism," pp. 417 f., with the extravagant estimate of R. H. Thompson's Burnet Prize Essay.

times, seductiveness in Flint, both traceable to his single eye for knowledge, ever more knowledge.

Similar qualities pervade the other books—treatises, as they ought to be termed, in the most literal sense. The evidence for belief in the existence of God is not likely to be reviewed again with the profuse wealth of detail, especially in the appendices, that makes “Theism” so valuable. “Anti-Theistic Theories,” like “Agnosticism,” are veritable armouries to equip us against the “isms” so rife in the nineteenth century. And “Socialism” may be classed with them. Aside from the prodigal learning and breadth of mastery over the sources, the temperamental method of attack, peculiar to the Scot of the pre-Hegelian era, is maintained with tenacity, a tenacity the more impressive that it is wholly effortless, and quite natural. It embraces the world of practical life no less than that of philosophical speculation. How characteristic, ay, and how honourable, this is: Socialism “leads men to expect extravagant results from merely repairing or reconstructing the outward mechanism of society. It encourages them to fancy that their welfare is more dependent on what Government does than on what they do themselves; on the wisdom and power of their legislators than on their own intelligence and virtue. There can be no more foolish and baneful illusion. Let any drunkard become sober, or any profligate a man of clean and regular life, and he has done far more for himself than any Government can do for him. Let Irishmen deliver themselves from the superstition that their clergy can, by an act of excommunication, exclude them from the pale of salvation, and they will thereby obtain both for themselves and their country more moral and political liberty than any Home Rule Bill or other Act of Parlia-

ment can give them; while Almighty Power itself cannot make them free either as citizens or as men so long as they retain in their hearts that servile faith.”<sup>1</sup> Here speaks, remember, a man of the people: but also *the* man of *a* people. John Knox and Thomas Reid, being dead, yet prophesy. Nevertheless, the accent strikes a very modern note on occasions, and we feel that we are travelling far from Bishop Butler, with whom one is constantly tempted to compare Flint. This appears most of all in “Agnosticism.” The admirable criticism of Paulsen<sup>2</sup>; the case *pro* and *con* “authority in matters of religious belief,” with its tart reference to the “religious-historical” school<sup>3</sup>; the overwhelming exposure of the fallacies of the Ritschlians<sup>4</sup>; and the judicious summary of the services rendered by the Critical Philosophy in the realm of theological inquiry,<sup>5</sup> are excellent specimens of Flint at his best, when in contact with recent movements. Be it said, too, that he does not remain untouched. In this, for instance, the voice is not quite the voice of Flint in 1874: “The reason to which belief ought to be conformed . . . is the entire rational self, regulating all, and not dispensing with any of the principles and powers of human nature so far as they can be rationally controlled, made ‘subservient to moral purposes,’ and ‘auxiliar to Divine.’ ‘Vernunft,’ says a recent writer on Logic, ‘ist der Gesamtausdruck für die höchste, umfassendste, geist-eigertste Bethätigung des gesamten Seelenlebens des Menschen.’ Reason cannot dispense with the aid, for instance, even of imagination in any department of science or any sphere of ordinary life.”<sup>6</sup> And, in this, Flint comes very nigh complete escape from the

<sup>1</sup> “Socialism,” pp. 270-1.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 244 f.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 538 f.

<sup>4</sup> pp. 592 f.

<sup>5</sup> pp. 643 f.

<sup>6</sup> “Agnosticism,” p. 514.

whole circle of the Scottish presuppositions: "The objective side of knowledge *per se* is not perceivable or even conceivable by any human mind. It is, as Ferrier says, 'what we can neither know nor be ignorant of any more than we can think of a centreless circle or of a stick with only one end.' Sheer nonsense, the entirely inconceivable, is neither knowledge nor ignorance. A subjective side without an objective side is, of course, as absurd as an objective without a subjective."<sup>1</sup> Finally, when compelled to launch out boldly against pragmatic anarchy, he forges an aphorism, which if thought through, would bring him into complete accord with the great constructive masters who moulded his own epoch. "No belief not inclusive of a sense of resting on truth can produce good."<sup>2</sup> These, and many others which might be cited, serve to illustrate his self-persuasion by his own candour and catholicity.

Before passing, in conclusion, to the man himself,<sup>3</sup> I would like to record the paramount impression left by his works. It is expressed pointedly by Carlyle, in his Edinburgh Rectorial Address: "'Diligent!' that included all virtues that a student can have." Flint's learning, and his books, represent an enormous effort of will-power, of concentration, of self-sacrifice on the altar of knowledge. They portend toughened moral strength; and it was this, I am told, that touched his students so deeply. It gave them an incarnate ideal, not mere spoken maxims, for the guidance of life. Hastie often referred to this in speaking of his master; and no long acquaintance with Flint was necessary to realise that the secret of his power lay here. He was an embodied ethical force. As a student, he never came in contact with

<sup>1</sup> "Agnosticism," p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 500-510.

a dominating personality,<sup>1</sup> and one soon discovered that, amid the conflicts of his age, he had learned to stand fast, because he had learned to dominate himself. His very loneliness, alike as a man and a thinker, was impressive; not on account of any self-sufficiency—he was poles apart from such defects—but rather in that he had a tense simplicity, a transparent human dignity. Thus, I never left his side without experiencing the conviction that he was an indefinitely larger person than anything his printed pages conveyed, than anything they were ever likely to convey to those who knew him not.

<sup>1</sup> I am well aware that several of his teachers were masterful individuals—Ramsay and Buchanan, for example. But no man who could be characterised as a “seminal” mind—even remotely—was numbered among them. Had Thomson been a humanist, the situation might have been entirely different.

## CHAPTER IX

### EDINBURGH

THE Chair of Divinity in Edinburgh University became vacant in October 1875 by the death of Dr Crawford. The late Professor had the confidence of the Church. He had occupied his Chair for many years and had trained a race of students who were handing on the old traditions of Scottish theological scholarship. He was the first Baird Lecturer and had published several volumes which in their day were regarded as standard works. This is particularly true of his treatises on the "Fatherhood of God," and the "Doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the Atonement." It cannot, however, be said that he was fully abreast of modern theological scholarship. He was a fine specimen of the old school and was in the line of succession of Hill and Chalmers, but he remained unaffected by the new movements which had originated on the Continent and were now beginning to spread over England and Scotland. Indeed it was the appearance of these new movements and the sympathy manifested for them in certain quarters, which turned the eyes of those who regarded themselves as the best friends of the Church and of sound doctrine, towards the Professor of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews as, in their judgment, the one man who could make a stand against what they regarded as dangerous innovations, and steer a theological course of safety if not of progress.

With few exceptions the teachers of theology in Scotland at the time were far from distinguished. The



thought of the country had not as yet emancipated itself from the reactionary tendencies and effects of the Disruption. Very few inducements were held out to the clergy to cultivate theological scholarship. The emoluments of the Divinity Chairs were poor, election to them was uncertain, and the Confessional bonds which had for generations restrained speculation were, owing to the spirit and circumstances of the times, being made firmer than ever. It is true that a few choice spirits had dared to risk opposition and even persecution in the interests of a freer theology. In this select band were to be found such men as Dr John Caird, Dr John Tulloch, Dr Robert Lee, Dr Story, Dr Wallace, and Dr Cunningham. Four of these, Caird, Tulloch, Lee and Wallace, occupied chairs in one or other of our Universities, and there can be no doubt whatsoever that their teaching had very considerable influence on their students and upon the theological outlook of the day. They had been inspired by the movements to which reference has already been made, they chafed against the restrictions that hemmed in their efforts, and having the courage of their convictions they strove to bring the thought of Scotland into line with other progressive countries. Their teaching, for the most part, dealt with doctrine; the Biblical scholarship which gave birth to the Higher Criticism had not as yet sprung up in our midst.

The good men who had at heart what they conceived to be the true interests of the Church took alarm at the progress of this new movement; they thought, as men similarly minded have thought in every age, that the Ark of God was in danger. They were the men who persecuted Dr Lee, who raised the charge of heresy against Dr Wallace and who even threatened Principal Caird. They acted, no doubt,

according to their lights and meant no harm to anybody, not even to the objects of their attacks. They thought very probably that the chastisement which they intended for them would have a twofold result, their salvation and that of the Church as well. It was accordingly under the stress of such circumstances that they determined to leave no stone unturned in order to induce Professor Flint to offer himself for the Edinburgh Chair, and at the same time to secure his appointment. One, of course, is in doubt as to whether these men quite understood Flint's theological position. He was undoubtedly sound in the fundamentals, as all great theologians from the days of Augustine have shown themselves to be; but while they fully appreciated the depth and range of his scholarship, his searching criticism of doubtful theories and, above all, his pure and noble nature, his quiet but sincere piety, and the loftiness of his character, they did not, and they could not, fully measure the width of his intellectual sympathies, nor perceive that the only standard by which he judged any and every theory was not this Confession or that, but reason and truth. This should never be forgotten in estimating Flint's philosophical and theological position. It is, of course, true that he was a convinced Christian man, but he was so because Christianity satisfied reason and truth; if he held by the essentials of the faith, it was for the same cause. He was far too learned, far too sensible, and far too just a man, to condemn any view, new or old, without first of all examining it in the light of all that had ever been said or written on the subject. He then judged it on its merits. Dr Wallace was one of his closest and most valued friends, so was Principal Caird, and all three spoke of each other in terms of the warmest admiration. It would be a profound mistake to regard

Flint as the champion of orthodoxy, in the obscurantist sense of the word ; he was far too great a man for that.

Flint at this time was literally bombarded with letters from those who were regarded as the leaders of the Church, all praying him to offer himself for the Edinburgh Chair. Each represented the case from his own point of view, but their main reasons for pressing him to consider the proposal favourably are fully expressed in a letter from Dr Stevenson, Minister of St George's.

EDINBURGH, *11th November 1875.*

MY DEAR MR FLINT,—I am already aware of your preference for those philosophical studies to which for some time you have devoted yourself so sedulously and with so much success, and but for the importance of the object to which I am about to refer I would not have desired to interfere in any way with your predilections. At the present moment it appears to me that our Church and, perhaps I ought to say, other Churches are situated in very critical circumstances, chiefly owing to the unsettled state of many minds in regard to even the fundamental tenets of religion, and therefore it is of the utmost importance that our Chairs of Divinity should be occupied by men whose principles shall command the confidence of the Church and whose abilities and attainments shall command the respect of the most learned opponents as well as of their own friends. Now I, and a very large number of my brethren, are of the opinion, that no one could be appointed to the vacant Chair in Edinburgh who could so certainly accomplish these objects as yourself, and I have taken the liberty of writing this letter in the hope that you will take this matter into your favourable consideration and enable me to say, where it may be necessary or useful, that you are not so wedded to philosophy, but that you might find it to be your duty, in present circumstances, to exchange it for theology. I seldom appear on the streets or in the University Club without being appealed to by someone or other as to the filling up of the vacancy of the Chair of Theology, and while I uniformly name you as the man whom of all others I would prefer, I am generally met with the remark that you have made up your mind to stick to philosophy.

Among those most eager to induce Flint to allow himself to be put forward was Dr Phin, Convener of

the Home Mission Committee, and one of the arguments which he used in support of his plea was that Dr Crawford had, before his death, pointed to the St Andrews Professor as his successor. Writing to Flint on the 5th November 1875, he says :—

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—There are few things which I am less likely to do than to give a rash pledge, but I am not comfortable about my position in reference to the Edinburgh Divinity Chair. You may remember that I told you in autumn of Crawford's anxious desire that you should be his successor when he anticipated resignation. Understanding you to decline in the most absolute manner the proposal, I could not refuse my best support (which is worth very little) to Dr Gloag, minister at Galashiels, of whose Biblical scholarship there can be no doubt. I am now, however, so thoroughly convinced that you are the only first-rate man who will be appointed and at the same time that your appointment, if you be named with your consent, is absolutely certain, that I promise to urge Gloag to withdraw from the contest in the event of your giving that consent. I cannot too emphatically express my earnest hope that you will accede to the entreaties which I know to be coming to you from many influential quarters, and allow yourself to be nominated. I am satisfied that a most useful and prominent position is within your reach and that all your work in philosophy may be turned to the best possible account while you gain new and greater honour in theology.

One of the earliest and most persistent of Flint's petitioners was Dr Charteris, who was born in the neighbouring parish to Flint's birthplace and who had recently been appointed to the Chair of Biblical Criticism in Edinburgh University. He also puts forward a fresh argument in support of the proposal which was now becoming general throughout the Church.

Had Dr Crawford been asked to name his successor I am sure he would have named you. I hope overtures will be made to you which you may be able to accept and that the salary may be made for you more adequate to the responsibility.

If you can think of it I do hope you will. *You would follow Chalmers, and you might do what he did.*

The last sentence of Dr Charteris's letter is clear enough in one sense. He holds out as an inducement to Flint the fact that if he came to Edinburgh he would be following in the footsteps of Chalmers, who left Flint's own Chair in St Andrews for the one that was now vacant in the Metropolitan University. In another sense, however, the sentence is somewhat ambiguous, for to do as Chalmers did would be to break up the Church and cause another Disruption. Charteris's meaning, however, was no doubt that Flint would be the great power which Chalmers had been as a Professor of Theology.

It is well worth noting that while the prime movers in the matter were the champions of orthodoxy, the hope that Flint would allow himself to be nominated was heartily shared by those who were suspected of Broad Churchism. Indeed, every section of the clergy was eager to see him elected to the Chair. This is brought out in a letter which was written to him by his friend A.K.H.B., minister of St Andrews.

THE UNIVERSITY CLUB,  
EDINBURGH.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR FLINT,—I had a talk yesterday with the Solicitor-General as to the Divinity Chair and I have spoken with several typical persons since I came here. There is a general looking towards you from very diverse quarters. I have little doubt that if you would accept, it would be offered you in a very gratifying way, and it would seem as if your appointment would unite and satisfy discordant parties as that of no other man yet named or likely to be named would. Of course it would be a grievous loss to me if you left St Andrews, but I cannot do other than make the facts known to you, and remembering that a communication from you did much to bring me to St Andrews, when I was in great perplexity. I have ventured to say this much.

I go home to-morrow and shall try to see you on Wednesday. Meantime let me add that M<sup>r</sup> Murtrie tells me that *Wallace and Phin* would be equally pleased with your appointment. Is there another of whom that could be said ?

The course of the negotiations, like that of true love, did not run quite smoothly. A certain disturbing element was introduced by something more than a rumour that Principal Tulloch had an eye on the Chair. He was at the time a liberal and belonged to the Broad Church party. This would naturally appeal to the radicals among the Curators. Tulloch was probably not very much in earnest in his candidature, and very likely thought that the opportunity of declining the appointment, should it be offered, might strengthen his position in St Andrews. Nor should it be forgotten that the emoluments of his Chair and Principalship were at that time somewhat meagre. Indeed, when the Philosophy Chair in Glasgow was vacant in 1866, he told Flint that he was seriously considering whether he should not apply for it. But there was no chance of his being appointed to the Edinburgh Chair on this occasion, if Flint could be induced to stand. There was a difficulty. Flint had not yet forgotten the conduct of the Curators in connection with the election to the Moral Philosophy Chair in 1868. "Once bitten twice shy," was a maxim which no doubt appealed to him. But the real reasons for his hesitation, and even declination, are frankly stated in a letter to his friend Mr James A. Campbell, who wrote strongly urging him to accept nomination. Flint says:—

So long as the salaries of our theological Chairs are only a half, or less than half, of many of our city churches, I do not see that the Church can expect men to make great sacrifices in regard to work in order to fill them. Even if I had the offer of the Edinburgh Chair of Divinity, by accepting it I should not only have to undertake a vast amount of new work, but to be content with a £100 a year less than I can easily make by congenial literary work in my present situation. It was very different in the case of Dr Chalmers. He was only five years here, I am in my twelfth session. He never made serious or extensive study of Moral Philosophy at all,

and I have been occupying myself with it as my main business in life.

The arguments which I do feel the force of, are the wide field of immediate usefulness which the position presents and the harm which will be done if a bad appointment is made. I sincerely trust, however, that the electors will be guided to a good choice. Should their choice be so limited that this is impossible, the Church will only have to blame her own parsimony for leaving her theological Chairs in the state of miserable poverty in which they at present are.

It is interesting to follow the movements of the ecclesiastical wire-pullers at this juncture. For once, at least, they were exercising their restless ingenuity in a good cause. Drs. Phin, Stevenson, Scott, Charteris, and Alison among the clergy, and representative elders like T. G. Murray and J. A. Campbell among the laity, are seen exchanging calls, buttonholing Curators, and bringing every possible pressure to bear upon Flint to have the end in view secured. They determined upon two important steps, which they were convinced must be taken if success was to attend the movement. The first was a Requisition, largely signed by the ministers of the Church, urging Flint to come forward; the second was a guarantee that his salary, if appointed, should not be, in any case, less than his income at St Andrews. The leading Presbyteries of the Church gladly fell in with the first proposal, and there is before me a list of signatures which must have appealed strongly to Flint and made him to feel that it was his duty to give his most serious consideration to the call that was being now made to him and, if at all possible, to offer himself for an appointment which was clearly within his reach. That the Requisition had this effect is clearly seen from the following letter:—

ABBEEY PARK VILLA, ST ANDREWS,  
*January 21st, 1876.*

MY LORD,—I have received the Requisition to which your Lordship's name is attached, and feel deeply gratified by such an expres-

sion of opinion from those known to have so sincerely at heart the interests of Christian truth. I have come to believe it to be undoubtedly my duty to apply for the vacant Chair and have accordingly done so this day. The application may be unsuccessful, but it will in itself I hope be taken as a sign of my willingness to serve the Church and of my grateful appreciation of the kindness which has been at this time so largely shown towards me by the members of the Church. If it be successful, I trust I may be enabled to manifest my gratitude in a larger measure by being strengthened from above to discharge faithfully the serious and important duties of the office.

It will thus be seen that Flint delayed sending in his application until the very last moment, and it was only the certainty that his appointment was universally desired by the Church that induced him to stand. The letter which he wrote to Mr James A. Campbell clearly states, what everybody knew, that his heart was in the subject which he had for twelve years been teaching in St Andrews. Although the course of his studies had for the time been interrupted by the preparation of his Baird Lectures, he looked forward to a speedy resumption of them and to the completion of the second volume of his "Philosophy of History." It may be true that all the gates to promotion in the subject of his own Chair were barred against him, so far as the Scottish Universities were concerned. There was in the course of nature very little chance of a vacancy in the Moral Philosophy Chairs at any one of them, and those of Glasgow and Edinburgh, in particular, which had recently been filled up, were the only two worth considering. Still, the wider field which Edinburgh would give him and the greater influence that he would necessarily exert upon the country as Professor of Divinity, coupled with the call which the largely signed Requisition made to him, helped him to make up his mind and to place himself at the service of the Church.

The second step which, as we have seen, it was



necessary for those to take, who were anxious to secure Flint's appointment, was to make the emoluments of the Chair worthy of his consideration. No man ever concerned himself less about money than he, but, as he himself states, it would be absurd for him to sacrifice at least £100 a year and the subject which he loved, even for the sake of the Church, not to speak of the formidable task which would lie before him in preparing three courses of lectures on a fresh subject. A larger salary could not of itself bribe him. His contributions to *Mind*, apart from other literary projects, added considerably to his income and a legacy which his mother had some time previously received made the position of his family more comfortable. That the supplement to the stipend of the Edinburgh Chair, about which so much was said shortly afterwards, offered very little inducement to him may be seen from the silence with which he received the following letter from Dr Stevenson.

EDINBURGH, 27th December, 1875.

MY DEAR MR FLINT,—I have made so much progress in raising a sum for the purpose of securing an augmentation to the revenues of the Divinity Chair so as to make them equal to £800 that I am quite sure of success; and I wish to say that I think you ought now to intimate that while you decline to canvass for the Chair you beg to state that if the Curators should be pleased to offer you the appointment you should feel it your duty to accept it. One of the Curators told me this morning that if you would do this they would be unanimous in electing you.

This letter was written on the 27th of December 1875, and Flint's application was not sent in until the 21st of January 1876, almost a month later, so that the promise of a few hundreds more a year did not seem to have had much weight with him. Certainly if the income was not to be made equal to what he had in

St Andrews he would not have considered it ; and who would have blamed him ? The dignity and even the usefulness of the Professor of Divinity in the Capital of Scotland could never have been maintained on £400 a year, and Flint would have been a very foolish man indeed to have thought of the appointment. But that very serious difficulty having been removed, it was the Requisition that weighed with him in the end and induced him to make the sacrifice. But he never regretted it. Whatever his future as a philosopher might have been, his career as a theologian forms a red letter in the history of Scottish thought during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The outside world usually holds an exaggerated view of the emoluments of ministers and professors, or at any rate takes it for granted that "all is well," and it does not become men in their position to make a loud moan when the shoe of want pinches. But even so great a man as Dr Chalmers was forced to raise the question of the meagreness of the salary attached to the very Chair which Flint was now pressed to accept, and the recollection of his predecessor's sore financial plight was probably not the least factor in causing him to hesitate. In a letter dated June 18th, 1835, to his friend Mr Sinclair, Chalmers gives a statement of the facts as follows :—

. . . . At the time of my entering on the professorship, which I now hold, and which was in November 1828, the salary of £196 a year formed the sum total of the emoluments of the office. At that time, fees were not exigible from the students of Divinity.

The first step towards the increase of the emoluments took place in 1829. It was ordained by the Town-Council, who were the patron of the University, and have absolute power over its arrangements, that each professional student should pay a fee of £2, 2s. a year and each non-professional a fee of £3, 3s. It should be remarked that scarcely ever had it been the practice for non-professional

students to attend the theological class, and far less to pay for their attendance. Certain it is that any revenue from their fees ought not to be counted on in estimating the sure and regular income of the professor. In point of fact my income last year from the professional student amounted to about £300 and from the non-professional to a little above £100 more, but the proper way of reckoning the future likelihoods of the professional income from fees alone would be to restrict the computation to professional students, I mean those who are destined for the Church; and it would be injurious both to myself and to my successors if this were rated at any sum above £300 a year.

But more than this. Within these two years a great disaster has befallen the office; the Town-Council has become insolvent, the salaries of the professors in so far as they are paid by the City Corporation, and unfortunately the whole of mine is so paid, are suspended. By an adverse decision of the Court of Session all hope of redress is put off for an indefinite period. For these last three terms I have received no half-yearly salary, and my strictly professional income is reduced to £300 annually. The additional £100 from non-professional students ought not to be counted in any general measure for the permanent provision of our University offices; and at all events this incidental addition to my emoluments does not save from the *res angusta domi* in a case where the expenditure in my station with its various exposures is such, that I have not been able to restrain it to £800 a year.

Chalmers memorialised the Government, but in vain, and in order to keep the wolf from the door he listened to his publisher's proposal of issuing in quarterly volumes a cheap and uniform edition of his works.

The election to the Chair took place on the 7th February 1876. Flint at the time was in Glasgow delivering his first course of Baird Lectures. The news was wired by his sister, who was with him, to their parents at St Andrews in a telegram that is still preserved. "We have this moment heard of Robert's appointment to the Chair, I presume, unanimously."

From the many letters of congratulation he received two, because of their representative character may be

selected. The first was from Dr Robert Wallace, who, as Professor of Church History, would be one of Flint's colleagues in the Faculty of Divinity. He says:—

One word to express the great gratification with which I read the announcement in to-day's paper of your appointment to our Divinity Chair. It is more than, until lately, I ventured to hope for, as I had got to believe that you had devoted your life to philosophy. Since, however, you have seen your way to accept a Theological Chair I can say with all sincerity that, for the sake of our Faculty here, I am profoundly thankful that we are to be reinforced by such power and learning as yours, and shall do my humble utmost to make your position among us as pleasant as I am sure it will be influential.

The second was from Professor Campbell Fraser of the Chair of Logic. He writes:—

I beg very cordially to congratulate you and this University on the appointment made yesterday to the Chair of Theology.

I look with great hope and interest to one of your antecedents taking that Chair in these times, and I look with a personal interest to the pleasure of having you as a colleague, and to mutual sympathy in departments that have so much in common as the theological and speculative philosophy. While we shall be greatly strengthened in the philosophical part of this University by your coming among us, I think you will find good scope for your power as an Academical leader in the present state of the University of Edinburgh—so full of encouragement and with so many onward tendencies to work upon and through.

Flint, however, was not to be allowed to take up the duties of his new Chair without being subjected to considerable annoyance by an article and letters which appeared in the public press. The *Scotsman* newspaper was at the time in its heyday of power and influence under the brilliant editorship of Mr Alexander Russel. It was ever on the outlook for objects of attack, especially if these interfered in any way with what it regarded as liberty and true progress. Tyranny or repression in

every form it abhorred ; but sometimes in its eagerness on behalf of freedom and truth it went astray and shot its shafts into the air. This was a case in point, for in a leading article published two days after Flint's appointment it made an unwarranted attack upon one who had recently befriended the Church of Scotland in a way unprecedented at the time, and never since emulated. This was Mr James Baird of Cambusdoon, whose munificent gift of half a million sterling to the Church of Scotland has been of incalculable benefit to that institution for the past forty years. The *Scotsman* from the very first looked with great suspicion upon this gift, and time and again opened its columns for severe strictures upon the management of the Trust and the spirit by which those who controlled it were supposed to be guided. In the present instance it leaped to the conclusion that the man who had stepped forward to guarantee a supplement to the Chair of Divinity was Mr Baird, and no one else, and hinted that the money thus granted would be controlled in much the same way as the grants of the Trust which bears the donor's name. The *Scotsman* never made a greater mistake in its history. It would have been no dishonour to Mr Baird had he done as his critic indicated, nor would it have been any dishonour to Professor Flint to have occupied a Chair whose meagre endowments had been thus unconditionally supplemented. But as a matter of fact the transaction never took place, and the *Scotsman's* onslaught both upon Mr Baird and Professor Flint was as undeserved as it was unworthy. One, however, reads the article after those long years with a certain amount of pride, if not of pleasure, because of the brilliance of its style and the incisiveness of its attack. Besides credit must be given to a journal which, however mistaken in the

present instance, always stood up for freedom, righteousness and progress, both in Church and State.

The article, which correspondents dubbed the "Iron Age," or the "Iron and Flint Age" of the Church of Scotland, opens in the following manner :—

"The election, made on Monday, of a Professor of Divinity for Edinburgh University, supplies an additional and rather remarkable proof that the Church of Scotland has fully entered on her Iron Age. Though the rev. gentleman elected is by no means deficient in qualifications for the office, he is really, as it happens, appointed to it on account much more of iron than of divinity—is, in truth (unless uncontradicted and more than probable rumour is utterly astray), almost as much a product of Gartsherrie as any bar that ever bore that excellent marketable brand. The way in which the thing has been managed, and in which many similar things will be managed, is quite simple, though in this particular case there has been an attempt to introduce a little cunning. It is a popular mistake to suppose that Mr Baird gives money to the Church to be used for Church purposes ; he uses it himself within the Church for Baird purposes. The money is his, and he gives it on his own conditions, though in the present case no conditions are expressed, but only understood, and effective penalties for their breach equally well understood. The facts seem to amount to this, that Mr Baird has obtained, by something of the nature, though not at all of the name, of purchase, both the appointment to, and the control of, this Chair. It is known that Dr Flint and some other clergymen who were candidates, or eligibles, did not feel inclined or able to accept the Chair with its existing or ordinary emoluments. Mr Baird removes the difficulty as to Dr Flint, of course leaving the others under the difficulty. It then becomes known that Dr Flint will accept, though the others cannot, and Dr Flint is elected. But for Mr Baird, Dr Flint would not have been elected, or rather would not have permitted himself to be elected. He was elected, indeed, by the Curators, but then they could not have elected him had not Mr Baird preferred him. Does not that come practically to the same thing as the choice having been made by Mr Baird ?"

The article continues in much the same strain, proving to its own satisfaction its main thesis, and then it winds up with the natural inference that the new

Professor of Divinity would take his theology from the laird of Cambusdoon.

But when one man lets it be understood that he will pay another man certain sums, so long as that other man behaves to his satisfaction, there is really more control in the hands of the giver than there could be, if the whole transaction were stated with full formality, without much wax and parchment. Both parties, the benefactor and the beneficiary, are quite unbound to each other in law—only the benefactor is free to break off the connection when he chooses, with a gain to himself, while the liberty of the beneficiary consists in being free to break off the connection under penalty of a great loss. Mr Baird will continue to pay the Professor as long as he pleases, which means as long as the professor shall please him. Dr Flint is a man of learning and ability, but unless he exercise that learning and ability according to the views of Mr Baird he will forfeit the emoluments of his office which have induced or enabled him to accept it. However enlightened he may hereafter become from increased knowledge and study, he could only use his enlightenment at his peril. Like multitudes more, under the Baird dispensation, he will be under penalty to take his enlightenment, mainly, from the furnace flames of Gartsherrie.”

Neither Mr Baird nor Dr Flint took any notice of this article. It was not the habit of the Baird Trustees to reply to any of the attacks to which, at the time, they were being subjected, but Flint's friends, knowing how untrue the statements were, thought it advisable, if not necessary, to contradict them. The man who had secured that the emoluments of the Chair should reach £800 a year was Dr Stevenson of St George's, Edinburgh, and in a letter of congratulation to Flint on his appointment he refers to the matter :—

You have no doubt seen an offensive article in the *Scotsman* of last Wednesday, but I trust that you will take no notice of it. I am saying to everyone whom I can address on the subject, that the whole of the statements are groundless, and I authorise them to say the same and to quote me as their authority. I have stated to all and sundry, and to Mr Russel of the *Scotsman* himself, that Mr Baird and you had no communications on the subject. That I

myself was the principal medium of communication with you, both as to the propriety of becoming a candidate, and as to the possibility of augmenting the salary. And that as to conditions being imposed by anyone of the Baird family the assertion of such a thing is a scandal.

Dr Charteris wrote Flint in much the same strain; and told him to leave the matter in the hands of his friends who would take very good care of his reputation. Flint replies from 21 Sandyford Place, Glasgow, in the following letter:—

MY DEAR CHARTERIS,—Many thanks for your letter received this morning (February 10th), I have got yesterday's *Scotsman*, to-day, with difficulty. The article is certainly of a discreditable kind and merits to be contradicted. If you think it well to do so I fully approve, if not, I am content.

The duty of replying, however, was undertaken by Dr Stevenson, who wrote thus to the *Scotsman*:—

9 OXFORD TERRACE, *February 17, 1876.*

SIR,—Having been informed that certain allegations in the *Scotsman* regarding Professor Flint's appointment to the Divinity Chair are still believed in some quarters, I ask your insertion of a letter from me, as I was concerned in originating and promoting the requisition to him. In your notice of the appointment, you said—"Mr Flint sent in no application for the Chair until a requisition got up by gentlemen closely connected with the Baird Trust had been presented to him." In your leading article of the 9th, you stated over and over again that the appointment is Mr Baird's work, and you intimate that Mr Baird has induced Professor Flint to come forward as a candidate by offering him money on certain conditions, these conditions being that the money will be paid so long as he "behaves" to Mr Baird's "satisfaction."

It would appear from their silence that the Baird Trustees are to adhere to their resolution of leaving unnoticed newspaper and other criticisms upon their proceedings, and I therefore consider it due to Mr Flint, Mr Baird, and the requisitionists to say that to my certain knowledge neither Mr Baird nor anyone connected with the Baird Trust had any share in suggesting or promoting the requisition, or in inducing Professor Flint to come forward; that there is



no proposal or arrangement to augment the salary of the Divinity Chair held by him from the Baird Trust Fund ; and that no " conditions " or " penalties " are attached to the proposed supplement to the meagre salary of the Chair.

Moreover, it appears to me that it is a libel on the characters of the Curators to insinuate that they elected Mr Flint not because they thought him the most highly qualified, but because he would be the best endowed of all the candidates. It is not fair to the very large number of ministers and laymen in all parts of the country, and of all shades of opinion within the Church, who signed the requisitions entreating Mr Flint to come forward, to suppose that they were actuated by anything save trust in his character and admiration of his European reputation. You little know Professor Flint, of whom you speak so grudgingly, if you suppose he would bind himself by any conditions not inseparable from the office itself.—I am, etc.

R. H. STEVENSON.

Dr Stevenson writing to Flint, a few days afterwards, thus comments with pardonable satisfaction on his own letter. " Everyone who has spoken to me on the subject, says, that the enemy is slain. But I am not done with him yet. The allegation of the supplement being ' optional ' is so manifestly absurd that everybody ridicules it. But the idea of a journalist feeling at liberty to hazard any false statement, and then calling upon people to contradict what has no foundation, save in the imagination of its utterer, is almost beyond endurance." With this sound judgment, which all " able editors " might very well take to heart, and with the reflection that, owing to the largely increased number of students which the fame of the new professor drew to his class-room, very little of the much-talked about " supplement " was ever required, we may well take leave of the subject.

It was on the 14th of November 1876, about eight months after his appointment, that Flint delivered his Inaugural Address as Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh

University. It was marked by all his best qualities of mind and heart. After paying a warm tribute to the memory of his predecessor he addressed himself directly to the young men who were listening to him, and told them that the time had gone by when a statement was heard with special respect "merely because it was uttered in a pulpit or by a person with certain peculiarities of costume. There are large and influential sections of society in which an opinion has not more but less weight than is its due because it happens to be maintained by a man who has 'Rev.' prefixed to his name. The influence which a clergyman can exert in virtue merely of his professional character, in virtue of simply being a clergyman, is less to-day perhaps than ever it was, and there are few signs that it will become greater again hereafter. The professional influence of the clergy must, I believe, rest henceforth on no sacerdotal idea or corporate authority or class distinction, but be inseparable from, yea identical with, personal influence. The success of the minister must be wholly dependent on the worth of the man."

Having thus cleared the ground and put himself on a proper footing with his hearers, he tells them that their future success will depend upon their intellectual, moral, and religious attainments; upon the extent, solidity, and refinement of their culture, and upon the accuracy of their acquaintance with religious truth. But where and by what means was all this to be obtained? Not in the Divinity Halls of the Scottish Universities which, in the meagreness of their equipment, he declared were a scandal and a disgrace to the Church and the country. "Look at my own Chair," he exclaims, "and from a single point of view."

I am sent to teach theology—to give a three years' course of instruction in theology. Well, certainly I have no reason to com-

plain that my commission is not large enough or that I should have too little to do. I confess, however, that I think it exceedingly unwise to assign to any man so much to do. In the mere fact of requiring students to devote even three years to the acquisition of theology, there is an admission that it is not a department of knowledge particularly easy to master in a scientific way. But if this admission be well-founded would it not be juster to the students, juster to the teacher, juster to the science, and more rational in every respect, to have at least three professors of theology instead of one, and each with a one year's course instead of three ?”

He then proceeds to enumerate the different departments of the science, comparing it in this respect with medicine and showing how inadequate are the means at the disposal of his faculty for treating the numerous branches into which theology has stretched out. He mentions in particular the two recent departments of biblical theology and comparative theology, for the teaching of which no provision exists in the Scottish Universities, and points out the strides that have been made in Germany in the development of these two subjects. Speaking particularly of comparative theology he says with boldness and wisdom :—

The study itself is a magnificent illustration, not only that man was made for religion, but of what religion he was made for. The more accurately the general nature of religion is determined, and the more thoroughly its various forms are studied, and the more closely they are compared, the more conclusively will it appear that Christianity alone realises the ideal of religion, that it is the absolute religion and alone satisfies the spiritual wants of humanity.

What remedy does he suggest for so equipping the theological faculties of the Scottish Universities that they may be able to overtake the work which is demanded of them? “The state of the theological faculties in our Scottish Universities,” he declares, “is profoundly unsatisfactory and profoundly discouraging.”

It is none the less discouraging from the fact that the country and the churches have the power but not the will to remedy all that I complain of. Look at Edinburgh alone. It is obvious that were all the theological professorships which already exist in this city combined within this University that a proper distribution of studies among the professors would at once give us a Faculty of Theology of which the nation might justly be proud. One which would not need to bow the head in shame even before our noble Faculty of Medicine. One as large, as adequately representative of theology in its present state, as capable of providing the clergy of the country, the clergy of all denominations, with a complete theological education as are the faculties of theology in Berlin, or Leipzig, or Halle. Is it utopian to suppose that the common sense and the Christian sense of the country must sooner or later face the problem of how this is to be accomplished? Am I wrong even in thinking that it would not be found difficult to accomplish it if our zeal for Christian truth were a little stronger, and our Christian love a little more comprehensive and ardent?

Well, it is almost forty years since these words were uttered and this hope was expressed, and the ideal which he thought, and which every sane person must still think, to be anything but utopian, has never been realised. The science of theology has in the interval advanced by leaps and bounds; new departments have been added to it and yet our theological faculties are as meagrely equipped as ever. Indeed it is to this very subject of the progress of theology that he next addresses himself and in connection with it he utters some of his weightiest words. He believed with all his soul in the progress of his chosen science. "I know," he remarks "that there lurks in some minds the notion that progress in theology is impossible, that the knowledge of God is unlike all other knowledge in being unchanging and unprogressive. It is a notion against which I must protest, as it is an error which would deaden all enthusiasm and destroy all hope in the heart of the theologian." No new truth, he admits,

may be discovered about God, but the old truths and attributes of the Godhead have been unspeakably enriched during the centuries through a deeper and wider apprehension of them and their contents. He points out how true this is of such doctrines as the Trinity and the Atonement, and he knows no reason why men's knowledge of the great Christian verities should not grow wider and deeper from age to age.

There may be, and there ought to be a continuous progress in theology and, whatever may have been said on the contrary, its history on the whole is a history of progress. And one of the conditions of such progress is that the faculties of theology should be sufficiently large and properly organised. That condition, as I have said, is non-existent in this country, and so, to the disgrace of the Scottish name and Scottish Churches, our theology lies stranded high and dry on a sandbank from which God alone knows when it is to get off, although one united and hearty push of the collective Christian community might set it afloat and send it on a prosperous voyage unto a glorious haven.

He then refers to what he afterwards more fully elaborated in his *Encyclopædia Britannica* article on "Theism." He points out the interdependence of theology and the sciences; how every science leads up to theology, and how theology profits by the sciences. "He can be no wise theologian," he says, "who does not perceive that to a large extent he is dependent on the researches of men of science for his data and who, firm in the faith that God will never be disgraced by his works, is not ready to accept all that is truly discovered about those works in order to understand thereby God's character. . . . The knowledge of God, far from being unlike other knowledge, unprogressive, is, or at least ought to be, of all knowledge, the most progressive; just for this simple reason that every increase of other knowledge—be it the knowledge of outward nature, or of the human soul, or of history,

be it the knowledge of truth, or beauty, or goodness—ought also to increase our knowledge of Him.”

Flint, accordingly, welcomes every effort in search of truth, even though the results might for the time seem to militate against theology. He declares that progress in theology as in every other department of knowledge is largely through antagonism, and that it is in the clash and conflict of opposing opinions that the sparks of truth are seen to fly out. Hence he declares that, “every creed is like a shield, thickly and deeply dented with the marks of battle. Every distinctly formulated doctrine has been tried and fashioned in the fires of controversy.” He believes that the law of the past will continue to be the law of the future. “Where progress is, there will be conflict.” For this reason he has no fear of materialism, pantheism or any other “ism”; in fact, he welcomes every opponent if he be an honest one, and is ready to give him battle, for out of the conflict truth is bound to emerge.

He finally refers to a third condition of progress in theology, namely, “that theologians should combine due respect to the collective reason in history with due respect to the rights of their own individual reasons. All true progress in nature brings the new out of the old by the continuous growth and elaboration of the germs of life into organic completeness. The only true progress in theology also is that continuous and consistent development which brings the new out of the old instead of parting with the old for the new, which increases knowledge for the future through retaining, applying and utilising the truth which the past has brought to the present.”

Having thus taken his stand on the only true conception of the law of progress he issues a challenge to those, and they were numerous in his day, who, in the

interests of freedom, would discard the past and especially the creeds and systems which the piety, scholarship, and earnest reflection of the Christian ages had produced and elaborated.

Amongst the strange religious counsellors of our time are those who recommend us to cast to the winds our creeds, our systems, our definite dogmas, our theology, and return to the primitive simplicity of religion as embodied in the New Testament. They do not see that what they would have us cast off is just what the reason and piety of the Christian world have been able to elicit from the original revelation; that in asking us to return to the point from which it has taken eighteen centuries to advance they virtually affirm that God has not been present to the reasons of His children in their study of His Word during all these centuries; that it is only through each generation having been called and privileged to bring some truth or aspect of truth into clearer light, to counteract some error, to bear its part in upholding the richness of meaning latent in the Divine Word that the whole circle of Christian teaching will be traversed in its natural order, while no generation will be called upon to undo all that its predecessors have done, or would be able, even if it tried, to drive the movement of history backwards. I am firmly persuaded that it is only in the line of what has been done in the past—only in the line of our creeds, of our great doctrinal systems, of our definite dogmas—that there will be, or can be, theological progress in the future; and that to discard these creeds, systems, and dogmas would be as irrational as to throw off all the laws and institutions, all the countless arrangements of the elaborated civilisation in which we live and retrograde to the rude and simple life of the earliest dwellers in Asia and Europe. While, however, the theologian ought to be conservative of the truth which has been already acquired, he is bound not to rest in it, but to use it as the means of further acquisition. He is bound to stand in no servile relation to the past, but, on the contrary, to help his generation, so far as his ability extends, to surpass and outgrow it.

We make bold to say that no theologian ever spoke wiser words, and they are as much needed to-day as ever. Flint risked being charged as a reactionary, and those who stand by him at the present time must not be afraid of being classed in the same category. But

the position which he took up was a scientific one, the only possible one, then, and at all times. He showed his breadth of view, his grip of the whole subject and his capacity for dealing with it in a way which few of his fellow-theologians in Scotland at the time possessed. Having thus stated his view of the place which creeds and systems ought to hold in the mind of the progressive theologian, he refers directly to the Westminster Confession of Faith and boldly says of it what he had said of all Christian creeds in general. This passage in his address created much commotion, was laid hold of in the public press by editors and numerous correspondents, and provoked a discussion which no doubt helped to clear the air, but which at the same time left the Professor of Divinity standing firmly by his position.

There seems to be a notion in many minds that if we accept the truth found by others we lose the right to seek for it ourselves. We are warned, for example, that if we sign the Westminster Confession of Faith, we forego our intellectual liberty; that we pledge ourselves to regard every word and sentence of it as the ultimate truth attainable by the human mind regarding revealed religion; that we can have no right afterwards to exercise our minds freely on theological subjects, and ought not even to dream of original investigations or original discoveries. Now, most certainly, had I believed anything of this kind, at no period of my life would the Confession of Faith have been signed by me. I have signed it because I believed the doctrine of it to be true—a doctrine fairly deducible from God's Word—one which cannot be rejected so long as the Scriptures are accepted as His Word, and because I admitted the right and expediency of the Church having a Confession. I have not signed it because I believed it to be on all points, or on any point, the highest and most perfect expression of divine truth which the human mind can attain. I believe that the doctrine of it will not and cannot be shown to be false, and that it must therefore be accepted by those who would advance farther in the way of religious truth. I do not believe that the acceptance of it prevents farther advance in regard to any doctrine which it contains. Those who maintain its acceptance to be incompatible with all-sided and



endless progress seem to me to labour under the same curious delusion as would a man who maintained that acceptance of Euclid implied rejection of the differential calculus and quaternions, or that the signing of Newton's "Principia," in a country or institution, say where there was a danger of the Ptolemaic system being taught—would be inconsistent with belief in the advance of physical science since the publication of that celebrated work.

The two leading journals in Scotland, while paying unstinted compliments to the learning, ability, and originality of the address, found fault with what they declared to be its "lame and illogical conclusion." In other words, while admiring Flint's advocacy of progress in theology, they believed that such progress could only be attained by the Westminster Confession of Faith along with others of a similar character being brushed aside or swept out of existence. It is quite needless to show the absurdity of such a proposition. It is absolutely unscientific. An army of correspondents entered the lists and showered letters through the press upon the public. The majority of them, strange to say, failed to understand the question at issue, and even Professor Blackie, intellectually nimble though he was, did not succeed on this occasion in hitting the mark. Of all the contributions which Flint's lecture provoked the versatile professor's was the happiest, and not the least so, because it took the form of verse. It appeared in the *Scotsman*.

#### CONFESSION OF FAITH

SIR,—My learned, candid, large-minded, and highly-esteemed colleague, Dr Flint, compares the Confession of Faith to the Elements of Euclid. Every man is free to choose his comparisons: I rather prefer to compare that venerable document to the gilded cage of a canary bird: with what propriety you may judge, if you think the following verses worth inserting.

JOHN S. BLACKIE.

## CREEDS AND CANARIES

I had a sweet canary bird,  
 Whose little wing was never stirred  
     Beyond the wires around it ;  
 I looked upon my dainty bird,  
 And while I looked my heart was stirred  
 To think that pretty prisoned thing  
 May never flap its native wing  
     Beyond the bars that bound it !

I went and ope'd the little door,  
 And looked, but, sooth, I wondered sore  
     To see my small canary :  
 With jerking head and pecking bill,  
 Within the wires it tarried still,  
 And had no lust abroad to spring,  
 And flit about with ransomed wing  
     In ample range and airy !

Well, well ! quoth I, 'tis plain to see  
 You have no notion to be free,  
     So stay within your cage now !  
 And yet, methinks you are no fool,  
 And, safely bound by custom'd rule,  
 You wisely shun a larger home,  
 Where cats and dreadful dogs may roam,  
     If you should leave your cage now !

If birds are wise, men are not fools,  
 For they too have their custom'd rules  
     And pretty gilded cages ;  
 And should you wish to make them free,  
 Just ope the door, and you will see  
 No folded wing they 'gin to stir,  
 But much with prudent ease prefer  
     Of their own gilded cages.

The lawyer and the grave D.D.,  
 Who find strong bond of unity  
     In old time-hallowed pages,  
 With sanctioned text and hoary creed  
 And fond tradition serve their need,

And live as safe and shielded well  
 As lobsters in close-mailéd shell,  
 Or birds in gilded cages.

And though you make a dusty din,  
 They wrap them closer in their skin,  
 And con their ancient lessons ;  
 And they are wise ; for who can tell  
 What risks may lurk and dangers fell  
 To helmless souls all tossed about  
 In seas of drivél and of doubt,  
 Unmoored from Old Confessions ?

Flint's alleged comparison of the Confession to Euclid, a mistake into which even Blackie, as the foregoing verses testify, unwittingly stumbled, produced something like a sensation and provided material for conversation and discussion in many quarters. He allowed this gross misconception of his views to pass unchallenged, but in the following year at the opening of the Divinity Class he delivered an address in which he referred to it.

Some persons, once on a time, published the wonderful information that he had represented the Confession as the Euclid of theology, a faultless demonstration. But of course what he had really said had even less resemblance to that than Monmouth to Macedon. He was not aware he ever either affirmed or implied, that there was any Euclid in theology, or demonstration of faultlessness in the Confession. There was undoubtedly room for very considerable differences in the interpretation of the Confession, as there must be in the interpretation of every Confession which human ingenuity could devise.

And then he goes on to give expression to an opinion which startled many, and which, once more, provided material for discussion and correspondence.

To some the Confession seemed to teach that the world was made in six literal days, that there were infants who were lost, and that no heathen could be saved. Like many others he could find none

of these doctrines in it. But of course he naturally felt extremely tolerant towards persons who had only such objections to the Confession as those. Their faith in these points was also in reality his. He could not on account of such divergencies wish them out of the Church, although he might wish that they might interpret differently the Creed of the Church. The Church, it seemed to him, was bound to be most tolerant even towards attacks on its Confession, however vexatious such attacks might be, when they arose from differences of interpretation.

One need not now be surprised at the difficulty which those who first heard or read Flint's opening lecture, and the words just now quoted, experienced in placing him. He was somewhat of an enigma to them, and this for a very simple reason. The theological world in their day in Scotland was divided into two camps, the orthodox and the heterodox, into Evangelicalism and Broad Churchism. The positivism of the former consisted in its blind acceptance of the Westminster Confession and the negativism of the latter in its equally blind rejection of that time-honoured document. But here was a man who belonged to neither school, who transcended both, and while freeing himself from the obscurantism of the one and the nihilism of the other presented a scientific view of theology and theological progress which was so new as to be, to many, unintelligible. Our point of view in these days is very different from that of two generations ago. Progress in theology is seen to be conditioned by the law which regulates progress in every other department of knowledge, and this result, it must be admitted, is largely due to the ability, learning, and wisdom of Dr Flint who undoubtedly inaugurated a new era in Scottish theology.

The Professor of Divinity had now made his bow to the public, and he quickly settled down to the work which was to engage his heart and mind for the next

seven and twenty years. The great world outside knew him through those masterly treatises which carried his name over every Continent. A more limited circle had occasionally the privilege of hearing him preach or lecture, but his class-room was his throne, and each succeeding generation of students his warm admirers and his devoted disciples. One has only to glance through the numerous note-books that contain his lectures and to see the care with which his prelections were prepared, the thoroughness of execution and even the neatness of the hand-writing, with scarcely an erasure or blot on any single page, to be almost overwhelmed by the amount of patient labour, supreme scholarship, conscientious thought, and consummate ability, that mark them. He had many eminent colleagues in the University of Edinburgh, and he was placed at a disadvantage in lecturing to students who were already somewhat tired of the routine of the class-room, but they all confess to a fresh awakening when they came under Flint, and to having received an inspiration from his lectures and his personality, imparted by no other professor under whom they had studied.

It is important to record a first-hand impression of Flint's qualities and powers as a professor, and this I am fortunately able to give by one who himself was a most distinguished student, and whose words from his position and reputation will be read with the attention which they deserve; I mean the Rev. Dr Fisher of St Cuthbert's Parish Church, Edinburgh.

“It is easy to be reminiscent about Flint. For, more than any other whom I have known, he was an ‘epoch maker’ in the intellectual life of young men. John Morley in his ‘Burke’ says that that is a ‘coveted epithet’ to win.

“ In the old days at Edinburgh University, which I recall, Professor Sellar was fascinating his students by his embodiment of the classical spirit ; and Professor Fraser was awakening them from dogmatic slumber and introducing them in wonderful ways to the world of speculation. But those eminent men were not more inspiring than Flint. Dogmatic Theology seems a dull subject, and students were prepared to find it dull. Yet they soon discovered that they had come upon a man who could relate every aspect of it to intellectual interests. Willy-nilly, they saw that the Queen of the Sciences was not a distant and dismal monarch, but a mistress they were to own and love, as British folk were beginning to own and love Queen Victoria, just in those years in the early 'eighties of which I am writing.

