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Life of William Cunningham, D.D.

# LIFE

OF

# WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, D.D.

PRINCIPAL AND PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AND CHURCH HISTORY,
NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

BY

ROBERT RAINY, D.D.,

AND

THE LATE REV. JAMES MACKENZIE.

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## ERRATA.

Page 205, last line, *after* Appendix, *insert* B.
Page 222, first line, *for* Chapter XXI., *read* Chapter XVII.
Page 342, last line, *after* Appendix, *insert* E.
Page 349, lines 4, 7, and 11 from foot
Page 350, lines 4, 5, 10, and 17 from top } *for* Maclagan, *read* Maclaggan.
Page 359, line 20 from foot . .
Page 463, last line, *after* 52, *insert* 156.

# PREFACE.

AFTER the death of Principal Cunningham, and the publication of his posthumous writings, Mrs Cunningham and the members of the family applied to two distinguished friends (both now taken from us) to prepare a memoir of his life. After very full consideration, the friends referred to felt constrained to decline doing so. They saw obstacles to their discharging the duty to their own satisfaction, which they did not feel able to remove. Ultimately the task was committed to the hands of the late Rev. James Mackenzie, Free Abbey Church, Dunfermline. He brought to the work, along with his tried literary abilities, a very great veneration for Dr Cunningham's character, and a legitimate ambition to make the memoir worthy of it. His failing health, and ultimately his lamented death, interrupted his labours. Some time afterwards, arrangements were made which resulted in my being called upon to complete the work. For that purpose the unfinished MS., and the materials which had been collected, were placed in my hands, with full powers to use them at my own discretion. The MS. exhibited a continuous narrative up to the period of Dr Cunningham's American journey. Beyond that point Mr Mackenzie had prepared only some notes and jottings relating chiefly to personal traits and special incidents of Dr Cunningham's life.

The Life as now published is written by Mr Mackenzie as far as the 15th chapter, and including three or four pages of the 16th. In editing this portion, I have made such alterations only as I felt satisfied Mr Mackenzie would himself have made before publishing. I have inserted in their proper places one or two matters which had been omitted, and also various incidents and reminiscences belonging to the earlier period of Dr Cunningham's life, which had not been brought under Mr Mackenzie's notice. These have not been distinguished in printing. They consist of matters of fact only, without comment or expression of opinion. One or two footnotes, attached to the text by me, are distinguished by the letter "R."

For the remainder of the Life, I am solely responsible. The members of Dr Cunningham's family have manifested deep interest in this publication, and have aided me in every possible way. But I have relied exclusively on my own judgment: all statements of fact and expressions of opinion are to be taken on that understanding. Except in subordinate matters, no one has even been consulted.

With a view to lighten the narrative of the College Controversy some portions have been thrown into the Appendix. They are chiefly digressions, intended to explain or vindicate the course taken by Dr Cunningham at particular stages. The reader will observe, that as originally written, they formed part of the text; and I should wish them to be had regard to by those who may take any special interest in that part of the narrative.

The want of letters, and of those elements of a life which familiar letters usually supply, has induced me to admit freely reminiscences by friends of common passages and incidents, even in cases where no important characteristic is illustrated, and merely the ordinary tenor of an unpretending life rises into view.

The length of time during which the publication of the Memoir has been delayed, and some other special reasons, made it desirable to bring out the work by a fixed day. It seemed to be my duty to make every possible effort to meet this desire; and if signs of haste are anywhere discernible, as there is reason to fear they may, I must trust to the reader's kindness to excuse them. One almost unaccountable mistake escaped me until the sheet concerned had been printed off. In page 299, I speak of the test for parochial schoolmasters as having been abolished in or about the year 1853. University Tests were abolished about that time. There was discussion also regarding the School Test, which gave an impulse, as the text states, to the general question. But at that time, and for a good many years afterwards, the House of Lords successfully stopped the way.