“ Flint was ever anxious that his men should recognise that Theology was a science, to be pursued with the same apparatus and the same disinterested enthusiasm as the other sciences of mind. He was most successful, we used to think, in his lectures on Apologetic. He was very interesting when he analysed and criticised Butler. And his excursions into Biblical Theology brought back nutritive material. Yet his massive logic was most at home in the realm of pure Dogmatic. It will be said later that Flint hardly impressed a system of his own upon men's minds, nor indeed added much to 'Hodge,' whose ponderous Calvinism he still consented to admire. But it was in his grasp of great principles that Flint seemed to us at the height of his splendid powers. Language little adorned but lucid as the day set forth solid thinking ; and those who listened to the Professor felt as if they were looking at some huge rock round which waves eddy and beat in vain. Nimbleness there was not, nor poetry, nor the



Photo, Horsburgh, Edinburgh

PROFESSOR FLINT

1879

A FEW YEARS AFTER HE BECAME PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN EDINBURGH  
UNIVERSITY





beauty of fine artistic work ; but strength—yes, strength, was the word that best characterised the man.

“Students are critical and notice little things. It was an amusement to watch for the professor’s vagaries of pronunciation, his odd renderings of the sacred name of ‘God,’ the curious nasal defect, as of one suffering from a cold, which made him pronounce such an introductory phrase as ‘Gentlemen, Marheineke says,’ like this, ‘Gentabed, Barheideke says.’

“That, of course, was on the surface of things, and did not affect our devotion to him. Yet, even at that time, there were some of us who fancied that it did not matter much what Marheineke (or Barheideke) said. And here one touches one of the weaknesses of our great man. Flint knew everything about his subject ; but he did not always hold his gigantic stores of accumulated learning in proportion. It is doubtful if many are now concerned about the opinions of Marheineke or are willing to believe that an important addition to knowledge is effected when these opinions are confuted. Flint was over-fond of demolishing the obscure.

“Indeed, in Flint’s lectures the historical method was carried to the extreme into which the method is ever in danger of falling. He said so much about other people that he had little time, even when he had the inclination, to disclose his individual view. This or that divine—Marheineke and teachers still more undistinguished—were summarised, criticised, disposed of admirably ; but the lingering question—What does Robert Flint himself think ? was not infrequently left unanswered.

“It would be ungrateful, however, to undervalue the skill, little less than marvellous, with which Flint dug out of a theological book its essential contribution. It was almost uncanny to discover, within two or

three compressed but vivid paragraphs the inside of a whole treatise. No man living is Flint's equal in this art.

“Yet, that being granted, students had an uneasy feeling that the books were not always worth summarising; and they had a genuine and often unsatisfied desire to discover preferably what was their own revered master's thought. Let it be taken as an example that the young men looked eagerly to Flint for the positive statement of a doctrine of the Atonement; yet, so far at least as this devoted admirer knows, they looked in vain.

“A hundred reminiscences cling around the personality of the man. People talked about John Caird, yet Caird's was a face so striking and conspicuous that, even if you had not known who he was, you would have turned round in the street to look at him. That is true also of Flint. No one would have called Flint handsome; but there was a gravity, a serenity, an air of learning about him as of a German savant at the  $n^{\text{th}}$  power, which made everyone recognise that he was not an ordinary person. Students are often stupid and sometimes irreverent, yet no student ever missed the bigness of Flint. Rudeness towards him was impossible; and it never happened. His face was kind, yet no suggestion of weakness glimmered through its benignity. Quite dull lads recognised that they had to do with a personality different from most that they had known.

“Probably that is the most permanent of all the impressions which remain upon the minds of Flint's men—that sense of sheer intellectual and moral distinction, the knowledge that here was a man of the large mould, to be treated as Lord Roberts is by soldiers, as Darwin was by seekers after scientific truth. Indeed, there

was something of the soldier in Flint all his life ; and most certainly there was also in him the same child-like and unquestioning subjection to truth which made the name of Charles Darwin to be revered.

“ We did not know those things in the old days, so as to state them in definite phrases as they are here set down ; but no one of Flint’s students will dispute that we all cherished such a settled conviction that he was a great man, to be revered as the great are.

“ If there has not been enough disparagement already in a recollection of the Professor which is meant to be wholly affectionate, let it be added that even lads knew, by some instinct, that their teacher’s imagination was less originative and fertile than his logical grasp was comprehensive. And they sometimes wearied of that discussion of the inter-relation of the theological disciplines (the technical term is *scientia scientiarum*) in which Flint delighted more perhaps than in anything else.

“ Flint’s lectures extended over a period of three years ; and all the students were taught together. That is to say that men coming up to their first year of theological study had to accept the same teaching as was offered to men who had already received two years of training. The system does not seem ideal ; nor was it ideal. It involved much repetition for the sake of simplifying matters to junior students. It involved also a considerable amount of confusion in the co-relation of subjects of study. For that reason perhaps, more than any other, the professor did not leave any very distinct ‘ system ’ of theology in his hearers’ minds. It is not easy to say of much beyond isolated contentions, ‘ That was what Flint taught.’ Was it a fault ? It may well be that the stimulus to individual thinking which he gave far more than counter-balanced anything in his method which was defective.

“In the days with which I am dealing Flint’s was a large class. I called his roll as the class-censor in 1884, and there were 124 names to be read. Not a few of them belonged to other churches than his own: but every one of them was an enthusiastic admirer of the professor. The look of Flint as he came into his class-room was itself enough to compose men into respect. Then he would prefix his lecture by offering prayer. Those prayers deserve to be recorded. They were wonderfully devout and uplifting. Flint’s method of lecturing was to dictate a proposition slowly enough for the words to be taken down in long hand, and then to discourse rapidly upon the proposition, expanding, arguing, illustrating. Then would follow another dictated paragraph, and that in its turn was amplified. At times the discussion of the theme would take on an impassioned tone, and the grave face would begin to gleam, and students laid down their pencils and listened enthralled, not even cheering the ponderous periods; until at last, half ashamed of his own eloquence as he seemed to be, the professor would conclude amid a storm of applause. Is his lecture on Roger Bacon anywhere preserved? It was one of the prelections which arrested and fascinated young minds. They would have made a poor examination paper out of it, for scarcely one of them had the self-restraint to take a note.

“The days on which the professor heard the students’ compositions, and afterwards commented upon them, were often profitable. Flint was never savage in criticism, and rarely severe. Indeed, it was well understood that his usual method of conveying a judgment upon the dulness and fecklessness of a discourse was by saying, ‘It is likely to be useful!’ But at times he could be irritated by pretentiousness; and then he

would give the offender such a pat as a mastiff gives a puppy, laying him low with a few solid, sagacious words, while the corners of his lips would quiver and his eyes would twinkle and we knew that he was thinking, 'I dislike saying this ; but it will do the lad good.'

"We were constantly hearing odd testimonies to the professor's learning, in which, of course, we revelled. One student of those days (Robert Stevenson, now minister of Gargunnoch), was dining with P. G. Tait, the great mathematician and physicist, and Tait said to him, "That is a wonderful man you have up in the Divinity Hall ; do you know what he is doing ? He is correcting the proofs of my last book." I myself remember that, when I was dining at a house in Edinburgh, the talk turned on military history, and Flint disclosed the most astounding acquaintance in detail with the operations in the Peninsula—the troops at Badajos, the number of killed at Salamanca, and so forth. My host ended by calling him 'Major-General.' Such incidents often came to our ears. And in them all we took a personal pride. Was he not our man, with whom the New College with all its array of ability in those days in which it possessed Davidson and Rainy, had nobody quite to be compared ?

"In private life, the scholar, the student, and the thinker, was as far as possible from being oppressive to his students. Of arrogance there was nothing in him. It would have been absurd to connect a suspicion of vanity with his name. We thought that Flint was afraid of us ; and I believe now that we were right, odd though it may seem. For he had a singularly childlike nature, as has often been the case with great men. At times he would invite us to a meal at his house, generally to luncheon, that most trying of all social functions. It was apparent that he was ill at

ease. But he was so kind, so evidently anxious that we should be happy, that those luncheons leave a fragrant memory. His sister, so devoted to her hero, and withal so genuine in friendliness to the callow lads who revered him as much as she, contributed to make the occasions pleasant. Alas, that they seem so far away !

“It would be easy to take my old note-books, still preserved, and give some recollections of the professor’s teaching—so solid and sometimes so stolid, so informed with thoughtfulness and scholarship. But it is better to tell of the general impressions which that teaching left.

“*Thoroughness* is the first word that springs to one’s mind when one looks for characteristic terms. Flint might utter commonplaces : he often did : but a commonplace on the lips of one who had read everything that had been written on his subject had a strange and moving power. It was as if a dead man were made alive.

“*Love of truth*, however, was the noblest lesson that Flint inculcated. If the following words are not exactly his, they are an accurate enough reproduction of what I heard him say more than once :—‘The truth is never to be feared ; it is always to be sought ; it can never be in the interests of truth that any one truth should be ignored or neglected or denied.’ That is a note well fitted to inspire any ingenuous heart. It certainly inspired those young men of my generation, who knew it to be the utterance of a man to whom truth was everything and the prevalence of his own opinion as dust in the balance.

“There was a certain remoteness in the scholar, which kept him somewhat apart from younger men. Their reverence and his own shyness reared a barrier. The fact certainly was that his students of that day did not

know him with much intimacy. Yet, as one looks back on the time, one recalls his efforts to be gracious, his straining to unbend ; and our conviction of his kindness was as assured as our respect for his unique intellectual equipment. That very eminent journalist, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, has said that ‘he never met anyone who brought to any subject of conversation so vast an accumulation of knowledge as was brought by Dr Flint.’ (The quotation is not textual, but it is, I think, fairly correct.) Even students had some glimmerings of the honour of dealing with such a man. And to the end those who sat at the feet of Robert Flint will reverence his memory as that of one who joined with phenomenal gifts of knowledge, the ingenuousness of an unworldly spirit, the considerateness of a true gentleman, and the simplicity of a little child.”

All Flint’s students have but one opinion of the profound impression produced upon them by his opening prayers. They sounded the note for the day, a note of absolute dependence upon the Revealer of all truth, for enlightenment and guidance in their work. These prayers, as we have already seen, were carefully prepared and written out by Flint ; they are to be found scattered through his note-books, sometimes on slips of paper and occasionally prefixed to a lecture. As they were characteristic of the man and formed so important a feature of his class-work, it is deemed advisable to print a few of them in this connection. They have been chosen at random ; the first of the four was evidently read at the opening day of a new year, and the last when introducing a speaker, possibly one of the Pastoral Theology Lecturers, to his class.

Almighty and Everlasting God, with Whom is neither beginning of days nor end of years, we humble ourselves before Thee as be-

cometh perishing creatures in the presence of Him who liveth for ever and ever.

We acknowledge with gratitude all the goodness and mercies which have followed us during our days and years that are past ; and confess with deep contrition our sins, beseeching thee to pardon them, and not to enter into judgment with us on account of them, but to blot them out of the book of Thy remembrance, and to give us of Thy good Spirit, that henceforth throughout the year on which we have entered, we may live continually in obedience to Thy laws and with a view to Thy glory.

May this year be a year of blessing to our souls,—one throughout which we may be enabled to look less than we have hitherto done at the things which are seen and temporal and more at those which are unseen, spiritual, and eternal.

Seeing that our time on earth is short, give us, we beseech Thee, O Heavenly Father, grace and wisdom to employ it in well-doing, earnestly seeking to perform our duties to Thee and to our fellowmen, and remembering that the day is fast coming in which we shall have to render unto Thee an account of all the deeds done in the body.

Teach us the solemnity of living and of dying, and prepare us for the life that is eternal.

Bless the University in all its interests. Bless all our friends and relations, the whole family of mankind, and the whole estate of the Church of Thy Son. And to Thee be the glory for ever. Amen.

O God, Whose counsels are from everlasting, and all Whose ways, though inscrutable to us, are righteousness and truth ; we adore Thine unfathomable wisdom, Thy boundless goodness, Thy judgments which are past finding out ; and we pray that the beams of Thy grace, which bringeth salvation, may illuminate all the nations of the world, and that Thou shouldest hasten the coming and kingdom of Thy Christ.

O Lord, Who knowest that we cannot of ourselves help or deliver ourselves in the dangers and temptations which beset us, be, we beseech Thee, our defence and deliverer, our shield and saviour. Let our faith and hope be in Thee ; and do Thou who workest effectually in them that believe, make us perfect in every good word and work.

Cleanse our souls with the presence of Thy good and Holy Spirit ; beautify them with the ornaments of Thy grace ; sanctify us wholly, in spirit, soul, and body ; and preserve us blameless to the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.



O God, the High and Holy One, Who inhabiteth eternity, and Who deigneth to look upon those who are humble and of a contrite heart, graciously enable us, we beseech Thee, to draw near unto Thee, and be pleased to forgive our manifold sins and transgressions, to renew us in the spirit of our minds, to transform us into the likeness of Thy Son, and finally to bring us to Thine eternal joy.

O God, Who searchest the hearts of the children of men, have mercy upon us. Make clean our hearts. Grant us the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit. We are ignorant, do Thou instruct us. We are dark, do Thou enlighten us. We are weak, do Thou strengthen us. We are compassed about with infirmities, do Thou make Thy grace sufficient for us, doing for us and in us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, so that finally we may, through the blood of the Lamb, attain to Thine eternal kingdom and glory.

Hear and graciously answer us, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

O God, we would draw near unto Thee with reverence and humility, for there is an infinite distance between us and Thee, since Thou art the omnipotent and all-holy Creator, while we are weak and sinful creatures of the dust ; but we would also draw near unto Thee with filial confidence and affection, since Thy wondrous love has come near unto us in Jesus Christ and we know that Thy heart is full of grace and tenderness towards us.

O God, we bless Thy name for all Thy benefits ; for the gifts of creation, the bounties of providence, and the yet richer treasures of redeeming love. Enable us gratefully to receive Thy blessings ; humbly to enjoy them ; and rightly to use them. Pardon our sins. Sanctify to us afflictions. Guide and enlighten us in our studies. Give us the knowledge and the love of Thy truth.

Prosper our country and Church. Bless the whole estate of the Church of Thy Son. May all that is taught and done in this University tend to promote the good of mankind, the extension of the Kingdom of Thy Son, and the glory of Thy Name. Grant Thy favour to Thy servant who is to address us this day. May his teaching receive Thine approval. And may Thy blessing be with him in all the relations and duties of life. Amen.

Flint was in the habit of giving occasionally an opening lecture to his class, of general interest, dealing with some question of ecclesiastical or academic im-

portance. These were usually published in the newspapers and eagerly read by the public. But he generally confined himself to a brief address, directed wholly to the students, and at its conclusion he gave a sketch of the course of lectures which he intended to deliver and of the work which they were expected to perform, during the session. What followed is one of those opening addresses.

Gentlemen, I welcome back to the Divinity Hall those of you who have been already here ; and I shall be well satisfied if you show the same interest and diligence in your studies during the session before you as you have done in those through which you have passed. At the same time, of course, I shall be very glad if you can outdo even the best of your former efforts. It is always pleasant to contemplate improvement, and we all constantly fall so far short of perfection that there is never lack of room for it.

I welcome here also those who are entering the Divinity Hall for the first time. I hope they will find it a not less congenial and agreeable place than the Faculty of Arts. But they must not expect to find it a place of repose, a haven of rest. It ought not to be anything of the kind. No right-minded student of Divinity, anxious to prepare himself for the great work of the Christian ministry in a country and age like ours, will desire that it should be anything of the kind.

And, in fact, the work of the Hall is not easy. Those who think it so must be those who take it easily, and whose opinion is consequently of no value. All the subjects taught in the Hall are not only very important but very large and difficult subjects, in which such proficiency as a clergyman of the present day ought to possess can only be attained through hard and steady study. The examinations of Divinity classes will probably be found as stiff and disagreeable as those of other classes. The chances of a candidate for the B.D. degree failing are much greater than those of a candidate for the M.A. In addition to class exercises and essays every student of Divinity is required by the law of the Church of Scotland to deliver with approbation during his curriculum six Discourses prescribed by the Professor of Divinity, and these Discourses *should*, of course, *be so good* that the Professor can *express approbation* of them, and *must not be so bad* that he *cannot even sustain them*. Any student, in a word, who follows the regular course of study in the Hall, who

takes three classes, and performs the work of them in an earnest and conscientious manner will certainly find that he has nearly enough to do throughout each working day. There is no danger of his having to feel that he is without work appropriate for one in his situation; the danger rather is that the compulsory work of his classes, faithfully performed, may leave him too little time for the self-selected study and independent personal reflection and discipline, unaccompanied by which compulsory class-work will never yield satisfactory results.

You have every reason to work earnestly and diligently. Professedly you have heard a call which brings with it many and serious obligations. The work to which you look forward is one which requires the most careful preparation. Humanly speaking, the progress of Christianity, with all that it involves, is largely dependent on the qualifications of its teachers. And never was that more true than now; never in any previous generation was the call more urgent for a fully cultured and thoroughly spiritualised manhood in the ministers of religion, the need greater that they should have vigorous, disciplined, and instructed minds well-grounded in the knowledge of Christian truth, than in the present when even a high education is so very common among the laity, and its combination with scepticism and worldliness is so far from uncommon.

I shall not dwell, however, on this subject but pass to a more special topic. I have now to say a few words of explanation as to the work of the class.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, I mean to lecture, as I mentioned yesterday, on those subjects; The Divine Nature and Attributes, The Trinity, Creation, Providence, and Revelation, Man's Original Constitution and Condition, and Sin. The lectures will be more of the nature of systematic annotations than of elaborate lectures, in which as a medium of instruction I do not much believe.

I shall examine on each lecture for a few minutes before the commencement of the following lecture. I expect every student who has heard a lecture to be able to answer on it, and must regard anyone's answering that he is not prepared to be examined on it as of all kinds of answering the least satisfactory.

In connection with each lecture I shall either dictate a brief abstract at the outset or dictate the headings of its paragraphs as I proceed with it. This is intended to facilitate both the process of comprehension and the taking of notes.

Occasionally I shall give dictations as to subjects on which there would not be time to lecture.

On Wednesdays I shall examine on "Fisher's Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief," or rather on that part of the volume which refers to "Christian Belief." The first three chapters are on—(1) The Personality of God and of Man, (2) The arguments for the Being of God, and (3) The Principal Anti-Theistic Theories—Pantheism, Positivism, Materialism, Agnosticism. I recommend the reading of these three chapters, but I shall not examine on them, as the ground which they cover is gone over more minutely in my own two volumes on "Theism" and "Anti-Theistic Theories."

In examining on Prof. Fisher's work I shall generally not occupy the whole hour with examination, but spend part of it in adding annotations.

To-morrow I shall examine very briefly on the fourth chapter only—the chapter on "The Possibility and the Function of Miracles, with a Review of Professor Huxley's Comments on Hume."

Friday is generally devoted to the hearing of Discourses.

It sometimes happens that there are no Discourses to hear. On these Fridays I shall lecture on "The Relations of the Sciences, and especially of the Theological Sciences."

It more frequently happens that the Discourses need only take up a part of the hour. On these Fridays, after hearing Discourses, I shall make some observations on preaching in continuation of those made last session.

Besides the daily oral examinations there will be, in the course of the session, two examinations in writing. The first of these examinations will take place some time before the Christmas Holidays. It will be on all the Lectures and Dictations from the beginning of the session to the day of examination. The second will be towards the close of the session and will be on all the Lectures and Dictations given between the two examinations.

An Essay will be also required as part of the work of the class, but of it I need not yet speak.

The roll of members of the class will be made up, I hope, in the course of next week, and will afterwards be daily called, and absences marked. When a student's absences in any class exceed a certain not very large number, his case must be referred to the Faculty for consideration as to whether or not he is entitled to a certificate of regular attendance. I hope such reference will in no case be necessary.

Universal testimony is borne to the value of the paragraphs, giving a brief sketch of the lecture or

lectures that he was to deliver, which Flint was in the habit of dictating to his students at the beginning of the hour. These paragraphs were most carefully thought out and arranged, and any student who took them down and afterwards listened attentively to the lecture, did not stand greatly in need of taking notes at all. This to my mind is the ideal method of lecturing. I have found it to be one that is followed by many of the professors in the German Universities. Flint's students evidently valued and profited by it. The fact that he read his lectures with some rapidity would imply that he did not expect his students to take very full notes of them, believing that an intelligent study of the paragraphs which he had slowly dictated would be sufficient. He was in the habit of delivering a course of lectures on the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the skeleton of one or two of these lectures is here given.

These lectures are continuous, and the numbers refer not to the divisions of the subject, but to the day of the lecture.

I. The W. Cf. has been censured on insufficient grounds, for beginning with the doctrine concerning Scripture, the Word.

II. Its first proposition has been denied not only by those who reject Theism but by many zealous advocates of Revelation, both Protestant and Roman Catholic.

III. The second sentence of the W. Cf. affirms the need of a special Divine revelation and contradicts all forms of Naturalism, Deism, etc.

IV. The term salvation must be understood in the Confession in the same sense as in the Scriptures, and thus understood the history of the heathen world shows that nature and unaided reason are insufficient for salvation.

V. The science and philosophy of the present day, dissevered from Revelation, are likewise insufficient.

1. The last clauses of Section I. chap. 1 of W. Cf. refer to the form and purpose of Special Revelation; the reasons for according it in writing; and the importance of Scripture.

II. They do not teach that every manifestation or revelation of any kind made by God was recorded in writing, nor that we have no knowledge of God except through the Bible.

III. In the second Section of the chapter questions of historical criticism as to the composition and authorship of the books of Scripture are not foreclosed, and no theory of inspiration is propounded.

I. The W. Cf. denies the Apocrypha to be inspired, canonical, or authoritative, but not that they are valuable for many purposes.

II. In stating the authority of Scripture as being the Word of God the Confession does not imply that evidence is not required to prove it to be the Word of God ; on the contrary, evidence is assigned its proper place.

III. The witness of the Holy Spirit in the consciousness of the believer is not represented as the sole evidence but as the source of the fullest assurance.

IV. The sufficiency of Scripture is affirmed against those who held that it ought to be supplemented by traditions and new revelations ; it is not affirmed that everything said and done in civil or ecclesiastical life must have a warrant in the express words of Scripture.

V. The doctrine laid down as to the sufficiency of Scripture is the doctrine of all the Protestant Churches in contradistinction to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

VI. Section VII affirms the perspicacity of Scripture ; Section VIII " the purity " of the Hebrew and Greek original Scriptures ; Section IX that Scripture itself is its own infallible rule of interpretation ; and Section XI that it is the Supreme Judge in religious controversies.

In Dr Fisher's contribution, what is chiefly emphasised is the intellectual grit of the Professor. Due emphasis, of course, is laid upon his moral and spiritual qualities and their effect upon the students, but in the following pages, which have been specially penned by the Rev. A. W. Fergusson of Dundee, also one of Flint's students, it is the profoundly religious character of the professor and the deep impression which it made upon the young men who studied under him that is chiefly referred to.

*An Edinburgh Eleven with Flint as Captain*

Every generation of students hero-worships its professors. But there *were* giants in the earth in those days five and twenty years ago, both in the Arts and the Divinity Faculties of Edinburgh University. So that it is difficult for those of us who sat there worshipful a generation ago, to believe that the students of to-day can possibly ever have the same profound regard and admiration for the men who now occupy their chairs as we had for Sellar and Tait and Chrystal, for Campbell Fraser and David Masson, for Robert Flint, the greatest of them all.

We had the seven Arts and the four Divinity Professors in those days—an “Edinburgh Eleven” fit to play any other in the world as we thought—and the captain of that team was Flint.

So the writer at least had all along strongly felt. And since the day that one of the most distinguished students of our time—a first class Honours man in Mathematics—said the same thing, with no uncertain voice, he has never had the least doubt on the subject. Among all that brilliant band the successor of Thomas Chalmers in the Divinity Chair was Chalmers’ “man of wecht” par excellence. The grasp of his mind was that of a vice—its blow that of a sledge-hammer. In some such vivid words as those the present distinguished occupant of the Divinity Chair has pictured forth the essential qualities of his predecessor’s greatness—and who shall dare to add anything to these two Phil May lightning-like strokes of characterisation? But the glowing outline may be filled in in some such way as this—that what impressed us most was first of all, his comprehensive grasp; he knew the whole field, had read everything that had ever been written on it, and was easily master of it all. Our *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as another Scottish professor said at his death, would be for him no more than a *handy* summary of general information. Secondly, his extraordinary exactitude of order and method, the whole field of theology was mapped out with a Government survey thoroughness of detail. So clear and exact everything was that one could actually put it down in diagrams! In old note-books one sometimes comes across his Theology, Soteriology, Eschatology, and all the rest of it just as one drew the schematism at the first, and saw luminous order and marvellous beauty, arising out of the dim *tohu va bohu* of one’s mind. Thirdly, the glow with which he suffused all his lecturing, the personal passion of enthusiasm which he threw into it. So that we were all caught up in the fervour of his almost boyish enthusiasm and carried with him whithersoever he would.

*The true Secret of his Greatness*

But others will write of all this with firmer grasp, and with a more exact knowledge, though not with a more responsive glow of heart and mind in the remembrance of these happy hours. The writer would press on to what he has for long considered the true secret of all his greatness. And this he will introduce and so lead up to by saying that the most striking thing of all in each day's work—the most impressive act of all—was the prayer with which he began the day's work. There we were—130 of us or so, finding our several ways like the members of a great herd to our accustomed places, and having found them, chatting away about all sorts of things in church and state—sharpening pencils, preparing notebooks ; a hum, a buzz, a rustle over all. And then the retiring-room door opened ; a little spare alert figure hastened to the platform with exactly that shy sideways-looking expression in the Sir George Reid portrait, so sideways-looking and uncertain in his walk as to give one at times the impression of lameness. The next moment we were on our feet with heads bent, minds waiting, ears straining, listening to the few short sentences of agonised and agonising pleading with which he cast himself and us all on the mercy of God in Christ. Pardon for our sins, strength for our need, the strength needful for this day and its duties : just a few short sentences, but they seemed to rise out of infinite depths of helplessness and of trust, the cry of a strong man in his utter weakness and absolute dependence upon God. It was an instruction to us that we should prepare the devotional part of our Sunday service before we took up the preparation of our sermon ; we know that this was his own custom for each day's lecture. And as we ponder his precept and recall his example and think of our foolishness in the neglect of both, we get very near the secret, the greatest of all the secrets, perhaps, of our failure on the Sabbath day. His prayer was a wrestling with God and a prevailing ; the hard won victory of faith over a stubborn wilfulness and out of the midst of a great weakness.

*The Knight of the Cross*

Those who remember his preaching will see exactly what the writer would express. It was a contest all the time ; a battling with the principalities and powers of darkness for the victory of Light and Truth (it is this exactly that has made Hole's *Quasi Cursors* sketch of him as the Knight of the Cross the bit of pure inspiration that it is.) He must win your verdict for the truth of his own con-



viction ; nay, he must persuade your heart and conscience to this eternal truth as he sees it with burning soul, or he has preached in vain. And so the whole being of the man is concentrated to this point of effort, to this fine edge of purpose ; he is ready to die in his struggle rather than to fail to convince you. So that it will be easy for us all to understand the dear old Moderate minister of Dumfriesshire (lying now these many years beneath the shadow of the church he served with the kindness and urbanity, let me say, of the highest type of government officialdom), who told the writer that “ when young Flint started his preaching he was very extreme, violent, outré. In the parish church of Cummertrees the young probationer had called them all to witness that, if they neglected this so great salvation and died in their sins, it would be recalled to them on the great Day of Judgment that on this day and in this place, this preacher, Robert Flint, had spoken to them the truth, and they would not receive it.” Another little touch—a lighter one—perhaps only a traditional one—will help to emphasise my point. It was a legend with us that when the day broke wet and depressing, the first thing our great Professor did when he sought his study was to light his gas and draw his curtains—that so there might be light about him, and that with undimmed, undulled spirit he might concentrate all his energies upon his immediate task. So carefully did he guard the flame. So jealously and strenuously did he hold himself up to his highest.

*A Spirit deeply wounded by Sin*

Another little touch will suffice to complete this impression of the man in his utter and absolute dependence upon God—finding life in His favour and counting it death to lose the light of His countenance. It was a letter written by him to the Moderator of the General Assembly the day after the deposition of a minister who had been a fellow student with Flint. The present writer was chaplain to that Moderator, and hence his perusal of the letter. It falls to all ministers in the course of their professional life to read strange letters ; but a more moving letter of heart-breaking pity and regret, the writer never remembers to have read. “ Did e’er such love and sorrow meet ? ” It was the cry of a soul wounded to the death by this awful fate of his old college friend, and seeking some little relief in the expression of it all. The phrases are all forgotten except these two—the one about being a student with him and the other about being so distressed by it all that he could neither work nor do anything that day. But the most

poignant thing about the letter, and that which can never be forgotten, was that at a certain point in its agony it became—it would not be true to say incoherent—but certainly confused and quite ungrammatical. What we say about our feelings at any time may be the artist in us rather than the simple and sincere recorder; but what our feelings say about themselves, when *e.g.* on the meticulously exact scholar's written page they break the bounds of grammatical convention—that is a true revealing of the heart within. The agony of that heart, literally breaking over an old friend's evil-doing helps one to get very near the central citadel of Flint's moral and spiritual being—and very near, we may dare to add, to the central citadel of the Christian faith.

#### *A Consecrated Life.*

This is the impression then that the writer would convey of the greatest of his professors—that the true secret of his greatness lay in the absolute consecration of all his powers to his divinely appointed life's work. Not only was the Will of God his peace, as in Dante's great line; it was his life; the very breath of his being. The sense of vocation, and of his dependence upon God, his moral passion and his spiritual aspiration—these were the deepest secrets of his influence over us. Our life is a pure flame and we live by an invisible sun within us, says Sir Thomas Browne; and in no man known to the writer has that flame burned so pure and gem-like. Eagerness, strenuousness, intensity, strain—these are the words that rise to one's pen as one tries to express the man's high purpose (Browning's *Grammarians' Funeral* is of the essence of it). And it was just this eagerness, this intensity that was, alas! his undoing. For no human fibre, no brain tissue, could ever permanently endure such strain. No one but himself could bend the bow that Flint shot with. But it was the tragedy of his life that he so seldom unbent his bow; so that before the end, it fell useless from his hand.

#### *The Professor's Humour.*

Sometimes indeed in class, he would unbend the bow a little—poking fun at the whole of us—as when he put the man whose popular sermon we were all yearning to hear, third of the three students who were to prelect that day and gave the first two such a long time in the pulpit and such lengthened criticism thereafter that when he had finished and looked at his watch, behold there was no time for more.

One Friday, a student, who rather fancied himself as a “profound

philosopher" ascended the little pulpit in the corner of the classroom, gave out his text, which was one of great simplicity, and proceeded to deliver a sermon couched in such technical philosophic phraseology that no ordinary congregation could have made head or tail of it. It was manifestly a "show off." The professor's lip twitched—it always did when he was highly amused or had something spicily to say—and, after allowing the budding "philosopher" to proceed for a few minutes, turned to him, and said, in his usual formula, "That'll do now, Mr ——." Then came the criticism:—"Mr —— I have always been of the opinion that it is a sign of real ability in a preacher when he succeeds in making difficult problems plain and obscure truths clear; you seem to be of the opinion that the truest mark of ability is to make plain problems difficult and clear truths obscure."

But the finest example of his humour in this sort was when his total criticism of a dashing student's popular sermon was in a single vivid phrase chosen from the sermon and given with all sorts of added significance. This student, all slap-dash and vigour and impressionism, had been speaking of the universal belief in unseen powers and the universal effort to secure their favour, and quoted the Red Indians faring forth to battle (the reader will here add the necessary descriptive adjectives) puffing their whiffs of tobacco smoke heavenwards, thereby seeking to propitiate the gods and win their favour, etc., etc. The sole comment when the sermon ended, "In future, I would advise you to leave out that whiff of tobacco smoke from your sermon." made the class roar and roar again, as the true inwardness of the criticism broke upon them. For the vital defect of the sermon was not in any particular phrase but in the whole free and easy smoke-room atmosphere of it. The phrase was in reality the formula by which the sermon stood condemned.

*Had He "Changed His Brain-Cells."*

But we return to this earnestness, strain, intensity which was the secret of his influence over us all. No human fibre as we have said could ever stand this strain; had he "changed his brain-cells," the end might not have been so painful as it was. But the flame of his saint-like spirit burned up to uselessness the poor clay in which it was tabernacled. The writer dwells on this poignant note because he takes it to be the final proof of what he has been trying all through to express—that the true seal of his greatness was in the moral intensity and spiritual aspiration of the man. Had he only been a

little more patient with "Brother Ass!" Had he only refrained from so crucifying his flesh daily! But then this was just the secret of his power—this passion of his soul for the highest, this constant aspiration to follow the Will of God with undivided purpose. It was this that did more for us than all his lectures, though his lectures were the best we ever had. What he was to us was always greater than what he said.

Such are the terms in which old students speak of their teacher. All who ever studied under Flint invariably use language when they refer to him, glowing with enthusiasm. He was their ideal, and their connection with him formed an epoch in their lives. If their universal testimony can be relied upon, as relied upon it must, "there can hardly have been," as A. K. H. B. observes, "a better Professor in any university in the world."

## CHAPTER X

### FLINT'S DOCTRINAL SYSTEM

DURING his tenure of the Edinburgh Chair Professor Flint had the duty of lecturing on Systematic Theology. His course extended over three years, and during this period he aimed at giving lectures to each generation of students covering the ground of Introduction to Theology or Theological Encyclopædia, Apologetics and Dogmatics. The note-books contain many more prelections than could be delivered in a cycle of three years; and the course, as actually delivered, is found to have been made up by selection from the materials which, especially in the field of Theology proper and Apologetics, accumulated from year to year.

Of the lectures on Theological Apologetics a good deal has been utilised in "Theism," "Anti-theistic Theories," and "Agnosticism." Comparatively little, however, has been published from the notebooks dealing with Christian Apologetics; while the lectures on Dogmatic Theology, some of which have been very fully elaborated, and embody much profound thinking and solid learning, would constitute a genuine addition to the dogmatic literature of the last century.

The lectures on Theological Encyclopædia are noteworthy as expounding a conception of theology which reflects the wide outlook of its author, and which also defines a standpoint that gives him a distinctive place in recent theology. In his inaugural lecture, Flint had declared his dissatisfaction with the prevalent method in theology, consisting as it did in the mere

proof or disproof of a doctrine by an appeal to texts of Scripture. In his view, the data of theology consist of all facts relevant to the being and works of God, and His relations to man and the world, which can be collected from nature, history and ethnic religions, as well as from the province of sacred history—narrowly so-called—that has its record and interpretation in the Holy Scriptures. In his lectures on Theological Encyclopædia he strongly criticised the German tradition which regards the Christian Religion as the exclusive subject matter of theology, and identifies the subject matter of theology with Christian Theology. “All the chief Encyclopædists of Germany,” he says, “follow Schleiermacher in this amazingly absurd fashion.” “The superiority of Christianity to other religions, the uniqueness of Christianity among religions does not alter the nature or lessen the magnitude of the error. Every Encyclopædia which confounds the general with the special so completely as to identify theology with Christian Theology, forfeits its title to recognition as scientific.” In opposition to the view of Hodge, that the task of theology is completed with the co-ordination and explication of the facts revealed in Scripture, he contended that the goal of theological labour must be the elaboration of a philosophy of religion in the light of all the facts both of general and special revelation. “The philosophy of religion,” he says, “is the one general theological science. It comprehends and dominates the special theological science so as to be the science of the sciences, and hence in accordance with the true distinction between philosophy and science, it is properly called philosophy rather than science.” This system of religious philosophy, however, was conceived of as gathering up into itself a philosophy of Christianity. “If the claims of Christianity be

warranted, if in it religion and revelation were consummated—the philosophy of religion can only reach a satisfactory conclusion when it has passed into a philosophy of Christianity, or in other words, attained such a comprehension of existence and of life in relation to the Person and Work of Christ as is possible to the human spirit.”

The standpoint which is thus indicated is that which has been described as rationalistic supernaturalism. Flint did not repudiate but rather gloried in the name of rationalist, provided always that he was allowed to guard himself against popular misconception. “The right of free thought,” he says, “is an indispensable one.” “The true function of Church authority is one analogous to that of parental authority and like all legitimate human authority, it tends to promote freedom.” He held that we are not entitled to adopt any beliefs which cannot be justified at the bar of reason, and, on the other hand, that we are bound to follow reason as far as it will take us. But with equal emphasis he contended, against the assumption of another school, that it is entirely rational to accept a special revelation if it can be supported by sufficient evidence, and that, as a matter of fact, the evidence is of sufficient strength to make the rejection of such a revelation an irrational procedure. In the same spirit he declared that the supreme proof of the truth of the Christian religion was, not that it is authenticated by external evidence, but that its doctrines, with hardly an exception, are intrinsically reasonable and combine to furnish the most satisfactory outlook upon existence and human destiny. The standpoints which he dismisses as false, are—(a) that in which an undue influence is allowed to authority; (b) that in which tradition is not allowed to be tested and judged by reason; (c) that

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which operates with an empirical theory of knowledge ; (d) the method of speculative deduction ; and (e) the mystical theory. Under these heads he waged a polemic against Romanism, Ritschl, Rothe and Schleiermacher. For him the norm of Christian truth was the Bible, but the Bible as understood in the light of Biblical theology, and with due regard to its special function and central content. "It must be observed and remembered," he says, "that the Bible is rather the record of a revelation than the revelation itself." "The real revelation lay in the dispensations, institutions, actions, communications, by which God manifested His character, will and purpose, within and outside the history of Israel ; and it is this concrete, historical, practical revelation, of which we have the record in the Bible, which is to constitute the real fountainhead of doctrine. Biblical Theology must endeavour to comprehend the revelation in its beginnings, in its successive stages, in its culmination, and in the relation of part to part and of all the parts of the whole."

According to Flint's view, then, Dogmatics ought to expand into a Christian philosophy of religion which contains as its staple and dominant element the doctrines that are given, implicitly or explicitly, in the special revelation that culminated in Christ, but which also combines this in a synthesis with the knowledge concerning God and His relations with the world and man that may be collected from the history of religions, from Natural Theology, from the Philosophy of History, from Ethics, and from any other auxiliary source. The programme was partially carried out in his treatment of the particular doctrines of the Christian system. One section was commonly devoted to tracing the germs and parallels of a doctrine in the principal ethnic religions. Thereafter he pursued the topic



through the different strata of the literature of the Old Testament, and expounded the contribution made in the different types of New Testament doctrine. Following upon this he traced the development of the doctrine in the Creeds and Confessions, and also expounded and discussed any contribution to the subject, whether critical or constructive, that had been made in the schools of theology or philosophy. The historical survey, in which his own critical powers were abundantly exercised, was completed by a positive exposition, accompanied in some cases by suggestions as to the lines of further theological progress. The distinctive features of the summing up were, on the one hand, extreme caution and reverent valuation of the positions reached in the classic periods of patristic and reformed theology, and on the other, an emphatic and reiterated disclaimer that finality had been guaranteed by any ecclesiastical authority. The substance of each lecture was given in a series of propositions which were triumphs of lucidity and condensation.

The lectures on the Being and Attributes of God are very full and thoughtful. There is evidence that they were being revised with a view to forming the staple of the first series on the Gifford Foundation to which he had been appointed; and as they stand they well deserve to be published as a monograph which would take its place alongside of "Charnock on the Attributes." Much attention was given to, and much criticism bestowed on, the classification of the Attributes. He finally declared his preference for a classification which connected itself with his fourfold proof of the existence of God—a proof which, he held, also involved a fourfold disclosure of the Divine perfections. In an alternative course delivered at an earlier period he had expounded the doctrine of God in the form of a minute study of the

data according to the progressive view of the scriptural teaching which is supplied in Biblical Theology.

The lectures on the doctrine of the Trinity are also very thorough, dealing as they do with the parallels in other religions and in philosophical thought, and proceeding from these to trace the Biblical and ecclesiastical developments. The Catholic dogma was expounded with sympathy, appreciation, and reverence; yet he did not profess himself to be entirely satisfied with its categories and modes of expression, and asserted the right and duty of modern theology to endeavour to formulate it in more intelligible and satisfactory terms. "Who," he asked, "can be entitled to pronounce it so clear, consistent, and complete a statement of truth as to the triune constitution of the Godhead, that all other attempts to express the truth on that subject are to be discouraged and censured? If so, must there not rather be a necessity, a call, for endeavouring to reconstruct or advance the doctrine of the Trinity as so many German philosophers and theologians of the present century have been endeavouring to do? Such endeavours by no means proceed on the assumption that the Nicene doctrine is erroneous or even that it will ever be displaced and made obsolete; but merely that it is not the only, the exclusively right way of expressing the truth which it aims at covering—not so perfect and exhaustively complete a way, that thought ought to seek no other, should conceive of the Godhead only in terms of Greek Metaphysics."

The lectures on Predestination dealt with a subject which was obviously uncongenial to him, but he devoted himself to it with his usual thoroughness on the ground that its history is one of which no professional Divine can creditably be ignorant. He regarded with barely concealed aversion the specifically predestinarian tenets

—emphasising the fact that prior to Augustine no theory of absolute predestination or irresistible grace was held by the fathers either of the Greek or Latin Church, and also that the slender Biblical support of the doctrines is only won by ignoring a larger body of teaching which supports a view of the relation of the Divine and Human wills that gives more scope to the love of God and a surer guarantee of human responsibility. “It is hardly possible to deny,” he says, referring to reprobation as taught in the Westminster Confession, “that the doctrine is calculated to cause an impression of harshness and arbitrariness, and that whether the doctrine be true or false it is greatly to be regretted that it should have been made a criterion of heresy or orthodoxy, and an article of Church Communion. Grant that it is true as formulated, it is calculated to produce impressions as to the divine character and as to man’s relationship to God, certainly most unlike what the Gospel as a whole or in its general tenor naturally produces. It is a doctrine raised on a very meagre and narrow basis of Scripture ; a doctrine terrible to reason, perplexing to conscience, most difficult to believe or preach or act on. The texts produced for it are certainly not the only ones in the New Testament which seem to bear on the subject. What of the far more numerous and far more explicit declarations which tell of God’s love to all, of Christ’s death for all, of the will of the Father and the Son that all should be saved, and of the intimation even of a glorious issue for all creation, all Israel and all humanity in Christ Jesus.”

The doctrines of Creation and Providence, especially the latter, were likewise handled with much learning and critical acumen. The substance of these also would doubtless have been expounded in the projected Gifford lectures, and the more so that the doctrine of

providence connects itself with the Philosophy of History, and in that aspect had claimed so large a measure of the time and energy of his laborious life. It cannot, however, be said that the lectures as they stand even give an outline of that providential interpretation of the history of the human race to which he had looked forward as the consummation of his untiring work in this field of research and speculation.

Passing to the department of Anthropology, he treated first of the dignity of man as made in the image of God, and thereafter of the doctrines of sin. The earlier lectures contain very minute discussions of the Biblical narrative of the creation of man, and trace carefully the history of opinion as to the original condition of man, and the survival in fallen man of the ground-work of the Divine Image. A lecture of later date discusses the bearing of the Darwinian hypothesis upon the traditional view as reproduced from Genesis, and the conclusion at which he arrives may be cited as an illustration of his habitual combination of caution and open-mindedness. "Science," he says, "has not disproved the doctrine of the immediate creation of the first man, and it may be held that Scripture has not certainly taught the immediate creation of the human body." He adds three reasons why the theologian may regard the doctrine of the evolution of man, at least on the bodily side, as not incompatible with the belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God. In the first place the Scriptures do not distinguish between mediate and immediate origination. In the next place, there is much in the creation-narrative which is obviously figurative and symbolical, and which may very probably not have been meant to be interpreted as literal fact. But further, even if Scripture be responsible for the doctrine of the special creation of man this would not

be decisive against a well-supported finding of science. "The Bible record was plainly not designed to teach Science. What it really aimed to convey was spiritual, religious, moral truth. The worth of dogmatic conclusions, drawn from Scripture on problems which are properly and strictly scientific seems to be slight and dubious."

The lectures on sin are notable in the first place for the large drafts which are made on Comparative Theology. It may be safely said that no other writer on Dogmatics has made the same serious attempt to elucidate the Christian doctrine by a comparison with the parallel ideas in other faiths and in other intellectual systems. It must, however, also be added that it is doubtful if the result has been a positive enrichment of the doctrine of sin, or anything more than a confirmation of the belief that a truly profound and spiritual view of sin is dependent upon the presuppositions and the spiritual energies of the Christian economy. The second outstanding feature of this section is the reflection in it of a sensitive conscience touched with a profound sense of the heinousness of sin and of the need created by its humiliating and desolate power for the intervention of a great salvation. It should also be added that Flint refused to follow the old divines in regarding the punishment of sin as an end in itself required by the attribute of the justice of God, and insisted on combining the satisfaction of justice with a preventive, and above all with a remedial purpose, in interpreting the attitude of God towards human sin.

The Catholic doctrine of the person of Christ was treated in the same spirit as the doctrine of the Trinity. He held it to be the best available statement of a doctrine which lies at the heart of revealed religion, while yet a

caveat was appended as to the rights of a progressive theology. "The general formula of the faith, the union of the two natures, the divine and human in one person, as laid down by the Council of Chalcedon, may be regarded as the centre of a sound Christology. It is fully warranted by Scripture, but, of course, only deduced from Scripture, not directly taught in it. Simple as the terms of the formula may sound, they are really technical, the products of philosophical and theological thought, perseveringly and strenuously implied. In the New Testament the faith was present, but as live fact, as object of faith, a source of comfort and a stimulus." After pointing out some of the difficulties of the Catholic dogma, he proceeded—"It is by no means necessary for us to rest content with the Chalcedonian Christology, but merely not to reject it without reasons, or to accept a worse theory. You will not attain to a better until you have thoroughly assimilated the truths which it contains and the difficulties which it was an earnest attempt to solve." "No doctrine has yet been reached by the thought of the Church which can replace the Chalcedonian, and until that is done the latter cannot be displaced. The old will only give way to the new when the new is a distinctly truer and fuller expression of the Christian reality to which they both relate. As regards the doctrine of the person of Christ, that time has not yet come. Christian thought has still to proceed on its lonely and arduous way in search of more light."

The work of Christ was exhaustively handled under the traditional rubric of the three offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. The New Testament data for the doctrine of the Atonement were very fully discussed and every type of ecclesiastical theory was carefully expounded and keenly criticised.

The general point of view was that every theory contained an element of truth, but that the outline of an adequate theory must be sought in the sacrificial interpretation given in the New Testament, and developed in the schools of evangelical theology. "The theories which do most justice to the objective or Godward reference of the atoning death of Christ may be one-sided and very inadequate, but all theories which do not give prominence to these references must be pronounced most defective." "Reconciliation is by no means to be resolved into a mere subjective sense of change in the mind of the sinner, but implies a change also, not indeed of the Being of God, not in the character of the mind of God—for it originated in his Being and is the outgoing of his mind—but a change in his relationship to sinners, a removal of a hindrance to the manifestation of his grace, a removal of an offence necessitating the manifestation of his displeasure."

The lectures on Subjective Soteriology, or the individual appropriation of Salvation, were somewhat slighter than those which were concerned with the Catholic dogmas. They did not take up, to any considerable extent, the problems which have been raised in recent discussions on the Psychology of Religion. On the other hand, the distinctively Protestant position in regard to justification faith and the kindred topics is set forth with the customary lucidity, and on occasion with sympathetic fervour. Especially noticeable is the expression of personal piety which is met with in the account of the dependence of the believer on the mystical union with the glorified Christ. "There is goodness and holiness in the believer only in that measure in which Christ has been made goodness and holiness unto him. In giving expression to this truth there is more danger of under-statement than of over-statement.

Christ so abides, lives, and works in his people that they derive all their spiritual life from his life. His life in theirs is what sanctifies their life, is the source and substance of their spiritual life."

Under the head of Ecclesiology he treated of the idea or nature of the Church; its constitution, ministry, and membership; its rule of faith and doctrine; the Word; sacraments and worship. In his exposition, the doctrine of the kingdom of God bulked more largely than the doctrine of the Church, which was regarded as the chief instrument, though not the exclusive instrument, for the advancement of the kingdom. "It is most instructive," he says, "that Christ should have dealt so incessantly and so emphatically with the kingdom of God, and that he should have touched so seldom and so lightly on the Church. That he should have done so is no evidence that the Church is an unimportant institution, or that correct views regarding it are unimportant, but it is evidence that the Church and the doctrines which directly refer to the Church are secondary and not primary, subordinate and not fundamental. It was the doctrine of the kingdom which Christ taught; the doctrine of the Church he left mainly to others to teach or rather to evolve from the principles which he had expounded as to the kingdom of God." From the very full discussion of the notes of the Church, one sentence may be quoted:—"Christian unity, although it may lead to such secondary unities as identity of doctrine or uniformity of ritual or oneness of government, might exist where these are not present, and might not exist where they are all to be found." "While outward unity is overvalued in the Roman Catholic theory, it is undervalued in the theory of Independency." It is evidence of his scrupulous fairness that in revising the last proposi-



tion he interpolated a "perhaps" in the reference to Independency.

He refers to the problem of the origin of the Christian ministry as a very controversial and to him only moderately interesting question. But the doctrine of the Sacraments was treated very minutely. In his lectures on Baptism he described it as the means for confirming the faith of the believer and adding to the grace which he already possessed. "It becomes a means of grace by calling faith into life and exercise." As regards infant Baptism he asked—"Why could God not condescend to accept parental trust and consecration, not indeed as a full substitute for personal piety in the child, but as the ground of spiritual privilege conferred upon the child, and the basis of a pledge that through His grace the child shall at length be brought willingly into a personal experience of the same spiritual life?" As to the significance of the Lord's Supper, the idea of the communication of a boon which is *sui generis* was rejected. "When in eating bread and drinking wine at the Communion Table, the followers of Christ realise His presence to their faith and affection, and appropriate to their souls the pardon of sin, the holiness, peace and hope which he secured for them by His death and now freely offers to them, they have the true communion with him—a communion in his body and blood. The elements are the means through which God communicates to us the virtue of the body and blood of His Son, or, in other words, the blessings which Christ's sacrifice of himself procured."

It was only incidentally that he touched on the topics of Eschatology. Reference has already been made to his view that scriptural evidence can be adduced both for and against the specifically Calvinistic tenets. He appears to have been of the same

opinion in regard to many of the controversial questions which are included under the rubric of the Last Things. His evasion of the subject seems to have been due partly to his dislike of discussing a subject unless he had studied and weighed everything that had been written on it, and partly to his dislike of discussing a subject when he did not see his way to a definite decision; but the determining consideration doubtless was that he felt that it might well be left to the students to grapple with these problems as a duty which would emerge with special urgency for the generation that was to follow, and that for himself the call to duty had been sufficiently responded to in concentrating on the exposition and defence of the more fundamental positions of theistic and Christian faith.

Flint usually lectured once a week on Apologetics, and his lectures on the subject proved the most popular of his course. Much of what he had to say on Theological Apologetics will be found (as has already been said) in his works on "Theism," "Anti-theistic Theories" and "Agnosticism"; but his only publication on Christian Apologetics is the lecture which he delivered in 1899, in St Mary's Cathedral, to the Edinburgh Diocesan Church Reading Union. This lecture contains the essence of most of what he taught his students on the subject. It forms the last chapter of the volume of "Sermons and Addresses" which also was published in 1899. It there appears under the title of "Some Requirements of a Present-Day Christian Apologetics," and is of so excellent a quality that it ought to be read by every one who may be desirous of making himself acquainted with the substance and scope of Flint's teaching on the subject. Numerous quotations might be given from the lecture, showing his point of view and his method of treatment, but it is packed so full of

thought that such quotations would give a very imperfect conception of them. As the lecture is published and is of easy access, all who may be anxious to know Flint's views and to acquire at the same time a true conception of this important subject should make it a point to read the lecture for themselves.

Flint's doctrinal system was of a type which does not connect itself with any of the schools familiar to the student of modern German Theology. For the genius of Schleiermacher he had a great admiration, but he regarded it as a hopeless proposal to base Theology on the obscure element of feeling, and held that his decision to exclude Natural Theology involved a reckless disregard of assured truth as well as a serious impoverishment of the dogmatic system. For the Ritschlian Theology he had little respect, as he held it to be vitiated by a false theory of knowledge, while it failed to do justice to well-authenticated elements of revelation. He might be placed in the mediating school along with Dorner, from whom he had learned much. He had considerable affinities with the philosophical school as represented by Rothe, Lipsius, Biedermann and Pfeleiderer, but he parted company with them on two grounds. For one thing he did not approve of the type of philosophy which any of them combined with the system of Christian doctrine, and in the light of which they had proposed to edit it. He protested against Pantheism with all the energy of his intellectual and moral being, while he thought that the critical philosophy of Kant left no solid foundation for Christian faith. The second point of difference, as already indicated, was that he did not, like most of the philosophical theologians, feel himself required to rule out a special revelation with a miraculous setting. He thought himself rationally justified in accepting the Christian

revelation as a vehicle of additional and better assured knowledge in regard to God, the duty and destiny of man, and the way of salvation. The conception which he consequently formed of a system of religious philosophy in which the substance of revealed truths should be united with the assured results of investigation and reflection on the whole data of the world and history is a conception, which, however it may have fallen of late into disfavour, seems to be tolerably assured of a revival in future developments of Christian thought. It is inevitable that, in the long run, Christian thinkers will feel the necessity of combining their Christian faith with their philosophical conceptions, and with those large scientific generalisations which enter into any conjunct view of the universe and of human history. On the other hand Flint certainly would not have claimed that the doctrinal system which he unfolded, completely answered to his conception of a philosophy of religion. In the main it was the contribution which he offered from the side of Christian Theology towards the comprehensive philosophy of religion which he regarded as the ideal, but even as such it was richer than any extant system in the materials of Comparative Theology and of Natural Theology which he desired to see embodied in the final synthesis.

Reference has already been made to the abundance of the Biblical and historical material. The criticism might indeed be made that the system was mainly a reproduction of matter from the historical disciplines of biblical theology, history of doctrine and history of theology, and that too little space was left for the dogmatic work on the expository, constructive and speculative side. As a fact the strength of the work lay in his gift of luminous exposition and in his analytical and critical power, rather than in the number and

weight of his positive contributions to dogmatic thought. The reason of this limitation is partly to be sought in his intellectual equipment. But account has also to be taken of the fact that he did his work under confessional conditions, which were indeed tolerable for him in virtue of his robust faith in Revelation and in its record, and also of his intense evangelical convictions, but which also were not easily compatible with his intense conviction that the function of ecclesiastical authority is to qualify for freedom, and that no bounds may be set by a purely ecclesiastical tradition to the course of theological progress. He himself emphatically declared, loyal as he was to the substance of the Catholic faith and of the Evangelical system, that the cultivation of Theology ought to be carried on under conditions of absolute freedom.

Those who had the privilege of studying Christian doctrine under Professor Flint may not have carried away with them the sense of possessing a simple standpoint and canons of thought with which it was easy to operate. They were not furnished with any easy solution of difficulties, as that there is a proof text available, or that such and such was the teaching of the patristic church and an Œcumenical Council. But they at least learned that God has provided Himself with many witnesses to the truth, that the greatest intellectual ability and learning are compatible with a childlike faith in God and a whole-hearted belief in the divinity and mission of Christ, that the doctrines of the faith are the fruits of the sustained and earnest labour of gifted and devout minds which were capable of giving reasons for their faith, that the alternative opinions which have clashed with them in history are seldom offered with better reasons and are commonly supported by worse, and that even the abstruse and uninspiring

chapters of Theology become luminous and interesting when the exposition has behind it a powerful personality that has its element in the life of God and the mystical union with Christ. Chiefly perhaps they acquired a conviction that God is the *Ens realissimum*, that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that the truth is mighty and shall prevail.

## CHAPTER XI

### BAIRD AND CROALL LECTURES

FROM the day of Flint's appointment to the Chair of Divinity in Edinburgh University may be dated his advancement to that supreme position in the Church and in the country which he held to the end of his career. He was, previous to that event, well known amongst scholars and highly appreciated by the leaders of the Church. A race of students who had studied under him in St Andrews was spreading his fame. His occasional appearances in the chief pulpits of the country had made him known as one of the most thoughtful and forceful preachers of the day. But it was not till his appointment to the Edinburgh Chair, the public discussion and controversy which sprang up over his Inaugural Address, and the delivery of his first course of Baird Lectures in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews, that the Church awakened to a recognition of the very great man that he really was, and gladly gave him that place in her esteem and counsels which his subsequent record only strengthened. Flint himself had not gone out of his way to win the approval of the Church. He was the very last man to seek or to court public applause; indeed, he rather shrank from it. There is not a single shred of evidence in the mass of material that has come under my hand that he ever regarded himself, his ability, his attainments, or his writings, with other than a humble heart, acknowledging his weakness and absolute dependence upon Him Who is the source of all strength, Who is

the "Father of lights and in Whom there is no darkness at all." Recognition came to him as the result of the consecration of great talents and a pure heart to the work which God had given him to do. And when fame and popularity came, they did not, in the slightest degree, influence his onward course or cause him to deviate from the path which, from the very beginning of his active life, he had seen to be the one which it was his God-appointed destiny to follow.

He now stood upon a much more prominent and influential academic platform than he did in St Andrews. He was at the centre of the intellectual life of Scotland and occupied the premier chair of all her Universities. For if theology, as he himself maintained, be the queen of the sciences, it not only demands the ablest of exponents, but is bound, if he proves worthy, to give him a position which no other professor can claim. It is not surprising then to learn that many students, who were not looking forward to the ministry of the Church of Scotland, attended Flint's class. Colonials, English Nonconformists and not a few aspirants to the ministry of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches enrolled themselves under him. The only other theological professor who made an equally wide appeal was Dr A. B. Davidson of the New College. His knowledge of Hebrew, his powers as a teacher, and his ability as a critic drew to his classroom many students who were studying for other Churches than his own. The influence of Flint, even as a professor, extended far beyond the confines of Scotland, and letters reached him from almost every part of the world, from those who had studied under him. His catholicity of spirit appealed to them, and they did not feel that they were at all prejudicing their own ecclesiastical position. They perceived in him



one who realised, as few did, the ideal of Christian unity, which makes one in Christ all those, whatever their outward differences might be, who truly believe and live by faith in Him.

Flint, even in Edinburgh, lived with singular faithfulness the life of the student, deliberately shutting himself off from many of the activities which, while perfectly legitimate, would have interfered greatly with his work and even his influence. He did not, all the same, live the life of the recluse, and especially during the first few years of his professorship he performed an amount of work and responded to a number of public engagements which must have sorely taxed his strength. He was now both a Doctor of Divinity and a Doctor of Laws. The University of Edinburgh conferred upon him the degree of D.D., and his own University, that of Glasgow, the degree of LL.D. He received both honours in the spring of 1876. Many other degrees and honours were afterwards to be awarded him. He was only in his forty-second year and had already attained in reputation and in distinction more than what falls to the lot of even eminent churchmen. The year of his appointment to the Edinburgh Chair was also the year of his first Baird Lectures, and it was no slight task, with the work of a new session and a new subject facing him, to deliver them in three university centres. In the autumn of that same year we find him at Balmoral preaching before the Queen, and in a letter to his mother he says :—

INVERCAULD ARMS HOTEL,  
BRAEMAR, *October 22, 1876.*

We (that is his sister and himself) had a beautiful drive on Friday from Blairgowrie to Glenshee, and on Saturday from Glenshee to Braemar, and on Sunday from Braemar to Crathie. From this you will see that we have had lots of drives; as for climbing, you will be

glad to hear that we have only been up one hill and that it, in comparison to some hills that we have seen, was not much larger than an ants' hill on which it was impossible to have broken a bone of our bodies, even if we had wished it. We spent a most pleasant day yesterday. Janet liked Mrs Campbell very much. I found the Queen exceedingly kind and enjoyed the time I was at the Castle. The Queen has again got possession of my sermon.

This was evidently not the first occasion on which Her Majesty, in the exercise of her Royal prerogative, had taken possession of the discourse which Flint had the honour of preaching before her, and she was so pleased with his preaching that she asked him for a copy of the volume of sermons which he had published in 1865, as the following letter from the Countess of Ely shows :—

BALMORAL CASTLE,  
October 28, 1876.

DEAR MR FLINT,—The Queen desires me to write and thank you for your book of sermons. The Queen wishes me to say she has read one or two of them and is much pleased with them. The book is so nicely bound and came quite in time. I am happy to be able to tell you that the Queen is much better. Her Majesty went to the Glassalt Shiel for two nights, which little change refreshed the Queen and did Her Majesty good.

The Queen had invited Flint to Balmoral on this occasion chiefly to consult him about the appointment to the Chair of Church History in Edinburgh, rendered vacant by the resignation of Dr Wallace, who had accepted the editorship of the *Scotsman*. Wallace's resignation was a great loss to the University and the Church, and Flint, who had a sincere admiration and regard for him, regretted it very much. The Queen was evidently desirous of giving the appointment to Dr Taylor, formerly of Crathie and at that time minister of Morningside Parish, Edinburgh, and she was pleased when Flint was able to assure her of

Taylor's eminent fitness for the post. But a strange proposal was made at the time by Dr Charteris. It was none other than that the Chair should be offered to Dr Christlieb, a German Professor, well known for his interest in, and his book on Foreign Missions. The matter had gone so far, in Charteris's mind, at any rate, that a serious attempt was to be made to have Christlieb appointed. But leaving out the German, Charteris had no doubt that Hastie was the best man. Charteris's letter to Flint on the subject is interesting from several points of view.

CLUNY HILL,

FORRES, *October 3, 1876.*

MY DEAR FLINT,—Your letter followed me by a roundabout route, and I have it here. It gave me my first intimation that Wallace is to resign. He wrote to me that he had not made up his mind and, ever since, I have been getting letters from puzzled co-presbyters asking whether, in my opinion, his orders are indelible.

The Christlieb matter has been asleep, because I had the idea that Wallace would either hold on for the session or resign so late that the Chair must be temporarily filled for the session. The only Church leaders I consulted are Smith and Scott, the former very favourable, but seeing difficulties in our Church's jealousy of foreigners, the latter dead against it as a confession that we cannot fill our own Chairs. This last is nonsense, because the question is one of comparative advantages only. I never consulted Dr Pirie until yesterday when I wrote to ask him whether the Assembly would object to admit Dr Christlieb as a minister if it should come to that. I confess I am doubtful as to our Church's patriotism, and I do not know the Lord Advocate well.

That is frankly everything, for I wish you to know all I know, but of the men you name I have no doubt whatever that Hastie is the best man. I know little of his theological position, but I know his character and zeal and natural piety so well as to be sure that he would not offer to teach what he does not like, and that is everything we need for theology. For reading, sympathy, and power to teach he is capital.

It is clear that Charteris's strong evangelical leanings and his keen interest in Foreign Missions were

at the bottom of his desire to give the appointment to Christlieb. He was paving the way for a smooth passage of his proposal, so far as the Assembly might be concerned. It never, however, got that length, and Flint does not seem to have given him much encouragement. If Hastie had received the appointment, how different his career would have been; and yet, looking at the spiritual fruit and influence of his all but tragic struggle and final triumph, one perhaps should not wish that it had been otherwise. He would have been saved untold sufferings, but the Christian Church might have gained less.

A letter reached Flint about this time from a leading minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Amsterdam which shows that the liberality of sentiment towards foreigners, which Dr Charteris wished the Church of Scotland to express, was not altogether confined to him. Owing to the trouble which had sprung up through the conflict between the orthodox and the rationalists in the Dutch Church, many of the parishes were vacant, and there were no probationers to fill them. This letter proposes that Scottish licentiates should go to Holland and be appointed to the vacant charges, of which at the time there were no fewer than two hundred.

“We have,” says the writer, “only a hundred students in theology of whom not more than twenty will be ready each year to fill the vacant places. Ministers’ salaries vary from £100 to £250, and there are rich country parishes with a salary of £350, with free parsonages. The great cities have not the highest stipends. The vacancies for the most part are in orthodox communities or parishes.” He then expresses an opinion of the Scottish students’ aptitude for languages which is far from being shared by the

students themselves. He says, "So far as the Dutch language is concerned, in which, of course, they will have to preach, I think a student of Divinity can learn it in this country in half a year." The expenses of a sojourn will be £50 per annum, all necessaries included, if at least they will not live too luxuriously. "Might it be the will of God that the old spirit of faith and courage of your Scotch people, reviving, should come to the help of our believing people in the National Reformed Church." Nothing came of this proposal either.

At the beginning of the winter session of 1877, Flint delivered two important addresses, the first at the opening of his own class, and the second to the University Theological Society. He elaborated in these addresses two of the points with which he had dealt the previous year in his Inaugural Address, namely the liberty possible within Confessional bonds, and the readjustment of the Faculty of Divinity with a view to the more efficient training of the students. Both addresses gave rise to considerable correspondence. But the most important event of a public nature in which he took part at this time was the preaching of a sermon in St Giles' Church, Edinburgh, on the 3rd July of the same year, at a meeting of the first General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance. He chose as his subject "Christian Unity," based on John xvii. 21: "That they all may be one," etc. As there is no passage of Scripture which suffers more in these days from a faulty and sentimental exegesis than this one, intending speakers on Christian Unity or on Church Union would do well to read Flint's sermon, in which they will find a true and sensible exposition. The meeting was a most important one, not only because it marked the inauguration of the

Alliance, but also because there were gathered together representatives from nearly every Presbyterian Church in the world. The choice of Flint as their spokesman was a wise one, and he rose nobly to the occasion. The sermon which he preached was one of the finest that he ever delivered, and certain passages in it are well worth pondering. Speaking of the desire there is in every sphere of thought and life for unity, he says, there is a serious danger of taking a false unity for the true.

But nowhere have erroneous views as to the nature of unity been so mischievous as in the province of religion. In the name of Christian unity men have been asked to sacrifice the most sacred rights of reason, conscience, and affection. Independence of judgment, honesty, brotherly love itself, and every quality which gives to human nature worth and dignity have been treated as incompatible with it. In former days it was thought that Christian unity could be forced upon men by violent and bloody hands, and in later times it has often been supposed that it could be promoted by wrathful words and the arts of worldly intrigue.

Contrasted with this false unity is the true unity which Christ asked for His disciples, a unity which has not only its foundation but its standard or model in heaven.

It is a unity rich in distinctions and perfections, the unity of an infinite fulness of life and love. The unity of a Godhead in which there are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a trinity of persons, a diversity of properties, a variety of offices, a multiplicity of operations, yet not only sameness of nature and equality of power and of glory, but perfect oneness also in purpose, counsel, and affection, perfect harmony of will and work.

He then speaks boldly against the false idea of unity entertained by many, one which is held to depend upon a mere outward uniformity of worship or government.

This is a very superficial view, for it represents Christian unity not as a living and spiritual thing at all, but as a mere dead and outward form of doctrine or policy. It is also a very dangerous thing, for it tends directly to the establishment of ecclesiastical despotism, in the discouragement of the open expression of individual convictions, and the destruction of faith in the sacredness of the value of truth. To me it seems that the chief aim and desire of Christians as to unity ought to be to realise their oneness, notwithstanding their differences, to estimate at its true worth what is common to them as well as what is denominationally distinctive of them.

Holding that difference of principle or opinion between the various denominations is not what mars their Christian unity, but the evil and unchristian passions which gather round these differences, he declares :—

The differences are only the occasions for calling forth these passions. If they did not exist at all, the same passions would create or find other differences, other occasions for displaying them. It is not when one body of men holds honestly, openly, and firmly the Voluntary principle and another the Establishment principle that Christian unity is broken, but when those who hold the one principle insinuate that those who hold the other are, simply in virtue of doing so, ungodly men or men who disown Christ as the life and guide, the Lord and Head of His people.

The preacher simply points out what most ministers who speak from this text would seem to be blind to; that sin and not honest differences as to doctrine, worship, or government is the evil which mars and destroys Christian unity. Christ's prayer "that they all may be one as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us," demands a regeneration of heart and not the abandonment of a denomination. Christian unity, as Flint insists, "is a spiritual unity" which links together all Christians and underlies all the differences which distinguish them from one another, and it should never be mistaken for

identity of doctrine or uniformity of ritual or oneness of government. "For Christian unity may be where there are none of these things, it might not be where they all were." And then he makes a pronouncement upon "doctrinal unity" which shows his extraordinary breadth of mind and soundness of judgment.

A man may err very widely in creed and yet have a sincere believing soul. He may greatly misunderstand many an instruction of his Lord and Master, and yet reverence Him far more and love Him far better—and therefore, since love is the fulfilling of the law, much more truly obey his will—than a wiser and more instructed brother, whose exegesis of the New Testament is perfect. A Church might have a faultless creed to which all its members unhesitatingly assent, and yet be devoid of Christian unity, because devoid of Christian faith, of spiritual life. Mere orthodoxy is deadly heresy, the purely intellectual unity reached through its purely intellectual assent is no operation of the Spirit; but where the Spirit is not, life is not; and where life is not, death is. Life, however, is unity and death is dissolution.

This is great teaching, and no one will be surprised to learn that Flint's sermon made a profound and lasting impression. It was published and fell into the hands of Bishop Dowden, among many others. He was much struck by it, and wrote to Flint a letter which indicated his desire for a closer union between the different sections in his own Church.

Your words are wholesome and timely words. Indeed, were I the judge, I should say that there is even more need that the truly Catholic spirit they breathe should be fostered in the churches of the Anglican family. In all the three leading schools of thought, the Broad not a whit less than High and Low, there are to be found tendencies that approach perilously near a settled unwillingness to acknowledge the divine source of the miracles of faith, hope, and charity, wrought by God's Spirit, blowing where He listeth.

Editors on the outlook for talented writers now laid siege to Flint. It is interesting to note that



among them was Mr T. P. O'Connor, afterwards better known as an ardent Home Ruler and Member of Parliament. He was at the time London correspondent for the *New York Herald*, and he wrote to Flint for a copy of his sermon, fully a month in advance, in order that it might appear in that well-known newspaper along with the proceedings of the Alliance. Professor Baynes asked him to write the article on "History" for the forthcoming edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Dr Blaikie pressed him for an article for the *Catholic Presbyterian*, newly started; Dr Oswald Dykes approached him with a view to his becoming one of the consulting editors of the *Presbyterian Review*, an international and pan-Presbyterian monthly, that was being founded in America. The editor of the *Princeton Review* succeeds in committing him to an article for that widely known magazine. Dr Phin desires that he should edit the late Professor Crawford's lectures, assuring him that "all the hard work would be done by Hastie, whose qualifications are of the highest order"; Dr Joseph Parker asks him in a characteristic letter to preach in the City Temple; and a request comes from Paris that he should repair thither in order to deliver a lecture before the Christian Evidence Society.

In 1878 we find him and his sister enjoying a brief holiday. They travelled direct to London and retraced their steps by Oxford and the English Lakes. Writing from Oxford to his mother on the 9th June, he says:—

We have seen a great deal of Oxford. It is a most curious and interesting place with twenty-four colleges and twenty-six Churches. The Colleges are all separate and are mostly beautiful buildings. They have fine dining halls, chapels, gardens, and walks.

We have been twice to Church to-day, and in the afternoon heard

Canon Liddon, the most celebrated preacher perhaps of the Church of England just now. Of course we had an elaborate and excellent sermon. In Church we saw Principal Shairp who is professing poetry here ; his son is a student at Oriel College. We also saw R. Ewing and walked with him for a time after the sermon. The town is crowded with people and gaily adorned with flags in honour I suppose of the multitude of fat bulls, cows, horses, etc., that passed our window yesterday. We leave to-morrow at twelve for the Lakes, and we shall write to you as soon as we arrive. We shall expect, of course, an immediate answer. We are always anxious to hear from home. Willmina (a young relative who lived with them) is very much improved as a letter writer, and does not merely say as she used to do, "We are all well and hope that you are the same." The more we get in a letter the better we like it.

As no new idea strikes me on the instant I shall close, although there is a blank page on the other side. With our best love to father and you, Willmina, etc.—Ever, my dear Mother, yours affectionately,

R. FLINT.

J. J. FLINT.

This was probably one of the very last letters that he ever wrote to his mother. A few weeks after his return home she took unwell, and towards the end of autumn (October 14th) she passed away. It is impossible to measure the sense of loss he must have felt at his mother's death. The closeness of the relation between them was exceptional even in such cases, but to one of his strong faith and reasoned hope and certainty of immortality, her death was, in truth, only a departure, and the final reunion but a matter of a few short years. She fortunately lived to witness the success and fame of her talented son, and her open pride in him, to which Principal Stewart refers, was beautiful to behold. Happily for him his sister, who for some time was really the careful guardian of his peace and happiness, took the mother's place in the home and made up by her devotion and loyalty something of his loss. Professor Birrell, writing to Flint many years afterwards on the occasion of Dr Crombie's

death, refers to the "prominent place" which, in the old St Andrews days, the academic society of that University assigned to his mother. He says, "It is an odd coincidence that Crombie should have died on his birthday, and this reminds me of those still more wonderful coincidences which you told me regarding your mother's life. The old coterie of friends here, amongst whom in our estimation your mother always occupies a very prominent place, is getting fast broken up."

Flint's unwearied attention to his mother on her sick-bed, the anxiety that her illness caused him, and the sorrow that followed at her death, interfered considerably with the task on which he was engaged at that time, the preparation of his second course of Baird Lectures for the press and their subsequent publication, and it was to her memory he dedicated the volume "in sorrowful and affectionate remembrance of her love and virtues." Indeed, since 1874, when he was first notified of the intention of the Baird Trustees to offer him the Lectureship, he must have made the subject both of his first and second courses (for he was twice appointed within the brief period of two years) his chief subject of study. Fortunately he had delivered the lectures on Theism before he was called upon to undertake the duties of the Edinburgh Chair, but it was during his first session as Professor of Divinity, that his lectures on Anti-Theistic Theories were delivered; and how he was able to discharge the duties of his Chair, seeing that an absolutely new set of lectures was demanded of him, and to prepare at the same time his second course of Baird Lectures, can be explained only by his exceptional ability and wealth of knowledge.

It is not too much to say that Flint's two courses

of Baird Lectures, the first of which was given in the spring of 1876 and the second in the spring of 1877, created more interest than any which had been delivered since the days of Chalmers. They were given both in Glasgow and in Edinburgh, and his first, on "Theism," in St Andrews as well. The attendance on the part of the public, especially in Edinburgh, when they were delivered on Sunday evenings in St George's Church, was greater than that at any similar course within the memory of those who were present, and their effect upon the audience was striking and impressive. Indeed, the only other course of lectures of past years, that created a similar amount of interest and drew equally large audiences, were Mr A. J. Balfour's Gifford Lectures, on the same subject as Flint's first course, delivered in the Bute Hall of Glasgow University in the winter of 1913-14. And of the numerous tributes that were paid to Flint, A. K. H. B.'s, for its double testimony, his own and Canon Liddon's, may be quoted. It is found in his "Twenty-five Years of St Andrews."

There is nothing beyond the daily round till March 1876 when Flint, on six successive Saturday mornings, delivered at St Mary's Church his admirable Baird Lectures on "Theism." I remember the warmth with which Liddon praised them. It is difficult to convey the sense of intellectual force which greatened upon one, listening time after time; the strength, the simplicity, the self-forgetfulness of the man so charmed, that really before the end I had quite come to like and approve even his odd pronunciation of certain often-recurring words. The word "awtoms" did at first jar upon one, but as Shairp said, Shairp who attended regularly, "You'll get fifty men to say 'atoms' in the usual way, before you can get a man who can write a lecture like that."

The impression at the time was very real. A few Saturdays after I find it written, "Very grand indeed, he is a wonderful fellow." And never was eminent man more unpretending. There was not in him one trace of the self-seeker.

The extraordinary interest that was taken in Flint's two courses of lectures can be accounted for by the intellectual conditions that prevailed. From 1860 to 1880 was a period of mental and religious stress. The old landmarks seemed to be blotted out, the very foundations of religion were assailed, and earnest-minded men's faith was distressed. In not a few cases it made shipwreck altogether. Darwin's "Origin of Species," which had just appeared at the beginning of the period, affected the whole field of thought. Science, literature, theology, and art were all more or less influenced by it, and thinkers in almost every department had to reconsider and to restate their positions. The philosophy of Herbert Spencer, whose theological outlook pointed to agnosticism, and who attempted to explain the whole universe of mind and matter, perplexed many; and the Higher Criticism, which had begun to find capable and ardent disciples in this country, threatened to destroy the last stronghold of religious faith, the revelation of the Divine as found in Scripture. The upholders of use and wont in theology, the ultra-conservative and the ultra-orthodox, stood helpless. For them to accept the doctrine of evolution and, at the same time, to recast their faith, so as to have still remaining a reasoned belief in the existence of God, was an impossibility. They insisted upon making untenable claims, and they could not adjust the principles, upon which belief in God exists, to meet the fresh discoveries and new positions, and the altered conditions that prevailed. Eager seekers after truth, and even simple souls who never perhaps could give a reason for the faith that was in them, equally yearned for some word of reassurance. Fortunately there were some who kept their heads amidst this tumult of

thought and confusion of tongues, and among them was Flint.

The two series of lectures which he delivered on the Baird Foundation—"Theism" and "Anti-Theistic Theories"—were in very deed a message for the times. The theistic argument had been frequently enough stated, but what was now wanted was a fresh setting of it in view of all the movements that have just been mentioned. The ancient setting had been threatened, if not destroyed. What was wanted was a recasting of the old arguments, or the production of new ones, which would take into account the discoveries in science that had recently been made and the new points of view which philosophies with a materialistic or agnostic basis presented, to turn the edge of their arguments and to prove once more to the minds of men the reasonableness, the soundness, and the stability of the ancient belief in God. This was a supreme task, and many were looking out for a champion who should undertake it. It is not too much to say that this looked-for champion appeared in Flint, who courageously stepped forward, boldly faced the new position, and restated and enforced the theistic argument, in view of all that was being said against it and in the light of the most recent and most ample knowledge. Flint undoubtedly was the most learned man of his day in Scotland. He was fully equipped intellectually, he had a strong brain, was an acute reasoner, a clear thinker and the master of a lucid style; he was also a profoundly religious man and had that purity of heart which sees God. Further, he was open-minded, candid, singularly void of prejudices, and eager to welcome truth from any quarter. If he found any fact fully accredited, any discovery in the realm of nature, any new light on

the revealed records, he welcomed them all and said that they were so many new arguments, not only for a belief in the existence of God, but also for entertaining a wider conception of Him. He saw in them the means for expanding our knowledge and for filling up with rich contents our idea of God. In the words of G. J. Romanes, words which were written in hopelessness, but which Flint could appropriate with confidence, he might well have said, "I should have felt that the progress of physical knowledge could never exert any other influence on theism than that of ever tending more and more to confirm that magnificent belief by continuously expanding our human thoughts into progressively advancing conceptions, ever grander and yet more grand, of that tremendous Origin of Things—the Mind of God."

Now it was Flint's power of showing this that struck reviewers. To their surprise they found in him one who was not afraid of Darwin, of Spencer, of Wellhausen or any other mighty name in Science, in Philosophy, or in Criticism. He welcomed in their works what was true, whatever had been proved to be true, and set it as a fresh jewel in the crown of theism to make that crown shine all the more brightly. But the crown, he held at the same time, explained the new fact, which would have remained a poor, dim, meaningless jewel, unless its significance had been made bright through its relation to the Divine. His teaching on this point is more fully expounded in his remarkable article on "Theism" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In this article he states the lines upon which theology will in the future advance. He announces himself as a speculative theist, longing for more light in the realm of nature and of mind, so that the idea of God may be made all the richer, but

at the same time showing that these discoveries will necessarily remain isolated and meaningless, unless they in turn have their full significance explained through their relation to God. It is not too much then to say that Flint by his lectures rendered a service to the time which cannot be over-estimated. He enabled men to breathe more freely and helped to destroy the dualism that existed between science and religion, to bridge the gulf that separated theology from the other higher interests and nobler pursuits of mankind. He pointed out how they all tended to God and ought to be claimed for God. Here again he might be something of a mystery to the two extreme schools of the orthodox in theology and the materialistic in science. But he had no difficulty in showing that their position was one-sided, and that "nothing could be done against the truth but for the truth." It is because each saw only its own side of the shield that they differed. He saw both sides, and it was his aim to enable them to do the same. He never for a moment imagined that his was the last word on this great theme. The theistic argument will have to be restated again and again in view of further progress in human knowledge, but his work is bound to remain both as a land-mark and as a beacon. The history of Theism cannot forget it; and the investigations of the future will not overlook it.

The longest and, in some respects, the most interesting of the many criticisms of the book that appeared was that by "Physicus," who afterwards turned out to be G. J. Romanes. It appeared in a volume under the title, "A Candid Examination of Theism," published in 1878, and formed "Supplementary Essay II." of that volume. Flint replied to the criticism of Romanes in Note III. of his "Anti-theistic Theories," and there



the matter would probably have rested, had it not been that Professor Caldecott, in his volume on the "Philosophy of Religion in England and America," published in 1901, referring to the absolute scepticism into which Romanes had fallen at the time, attributes the cause to his reading of Flint's book. Flint was naturally offended at such an allegation. In Note XLI., the last that he ever wrote, to the tenth edition of his *Theism* (1902), he refers to this misrepresentation and has no difficulty in showing the blunder into which Caldecott had fallen. The essay of Romanes, in which he announces his scepticism, was, according to his own showing, written before Flint's book appeared and in the "Supplementary Note," in which he criticises Flint's book, he pays a handsome tribute to its "lucidity," its "ability," its "temperate candour and tone and logical care in exposition." The notice of the tenth edition of "Theism" in the *Spectator* of September 20, 1902, refers to Flint's Note and says, "Professor Flint has reason to complain of a serious misrepresentation. Dr Caldecott, wishing to show that 'Theism' states the case badly for belief, writes, 'The weakness of the book was sadly brought out when Romanes turned to it, and after reading it wrote his "Candid Examination" and fell into atheism.'" This the review then proceeds to rebut, in a very thorough fashion.

One is glad to note that Dr Caldecott admitted and regretted his error, as the following letter to Professor Flint will show :—

KING'S COLLEGE,  
LONDON, *September 30, 1902.*

DEAR SIR,—I am taking the liberty of writing to you in connection with my regretted error in the matter of Romanes. Ever since Johnston put me right in the matter, I have been on the look-out

for an opportunity of expressing regret in some public way. In a copy of the *Spectator*, which I send with this post, I have taken advantage of an opening given, and I trust that my letter may be read as widely as the original statement may have been. I am, yours faithfully,

A. CALDECOTT.

The letter to the *Spectator* appeared in the issue of September 2, 1902:—

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

SIR,—Your notice in the *Spectator* of September 20th of the new edition of Professor Flint's well-known book brought up a point on which Dr Flint dwells in his Preface. I had fallen into a misconception of what really took place in the mental history of G. J. Romanes with respect to this book, and had been supposing that he took it as the last word to be said for the theistic position, before he went for twenty years into a scepticism more or less complete. Immediately after the publication of my book it was pointed out to me by my lamented friend Professor Johnston of Cheshunt, a fellow-pupil of Dr Flint at Edinburgh, that I was in error, and I had been watching for some opportunity of withdrawing the statement I made. I shall be obliged if you will allow me to take your notice of last Saturday as my opportunity for this and to express regret that I made the mistake.

A. CALDECOTT.

It is well known that some time before his death the religious views of Romanes underwent a radical change. Near the close of his life he was occupied in writing a "Candid Examination of Religion" to be published under the pseudonym of "Metaphysicus." Such notes for the work as were sufficiently complete were published after the author's death by Canon Gore. They indicate a return to the orthodox position, and express a conviction that the fault of the Essay of 1878 lay in an undue reliance on reason to the exclusion of the promptings of the emotional side of man's complex nature. This volume, when it appeared, was sharply

criticised, in one relation at least, by Professor Rentoul of the University of Melbourne. He complained of the imperfect way in which the editor traced the process by which Romanes passed from scepticism to belief, and was particularly dissatisfied at the failure on the part of Dr Gore to note the effect which the works of Flint and his criticism of Romanes must have had in changing the latter's theological position. Professor Rentoul's review formed the substance of his Inaugural Address at the opening of the Theological Hall for Session 1896. In a letter to Flint he says :—

Canon Gore's Book, it seems to me, is a most defective one because he does not lay bare the links of process by which Romanes passed outward and then again inward to the faith. Whether from Anglican insularism or from lack of larger knowledge of the philosophical side of Romanes' mental conflict, Gore has given no indication of the relations of Romanes as "Physicus" to yourself and to your reply. . . . In my lecture I tried to bring out what seems to me quite certain, the influence which your dealing with "Physicus" had with Romanes and also the influence upon him of the "great mathematicians." I have been much surprised that the relation of "Physicus" to yourself does not seem to have been seen or dealt with by any editor or reviewer or by anyone at all in the British Isles in dealing with Gore's book and the subject of Romanes' return to the faith.

All that Flint says in his Note to the tenth edition in referring to this letter and to its writer's Inaugural Address, neither of which is quoted by him, is, "I attach no blame to Dr Gore and make no claim for myself."

Flint's second course, on "Anti-Theistic Theories," was on its delivery even more popular than the first. It dealt with such subjects as Atheism, Materialism, Pessimism, Pantheism, etc., all of which were, so to speak, in the air. The words of Professor Calderwood, "The fairness of statement, clearness of reasoning, power of argument, and felicity in delivering a blow at the weak

point of a theory," expressed the general opinion of reviewers and critics. Principal Sir William Geddes only voiced the consensus of opinion with regard to both books when he wrote to Flint as follows :—" In the great battle which you have been fighting and fighting so well, I trust you will find ere long a multitude of coadjutors and the tide turning in favour of Idealism and the Eternal Verities. At present, when philosophy is looked on as ultimately a part of physical science, you will receive slight aid from the dominant faction who are in possession of the high places of the field. But even among them, as in the case of Jevons, there are symptoms of a reaction to sounder and stabler views."

It was a matter of gratification to the Baird Trustees that Flint intended both volumes to be used as Text Books. This accounts to a certain extent for the form in which the lectures are cast, and partly explains the full and learned notes that accompany them. Their success must have been equally gratifying to all concerned. "Theism" is now in its twelfth and "Anti-Theistic Theories" in its eighth edition, and both books would seem to be almost as popular as when they were first published. This is surely a tribute to their sterling merit which no criticism can gainsay. It was while listening to one of these lectures that the very Rev. Dr Wallace Williamson, minister of St Giles', Edinburgh, was first struck by and drawn to Flint. He was but a youth at the time, and has since proved to be one of the most distinguished men that ever sat under the Professor. In response to a request on my part he has written the following appreciation :—

"The first time I saw Robert Flint was on a winter Sunday evening in St George's Parish Church, Edinburgh, about 1876. He had come to deliver his famous Baird

Lectures on Theism which, in their published form, have now become a classic in Apologetic Theology. The opening sentence, slightly different from the printed page and delivered with characteristic force:—‘Is there a God, or is there not a God?’ gripped the vast congregation at the outset and held them spellbound to the end. Sunday after Sunday he carried us through the great departments of his mighty theme, leaving us at the close with two deep and unalterable impressions—the irrefragable reasonableness of belief in God, and the insufficiency of mere theism to make faith in God the ruling principle of human life.

“Two years later I entered the Divinity Hall of Edinburgh University, where Flint had been for some time installed as Professor of Systematic Theology. His power was already felt far beyond the sphere of his immediate influence in the Chair. Yet none but his own students can know how much that influence was enhanced by his presence and personality. Not that he ever sought to sway men except by the sheer force of his reasoning as also by the weight of his learning. Yet his personality counted for much and became to all of us a spiritual tonic and a stimulus. We moved in a clear air of reality. Transparent honesty was the keynote of all his discussions. He was ever conspicuously fair if he was at the same time relentlessly logical. The impression which his Baird Lectures had created was continuously deepened and strengthened. All his teaching was dominated by the thought of the fundamental truth of the reality of God and the full revelation of God in Christ.

“Nothing weighs more with the student than the conviction that his teacher is master of his theme. And Flint was supremely a Master. No region of the great field of Theology was unfamiliar to him. Into none

did he fail to lead us with unerring guidance. Always clear, strong, earnest, sincere, he was able to bring home to us, with convincing power and massive scholarship, the great living principles of the Christian Faith. Himself deeply religious, he impressed us with the noble reasonableness of our religion and inspired us to make our ministry worthy of the great message committed to us. He cared for the great things of the faith, and made us care for them with a measure of his own intensity and fervour. No student of Flint's can cease to cherish the deepest respect for his memory nor can any of us fail to be grateful for the opportunities of those years. To him and to his teaching we owe more than we can fully express for our unshaken sense of the stability of the foundation on which religious faith rests, as also for our conviction of the spiritual fulness of the Christian Gospel, and of its manifold adaptability to human needs.

“The great qualities of Flint's theological and philosophical work appeared in simpler form in his preaching, which was singularly attractive to the ordinary worshipper. He did not indeed set himself forth for the work of the pulpit as his special calling. He was essentially a teacher of preachers. But his own sermons, as published and as delivered, exhibit the qualities of his mind in an interesting and impressive way. He could bring the deep things of religion very near to the common mind. And he added to the clearness of his message a note of tenderness and simplicity which was not only characteristic of the man, but, united as it was to profound thoughtfulness, wisdom, and learning, was strangely winsome to many who heard him. Alike in the set academic discourse and in the simple sermon to quiet congregations of working folk, he was clear, strong, and definite in setting forth the distinctive

spiritual message of Christianity. This was the secret of his power in preaching.

“Looking back, as I do, over a long period of years, during which I had frequent opportunities of meeting my honoured professor and teacher, I realise that the qualities which I have mentioned were clearly those which won our admiration and influenced our own lives. Wearing all that weight of learning lightly like a flower he impressed us with his deep simplicity ; and even while he led us into the lofty regions of speculative thought he made us feel that we were in contact with the unstained purity of a childlike heart. The humour that lurked within his grave and kindly eyes would often irradiate his face and the gravity of the professor would melt in the warm interchange of friendly talk. Many of us are grateful to this hour for his brotherly sympathy and wise guidance in spiritual as in other difficulties. And therefore while we honour the great theologian and scholar whose name has added lustre to our Church and country, we have a special tenderness for his memory as our teacher and friend. Robert Flint will ever be to us an inspiration in the ministry to which he was largely instrumental in leading us and in which, by example as well as by precept, he taught us that the supreme purpose is to lead men to God in Christ.”

This seems to me to be the fitting place in which to refer to Flint's great book on Agnosticism. It is true that it was not published till 1903, but it forms a part of the course which, under the Baird Foundation, he delivered on Anti-Theistic Theories. In the Preface to that book he says, “The chief omission in the present volume relates to Agnosticism. The explanation of the omission is that the author was anxious to avoid in a semi-popular work abstruse metaphysical discussion, and

has long cherished the hope of being able at some future time to publish a historical account and critical examination of the various phases of Modern Agnosticism." The opportunity came when in 1887 he delivered the Croall Lectures, but he felt that the limitations under which he had to prepare them militated against that full discussion which he desired. Hence the delay in the appearance of his book. Other pressing work, of course, also interfered, but there can be no doubt that the time involved in completing a thorough discussion of the subject was the main cause. It is interesting to note that he might have been Croall Lecturer as early as 1876, were it not that he was precluded from accepting the position, owing to the fact that he was Baird Lecturer. His friend Dr Stevenson, writing to him on the 2nd of June of that year, says, "The Croall Trustees met on Tuesday for the purpose of nominating the next lecturer. I proposed you, but was met with the statement that you had been nominated for the second time as the Baird Lecturer and that it would indicate a dearth of qualified men to appoint one man to two Lectureships at the same time. The result was that Principal Caird was appointed, and he has accepted; but for the Baird Lectureship, you would have been the nominee."

Flint, however, can hardly have finished the second of his Baird Lectures when he took up Agnosticism, for in the autumn of 1880 he delivered a course of six lectures on that subject on the Stone Foundation, before the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey. These were practically the same lectures as he delivered under the Croall Foundation in 1887, and which formed the nucleus of his great treatise on that subject. Accordingly it is quite fitting that even in point of time his three important works on Natural Religion should be grouped together. He was accom-



panied to America on this occasion by Principal Rainy, who travelled in the same boat, and Flint once told me an amusing story about their landing in New York. The Custom House officers there are, as is well known, very exacting, but, as Flint and Rainy landed from the steamer, they met with very different receptions at the hands of these officials. They looked at Flint and let him pass on, luggage and all, without any inspection or delay whatsoever; they also looked at Rainy and caused him to turn out all his boxes to the very bottom. Flint himself drew no inference, but told the story as a great joke.

Dr Joseph H. Dulles, Librarian of Princeton Theological Seminary, furnishes the following interesting account of Flint's visit and of the impression which both he and his lectures made upon his audience :—

Dr Flint came to America in the autumn of 1880, in response to an invitation from the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, to deliver the annual course of lectures on the L. P. Stone foundation for the year 1880-1881. He came also on the further errand of reading a paper before the second general Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, which met in Philadelphia, on Sept. 23rd, 1880, and continued in session until Oct. 2nd.

The Stone Lectureship was established in 1878, and Dr Flint was the third lecturer in the course and one of the most distinguished. Others from across the sea have been Dr Abraham Kuyper and Dr Herman Bavinck of Holland, Dr James Orr of Scotland, Sir William Ramsay of England, and Dr W. H. Griffith Thomas of Wales. Professor Flint's subject was Agnosticism, upon which he delivered six lectures between Sept. 21st and Oct. 7th. He was heard with a sustained interest by large and appreciative audiences in the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton. The lectures, as delivered, were never published, but they formed the basis of a later work on Agnosticism, published in 1903.

The paper<sup>1</sup> read before the Presbyterian Alliance on Sept. 25th

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the "Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, Philadelphia" (1880).

had the same theme and attracted much attention. The *New York Observer* spoke of it as "so clear and forcible and practical in its logic and metaphysical argument as to entitle it fairly to high distinction among the remarkable contributions of this great council." It called forth quite a lively discussion at the next session of the Council and some adverse criticism, the latter largely on account of a misapprehension of a statement by Dr Flint that "the mere exercise of discipline by any Church must be deemed a very poor method indeed of replying to agnostic criticism, or any kind of illegitimate criticism of religion and revelation." This perfectly harmless statement was thought by some members of the Council to contain a sneer at Church discipline. Others came to the defence of Dr Flint with a truer perception of his position. The fact of the somewhat heated discussion provoked by the paper emphasised the fact of the unusual interest aroused by it.

During the same visit to the United States, Professor Flint delivered a lecture in the chapel of the Union Theological Seminary in New York City on Oct. 8th, which was also most favourably received. The *New York Observer* of Oct. 14th, in a long editorial notice, described it as "luminous, strong, and stimulating." The editorial closed with the words: "From this mere outline, the reader cannot obtain any suitable impression of the analysis, logic and diction, which gave the discourse so much spirit and power. Dr Flint is a young, hopeful, progressive theologian. That soul must be truly torpid which is not quickened with new desires and expectations by his aspiring and reverent spirit. We have no fears or warnings for a noble mind that soars on wings of faith and seeks for a brighter day in the light of the Sun of Righteousness."

Opinions vary as to whether the "Philosophy of History" or "Agnosticism" is Flint's greatest book. Both have their supporters. But it is generally admitted that the latter contains his most matured views and his richest thought. It might be interesting, but it seems to me that it is not necessary, to give a detailed sketch of the contents of this important book or to refer to its reception by thoughtful readers all over the world. But in this connection it may be sufficient to give the notice of it which was read before the French Academy in June of 1903, by M.

Emile Boutroux, and printed in the proceedings of the Academy. Such a notice, before so famous a body, and by so distinguished a man was surely a very singular honour. The notice besides is a fine example of that gift of exposition which Flint himself so much admired in the French.

Professor Flint, in sending to the Secretary his new work, entitled *Agnosticism*, begs the Academy to consider it as an act of homage and gratitude. I would desire that he, in turn, would permit us to say what value we attach to this present and what importance the fine book has in our eyes, both as regards the subject which it treats of and the science, profundity, and the carefulness of the exact and complete analysis which he has brought to this investigation.

#### *System of Natural Theology*

Among the works of Mr Flint the present volume is not an isolated publication. It is a part of a whole, the plan of which was traced out long ago and which was to form a complete system of Natural Theology. The problems which this system is to deal with are four in number: First, the reasons which justify the belief in the existence of God; second, the refutation of Anti-Theistic Theories; third, the Characteristics of the Divinity, in so far as they can be determined by the study of Nature, of mind, and of history; fourth, the historic development of the idea of God. To the final question, the work entitled *Theism*, published in 1877, is related. To the second corresponds in part the work entitled *Anti-Theistic Theories*, 1879. In this Mr Flint criticises, in their relation to the idea of God, materialism, positivism, secularism, pessimism, and pantheism. There remains, in order to exhaust the list of Anti-Theistic Theories, *Agnosticism*. The developments, which belong to the examination of this last doctrine, demand a separate study. It is this study which Mr Flint gives us to-day.

#### *History of Agnosticism*

I will not attempt to analyse this important work, in which all the questions, historical and theoretical, that Agnosticism raises, are minutely passed in review. I will do nothing more than mention the precise definition of the essence and characteristics of this elusive doctrine; the substantial résumé of the evolution of

Agnosticism, from its eastern origin until its full philosophical development with Hume, Kant, Hamilton and Mr Herbert Spencer; the analogy, learnedly established by the author, between physical agnosticism and theological agnosticism, the result of which is the solidarity of the belief in the existence of the world and of the belief in the existence of God.

I will confine myself to a consideration of one or two points that are fitted to show how the book is an excellent response to the questions that are actually occupying our minds.

### *Prevalence of Agnosticism*

If there is a mode of thought which is prevalent in countries where philosophy is cultivated, and among ourselves in particular, it is that which Littré has formulated in the celebrated phrase: "Immensity is an ocean beating upon our shore, and for which we have neither barque nor sail." According to this doctrine, the totality of realities accessible to our intelligence forms a domain exactly marked off and, like a finite sphere, surrounded in every direction by illimitable spaces. This surrounding immensity is not a non-entity; it is real and full of realities, but as far as we are concerned, it is unknowable—absolutely and for ever unknowable. *Ignorabimus*, Dubois-Reymond has said. Many minds have acquired the habit of looking at things with this prepossession. Then, when formerly we saw two correlative terms, equally necessary to our thinking, the temporal and the eternal, the movable and the immovable, the relative and the absolute, there are many at the present day who are content, in their speculations, with a single point of support, that of sensible facts, the contingent, the relative. The second term is not denied; it is relegated to the unknowable. Our celestial vault has been again solidified. All that may exist beyond us, for us is nothing but a chimera, it is said. Thus the relative is no longer something that depends on the absolute; it is self-sufficient; the only admission made is that beyond it there is an Absolute, with which it is impossible and idle to occupy ourselves. The conditioned has no longer its condition in the unconditioned; it is knowable by itself, although there is doubtless somewhere beyond an unconditioned with which we have nothing to do. Science has nothing in common with it, and henceforth, in its Mathematico-physical form, it is capable of responding to all our needs. Outside science, somewhere else, we are allowed if we like to imagine the possibility of a faith that rests on no foundation, perfectly unverifi-

able and entirely useless. Plato decreed crowns of flowers to the poets and banished them from his Republic ; science " shows out " God very politely in naming him the Unknowable.

#### *A Subtle Doctrine*

It is this fluctuating and subtle doctrine that Mr Robert Flint seeks to define and examine. He sees its origin in the systematic dualism, which, under the pretext of securing the free development of science and religion respectively, strives to present them as independent of each other. If science in effect really does not embrace anything that bears a religious significance, each step in its advance makes religion appear less founded on solid grounds, and as its empire extends indefinitely, we can conceive a moment, when religion, as it does not offer to reason the same guarantees, will not be regarded as employed in the same business. Two persons, who become entire strangers to one another, inevitably come to ignore one another.

It is necessary to break with this dualism. At the same time we must not think of restoring, purely and simply, that old condition of medley and confusion, in which science and faith are mutually opposed and which is just what brought about the renewal of a dualistic philosophy.

#### *Close Relations of Science and Faith*

Now Mr Flint endeavours to show that science and faith are neither strangers to one another, nor should they impede one another. Science does not encounter faith in the course of its development, as an exterior barrier which will limit its progress. But in reflecting on its own principles, on the laws to which it spontaneously conforms, it finds in them beliefs, intentions, principles, which, if fully considered, are found to attach themselves to religious ideas. And, in the same way, religion does not do violence to reason ; it is not a renunciation of science. It is the development of a certain order of ideas and of known facts which arise naturally in the human mind. Man is religious, just as he believes in his own existence and in that of the outer world. If this is so, how does it come about that there are many intellectual men, notably in our own time, who are satisfied with Agnosticism. Mr Flint gives a very full analysis of the cause of Anti-religious Agnosticism. Among those which he notes I shall mention one which is particularly interesting. " Each science," Mr Flint explains, " presupposes among

those who cultivate it certain special aptitudes." Thus the study of formal logic does not require purity of heart, but it requires "purity of reason, which one does not find in every one." . . .

Now why should that which is true in all the other sciences be false in religious science? In that domain it is necessary to recognise that certain faculties, which we do not find in the same degree among all, are equally required. Then, too, certain conditions favour, others hinder, the development of the natural aptitude. It is a fact of observation that our spiritual nature becomes atrophied by want of exercise, as happens when we employ, more or less exclusively, one form in purely physical occupations or in the strictly intellectual. "A man given up entirely to science," says Mr Flint in this case, "however great and good he may be naturally, is able in this way to allow the sources of the spiritual life to be dried up."

#### *Testimony of Darwin*

Our author cites on the subject the interesting evidence of Darwin, who admitted that one side of his mind had been modified during the last twenty or thirty years of his life.

An inverse example is that of Sir William Hamilton, who came to deny to mathematics the evidence and the certainty which belong to them, because, not having sufficiently cultivated that science, he had not acquired the faculty of soundly appreciating it. There is then, for every order of studies, a special kind of capacity, which must be created and developed and which cannot be acquired except by means of an appropriate experience.