On page 18, the income of Mrs Cunningham senior, at the time she came to Dunse, is stated at no more than forty pounds a-year. No one would have more disliked than Mrs Cunningham, that undue credit should be accorded to her in respect of difficulties overcome. It is due, therefore, to historic accuracy to say, that her income at that time was about one hundred pounds a-year. The sum of forty pounds a-year represents merely the amount of her own patrimony.

The portrait inserted in this volume is taken from a group of Moderators of the Free Church photographed in 1860. Artistically it is defective, as bearing traces of the other members of the group. But it has been preferred notwithstanding, as more satisfactory and characteristic than any other.

I may be allowed to express my regret that the conditions of time, above referred to, have thrown the composition of the last

chapter into circumstances very unfavourable for doing it justice. It is not the tribute I should wish to have paid to my beloved master's theological powers and services. Happily his reputation in that respect is independent of any shortcomings of mine.

ROBERT RAINY.

8 Rosebery Crescent,
Edinburgh, *10th May 1871.*

# LIFE

OF

# WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, D.D.

## CHAPTER I.

### *EARLY DAYS.*

ON the last day of the year 1810, a little family group of five were on their way to spend the New Year's day in the parish of Lesmahagow, in the west of Scotland. The grandfather lived there; and it was their custom to pass each New Year's day with him. The father rode on horseback; the mother and her three little boys travelled in a light covered cart. Deep snow concealed the ground, and the day was clear, still, and keen. Close to the road, some farm labourers were at work on a huge heap of compost. An immense number of crows had gathered about the heap—after the manner of these birds when frost locks up the earth and forces them to

"Seek a dole from every passing steed."

As the cart rattled past, they rose on the wing in a noisy cloud, and startled the horses. The horse drawing the cart was quieted without harm done; but the horse which carried the rider fell, and hurled him upon the frozen road. He rose, spoke cheerfully to his wife and frightened children, remounted, and rode on. But he had suffered some fatal inward injury, and was never well again. In a short time his wife was a widow with three fatherless boys, the eldest of whom was only five years of age. This eldest of three orphans was WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM.

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Their father, Charles Cunningham, was a merchant in the town of Hamilton. When the father was laid in Hamilton Churchyard, and all his affairs settled, the widow found herself poor enough. But she was a woman of a strong independent spirit, after the old God-fearing manner of her country, and of much more than ordinary talent and force of character, and trustfully and bravely she set about the heavy task of bringing up her fatherless children. The town of Hamilton stands finely on the western slope of the Strath of Clyde. Beautiful by day, the Strath puts on a lurid splendour by night. The smelting fires of innumerable iron furnaces, spreading afar, round the magnificent slopes, and heightening as day declines, might be the camp fires of some mighty host. Hamilton, the centre of an important district, is quite a handsome town, with wide streets, good houses, elegant shops, a new town-hall, county buildings, and a Sebastopol cannon. Few places have asserted their townhood more vigorously. But in those days it was primitive, thatched, and quaint. The burgh prison stood with its gable to Castle Street—then the best in the town. The prisoners from the upper windows employed themselves in fishing for pence among the passengers, with a string and a stocking-foot. The whole locality is now Irish and low. The Dukes of Hamilton have bought up many houses and gardens, and pushed back the town to extend the Park, and a great sullen wall, twenty feet high, now stretches along the whole line of street.

William Cunningham began to go to school at the age of five. It was a school taught by one Kemp,—a little lame man, but not a lame teacher. It stood near the gate of the old ducal palace of Hamilton, but has long since been swept away by the extension of the Park. One evening the young scholar was missing from home, and was sought for in a household panic. At last some one thought of looking in the school, and there sat the child alone, intent on his book. After this, when missed at home, his mother would say, "He'll be in the school again"; and there, accordingly, he was sure to be found. At the age of six, he was able to read fluently. He soon shot ahead of his companions; but the praises he received did

not spoil the modesty of his nature. The boys of Lichfield School are said to have carried little Samuel Johnson shoulder high, owning thus, as Boswell thinks, the predominance of his intellectual vigour. Once, on the occasion of some public exhibition in the school of Hamilton before the magistrates, little Cunningham shewed such cleverness, and was so clearly the foremost boy there, that the rest of the boys carried him shoulder high in triumph through the streets. The boy said nothing to his mother of the ovation given him by his school-fellows. Sometime afterwards the affair came to her knowledge. She asked him why he had never mentioned it. "Mother," said he, "it was very foolish; you would not have me tell you such nonsense."