In truth, Mr Flint's book supplies us, in this respect, with regard to the subjects he treats of, the example along with the precepts. It is the work of a man who has lived the spiritual life; and by the constant association of a highly acute critical mind with an exceedingly lively sense of things moral and religious, which that experience has conferred on him, it is well fitted to cause those who are inclined to regard Agnosticism as a stable and definitive view of things, to reflect.

In the next chapter an estimate is given, by one well qualified, of Flint's contribution to Theism.

## CHAPTER XII

### HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THEISM

EMERSON has said that "great men are more distinguished by range and extent, than by originality." Judged by this dictum, I should confidently claim the greatness of Professor Flint, among British theistic philosophers of the nineteenth century, to be supreme and unquestioned. The "range and extent" of his theistic acquirement were unrivalled. Nor was the originality wanting. For the introduction of a new method of theistic study was, to say nothing of other points, a large and most desirable form of originality. That original method consisted of the mastery of the theistic literature of the European and American continents, as a title to the handling of Theism. The uniqueness of Professor Flint's method of theistic study is doubly apparent. It is seen in the immeasurable advance he made on previous British theisms. It is also evidenced in the striking fact, that, after three decades, the method has, in no case of theistic work, been repeated, with the single exception—which I am bound to record—of my own deliberate adoption and pursuance of the method, largely, no doubt, under the inspiration of Flint's example, but under foreign influences as well. The great and comprehensive character of the theistic inquiry should be remembered at the outset. Flint's own definition of Theism was, "as the doctrine that the universe owes its existence, and continuance in existence, to the reason and the will of a self-existent Being, Who is infinitely powerful, wise,

and good. It is the doctrine that Nature has a Creator and Preserver, the nations a Governor, men a heavenly Father and Judge." The broad range of the definition is apparent. Its objectivity is equally evident, if one compares it, say, with the more subjectively weighted definings of the late Professor Bowne, of Boston, in his philosophy of theism. But the complex character of the functioning of the theistic idea or hypothesis in human thought, taken as a whole, was grasped by no one more thoroughly than by Flint.

In estimating Flint's place in the theistic succession, one must, of course, look back on the state of theistic thought precedent to his treatment. But in all such theistic references—whether to authors prior to Flint or to writers subsequent to him—I must omit many works which I should have noticed in a theological treatise. I shall here confine myself to such as seem most worthy of notice, in connection or conjunction with the thought and work of Flint. The nineteenth century opened with the theistic arguments of Paley, Priestley, and Thomas Brown. But soon there came to be felt a new power, pervading the religious thought of Britain. It proceeded from Coleridge. Whatever else Coleridge was, he was an ontologist, with a transcendentalism derived from Kant and Schelling. His theology was grounded in his speculative theology as its base. His great functions were to emphasise the spirituality of man, and to establish a truer and deeper harmony between reason and religion. He sought to replace eighteenth century natural theology, with its negative rationalism, by a spiritual philosophy, in which a dynamic system should replace a mechanical one. Theism was for Coleridge a necessary hypothesis, but the necessity was only of a logical or conditional kind. His transcendentalism reached not forth to secure higher reality, and so fell



short of being of the constructive order. His influence, however, was felt by Hare, Stanley, Newman, Mill, and many others, and subsequent thought was deepened by the impulse he had given. I do not dwell on the theism of J. D. Morell (1849) which bore an intuitional character, and had some repute. It was not of a native cast, but had resemblances to Rothe, Schleiermacher, and other German writers.

A significant influence for Theism, in the middle of the nineteenth century, was the work of Dr Chalmers. He drew from Butler; was ill content with the traditional theism; and tried to vindicate teleology by appeal to Mind, and, still more, to Nature. He strongly argued for the adjustment of matter, rather than its creation, as the best proof of the Divine Existence. Despite the fact that a knowledge of German Philosophy would have helped Chalmers to a loftier "Natural Theology" than he has left us, there are yet passages in his work, relative to theism and anti-theism, which render Chalmers, at points, no unworthy forerunner of Flint, a quarter of a century earlier.

A new epoch began for British theology in 1855. If the works of Stanley and Jowett in historical criticism marked a new era, not less did the Burnett Essays of Thompson and Tulloch—published in that year—signalise an advance in theistic thought. On Tulloch's meritorious performance, which laid its main stress on Teleology, though not in sufficient distinctness from Cosmological considerations, I do not propose to dwell. I note, however, his lucid statement of the Ontological argument as one in which the infinite was "not logically but instinctively given," apprehended indeed "as a fact in the truthful mirror of intuition"—not in a set of mere abstract ideas or as a mere logical necessity. I dwell rather on R. A. Thompson, who has never re-

ceived, from British theological critics, the justice he deserved. I have ere now come across a stray American writer who had the insight and the courage to rank Thompson among the masters of theism in his own time. Flint, however, paid a handsome compliment to Thompson, when, in his "Agnosticism" (p. 354), he said that "the ablest exhibition of the parallelism between knowledge of God and knowledge of the world to be found in any language is that contained in R. A. Thompson's 'Christian Theism.'" Thompson's theistic scheme was far the ablest and best of his time, and a great advance on all that went before. Unlike Chalmers, the Church Leader, Thomson was a pure thinker, and the work of the pure thinker is of peerless value. His scheme was the widest and most modern; among its virtues I reckon the following points—its architectonic skill; its foundational treatment; its philosophical appeal; its attention to idealism, to space, and to time; its recognition of psychological method; its indication of the importance of the *à priori* argument for the Divine Existence; its express concern for the Personality of God; its sense of the theistic significance of the sublime and beautiful; these and other excellencies made it a highly meritorious performance ante-dating the work of Flint by fully twenty years. From our vantage ground of time, however, the treatment of not one of the matters just referred to can be regarded as anything like deep, adequate, or satisfying; but such a broad recognition of the things that mattered to Theism, and such a serious attempt, amid the imperfect knowledge of the time, to discuss and relate them, entitle Thompson to a high place in the theistic succession.

From 1860, the great idea of Evolution began to make itself felt in theological thought, not less than in the

study of Nature and her processes. But it is curious how Mill, in treating of Theism, leaves the "remarkable speculation" of the principle of the survival of the fittest very much aside—"to whatever fate the progress of discovery may have in store for it." The truth is, Mill was not without good ground for his notion of the "inadequacy" of natural selection to account for the adaptations of nature. Darwinism found some acceptance in the fragmentary theism of Mozley, which presented Teleology in a fashion which is not without points of agreement with Flint's mode of setting it forth. Huxley thought the doctrine of Evolution "neither anti-theistic nor theistic." Flint brought the matter to clearer issue, when, in his "Theism" (p. 209), he said of the laws of natural selection and progressive development, that "they must imply belief in an all-originating, all-foreseeing, all-fore-ordaining, all-regulative intelligence, to determine the rise and the course and the goal of life, as of all finite things." But to return. Mill's Essay on Theism was written between 1868 and 1870. It was a curious attempt to construct a theistic theory of the world on the basis of its imperfections. It condemned the argument for a First Cause, under the supposition that Force has all the attributes of a thing uncreated and eternal. Not only was Mill's treatment of the idea of Force eminently unsatisfactory, but the same holds true of his treatment of Mind, so that he failed to appreciate the theistic contention for Supreme or Creative Mind as the Primal Force or First Cause. The argument from Design found more favour in the eyes of Mill's theism; in this emphasis he followed Brown. Mill, in treating of Hamilton, thought the Design argument "the best," and "by far the most persuasive." He even thought the argument of "a really scientific character," although

he did not carry it so far as Christian Theism does. The omnipotence of the Designer is testified against, in Mill's view, by every indication of Design in the cosmos. The truth is, the tenuous theism of Mill was in far deeper, more logical need, of metaphysical basis than Mill saw or imagined. Little wonder that Immortality meant for his theism total absence of evidence for either side. W. Jackson's important Essay on "The Philosophy of Natural Theology" appeared in 1874. Jackson thought the arguments for Theism "purely constructive," and each of them he would have judged "upon its own merits," but he held "that they all lend each other mutual support, and become consilient at last," a position not without interest in view of the fact that the same position was soon to be maintained by Flint. Conder's theism, published in 1877, was not without good points, but hardly calls for lengthened notice.

It was in this year, however, that Flint's "Theism" appeared, to be followed in 1879 by his "Anti-Theistic Theories." These, with his excellent article on "Theism" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which was meant "historically" to supplement the "Theism" volume, and his massive work on "Agnosticism," issued in 1903, form the four works that sum his contribution to Theism, as dealt with in this chapter. Taking them all, what are we to say of Flint's contribution to Theism? This, that, looking at the heritage, so comparatively poor, scanty, and ill-co-ordinated, the appearance of Flint marked an incomparable advance, and the ushering in of a really scientific theology—the first, in any worthy sense, in this country. Flint's service to theistic thought is not for a moment to be measured by the lectures of which the theistic books were made up. In these lectures, as semi-popular, he was limited by his audiences. But all this drawback was swept away

by the rich, full, learned Appendices of his "Theism" and "Anti-Theistic Theories." Flint was the first thinker in this country who made his contribution to Theism on the basis of having mastered everything, great and small, that had been contributed by the relevant literature of the European and American continents. He was the first that really burst into those silent seas, European and American, and made their merchandise of thought his own. Such a mastery is the only kind of equipment one can recognise to-day as adequate, thorough, scientific. But its introduction by Flint, together with the relative completeness of his system, mark him out, in twofold fashion, as having rendered incomparably the greatest or most memorable service to theistic philosophy in the nineteenth century. For even those of us who have advanced upon his work in various ways have yet had our work, largely and initially, made possible by his, as base and starting-point of all subsequent acquirement or achievement. It is not unnecessary to say these things, since competent enough theological critics have been able to contemplate his work without appreciative sign of his pre-eminent service to theological method.

The character of Flint's theism has been described as that of "demonstrative rationalism." It has been credited with over-emphasising the intellectual elements of religion, and undervaluing the elements of feeling and volition. Recent psychology of religion would sustain this objection, so far as certain passages in the "Theism" are concerned. In the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Article, however, he speaks of the apprehension of God in a less one-sided way, as "itself an organic whole, a complex and harmonious process, involving all that is essential in the human mind"

(p. 248). Also, it may be said that Flint's emphasis, in the "Theism," on reason, carried much of beneficial character; theism, he says, "precedes and surpasses reason"; "it nowhere contradicts reason—nay, it incorporates all the findings of reason" (p. 49). And, later, he more finely shows how "reason reaches objective reality and possesses subjective certainty" (p. 270). Still, it is not altogether without ground for surprise that, with his strong hold on reason and the like, Flint's thought did not feel impelled to rise beyond a demonstrative, and reach a transcendentalist position. For, God once "disbelieved in," that might very well be the result of "the human mind" feeling itself left as, "of its very nature, self-contradictory" ("Theism," p. 268).

Flint did much to rehabilitate the theistic proofs, which had fallen into too great discredit, partly as the result of mere unthinking philosophical fashion, and partly from the stupid custom of treating them as proofs in a demonstrative sense. Flint may be said to have made the best of them, in the form in which he adopted them. But it cannot be said that these proofs can always be best sustained, in the forms which he adopted. The Cosmological proof he set forth, in the "Theism," by taking Nature as but a name for an effect whose Cause is God, and by trying to rise from the physical and the mental worlds up to a Personal First Cause. Flint had a strong intellect, and was an acute reasoner; but not even these could avail against the unsatisfactoriness of the old Deistic tendency left in this stress on an extramundane Cause. Not that Flint wishes to ignore elements or aspects of an immanent character, but that Nature is still left as an effect, whose Cause is God, in much the same manner as natural effects flow from natural causes. Neither the scientific

nor the religious consciousness can be satisfied with a God Who is there, outside the world, making it, as though He were not in it. The deeper, more essential form of the causal argument is that in which the world is used as evidence of the spiritual—of the need of a Ground of phenomena and their laws. That is to say, a true and Ultimate World-Ground and self-existent Cause is the real demand. Though Flint has not fully met this demand, yet one may note his nearer approach to it in the treatment of the cosmological argument in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Article, where the stress is laid on the contingency of the world, on the need to set aside deistic tendency, and to produce “a true appreciation of the Divine immanence” (p. 248).

Professor Flint's treatment of the Teleological argument was both strong and original. It was the latter by reason of the way in which it boldly proposed a virtual abandonment of the argument from Design, in favour of the argument from Order. He rejected the analogy form of the argument, as between the works of Nature and the products of art, and he found in Nature adaptations, but not purposes. But in taking this not quite satisfactory position, Flint did not seem to me sufficiently to allow for the reasoning being to a conceiving intelligence, since both were products of reason permeating them, but not results of their own self-conscious reflection. The argument was not *from* Design, he held, but *to* it, and this I have elsewhere supported, as suggesting “the right track.” Flint's reasonings for the dismissal of final causes or intrinsic ends had a great deal in them that was excellent, timely, and useful, but one may admit all that, without being prepared to expunge the immanent purposiveness of Nature or surrender the doctrine of final causes. The real need was to have the whole argument revised in purest

evolutionary light, and it was pleasing to find Flint give a more explicit recognition of this fact in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Article. There he says the argument has been "both corrected and extended owing to recent advances of science and especially of biological science. The theory of evolution has not shaken the principle or lessened the force of the argument, while it has widened its scope and opened up vistas of grander design" (p. 248). This again shows that Flint was not insensible to the progress being effected in theistic thought.

Professor Flint was strong in his handling of the Moral argument also. Where it seemed most to lack, as coming from a philosophical theologian, was in its not proceeding along more distinctively ethical lines, laying stress on the element of ideality. But I think that, in this objection which has been urged against Flint's procedure, Flint had more to say for himself than his critics have seen, although I cordially welcome ideality. From one of the Appendices to the "Theism" (No. XXV.), I think one may presume that Flint would have feared this stress on the Ideal would give "a mere moral ideal," something "not really God." Exception has been taken to Flint's position that the Moral argument is "but a part of a whole from which it ought not to be severed. It cannot be stated in any valid form which does not imply the legitimacy of the arguments from efficiency and order" ("Theism," p. 213). The objection is to Flint's making the Moral argument only contributory, and not giving it the independence claimed for it by ethical idealists, who treat the moral consciousness as ultimate. In this matter, I stand with Flint against his critics. I think his method and procedure more philosophical and thorough-going. I cannot, any more than he, sanction the rupture or





Photo. Hor-Langbe, Edinburgh

PROFESSOR FLINT

1888



severance whereby the moral consciousness, having torn itself away from the rest of being, constituted itself an autonomous realm, and established its conclusions, comes back, as by an after-consideration, to look at the vast spheres of physical and mental—the whole realm of narrowly-distinguished non-moral being, and see what is to be done with it. I do not believe the philosophical kingdom can be so violently disrupted without Nemesis. I blame Flint's critics for one-sided stress on moralism in precisely the same way in which they blamed him for one-sided intellectualism. Besides, the argument is really a part—the highest part—of the argument for Final causes, since an end is, with the fact of moral law in us, given for the world. I even think Nemesis has come in the indeterminate character of much recent ethical theism, and the anæmic character of a good deal of recent philosophy of religion.

Professor Flint rendered good service to theism by his acute presentation of the Ontological argument, which, however, he did not elaborate so much as might be wished. None of the proofs has come in for so much severe criticism as this argument, yet as a sample of its importance and vitality, Dr Hocking, of Yale, claims it, in a recent elaborate work, as "the only proof of God." Of the general result of this argument, one may say that it has made the concept of God seem to human reason of so unique and necessary a character, that reason itself is not satisfied without demanding the existence or reality of God.

In ten chapters, with forty-one learned relative appendices, Flint dealt with "Anti-Theistic Theories." The book treated such subjects as "Atheism," "Materialism," "Positivism," "Secularism," "Pessimism," and "Pantheism." There is the same crisp style, the same incisiveness of treatment, and the same

decisiveness of tone. There is also a valuable chapter on the "History of Pantheism," in which the vague uses of the term were ably dealt with. "It has been so understood as to include the lowest atheism and the highest theism—the materialism of Holbach and Büchner, and the spiritualism of St Paul and St John" (p. 334). "There is probably no pure pantheism" (p. 335). But there is neither the same room nor need to follow the work in detail, as we have done in the positive "Theism."

It is more urgent to speak of the massive work on "Agnosticism," which appeared in 1903. Its nucleus consisted of lectures delivered in 1887-8, and subsequently worked up into the historical and critical treatise before us. An even heartier welcome would have been accorded it, had it been issued earlier. I think, however, that criticism, from the American side, made too much of this objection. Still, there is no doubt that its earlier appearance would have augmented the volume of its praise, for the work would then have preceded certain shifting moods of thought, and been more eagerly welcomed. Its late appearance would not have mattered so much if the work had been enriched with a full and thorough index, and with such a bibliography as Flint could have given. It is not possible to gainsay the fact that the work, in its standpoint, attitude, and argumentation, belongs, as of right, more to the nineteenth than to the twentieth century, to which latter it is, for all that, a standard work of reference. Flint's fine sense of historical perspective, his immense range of reading, his able analyses, his just and sun-clear judgments, all contributed to make it so. The work opens with some excellent criticism of Agnosticism, as viewed by agnostics themselves; but it is, in Flint's fine phrasing, scepticism

“mitigated” by “dogmatism.” He declares Agnosticism to be “so vague and variable that to attempt to reason on it in itself, apart from its actual manifestations, must be futile” (p. 78). Again, “agnosticism is, in fact, never self-consistent, and never exactly this or that, but always relatively a more or less” (p. 191). Flint’s historical account of agnosticism from the Greeks to the Renaissance is sound, able, and comprehensive in its learning. His treatment of the agnosticism of Hume and Kant is so unexceptionable that criticism, admitting the treatment of Hume to be perfect, had to become somewhat hypercritical before it could find anything to urge against the acute treatment of Kant. Forms of “complete” and “partial” agnosticism are treated at great length and with much thoroughness. It is Flint’s fine conclusion that “the only ascertainable limitations of the mind manifesting itself as reason—*i.e.*, in the appropriation of knowledge and truth—are those which are inherent in its own constitution.” “They are inherent in and constitutive of intelligence” (p. 300). But when the author passes to discuss (pp. 308-311) the “ultimates of knowledge,” the treatment of Space and Time cannot be considered philosophically satisfying. In accordance with his leanings towards the Scottish philosophy of common sense, Flint treats Space and Time very much as if they were two absolutes in addition to the Deity as Absolute. They are called “infinite” and “eternal”; they are declared to bring with them the mysteries of “self-existence, eternity, and infinity.” To anyone conversant with the keen philosophical discussions of Space and Time within the twentieth century, this must appear one of the less satisfactory parts of the volume. This is not to question the ability of Flint’s statement from his own standpoint, but merely to say

that the standpoint is largely an "overcome" one to the philosophical world of to-day.

There is much valuable matter in the treatment of the Self, the World, and God. But the handling of self-consciousness would have been better, had its attentions been devoted to the contentions of Bradley rather than to those of Spencer. Nor can one say that the treatment of our perception of the external world is above criticism. It does not sufficiently deal with the modern difficulties. The large concluding part of the work, dealing with Agnosticism as to God and Religion, is of immense value for religious thought. The subject of Belief comes in for very full and important treatment, which cannot here be followed in detail. "A rightly regulated mind is one in which evidence is the measure of assent; or in other words, in which assent is proportional to evidence" (p. 245). This position is still too much in accord with eighteenth century Deism and nineteenth century Natural Theology in its intellectualistic stress. One can hardly help feeling how impossible it is for the thought of our time not to take more account of the part played by the subjective factors, than is involved in such a stress on "evidence."

It remains to be said that no brief critical notice of this great work can show what a rich feast of reason the author provided in the just and masterly criticism of so many authors, drawn from the wide sweep of Professor Flint's knowledge. The work was a fitting and worthy one in his broad scheme of Natural Theology, and the years will not be few in which its many noble passages will live. For there is much wisdom in the work, besides its comprehensive knowledge and valuable criticism.

Before I speak of the course of theistic speculation

subsequent to Flint, I shall refer to a contemporary of his, to whose work Flint made handsomely appreciative reference—I mean Dr James Martineau. Of Martineau's "Study of Religion," Flint wrote that it is "a work of rare excellence and beauty, and unequalled, perhaps, in the treatment of the moral difficulties in the way of acceptance of the theistic inference—the chief obstacles to theistic belief." In view of the recent attempt of Professor James Seth to depreciate the work of Martineau as a theistic philosopher, under cover of Richard Holt Hutton, I quote Hutton for his "profound conviction" that Martineau's "Study of Religion" "will be one of the books to which thinkers will refer long after this and many generations have passed away; that it will rank with the great works of Berkeley, Butler, and Cardinal Newman, among the most enduring efforts of philosophical thought, and together with the author's previous work on ethics, even found a religious and ethical school not less original and probably more enduring, because laid upon deeper foundations than that which Kant founded in Germany by his *Criticism of the Practical Reason*." Professor Seth compares Martineau, to his detriment, with Campbell Fraser, as "distinctly the less original and speculative thinker," both on the metaphysical and the ethical sides. But there is a good deal more to be considered, before reaching such a judgment, than Professor Seth has taken into account; and though Fraser's result may happen to be more in line with a certain section of modern thought, it is not necessarily more original to be determined by the views of Locke and Berkeley, than to set out from Reid and Hamilton, as did Martineau. Happily, most philosophical writers well know what Martineau—with his moralistic approach—and Green—with his metaphysical advance—

did for moral philosophy in this country. Martineau and Fraser both represent ethical theism. Martineau's spiritual theism claimed for God the right so to limit His own infinitude as to make room for human personality and freedom. His treatment of the Design argument was very powerful, as was also his advocacy of human freedom. To Fraser I shall return in his proper place.

In 1893 appeared Professor W. L. Davidson's "Theism as grounded in Human Nature," and Professor Knight's "Aspects of Theism." They were both clear and able works, but not remarkable in range. Davidson's meritoriously anticipated later psychologising about religion, but without sacrificing metaphysical elements. Knight's work emphasised Intuitional aspects. In 1894, Professor C. B. Upton's "Bases of Belief" appeared, under the influence of Martineau and Lotze. Upton held strongly by immanence, but not without transcendence. The cosmological and other arguments, as presented by Professor Flint, Upton put aside. His thesis was, that reason, conscience and man's higher nature all have their ground and source in God. Excellent in his criticism of Pantheism and Absolute Idealism, Upton scarcely kept himself immune from criticism for not depicting personality, human and Divine, in more unimpeachable theistic terms. In 1897 Professor Campbell Fraser issued his "Philosophy of Theism." It was a finely and calmly reasoned work. He steered a middle course between eighteenth century deism and nineteenth century pantheism. He sat loosely to the independent reality of the material world, so centred was his interest in spiritual realism. His philosophy of theism, which Professor Seth calls "new," is an amalgam of Locke, Berkeley, and Coleridge. It is a moral idealism, for the stress on the moral con-



sciousness overshadows that on consciousness - in general. The system is thus overweighted or one-sided, although Professor Seth shows no precipience of the fact. The final incompleteness of knowledge leads Fraser to moral faith—faith in the goodness as well as in the rationality of the Deity. The fact of moral evil is to him the great enigma of theistic faith. Fraser shows little knowledge, either direct or indirect, of the modern European and American literature of the subject, in which respect he is like Bradley, Ward and most philosophers who take up theistic themes. I cannot but think it essential, however, for efficient theistic handling, that the thinker should have such a mastery as had Professor Flint, at once of the philosophical and the theological material. Independence should come *after* knowledge, and not court the Nemesis of independence of knowledge.

Dr James Lindsay's work on "Recent Advances in Theistic Philosophy of Religion" was issued in the same year (1897). Of this work, as my own, I can say nothing, except indicate one or two relevant facts. The work stood in a somewhat unique relation to Flint's theistic works. Starting from a mastery of the literature filling Flint's elaborate Appendices, it essayed to present and to criticise the "advances" made in theistic thought during the twenty years that had passed since the publication of Flint's "Theism," as these "advances" appeared in the rich European and American literature of the subject. But while it did this, it pursued the steady elaboration of its own central and broader thesis, viz., "the progressiveness of Theism." It aimed to replace the prevalent static categories of theistic thought by others of a dynamical order, and so invest the treatment with vitality and growth. It thus brought theism more into line with the philosophical

tendencies of the time. Theistic positions I have since illustrated, in relation to the concepts of substance and cause (including First Cause) in my "Fundamental Problems of Metaphysics" (1910), and a volume of "Studies in European Philosophy" (1909). In this latter work my position has been indicated as that of Theistic Idealism, of which a fuller explication has been asked, and may yet be given.

The most significant work on theism, in most recent years, is Dr James Ward's "Realm of Ends, or Pluralism and Theism" (1911). The work has great excellencies, but also, in my judgment, greater defects than its critics have generally seen. These I have pointed out at some length, in the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, and will now advert to only very briefly. The pluralistic emphasis is overdone, and theistic result made to appear a more precarious thing than it deserved. Pluralistic alternative is said (p. 260) to be "prior," "simpler," "adequate," twice "preferable" (p. 264), to be followed (p. 268) by the sudden announcement that, after all, the theistic hypothesis has been "adequate"! Such a remote and circuitous method of reaching theistic Argumentation, seems to me well-nigh fatal to vitality of treatment, cogency, and impact. The contingency of the world is treated in the first part of the work, while the world has only become created in the second part—not a very logical scheme. Professor Ward's treatment of Creation is, theistically, not very satisfactory: he locates it in the "Divine Essence," rather than in Divine volition, in such wise that Deity is set in abject and unworthy subservience to the world. Here, and elsewhere, the theism is languid: it offers cold and naked possibilities incapable of satisfying any vital cast of theistic thinking. Dr Ward's relation to the literature of the subject is not satisfactory, for,

of all his numerous quotations, Martineau is the one recent theistic thinker referred to! What Dr Ward calls the usual views or common views are of a kind that make one feel Theism should have been considered in its best, most progressive forms, if the discussion was to be of present-day value.

Dr George Galloway's "Philosophy of Religion" (1914) has not the theistic significance one might have expected. This is partly because the unfortunate plan of the work leaves only the last third of the book for theistic treatment, and partly because the treatment is colourless or lacking in distinctiveness. Allowance must, of course, be made for the work being only a manual. But if Dr Galloway had been dowered with more of the instincts of a theistic philosopher, he would not have sacrificed the theistic treatment in the way he has done. In the first part of the book a good deal of descriptive matter should have been omitted as belonging to the History of Religions, separately dealt with in the series to which his book belongs. In the second part of the work it was very ill-judged again to lose space needlessly for a very fragmentary epistemological discussion, instead of following Professor Ladd's example, in leaving epistemology to be got in satisfactory form from philosophical works. Space is yet further lost to Theism by the insertion of a number of small rhetorical patches scattered through the work. Thus room is left for theism only in a very cursory treatment. Many items are dealt with in most summary and unsatisfactory fashion. The multiplicity of topics barely touched takes away from the thoroughness of the work, so that no part is strongly dealt with, though some parts are worked over in a fresh and fairly independent way. Dr Galloway has in this work done something to improve the narrow range of his philo-

sophical knowledge, but his theological interests are not great, and his work suffers from this lack. He gives a very commonplace statement of the theistic "proofs," which he, in infelicitous terms, sets aside as "probabilities."

His work contains no reference to that of Professor Flint, whom he, in the Preface, calls his "respected teacher." Without dissenting from the main positions of the work there is hardly a detailed point—faith, feeling, reason, religion, change, evil, time, etc.,—which does not call for criticism or correction. Despite a stray mention of objectivity, the work is too enmeshed in subjectivity to leave the theism much fitted either to strengthen faith or inspire life. Not as it would have been, had the theism pulsated in more vital and sustained contact with objective spiritual reality, and not been left so much as a bare argued possibility. Dr Galloway closes by saying that the central "problem" is the validity of the idea of God: to close by saying there is a "problem" is not to do much: better if he had done something, like Mr Balfour lately, to meet the real demand of the varied values for "a theistic setting."

## CHAPTER XIII

### FLINT AS A CHURCHMAN

ONE of the first fruits of Flint's visit to America was an intimation of date September 29th 1880, informing him that he had been elected to an honorary membership in the American Whig Society, a literary organisation founded in the year 1769, and composed of a portion of the students and faculty of the College of New Jersey. "Our catalogue," writes the secretary, "includes the names of many of the most illustrious citizens of our own and foreign countries and we should be happy to add yours to the number." However much Flint may have valued this honour, there can be no doubt of the estimation in which he held the distinction conferred upon him by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, when, on the 1st March of the same year, it elected him an Honorary Fellow of that body; and the announcement would be all the more welcome, seeing that it was made to him by his friend Professor Tait, who was Secretary. In due time Flint was chosen one of the Vice-presidents of the Society. He took the keenest interest in its affairs and was most regular in his attendance. Tait and he were in the habit of walking home together at night from the meetings and interchanging views on the subjects discussed. It is clear that he made a deep impression by his Stone Lectures on the academic world of America, for in 1881 the authorities of John Hopkins University offered him the Professorship of Philosophy in that Institution, and when they failed

to induce him to accept it, they asked him to deliver a course of lectures on some philosophical subject, for which they were prepared to give a thousand dollars. Andover Theological Seminary favoured him with a similar request. Both of these, however, he was compelled to decline.

At the opening of the session of 1881 he addressed his students on his favourite subject, "The Progress of Theology," and in the course of his lecture he said :—

I know that there are some who do not hesitate to avow, that the theologian ought to teach nothing but what is contained in the doctrinal statements of the creeds of the Church, ought to propound no truths or ideas except those which the Church has already adopted. This servile subordination of theology to the Church I utterly repudiate. I cannot conceive how any theologian possessed either of self-respect or of love of his science would consent to profess to theologise in any Church which attempted to act on so false and degrading a theory of the theologian's duties. The theologian's business is less to follow than to lead the thought of the Church.

And here he reverts to his old illustration of Euclid :—

I understand my relationship as a theologian to the Confession to be analogous to that of a professor of mathematics to the elements of Euclid. He is content not to contradict the doctrine therein contained, but he would by no means be content to be confined to it and prevented from going on to the higher mathematics.

The redoubtable Dr Begg, who shone much more brightly as an ecclesiastic than a theologian, had the temerity to attack Flint because of this pronouncement. Flint did not allow Dr Begg's attack to pass unchallenged. He turns upon him and, in the course of a justification of his former address, deals blow upon blow with great power. He reminds Dr Begg of his recent confession in the Free Church Commission that he "had no sooner entered the ministry than he fell into the stream of public discussion," and calls

his attention to the fact that “ fifty years of exertion and his great skill and ample experience in swimming, both with the current and against it, have failed to carry him to a peaceful shore or a haven of rest.” He then utters these earnest words :—

I do not like the stream into which he fell, and for this, among other reasons, that it is a stream which has wasted and impoverished every field of theological science in Scotland, and into which whoever is completely drawn must be lost to theological science, and must lose to some extent a due interest in its progress. The fruit of science like the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace ; it loves quiet places. For fifty years there has been no ecclesiastical peace in Scotland, and Scotland is fifty years behind some other countries of Europe in theological science. It is about time, in my opinion, that divines were thinking of coming out of a stream so unfertilising, and in some respects so unclean as that which has so long been flowing through Scotland, instead of plunging into it, as many of them are doing just now, more madly than ever, and trying to drag the whole country into it.

It was in the same year (1881) that he delivered, what Principal Sir Alexander Grant, in a letter of thanks, characterises as “ your noble lecture on the Covenanting period (one of the St Giles’ Lectures) which I listened to with the greatest interest and admiration yesterday.” The Principal continues :—

I thought every sentiment and judgment in your lecture most just and generous. I was particularly touched by your passage on Leighton, and I shall ask your permission to transfer this bodily to the pages of the survey which I am engaged in compiling, of the past three centuries of our University.

Sir Alexander’s praise was thoroughly deserved, and if Flint had taken up the history of Scotland as a whole and treated it in the same manner and spirit, as he no doubt would have done, he might have produced a work that would easily have superseded all others of a similar kind. As Professor Hastie once remarked, “ Flint’s forte was history.”

We find him in July of 1882 enjoying a brief holiday in London, having been called there to preach in Crown Court Church. He writes to his sister on the 5th of that month telling her that he "had a busy day, eight hours at the British Museum. I had luncheon at the Whitelaws, who are as kind and in as great force as ever." On the following day he says, "I was three hours at the British Museum, then went to Lord Balfour of Burleigh's and had luncheon, afterwards drove to Dr Wallace's and had a talk with Dr and Mrs Wallace. I heard at Lord Balfour's, that there was an almost full report of the forenoon sermon which I preached at Crown Court, in a publication called *The Christian World*. I shall try and get some copies. I am glad I heard it was published, as otherwise I might have preached the sermon at Manchester."

He was pressed during these years by editors on the outlook for able writers, to contribute to their magazines. Letters asking for articles reached him from the editors of *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, *The Contemporary Review*, *The Presbyterian Review*, *The National Review*, *The Princeton Review*, *The Expositor*, *Good Words* and other magazines. It was only a few of these requests that he could respond to, for he was engaged at this time upon many important works, as will be seen from the following letter to Dr Charteris.

MY DEAR CHARTERIS,—Are you not a happy fellow to have had three months and a half to think about beginning to work? And ought you not to have profound sympathy with those poor wretches who are weary of well-doing? I am one of the aforesaid *pauvres miserables*. Except a fortnight in Ireland in April, and ten days in Roxburghshire and Dumfriesshire in June, I have been continuously at the grind at Johnstone Lodge, while you . . . I am just concluding a paper for the January number of *The Presbyterian Review*: must begin at once, in order to have finished by April



articles on "Theism" and "Theology" for *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Am considerably occupied with "Philosophy of History" and "Philosophy of Sciences," two obviously small subjects. Have already engaged to preach or lecture thrice during the winter. Have awaiting me as one of your colleagues certain duties which are of course of a very light and easy character, yet do occupy one's time a little, for a short period, and really I must not join that London Lecturing Scheme which you so persuasively argue and convincingly urge to be most beautiful and blessed.

This letter was written on the 15th of August 1885 and leaves out of account several other works on which he was engaged during those busy years; notably his book on "Vico," published in 1884, and his contributions to *Chambers's Encyclopædia* and to the third volume of the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia*. He had a brief holiday in the summer of 1883 in Holland. Since his mother's death, his sister, who used to be his companion in every trip to the Continent, did not so frequently accompany him. On this occasion he travelled alone and writes to her glowing letters of the beauty and attractiveness of the Hague and Scheveningen. He also preached during those years on certain important occasions, notably at the Tercentenary Celebrations of Edinburgh University in April of 1884. He also delivered the annual sermon of the British and Foreign Bible Society at Regent Park Square Church, London, in May of the same year. In April of 1885 he preached at the opening of one of the leading Presbyterian Churches in Belfast (Dr Johnstone's) and finding himself in Ireland, he made a tour of the Lake District and Dublin, and returned home by Stranraer. The collection at the opening of the Church in Belfast amounted to over £500.

It was on the 13th of September 1884, that his father died, having reached the advanced age of eighty-

six. Among those who wrote to him letters of sympathy and condolence was an old friend, Mr J. M. Robertson. His letter is so sincere, so discerning and so perfect in manner and sentiment, that it may be accepted as a true and apt expression of the feelings that existed between father and son.

GRANTOWN ON SPEY,  
16th *September* 1884.

MY DEAR SIR,—And so the bereavement which in the course of nature could not have been long deferred, has visited you and your sister, and you have to write of your father, what must sooner or later be written of us all—“and he died.”

You have, however, the pleasant reflection that it was in a good old age and formed the close of an exceptionally consistent Christian life, so that his death may be fitly described as the harvesting of a shock of corn fully ripe. While therefore, you will doubtless long miss your father's appreciative interest in your happiness and prosperity, you can have no painful regrets on his account, as you have every assurance that death to him must have been great gain.

I remember well the anxious desire I felt when a youth, that my father, who was then an old man, might be spared some years to give his children, for whose upbringing he did so much, the opportunity of making some return for it. That desire was gratified, and the loving and stimulating effect of the opportunities thereby obtained forms one of the pleasantest memories of my life. You have had this exquisite enjoyment for a much longer period and I have no doubt you will never cease to cherish the memory of it as one of God's best gifts to you.

It is now thirty-three years since I first became acquainted with your father, and I very much regret that through the intimation of his death not reaching me in time I was unable to show the high esteem I entertained of him by attending his funeral. I certainly would have done so, if it had been possible for me to reach Edinburgh in time. We must therefore ask you to accept in this form the expression of the heartfelt sympathy which we have with you and your sister in this affliction and of our earnest desires that you may have a full realization of the consolations which our holy religion is so well fitted to give.—Yours very affectionately,

J. M. ROBERTSON.

Flint had no special liking for the Courts of the Church. He, of course, regarded them as necessary for its work and discipline, but he did not feel that his special talents lay in attending to business details or in taking part in the controversies that sometimes enlivened them.

There are ministers to whom the trivial matters, that not infrequently engage the attention of presbyteries, are as the very breath of life, and for whom to be on a committee, and especially to be the convener of a committee, is the acme of their ambition. Flint's interest did not lie in these directions; he had other and greater work to do and he often felt himself straitened until it should be accomplished. But he was a loyal Churchman and on at least three occasions during his career he came into the open and took part in discussions or controversies which affected the well-being of the Church. It is to these well-known instances—all of them embraced within the years that we have just been considering—that we shall now direct our attention.

The first of them was in what was known as the Lenzie Case, which came before the General Assembly of 1881. Flint was a member of Assembly that year and moved the adoption of the report of the Endowment Committee, of which the well-known Churchman, Mr T. G. Murray, was Convener. Flint in his speech made certain observations which are well worth remembering. Speaking of the principle of territorial endowment, he says:—

It was a principle which underlay their whole economy as a National Church. It was an old principle—far older than their Scotch Presbyterianism—but they need not be ashamed because it was old, and was much made use of in Catholic and mediæval times. Almost all the money which the connection of the Church of Scot-

land with the State gave them were the endowments which the pious had provided for the maintenance of religion in Scotland, and the people of Scotland could no more be deprived of these endowments than they could of those which were provided last year, for the simple reason, that they could not be diverted to any nobler use.

He then turned to a brief consideration of the voluntary principle which, compared with the territorial, he found historically to be defective. "He admired in many respects," he said, "the chief voluntary Church in this country; it was a most zealous and faithful Church, but its very zeal and faithfulness made only more conspicuous the failure of the purely voluntary principle, as a means of evangelizing the poor, the indifferent, the vicious."

Dr Chalmers, working out the simile of ministers being fishers, used to say that "voluntaries were a kind of fly-fishers, whose operations did not extend to the muddy bottom and that the effect of an endowment was to lengthen the line so that the depths might become accessible." The truth of that was ever receiving fresh illustration, certainly not owing to any fault in voluntaries, to use Dr Chalmers's term, as fishers, but from their want of lines sufficiently long in the form of endowments.

It was very seldom that he spoke in the Assembly, indeed it was only occasionally that he was even a member of it, and when he did address it, he either read his speech or spoke from very full notes. It was only under pressure that he ever spoke at all. His friend, Dr Donald Macleod, on one or two occasions persuaded him to move the adoption of the Report on Home Missions, of which he himself was convener. Mr T. G. Murray was evidently equally successful on one occasion, but after the action of the Assembly in the case of Dr Hastie in 1884, he did not enter the Assembly for many years. When that storm had all but blown past and justice had at length been done

to his friend, he came back, not as a member, however, but as a visitor. The occasion still lives vividly in my memory. The House was full, Flint came quietly in by the door under the Throne Gallery and stood for a moment until he could find a vacant seat. No man ever looked the student more than he did. The sometimes heated atmosphere, the sharp collision of debate, the excitement and stress that now and again affected the members of that venerable House, seemed utterly foreign to him, as he did to them. But while thus standing for a moment, the Assembly caught sight of him; a whisper went round, "There's Flint," and everyone in that crowded House rose to his feet in an instant. And, so upstanding, the Assembly of the Church of Scotland paid to its greatest scholar and thinker a tribute which, for its spontaneity and reverence, I never saw rendered to any other.

The Lenzie Case rose out of a volume which bore the title "Scotch Sermons," which was published in 1880, under the editorship of Professor Knight of St Andrews. It contained sermons by such well-known ministers as Principal Caird, Dr Cunningham of Crieff, Dr Macintosh of Buchanan, Dr Story and others. The Preface declares that "this volume has originated in the wish to gather together a few specimens of a style of teaching which increasingly prevails amongst the clergy of the Scottish Church. . . . It may serve to indicate a growing tendency and to show the direction in which thought is moving. The writers," it is further stated, "are all clergymen of the Church of Scotland." Now the Preface, to begin with, was undoubtedly misleading and much objection was taken to it. It was generally, and looking back on the facts, it must be admitted, justly denied, that

the sermons contained in the volume were specimens of a style of teaching which "increasingly prevailed amongst the clergy of the Scottish Church." But while we admit this it must at the same time be allowed that they were a token of a movement to which reference has already been made, and which came to a head with the appearance of this volume, and then subsided. Whatever of good there was in it, and it must be conceded that there was good, has remained, and now forms a part of the thought and life of the Church. But what was defective, like all imperfect things, has passed away. "Scotch Sermons" was the product of the choicer or more advanced spirits among the Broad Church party. That party represented the reaction that was bound to spring up against the obscurantist orthodoxy that had been steadily growing in Scotland and which threatened to arrest freedom and progress in theology. It was a necessary movement, and acted as a solvent. It was inspired by the highest of motives—the search after religious truth—and was influenced by the literary, speculative, critical, and scientific tendencies which were manifesting themselves in many quarters and crying for a restatement of doctrinal belief in which they should find a place.

Now every good movement has the defects of its qualities. The Broad Church party saw only half the truth, and they were so blinded by the tendencies, just referred to, as to be unable to see the whole truth. For these tendencies were only tendencies after all, and not the final statement of absolute truth, and many of the theories which were being continually set forth have long since been absolutely discredited. All the same this movement shook from their dogmatic slumber many of the ministers of the Church, and

called upon them to be prepared to give a reason for the faith that was in them. The movement undoubtedly helped to clear the air and to set the Church a step forward on the path of theological progress.

The case came to the Assembly on appeals, and dissents and complaints, by several parties against the judgment of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, affirming a deliverance of the Presbytery of Glasgow, in which the Presbytery resolved to appoint a Committee to confer with the Rev. W. L. M'Farlan, minister of Lenzie, in respect of two sermons contributed by him to "Scotch Sermons." These sermons bore the titles respectively of "Authority" and the "Things which cannot be shaken." The case was debated at great length, both in the Presbytery and in the Synod, and created much public interest. It is perfectly clear that while these two Courts were anxious to defend the fundamentals of the Faith, which it was alleged were threatened or denied by these two sermons, there was no desire to persecute Mr M'Farlan or to libel him on a charge of heresy. His utterances, however, were so imbued with the tendencies that were in the air, and his conclusions were so vague, indefinite and doubtful, that one cannot be altogether surprised at the action which was taken. The first sermon on "Authority" dealt with a very difficult subject, and it was capably handled. The second sermon put into the mouth of one whom he called a "modern theologian," views which, if accepted, left very few of the ancient beliefs of the Church unshaken. And the question at issue really was, whether Mr M'Farlan himself accepted these views or simply stated them as one of the signs of the times. Now it required not a little judgment to deal with this case. If the Church

was to encourage speculation in theology, and to preserve at the same time the essentials of the Faith, it would have been foolish to have libelled Mr M'Farlan and equally foolish to have allowed the matter to be entirely dropped.

Two motions were submitted to the Assembly, the first by Dr Cunningham of Crieff, and the second by Professor Flint. Cunningham's motion proposed to recall the judgment of the Synod as to the appointment of a Committee, but, without entering further into the merits of the matter, that Mr M'Farlan should be cautioned to be more careful in his teaching both from the pulpit and in the press. Cunningham made a very clever speech in support of his motion. He made out a very good case for the orthodoxy of the first sermon, but when it came to the second, he admitted that when he read it he felt that it "had an ugly look, and was profoundly sorry it had been published." He took up the only possible ground of defence—that Mr M'Farlan in that sermon was not stating his own views, but that of a modern theologian influenced by all the tendencies of the times. And he very cleverly roped in both Flint and Charteris as equally culpable, if there was any culpability in the matter at all. "Was any man to be censured, suspended or deposed," he asked, "because he had become the expositor of the opinions of some German theologian or it might be of some infidel writer?"

Were their clergy to be debarred from all exposition of the opinions of others? That would be a very dangerous position to lay down. He did not know how wide the sweep of that might be. They knew some of the most eminent ministers of their Church had done so. The learned Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, some years ago published a volume on *Anti-Theistic Theories* and



two-thirds of that volume was filled with an exposition of the opinions of atheistic writers, so lucid, so forceful, so honest, that he was afraid that exposition would linger in some minds in spite of the people themselves. They were not to call up Dr Flint there because he had given an exposition of the subtle theories of Spinoza and the somewhat coarser opinions of Bradlaugh. That would be dealing out very hard justice to him. But there was another member of the house—a man without stain and without reproach, and also a professor of the University of Edinburgh—at a still more recent period had given to the world a book which he hoped would illuminate the world—a book on the Canonicity of the Scriptures. He had been drinking not at the living fountains of water, but at these German Springs—these German fountains, which were understood to contain, not living water, but putrid water, not wells of salvation, but wells from which he would draw that which would endanger his own soul. That learned professor had stated more the opinions of other people than of his own; some of them most dangerous and unsettling opinions, regarding the canonicity, authorship, and origin of some books of the New Testament, and though the learned professor had attempted to answer some of these, it was thought by most men that he had not been able to do so. He asked how they would deal with the Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Edinburgh? Must they libel him? He would confess that the very thought of that would wring all their hearts with most poignant sorrow, and make them feel that the Church of Scotland might lose its ornament and glory!

Flint's motion was a very long one, but it simply amounted to this, that if Mr M'Farlan disclaimed the identification of his own views regarding the doctrines specified in the second sermon on "Things which cannot be shaken" with those of the modern theologian described as holding these doctrines, and expressed regret that his sermons should have given occasion to doubts as to the soundness of his teaching, and promised in future to avoid giving occasion of such offence, the case should end. It ought to be noted that Flint makes no reference to the first sermon on "Authority." He evidently did not think that there was any heresy in it and the questions which

it raises were questions which exercised his own mind greatly. He took a very broad view of the subject and once remarked to me that, in the framing of any creed or confession which was to be even of secondary authority in the Church, much more should be taken into account than Scripture. Reason, history, experience and other factors ought to form important elements in drawing up a standard of belief. Indeed, he did not think that either of the sermons gave any grounds for heresy. Speaking to his motion he said :—

It does not affirm that the sermons teach heretical views. I could not assent to any motion which affirmed this. The accusation does not seem to me to be well founded. What I can only call unedifying and erroneous views, may seem however to some or even to many in this house heresies which could be justly and successfully made matters of libel, and acceptance of my motion does not prevent their still quite consistently holding this view. I cannot go as far as they do.

Flint was most anxious to dissociate Mr M'Farlan from his sermons in considering the case. "They are," he says, "all that is before us, their author is not," and what he aimed at was to discover whether the writer and the speaker, that is, whether Mr M'Farlan and the "modern theologian" were identical or not. The only way by which this can be discovered was by Mr M'Farlan himself giving a clear answer and dissociating himself from the views which the sermon contains. He remarked :—

The Church of Scotland, as to the great Catholic doctrine of the Faith, has always been a plain outspoken Church. I have read Mr M'Farlan's sermon with considerable care, and as fairly as I could. I have read it certainly with no bias unfavourable to Mr M'Farlan, but also trying not to have any bias in his favour; wishing in the first place only to ascertain what the sermon teaches . . . I cannot afford to make the confession that I am specially unable to understand sermons; part of my professional duty being to read

and judge of at least a hundred discourses in a year more than other people are expected to attend to ; yet at the end of my study of Mr M'Farlan's sermon I have candidly to admit that if you ask me : Does Mr M'Farlan hold or not hold those heretical views which he allows his modern theologian so freely to put forth ? I am utterly unable to tell you, and I believe no man can tell you who judges merely from the sermon.

Flint naturally complained of the meagreness of the creed which remains after the "modern theologian" has torn to shreds the great doctrines of the Christian Church. Righteousness is blessedness—there is a Divine Being seeking to make men sharers in His blessedness, by making them sharers in His righteousness—and man is the heir of a personal immortality—that is all.

Now undoubtedly these are three great truths, but are they unable to be shaken in any sense in which the fundamental and distinctive truths of the Christian Faith are not equally unable to be shaken ? Christianity can no more be shaken from its foundations in fact and reason than natural morality, and natural religion. If, by being unshaken means being unquestioned, undenied, the three propositions I have referred to have been abundantly shaken. A whole host of sophists, epicureans, materialists, pessimists, etc., have denied that righteousness is blessedness, and very many Christians will think that no righteousness which has not its source in Christ can have a firm foundation and constitute blessedness. Belief in the Divinity of Christ has been shaken no otherwise than belief in the existence of deity. Thousands have disbelieved in a personal immortality, and if the strong rock of the resurrection of our Lord be withdrawn from under it, it will be very seriously shaken indeed. It is deeply to be deplored that Christ should have been so strangely left out of view. This Assembly must I feel sure deeply deplore to have found so grave an omission and is bound, I think, to say so, and to warn the ministers of the Church to be on their guard against failing to give due prominence to the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

It may be thought by some that these words do not give much of an opening for progress in theology. Any one, however, who may think so is much

in the same position as those who were represented by "Scotch Sermons." To them the only progress in theology was to discard theology and throw over the great doctrines of the Faith as this "modern theologian" of Mr M'Farlan's sermon had done. Progress in theology must be progress along the lines of the doctrinal teaching and belief of the Church from its very foundation. It must be through a development of those great truths, to certain of which Flint referred in his speech, by a clearer apprehension of them, a more thorough exposition of them, and by an unfolding of them in all their bearings and relations that we can get a deeper conception of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Any other sort of progress in theology is no progress at all.

Flint was most anxious that the case should end. "Everyone," he said, "must feel that if the case can, consistently with fidelity to truth, be brought to a close, an effort should be made to do so."

Who can look with anything but dismay to the prospect of a continuation of it? Who can expect from that anything but division, dispeace, scandal and all kinds of evil? It seems to me but fair and right that Mr M'Farlan should have an opportunity given to him to disclaim, if he thinks fit, the opinion which has become current, that the views of the theologian of his sermon are just the views which he himself entertains. If it be given, and if Mr M'Farlan see his way to embrace the opportunity and make the disclaimer, I can perceive no impediment to an immediate settlement of the matter.

The Assembly divided. For Dr Cunningham's motion there voted 56, for Dr Flint's 230; a majority of 174. On the following day Mr M'Farlan gave the disclaimer asked for and the case ended.

Flint's attitude towards freedom of thought in the Church is clearly expressed in the closing paragraphs

of his lecture on the "Duties of the People of Scotland to the Church of Scotland"; it is one of fidelity to doctrine combined with liberality. He says:--

The Church of Scotland is established as a National Church on conditions which bind her to give heed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ be presented to the people in purity and with fulness. Her standards show her clearly what is expected from her. She has no right to tolerate sceptical teaching and fundamental heresy, but neither has she a right to repress variety of opinion or to act in an inquisitorial spirit or to violate constitutional procedure or to treat all errors as heresies or to be over-rigid with any man. I think the Church of Scotland is very far from needing to be ashamed of the chief representatives of what is called her Broad Church school. I think the same can be said of the Free Church. I believe in faithfulness in dealing with doctrinal matters, but there is an ultra-conservatism in which I do not believe and against which I think Churches should be on their guard.

The lecture just referred to leads us to the consideration of another subject in which Professor Flint was interested as a Churchman: the question of the relation between the different Presbyterian Churches in the country and the controversies with which it is fraught. He made altogether three pronouncements on the subject; the first in a lecture in Newington Parish Church, Edinburgh, in April 1882; the second in an article in the *Presbyterian Review* in 1885, and the third in another lecture in Newington Parish Church in February of 1891. His two lectures are published in the volume "On Theological, Biblical and other Subjects," and in the preface he strangely remarks that they were both delivered in Edinburgh in 1882. This was not the case. He also took part, along with other ministers of the Established Church, in a Conference on Union with representatives of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches in 1894 and the two following years; so that he showed his deep

interest in the subject and contributed not a little to its possible solution. In any case his powerful utterances helped to clear the air and to show exactly where the question lay. The first of his two lectures is the soundest piece of writing on the subject that has come under my observation. It may be said with confidence that were that lecture republished and widely circulated among the ministers and members of the three Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and were it carefully and intelligently studied by them, it would do more to bring them together on the basis of a common understanding than anything that has since been spoken or written. It shows so fine a grasp of the whole situation, manifests so supreme a knowledge of the constitution and history of the Church, reveals so clear an appreciation of the position of each body, and exhibits such a spirit of fairness and conciliation, while, at the same time, yielding up no principle which is vital, that it would be bound to help largely towards ecclesiastical peace.

The title of both lectures is the same: "The Duties of the People of Scotland to the Church of Scotland," and the title is significant. When the lectures were delivered, the union between the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches had not taken place. He points out in the first lecture that, while the United Presbyterian Church held the connection of Church and State to be an open question, the Free Church believed in it; so that while the United Presbyterian Church might consistently seek disestablishment, the Free Church could only consistently seek re-establishment. It should be noted that, when he delivered this lecture, the Disestablishment movement in Scotland had received an unexpected impetus from a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland

introduced into the House of Commons by Mr Dick Peddie. The Church was somewhat alarmed and, while maintaining the attitude of conciliation which it had held since 1870, thought it wise to be prepared for defence. Flint's lecture was one of a course which had this end in view. Hence in discussing the question of the people's duty to the Church he was bound to touch on the agitation for its disestablishment that was being fomented, and he declared that the Free Church, in uniting with those who sought the destruction of the Church of Scotland, was absolutely untrue to her principles.

That Church had fought for a certain principle, what she called Christ's Headship over the Church, and she sacrificed her connection with the State because she could not gain what she sought. But was she seeking it now? he asked. Had she ever really tested Parliament and the country to see if they would concede to her that measure of spiritual independence within the establishment that she had desired? She had done nothing of the kind, and therefore she could so far boast only of having made an abstract claim which might or might not be practicable.

He further declares that the Free Church has also the task incumbent on her of showing that Spiritual Independence is not equivalent to ecclesiastical arbitrariness and does not imply that the majority of a Church court may disregard constitutional principles and procedure and deal in any way it pleases with a minority or even with an individual. "If the principle of Spiritual Independence be understood as requiring the sacrifice by minorities of their rights to liberty and justice, it means the tyranny of ecclesiastical majorities and the slavery of ecclesiastical minorities."

And what about the Headship of Christ over the

nations? a much more important question than the Headship of Christ over the Free Church Assembly and the United Presbyterian Synod. "To conceive of Him only as a Moderator of ecclesiastical courts and not as Lord of lords and King of kings is an inadequate and dishonouring view of His position in the universe."

He breaks a lance with the late Dr Candlish, who declared that what the Church of Scotland had chiefly contended for through all her struggles, was not the principle of a national establishment of religion, but the independence of the Church. There are some at the present time who are fond of re-echoing this travesty of the truth. To them Flint's words in reply to Candlish should be profitable reading. He says: "Such a reading of the history of the Church of Scotland is of course utterly inconsistent with every important historical testimony of the Church of Scotland from the first Scotch Confession downwards, as well as the Free Church Claim of Rights, and all that any man can prove by adopting it is merely that he himself truly represents neither the Church of Scotland at any period of her existence nor the Free Church of 1843.

Flint insists on all this, not to "reproach or glory over the Free Church," but to point out to her her duty, namely, that she should see what demands she might wisely and justly make upon the State, and should ascertain whether or not her laity desired to urge these demands. Flint has no doubt about the position of the laity in the Free Church; he is convinced that they would seek re-establishment on Free Church conditions rather than disestablishment. Nor does he see why such a policy should fail, if energetically prosecuted. He believes the State is much less Erastian



than formerly and that the Free Church claims would be much more favourably considered than they were at the Disruption.

I venture to say that unless the Free Church claims are of an extravagant and unjust character—such claims as the State would not be in the least likely to grant—the Free Church would have the heartiest good wishes of the Church of Scotland for her success. I venture to say with confidence that a reasonable and really practical movement on the part of the Free Church towards re-establishment, reconciliation, peace, would be heartily welcomed in the Church of Scotland, and I doubt not would be aided by her as far as her aid was desired.

Having thus pointed out the duty of the Free Church, he next turns to the Church of Scotland and counsels her ministers and members to study her history so that they may have a due appreciation of the interest at issue. The first of these is the maintenance of a National Church. He declares that this is the most important duty of all. "It is sometimes said," he remarks, "that the Church of Scotland does not base her claims to national recognition on principle but merely on expediency; there can be no more erroneous statement."

He is a poor advocate of the Church of Scotland who rests his arguments for her merely on the value of her endowments. It is true that Scotland is not so exceedingly rich or marvellously liberal that, with spiritual destitution rapidly increasing in many parts of the country, she can afford to cast about ten millions of money set apart for the advancement of religion into the German Ocean, or even to make a present of it to the wealthier portions of the community. Far more important, however, than that money is the Divine truth which would have to be cast away along with it. Is our country as a nation to acknowledge itself under God's sovereignty, under Christ's Headship or not?—is the gravest matter at issue between the Church of Scotland and her foes.

He insists upon the duty of the State to provide for the religious instruction of the people, and maintains

that it would be bound to do so even on the principles of natural religion.

Spiritual Independence is another of the principles which the Church of Scotland must maintain, and he believes that "in virtue of being the Established Church she has more spiritual independence than any other Church in Scotland." At this point he makes a prophecy which, a number of years later, was fulfilled to the letter. What he says is worth quoting, because it is quite clear that non-established Churches are beginning to see the truth of it, and to realise that it is necessary for their very existence to have some recognised and definite relations to the State to which they themselves will be parties. It seems to me that if they acted upon this obvious truth, the greatest of all steps would be taken, in Scotland at least, towards an understanding with the Church of Scotland which might in the course of years lead to union. Flint's words are as follows :—

The Free Church, for example, is under the control of the civil courts of this country, both as regards doctrine and discipline, in a sense and to an extent which the Church of Scotland is not. In a case either of doctrine or discipline any person who deems that he has been unconstitutionally dealt with by the Free Church can bring either her creed or procedure under the review or control of the civil magistrate. From this subjection there is no possible escape. A hundred successive disruptions, although they might allow of a hundred changes of her constitution, would not take her a step nearer freedom. She can only find deliverance from what she has often called Erastian dependence on the civil courts by having jurisdiction within proper limits duly secured to her own courts by statute law. So long as she does not attain this she lies, although it may be unwillingly, in "the house of Erastian bondage." Ought she to be content to remain there? I think not. I think she should wish to breathe the larger and freer ether into which she can rise only through establishment on proper conditions. Establishment, instead

of necessarily involving what is called Erastianism, is the only way to sure and complete immunity from it.

It is interesting to note, in view of the somewhat sharp criticism that Flint had recently passed upon Dr Begg, that he sent to the venerable constitutionalist a copy of this lecture, which drew the following reply :—

*April 25th, 1882.*

DEAR DR FLINT,—I am glad that you have published your lecture in a reliable form, and I thank you cordially for the copy you have kindly sent. I have read it with much interest and, without professing to agree with everything which it contains, I approve much of its spirit and general scope. I hope it may be very useful, and I am persuaded that were many to speak in the same strain great good would result to all our Churches and to our common country. It would certainly be an immense blessing were the great mass of our Presbyterianism—by the blessing of God—again united on sound principles, and were modern and dangerous dreams completely exploded.—Yours ever faithfully,

JAMES BEGG.

Flint's next pronouncement on the Church question was an article in the *Presbyterian Review* of October 1885. It was occasioned by a contribution from Dr Calderwood to the same magazine and on the same subject. While Calderwood pleaded for reconciliation and peace, he believed that they could only come by disestablishment and that disestablishment was near. This was written in the early part of 1885, when it was expected that Mr Gladstone would, if returned again to power, move in the matter. But the feeling of the country against such a proposal, which the plebiscite in Midlothian conducted by Mr Menzies, the agent of the Church, made clear, proved Calderwood's opinion to be absolutely wrong; but it was while this opinion was in doubt, or at least before it was obtained, that Flint wrote his reply to Calderwood. The agitation for disestablishment was then

at its height, and it was in the Assembly of that year that Tulloch made his last and most famous speech in defence of the Church.

Flint in the midst of the turmoil writes calmly and clearly. He has no fears of disestablishment taking place, and strongly advocates a drawing together on the part of the Churches on some common principle. It was in this article that he first made what may now be called his historic statement about "Establishment not being a principle." His words are, "Neither establishment nor endowment are in themselves principles, they are only applications of, or facts associated with, the principle of national allegiance to God." The second lecture, which he delivered in 1891, is, with the exception of the controversial portion of the magazine article in which he dealt with Professor Calderwood, practically a repetition of that article, and in it he reiterates his famous pronouncement. "There is," he says, "strictly speaking no principle of establishment. *There is a principle of national religion.* And because a principle, it is invariable and equally true at all times, places and circumstances. Establishment is not a principle but simply a fact. It can only be claimed to be an application of the principle of national religion. But all applications may vary with times and places and must conform to circumstances."

This was written shortly after Mr Gladstone had expressed the opinion that the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland need not detain Parliament more than two hours. It is not for a moment to be thought, however, that the seeming concession of Flint to those who sought the Church's destruction was caused by this threat. He felt that in the turmoil and commotion men on both sides were blinded to

the real question at issue and that they failed to see that beneath the differences there was a principle on which they were agreed, and that was national religion. Flint from the very first was undoubtedly keen for Presbyterian re-union. This is made plain enough in his first lecture, and it is made clearer in his article in the *Presbyterian Review* and in his second lecture. Nor would he have entered into the conference for union in 1894 or taken so deep and active an interest in it, unless he had been convinced that reconstruction and re-union was the only wise policy to advocate and to follow. With this great end in view he tried to get to the root-principle of the whole question and to see if, by bringing it to light, the surface differences might not vanish. He did this in the case of the endowments. He showed how they were as much the property of the Church of Scotland as the most recent legacy bequeathed to a voluntary Church. No voluntary, therefore, ought to have any scruples in benefiting by them, but if such scruples existed, why not in a united Church have the two methods co-existing, teinds and seat rents? If a voluntary could not feed on teinds, then he could satisfy his religious needs by seat rents. But he declared that after all no such thing as voluntaryism existed, for a Church that lived on seat rents thrived not on a voluntary, but on a mercantile, principle. He thus strove to show that at bottom the Churches, even on the question of endowments, were in reality at one. They might differ about the application of the principle of Church support, but they were in reality at one as to the principle.

Having re-union still in view, he next turns to the question of establishment. Now it ought to be noted that he frequently uses the terms the "establishment

principle” and the “principle of the national establishment of religion.” It was only latterly that he spoke of the “principle of national religion” as distinct from the principle or rather from the “fact of establishment.” Now why did he do so? Well, most probably in the interests of truth, but, to begin with, undoubtedly in the interests of reconciliation. The dispute between the Churches was about establishment. There was in reality no dispute between them on the question of national religion. Very well, then, here was a basis of union, a principle on which they were all agreed. Establishment, said Flint, was the application of that principle. Let the Churches then come together and discuss how the principle of national religion could be so applied as to meet all their differences. The Free Church from its very constitution and origin was bound to do so. The United Presbyterian Church could reasonably do so, and the Church of Scotland, he felt sure, so long as the principle of national religion was safeguarded, would very willingly do so.

Now it is important to understand clearly what Flint meant by the principle of national religion which, he says, the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland hold in common, and which ought not to be sacrificed and endangered through the pressing of a point which divides them. “The principle of national religion is the principle that the Nation, no less than the Church, or the family, or the individual, is under the law of God. That the officers and members of the State are within their proper sphere of action as much bound to obey and glorify God as the ministers and members of the Church. That the divine Kingdom ought to be inclusive of the State as well as of the Church; that Christ is not only the Head of the Church, but

the Prince of the kings of the earth," and then he adds :—

The Church of Scotland will never, I hope, desert this principle or unite with those who refuse to bear testimony to it. If there is ever to be union between the Established and Non-Established Churches it must, I believe, be on the basis of a common testimony to this principle. I do not doubt that the Non-Established Churches are able to join in such a testimony.

He then pictured a hypothetical case which some have accepted as a reality. He conceived good churchmen so distressed by the present divisions and contentions as to entertain for a moment the possibility of conceding the fact of establishment while still holding the principle of national religion. But he declares that they could not pay so costly a price even for union, or make so painful a concession. Indeed, even on the ground that national religion and not establishment is a principle, he does not see how the principle could be recognised or safeguarded except through establishment. And, while admitting, as every one must do, that the establishment of a Church as national may be plainly reasonable and right at one time and in a given set of circumstances, it may at another time and in another set of circumstances be manifestly absurd and unjust. This means no more than that while, for instance, the establishment of [the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland in the thirteenth century was reasonable and right, in the sixteenth century it was manifestly absurd and unjust. But what about the Established Church of Scotland at the present time and in the present set of circumstances? He has no doubt whatever of her establishment as a national Church being plainly reasonable and right.

I believe establishment to be, in this country, even at present a most fitting application of the sacred principle of national religion, and to be further a safeguard of the principle, although the defenders of establishment are apt, I think, to injure their cause by exaggeration on this head. I do not believe it to be in the least degree inconsistent with religious equality in any sense in which that doctrine is true or credible, or to warrant in the least degree the imposition of civil disabilities because of religious belief or any other sort of intolerance. And I deem it a very serious objection to disestablishment, that it would free the Imperial Parliament from the obligations imposed by the Revolution Settlement and Treaty of Union, without much, if any, likelihood of others being obtained.

Flint's last recorded expression of opinion is found in the preface to the volume which contains the two lectures that have just been discussed. He says: "The policy of disruption, disendowment and disestablishment has hitherto miserably and deservedly failed. The true policy has been amply and manifestly shown to be one as much as possible of re-union, co-operation and peace." This was written in 1905, and a year earlier, in reply to a letter from Lord Reay, who wished to know his opinion of the Free Church Case viewed from a general Presbyterian standpoint, Flint excused himself from offering any judgment and touched at the same time on the subject with which we have been dealing.

1 MOUNTJOY TERRACE,  
MUSSELBURGH, 21st October 1904.

DEAR LORD REAY,—I regret that I cannot undertake in present circumstances to express any opinion as to the Church Case which is exciting so much the public mind. It seems to me most desirable that the clergy of the Church of Scotland and those who wish her well should as far as possible take no part or notice of what is being done in the "imbroglio" outside. It is only on that condition that they can hope to have any influence in bringing about, through a national Presbyterian reunion, religious peace and harmony.

I earnestly wish it could be brought about and that the Established Church may quietly yet earnestly do the utmost she can to bring it



about in a wise and thoughtful way. I cannot shut my eyes, however, to the likelihood that the United Free Church may, with the aid of political alliances of a very questionable kind, aim at attaining at the earliest possible opportunity the disestablishment of the Established Church of Scotland.

I quite agree with your Lordship that the principle of establishment is not a fundamental principle or dogma, but I think it a very important fact, which may be of great moral, religious, and even political value.

It is incumbent on me, I must add, to assure your Lordship that I am no authority whatever on ecclesiastical law. In fact, I have never been able to take an interest in it. I was exceedingly amused three nights ago when I read in the *Evening News* that, in comparison with my humble self on the subject, Lord Robertson was a mere Tom Thumb!

I thank your lordship most sincerely for your exceedingly kind invitation, which I would have been much pleased to accept had I not been rather unwell, and also rather burdened in trying to finish a book, chiefly theological in character.

The setting aside of the decision of the Law Lords would surely be a very dangerous thing to do.

Flint's article in the *Presbyterian Review* was written at the request of the editor, the Rev. Dr Briggs, the well-known American theologian. And in his letter to Flint, he discusses the question of establishment from his point of view. His opinion is valuable, partly as coming from himself and partly as expressing the views of many in his own country. His letter is dated June 19, 1895, and is written from New York.

I am not so sure that I would favour disestablishment at present if I were in Scotland. So far as I see I could work in the Church of Scotland as freely as a native and without any conscientious scruples as to State connection, endowment or establishment. I am not sure which Church I would join if the choice were given me. I would probably be governed solely by the consideration, where I could be most useful. The Americans are not altogether on one side of this question. We are able to see that the circumstances of Scotland and England are somewhat different from America and Ireland. I have talked quite freely with eminent divines in the

three great Churches of Scotland, and, outside of a few ecclesiastical politicians, I have found only kindly fraternal feelings towards the sister Churches. The inner disposition is sound and true whatever Church politics may seem to demand at present. I am of the opinion that the reunion of Presbyterian Scotland ought to precede in principle and in agreement, if not in fact, the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. If the Churches could be combined, the reasons for an Established Church would be stronger in Scotland than in any other land in the globe. The question of the relation of Church and State is not yet settled in the United States. I would be the last one to think of urging an American plan, which grew out of the history of our country and its necessities, upon any other people.

The Report of Proceedings of Private Conferences on Re-union of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland during the years 1894-5 has been published, and though it might be possible, still it would be difficult and perhaps misleading, to say exactly what may have been Flint's contributions to the discussions. The Report is most informing and interesting, both in itself and for the indications which it gives of the development and progress that have since taken place in the discussions on the question of Union. Fortunately, however, I am able to publish a letter from Rev. Hon. Dr Arthur Gordon, who was associated with Dr Flint on the Business Committee of the Conference. He is familiar with all that took place, and can testify better than any one else to Professor Flint's share in and contributions to the discussions.

16 HERMITAGE DRIVE,  
EDINBURGH, 1st *May* 1914.

DEAR DR MACMILLAN,—I have recovered, and now send you my only copy of the report of Reunion Conferences held in 1894-5, which will show you the part played by Professor Flint at that time. I have no letters worth your seeing from him, but well remember his profound interest in the movement. With Dr John Alison and myself, and later Dr Scott, he acted on the Business Committee. Of course he was always treated with immense respect both because

of his great reputation and also because of his singular earnestness, perfect candour, and eager desire to understand the position of all who were negotiating. You will see that he moved the conclusions on spiritual independence, the 6th of which, so characteristic, was entirely his own.

On National Religion the phrase on page 73 of "a right relation between Church and State," and that the "State itself should be in a right relation to the religion of Jesus Christ," etc., was his favourite way of phrasing the twin ideas. His mind was not thirled to the existing relation provided that any better could be devised, but he was quite satisfied with things as they are, and the Acts as we now stipulate to leave them, while ready of course to remove the obsolete reflections on other Churches. It was the permanent and essential element which he valued.

His solution of the problem surprised me at the time, but I came to realise its wisdom. He thought there was a fairly sufficient basis for union, a toleration which would make neither establishment nor disestablishment a term of communion, but an open question. The movement was not ripe in those years, nor had the method we are presently employing been thought of. Though his attempts at that time were unsuccessful, I believe they helped not a little to a better understanding. The agitation was never so bitter afterwards.

I have never been able to explain what Dr Flint meant by there being "no principle of establishment, only of national religion." I think he meant that establishment could not be applied in all cases; but assuredly, except in that one instance, he seemed to me to use the "establishment principle" freely as a phrase, and to be profoundly impressed with the necessity of resisting its disuse in our own land for reasons given.—With kind regards, yours sincerely,

ARTHUR GORDON.

The sixth article, which Dr Gordon says was Flint's own, is as follows: "Christ has conferred on His people individually a spiritual freedom which neither civil nor ecclesiastical authorities are entitled to violate." That article is very characteristic of Flint. It is also very important at present. It states the inalienable spiritual independence of the Church people. The U.F. Church doctrine utterly ignores it—why? Because the U.F. Church stands only for the spiritual

independence of the Church courts—and such a doctrine as Flint has stated is ignored. The U.F. Church stands for an ecclesiastical tyranny—the absolute authority of the courts over the Church—a Papist position, in fact. But this is the bedrock of Establishment. Establishment means not only that the Church courts are secured against the civil magistrate, but that the Church people are secured against both civil magistrate and Church courts. Thus, the Act of 1874 secures congregations in rights, which might very easily be invaded under such an autocracy of Church courts as the U.F. doctrine implies. This is the point on which, in the day of stress, an appeal may be successfully made to the Scottish people.

The following Memorandum prepared by Dr Flint is of much interest and value, showing as it does his strong views on the rights of the Church and its respective parishes to the teinds:—

1. It may be right and expedient that the State should contribute to the maintenance of the Church out of national resources.

2. The Church may rightfully accept endowments for her maintenance from individuals.

3. The view that the Church ought to be supported merely by the temporary contributions of living individuals is erroneous.

4. The endowments held by the Church of Scotland are almost entirely endowments conferred by pious and benevolent individuals, not by the State, and which the State has no right to appropriate unless very special reasons can be shown for doing so.

5. The Parishes in which the teind lands are have claims in regard to them which both the State and the Church are bound to recognise.

6. In this connection the bearing of endowment or

disendowment on the territorial or parochial as distinguished from the congregational system will require to be carefully considered.

7. The Church of Scotland has through its connection with the State saved the teinds from being applied by the State for secular purposes, and being a Presbyterian Church and Scotland being in the main Presbyterian it is right and reasonable that they should continue in the possession of a Scottish Presbyterian Church.

The third instance in which Professor Flint gave a public proof of his Churchmanship was the most important of all. It was the stand that he made on behalf of the late Dr Hastie, Professor of Divinity, in the University of Glasgow. It was in the great fight that he put up on behalf of the moral issues that were at stake in what was known as the "Calcutta Case," that Flint proved to the Church and the country at large the man that he really was. In the storm and stress of that dark time he displayed the noblest qualities of mind and heart; undaunted courage, sound judgment, skill in controversy, a passion for truth and righteousness, and absolute loyalty to his friend. It may in a word be said that had it not been for his action, the Church might have remained, to a large extent, untouched by the injustice done to one of its great men, and callous to the evils that defiled a branch of its Mission work in India, and Hastie himself would have died without attaining to that position which was his right, and which he so gloriously adorned. It is not my intention to enter into the merits of the Case or to write its history. The silence that has hitherto been maintained has not been because there was any fear of damaging the memory of Dr Hastie, but rather from a dread of injur-

ing the fair name of the Church which inflicted upon him such wrong. Sufficient evidence has now emerged to vindicate his conduct, not his character, for it was never at stake. The judgment of the Church, as it was expressed through a vote in the General Assembly, has been silently reversed in the hearts and minds of her ministers and members. Truth in the end prevails, and justice, though long in coming, always arrives at last. It has been so in the case of Dr Hastie; and the one man who, of all others, judged rightly from the very first, was Professor Flint. He was able to do so because of the purity of his nature and his absolute detachment from ecclesiastical cliques and coteries. It was he and, of all the leaders of the Church, he alone, who fought the fight and who rested not until he had established the reputation of his friend and seen him appointed to the premier Chair in his own Alma Mater. Flint's righteous soul was literally so vexed by the evils that existed in one branch of the Church's Mission work in Calcutta and by the action of the Assembly and the temper displayed, that he was compelled, in virtue of his own nature, to make the stand he did and, as a knight of old, to fight for truth and honour. A word or two, however, must be said in passing about the proceedings of those sad times in order that the reader may be able to understand and appreciate Flint's conduct.

Mr Hastie was sent to Calcutta in 1878 to take up his duties as Principal of the General Assembly's Institution there. His position was that of the head of a great Christian College, and he was not many months in Calcutta until he proved himself to be one of the greatest educationalists that India had ever seen. The College in a year or two became the most distinguished in that vast dependency for the pro-

iciency of its students. Hastie was a man of extraordinary natural ability, and of the most varied and ripest scholarship. Next to Flint himself, he was the most learned man in the Church of Scotland. He was a born teacher and threw unbounded enthusiasm into his educational work. His students adored him. He was equally remarkable for the depth and intensity of his religious convictions, and he was not long in Calcutta until he saw that the work which a Christian Church should attempt in India was not merely education, but also and chiefly evangelisation. And he was convinced that what he ought to aim at was the development of purely missionary enterprises, the founding of fresh centres for the conversion of the heathen in India, and the diffusion of the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His abilities, his character, his aims, and his enthusiasm raised him to a leading position in Calcutta and made him a powerful influence, especially among the higher classes and educated Hindoos.

The events, which resulted in the dismissal of Mr Hastie in 1884, must be briefly told. Friction had set in between him and the Foreign Mission Committee chiefly on two points, first, on his views as to missionary expansion in India, and second, on the condition of a Female Orphanage in Calcutta which belonged to the Church and which was managed by a Committee of Ladies at home. In the correspondence that took place, Hastie displayed unwonted impatience and irritation. What brought the differences to a crisis was a letter which he sent home. It was written by a lady belonging to the Church and of good social position in Calcutta. In it she brought serious charges against the management of the Orphanage. Hastie endorsed this letter, which he regarded

as private and privileged, and it was unfortunately made the ground of an action against him in the Civil Courts in Calcutta. The relations between him and the Committee became more strained, and ended in his recall on the ground of his "temper and disposition." The case, in which he was thus inadvertently involved, caused a great stir throughout India and equal commotion at home, where, however, there was undoubtedly a deep and widespread sympathy for him.

In the first Assembly after his departure from India, that of 1884, Mr Hastie presented two petitions, the first demanding his reinstatement, and the second claiming the payment of the costs of the trial in which the Committee, he alleged, had involved him, and which amounted to £2000. It was generally believed that if he had put his case into the hands of a leading advocate, the Assembly would have granted him both petitions, for there was a powerful body of opinion in his favour. But he pled his own case, and in an extraordinary speech of eight hours duration he, while showing marvellous ability and eloquence, so played into the hands of his opponents, that when their turn came they found their task made very much easier. Two motions were submitted to the Assembly, the first expressing the official attitude, asking that the action of the Committee should be confirmed, and the second by Dr Flint. This was Flint's first public step in the matter. He had evidently given it the most careful consideration, and came to a decision regarding it which he held by to the very end. He never wavered in his opinion, and as the years passed on he strove both publicly and privately to justify it, and although he did not succeed in causing the Assembly to reverse its judgment, technical considerations standing in the way, he yet did much to cause a change



in the mind of the Church and to bring it round in the end to the side of Mr Hastie. Flint, who was received with loud applause, said he would submit a motion, but he would not support it by any speech ; he would simply move the following resolution which entirely expressed his feelings in regard to the matter.

The General Assembly having had laid before it the special Report of the Foreign Committee on his complaints and petition, disallow the crave of the petitioner to be found still *de jure et de facto* the Principal of the General Assembly's Institution at Calcutta ; but find that his summary dismissal was not warranted, was of doubtful competency, under the regulations applied to ordained missionaries, and seemed by implication to reflect not only on his qualifications as Principal, but on his moral character, although such a reflection was certainly not intended ; deem it due to Mr Hastie to record that they are as satisfied of the moral earnestness and excellence of his character as they are of his intellectual abilities and attainments, and that the General Assembly's Institution has not had since Dr Duff a more talented, enthusiastic, or successful educational head. The General Assembly further resolve that a Committee be appointed to confer with Mr Hastie as to the condition and requirements of the Church of Scotland's Missionary work in Calcutta, and to consider as to the advisability of the Church again availing herself of his talents and experience in the Mission field. That the Committee be instructed to report on this subject to next Assembly, and that the Foreign Mission Committee be instructed to continue payment of Mr Hastie's salary to that date.

As to the second complaint and petition, the General Assembly cannot approve of the imparting to the Lady Superintendent of Mr Hastie's communication and statement regarding the Female Branch of the Mission in Calcutta, and consider that the Committee should of itself have caused to be instituted an inquiry into the truth of the said communication and statement. The Assembly refuse the pecuniary crave of petition on the ground that it would not be a proper use for the mission funds.

On the vote being taken, the official motion, approving of the action of the Committee, was carried.

My sole aim in what follows is to show Flint's loyalty to the friend whom he regarded as unjustly treated

and the efforts which he made on his behalf. He had undoubtedly at the same time a much greater object in view than even the vindication of the conduct of one man. He desired to bring the Church round to a clear understanding of the moral issues at stake and to purify the whole atmosphere in which she, for the time, had been living. There can be no doubt whatever that Flint's action, misjudged by many at the time, as foolish and as that of a mere student and recluse, had a great and purifying influence upon the missionary outlook and enterprises of the Church, and the success, which has since crowned her efforts in those directions, owes not a little to the stand which he made at this critical time. On the day after the judgment of the Assembly, he wrote the following letter to Hastie:—

JOHNSTONE LODGE, CRAIGMILLAR PARK,  
*May 31, 1884.*

DEAR MR HASTIE,—I cannot say how sorry I am for yesterday's proceedings or how deeply I feel for you, or how greatly I am ashamed of the Foreign Mission Committee and the General Assembly. It was wrong and fearfully imprudent of you to write those letters which were at the last moment brought out to crush you, but I would far rather be responsible for having written them, than be guilty of the cruelty of having used them as was done yesterday, or even be guilty of the callous coarseness shown by those who laughed and glorified at what was being done, stabbing at the reputation of one defenceless man who had done the mission cause great service. It will be years before I get over the sickening, saddening impression of yesterday, and it will be years I believe before I allow myself again to be returned to the General Assembly. I hope you will not persist in your demission. I can see what your difficulty is. If many of the statements which the Assembly not only allowed but applauded be true, of course you should not only be suspended, but deposed. But those statements were after all only the allegations of individuals, and what alone concerns you is the judgment of the House as expressed in the motion which carried, and that merely sustained what the Committee had done. Get as soon as you can into a parish,

work there for the good of the people and for the good of India, and all this trouble will be found to have had blessing in it. I do not fear for you. Yesterday some did their best or worst to ruin you; but such triumphs are only temporary; a great and happy career I hope is yet before you.—Yours truly,  
ROBERT FLINT.

Hastie took his case to the Court of Session, but as the judges could not deal with the merits, the decision went against him. Flint sympathised with him in this fresh trouble, and wrote him a letter of encouragement.

*December 18th, 1884.*

MY DEAR HASTIE,—I was excessively sorry to read in the *Scotsman* of to-day that you had lost your appeal, but I do hope that you will not take it too deeply to heart. The decision of the judges turns on the question of law which does not touch the merits, and even if you had gained your appeal it might have been impossible for you to have had any resifiting or enlarging of the evidence bearing on the essential merits.

I sympathise with you, however, most sincerely. Black and discouraging as things look we must hope that the clouds will break and the light yet shine out.

The pleading of the Solicitor General seemed to me to be not only a remarkably able but a remarkably fair statement, and it will of itself no doubt do good.

May higher than human strength not fail you.

In May of 1886 Flint journeyed to London for the purpose of bringing influence to bear on the Lord Advocate and Lord Dalhousie, Secretary for Scotland, to have Hastie appointed to the Chair of Divinity in St Andrews. Writing to his sister on the 29th May he says:—

I had an interview with the Lord Advocate. He is extremely friendly, and I stated my mind frankly on all the points on which I thought it desirable that Lord Dalhousie should have correct information. The Lord Advocate promised to report without delay what I had said. The accusation of “bad temper,” etc., will thus be as much met as I can meet it.

It was this same charge of "bad temper," which was made the ground of Hastie's dismissal, that stood in his way, and it was the difficulty that Flint was met with on every occasion on which he tried to help his friend. Nothing came of his efforts on this occasion; the appointment was given to Dr Cunningham. This was the first of three special visits that Flint made to London with the object of securing a Chair for Mr Hastie. But in 1888 having found that the Church, as represented by its leaders, still refused to do justice to Hastie, he issued an appeal to the Church and sent a copy to every one of its ministers. He traversed the ground that was covered by the Calcutta Case and the Church's dealings with it and with Mr Hastie from the beginning until the date of his letter, which was the 9th May 1888. He says that he had cherished the hope that the Church would come to regret the course which it took in 1884, and at least would seek to provide against the recurrence of similar evils. "It is because I have waited in vain to see this that I now address you." And then occurs the following passage in which he states his opinion of Hastie and of the treatment which he had received:—

The way in which Mr Hastie has been treated is one of heartless injustice and cruelty. Grant all imprudences which can fairly be charged against him, and yet the case between him and the Foreign Mission Committee stands substantially thus. Here was a man the purity and earnestness of whose own life cannot be questioned; vastly superior in scholarly ability and acquirements, and not inferior in temper or disposition, to the most prominent of those who have defamed him; a man of extraordinary powers of learning, teaching, and labour; who, when the Institution at Calcutta was wretchedly undermined, made it marvellously successful; who, when he erred, erred largely from excess or misdirection of zeal for the Church he served and the work he was sent to do; and this man the Committee—after some of its members had in an underhand and dishonourable manner involved him in legal proceedings by

which he was stripped of above two thousand pounds—ignominiously dismissed, and subsequently, through its spokesmen in the General Assembly, callously sought to ruin. I am not aware that since 1884 until now any signs of a better mind has been shown by those most to blame. I know that some of them have done what they could to confirm the old observation that men are naturally prone to hate those whom they have injured. Thus Mr Hastie has been dealt with. He has had immense misery inflicted on him and grievous wrong done to him, for which I see not that those who have inflicted it have any better justification than the question, Are we our brother's keeper? He has been driven from the Church. Those who have been instrumental in doing so will, of course, try to represent this to themselves as a small loss. I venture to think it a great loss. The Church of Scotland has got many energetic ministers, and enough of ecclesiastical politicians, but her theological scholars are so very few that she should beware how she alienates and ejects them.

And he concludes as follows. "I have kept silence with painful and perhaps excessive self-restraint as to some of the evils I have indicated, because I have not seen how my speaking could have prevented or remedied them. I felt it right, however, to put on record some of my sentiments regarding them. Hence this letter."

Though unable to help his friend in the way chiefly desired, he kept in close touch with him and showed him every kindness in his power. They lived not far from each other in Edinburgh during those ten years in which Hastie was in the wilderness, supporting himself as best he could by literary work. Mr Hastie was far too proud to accept pecuniary favours at the hands of any friends or even from his own family, who could have well afforded to keep him in comfort and even in affluence. There were many rich people, both in India and in Scotland, who would have been only too glad to have contributed liberally to his support, but he was so independent that he turned a deaf ear to all such overtures. He was a scholar,

and his wants were few, and these he supplied by his own exertions. But Flint and he had frequent intercourse, they had much in common. There was no subject of human knowledge that they could not converse about with almost perfect acquaintance, and their special love for theology and philosophy was in itself a bond of union between them. But the Flints seldom lived in Edinburgh during the summer vacation, and it was their habit to invite Hastie to join them at their autumn quarters for a brief holiday. For several seasons in succession they resided in Ireland, where they found much to interest them. They invited Hastie to join them on at least two occasions.

CULLYCAPPLE HOUSE, ASHADOWEY,  
*September 19, 1892.*

MY DEAR HASTIE,—I am sorry that you have not been able to come over to Ireland and very sorry that you are not feeling well. The weather here is not very good just now, and I fear I shall not be able to make out my intended run through Donegal. I shall be very happy to sign the Memorial in favour of Dr Davidson.

There will be no use of you going in for the Hebrew Chair if you feel that you could not give hard work to it. It would undoubtedly require that from you for some years.

Hoping that you will soon be all right, and with kindest regards to all,—Yours very truly,

R. FLINT.

ROCK CASTLE,  
PORT STEWARD, CO. DERRY,  
*June 26th, 1893.*

MY DEAR HASTIE,—It was a disappointment to us and it must have been to you that the weather broke and prevented you getting a glimpse of Ireland, but it was most fortunate that you did not cross in the Coleraine boat. She must have had a shocking bad passage. We saw her in the most broken-down looking condition making for the mouth of the Bann, and then, when baffled, going back to Portrush. She would only reach Coleraine on Saturday night. The sea here is very stormy but very striking and grand.

I was excessively fortunate in my tour through Donegal. The

weather was glorious. I did each day on car nearer sixty than fifty miles. My stations were Donegal, Killybeg, Ardara, Glenties, Dungloe, Gwedore, Dunfarishag, Millford, Rathmullion, Londonderry; and thanks to the lovely days, I did a good deal of walking. I gathered a lot of news, and if it were not for that detestable "Socialism" I should be inclined to write for the *Scotsman*, "Four Days' Impressions in Donegal," but I won't. The Donegal Irishman is very unlike the south-western one. I was not asked during my whole tour for "a copper." None of the car men I had, swore. The priests within the last few years have nearly put down "poteen." Swift McNeil and O'Sullivan are mere carpet-baggers. Enthusiasm for Home Rule is a vanishing quantity; the people have a great belief in Balfour's interest in them, they expect nothing from Morley. We have never, I think, been so fortunate as regards a house and situation as here. We shall leave with regret, but must leave on Friday. Probably we shall stay some days on our way, so as to improve our knowledge on Antrim. Kind regards to your brother and sisters,—Yours very truly,

R. FLINT.

Flint's patient and persistent loyalty was to be at last rewarded. His circular letter had a powerful effect upon the minds of the clergy, and his steadfast adherence to his opinion and belief in Hastie, and Hastie's own subsequent and manifold labours in the fields of theology and philosophy also had their effect. The passion and temper which blinded even good men in 1884 were giving place to a calm consideration of the merits of the whole question, and Hastie's strongest opponents were now prepared to aid him in securing a position where his undoubted talents would be of incalculable service to the Church. After many disappointments Flint at length saw success in sight. The Chair of Divinity in Glasgow University had become vacant in 1895 by the retiral of Professor Dickson, and Flint advised Hastie to apply for the post. It must now be mentioned that the two men who fought the case against Hastie in the General Assembly were Dr Scott and Dr Story. Dr Scott was Convener

of the Foreign Mission Committee and leader of the Church, and Dr Story, who was minister of Roseneath, had by this time become Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Glasgow. Both Scott and Story were men of great influence in the Church. No one could, in ordinary course, be appointed to the Chair unless he had the sympathy and support of the Church, as that could best be expressed by the mouth of Dr Scott, and unless, at the same time, a colleague of the standing of Dr Story could act in friendly relations with him. This was a supreme moment in the lives of these two men. It was in every sense of the word a time of sifting. Upon them depended whether Hastie would be appointed to the Chair or not, and to their infinite credit it has to be recorded, that without hesitation they determined to support Dr Hastie. Story, of course, was the important factor in the situation, and to those who knew him intimately, his conduct on this occasion caused no surprise. His nature, if impetuous, was truly noble, and his speech, though at times sharp and bitter, was more than atoned for by the genuine kindness and tenderness of his heart. This also was an anxious time for Flint, and he brought into action an amount of prudence, diplomacy, tact, and skill of which those who did not know him had not the slightest conception. Flint could easily have excelled as a man of affairs had his inclination lain in that direction. The following letter to Dr Hastie at this critical time lifts the veil and reveals what forces were at work. It also reveals Flint's own wisdom:—

THE IBERT, MONZIE, BY CRIEFF,  
*9th July, 1895.*

MY DEAR DR HASTIE,—Your letter gives me much satisfaction. In the circumstances you could not have properly done anything



else than call on Dr Story, and your visit and my letter will be co-operative not counteractive.

Charteris has written to Sir James King and Sir John Cuthbertson. He puts to me the question, "Who could tell the Principal that Hastie and Story would work well together?" Story himself is the person to tell, and I believe will. I think it may be left to him to do so.

Dr Scott writes in a quite satisfactory way and is willing to aid your candidature, but does not wish you to know what he does as he thinks you may misconstrue his action and perhaps resent his interference. This is quite reasonable. I have suggested to him how I think he may act with the most effect.

Unless you yourself tell of your interview with Story, which you should not do, it will not likely get noised abroad. The outside public should know nothing of any of your interviews with any of the electors.

Let me know as soon as you can what you think relevant regarding Professor Jack's position, as I require to write to him,—Yours very truly,  
R. FLINT.

Hastie received the appointment, and his family, recognising the part which Flint played in the matter, gratefully acknowledged his unwearied efforts and final success. This found expression at the hands of Dr Hastie's sister, who sent to Miss Flint the following letter :—

LEADHILLS,  
August 8th, 1895.

MY DEAR MISS FLINT,—Here we are among the hills and are already feeling the better of the change. . . . The people here and in Wanlockhead are greatly rejoiced at my brother's appointment to the Glasgow Chair. There has been quite an excitement about it when they had seen it in the papers. They always expected he would arrive at something of the kind, but of late years they had begun to think it was not to come. It becomes a greater marvel every day to us that he has really got the Chair, and *but for Professor Flint it would not have been*, as we think he had strong opposition. A clergyman from Glasgow called before we left Edinburgh and he said he had always admired Professor Flint for his learning and writing, but he admired him more for bringing about this appointment than for anything he had done. We cannot help

speaking about it daily as no other man but the Professor could have overcome the difficulties in the way to his appointment. What a different world it would be if there were men like him. Professor Story said to Sheriff Wallace, that he was pleased Dr Hastie had got the Chair.

One of the most striking features in the long drawn-out contest, which thus ended so happily, was that Professor Flint did not make a single enemy. He was not sparing in the blows that he showered upon those who, he believed, had been mistaken, but not one of them resented his attacks. They knew that his motives were absolutely pure, and that he was fighting for truth and honour. Every one of them remained his friend and ardent admirer to the very end.

## CHAPTER XIV

### “ VICO ” AND “ SOCIALISM ”

It was in 1884, the same year as the incident discussed towards the close of the last chapter, that the Ter-Centenary Celebrations of Edinburgh University were held. That year was accordingly a very crowded one for Flint, for he took as deep an interest in the one event as in the other, and only a month separated them, for the celebrations were held in April and the Assembly met in May. On no occasion did Flint show to such a degree, what might fitly be called the genuine boyishness of his nature, as he did in connection with the many and varied events which marked the great gathering of learned savants who had assembled from most parts of the world to do honour to his University. He entered heartily into all the proceedings and took unbounded delight in furthering the arrangements which were crowned with so great success. The other three Universities of Scotland have, since then, held similar celebrations, but Edinburgh was the first of the kind and it drew to it the undivided attention of the learned world. The community of letters, the kinship of learning, the solidarity and common interests of those who everywhere represent philosophy and science have never been so strikingly exhibited in Scotland, and the members of the Senatus, upon whom the responsibility lay, spared no effort to make the celebrations worthy of the traditions and fame of their Alma Mater, and creditable to Scotland itself.

It was not often that Flint took an active part in University matters, although he was most regular in

his attendance at the meetings of Senate and took an intelligent and sympathetic interest in any business that might be on hand. So unobtrusive, however, was he at these meetings that some of the more talkative members may have taken his silence for ineptitude. No less a person than Sir William Muir, the Principal of the University, fell into this deplorable mistake, as the following letter will show. Flint had sent the Principal a copy of his "Agnosticism," and it is thus that Sir William acknowledges the gift.

DEAN PARK HOUSE,  
EDINBURGH, *March 10th*, 1903.

DEAR FLINT,—I am deeply indebted to you for sending me your great work on "Agnosticism." The first half is vastly beyond me and the second a good deal also, but I have tried to get somewhat through the grand thoughts which fall like magic through it, and the depths of its philosophical expressions.

It is the first of your great works I have ventured upon and I just write a line to say that it so grandly transcends all that you have in our Senatic life allowed to fall from you in our University meetings, that I feel ashamed of many in our committee meetings not recognising the high transcendency of my friend. You will pardon me thus, but at our meetings you used to sit so quietly and respectfully that till one reads your high and philosophically put ideas, one naturally sits quietly by you.—Ever yours sincerely,

WILLIAM MUIR.

Well, one has cause to be surprised at many things, but surely at nothing more than at the purblindness of some members, according to the confession of the Principal, and himself among them, of the Senate of Edinburgh University who were unable to see in the modest scholar the thoughtful and wise man whom the world outside the University so well knew. But, after all, Sir William's letter should perhaps not be taken too seriously, for it is on record that the best men in the Senate gladly admitted that Flint was the "most distinguished man

among them.” On the present occasion, however, Flint, fired with a generous enthusiasm, came out into the open, led his own Faculty in doing honour to the great scholars who had assembled to recognise the three hundred years work and progress of his University, and put himself in line with all who were determined to make the occasion memorable in the annals of their Alma Mater.

The record of these celebrations has been published by the authority of the University itself in two large volumes, but a bright account of them, within brief compass, is given by Principal Story and quoted in his “Life” by his daughters. Nothing can serve our purpose better than to give his attractive sketch. Speaking particularly of the Ter-Centenary Banquet he says :

The unity of sentiment which pervaded it, and which seemed to knit together letters, science, and theology into one brotherhood, struck me as particularly interesting. In point of fact it would be difficult to say whether the men of science or the men of letters exhibited the more perfect mastery of literary and oratorical style, or by which of them the subject of religion was approached with a more respectful mien ; while the theologians displayed a breadth of sympathy with liberal culture and an unconsciousness of special dogmatism which were as rare as they were instructive and exemplary. The heartiness with which the Bishop of Durham, the greatest scholar on the Anglican bench, extolled the progress and achievements of a University which he described as “ Presbyterian to the core ” was a refreshing contrast to the jealous narrowness of which we have specimens nearer home ; while the warmth with which Dr Beets, the stately delegate of Utrecht, recalled the old religious bond between Holland and Scotland, and as a “ Presbyterian Dutchman ” rejoiced over the vigour and vitality of his co-religionists on this side of the North Sea, was devoid of a single grain of sectarian exclusiveness.

“ The keynote of this liberal tone was,” he adds, “ struck by Professor Flint in his inaugural sermon and maintained in their several speeches by Helmholtz, Virchow,

Pasteur, and Laveleye; while Count Saffi, the illustrious scholar, publicist, and statesman, declared that 'the grand, the noble, the inspiring feature which struck me chiefly in this celebration was the harmony, the union, the intimate union, between religion, patriotism, and science, which has presided over all the proceedings.' "

Flint's sermon to which Dr Story so favourably refers is published with the place of honour in his volume, "Sermons and Addresses." It was preached in St Giles' Church on the 16th of April, and, as was fitting, inaugurated the celebrations themselves. Flint chose for his text two passages; the first from the Old Testament—Isaiah xlvi. 9: "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me"; and the second from the New Testament—Philippians iii. 13, 14: "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The passages of Scripture thus chosen indicate the nature of the discourse. It was retrospective and prospective. It briefly sketched the growth of the University during the three hundred years of its history, emphasised with pardonable pride its spreading fame and then looked forward into the future, prophesying for it even greater things if it advanced in humble dependence on the only source of success in knowledge as in all things—Almighty God. Two passages may be quoted. Speaking of its humble commencement, "like a tiny, feeble plant, set in a frozen soil, under a wintry sky," he refers to the protection and support that were continuously vouchsafed it, "until at length there came happier days and clearer skies, the abundant dew and the bright sunshine and the truly astonishing growth of recent times."

It has throughout been ministered to according to its wants. For example, at critical seasons the fittest men to preside over its affairs have always been granted it. Thus, when at its origin its feeble vitality could only be preserved and developed by intense religious zeal, Rollock was given; when the storms of religious passion swept over the land, the most competent directing mind which Scotland then possessed—that of Henderson—was placed at its service; when fanaticism and intolerance had converted the country into a well of Marah, in which all sweetness was in danger of being lost, and when safety was only to be had in pious quietness, the saintly Leighton was lent; when political sagacity was peculiarly required it was conferred in the person of Carstares; and when the transition from the ecclesiastical to a literary epoch needed to be wisely effected, no one more suited to direct the movement could have been found than Robertson.

Then casting his eyes towards the future he sketches a bright and hopeful picture.

The past has brought nothing to perfection and the future ought to be in all respects an advance and improvement on the past, since it can start from it and profit by it. The appearance of a pessimistic philosophy here and there, and the still wider prevalence of a pessimistic frame of spirit do not prevent the present age from being on the whole an exceptionally hopeful one, and, doubtless, it will be its own fault if that hopefulness prove vain. It is not into a dull and uninviting future, not into one which we need fear to find empty or unremunerative, but into one filled with the promises of discovery, gleaming with the crowns of victory, that we are called to enter.

“ Before us shines a glorious world,  
Fresh as a banner, bright, unfurled  
To music suddenly.”

What delighted Flint most in these celebrations was the opportunity which they gave him of meeting and conversing with many of the most famous men in science, letters, and theology. Perhaps of all the members of the Senate he had himself the widest international reputation. This was true in any case so far as theology and philosophy were concerned. Some of the delegates

he had met in past years, with others he was acquainted through correspondence, and he was most anxious that due honour should be done to them and honorary degrees conferred upon the most distinguished among them. We find him accordingly writing to Dr Charteris advising him as to whom the Faculty of Divinity should recommend for the degree of D.D. And he informs his colleague of the qualifications and publications of the most eminent Dutch scholar of his time, Dr Beets, the "stately delegate of Utrecht" as Principal Story characterises him. Flint apprises Charteris of the escape which they had made from entertaining "an angel unawares," for, after having made himself acquainted with the many and varied works of the distinguished Dutchman, he declares him to be a "tremendous swell." He is equally desirous of justice being done by the other faculties, and particularly that of Arts, to eminent scholars whom it should recognise with the degree of LL.D., as will be seen from a letter to Professor Fraser.

*March 14th, 1884.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR FRASER,—I cannot be to-day at the meeting of Principal and Deans' Committee, at least till considerably after 4 P.M.

I hope that you will agree with me in thinking that the degree of LL.D. should be conferred on some of the philosophers who have been sent to us as delegates. It seems to me that Caro cannot possibly be passed over, especially as the degree is to be given to Mézières—a man very worthy of it, but not more distinguished than Caro.

Then, as you know, Dr van der Wyck is one of the two Dutchmen who have a kind of European reputation in psychology, is a man highly esteemed, and was a great friend of Dr John Muir.

Perhaps you may say a word for these gentlemen, and I hope you will be able to support Dr Charteris who has some new names for D.D. to propose,—Yours very truly,

R. FLINT.



The delegates and others specially invited were entertained as guests by the Professors and prominent citizens of Edinburgh, and Flint, who had a commodious house and was hospitably inclined, welcomed to his home four distinguished men: M. Elme-Marie Caro, Member of the Academy of France, a well-known philosopher and critic; M. Alfred Mézières, also a member of the Academy of France, an eminent linguist, scholar, and critic; Dr Westcott, afterwards Bishop of Durham and at the time Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and Canon of Westminster; and Dr Edwin Hatch, Vice-Principal of St Mary Hall, and Reader in Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, widely and favourably known for his Bampton Lectures on “The Organization of the Early Christian Churches.” These four notable men, representative of what was best in French and English thought and scholarship, were previously acquainted with Flint, either personally or through correspondence, and Caro is favourably spoken of by him in the second edition of his “Philosophy of History.” Their visit to Flint formed the basis of a close and delightful friendship, and their letters to him—afterwards to be quoted—reveal not only their deep gratitude to him for his generous hospitality but also their high admiration for his ability and his work, and their deep affection for himself. A volume entitled “Quasi Cursores,” giving popular sketches of the careers of the different Professors in the University, was published. It is illustrated by Hole, the artist, and his cartoon of Flint, as the Knight in Armour and Defender of the Faith, is most characteristic, and the happiest in the collection.

Early in July of the same year, two months after these celebrations and festivities had come to an end, Flint

published his monograph on "Vico." It formed one of the series of "Philosophical Classics for English Readers," edited by Professor Knight of St Andrews and published by the Blackwoods. The subject was not Flint's first choice, although in the end he had no reluctance in undertaking it. The philosopher originally assigned to him was Hobbes, but his friend Professor Croom Robertson had also set his heart on this subject and had been gathering material in connection with it, and Flint good-naturedly gave way. Butler was then suggested, and, as Flint's students know, this would indeed have been a theme after his heart. Flint had several courses of lectures on Butler; he kept by him a copy of his works carefully annotated, he wrote a special lecture on him, he was ever ready to defend him from misrepresentation and attack, and never failed when the occasion arose to express genuine admiration for him. Indeed, as Professor Wenley remarks, the thinker of all others to whom Flint may be compared is Butler. But Mr Blackwood had asked Professor Knight to assign this subject to the Rev. W. Lucas Collins, remarking how ever that "it is very generous of Professor Flint giving up Hobbes, and I hope that you will be able to give him one or two other philosophers to select from," and he adds: "If Professor Flint knows that my uncle desires Collins to take Butler in hand he will be quite satisfied to take another philosopher."

Well, all this may be very complimentary to Flint's good nature, but it also shows the belief which the publisher and the editor had in his ability to deal satisfactorily with any philosopher that might be mentioned, and that while he may have had his favourites it did not matter very much in the end, so far as knowledge of the subject and the power to deal satisfactorily with it was concerned, what philosopher might be assigned to him.



CARTOON OF PROFESSOR FLINT AS "THE KNIGHT OF THE CROSS" OR "DEFENDER OF THE FAITH," BY MR. WILLIAM HOLE, A.R.S.A., PUBLISHED IN *QUASI CURSORES*

Dressed in complete armour of the Middle Ages but with ministerial bands of the present date conspicuously displayed, he is in the act of sheathing the sword with which he had apparently vanquished Apollyon. One of a series of sketches of the Professors of Edinburgh University issued in connection with the Tercentenary Celebrations of 1884.



It may, however, be said, without any reservation, that the subject which in the end fell to him was one with which he alone could have dealt ; for Vico was practically unknown among British readers, and just barely known as a name, even among British philosophers, until Flint published his monograph. Flint was quite familiar with his task. It will be remembered that in one of the course of lectures which he delivered before the Philosophical Institution he treated at considerable length of Vico and his views on the philosophy of history. He had made himself acquainted with Italian writers, with the history of Italy, and with the movements of thought in that country, in view of his second volume on the philosophy of history.

Readers of Flint's purely theological and philosophical books cannot fail being struck by the easy and graphic way in which he handles the biographical part of his “ Vico.” Indeed, the whole is lightly handled, a proof of his familiarity with the subject. But those who heard his lectures at the Philosophical Institution on such thinkers as John Stuart Mill, Hobbes, and others, and any who may have had the privilege of reading his sketches of many other notable thinkers, are fully aware of his biographical, as students of his works are of his critical, instinct. “ Vico ” may be described as a *tour de force*. It gives one the impression of having been written at white heat, and if his limits had permitted him to deal in the same spacious manner with the philosophical, as he does with the biographical, part of the book, it would have been an even better performance. Compression, especially on a subject that necessarily demands expansion and elucidation, is never conducive to lucidity and easy reading.

It seems to me advisable to give, in however brief a form, a summary of Flint's book. Any such account

naturally falls into two parts : first, a sketch of Vico's life, and, second, an exposition of his views.

### *His Life*

Vico was the son of a small Neapolitan bookseller, and was born in 1668. A fall from a stair, in his seventh year, so seriously fractured his skull that the physician declared he would either die or become an idiot. It interrupted the course of his education for three years. He ascribed to it also a considerable change in his mental character, rendering him more inclined to melancholy, self-analysis, and reflection. Hard study having preyed upon his health, and he himself being poor, he accepted from G. B. Rocca, Bishop of Ischia, the post of tutor to the Bishop's nephews, and spent with them nine years (1685-1694) in quiet, happy, studious retirement at the Castle of Vatolla. Here he read leisurely all the best works of classical antiquity and of Italy. He went thrice through the works which interested him most—the first time striving to comprehend them as a whole, the second to follow closely the sequence of ideas and arguments, and the third to impress on his mind particular passages nobly conceived or admirably expressed. For mathematics he had no aptitude. He got as far as the *pons asinorum* in Euclid, and looked at it, but could not get across. And then, after having acquired such a mightily extensive acquaintance with such subjects, he must give his opinion and condemn mathematics as a mental discipline. It suits, he maintains, only small minds, and the algebraic department of it is naturally injurious to almost every intellectual faculty. Another of his conclusions (very likely correct) was that they who cultivate several languages will never speak or write even one of them with purity and elegance. He had studied law, philosophy, and history ; was Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Naples ; and in 1737 was appointed by Charles III. historiographer of the kingdom of Naples. But the old man was by that time worn out by heavy domestic affliction and other sufferings. Last and worst of all came cancer in the throat and face, and he gradually sank into a profound melancholy. Speech became almost impossible, and for fourteen months before his death he could hardly recognise his own children. He expired, faintly endeavouring to sing one of the Psalms of David, on the 20th of January, 1744. Misfortune followed him even to the grave. A scandalous dispute arose between the members of the Brotherhood of St Sophia, to which he belonged, and the professors of the

University, as to whose right it was to carry his bier. After hot and fierce contention both parties withdrew, and it was some little time before the body could be buried.

### *His Views*

Vico's two chief works are, an early treatise in Latin, *De Antiquissima Italarum Sapientia*, in which “ he endeavours to evolve a metaphysical theory from the analysis of the roots of the Latin language and from the general study of philology, which, according to him, embraces all the facts of historical experience ” ; and a later work in Italian *Principii di Scienza Nuova*, which really gathers up all that he thought most worth preserving of the results of his life's thinking, and is in the main a theory of the history of civilisation.

In the earlier work there is much fanciful etymologising which could well have been omitted, and the metaphysical ideas supposed to be evolved thereby are really the product (often very valuable) of the writer's own genius. In this treatise he attempts, what has often been attempted before and since, to lay down a Criterion of Truth, and his principle is that the mind can only know that which it can create through its own activity. Professor Flint shows that this principle when fully understood is original and important, and he thus applies it to theological science :—

Verifying spiritual truth is, according to Vico's view, only possible through producing or making it within our own experience. And certainly the importance of such verification can hardly be exaggerated. The chief reason why ethics and theology are in so backward a state is, that spiritual experience and experimental evidence have not been rigidly enough demanded for their doctrines. The measure of their success or failure in the future must mainly depend on the degree in which those who cultivate them feel or forget that no spiritual truth can be certainly known which has not been experimentally realised (p. 111).

The most important speculation in this philosophical treatise is the theory of "Metaphysical Points," which "points," or centres of energy, he conceives to be the first outcome of God's creative energy and to lie midway between the Creator and the visible creation. It is not probable that this theory was suggested by the monadology of his older contemporary Leibnitz, for Vico's points are not psychological principles like the monads of Leibnitz, but are simply forces, such as Boscovich and Faraday imagined. "The New Science" proves that Vico is in some important respects a sociologist quite abreast of present thought, if indeed he is not in advance of it. Nations, in Vico's view, pass through three great stages: (1) The age of the Gods: (2) The age of the Heroes: (3) The age of Men or the historical age; and then by a process of decay recur to a state not far removed from their primitive condition. He takes the history of the Roman people as the type of a process which he regards to be common to all nations. The period of decay, however, is followed by a period of new life, and another cycle of change is entered upon which in its main features resembles the former. It is to be noticed, however, that he exempts Christianity from the law of cyclical change which involves the decay of all other human institutions. It is no detraction from the merit of Vico's *rationale* of history that he considers the facts inexplicable apart from the assumption of an overruling Providence. Professor Flint's account of Vico's attitude in regard to theology, on the one hand, and social science on the other, is well worth quoting:—

As in contemplating history he perceives clear traces of the action both of God and man, his New Science is conceived of as both a theology and a sociology, but he does not confound these two. He recognises that they are distinct, and takes on the whole a correct



view of their relationship. He neither makes sociology dependent on theology, nor does he allow it to displace it. He was fully aware that historical events ought not to be explained theologically ; that merely to assert that God caused these events for such and such a purpose was futile ; that there was no science in that, and if any theology, only theology of a bad kind, always arbitrary and arrogant in relation to God, and generally unjust in relation to men. On the other hand, he was not one of those who suppose that when the world of nations has been shown to be a product of the ideas, feelings, and volitions of men, it has been fully explained ; on the contrary, he thought that the explanation itself as much needed explanation as what it had explained. He saw, or thought he saw, that what was realised in the course of the ages by the millions of individuals which compose humanity was a system of order so vast, comprehensive and excellent, as to imply a Supreme Will pervading, controlling, and using human wills,—

“ A divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.”

None of Flint's books drew so many letters of warm congratulations from his friends as did his little volume on “ Vico.” This was perhaps owing partly to the freshness of the subject, but chiefly to the bright and capable way in which his task was accomplished. It may be enough to select two letters from his English-speaking friends, one from the philosopher, Dr James Hutchison Stirling, and the other from Mr William Blackwood, his publisher.

4 LAVEROCK BANK ROAD,  
EDINBURGH, *July 14, 1884.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have delayed thanking you for your kind present of your “ Vico ” until I had given myself the advantage of reading it. That reading has been one of great pleasure and of constant admiration. Your knowledge of books and your power of bringing them together are really quite wonderful. Again and again I have been surprised into exclamations in these references. Surely you have done Vico a quite exhaustive justice. I should think for completeness and fulness your little volume beats all those which have preceded it, and yet many of these have been very excellent. Nothing could well be better than Grant's “ Xenophon ”

and "Aristotle." I was greatly pleased with the completeness of both, especially of "Aristotle." Then Fraser's "Berkeley" is very happy—the best thing he has done, I think. Adamson's "Fichte" I have hardly read, but I have found it good where or when I have read. Then "Kant" and "Hamilton" are also good; the others I have not seen. Of all that I have seen, yours, as it seems to me, is the fullest and most original. Its pages are constantly irradiated by the finest epigrammatic expressions which bring together the latest and deepest findings on the best things which occupy us at present. The very first chapter strikes the note. The last chapter, too, is very full of the pregnant epigrammatic expressions I allude to, and which, if I may say so, have so much of Hegel in them. I prize very highly this little book.—I am, Yours very truly,

J. H. STIRLING.

P.S.—I am tempted to add an illustration of what I mean by "epigrammatic expressions," etc. At p. 200 you will find two sets of evolution referred to, a "biological" and a "cosmical"—that is a passage in proof, only I fear very few know anything of the latter, which is the only evolution I believe in. Your abundant Italian and even special references to Vera suggest that perhaps you would like to see a letter of his, the rather that your name is mentioned in it.

Coming from such a man as Hutchison Stirling this was praise indeed and must have been gratifying to Flint. So must also the letter which he received from Mr Blackwood. I do not know if publishers are in the habit of congratulating their authors, but a word of praise such as Blackwood sent to Flint would not, when deserved, come amiss.

45 GEORGE STREET.

EDINBURGH, 18th July 1884.

DEAR DR FLINT,—I have the pleasure of enclosing your cheque £100, in payment of the copyright of your admirable contribution on "Vico," to our series of Philosophical Classics for English Readers. I hope soon to see some reviews worthy of your fine work upon a writer not much known in this country, and the volume should help to increase the value of the series to the general reader. Thanking you for the pains you have bestowed upon it.—Believe me, Yours very sincerely,

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

One of the most important results, however, of his “ Vico ” was the strengthening of his friendly relations with Italy and Italian scholars. He was already well known, chiefly through his “ Philosophy of History,” to many of the most learned men in Italy, some of whom he had already met, and with others of whom he was in correspondence. But his appreciation of Vico, who was their chief philosopher, and the wide circulation which his book gave to the name and writings of one who outside his own country had up till then received scant justice, gained for him the warm friendship of many Italians who were not slow in giving expression to their gratitude and admiration. One of the first to thank Flint for his book was Count Saffi, Professor of the History of Public Law in the University of Bologna. He had been a delegate at the Ter-Centenary Celebrations and had received the degree of LL.D. Writing from Bologna on the 1st August 1884, he says :

I have read the book with the greatest pleasure, and beg to say that, in my judgment, the work is one of the highest value, both for the clear exposition of the doctrines and the exact definition of thought, as well as for the important references to Vico’s mind and principles on the subsequent development of scientific speculation on the philosophy of history, in Germany and elsewhere.

The view that the *Corsi* and *Ricorsi* of the “ Scienza Nuova ” do not exclude the notion of progress seems to me worthy of the greatest attention as very likely to be the true one.

Your accurate knowledge and recension of the traditions of philosophical inquiry in Italy and of the precursors of Vico’s thought add considerable interest to your book for every competent reader among my countrymen, and a faithful translation of it in our own language would, I am sure, highly gratify our learned world. Indeed, were my abilities equal to the task, I would consider it a duty to try, with your consent and under your authority, the experiment myself.

With feelings of sincere sympathy and admiration, I remain, very truly yours,

A. SAFFI.

The translation thus proposed by Count Saffi was however, in the end undertaken by Count Francesco Finocchietti of Florence, who writes on the 3rd of February 1885 to Flint, saying that on seeing "Vico" announced, he had ordered it, and found it worthy of translation. Indeed, he had already girded himself to the task and was now half through, but would not publish it without the author's consent. It was not till November 1888 that the Italian translation was published, circumstances, as the Count informs Flint, having, to his great regret, caused the delay. The book in its new form created even greater interest among the scholars of Italy, and their appreciation found expression at the hands of, among others, Professor A. Nicola of Naples, who has read Count Finocchietti's translation of "Vico" and feels it to be his duty to send to Flint his sincere congratulations. Flint "has penetrated the secret of that remarkable scientist and given a luminous proof that the English mind, among all Northern races, is the one best fitted to understand Vico."

The learned world of Italy, however, was not content with simply expressing thanks and writing letters of congratulation; it determined to do for Flint what France had done for him, after his publication of the "Philosophy of History." The French Academy made him a Corresponding Member, and now the Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters, and the Fine Arts of Palermo awards him its Diploma. This it did in January of 1889, and the secretary, in intimating the honour to Flint, hopes that "it will be a new link between him and Italy."

Flint during the next few years was deeply engaged on his "Historical Philosophy in France," which was

published in the beginning of 1893. He had also in hand his lectures and his book on “ Socialism ” which appeared in 1894, and he was able, notwithstanding the heavy demands upon his strength and time which these two important works entailed, to write several articles, two for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and one for *Mind*. He also wrote a valuable Preface to the translation by Dr Hastie of Pünjer’s “ History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion from the Reformation to Kant,” which drew from Professor Lipsius of Jena, an eminent theologian who should be better known in this country, a word of thanks for “ this fine translation and a wish that my late friend could have seen it.” Flint’s article in *Mind* appeared the following year, 1888. It was on Dr James Martineau’s “ A Study of Religion,” which had just been published. It was appreciative of the veteran theologian’s work, and must have been highly pleasing to him. But by far the most important of all the articles that he wrote at this time were those on “ Theology ” and “ Theism ” for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. An impression of them was made in separate form, and it was thus possible to have them circulated among the leading theologians at home and abroad. It is no exaggeration to say that these two articles were among the very best things that Flint ever wrote, and both of them are still of great value. Professor Lipsius, to whom we have just referred, expresses to Flint his “ sincere gratitude for them.” “ The whole treatment of the subject,” he adds, “ and the spirit in which you regard things theological, as it appears in all your works, has much in it that appeals to me. And I sincerely wish that you may be able to realise your plan of writing an Introduction to Philosophy.” Professor Kuenen of Leyden declares that the “ reading

of the articles filled him with great admiration," and Dr Edwin Hatch affirms that he has no hesitation in saying that he has never read "anything so masterly and so clear upon either of the subjects of which you treat." He then goes on to make some interesting remarks on the state of theological learning at Oxford.

They are the more welcome because they deal with what has become in Oxford almost a lost Science. Theology proper has, with the exception of Fairbairn, who is not yet a University teacher, no teacher and no students; out of more than sixty candidates for honours in it a month ago I did not obtain a single first-class answer.

Dr Hutchison Stirling, who never indulged in merely formal acknowledgment to the author of any publication that he may have read, but frankly stated his views, and, if necessary, his criticisms, characterises Flint's Articles as "two valuable treatises."

I have been spending the day in reading them, especially "Theism," which is an altogether fully complete and exhaustive discussion of the entire subject. What strikes one at once is the enormous industry, then the satisfactory proportions into which the vast material is thrown, together with the trained skill than can so easily handle an erudition so immense; and, lastly, the catholic sanity of the thinking, combined with a perfect lucidity of the statement. I do not understand how Lord Gifford could have asked for more, or for aught else—when or if he had this "Theism" of yours! It alone—even without the theology—is calculated to be a complete guide to all "Lettori Giffordi." (Mrs Sellar told me that her husband's nephew, Andrew Lang, signed himself from Italy, "Lettore Giffordo.")

I, for my part, feel myself, in presence of all that, in no small condition of perturbation, the shame of me in such a position is brought only too vividly home to me. One would like to steal off indeed and escape!

Hutchison Stirling's perturbation is explained by the fact that he had just been appointed the first Gifford Lecturer in Edinburgh University, and his reference to

Lord Gifford finding in Flint's article—if he had ever seen it—all that he could have wished for on the subject is not without some interest from the fact that his Lordship's original intention was to endow a Chair for Flint, on Natural Theology. From whatever cause, the offer was not accepted, much to the gratification no doubt of all Gifford Lecturers, and, as Flint himself would believe, from the number of able minds that would be brought to bear upon the subject, to the advantage in the end of theological progress itself.

As Flint's article on “ Theism ” in the *Encyclopædia* has been frequently referred to in the course of this Biography, and as it is admitted on all hands to be an important contribution to the subject, it seems to me to be advisable to give an account of it. No better sketch in brief compass could be written than what is found in Professor Pfeiderer's work on “ The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant, and its Progress in Great Britain since 1825.” Flint's article, he declares, “ offers some excellent observations upon the agnostic position,” and then he continues :

Flint maintains that agnosticism is so far from being the necessary corollary of Kantian criticism, that, on the contrary, it contradicts its true principles. For if it is the categories which make experience possible, their validity cannot be restricted to sense experience, but extends as truly to the realm of moral and religious experience. And if the objective validity of the categories, or the necessary forms of thought, is generally called in question, it is not merely theology which is thereby deprived of all foundation, but equally all other sciences, which are then all resolved into castles in the air. But against such scepticism human consciousness testifies, for it cannot think the mere subjectivity of a true category. As against Hamilton and Mansel, Flint observes that the idea of the Absolute, so far from being, as they alleged, an empty negation, abstraction, and fiction, because out of all relation to the knowable, contains the foundation of all relations, the basis not less of existence than of thought, and therefore, being far from unknowable, is the richest and

highest idea to which all other knowledge conducts as its necessary completion. In it all the metaphysical categories are included, for God is the absolute Being ; all the physical categories, for he is absolute Force and Life ; all the mental categories, for he is absolute Spirit ; all the moral categories, for he is the absolutely Good. Thus the idea of God brings all ideas which are the conditions of human reason and the basis of a knowledge of things into an organic system ; the whole truth of the world, unfolded in the various sciences, as well as the truth of the mind, is included in the idea of God.

A philosophy of the Absolute, such as Hegel's, may in its controversy with Agnosticism fall into some extravagances of Gnosticism ; but a theist may nevertheless sympathise with its general aim and appropriate many of its results. Undoubtedly this philosophy needs correction, so far as it fails to do justice to the personality and transcendence of the Divine. And this error is due to its having obtained the idea of God too exclusively by the method of formal logical thought, and to its neglect of the other sides of the mind, the moral and religious experience particularly. The idea of God cannot be laid hold of solely by the scientific organizing intellect, but only by the combined theoretical and practical powers of the mind. It is a truth ever more clearly conceived, that the divine glory has its centre in moral perfection, in holy love. On the other hand the general movement of theism tends to a mediation between the extremes of pantheism and deism, to a harmonious combination of the personal self-equality and the universal agency of God. Positive science has powerfully co-operated with speculative philosophy in producing this movement. The modern scientific view of the world has not as its result pantheism, but it gives sanction to the relative claims of pantheism, and demands a theism which acknowledges God's immanence in the world while holding fast to his personality. The theory of evolution as applied to nature and history does not lead to Agnosticism, but to a more vivid knowledge of God, from whom and through whom and to whom are all things, who is the eternal source of all forces in nature, and also the power in history working for truth and righteousness.

“These excellent views of Professor Flint,” concludes Dr Pfeiderer, “seem to me to contain, in fact, the quintessence of the best thoughts of modern speculative philosophy and the programme of its further development.”



It was during these busy years that Flint took the first step in the preparation of his large and important work on “ Socialism.” It is very probable that he had no intention at the time of publishing a book on the subject, for he dealt with it, to begin with, in the form of lectures which he delivered to popular audiences. It will be remembered that when minister of the East Parish, Aberdeen, he expressed regret when leaving that he had not had time to give lectures to the working men of his congregation, in whom he felt the deepest interest. He had come into close touch with the toiling masses when he was assistant to Dr Norman Macleod of the Barony Parish, Glasgow, and he never lost his interest in and sympathy with them. During the years that had elapsed since his departure from Aberdeen he had been engaged almost entirely with the studies and duties entailed by his two professorships. But he never lost his love for the working man, who, so far as intellectual guidance was concerned, was often as a sheep without a shepherd. Indeed, he was in imminent danger of falling into the hands of false shepherds, of being turned over to the ravenous wolves who were ready and eager to devour him. It was the thought of all this that prompted Flint to deliver a course of lectures on Socialism to the working men of Edinburgh. Henry George had recently visited Scotland and his gospel was being preached by many, with equal fervour and ignorance. Socialistic propaganda was spreading everywhere; the doctrines inculcated seemed to promise a very El Dorado to the toiling masses.

Flint accordingly, in March of 1886, made a proposal to the Edinburgh United Trades Council to deliver, during the coming winter, a course of lectures, under their auspices, on Socialism. The Council gladly accepted the offer, undertook all the arrangements, secured the

use of the Tron Church, and issued a programme of five lectures, to be delivered fortnightly, beginning on the 6th January 1887 at eight o'clock in the evening. The subject at the time was a burning one, and the working men of Edinburgh filled the church on every evening. The Right Honourable Sir Thomas Clark, the Lord Provost of the City, occupied the Chair at the first lecture; and the course created a deep interest, not only in Edinburgh, but through the country. Dr Donald Macleod, editor at the time of *Good Words*, rightly considered that Flint's lectures would make highly profitable and popular reading for his magazine, and he approached him with the view of securing them. Macleod and Flint were very old friends; they knew each other as students, and Flint succeeded Macleod in the Barony assistantship. They accordingly wrote to each other with a familiarity and freedom that do not usually characterise the correspondence of those whose friendship is made in later life. The editor, anxious to keep his contributor up to time, writes him on the 29th August 1888 reminding him of his promise.

MY DEAR FLINT,—This is only to remind you that the *pièce de résistance* for *Good Words*, 1889, is to be your lectures on "Socialism." You may perhaps find another dish by W. E. Gladstone on the "War of Unbelief." The old man is "considering it." He is a study in political morals, but I believe he may have something useful to say on the subject I mention.

Flint, however, was not to be hurried; the articles would appear, but the editor must wait until the author had time to make them worthy. So almost a year later we find him writing to Macleod from St Conan's Tower, Loch Awe, on August 30, 1889, assuring him that the articles would be forthcoming, and playfully congratulating, and at the same time chaffing, his friend on the celebration of his silver wedding, which was then taking place.

MY DEAR MACLEOD,—You will get the papers on “ Socialism.” When must you have the first ? How many are there to be ?

I hope you will have a “ golden wedding ” day, but how much dear Mrs Macleod must have had to put up with during these last twenty-five years ! And then how far from repentant enough you are or grateful enough either ! Oh, the wickedness of human nature !

This summer I have been six weeks in Ireland, and a month here. To-day I leave for Edinburgh.

Dr Macleod was much relieved by Flint’s assurance and in thanking him, commiserates him on his celibacy ; thus indirectly defending himself from the playful humour of Flint’s last letter. Macleod wrote from Balmoral Castle, on the 8th September 1889 :

MY DEAR FLINT,—A thousand thanks, old boy, for your letter. If we have copy of your first article by the end of November it will do. You can decide better than I can how many there should be. Let me know what you think. If you don’t look sharp I’ll never be able to congratulate you on your “ silver wedding ”—wake up, man—philosophy at the best can only be a handmaid !

I am taking advantage of my enforced idleness in my room—work being over and Church and the afternoon walk—and dinner time not come—to write some letters, and this one being for you I write on the Balmoral Paper. To lesser men, or less cared for, I take my own.—Ever thine,

DONALD MACLEOD.

Dr Macleod was quite as much interested in Socialism as Flint himself, and three years afterwards published a volume on “ Christ and Society.” His valuable services and long experience as Convener of the Church of Scotland’s Committee on Home Missions brought him into close touch with the needs of the poor, and as minister of the Park Parish, Glasgow, he had an intimate knowledge of the life and habits of the rich. He could thus lay his hand upon the two extreme sections of society, and his book consequently showed thorough and sympathetic knowledge of the subject. Flint was

favourably impressed by it and wrote to Macleod a letter of warm appreciation.

ROCK CASTLE, PORT STEWART,  
IRELAND, *June 15th*, 1893.

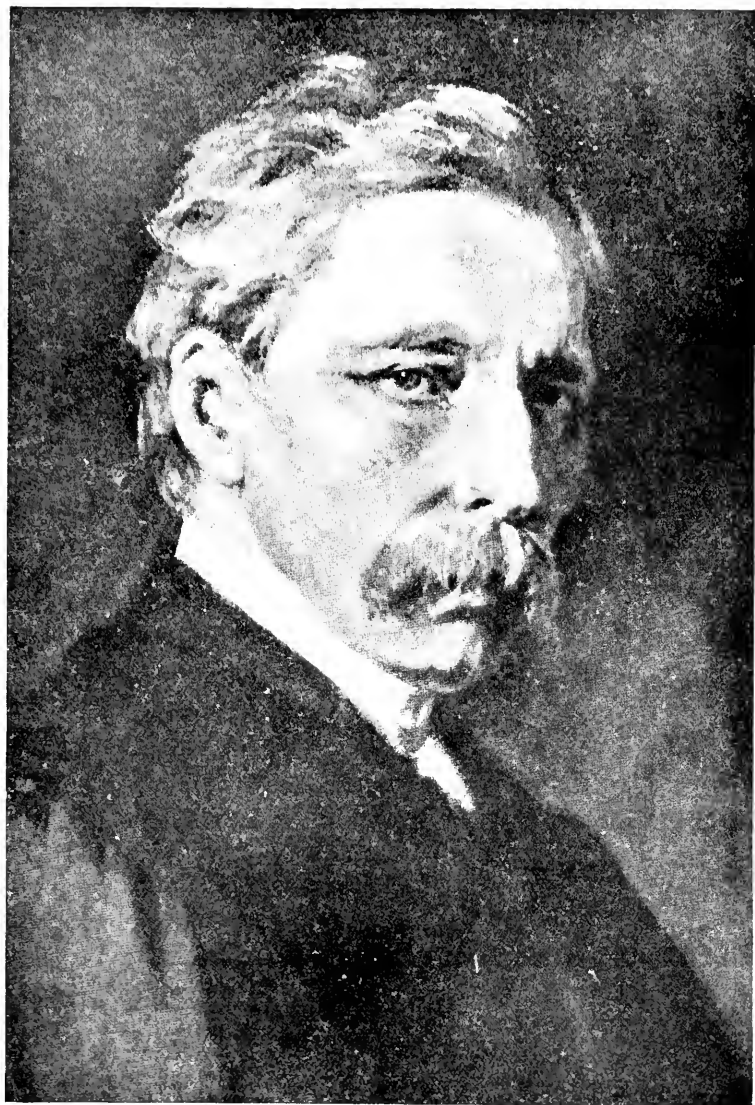
MY DEAR MACLEOD,—Your volume is admirable. I have read the half of it with great enjoyment and will skip none of it. It is a very wise and practical book. We have greatly enjoyed our stay here. To-day I start for a tour of four or five days in Donegal.—

My sister joins me in kind regards to Mrs Macleod.—Yours very truly,

R. FLINT.

Flint's book appeared at Christmas 1894 and commanded immediate and favourable attention. Its non-partisan character appealed to the common sense of readers everywhere, and its learning and thoroughness called for replies from the extremists on both sides. The work is animated by the spirit which is found in all Flint's publications. It evinces an earnest desire to get at the truth and is singularly free from all prejudices and preconceptions. Its tone is, in the main, conservative, but it frankly and warmly recognises whatever is good and true in the views of socialists, and takes to task those more favoured in worldly circumstances, or by their position, who fail to realise their responsibilities and do their duty. It is full of sympathy for those who are hard pressed in the struggle of life and accepts every legitimate proposal that can be advocated in their interests. But it is at the same time unsparing in its criticism of every fallacy that is put forward as a sound argument by socialists, and mercilessly exposes the hollowness of much that they advance as economically and morally sound. The spirit and manner of the book is well expressed by one of its reviewers when he says :

We have received a comprehensive and intelligent discussion of socialism by Professor Flint wherein the author briefly but clearly



PROFESSOR FLINT

*Portrait by Sir George Reid, P.R.S.A.*

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presents the respective views of the leaders in the movement, analyses each, and then offers his conclusions in moderate and conservative, but convincing language. That he is not in sympathy with men who would overturn existing conditions and reorganise social and industrial life on new and different principles, is plainly to be seen. And there is no display of morbid or religious sentimentality. The social change must be a gradual one, an evolution, not a revolution. It is also evident that Dr Flint has spared no pains to gain a true conception of the nature of the burdens that bear so heavily on some, and so lightly on others. Thus with a clear knowledge of the situation, he pleads the cause of the working man to *working men*. And it is essentially a working man's book, picturing before the toiler the true and the false, the ideal and the practical, in the socialistic schemes that are so glibly offered as a panacea for all social ills; a work written with the ink of human love by the right hand of good fellowship.

A book that is so well and widely known (for a second edition of it appeared in 1908) stands in no need of a lengthy discussion, but a brief description of it may be held to be necessary.

According to Professor Flint, Socialism is neither merely accidental nor purely essential. It arises from principles inherent in the life and necessary to the welfare of society; but it does not spring from them inevitably, and is the one-sided exaggeration of them. Inasmuch, however, as truth underlies and originates it, and the exaggeration of that truth is always easy, and sometimes difficult to avoid, without being strictly necessary, it is extremely natural; and society can never be sure that it will ever get free from it. Professor Flint's method has been to take the chief manifestations of that tendency and determine how far they are in accordance with the fundamental principles of justice and the teachings of political economy. After dealing briefly with the history of Socialism and discussing its relation to Communism and Individualism, and indicating the principles which should regulate State intervention in general, he passes to what may be called the economic basis of Socialism. He discusses in detail socialistic views with regard to wages, and contends that they have absolutely failed to discover any better method of remuneration, or to attach any reasonable stigma to the wages contract. In another chapter he discusses the Marxian theory of capital, chiefly from the point of view that it cannot be

regarded as an appropriated part of the product of labour, as in almost every instance it is a necessary antecedent of the performance of the work. The treatment of the subject in these two chapters is popular in the best sense of the word. They deal with what are perhaps the most difficult aspects of Socialism, and cover ground which unfortunately is regarded by many Socialists as not being debateable, though it is the fundamental basis of Socialism so far as it claims to be scientific. In appendices to both the chapters he has gone more into detail, and they form a very complete refutation of the economic doctrines of Marx and his adherents. In the next two chapters he deals with what might be called proximate Socialism—a form of Socialism which rests quite as much on ideas of expediency as on principles of economics. In the first he discusses the question of the nationalisation of the land, and shows that the title to land is not essentially different from the title to other property, and that communities or states have no better title to it than individuals. He also deals fully with the question of unearned increment. In the second he discusses the collectivism of capital, and shows the impossibility of dispensing with individual initiative and responsibility, and the inconsistency of allowing a right of property in the objects of consumption and denying it in the instruments of production. But the most interesting chapters in the book are those in which the author deals with the relation of Socialism to morality and religion.

It is interesting to note the way in which distinguished men, holding different views on this as on other subjects, regarded Flint's book. They are unanimous in their appreciation and approval. Its fairness, its calm judiciousness, its sympathetic treatment of views which at the same time it unsparingly criticises, and its fine humanitarian note and catholic spirit strongly appealed to them. His friend, Professor Van der Wÿck, writing from Utrecht on the 16th January 1895, remarks :

I did not expect to see you publishing so soon again. (Flint's "Historical Philosophy in France" had appeared in the previous year.) You are not only a very able but a very productive writer. I have not yet had time to finish your book, but I have read a great part of it and found it admirable. Your exposition of the socialists'



doctrines is most impartial, and the style of your book is as polite in the main as possible. I think I can agree with all your principles. You are indeed a man of principles and not a formalist; but the men of your stamp, the possessors of a firm conviction, are not very numerous in our age; and so we are exposed to mischievous experiments in the socialist line from the side of so-called liberal politicians. Collectivism and Anarchism are indeed the great danger of our time.

Before reading your book I gave to the question: What is Socialism? the following answer which I see coincides with that of Janet. “It is the endeavour to obtain a greater equality among men by substituting more or less the compulsory agency of the state for the free agency of society.”

I see with pleasure that you have availed yourself of the wise lessons of the present Pope in your criticism of the mad tendencies of our day. Popery can be an efficacious aid, I believe, in maintaining the blessings of civilization. Your criticism of Marx, as far as I can see, is more stringent, but why did you not speak about Tolstoi? Perhaps it would have taken too much room. I should like to hear you about that generous madman, and also about your countryman Wicksteed, who is, as I understand, one of the prominent forces of the Fabian society, whose name you have most fitly ridiculed as inappropriate. But I am most thankful for what you have given, and I feel sure that your masterly book will bear splendid fruits.

His old friend and colleague in the University of Edinburgh, Robert Wallace, a man who was democratic to the core, and had strong sympathies with the working people is equally hearty in his praise.

5 ESSEX COURT, TEMPLE,  
LONDON, E.C., 29th December 1894.

MY DEAR FLINT,—I have read the whole of the big print through without stopping, except for sleep. The subject interests me deeply and you fairly carried me along with you. The Prolegomena, if I can so term the supplementary notes, which I see are full of minute argument and research, I am reserving for more leisurely study.

I think you are nearly right all through, but right or wrong you have given us the most powerful and learned treatment, by far, of anything of the kind we have in this country, and I should imagine on the continent either. It will be a perfect mine of material for coming controversies.

Mrs Wallace bade me remember her, along with myself, in general and seasonable greetings to Miss Flint and you.—Yours very truly,  
ROBERT WALLACE.

Dr Wallace, it may be noted, hazards the remark that an equal to Flint's book could not be found even on the Continent; and this is borne out by a letter which Flint received at this time from Professor Pfeleiderer of Berlin. Pfeleiderer, to whom we have already referred, had been a Gifford Lecturer in Edinburgh University. He struck up a warm friendship with Flint, for whom and for whose works he had the highest admiration.

GROSS LICHTERFELDE,  
NEAR BERLIN, 3rd May 1895.

I have studied your excellent book on "Socialism" with the greatest interest, and with full assent; and in my lectures on ethics have made use of the two last chapters—the Ethical and Religious Character of Socialism—for the benefit of my students. At the present stage of our debates on the social question, your treatment of this subject is of extraordinary value. In my own position as Rector of the University, in opposing the socialistic agitation of the students, I have had to encounter much opposition, and I am all the more gratified for the support I find in your book. I have written a long paper on it in our Church magazine and will send you a copy. I consider the book so valuable and timely, that I should like to see it translated into German. If you approve I believe I can arrange for it through my publisher. I have proposed to my daughter Clara, that she might undertake this, as it would both be an honour to her and useful for her English studies. She seems to be not altogether disinclined, but very doubtful of her powers. However if she cannot undertake, I am sure of finding some translator and I will arrange with my publisher. I hope that you will be able to carry out your plan of visiting Berlin and with kindest regards to your sister and all other friends and acquaintances,—Yours most sincerely,

O. PFLEIDERER.

No one took a deeper or more sympathetic interest in the questions with which Flint's books deal than Dr Westcott, Bishop of Durham. He had more than once

given practical proof of his power, not only to discuss Socialism but to carry out in a practical form those principles of it, especially in the industrial field, which he believed to be true. There was no one in Britain more capable of giving a just opinion of Flint's book :

AUCKLAND CASTLE, BISHOP AUCKLAND,  
*January 9, 1895.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR FLINT,—I have been deeply interested in the questions with which your book deals from my school days, and you will forgive me if I resolutely and after the fullest reflection refuse to surrender the word Socialism to Communists or Collectivists or State Socialists. They have all their appropriate titles and their principles are fundamentally opposed to any meaning that I can attach to the word. However, I make my protest and now and never use the title.

As yet I have only read one chapter of your book, that on Social Organisation. With that I need not say I agree most heartily. You touch on what appears to me to be the greatest peril of the next age in what you say on education. What can be done? Here I am always speaking on the subject, but with no practical fruit. In many ways the most remarkable work in which I have been allowed to take part in the North has been in periodic gatherings here since 1890 of representative employers and employed. On the last occasion Professor Marshall came to us to open a discussion on the possible limitation of competition in different large industries. Ideas are exchanged and results come later, in some cases like mature fruit. I could not but wonder when I read what you say of old-age pensions in our large industries whether I could persuade you to come here. Old-age pensions was the first subject which we discussed, but I believe that the question might be more effectively dealt with by separate industries. We have meetings commonly in June and October. Another subject I have been anxious to bring forward is the old one of the unemployed.

It would be a great delight if we could induce you to come here. May I add my kind remembrances to Miss Flint.

The German translation of Flint's book, proposed by Professor Pfeiderer, was not proceeded with owing to publishing difficulties; but it came to be well known in its English dress on the Continent and had a wide circulation in America and in the Colonies.

## CHAPTER XV

### FLINT AND HIS FRIENDS

ONE can well understand how Flint, after what must have been constant and arduous toil in the writing of his two great works, both published within a year — “Historical Philosophy in France,” and “Socialism”—would long for some rest. It is for this reason most probably that, with the exception of “Sermons and Addresses,” which appeared in 1899, nothing of importance was published by him till 1903, when he gave his “Agnosticism” to the world. There is so much matter in this book; it displays so large an amount of hard thinking and careful writing, that even although he had done nothing else during those ten years no one could accuse him of being idle. It is true that he contributed articles to certain encyclopædias, *Chambers’*, for instance, and also to *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*; revised many of his class lectures, and did other work of an occasional kind, but his energies were undoubtedly concentrated upon his “Agnosticism.” Although many were clamouring for its appearance, he would not be hurried, but was determined that, so far as he was able, it should be a thorough piece of work.

During those years honours poured in on him. In 1896 Princeton University conferred upon him the degree of D.D., and Yale followed suit in 1901 with an LL.D. He already held the LL.D. of Glasgow University, but in 1901 his Alma Mater at her Ninth Jubilee celebrations bestowed upon him the degree of D.D.;

Edinburgh, of which he was a D.D., honoured him with an LL.D. when he retired. Aberdeen in 1906 conferred upon him the degree of D.D., and in 1901 he was elected one of the original members of the British Academy. The only Scottish University from which he did not hold an honorary degree was St Andrews, but that was not the fault of Scotland's most ancient seat of learning, in which he did what was perhaps, after all, his finest work. It offered him a degree while he was professor there, but academical etiquette forced him to decline it. But not one of the universities of his native land was prouder of its connection with him than St Andrews. No one coveted these honours less than Flint, but those who conferred them felt that they were honouring themselves as much as him. In 1895 he was offered the Moderatorship of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, but he declined the honour. In 1900 his old students presented him with his portrait by Sir George Reid. The presentation took place in the Hall of St Cuthbert's Church on the 12th of December, and in the evening he was entertained at a dinner in the Windsor Hotel, which was presided over by the Rev. Dr Keith of Largs. Professor Flint's health was proposed by the Rev. Dr Grant of St Stephen's, Edinburgh, and in his reply Dr Flint narrated the brief but interesting autobiography to which reference has been made in these pages. So early as 1882 he was offered the Principalship of the Theological College of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, at a salary of not less than £800 a year, and in 1893 his friend, Dr Briggs, informed him of the desire of the Union Theological Seminary of New York to secure him for a course of lectures. In 1900 he received an invitation from Principal Rainy, in a letter which does infinite credit to them both, to be present at the meeting which celebrated the union of

the Free and United Presbyterian Churches. Flint, however, could not see his way to accept the invitation.

BONSKEID, PITLOCHRIE,  
10th September 1900.

DEAR DR FLINT,—In connection with the Union proceedings to which we are looking forward—which are fixed for 31st October and 1st November—we ventured to address an invitation to your Moderator, Dr Norman Macleod, signifying how much gratified we should be if representatives of your Church could be present on the occasion. Dr Macleod sent a courteous reply in which he expressed his own interest and Christian good wishes, but said that as no authority competent to represent the Church of Scotland would be in a condition to act before the date fixed, there would be no possibility of taking the mind of the Church on the matter.

It is not quite clear to myself how far the letter of Dr Macleod leaves it open to us still to invite his own personal presence, but I think his meaning is, that he would not think it proper to be present officially unless authorised, and that his presence could hardly be other than official. It might not therefore perhaps be in good taste to trouble him farther. Yet we are very unwilling that by accident or oversight any appearance of unworthy feeling with reference to the Established Church and to the many eminent men who serve it should be supposed to characterise our arrangements.

I have been desired therefore to write, as I now do, to ask your friendly consideration of this proposal. We have invited one or two men not as representatives of denominations, but on their own merits. Dr Maclaren of Manchester is one; we should be greatly gratified if you as one of the most distinguished professors of the University, as well as a most honoured minister in the Church, could be present—still more, if you could take part, however briefly, in our proceedings.

I may say, that we are the more free to ask this, because we realize how plainly and strongly you have expressed, from your own point of view, censures of proceedings on our side of which you disapproved, but this has not interfered with your frank recognition of the bonds of Christian brotherhood when proper occasion arose to do justice to them.

May I ask your special consideration of this proposal, to which we attach great importance?

Believe me to be, Dear Dr Flint, with much regard, Yours very faithfully.

ROBERT RAINY.

We should like to find the way open to secure the presence of other representatives of your Church, clerical and lay.

It was chiefly during those years, when the strain of work was somewhat relaxed, that Professor Flint and his sister extended their hospitality to their friends in Edinburgh and particularly to the learned representatives of other countries who from time to time visited the Scottish capital. Their house, Johnstone Lodge, Craigmillar Park, was well adapted for the entertainment of guests. It was commodious, beautifully situated, and, while bordering on the country, within easy access of the city. Their first house, also called Johnstone Lodge, in which they resided for the first seven years of their life in Edinburgh, was almost opposite the one which latterly became their home. The new house was built by Dr Flint; its arrangements were of his own ordering, and fitted in with the studious, domestic, and social life which characterised his most active years. His habits as a student and his method of work have already been described, and his family life more than touched upon. One who stood on the most intimate relations with him and the members of his family has thus described it :

His home life was singularly beautiful. In his habits he was very simple and in his ways very gentle, kindly, and considerate. I never saw him angry or utter a harsh word. He was full of kindness and charity with no guile or selfishness in his nature. A deep peace and calm ever hovered over his spirit; he lived near to God and was bright and happy always, and the sunshine of his life flowed out to all around him. He was devoted to his parents and sister and they were equally devoted to him. Although much in his study he could leave his books and thoughts behind him, and talk with humour and interest at his meals about daily happenings and events. He was a truly good man, simple and humble as he was great, and, with all his learning he was childlike in faith. I shall never forget the sweetness of his life and character.

A man so earnest and so busy had not unlimited leisure to spend on casual acquaintanceship in which there might be no real community of spirit or true friendship, but there was a number of men, some of them his colleagues in the University, others drawn from a wider circle, who shared his confidence and his esteem, who were welcomed to his home and with whom he had frequent correspondence. One of the earliest and closest of these friends was the Right Honourable James A. Campbell of Stracathro, M.P. for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen. Their friendship began in the old Barony days. Mr Campbell was one of Norman Macleod's young men, and he was a member of the Barony, if not an elder, when Flint began his career as assistant in that parish. Miss Flint remembers Mr Campbell writing to her brother after he had preached his first sermon in the Barony, telling him just to go on as he had begun, and to make no change in his theological standpoint, or in his manner of treatment, or in his delivery. Mr Campbell was one of those who strongly pressed Flint to accept the Edinburgh Professorship, but it was not until "Theism" was in the press, that the working relation began between them, which was unique in its way, and which remained unbroken until Mr Campbell's death. Flint entrusted the revision and correction of the proofs of "Theism" to Mr Campbell, and a similar task was undertaken again and again by the same kind hand and discharged with a painstaking thoroughness which is beyond all praise. Many letters are in my possession from this faithful helper of Flint, with pages of foolscap carefully marked with errata, which were in due course passed on to the printer for correction on the proofs. No slip was too trifling to be passed over, and the commas were as carefully attended to as the most notorious misprint.



Flint knew and appreciated the scholarly qualities of his friend. His modesty was almost equal to Flint's own; and Scotland never had a better representative in Parliament, or the Church of Scotland a wiser or truer friend. He was undoubtedly the most representative churchman of his day, and he and Flint were equally fortunate in their loyal and affectionate friendship. Mr Campbell pled with Flint not to mention his name in the preface to any of his books, but the professor would have his way in spite of the following letter.

STRACATHRO,  
BRECHIN, 17th May 1879.

MY DEAR DR FLINT,—I don't like to be obstinate, especially against a strong wish of yours, but I should really be better pleased if you will let me have my own way in this matter. What I did in revising the proof sheets was not worth mentioning in a prefatory note. It was little more than correcting slips of the pen or mistakes of the printer. Any acknowledgment of my small services would lead people to think that my revising had to do with matter as well as form.

If you *will* name me, please call me *Mr* and not *Dr*—but please do not name me at all.—Yours very truly,

JAS. ALEX. CAMPBELL.

In another letter, one of many he wrote to Flint, Mr Campbell makes an interesting confession. He declares that he is fond of proof reading. In this respect he surely was the solitary exception to the rule.

STRACATHRO,  
BRECHIN, October 18th, 1898.

MY DEAR DR FLINT,— . . . As to reading proofs I feel flattered by you thinking of me. It is a work I like, and if there is no hurry, that is to say, if the second week of November would not be too late to begin, and if a two days' post would not be too objectionable, I should be very happy to do what I could in the way of revising the proofs of "Sermons and Addresses." I hope to be settled at the Hotel

Montfleury, Cannes, on the 5th of November. I shall have more time for the work there than I should have at home.—Yours very truly,  
 JAS. ALEX. CAMPBELL.

There was no one among his colleagues with whom Flint had more intimate relations than Dr Charteris. He was on the most friendly terms with them all, particularly with Professors Taylor, Tait, Blackie, and Campbell Fraser, but Charteris and he were fellow-Dumfriesians; they knew each other in their earlier years; they saw each other frequently, and numerous letters passed between them. Flint occasionally unburdened himself to Charteris and imparted to him confidences on University and theological matters. An interesting letter from him in which he frankly states his views on some Biblical questions may be given.

THE IBERT, MONZIE, BY CRIEFF,  
 24th June 1895.

MY DEAR CHARTERIS,—I was glad to get your letter. I think I may infer from it that you are decidedly better. I hope I can, and that you will continue well and find your winter's work a pleasure.

I have been interesting myself somewhat of late with the 8th century B.C. Prophetic Books, and I almost envy you having to lecture on them. They are magnificent productions, whether looked at from a literary or a religious point of view. Most wonderful men their authors were; and yet how manifest it is that they no more originated the thoughts which they uttered than they created the words in which they express them. It is amazing how so many critics can fail to see this, and persist in attributing to them an abnormal originality which makes them inexplicable. . . .

We have been here for three weeks and intend remaining three weeks longer. It is a lovely place, magnificently situated three miles north of Crieff, on the way to the "Sma' Glen." Dr Taylor and his family are coming when we leave, and I feel sure that it is just the place for them, and that if they be fortunate in weather it will do Taylor far more good than Italy has done.

The Communion week is here just over. M—— of B—— preached on Thursday and M—— of S—— last night, and the sermons of both

were excellent. It is a comfort to know that so many of the younger men of the Church are most decidedly not of the dry, negative sort, but have real spiritual insight and sensibility.

Our kindest regards to Mrs Charteris and Miss Anderson and yourself.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT FLINT.

Three years later Flint writes to Charteris on his resignation.

JOHNSTONE LODGE,  
CRAIGMILLAR PARK, EDINBURGH,  
*24th June 1898.*

MY DEAR CHARTERIS,—I have heard to-day from Richardson the gardener that you had met with a bad accident. I earnestly hope that he may have been wholly misinformed, or that the report has been at least greatly exaggerated, and that you will be all right in a day or so.

I have not grieved over your resignation of the Chair, because I believed that a long, active, and valuable stretch of life lay before you, and that you could spend your time, both more pleasantly and usefully, free from all professional restraints.

Such is my faith. In my mind's eye I see you turning—after a good long holiday of course—to labours manifold, and more even than 22 Queen Street will approve of; and would humbly venture to remind you that you have still a duty to Biblical Criticism to perform, the bringing out of a new edition of “*Canonicity*.” Don't let any enterprising Yankee rob you of the honour due to you in connection therewith.

We are leaving here on Thursday or Friday for Braeside, Charles-town-on-Forth, intending to remain just a month.

Hoping to hear, as soon as convenient, good news from you, and with kindest regards to Mrs Charteris, I am, my dear Charteris, yours very truly,

R. FLINT.

Professor Campbell Fraser and Flint had, philosophically and theologically, much in common, and a very warm friendship existed between them. When I asked Dr Fraser kindly to forward to me any of Flint's letters that he might have in his possession, he wrote to me as follows :

34 MELVILLE STREET,  
EDINBURGH,  
11 December, 1912.

DEAR DR MACMILLAN,—My intercourse with Professor Flint was almost entirely in conversation, so that I have no letters of much interest to send to you. I enclose the few which I have found.

I regard his friendship as among the most elevating influences with which I have been favoured in a life of almost ninety-four years, but as I am not allowed to indulge in correspondence I cannot now say more. I am glad to think that his biography is in good hands. Forgive this scrap.—Yours very truly,

A. CAMPBELL FRASER.

Two of the letters which Dr Fraser sent me refer to the interest which Flint took in Dr Fraser's visit to Holland in 1895. Flint, who knew a number of the Dutch professors, forwarded introductions to them, to Dr Fraser. Writing from Edinburgh on the 9th May 1895, he says :

MY DEAR DR FRASER,—I hope my note of introduction to Dr Tiele will reach Girton before you leave it.

Finding myself not very well last week I went to Tweedsmuir and have returned much refreshed. I enjoyed immensely its hills, glens, and valleys.

You are sure to like Holland, although you are not likely to see a decent hill, glen, or burn in it.

Leyden is an immensely interesting town. Are you to be in Utrecht? If so, I can give you a note of introduction to Professor Van der Wyck, one of the kindest and most genial souls I have ever met. He, I am sure, would be delighted to introduce you to Dr Beets; perhaps the most interesting, illustrious, and beloved man in Holland. Both Van der Wyck and Beets were at our Ter-Centenary. Both speak English well, Beets admirably.

My sister had to telegraph Mrs Fraser, as she could not write, owing to having had her right hand bitten by a cat in saving it from a dog. The hand is now nearly better, but still very stiff. With our kindest regards to you both, I am, my dear Dr Fraser, yours very truly,

R. FLINT.

In the next letter he makes an appreciative reference to Professor MacEwen's "Life of Cairns."

EDINBURGH, 13th May, 1895.

MY DEAR DR FRASER,—From what you say as to Van der Wyck, I fear that Madame Van der Wyck may be ill. I hope it may not be so, as anything serious in that direction would be sure to tell very severely on him. Your visit to Utrecht could not fail to be much brighter if the Van der Wycks were there and well. Hastie was greatly pleased by their kindness.

I enclose a note of introduction to Dr Beets, although rather afraid that he may deem it somewhat presumptuous.

Wishing you much enjoyment of Holland, and with kind regards to you all, yours very truly,

R. FLINT.

P.S.—I have got to the length of the 589 page of the “Life of Cairns.” What a noble life it was! I am deeply glad that MacEwen has produced so worthy a memorial of it.

R. F.

Flint, as it may be recollected, made a tour of the chief towns in Holland in 1883, and it was very probably on that visit that he made the acquaintance of the distinguished men to whom he introduced Professor Fraser, and of others. That acquaintanceship, in the case of certain of them, ripened into a friendship through their presence at the Ter-Centenary Celebrations the following year. Writing to his sister from the Hague on the 29th May 1883, he gives a very pleasing picture of Holland, which it is quite clear agreeably impressed him. “The canals,” he remarks,

are in general remarkably pleasing from their banks being so green with grass or finely done up with stone walls, while the trees run all along them and the streets are as if newly washed. The country round is very pretty, and, I imagine, thoroughly Dutch. If so, there is no need to speak of Dutch farming in contrast with our own. The whole thing is different. It is not what we would call farming at all, it is gardening and dairying all through. . . . I never saw a place where smoking was so universal as in Delft. Every man or boy in the street has a cigar or pipe—most common a cigar. It is to be hoped that they do not smoke so much upon other days as on Sundays. The pronunciation is laughably Scotch. In going along the canal bank I was startled to hear what I thought for the moment

a "randy" Scotch wife, screaming to her bairns whose conduct was not pleasing her—"What in the world are ye"; it was her way of pronouncing "wat in der wereld," etc. The nearness of the Scotch to the Dutch only comes out when the Dutch is heard spoken.

But while interesting himself, as was his wont, in the country, its institutions and its people, he was desirous of meeting with its representative and learned men; so he tells his sister in writing to her from Leyden, on 31st May, that he had an "invitation to tea for tomorrow from Professor Tiele, and I think I should accept it as I am likely to learn something from him regarding the Dutch university system." Writing to her on the following day, he says: "I called yesterday evening on Professor Kuenen and had a cup of tea and a very long and interesting talk with him. To-night, as I told you, I have to take tea with Professor Tiele. He has called twice, but I had been out on both occasions. To-day I have seen the Senatus Hall of the University, which has got a wonderfully interesting collection of portraits of famous professors from its founding. I dare say there is nowhere so interesting a collection of portraits in so small a space." And on the 2nd of June, in a letter to his sister, he says: "Last evening I had a long talk with Professor Tiele." On 5th June he was in Amsterdam, and writes in the evening: "I went out and called upon Professor Hoekstra. He knows hardly any conversational English, but with German we got on very well." Two days afterwards we find him in Utrecht, latterly the home of his friend, Van der Wyck.

The two Dutchmen with whom Flint was most intimate were Professors Van der Wyck and Tiele. Flint, as we have just seen, made their acquaintance on his visit to Holland, but he was in correspondence with them previous to this date, and many letters



MISS FLINT





passed between him and them. Van der Wyck was a delegate to the Ter-Centenary Celebrations when he received the degree of LL.D. He then renewed his intercourse with Flint, and he frequently refers in subsequent correspondence to the great kindness shown to him by the Edinburgh Professor and the lasting enjoyment which his visit gave him. Writing shortly after his return home to Groningen, on 27th May 1884, he says :

You will allow me to thank you and your sister also for what you have kindly contributed to enhance the interest and enjoyment of my sojourn in Edinburgh. I can assure you that I will never forget the days that I passed among you and that I will be happy to meet you and some of your colleagues again.

Six years afterwards (1890), he sends a New Year's greeting to Flint and to his sister, adding : " I was happy to see that you don't forget me. God bless you both in the New Year." And in one of the last letters which Flint received from him, dated the 23rd December 1896, he refers to his retirement and adds :

I send to you and your dear sister my best wishes for the coming year. It would be a great joy to me to see you again before my death, but then you should come over to Holland, for there is no chance of my coming over again to Scotland.

Tiele was a Professor at Leyden. He was the great authority on Comparative Religion. The Senatus of Edinburgh University, chiefly through the influence of Flint, chose him as one of its Gifford Lecturers. He was in Edinburgh in 1895 delivering his course, and Flint and he naturally saw much of one another. Tiele's character, as a man, was equal to his eminence as a scholar, and in his many letters to Flint one sees the fine nature of the man. His life was not a long one. He died some years before Flint.

Of Flint's German and Italian friends who shared his hospitality at Johnstone Lodge, two must be specially mentioned, Professors Otto Pfleiderer of Berlin, and Diodato Liroy of Naples. Flint's opinion of the Germans and his attitude towards German thought have been already indicated. It must be admitted that while he knew many of the leading thinkers, only one or two of them can be said to have been his friends. Of these, Lipsius of Jena and Pfleiderer may be mentioned. Flint and Lipsius never met, but Pfleiderer, when Gifford Lecturer at Edinburgh, was a frequent guest at Flint's house, and from his letters, already quoted, one can easily see the sincere admiration and respect he had for him. It is significant that when Dr Charteris and others delivered a series of lectures as an answer to Pfleiderer's Gifford Lectures, which they believed to savour of heresy, Flint, who was asked to be a party to the movement, declined to have anything to do with it. He was not frightened by the speculations of his friend or by his critical attitude towards the Scriptures. He did not believe that the cause of truth was advanced by suppression.

Italian scholars were deeply interested in Flint's "Philosophy of History," which they knew chiefly through the French translation of M. Carrau. It was a subject that seemed to interest them, and Flint's promise to deal with Italy as he had done with France and Germany raised their hopes, and numerous letters were received by him from Italian thinkers asking when the promised volume was to appear. His ample references to Vico in his lectures at the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, and certain passages in the "Philosophy of History" itself whetted their intellectual appetite; and finally his book on "Vico" made his name familiar to all Italian scholars. He himself

looked forward, again, and again to a visit to Italy, which, unfortunately, he was never able to compass. Indeed, there is no record of him having been abroad after the year 1883. But there can be no doubt that a visit to Italy was one of the dreams of his life which he can have been prevented from realising, only by the arduous tasks to which he set himself, summer after summer. In summer he wrote his books, and the series that appeared after 1883 was certainly of a kind to engross all his time and energies. But one can see his liking for the warm-hearted Italians and his deep appreciation of their literature and their efforts towards freedom and a conscious national life.

Flint's chief foreign correspondent, if one may judge by the number of letters which he received from him, was Diodato Lioy, Professor in the University of Naples. He was among the first to recognise the learning and ability of Flint and the value and significance of his volume on the "Philosophy of History." Flint must have equally appreciated Lioy's own work, for he arranged for the translation of the Italian professor's "The Philosophy of Right" into English. The work was entrusted to Hastie, and it appeared in two volumes in 1891. Lioy took this as a great compliment and was delighted with the manner in which the work was translated and the reception which it received at the hands of English scholars. Writing to Flint on the 28th May 1891, he says :

I have read several accounts of the English translation of my "Filosofia del Dritto" with flattering hints both to author and translator. Mr Hastie has fully succeeded; his perfect interpretation proves the eminent scholar. I can never forget that I am mostly indebted to you for all such honour.

Lioy visited Edinburgh in 1894 to receive the degree of LL.D. He was warmly welcomed by Flint and

entertained by him at his house at Craigmillar Park. And the Italian on his return home is profuse in his thanks and gratitude.

NAPLES, *17th August, 1894.*

MOST ESTEEMED FRIEND,—I am again in the bosom of my family after an absence of twenty-five days, which I shall remember as among the happiest of my life, since they have procured me the personal acquaintance of yourself and of other illustrious colleagues. May it be all my care to render myself worthy of them, by prosecuting with alacrity the search for truth.

Liroy took great pleasure in keeping Flint well posted up in Italian literature. He would send new books and magazines, dealing chiefly with philosophical subjects, and every year, as the day came round, he wrote to Flint in commemoration of his visit to him.

NAPLES, *29th July, 1901.*

GENTILISSIMO AMICO,—In the impending day of the 7th Anniversary of my unforgettable visit, I cannot help recalling myself to your kind remembrance, begging you to accept my most cordial greetings; but all the circumstances, kindnesses and marks of friendship daily return to my memory. It seems to me as if it were all a matter of only a few days ago. With all kind regards, I remain, dear Professor, yours sincerely,

DIODATO LIROY.

The men, however, with whom Flint was on the most cordial terms of friendship were the four distinguished delegates who were his guests at the Ter-Centenary Celebrations of his University in 1884; Canon Westcott, afterwards Bishop of Durham, Dr Edwin Hatch of Oxford, and MM. Caro and Mézières of Paris. Miss Flint still speaks of that delightful occasion and the great pleasure which her brother had in the society and conversation of his friends. Many letters must have passed between him and them in after years, and quite a number of theirs has been preserved. The two Englishmen, Westcott and Hatch, stood in the very

front rank of English scholarship, and they found in Flint a peer worthy of their friendship. The same can be said of his two French guests. He was fortunate in his choice, and he invited them with a full knowledge, not only of their ability, but also of their character and disposition. Flint, in seeing his friends off at the railway station, after the festivities were all over, was somehow accidentally parted from Dr Westcott and failed to bid him farewell. This drew from him a letter in which he makes an interesting reference to the late Dr Matheson :

JOHNSTONE LODGE, CRAIGMILLAR PARK,  
EDINBURGH, *April 23rd*, 1884.

MY DEAR DR WESTCOTT,—When I left you at the station on Saturday, it was to seek our French friends, and I was quite perplexed on coming back soon after, that you were not to be found. But your kind letter has entirely relieved me. In spirit I trust we shall never part.

I cannot say how much I have enjoyed your visit, nor how much I feel indebted to you. For one thing, Browning I have hitherto very much ignored. Henceforth I shall study him as I have done Wordsworth and with the hope of being not too old to learn from him. Even to St John I shall go with new sympathy. Perhaps in some not distant day we shall be allowed to meet and have a long quiet talk on the life that is, and is to be, and on what those divinely taught can teach us about it. Your kind gifts have caused great pleasure to my sister and me ; she will be as glad as myself at any time to see you again and would be delighted to make the acquaintance of Mrs Westcott and family.

Preaching on Sabbath has almost cured me of my soreness of throat. I enjoyed my visit to Bathgate, especially as I met at the Manse, Dr Matheson of Innellan—a very interesting man. He is quite blind, yet a fresh and most effective preacher, and the author of an admirable book on “The Growth of the Spirit of Christianity.” My dear Dr Westcott, adieu, yours very affectly.,

R. FLINT.

Dr Westcott kept pressing Flint to visit him at Westminster and to accept shelter within the “old monastery

wall which just encloses our house," and in a letter to him two years after his visit to Edinburgh recalls with pleasure that happy time :

2 ABBEY GARDEN,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W., *June 12th*, 1886.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR FLINT,—Your most kind message of good wishes calls up again what was, I think, the most delightful episode in my life. Again and again I have longed to renew the conversations which we began, and time goes on swiftly and work grows heavier and one's strength less. I wish that you could see Westminster while I am here. Will you offer my kindest remembrances to Miss Flint, and believe me to be—Ever yours affectionately,

B. F. WESTCOTT.

Dr Westcott after he became Bishop of Durham was most desirous that Flint should visit him and give an address on the subject of the "unemployed" to the association through which the Bishop was working to secure a better understanding between employer and employed. Flint was unable to accept the invitation at the time, and explains the reasons in the following letter :

JOHNSTONE LODGE, CRAIGMILLAR PARK,  
EDINBURGH, *12th February* 1895.

MY DEAR BISHOP WESTCOTT,—There is no one whose favourable opinion of "Socialism" could give me more pleasure than your own. I have read eagerly almost all, I think, that you have written regarding society and social questions, and I entirely believe that the point of view from which you regard them is the one from which they can be far most truly and profitably contemplated. While, unfortunately, it is also the one which there are fewest to occupy.

Many thanks for kindly sending me your address on the "Co-operative Ideal." I have read it with great delight. The precious moral elements in the "Ideal" could not have been more beautifully and profitably indicated.

I am sure I should very much enjoy a visit to you at Bishop Auckland, but I fear that it will not be possible for me to be with you in June or July or during the coming summer. I am in very much need of a rather lengthened rest. The last two summers,

“Historical Philosophy” and “Socialism” left me none, and in consequence, Theology, College Committees, and unavoidable public engagements have made the last two winters more than usually heavy. The present winter has been much the worst, as for the greater part of it, I have been the sole Professor in our Divinity Faculty. Poor Professor Dobie was killed in the Newtonmore railway accident, and both Drs Charteris and Taylor have had to get leave of absence in consequence of the state of their health.

My intention is to take as much play as I can during the coming summer. I must work at “Agnosticism,” and which I had hoped to publish years ago, but I must drop as far as possible everything else for a short time. I wish I had come to the resolution earlier as it would have prevented me making some engagements which will take up most of June.

You must, I fear, my dear Dr Westcott, think it very foolish and wrong of me to write in this lugubrious and grumbling tone. My work must be very slight indeed in comparison with what you are daily doing and what, I sincerely rejoice, God has given you strength so nobly to do.

Perhaps, next summer, if all be well, I may come and see you, and see one of your gatherings of Durham employers and employed. There are many topics on which I should gladly have a talk with you, and gladly would I see you again, no matter how humble might be the topic of our conversation.

My sister joins me in kindest remembrances.—Believe me, my dear Bishop Westcott, Yours ever very truly,

R. FLINT.

Two days later the Bishop replies to Flint’s letter :

AUCKLAND CASTLE,  
BISHOP AUCKLAND, *February 14th*, 1895.

MY DEAR DR FLINT,—Let me thank you for your most kind letter. We should all have been most glad if you could have introduced the subject of the “Unemployed,” but I can well understand how you must need rest. The range of reading covered by “Socialism” not to speak of the “History” amazes me. Perhaps you may be able to take a fragment of rest here. As a general rule I take a change of six weeks from the beginning of August, returning for the ordination Sept. 18-21. After this to the end of the month I expect to be free, if you could fit that time in to the return from your holiday. Your term begins, I think, in October.

I look back to my visit to Edinburgh as perhaps the brightest episode in my life, and ever since I have longed to continue some of the conversations which we began.—Ever yours affectly.,

B. F. D.

Bishop Westcott's son, with whom I corresponded in the hope of receiving from him any letters that Flint may have written to his father, states in his reply the opinion which the Bishop held of the subject of this Biography. It is a very high estimate indeed, and coming from such a man as Dr Westcott, who must in his day have met the most distinguished men among his contemporaries in Church and State, in Science and in Literature, it is of unique value.

THE CLOSE,

NORWICH, *December 22nd*, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—My brother Arthur who wrote my father's "Life" will have any letters of Dr Flint that may have been preserved. I have written to him. I can only make one little contribution to your labour of love. That is, I have heard my father affirm, with great deliberation, that Professor Flint impressed him as being undoubtedly the most able man he ever met. He was prodigiously taken with him the first time they met at Edinburgh, that was on the happy occasion when that ancient University raised him to their Doctorate—an honour he appreciated most highly all his life.—I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

B. F. WESTCOTT.

Dr Hatch placed an equally high value on Flint's friendship, and he thus replies to an invitation from Flint, asking him to stay with him again while on a visit to Edinburgh, as a preacher before the University.

MARCHFIELD,

OXFORD, *April 15th*, 1886.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR FLINT,—I write with some shame of face because I know that I ought to have written you before. I should much have liked to stay with you again. It has always been so very pleasant to stay with you. But the Principal's invitation to stay with him came together with the invitation to preach and the two invitations were accepted at the same time.



Writing to Flint two years later from Vienna, July 15, 1888, he says :

I am grieved that so long a time has passed without our meeting. If you come south this summer it would be a very great pleasure to see you at my Rectory in Essex, where I expect to be all August and September, and your sister too, if she travels with you. Almost any time would be convenient, for although we are expecting other friends we have more than one room to spare.—With kind regards to your sister, always sincerely yours,

EDWIN HATCH.

Flint had many friends among American scholars, but the two who were most intimate with him were Dr Fisher of Yale and Dr Briggs of New York. They both visited him in Edinburgh and kept their friendship green by frequent correspondence. But, next to Westcott, the two men to whom Flint seems to have been most attached were Mézières and Caro of Paris. It will be recollected that in view of the Ter-Centenary Celebrations, Flint was anxious that both men should be honoured with the Doctorate of Edinburgh University, and in speaking of Caro under the Eclectic School in his "Philosophy of History in France," he declared that "spiritual philosophy has had no more accomplished expositor and defender in France during the present generation than the late M. Caro. . . . He was brilliant alike as a lecturer and a writer. Hardly in any age has there appeared so consummate a master of the Art of philosophical polemic. The lucidity and grace, the exquisite blending of naturalness and refinement, and the perfect accordance of thought and feeling with their expression, which characterise all his compositions, are reflections of the harmony and beauty of his personality, expressions of the light and sweetness of a most loveable character."

This was written after Caro's death, and, of course,

after his visit to Flint in Edinburgh, and is an expression of the estimate which Flint formed of him in the intimacy of his own home as much as that which was derived from a study of his writings. Caro's regard and admiration for Flint were equally strong, and like his fellow-guests at the Ter-Centenary Celebrations, he carried the fondest remembrances of that happy time across the Channel and to his grave. Jules Simon, writing to Flint from Paris on July 6th, 1884, refers to this:

Most of the Members of the Institute who assisted at your Centenary and notably Messrs Pasteur, Caro and Gréard, are old pupils of mine. M. Caro, in particular, has spoken to me of how much he has to say in praise of your hospitality.

M. Caro, on receiving Flint's invitation to stay with him, hesitated somewhat, because of his ignorance of colloquial English.

PARIS, 17th March, 1884.

MONSIEUR ET CHER CONFRÈRE,—Your very kind and gracious invitation has given me all the greater pleasure, because I know your works and because on many points I share your views.

My pleasure at being your guest would have been unmingled if I had not to confess to you that I do not speak English. I read it, but I neither speak nor understand it. I have a certain scruple in imposing upon you the burden of an "involuntary mute," and I cannot console myself easily to the thought of losing this opportunity of speaking with one whom English Philosophy and the University of Edinburgh honour.—Believe me, etc.,

E. CARO.

After his return to Paris, Caro wrote to Flint, and his letter clearly indicates that Flint must have had a useful command of colloquial French, for their intercourse would seem to have been close and stimulating.

PARIS, 17th May, 1884.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—I have asked my publisher, M. Hachette, to send you some of my latest publications. I should like to con-

tinue the friendly intercourse of mind and heart that I inaugurated with you, and that I hope much to continue.

Will you ask Mademoiselle, your sister, to accept my most respectful souvenirs?—Yours faithfully,  
E. CARO.

The last to be mentioned of Flint's guests on this memorable occasion is M. Alfred Mézières. He was a member of the French Academy and of the Chamber of Deputies. He was also Professor of Foreign Literature in the Academie de Paris, Université de France; a Linguist, Scholar and Critic; well known for his work on Petrarch and many other writings. Writing to Flint on his return to Paris, he exclaims: "You happy men who continue in your University Chairs"; and he contrasts their lot with the "agitated life of a politician," and five years later he again writes to Flint.

CHAMBRE DES DEPUTES,  
*April 16, 1899.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received with a grateful mind some good news of you and of your sister. I cannot forget the most pleasant days I passed in your house a few years ago. Alas; our poor friend Caro is gone; he was so full of life, so clever and so young. His death is even yet for me a constant cause of sorrow. We have lost also with great sadness, M. Carrau, your young and amiable translator. It is the destiny of old men to lose their most devoted friends.

I would be very glad to be your guide in our Exhibition, and I beg you not to put off your visit to France till next year.—With the most grateful and devoted respects to your sister,—believe me, my dear friend, yours truly,  
A. MÉZIÈRES.

The next and last letter of the warm-hearted Frenchman acknowledges Flint's gift of his "Agnosticism."

PARIS, *March, 1903.*

DEAR AND EXCELLENT CONFRÈRE,—Thanks for having sent me your very fine work on "Agnosticism." It would have been impossible to have made it clearer, more powerful, and better than you have done. You have succeeded in presenting the subject under all its aspects, with admirable impartiality. One feels at the same time in every page the high moral inspiration which guides you.

There is a certain emotion under your reasoning. I thank you and congratulate you, and often think of the charming hours I passed with you under your roof. I would like to offer you in Paris the same hospitality which was so kindly given to me.—With my best regards to Mademoiselle Flint,

A. MÉZIÈRES.

Mézières refers with deep regret to the death of Carrau whom he describes to Flint as “your young and gentle translator.” Flint classes Carrau along with Caro under the Eclectic School, and he speaks of him in the most affectionate terms. After discussing the views of Caro, he says: “I pass to another author whose memory is also dear to me, the late M. Ludovic Carrau. His life was brief but fruitful. . . . His works testify to the thoroughness of his studies, the amplitude and accuracy of his information, and the clearness, strength, and acuteness of his understanding.” Flint and Carrau never met, but many letters passed between them, and the younger man always addressed Flint in the tone of a disciple. Carrau, who was professor in the Faculty of Letters, Besançon, reports to Flint his progress with the translation which he was making of his “Philosophy of History.”

BESANÇON,

22nd January, 1877.

. . . I have already translated the first book of your work. That is to say, all the part which concerns France, and the first chapters of the second book. As I go on, I appreciate more and more the solid and luminous learning, the temperate, impartial, and penetrating criticisms and the irrefragable methods which characterise this fine work.

The printing of my translation ought to begin in the course of February and will doubtless be finished by the end of April. If you have any slight change to introduce into your text, I shall be grateful if you will let me know within the next fortnight, that is to say before the printing of the first sheets.

Will you allow me to ask you to be good enough to send me the translation in French of the phrase which concludes page 369; “on this ground, etc.”? The words, “under mosaic economy,” have given me, I confess, some trouble.

Writing again to Flint on 9th August 1879, he gives an account of his literary undertakings and praises highly Flint's "Anti-Theistic Theories," a copy of which he had just received, and adds a word of condolence to Flint on the death of his mother, and tells his friend at the same time of his own sad bereavements :

I sympathise deeply with you in the sad loss you have sustained. I myself during the last year, within six months, lost my father and mother, and this double blow makes my sympathy with you in your sorrow all the deeper.

He rejoices to tell Flint on the 18th of October 1877, of the completion of his translation of the "Philosophy of History."

The translation of your "Philosophy of History" is at last completed and will form two volumes. The first will appear in the beginning of December. I intend to add a short Preface, and I shall be obliged if you will send me some information on your career as a professor and a writer. This cannot fail to interest the French people. Will you likewise tell me when the second volume on Italy and England may be looked for? I am looking forward to it with lively impatience, and will translate it like the first.—Respectfully and faithfully yours,

M. CARRAU.

Writing after the return of the delegates to the Ter-Centenary Celebrations, he says : "My eminent master, M. E. Caro, tells me that you had long talks together at Edinburgh in the month of April. I was happy to get good news from him of your health," and in May 1888, he wrote what must have been his last letter to Flint :

I have been highly honoured in receiving your kind letter and I send you my kind thanks for the two remarkable articles "Theology" and "Theism" you have sent me. I have read them with interest and profit. I am waiting with great impatience for the continuation of your fine work on the "Philosophy of History." That which has already appeared gives a high idea of that which you are preparing on Italy and on England.

I shall be very happy to make acquaintance with your studies on agnosticism. It is a subject to which I have given much attention, and I have a great wish to know what you think on it.

I am very grateful for your favourable appreciation of my recent work on "Religious Philosophy in England." From a master like you this judgment is a testimony of which I may be proud.

I desire with all my heart to know the moment when you will come to France, for in summer I live in Normandy and I usually travel in September and October. But I will do all in my power not to miss the honour of your visit, and I look forward to being able to visit you in Scotland.

Alas! this was not to be. The two friends, the master and the disciple, were fated never to meet on this side of the grave.

Flint had no more ardent admirer than Madame Quinet, the widow of Edgar Quinet, whose life and work are noticed by him in the first and second editions of his "Philosophy of History." Madame Quinet was his second wife, and, as Flint notes in the 1874 edition, was a Roumanian. She was absolutely devoted to the memory of her husband and was grateful to Flint for the generous terms in which he spoke about him. Flint classes Quinet along with Jules Michelet in the Democratic Historical School, and he declares that in them "democracy had two fearless, zealous, and brilliant champions. The name of either can hardly be pronounced without recalling that of the other, as for half a century they were close companions in arms and intimately bound to each other by joy, sorrow and labour, the same triumphs and defeats, the same convictions and hopes. Their lives were so associated that death could not divide them." And of Quinet himself, who died on the 26th March 1875, he observes: "Few have lived in any age a life so singularly unselfish, so conspicuously pure and high in aims, so earnest in

endeavours, so fruitful in works, and so profoundly religious in spirit."

Madame Quinet's first letter to Flint was written shortly after Carrau's translation into French of the "Philosophy of History" appeared. She was deeply impressed by Flint's estimate and appreciation of her husband and wrote to thank him :

PARIS,

28th January, 1878.

SIR,—I read with emotion the judgment which a celebrated Professor, one of the noblest characters of great and free England, has passed on Edgar Quinet. That homage seems to me, not only to be an act of justice to that pure and dear memory, but also a true service rendered to the youth of France.

The friends of truth and political rectitude read you with an infinite joy. I could fill many pages if I were to express the pleasure with which your fine work has inspired me.

Eighteen years afterwards Madame Quinet found herself in Edinburgh and one of the persons she was most anxious to meet was Flint. So she writes to him proposing a visit :

ROTHESAY PLACE,

EDINBURGH, 4th August, 1896.

SIR,—It is many years ago, it was, I think, in 1878 (but to me it is like yesterday) since I read an eloquent work of M. Flint on the "Philosophy of History" in which he rendered shining justice to Edgar Quinet. I read it, and wrote to thank him, and he sent me a kind reply.

I cannot find myself in Edinburgh, that city illustrious for its learning and admirable for its picturesque situation, without seeking to meet M. Flint. If he is in town I beg him to mention the day and hour when he can receive me. I remain here till the end of the week.

The meeting took place, and Flint and his sister showed Madame Quinet every kindness and attention. She was so delighted with their hospitality and Flint's character and personality, that in her subsequent letters

to him she writes with an enthusiasm and emotion that Scottish ladies, who exercise a stronger control over their feelings, might misunderstand. This may be accounted for by her nationality and her gratitude to one who was indeed worthy of all admiration, and whose services to the memory of her late husband, to whom she was absolutely devoted, she could not appraise too highly. Flint had the gallant and courteous bearing of the true gentleman, and his pure and sincere nature drew to him all who shared, in however limited a degree, the main features of his own character, and who were ready to appreciate and respond to the finest traits of a noble manhood. Between him and his French friends in particular, there was a cordiality of sentiment which can only be explained by a similarity of disposition.

MELROSE,  
24th August, 1896.

DEAR M. FLINT,—It is to you that I would like to address my first letter from Paris, to tell you at once of my enthusiasm for Scotland and the tender souvenir I preserve of your reception. I have prolonged my stay at Melrose at the entreaty of my friends who remind me of winter and its miseries, and wish me to fortify myself against them in the country of Walter Scott. If I might judge of all Scotland by what my eyes have seen, no country is happier or more prosperous. But it is of Edinburgh, of Craigmillar Park, that I guard the most cherished impression. How much at home I felt with you and your sister at that hospitable table, and our conversation before the window from which we could see the Castle of Marie !

You have, dear M. Flint, a voice deep and moving, which vibrates for long in the hearts of those who hear you. Has no one yet told you so ? It may be an illusion, but when you spoke to me of Edgar Quinet, it was as one who well understood what it is to love and to awaken love in others. . . .

How often I shall speak of you with those who love me. I shall be often in spirit by your fireside, and all this winter will be less hard for me by reason of souvenirs of Edinburgh, St Andrews, and Melrose. I should like to return next year and get to know the



Highlands. This year, Scotland, historical and intellectual, has taken me captive ; it will be completed, I hope, in 1897, by its picturesque beauties. I would be very grateful to you if you would give me the name of a book, or better, of a *brochure*, which would make me acquainted with an institution for the education of young girls in Scotland. It would be of service in connection with my school—"Edgar Quinet."

The lunch-bell interrupts this letter. Adieu et au revoir, cher Monsieur et Ami,

VVE. EDGAR QUINET.

Flint evidently felt somewhat overwhelmed by Madame Quinet's gratitude and was so embarrassed as to find it difficult to acknowledge it. In any case he maintained silence, as the following letter from Madame Quinet clearly shows :

PARIS,  
12th October, 1896.

DEAR AND REVERED M. FLINT,—Have you not received the letter I wrote to you from Melrose about two months ago ? I told you, and I repeat it again, the hours I passed with you is my dearest souvenir of Scotland.

Are you absent from Craigmillar Park ? Are you waiting for my return to Paris before sending me the precious volumes you have been good enough to promise ? I am looking for them with gratitude. They will give me the illusion of being still in your interesting and honoured society, and will fortify my philosophy, of which I have great need, at the threshold of winter and in the midst of work which gives me so much to think of. Cordial salutations to your dear sister and with affectionate esteem,

VVE. EDGAR QUINET.

Madame Quinet wrote many letters to Flint full of intelligence and interest, discussing books, the political situation in France, and the general European outlook. She shared her late husband's views and felt despondent at what she regarded as the reactionary tendencies of the times. But her visit to Craigmillar Park ever remained, as in the case of most of Flint's other friends, a red-letter event in her life ; and each year, as the day

came round, she remembered it with deep gratitude. It is to this she refers in one of her last letters to Flint :

BEX, SWITZERLAND,  
*August, 1898.*

DEAR M. FLINT,—To-day, it is two years since I was with you at Craigmillar. It is so dear an anniversary to me that I wish to keep it as long as I live. I felt myself in the region of that moral life which Edgar Quinet made indispensable for me, and that one finds so rarely in this feverish, bustling, troublesome world.

One would give much to have had the privilege, which Madame Quinet and Flint's other friends so much valued, of sitting at his hospitable table or at his study fireside and listening to and sharing in the conversation of himself and his guests. I am fortunate in being able to give at first hand the impressions and reminiscences of three distinguished writers who enjoyed this privilege. The first of them is the talented and well-known authoress, Annie S. Swan (Mrs Burnett Smith), who in her early married life and whilst still struggling into fame as a writer, gained the friendship of Flint and of his sister. She thus records her recollections :

“ I first met Professor Flint in Edinburgh, long ago in the early years of my married life. We were then living in a very modest flat on the south side, a young couple possessed of very little of this world's goods, though rich in hope and courage. We were also blessed with an inner circle of very kind and intimate friends, who did much to enrich life and make it interesting.

“ One of these, a dear lady of the old régime, belonging to an old Fifeshire family, took me first to Professor Flint's house at Craigmillar Park. The occasion was one of some importance, because numerous guests

were assembled. I was quiet, as befitted an obscure stranger in distinguished company, for which reason no doubt, I was singled out for special attention by the host, a spare figure of a man, with a strong serious face, and a pair of eyes which struck me then, and which I have never forgotten. They were a very wonderful kind of eyes, so deep and full of feeling, so ready to flash and scintillate, now with irresistible fun, as some good story either old or new rolled from his lips, or with righteous rage, perhaps over some wrong or injustice.

“ Yet, I think, in repose they were a little sad, the eyes of a man who looked into the deep heart of life, and knew its sorrow as well as its joy. His usual manner was very quiet, always cordial, yet a little shrinking. He talked much to me that day, asking many questions about my life and the literary work, not long begun, and drawing from me easily all he wished to know.

“ That was the beginning of a friendship with Professor Flint and his sister, which is certainly one of the most precious memories of my Edinburgh life. The tea-party was followed up by numerous other invitations to functions at which there were always guests worth meeting, and much stimulating talk. How truly my chaperon and introducer remarked as we left the house: “ It will be very good for you to go there. They are delightful, and it will always be worth while.” Worth while ! ah, indeed it was !

“ The Flints then entertained a good deal on a lavish scale, and most distinguished visitors to Edinburgh were to be met at their house. But though they had such a wide circle of interesting friends, the obscure couple aforesaid were seldom forgotten. The value of such opportunities to those interested in the intellectual life, starving for its sustenance, cannot be over-estimated.

Even at this late date I can hardly write of it without tears.

“Two things stand out in my memory of Professor Flint, his delightful cordiality of manner, and his insatiable love of fun.

“His deep eyes were seldom without a quiet twinkle in them, and his store of gay repartee, of fine though sometimes obscure *bon mots*, was practically inexhaustible. Much of the dinner-table talk was unintelligible to me when the company consisted of philosophers and theologians, but one had always the sense of being with giants, and the opportunity of learning, at least, what vast stores of knowledge there are inside the gates of the intellectual life.

“One thing, I certainly do not recall, a single undignified, ungenerous, or even too critical word regarding the living or the dead.

“The atmosphere was sunny and joyous, always conveying the impression of the larger room.

“At the time of the University Tercentenary celebrations, we met at Craigmillar Park many distinguished guests, German theologians with terrifying names and intellects and the hearts of little children, literary guests too, among them the much-loved Oliver Wendell Holmes. After we migrated to London we had the incomparable joy of receiving Professor Flint and his sister in our home at Hampstead, and he rejoiced because we had ‘arrived’ and achieved most of that on which we had set our minds and hopes in the old Edinburgh days.

“To me, the memory of Professor Flint is not of the great theologian and man of letters, but simply of the friend, always kind and sympathetic, ready to enter into one’s interests, even when they must have seemed small in his eyes.

“And that, I take it, is the hall-mark of the truly great.”

The second is Sir William Robertson Nicoll, the well-known author and journalist, whose admiration for Flint dates from his student days in Aberdeen. Like Bishop Westcott, he has met in his day the most distinguished men of the world of letters. The place which he gives Flint is a very high one, and the few conversations he had with him made a lasting impression.

“I first heard Professor Flint when he was preaching to students in the East Church, Aberdeen. I was a boy of fourteen in my first year at the University. There was a great crowd, and the scene was extremely impressive. The sermon has been printed, and is a very able and thoughtful production, but the power of it was in the glowing intensity and burning eloquence of the preacher. The hearers were carried off their feet by the torrent of passion. Now and then the preacher checked himself and spoke an ‘aside’ quietly to the students. One of these I remember. He spoke of the plodding, conscientious lad, who had done his very best day by day, and found himself at the end of the session without recognition of any kind. He told us that many of us should be prepared for the discovery that God had not given us many talents, and that he would judge us not according to the number of our talents, but according to the use we made of those committed to our trust.

“As time went on, I followed Professor Flint’s remarkable career with deep interest and sympathy, and shared his indignation at being deprived of a professorship which he could have filled as no one else could. His great series of books appeared one by one, and each

of them made its indelible mark. Gradually the man was disclosed to the public. His special quality was the combination of vast erudition, with the clearest, coolest logic and the most vehement feeling. His universal reading built up rather than dulled the fires of his spirit. When he is writing on great religious themes, there is behind the trenchant, candid, disciplined reasoning a reined-in passion which makes itself felt by those who know anything of his ways. Though, as a rule, he took little part in controversy, when he did he made men feel with astonishment the volcanic fire of his spirit.

“The last time I saw him was just after Professor William James had delivered his famous course of lectures in the University of Edinburgh. Flint had attended all these, and spoke of them with much frankness and a certain sympathy. I do not venture to reproduce his criticism, as I should almost certainly do him injustice. Characteristically he set himself to ‘place’ James, to indicate his true affinities, and he did this with a skill and knowledge which James would have been the first to appreciate. It would not be right to say that Flint was in essential agreement with James.

“In these days I think it worth while to note that this great master of philosophy and theology, this Christian teacher who had faced calmly every theory of the universe, this trained and furnished and illuminated mind adhered firmly to the great truths of the Christian redemption.”

The third is the Rev. Dr Bruce of Banff, one of the best known ministers in the Church of Scotland, and an author of much distinction. He fortunately took notes of a number of the conversations that he had with

Professor Flint, and he has been at the trouble of writing them out for this Biography. Every one knows the value of having recorded the *ipsissima verba* of a great man's talk.

“I had met Professor Flint several times between 1896 and 1900, and had derived from his conversation very great benefit and stimulus. But it was not till 1900 and afterwards that I jotted down in my note-book recollections of these talks. They are Memoranda, mostly of chats round the study fire, either at Craigmillar Park or at Mountjoy Terrace, Musselburgh, only one or two being protracted conversations on the Links that stretch from the mouth of the Esk westwards to Portobello. They were jotted down at first in pencil and afterwards more fully transcribed into my note-book.

“Dr Flint talked best when one carried to him an honest difficulty and asked his help in untying the knot. He was kindness itself, and book after book would be quickly brought from many different bookcases and rooms and staircase shelves, that bore upon the theme and helped to elucidate it. Then he would indicate how far these authors were right and where they were wrong, and after all this explanation and elucidation he would sit down and slowly give one the view that commended itself to his own mind, with sidelights innumerable on the main topic. The extraordinary trouble he put himself to and the patience he showed, until one took it all in, were very characteristic of the man. He was a great theologian and a very able philosopher. But above all he was a most humble and unselfish Christian man.”

#### *The Moral Dynamic*

One of the first talks that I had with him was on the Moral Dynamic and the value in connection with it of Good Habits. I had remarked

how very strong was the tendency which Habit had to produce a hard and wooden type of character. "Yes," he said, "that is true. And Aristotle knew it, and withal he praised Habit he confessed its limitations. But don't forget the helpful side of Habit. It is just as helpful in morals as it is in manners. Persistent practice in the habit of truth speaking is just as needful as continual practice in getting up at the sound of the morning bell. Habit has a very gracious side and we should teach all the young folks to take advantage of it. The religious life is best lived when it has in this way become a second nature. We need a birth from the natural into the spiritual: but we need another birth from the spiritual to the natural. . . . Of course, you must take care that Habit does not become a hard coat of mail, and only a bondage instead of a help. You are right in maintaining that Habit needs to be rehabilitated to meet new needs and totally different circumstances. Habits are terrible Tories and would soon make ethical progress impossible. We all need deep feeling to save us from the deadening effects of even good habits. It needs the grace of God to remove the antinomy."

#### *The Spirit of the Age*

I spent, by invitation, a Monday at Musselburgh, after having on the previous day delivered a Croall Lecture on *The Social Mind of To-day*, in which I had spoken of the Spirit of the Age as socialistic and democratic. He had read a summary of it in the *Scotsman* of the same morning, and his talk took a most wide sweep over the lengths and breadths of this favourite topic. Within those two hours he covered, I should say, probably the whole field brought under purview in Hegel's *History of Philosophy*, touching on all the determinative and organic epochs in the world's progress and on the most formative influences of these epochs. It was the most comprehensive view of historical progress that I ever got. I regret my notes are somewhat paltry.

He began with Indian civilisation, which, when it came to its crest, was full of the conception of human life as a field of continuous suffering. Hence it inculcated the duty of man freeing himself from this painful incubus. Buddhism is inevitably pessimistic and agnostic, and the height of wisdom is found in ridding yourself of life's burden or at least in the attempt to reduce its weight.

On the other hand our Western civilisation (he maintained) stood opposed to this negation of life. According to its valuation, life is a great good, to be strenuously augmented and enriched. We try



to establish the affirmative truth and to demonstrate the value of reality. This Western development had three phases—all to him very interesting.

First, there was the Greek mind, which regarded the world as a *complete work of art*, and spoke of it as an entirely harmonious product, and out of which man was to get boundless enjoyment—so different from the conception of the Buddhist.

Then next came the Christian thought of the Reformation, when men saw reality revealed as a great *Moral Order* of which Calvin made supreme use, as Augustine had previously done, a view which still saturates the religion of Scotland, and has had a worthy history.

Finally, there had now come a revolt against all Determinism. The present generation was growing more disposed to Free Will and Spontaneity, and regarded civilisation as a *great progressive current of life*. In this there was a recrudescence of many vulgar errors and much chaotic theorising. But everywhere one can see a strenuous endeavour after the amelioration of Society. Men no longer try individually to solve the problem. They attack it socially. And if the reconstruction be only on Christian lines who would not wish it well? But he grieved to see modern Protestantism so disrupted and divided. The first duty of the Protestant churches was to heal these divisions and then seek with all their might the salvation and moral welfare of Society.

He also saw with deep regret, concurrently with the social advance, a growing legislative interference with the rights of the individual and the dawning of a dangerous majority-rule in which protesting minorities, even when large and educated, might be crushed down, and legislation might be passed that would speedily issue in Lord Roseberry's "Spoon-fed nation." His foresight now strikes me as having been very keen.

### *Nature's Appeal*

In our walks on the Musselburgh Links and up Eskside we always looked out for the flowers of the season. I would pick up a viola or roeket, or a sea purslane, and ask him to look carefully at the very delicate corolla and the fine thread-like filaments of the stamens and at their two-lobed anthers. He almost always remarked that all natural objects made a very strong, although silent, appeal to him. They seemed to cry from every roadside, "Understand us, interpret us, love us." And then next they seemed to him to say, "Make some use of us, we have a purpose." He could not but

respond to this constant appeal of the beautiful world that confronted him and so loudly demanded to be understood by him.

He would often say he felt it was a religious duty to try to understand the world, and he was sure every man of thought must also feel the appeal, the Hindu as much as the Englishman. That was why religion was so universal. On that side of his being, man was always seeking after the soul of the world and hearing it address him.

He believed that all the nobler religions of the East gave some expression of this experience of revelation by the outside world. We, in Scotland, must get our ideas of revelation widened. There is an implicit theism in Nature which we must make explicit and which teaches us much truth. The old scholastic conception of revelation, as concerned only with doctrine, must give way to the wider one that included the course of history and the teaching of Science. There had been a great educative process ever going on and it was not ended. It was a pity Christian men should depreciate it. Every flower has to me a deep religious meaning. I feel intensely the truth of the stanza :

“ Flower in the crannied wall,  
 I pluck you out of the crannies :  
 I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
 Little flower ; but if I could understand  
 What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
 I should know what God and man is.”

These things help to make every walk to me a means of worship, and every roadside a witness to the divine power and presence. Even these Links may be leaves of a Book of Revelation.

#### *Dangers of Specialism*

Dr Flint had a great admiration for Huxley's frank and ingenious character. He expresses it in the first chapter of his volume on Agnosticism. But some of Huxley's sayings at that time gave him annoyance, in particular one which parodied a verse of Scripture—“ In the beginning was—Hydrogen.” It led to a talk on the desirability of an all-rounded culture which included every part of one's nature. It was only in that way men could see the bearing and inter-relations of all the Sciences. “ I think all physiologists should know Theology,” he said, “ and all mathematicians should make themselves acquainted with Psychology. There's no other way of re-

moving their jealousies and misunderstandings; these spring out of ignorance and create the narrowness and illiberality which do so much harm." He was convinced that the increasing Specialism of to-day led of necessity to one-sided views and to a great rarity among scientific men of well-balanced minds. In the interests of religion and of a true theology he greatly deplored the many evils which he then saw to be almost necessarily attendant in the ever increasing specialisation in Science. He believed it might soon lead to intellectual anarchy of the most injurious kind.

*Partial Knowledge*

It was seldom that Dr Flint spoke of his own deep convictions. But on the occasion of the last walk I had with him on the Links he surprised me by doing so. The talk had turned to Tennyson and the teaching of *In Memoriam* regarding the craving we have for a perfection never reached, and that seems to mock us with continual disappointment. He said at once that his heart revolted against the thought that God should endow man with such kinship to Deity only to deal with him as with a dog in death. It was utterly impossible. How could man

“ . . . Who suffered countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or sealed within the iron hills ? ”

It would beget universal confusion and scepticism if those who had toiled in the grand cause of humanity, up to the last moment of their life, should have to resign their work and pass away for ever from all interest in the noble efforts to which they had devoted all the mental and moral endowments with which their Creator had enriched them. He felt that his own aims might be frustrated and his deepest aspirations be unfulfilled, but he was convinced that this world was shaped by a God of love and righteousness Who would take care that a man's aims counted for something and were precious in God's sight as being of spiritual value. They were an offering laid on God's altar, and He would not mock what we love, but would in another life endorse our assurance that He did here accept the best we could offer Him.

If this were not so, then Providence tortured us with cruel delusions and planted in us ineradicable cravings after the good and the true and the immortal, absurdly out of proportion to the insig-

nificance of our brief life. He was deeply convinced (he added) that the enigma was the result of our fragmentary knowledge of God's great purpose of grace. We know only in part, and partial knowledge led to many misunderstandings. He fell back on the assurance that the Creator was just and His purpose was good, and he was perfectly confident the solution of it would yet come. It would be a grand day when the mists lifted and we saw the whole. The final justification of the Creator was beyond the veil.

Dr Bruce mentions that a number of the conversations which he had with Dr Flint was at Musselburgh, either at his house at Mountjoy Terrace or on the Links. This brings us to the next and what may be called the final stage in the life of Dr Flint, for it was at Musselburgh he resided after his retirement. This event took place at the close of the Session of 1903. It came as a surprise, for Dr Flint had shown no signs of infirm health or of decline in his mental powers. It was, however, no hasty step, for he had contemplated it some years previously, and was only prevented from taking it by the pressure brought to bear upon him by his colleagues in the Faculty of Divinity. But he had been a professor for the long period of thirty-nine years, twelve in St Andrews and twenty-seven in Edinburgh, and, so far as his pension was concerned, he had earned it nine years previously. No one who has followed the course of his life, as recorded in these pages, and given earnest thought to the enormous labour and the extraordinary productivity of that life, will feel surprised at the step which he now took. Few men ever earned their rest more than he; yet it was not to rest or to be idle that he retired from his professorship, but in order that he might have more leisure to finish certain books which he had then in hand, and to undertake new ones. His retirement was regarded everywhere, in the University and all over the country, with the deepest regret, for everyone felt that the loss to the teaching of theology

in Scotland would be irreparable. This feeling found expression in many quarters. The University of Edinburgh and the Church of Scotland, in particular, felt the loss most, and both seized the earliest opportunity of recording their admiration for the man and his work, and their profound regret at his retirement.

The University Court recorded their "deep regret at the severance of Dr Flint's long and honourable connection with the Professoriate and teaching of the University."

They recall with pleasure that, although both the oldest and the youngest of the Scottish Universities would retain his name on the roll of their distinguished teachers, his life's work peculiarly belongs to the University of Edinburgh. They recall with equal satisfaction his efficiency and influence as a professor, his undeviating devotion to study and research in History, Philosophy, and Theology, and the ripe learning and intellectual virility that characterise his writings. These have not only secured for him a unique position among the Scottish Theologians, but an acknowledgment of his eminence and distinction as an author in the Colonies, the United States of America and on the Continent as pronounced as that which has been accorded to him in the country of his birth.

The *Senatus Academicus*, also, recorded in their Minutes their grateful appreciation of the work done by him for the University.

Professor Flint came from the University of St Andrews to this University in 1876 with a great reputation as a philosophic thinker, and during his long connection with the University his reputation has grown and advanced, and by his altogether unusual combination of gifts he has conferred a unique lustre on the University. In his own Chair he has been the *decus columenque* of the Faculty of Divinity, a teacher of unrivalled force and inspiration, winning reverence from his students by the massiveness, the exhaustiveness, the fairness, and the lucidity with which he discussed the weightiest problems of thought and life, and captivating all with the simplicity and charm of his personal character. The *Senatus* desire to acknowledge the services which he rendered to the Library from his rare knowledge

of books, in many languages and on many subjects, the catholicity of spirit with which he discharged the duty of Convener of the Gifford Committee, and the kindly relations which invariably existed between him and his colleagues in all the Faculties.

His own Faculty recorded their warm appreciation of the "splendid services which he had rendered to the study of theology and by the distinction which he had conferred on the Faculty during his twenty-seven years' tenure of the Chair of Divinity."

In length of service he had been surpassed only once in the history of the Chair, in respect of all the highest gifts of a teacher by none. The Faculty recall with pleasure their friendly relations with his as a colleague, and they express their earnest prayer that there may be before him many years of work in the sphere to which he has consecrated his life.

The University was not content simply with recording in its Minutes its appreciation of Flint; it took advantage of a clause in the ordinance which permitted it to give a larger pension to Flint than what he was legally entitled to. His friend, Professor Taylor, anticipated the forwarding of the formal Minute of the University Court with a private note, telling Flint of the unanimous decision.

6 GREENHILL PARK,  
EDINBURGH, 13th July 1903.

MY DEAR FLINT,—There is a bit of news which I have very great pleasure in communicating. The Court at their meeting of this date resolved that your pension, which worked out at the usual scale and data at £388, should be £500. This, of course, is a mere private note, but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of letting you know without a moment's delay.—Ever yours,

M. C. TAYLOR.

Flint received many personal letters of regret at his resignation from his colleagues at the University and his friends in the Church. I shall select one from the

number ; it is from one who also shed lustre upon the University of Edinburgh, who retired about the same time as Flint did and who, like him, has also gone to his rest—Professor Butcher.

27 PALMERSTON PLACE,  
EDINBURGH, *March 20, 1903.*

MY DEAR FLINT,—This is the first leisured moment I have had for some days past, and I can no longer delay saying how much I was affected by the announcement of your intended resignation. You are the most distinguished member of our body, to put the fact bluntly, and your withdrawal from the Chair will be felt all over Scotland and outside this country. Then there is the deep personal regret present to one's mind at not seeing you henceforth at our meetings. The occasions for conversation are few, but even in this transient intercourse there is a pleasure.—Yours very truly,

S. H. BUTCHER.

All the resolutions passed by academic and ecclesiastical bodies, and many of the letters which he received from his friends, conclude with the earnest hope that many years might still be before him in which, freed from professional restraints and responsibilities, he should devote himself to the completing of those works which he had in his mind. But although seven years of life still lay before him, only two or three of them could be thus utilised and, as not unfrequently happens, the leisure that was so much coveted bore less fruit than was anticipated by him and his friends.

## CHAPTER XVI

### LAST YEARS

FLINT's work was now done. He sold his house at Craigmillar Park and retired to Musselburgh in order to have peace and quietness for the production of those books which he was still bent on writing. But all that he was able to publish were two volumes which had already either appeared, for the most part, as magazine articles or had been delivered as lectures on special occasions. These two books were "Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum and the History of Classifications of the Sciences," and "On Theological, Biblical, and other Subjects." The first appeared in 1904 and the second in 1905. The subject of the first volume had interested him from the days when he was a student in Glasgow University. He remarks in the preface: "The author's connection with the subject of his book has been a lengthy one."

When a mere youth in the Glasgow University he joined a number of young men, among whom were representative Canadians, Englishmen, Welshmen, and others, in forming a Literary and Philosophical Society. As a member and vice-president his contributions to it were two essays, one on "Cartesianism" and the other on "The Relations of the Sciences." The former cost him a study of 200 old books in Latin and French, but it soon got lost and never returned to him. The latter he still possesses and deems on the whole fairly accurate as far as it goes. His dealing with such a subject at all he attributes to the inspiration of the greatest of his teachers, the Professor William Thomson of the time, the Lord Kelvin of to-day and of all time. My study of the "Relations of the Sciences" did not deal at all with the history of the subject, but kept entirely to what was implied in the title. During some years I was entirely engrossed with pastoral duties. In 1864-65, my first session





PROF. A. A. FLINT

PROFESSOR FLINT

1903

THE YEAR OF HIS RETIRAL FROM HIS CHAIR



as Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at St Andrews, I gave some lectures in connection with those two sciences to other sciences. In 1867 I had begun to think of constructing an elaborate work on the Relations of the Sciences to one another, to Philosophy, Religion and Morality, and such a work was advertised for a considerable number of years. The delay and revocation must have been hard on the publishers, but I suppose publishers get accustomed to such things. For myself I deem it fortunate and even providential to have had to change my intended course and follow others where more urgent demands were made and more obvious interests were at stake.

It will thus be seen that Flint carried with him, through all the varied vicissitudes and experiences of his intellectual life, the subject which caught his early fancy, and it can justly be said that it was the last with which he dealt. For the volume which he published the year after contains no new matter, while this one does, and the whole subject was recast and amplified by him and put into its final form. In November of 1878 he published in the *Princetown Review* a long article on "Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum," and in July 1885 and July 1886 he published two equally long articles in the *Presbyterian Review* on the "Classification of the Sciences"; and in a foot-note to his "Philosophy of History in France," he says "that he proposed expanding and supplementing these papers so as to form an Introduction to Philosophy." It is this purpose that is carried out in the volume which is now being noticed. It seems to me unnecessary to deal at any great length with this book. The first part embraces 63 pages and the second 277 of the whole volume. "Philosophy as scientia scientiarum," he declares, "may have more functions than one, but it has at least one."

It is to show how science is related to science, and where one science is in contact with another, in what way each fits into each

so that all may compose the symmetrical and glorious edifice of human knowledge which has been built up by the labours of all past generations, and all future generations must contribute to perfect and adorn. With whatever province of science a thoughtful man occupies himself, he soon becomes aware that it has intimate and manifold connections with other provinces, and if he try to trace these connections out, he will ere long perceive that the sciences are not isolated things, but so bound together as to constitute a unity which is a reflection of the unity of nature and the unity of that Supreme Reason which pervades all nature and originates all intelligence. Philosophy aims to raise the mind gradually and legitimately to a point to which this unity may be visible, while the distinctions of the special sciences are not only not effaced, but lie clearly and truthfully before it.

Having thus stated the aim of philosophy as *scientia scientiarum* he prosecutes it with that amplitude of knowledge and logical sequence of thought with which readers of his other works are familiar. And the concluding sentences may be quoted as an indication of Flint's own position all through ; his passion not only for knowledge, but for the unity of knowledge, and also his faith in that ampler field of knowing and being which transcends all human knowledge, but of which he firmly believes human knowledge is a part. If there was any duality in Flint's thinking it was surely bridged by his rational faith.

Philosophy may not unreasonably present a claim to be regarded as the highest and most comprehensive kind of all human knowledge, but certainly not of all knowledge. There is an infinitely vaster and more perfect knowledge than any to which man or any other or even all created beings can pretend to possess. There is a knowledge which we are very apt to ignore, although all other knowledge in the universe springs from it and is closely connected with it. In other words, there are not merely ordinary and human knowledge, science and philosophy, but *omniscience*—divine intelligence and wisdom—an all-comprehensive perfect and infinite knowledge. Nothing can be hid from God. All is perfectly known to Him in the past, present, and future, from the highest to the lowest, and from the least to the

greatest. He has all the perfections of knowledge in Himself and also knows what there is to know from without. Co-extensive with omniscience is omnipotence. They are indissolubly united. The former is not inactive nor the latter unenlightened.

In the opening sentences of the second part of the book, which has for its subject a "History of the Classifications of the Sciences," he says :

The first problem with which philosophy alike as *scientia scientiarum* and as *positive philosophy* should deal, seems to be how may the sciences be rationally arranged and classified. Unless it be so far accomplished, obviously no attempt at the organisation of either knowledge or science can be successful. Philosophers have always felt more or less distinctly that such must be the case. They have never shown themselves wholly unconscious that they ought to aim at the organisation of knowledge. On the contrary, they have made many endeavours to realise that aim, and have always recognised the first step or stage to organisation required is some form of classification. From the time of Plato to the present day there has been a continuous series of attempts to classify the sciences.

He then proceeds to give an historical and critical account of these attempts "from the time of Plato to the present day," and his method of treatment is the same as that adopted by him in his "Philosophy of History." First a statement of the writer's views, followed by an exposition and criticism. His closing words may also be quoted :

I have not meant the book to be more than what its title means, and I have brought the history contained in it down to the present time. That that history is needed, no one, I think, for whom it has been intended can fail to acknowledge ; it is meant only for a certain class of persons, and whether the class be a large one or a small one I do not profess to know.

The opinion of experts for whom the book was really intended may be summed up in the words of Mr A. J. Balfour :

WHITTINGEHAME,  
PRESTONKIRK, *October 21st, 1904.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR FLINT,—Allow me to return you my very sincere thanks for your “Philosophy as *Scientia Scientiarum.*” It has just arrived, and a mere glance at its contents and arrangements suffices to show how valuable an addition it will prove to our existing histories of thought,—Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR JAS. BALFOUR.

The last work published by Flint, “On Theological, Biblical, and other Subjects,” is in some respects the most interesting of all his books. It is more of a self-revelation than any of his other works. As he remarks in the preface, the “subjects treated of are of a somewhat miscellaneous nature.” It embraces papers on certain books of the Old and New Testaments, lectures on the Church question in Scotland, already referred to, and articles on various theological and ethical subjects; but the most valuable portion of the book is that which contains five lectures under the general heading of “Advice to Students of Divinity.” In these lectures we seem to hear Flint thinking aloud. They are a kind of theological table-talk between him and his students. They give the matured results of his reading and thinking on most of the subjects in which students of divinity are interested. They are full of the ripest wisdom, and they show at once the author’s breadth, sanity, and faith. None other of Flint’s publications tells us so much of what he really thought on many of those things which are of present-day, and even of perennial, interest to all thoughtful men. And the best service which one can render both to the writer and to the reader is to give extracts from his reflections and conclusions on these subjects.

*Bibliolatry*

Bibliolatry is certainly not in the present day the most prevalent of erroneous tendencies, but it is still not uncommon, and you should strive to keep free from idolatry of every kind. You will only do harm to the cause of Biblical authority and truth if you assert its entire inerrancy, and hold by the old hypotheses of plenary inspiration which were once so prevalent. At the same time, receive rashly no new hypotheses as to Scripture, for the vast majority of them are born only to die. It is not wise for you at your stage of education to spend much of your time on the consideration of the mere guesses that swarm in the pages of the critical and theological journals. Learn to mortify your love of such novelties, for it is just now far too easily gratified, and you are sure to find the indulgence of it far too wasteful.

*Theology and Religion*

There may be less activity at the present time in the department of Dogmatic Theology than in some former ages, but there is very great activity,—as much, if not more, than in any age since the Reformation period. Far more earnestness and independence in doctrinal investigation are shown in Britain now than at the commencement of the nineteenth century. At all points in the dogmatic field there are to be found energetic and independent labourers. New questions are raised, new solutions are proposed. Everywhere there are manifestations of an earnest and hopeful spirit and of a fresh and vigorous life. The old faith is retained in essentials although the forms of doctrine have changed and are changing. The new forms are, on the whole, in most cases improvements on the old. What is being let go is mainly the crude and imperfect. The general tendency of the course of change is towards simplicity, clearness, self-consistency, and perfection. Thus the study of theology is becoming less theoretical and technical, and more practical and natural. Knowledge divorced from experience is more adequately recognised to be futile; theology apart from religion to be empty and worthless even as science. Theology is the science of religion, and just for that reason it is the religion, not the theology, which is of prime importance, the main concern, much the more real and vital. The worth of the theology consists entirely in its reflection and expression of the truth contained in the religion and its sources.

*The Effective Sermon*

As a rule, sermons to be effective must be written with a view to the particular kind of audience to which they are to be addressed. The most useful sermons are often those which have been written most rapidly, when the writer of them had appropriate thoughts enough to express; but to be under the necessity of writing them in haste when one has not appropriate thoughts is a sort of Egyptian bondage, like making bricks without straw.

*Catholic and Protestant*

Catholic and Protestant historians cannot be expected to see eye to eye in their study of many transactions, or to form the same estimates of many of those concerned in them, but it is deplorable, inexpressibly deplorable, that so many of them still show so much prejudice, injustice, and lack of Christian charity. It is happily true that on both sides—Catholic and Protestant—there has been of late considerable improvement, but there is ample room for more. Let us hope that it will extend and deepen. Let us hope that the fairness, the candour of spirit, which is still the exception, will become the rule, and that the time may not be far off when even the greatest religious differences in opinion among us will not be felt to be incompatible with unity in Christ and the exercise of all Christian graces and duties towards those who differ from us in doctrinal views.

*The First Condition of Right Knowledge*

It is essential that the student of Christian doctrinal theology should be of a reverent and religious spirit. The first condition of all right knowledge is a pre-existing sympathy with the object to be known. He who would know truth must himself stand in the truth. Only the philosophical mind can comprehend a philosophy. Only the æsthetic mind can appreciate aright beauty and art. Only the pious mind can do justice to religion, and without religion there can be no theology worthy of the name. Religious sympathy—religious experience—is essential to successful theological study.

*A Divinity Student's Education*

Divinity students should not fancy that a complete education is to be found in the class-rooms of their professors. To have the needed sympathy with every one to whom they may be called to minister,—



to have the needed comprehension and advice for every one, rich or poor, proud or humble, lifted up with joy or crushed down with sorrow, allured with pleasures or harassed with cares, credulous or sceptical, confident or callous or despondent,—the minds of efficient pastors must manifestly not be mere intellects, however vigorous and highly trained, but such as are also rich with the susceptibilities of humanity and the graces of sanctified hearts.

It is further to be observed that even as regards the intellectual education of those who aspire to the ministry non-theological studies are almost, if not altogether, as necessary and important as theological. A man who is learned only in theology will never do much good with his learning, and it is quite natural that it should be so, for such learning is not good in itself. The study of theology can only be entered on wisely through other studies, and can only be prosecuted successfully by their aid. Without a considerable amount of knowledge of language, of criticism, of history, of science, of philosophy, there can be no scientific study of theology. The conclusions of all the physical, mental, and historical sciences are the data and premises of Natural Theology, and the wider a man's knowledge of these sciences the better it must be for his Natural Theology. Biblical Criticism is only a kind of Criticism, and it must obey the general laws of Criticism. The Bible, as a literary phenomenon, can be judged of aright only through comparison with many other literary phenomena. A merely Biblical critic is almost certain to be a very bad critic, as is abundantly proved by the example of so many Biblical commentators. The history of the Church is unintelligible, apart from the general history of society. No one department of history is fully intelligible by itself.

### *Piety and Theology*

The true relation of practical piety and theological study is very obvious. On the one hand, the theological science which is not rooted in the religious life will never produce abiding and beneficial results of a positive kind. Mere intellectualism, criticism, rationalism may remove rubbish, but cannot in the sphere of spiritual life build up nor ever truly comprehend, for without personal interests and sympathy there can be no earnestness or depth of intelligence. On the other hand, the spiritual life which shrinks from spiritual life, nay, which does not turn to it and seek it with all the force of its nature, is a diseased life. The faith which fears inquiry into its objects and grounds is a faith which has the canker of a semi-conscious distrust at its root. The piety which dissociates itself from the love

of truth will also proceed to dispense with the practice of righteousness and become a thing hateful to God and contemptible before honest men.

### *Glittering Superficiality*

Congregations not unfrequently choose the worst preachers on their leets, quite convinced that they are the best. Glittering superficiality is often more esteemed than solid worth. Even almost absolute unintelligibility is at times attractive and admired. Once, happening to be in Glasgow one wet Sunday forenoon, I went into the nearest church. There was a crowd of carriages at the door, there was a crowded congregation within, and the sermon was given by the minister himself. It was listened to seemingly with rapt attention and interest. But I not only confess that I understood virtually nothing at all of that sermon, but I am convinced that, whatever they might suppose, the preacher and all his hearers were in the same position, since there was, in fact, nearly nothing intelligible in it. There was there success in verbal articulation and modulation of voice, wonderful success in the use or abuse of the dictionary, and remarkable success in attracting a mass of wealthy people who, doubtless, supposed themselves to be intelligent; but, notwithstanding all such success, it was assuredly far worse than worthless. It was mischievous.

### *A Church's Danger*

When a Church loses that love of the truth as it is in Christ which constrains it to seek in Him for ever new treasures of wisdom and knowledge—when it comes to look with suspicion on new discoveries and to discountenance the spirit of independent and original investigation—when theological research and theological instruction are the last things it strives to encourage—that Church is not far from the terrible condition in which errors are justified and lies embraced; and if that condition be reached, the moral corruption within will speedily make itself manifest without.

### *Spurious Originality*

I, for my part, have no faith in the originality which is so great that it can dispense with knowledge, and make a man extremely enlightened while it allows him to remain extremely ignorant. I for my part can never feel that I have attained to any real comprehension of a doctrine until I know how it has grown up, out of what

elements it has been formed, from what motives and reasons, what errors have been committed in connection with it, how these errors have been detected and refuted, etc. It is only, I am convinced, when the individual mind thus follows, as it were, in the track of the collective mind, and learns alike from the successes and failures of the past, that it can obtain a comprehensive view of any doctrine or contribute to its further development. I attach, therefore, the very greatest importance in the study of doctrine to the study of its history. The past is no mere desolate graveyard. It is the seed-field of countless future harvests, and only those who cultivate it diligently will reap abundantly.

### *Creeds and Confessions*

In the study of doctrine, particular attention ought to be given to the statements of doctrine contained in the creeds and confessions of the Churches. In Germany, many theologians go to an extreme in this respect. They entirely subordinate theology to Churches and creeds. They represent it as a branch of historical science—as the systematic analysis and exposition of the faith of a Christian community existing at a definite time and place—as the scientific self-consciousness of the Church to which the theologian belongs. According to this view, a creed which embodies the faith and expresses the consciousness of a Church, is the very object of which theology treats, a Lutheran creed being an adequate basis for a Lutheran theology and a Calvinistic creed for a Calvinistic theology. I regard this view as very erroneous. The Church is dependent on the truth as it is in Christ, not the truth on the Church. The whole visible Church may err, and has erred for generations, otherwise there would have been no need for the Reformation. With what right or confidence, then, can any particular Church put forward its faith, its self-consciousness, as the basis of theological science? The only true basis of Christian theology is the original revelation of God in Christ; not the impression which it has produced on the minds of a society of fallible men, nor any production of a society of fallible men.

### *The Westminster Confession*

No man in his senses will maintain that the Westminster Confession contains the whole truth of God or is exempt from error. It is enough for the Church's needs if it be, as a whole, and so far as it goes, a true exhibition of the principles of Divine Revelation. It professes to be no more; it disclaims for itself and for all things human every pretension to infallibility.

There has been very great progress made in theology since the Westminster Confession was framed. Entire theological sciences have been created within the last hundred years. In fact, the human mind never worked, perhaps, more energetically or successfully in the fields of theological science than it has been working during the nineteenth century. The theologian, therefore, who would be abreast of his age cannot stop short in his studies at Calvin or at the Confession of Faith, but must make himself acquainted with the most recent writers and the latest researches.

### *A Broad Theology*

My wish is, that your theology may be not a narrow theology, which must be a false theology, but a broad theology, which can alone be a true theology. All who are resolved to enter into the ministry of the Christian Church should be men of wide sympathies and many interests. They should certainly be neither recluses nor chargeable with narrow-mindedness. Nothing in God's universe which presents itself to them should be wholly indifferent to them. In all nature they should seek to see disclosures of revelation and in all history the operations of providence. And they should be quick to discern the signs of the times, and able to appreciate aright the prevalent tendencies and the movements of thought which are in operation among us. It is not difficult to see, in a general way, what the right attitude towards them should be. It must obviously be one primarily dictated by a strictly conscientious regard to what it holds to be the truth in Christ,—vitaly important religious truth. The Church exists to be a pillar and ground of spiritual truth, and should bear a clear and distinct testimony on its behalf, as also a clear and distinct testimony against what is hostile and dangerous to it. The Church cannot do its duty in relation to such phases of modern thought as agnosticism, pessimism, pantheism, empiricism, rationalism, anarchic or revolutionary socialism, and the like, if it lack the courage and candour required to combat what is false and evil in them.

### *Faith and Doubt*

It is the special temptation of religion, and of the teachers and preachers of religion, to exaggerate the merit of belief and faith, and to depreciate and denounce unbelief and doubt. Religion springs from belief; its strength is the strength of faith; it spreads and flourishes through the enthusiasm begotten of belief or faith. Belief precedes doubt. Uncultured man believes easily; the lower reli-

gions show his extraordinary credulity. The greatest and highest religions equally appeal at their origin to the faculty of faith, and with a success shown by the conversion of multitudes at once. As on trust in Christ all Christianity depends, so on trust in Mohammed all Mohammedanism depends, and on trust in Buddha all Buddhism. Faith has raised all these religions, and is their life, and the life of all that has been evolved from them. There is thus abundant testimony to the power of faith, and explanation enough of the eulogies which have been heaped upon faith by religious men.

### *The Value of Doubt*

But there is another side of things. If faith be strong and have done great works, doubt is not feeble and has wrought many achievements by no means contemptible. If faith have raised religions, doubt has often thrown them down, and has in all of them found much to eliminate and destroy. If theologians often speak as if all duty were summed up in religious faith, scientists and philosophers often speak as if the very root and spring of all progress and culture were scientific and philosophical doubt. The great revolutions of speculative thought, at least, have all originated in extensions of the operations of doubt. A believing enthusiastic type of character is the one most generally admired, and is supposed to be one of special excellence and strength; the doubting, questioning type of character is generally viewed with decided disfavour, and supposed to be necessarily culpable and weak. But that is a very one-sided and superficial estimate. Socrates and Plato, Carneades and Ænesidemus, Des Cartes and Locke, Hume and Kant, and many others, in whose characters the quality of doubt was largely present, were undoubtedly very superior men, who could brave the world's antagonism, and who singly did as much for the world's advancement as many thousands of burning enthusiasts combined have done. Much may be said on behalf of doubt and doubters. I am not going, however, to constitute myself their apologist or advocate, any more than of belief and believers.

### *No Merit in mere Faith or mere Doubt*

In my view there is no merit either in mere belief or in mere doubt; there is merit only in believing and doubting according to truth. Excess of belief, however, is as bad as excess of doubt; and there is excess wherever either belief or doubt outstrips reason and fails to coincide with truth. To doubt so long as there is reason for

doubt is as much a duty as to believe where there is reason for belief. To believe where there is insufficient reason for belief is as much a vice as to doubt in opposition to sufficient evidence. Enthusiasm in the propagation of truth is admirable, but so is the enthusiasm in search of truth which will accept no substitute for truth, no unreasoned or unreasonable belief. The former enthusiasm without the latter is half vice as well as half virtue, and it is only by chance that it is not enthusiasm in the propagation of falsehood, which may be an object of admiration but must be also an object of alarm.

#### *An Exaggerated Christianity*

Christianity has done great things, and its power is unexhausted and inexhaustible. It needs no flattery. It can only do harm to ascribe to it victories yet unwon. Yet undoubtedly there prevails a visionary way of regarding, an exaggerated way of describing its achievements which we would be well rid of, and which in the conflict with pessimism we shall be compelled to abandon. In many respects Christendom is not so much better than heathendom. London and New York are not much less vicious than the great cities of the East. The Gospel has not expelled from the area, where it has reigned for centuries, drunkenness, prostitution, war, the robbery and oppression of man by man. Christianity is not making more rapid progress than some of the ethnic religions. Its gains from among educated Brahmins, Buddhists, and Mohammedans are few and slight; its losses from among the scientists and thinkers of Europe are many and serious. It is a far more urgent problem at present how to keep the leaders of thought in Germany, France, and Britain Christian, than how to make those of Turkey, India, or China Christian, for we are certainly much more rapidly losing the former than gaining the latter. These and the like facts are dark and painful, and we are apt to shut our eyes to them, tempted to deny them, to gloss them over with pious phrases, and to go on contentedly indulging in pleasant dreams. That is the worst thing we can do. Let us seek to know the worst, and betake ourselves to no refuges of lies.

#### *Biblical Research*

The questions raised as to the origin, composition, and relationship of the constituent portions of the literary documents from which our knowledge of history must be drawn were comparatively few, and of a far less radical, wide-reaching, and perplexing character than those with which Graf and Reuss, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and

so many others have made us familiar. These writers may or may not have made out their own main positions, but they have undoubtedly discredited, to all except the ignorant and those who are in a deep dogmatic slumber, the old and easy method of studying Bible history formerly universal. The inquiries which they have originated imperatively demand from those who would either continue them or show wherein they are erroneous in method or conclusions rare special linguistic attainments and refined and laborious critical researches. At the same time, they are not inquiries which he cannot be too strongly urged to qualify himself for conducting, or at least for estimating aright. They should be of primary interest to him, for they are investigations into the very foundations of what concern him most. They must be presupposed or dealt with in almost all spheres of theological science. They underlie all Biblical Theology and condition its results, and so mediately underlie and condition the results even of Christian Dogmatics. Besides, although they are not at present the subjects of ecclesiastical controversy and treatment, there can be little doubt that they will become so, and that the most serious trials await the Churches from this quarter. Ignorance is a dangerous kind of protection to trust in. Whether in the controversies which are sure to arise our Churches will conduct themselves well or ill must mainly depend on the amount and diffusion of appropriate scholarship among their clergy.

#### *Need of Speculation*

In our age the speculative movement is not specially strong. In most minds there is suspicion of or aversion to all that bears the name or nature of speculation in theology, or in any other department of thought. In this country over-speculation (I mean, of course, in intellectual, not in money, matters) is, perhaps, the only kind of evil by which we have never been visited. There is not the slightest need, therefore, to discourage the rise or impede the spread of speculative thought among us. On the other hand, there is great need, if speculative thought have a true place and function in the advancement of theological or other knowledge, to recognise the fact and proclaim it. Now, I for one have no doubt whatever not only of the legitimacy, but of the necessity of speculation in theology, in philosophy, and indeed in all science. There is no science which does not advance by the aid of hypotheses, and there is no scientific hypothesis which is not essentially, so long as it is merely an hypothesis, of the nature of speculation. An original genius in science is necessarily a man of speculative intelligence within the sphere of that science.

*The Higher Criticism*

The so-called Higher or Historical Criticism deals with the historical bases of our religion—a religion which rests largely on history, and which centres in an historical person. It analyses and criticises the sources of our knowledge of this religion, and pronounces on the character, authenticity, age, and credibility of every constituent portion of the Bible. It treats of all that bears on the explanation of the origin and formation of the Bible. It thus obviously and directly affects faith and doctrine, and searches and tries their very foundations. Criticism of this kind cannot fail to be widely and intensely interesting. There may be much good in the interest which it awakens. But there should be no unnecessary impulse given to its diffusion or intensification. There are some serious evils accompanying it, and these are all very much increased by the fact that the vast majority of those who get excited over the results said to be reached by the historical criticism of the Scriptures are wholly incompetent to judge for themselves whether these results have been really attained or not, and can only accept them on the authority of those whom they are told are the highest authorities. And told by whom? Perhaps by a credulous partisan disciple of those authorities. Or, more probably, by writers who are no more entitled than themselves to say who is or is not an authority: journalists, say, who really know almost nothing about the Higher Biblical Criticism except what they pick up to enable them to compose the articles which are supposed to mould, and perhaps do mould too much, public opinion.

*Mysticism*

There is another movement or tendency as to which a word may be said—the Mystic movement or tendency. It proceeds on the assumption that religious truth is to be attained not by processes of reasoning and reflection, but by immediate vision and feeling. It is a very large phenomenon—common in the lower form of Shamanism among barbarous nations, fully developed in the East, widely prevalent at sundry times in Mohammedan and Christian lands, never entirely absent from any age—and naturally so. That it should have prevailed among uncultured men was to be expected from their unacquaintance with all logical methods of attaining truth. It is so closely connected with pantheism—flows from it so directly in certain forms—that we cannot wonder it should be common wherever pantheism is dominant. It is so natural a recoil



from Scepticism, and so natural a reaction from Dogmatism and Formalism, that it is easy to understand why it should have been so current in medieval and modern times.

*Catholic and Protestant Mysticism*

There is a Catholic and a Protestant mysticism, but, so far as mysticism is concerned, Catholicism must be admitted to have been more tolerant than Protestantism. That may probably have been owing to its feeling more able to be tolerant, in virtue of its stronger organisation. Looking merely to the subjectivist and individualist character of mysticism in general, we would naturally expect it to be more welcome in the Protestant than in the Catholic Church ; but that has certainly not been the case as regards at least pronounced forms of mysticism. It may also be noted, however, that Catholic mystics, even the most enthusiastic, have been most willing to make their mystical doctrines subservient to the interests of their Church. I am inclined to think that there has been too much mysticism in the Catholic and too little in the Protestant Church.

There was only one other honour that the universities of Scotland could confer upon Flint, and that was his appointment as Gifford Lecturer. This too came. Each of the four universities of his native land approached him on the subject, but he declined on various grounds the proposal from three of them, evidently reserving himself, as was natural, for the University with which he had been so long and so closely identified, that of Edinburgh. It was in 1902 that he was offered at the hands of his friend Principal Story the Glasgow Gifford Lectureship. He was much touched by the offer, and it is clear that it was with difficulty he brought himself to decline it.

JOHNSTONE LODGE, CRAIGMILLAR PARK.  
EDINBURGH, 21st January 1902.

MY DEAR PRINCIPAL,—I feel it to be a great kindness and a great honour that the Senate of my old Alma Mater should have unanimously resolved to offer me the appointment of Gifford Lecturer, and I much wish that I could have seen my way clear to accept of the offer. But, alas! I cannot. On the contrary, I clearly

see that I ought for some years, if God graciously grant them to me, to devote myself wholly to trying to meet, as far as I possibly can, literary engagements already made and the non-fulfilment, or only partial fulfilment of which are now, I confess, weighing heavily on my conscience. I must not abandon them for new undertakings.

Accept my cordial thanks for your own kind letter, and remember me and my sister to Mrs and the Misses Story.—I am, my dear Principal, Yours very truly,  
R. FLINT.

The appointment to the Edinburgh Gifford Lectureship, however, was not offered to him until January 1906. Alas, too late! There is every reason for believing that he expected it in 1904, and it was a great misfortune that the Senatus did not see their way to appoint him then. As Convener of the Gifford Lectureship Committee from the foundation of the Lectureship, he had come to be so trusted by his colleagues that the patronage of that honour lay practically in his hands, and the series of distinguished lecturers in Edinburgh University, up till the time of his resignation, was practically nominated by him. And now when it came to be his turn the offer was made too late. And the misfortune was all the greater when it is remembered that he might have had the Glasgow appointment in 1902. Flint had prepared himself for the task. His course of Gifford Lectures would have been the crowning effort of his life; in them he would have embodied the results of all his thinking on the highest subject of human thought. But it was in the year of his appointment that his health began to fail, and the Lectures were never delivered.

Only two events now need to be recorded. The death of his cousin Miss Irvine, the "Willmina" of old days, in 1905, affected him and his sister most deeply, and finding Musselburgh, under the changed circumstances of their loss and his own failing health, somewhat lonely and inconvenient, they removed in 1907 to 5 Royal

Terrace, Edinburgh. There on the 25th November 1910 he died. Three days afterwards he was buried in Liberton churchyard beside his father and mother.

Tributes to his memory appeared in all the leading newspapers in Scotland and in England, and notices of his life were published everywhere throughout the country and in the Colonies. The Synods and Presbyteries of the Church recorded in their Minutes their profound regret at his death and their appreciation of his supreme services to theology. It was felt that a great man had died, and that the loss, for this generation at least, was irreparable.

Readers who have followed the course of the narrative which is now coming to a close, will not expect or desire any estimate of the life and work of Professor Flint other than what is given in the foregoing pages. Every effort has been made to present his career in such a way as to enable all unprejudiced persons to form an estimate of it for themselves. I will therefore content myself by quoting, in conclusion, the judgment formed of him by one who knew him well, and who penetrated into his heart and mind more than most who knew him; a judgment so true and so beautifully expressed that any attempt to add to it would be to destroy it. Professor Wenley, from whose contribution to this Biography valuable extracts have already been given, after briefly sketching the growth of his intimacy with Flint, concludes with the following estimate and appreciation of his character.

In the biography contributed to the "Dictionary of National Biography," the Rev. Alexander Gordon writes: Flint "had no taste for amusements, country walks being his sole recreation. With his students he was popular; yet it is said that of them all only two were privileged to accompany him in his walks."<sup>1</sup> When

<sup>1</sup> Second Supplement, vol. ii., p. 36.

Dr Macmillan did me the honour to request my recollections and especially a constructive appreciation, I felt myself at a grave disadvantage; for the delight, and distinction, of study under Flint's guidance had never been mine. Yet, strange as it may seem, these same "country walks" afforded me my main opportunity to know the veritable man. He spent several long vacations at Tighnabruaich, where my family has made its summer home for forty-five years. Thanks to this happy accident, we tramped together often—on holiday, and therefore off guard, as it were.

By way of introduction, it may be worth while to tell how our acquaintance ripened into friendship, especially as one or two interesting incidents occur.

As I recall, I was first brought into contact with Flint about the spring of 1889. He "read" the MS. of my maiden book, after I had sent it to the Blackwoods with fear and trembling. His weighty review of its defects—

" He struck his finger on the place,  
And said, *Thou ailest here and here* "—

far more than his too indulgent praise of such merits as it had, drew me to him. The "country walks" followed. He thought it worth while to invite me to his town house to meet Otto Pfeleiderer, then Gifford Lecturer in the University of Edinburgh. This was in January or February, 1894. In the following year, events were to bring us to closer quarters, and, although Flint conceived that I was doing him a personal favour, in reality the issue was productive of two among the memories that I cherish most. In 1895, William Hastie<sup>1</sup>—untimely dead—became an eleventh-hour candidate for the chair of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. Flint counted Hastie his most brilliant co-worker, and it was at his suggestion, if not solicitation, that the candidacy arose. As everyone acquainted with the recent history of the Church of Scotland is aware, Story, who became professor of Ecclesiastical History at Glasgow in 1886, had been largely responsible for the harsh decision of the General Assembly whereby, in 1884, Hastie was dismissed from the Principalship of the College of the Church in Calcutta, and condemned to a decade of eclipse and sorrow, nay, to what seemed a blasted career, in the very prime of manhood. This tragic blunder, as we all can afford to regard it now, incensed and wounded Flint deeply. I was present in the Assembly, and heard Hastie's vehement, maladroit

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Dictionary of National Biography," Second Supplement, vol. ii., pp. 222-3.

defence, prolix to unwisdom, which did so much to determine the final action. I also heard Story's sarcastic and bitter, if scintillating speech. Naturally, then, Hastie doubted whether he could work with Story as colleague, and Flint requested me to ascertain the possibilities. After consultation with John Caird, it was decided that I might venture to interview Story. The occasion still stands out sharp in my memory. Story's response redounded to his eternal honour, and disclosed his fundamental kindness of heart, appreciated to the full only by his intimates.<sup>1</sup> I immediately took train for Edinburgh, to acquaint Flint with the good news. He was perceptibly moved—he could now forgive and forget, where the virtue and the attitude had been nigh impossible before. And he never forgot this "service," as he called it. Notwithstanding, the "service," as I have said, was to me. For, the incident awakened my admiration for Story, and paved the way for our friendship later. It also made my footing with Hastie far more confidential, although I had been meeting him occasionally for some years.

If, with characteristic generosity, Flint had thought of obligation, the opportunity to counsel and aid me came soon and most unexpectedly. I had been called to the chair of Philosophy in the University of Michigan in July, 1895, while in ignorance of Professor Dewey's resignation. The decision to uproot life-long associations and, under the handicap of total unfamiliarity with American conditions, to follow a line of eminent predecessors, proved very difficult, so much so, that it troubled me for six months. In the interval, Flint threshed out the *pros* and *cons* with me thoroughly. Nor was this all. Then, as always, importation can be no light matter for the authorities of a foreign university. During a visit to Chicago, it seems that Professor James Orr, then of Edinburgh, had suggested my name to President James B. Angell. His advice, like that of others whom Mr Angell approached, came from men who, for various personal reasons, might have been prejudiced in my favour. Accordingly, when I went to Ann Arbor, in the spring of 1896, to inspect the field of future activity, I hinted to Mr Angell that, in order to obtain objective evidence, he might communicate with Flint, as the most distinguished man of my acquaintance who was bound to me neither by philosophical agreement nor by any ties such as often link teacher with pupil, and produce subjective judgments. Flint's reply impressed the President profoundly, so deeply, indeed, that he reverted to it frequently in after years. Thus, at what, so far as I can see, was the crisis in my career, Flint stood very, very

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Memoir of Robert Herbert Story," by His Daughters, pp. 256 f., 276 f.

near to me. So it came about that, on all home visits after my emigration, I made it a point to see him. In 1898, when I was in Edinburgh for less than a fortnight, I spent a day with him. In 1901, when I happened to be in Scotland all summer, I visited him at Edinburgh, and walked with him at the Kyles of Bute. I saw him several times in 1905-06, when on long leave for fifteen months. Our last meeting, alas, was at Musselburgh, in the spring of 1906, when he discussed his plans for his forthcoming Gifford Lectures, and showed me many things from the ample store of his MSS.

My acquaintance with him thus covered more than twenty years; our closer friendship, despite the sundering circle of the ocean, lasted about fifteen. When I began to know him well, he was fifty-six, in the zenith of his reputation and powers, while I was little more than a beginner. Moreover, the fact that he belonged to my father's generation, not to mine, had its effect upon our intercourse. Still, his frankness and simplicity righted the balance in a manner. And, although he possessed no genius in friendship for the sake of friendship, he displayed great talent for the give and take of intellectual intercourse on the basis of mutual interests and ideas, even when complete agreement was out of the question. For, I fear, we could not see eye to eye with each other; and the reader must remember this as I proceed.

“The career of a scholar and thinker is never apt to be prolific in events that attract the public eye. Moreover, the generation, whose heyday ran from about 1865 to 1895, afforded fewer opportunities than our own to ‘the scholar in politics.’ If nothing else, publicity, and external honours bestowed by governments and institutions, had not attained their present proportions. The world as a vast sounding-board is a recent development. Flint lived ere the acquisition of the telephone habit; ere the interviewer, with his greed for personal ‘bits,’ scoured the land; ere men scampered weekly without a sigh to London or Paris or, on frequent occasions, to the United States; ere the continuous whirl of international and inter-academic commemorations made the learned, personal and popular familiars.

In addition, his stage was his study, his books, his most intimate friends; constitutionally, he craved no larger arena, no more congenial companions. He shrank even from the national eminence which invited him, thanks to his position in the Church of Scotland, had he cared a whit. Thus, any appreciation must be from the inside, and must revert to his education, his vocation, and his literary remains. For, after all, when he did emerge for a moment,—as at the Aberdeen Meeting of the British Association in 1859, or at the Tercentenary of the University of Edinburgh in 1884,—it was only to retire forthwith; his weighty utterances upon such occasions have been preserved, happily. I heard him preach his British Association sermon many years afterwards, in a quiet Highland Parish Church; and, as I read it now in cold print, almost all the power of the spoken word asserts itself. For, even in the pulpit, Flint had few, if any, arts, and stood in no need of artifice.

“As we approach him, then, in an effort to recapture his person, we must remember, first and foremost, that he was a Scot of the Scots. No doubt this conveys something, but hardly enough. Intense as their national spirit is, there are Scots *and* Scots. On the one hand we have the overwhelming majority, spiritual descendants of Knox, heirs of a folk-consciousness whence nigh every perspective or ideal instinct in the term ‘catholic’ has been evaporated. This type, its ‘spiritual indispensable’ wrought into final literature by Carlyle, is usually heralded as *the* Scot; furth of Scotland, none other so much as occurs to the stranger. But, on the contrary, we must reckon with the small minority, harried by the defects, yet illuminated by some of the qualities of the mediæval saints,—the type illustrious in Scott and Ruskin,—which, while overlaid

these many decades, has not lost voice utterly. Nay, stimulated by certain tendencies of modern idealistic philosophy, it begins to whisper once more of a theurgic universe, although it has found no real prophet thus far. Flint belonged entirely to the former, and such disturbance as the latter has upthrust these last thirty years left him, if not unconscious, assuredly untouched. And yet both types, their instant antipathies notwithstanding, are alike 'children of the light.' It is thanks to them, and to their eternal debate, that the things of the spirit have weighed with the Scot more than with any other people of Western Europe. As an eminent American—himself a past master in both arts—said to me, after a memorable discourse by a brother Scot: 'You Scotch may have many defects, but you *can* preach and you *can* teach.' Flint was a power equally in the pulpit and in the class-room; and, be it said, each function demands an extensive, perhaps profound, spiritual background. His books, his sermons, and lectures no less, were of the sort that 'take thirty years to prepare.'

"So, difficult as it has been to keep 'sound in head' while attempting to estimate Flint's achievement as a scholar, I fear that it is impossible to be in any wise 'pure at heart' enough to compass his ethical personality. For he belonged to that select band of rare spirits whose very presence causes one to rejoice in the privilege of sharing a common humanity with them.

"I said that Flint was a Scot of the Scots, and I said so advisedly. Every people, as it traverses the zig-zag lines of its history, moving, weaves a pattern. Manifestly, its chief institutions are transformed by slow degrees and, in like fashion, its representative sons, despite the preservation of certain substantial



qualities, vary as generation succeeds generation. The reign of Queen Victoria coincided with a definite period in the development of the Scottish people: a definite period, because formative and symptomatic institutions—the church, the universities, and the educational system, the cities and the rural districts, the professions, commercial and industrial pursuits, the relations of Scotsmen to the overseas empire, above all, perhaps, the intellectual outlook—underwent great changes: a definite period, moreover, because, so far as we can judge now, twentieth century Scotland is shedding the substantial qualities transmitted from the days of John Knox and George Buchanan, and maintained even to the late Victorian era—losing them as a consequence, possibly, of the displacements upheaved since 1837. Neglecting many aspects which, however interesting in themselves, are not germane to the present theme, it may be said that, under Victoria, individual Scots reaped, as never before, the opportunities offered by the democracy of their national institutions, notably the universities and the church. To be plain, the nineteenth century was *the* epoch when the ‘lad o’ pairts’ had the best chance to become the man of power; to realise his own capacity, and to mould others. Native ability was so circumstanced that it could discount handicaps which, south of the Tweed, or over the water in Ireland, were destined to prove insurmountable. Yet we must not foster misunderstanding. To grasp the situation, it is necessary to consider the ‘pairts.’ The important fact is, that they were as much moral as intellectual. Nay, the substantial qualities, nurtured from of old in the stock of the folk, appeared in moral stability and dogged persistence, rather than in mental brilliancy or logical acumen. As a rule, the success-

ful men won to the top because they had 'weight'—an ethical endowment.

"We need not go further than Robert Louis Stevenson for the reasons. He reminds us that the privilege of Scottish birth was not exempt from the law of compensation; one was compelled to learn the Catechism and the Paraphrases! Very true and, I fear, with unpleasing as well as with potent results. For, many Scots, lacking a sense of relative values, 'spoke to and of God as though He had been their next-door neighbour.' Others, who once were, and still may be, a distinctive element in the undergraduate body, differentiating the academic atmosphere from that of the English universities, always wanted refining, purging of provincial dross, and of admiration for bad models, as Nichol intimated.<sup>1</sup> In short, thanks to youthful theological "larnin," they mistook pious rhetoric for sober argument, religiosity for thought. On the contrary, with the better sort, scholarship and thinking were ballasted, even hallowed, by reverence, chastened by grave conviction, touched to those larger issues with which depth of religious belief is always fraught. Flint was typical of this ampler spirit.

"He rose from the ranks, character assisting more than mere brains; and he brought with him to the wider field of the 'great world' that unobtrusive piety and fresh faith that had beautified, nay transfigured the lives of his parents. By right of inheritance, he bore upon his unsullied escutcheon the motto, 'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' Being thus born to the profound things of religion, no trace of pose tainted him. He bore himself with complete absence of affectation, for the piety absorbed at the family altar had nothing of clerical self-con-

<sup>1</sup> "Memoir," p. 225.

sciousness in it. So, too, his conscience never splurged, as if working by fits and starts. No sudden awakenings, the bane of some Scots, carried him off, and therefore there were no uncomfortable contrasts between temporary profession and customary practice. Flint's conscience slumbered not nor slept. Its steady constancy exerted a normal control that issued in high seriousness of manhood and, at the same time, curbed those emotional spasms which surge for an instant and expire, only to leave flabby lassitude.

“As has been hinted, this combination of grave piety with abundant knowledge appeared something of an enigma. And, no doubt, such it was, especially as the changes of last century sped their course. I remember very well how, just after our last meeting, I felt an access of this difficulty. I found it hard—impossible at the moment—to select words expressive of the impression made by him. One was compelled to divine it. It was late in the afternoon of a bright day in early summer. We had parted on the doorstep of his Musselburgh house, and I walked a little way to the car. Climbing the steps, I seated myself on the top, and thus took the short journey back to Edinburgh. The keen air challenged the brilliant sun. I stiffened to the sharp tonic, anon relaxed to the kindly warmth. Then, in a fit of musing, I exclaimed suddenly—almost aloud—‘That is Flint.’ The strong, clear intellect, friendly to the *Allgemeinheit* of scholarship, was challenged by the bracing *severitas* of the man—by his homely purity and conscientious thoughtfulness. Yet, somehow, the two were at one. Mutually supported and supporting, they gave that indescribable sense of reserve power, or of quite peculiar personal experience, noticeable in the native Scot as his most characteristic quality.

The flash of mental illumination was there, but with it the restraint of ethical steadfastness. And although, when we talked earnestly, now the one, now the other seemed to gain the upper hand, both were absorbed and subdued into a mood of repose, instinct with faith, although devoid of anything like pulsating emotion. A brief month had fled when, one glorious noon—in Suffolk—all Nature caressing, almost cozening Man, I found myself exclaiming—this time, loud out, for the impression had struck straight home—‘I know why such a land as this could never foster men like Flint.’ It suffices: one has no need for a ‘beyond’; the things which are seen *were made* by the things which do appear!

“We are well aware, examples abounding, that this double aspect of Scottish character tends to breed contradictions or, at least, that it favours strange discontinuity. But Flint had overcome the inward strife. This was his personal difference, and in it, more than in aught else, his special individuality or completeness appeared forthright. His calm continuity was no ‘nominal naethin’,’ to use an expressive Scots phrase, but a serenity bred by life-long discipline of the spirit. His soul was always ‘in training,’ always ‘hard’ and, if not agile, supple. In a word, the central unity with self came not of reflective ratiocination, but of the deep peace that ensues upon unconscious moral assurance. So, for all his student habits and traits of the recluse, he quite escaped the aloofness of the ascetic. With plenty of sly humour, he appreciated the advantages of ‘a twa-headed bawbee, for tossin’ wi’.’ He was ‘douce’ enough to be old-fashioned, and old-fashioned enough to take vivid interest in the common affairs of this present evil world. Theology and philosophy, no matter how

well in their way, did not quench zest in ecclesiastical, national, or international politics. If you touched him here, you would discover, perhaps with mild surprise, that he had, not 'views,' but wide information and canny judgment. Thus, it was a misfortune for the Church that distaste for the machinery of ecclesiastical courts deprived her of his public counsel. She is distinctly the poorer by the absence of his name—as of that of his older contemporary, John Caird, who was similarly minded—from the distinguished roll of Moderators. I suppose we must acquiesce in Flint's judgment of his limitations; his modesty affords due compensation. The niceties and checkmates of organisation had no charm for him. They savoured of unreality. The ideas and, much more, the ideals to be affected and effected held his attention. He could grasp them. Of the machinery he recked little, unless, as in the case of the Royal Society, which he served faithfully, the relation of means to end were direct, and so adjusted that passion could not intervene readily to ignoble purposes.

“After all then, as we come full circle, we must be frank to admit that the inmost man of him was 'hid'; and this not simply by natural reticence or constitutional reserve, much less by acquired love for books and study. No doubt, these wrought upon him so that, even of his students, 'only two were privileged to accompany him in his walks.' As I read him, the secret lies deeper. Till Flint reached the age of forty, or a little more, two streams of tendency had played upon him. On the one hand, he had seen the profoundest questions set 'in a glory of rhetoric concealing a depth which it could not penetrate.' Inevitably, he was under bonds to plumb this gulf. On the other hand, he had been exposed to the full stress

of the revival of evangelical religion in Scotland. Circumstances had brought it home to him in that most penetrating and persuasive shape—the personal; he knew its fruits. And here, unquestionably, he found the depth that the formal philosophy, native to his time and country, had missed. Thus, a sufficing metaphysic, in the Platonic or Hegelian mould, was forestalled by the religious mood. Now this very mood, in turn, happens to be antagonistic to the absorption of the objects of belief in the processes of their justification. The temper, of course, is proverbial and persistent. Whether the Jewish-Christian, in the first century of Grace, flout 'pagan' philosophy, or the 'decent' Englishman, in the nineteenth, thank God that he is not as these continental Samaritans, the same feeling finds outlet in almost the same words. 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'<sup>1</sup>

" Hold thou the good : define it well :  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark and be  
Procress to the Lords of Hell." <sup>2</sup>

That is, religion issues from a practical, individual 'conviction' of sin, and moves to an equally practical, individual 'assurance' of righteousness. In the nature of the case, it is 'hid.' Flint was what he was as a complete character, because this aspect of the religious life always ruled him. His later philosophy never became altogether 'a way.' His soul experienced a profound need 'to discourse with herself,' but he could never persuade himself of a *Selbstanschauung Gottes* in man. For this reason, he was self-centred—because he was self-limited, in the

<sup>1</sup> Colossians ii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *In Memoriam*, Tennyson, liii.

evangelical sense. Mediation, despite all that belief might convey, left something 'over against' him; a miracle remained to be wrought. I ascribe his reserve to this. I always *felt* it, and felt that I could not pierce to the core of his calm assurance. Moreover, I *knew* that I could never reach it by the path which he had beaten. He rejoiced in the vision of a 'shortening of our tribulation' which I, born under an unluckier star, could never share. Yet, this union between evangelical *res spirituales* and virtuosity of information rendered Flint unique. Thanks to its magic, he was able to speak as one having authority alike from the pulpit and from the desk. For, his piety was proof against the deceits of many a prejudice, his scholarship emancipated from the abstractions of many a popular theory. He set his face against partizanship, and his character elevated him above petty dodges or expedients. So, even when speaking, as every representative man must speak, in the accent of his age, he rang true.

“ Finally, one must not forbear to add that, in the averages of daily life, where the best are so apt to stumble, he rose superior to the middling levels of easy blamelessness. Others must attest his filial devotion. When I knew him, he was left alone with his sister. Together, they formed an ideal household. A perfect understanding blossomed from the brother's unvaried affection, touched by natural chivalry, and the sister's unwearied care, nursed by generous admiration. There was a tacit agreement that the *res Domi* should be *angusta*—not straitened, but incidental—because subordinate to those higher ends for which his diligence meant so much. Thus, the common obligations of brotherhood and sisterhood took on a larger significance in mutual obligation to the things of the spirit.

Hence the simplicity of the home had an amplitude that won strongly upon those who were received into it. Friends found the bed-rock of reality here. The sanity and wholesomeness of the domestic hearth left memories that we must cherish tenderly to our lives' end. For the elements of the humane were exhibited in rare control. If happy for us, how much the happier for her, who is left sadly alone, that she can look back wistfully upon such fragrant memories.

“As I recall the study, filled to overflowing, and the man, serenely touched by the larger hope, I also recall this sonnet, which may serve to give a glimpse of Flint's hidden soul-drama :—

“ ‘ Strange things pass nightly in this little room,  
 All dreary as it looks by light of day ;  
 Enchantment reigns here when at evening play  
 Red firelit glimpses through the pallid gloom ;  
 Then come—perchance the shadows thrown assume  
 That guise—heroic guests in dim array,—  
 The Kings of old, returned the human way  
 By Bridge of Dread, from star to straitening tomb.

High dreams they bring that never were dreamt in sleep :  
 These walls yawn wide to Time, to Death and Hell,  
 To the last abyss of men's wild cries to Heaven ;  
 While night uncurtains on a sobbing deep,  
 And lo ! the land wherein the Holy Grail,  
 In far Monsalvat, to the soul is given.’ ”



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