It is well known—ask the coming man—that a new turnip is one of the pleasantest of summer fruits. One day, William and his brother Andrew, with four or five other boys, had gone into a field on the errand, so aggravating to the agricultural mind, of pulling turnips. As they were busily engaged in selecting their esculents, "the Duke" himself came suddenly upon them. The other boys ran for it, but William Cunningham and his brother stood and faced the responsibilities of the situation. It was never in William Cunningham's nature to shrink from his responsibilities. The Duke demanded his name and his abode. William told them at once.

"Now, tell me the names of the boys who have run away, and I will let you off."

"But I cannot do that."

"You know them, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Then if you don't tell me their names, I will put you in prison."

"I can't help that. I have told you my own name, but I won't tell you theirs."

The Duke of Hamilton of that day was a proud, haughty man, very bitter when thwarted. Baffled by William, he turned to Andrew, and tried to extract the names of the runaways from him; but Andrew was stoutly silent. The Duke threatened the manly little lads, but he threatened them in vain. William would not utter a word to betray his comrades, and Andrew bravely backed

his brother. The Duke gave it up; but the boys lived in misery for days in dread of his threatened jail.

For some years after her husband's death, Mrs Cunningham resided in Hamilton. Then came a change, and she found it necessary to seek a home in her father's house. She removed her family from Hamilton to Lesmahagow, where her father was the tenant of Drafane Farm, which lies in a beautiful part of the country, with sweet diversity of hill and dale. The little river Nethan flows close at hand, between finely wooded banks. Near the point where it joins the Clyde, stands, in the most romantic situation imaginable, the Castle of Craignethan, better known as the Tillietudlem of Sir Walter Scott.

Drafane farmhouse stands on a broad low hill, which commands a wide view of the valley of Clyde. The tree-shaded garden remains as in the days when William Cunningham played there. There was an understood concession to the brothers of all the fallen apples. Such a premium on the law of gravitation was scarcely wise; for gravitation can be tampered with. William had a gift of stone-throwing equal to that of the children of Benjamin, who could "sling stones at an hairbreadth and not miss." The trees surrounding the garden masked his battery, and there was no want of fallen apples. Another farmhouse now stands where the long, one-storey house stood in his time. A *clachan* of six or seven cottages stretches untidily down the northern slope of the hill. Bitter smoke from the calcining of the "black-band" ironstone of the neighbouring mines goes trailing over the ground. Away to the east, the lofty top of Tintock looks down over the ridge of the Dillar hill on the beautiful valley of Clyde, like a giant looking over a garden wall.

Drafane, when the Cunninghams lived there, was an unusually large farm for the district. The arrangement of the land is much altered now. Where different homesteads stand at present, each with its own system of hedgerows and fences, there were then breadths of corn and pasture land spreading away on one side to the "Cauder" water, and on the other to the banks of the Nethan. To work this "breadth of arable and tilth" a large number of

servants was required. On the summer evenings a horn was wont to be blown on a hillock near the house, to announce to the labourers that the welcome "loosing time" was come, and as a signal to the herds to bring in the cattle from the distant pasturages to the milking. This custom of the rustic horn is perhaps quite gone out in this country now; but it will remind those who have travelled in Switzerland of the plaintive Alpine horn, heard amid the mountain ranges at summer eve. The Drafane horn, a gift from his mother, was kept by Principal Cunningham, as an interesting memorial, to his dying day. Visitors may remember to have seen that huge ox horn, yellow with age, and loaded with strange carvings of the rustic knife, as it lay conspicuous on the mantelpiece of his dining-room.

Mr Robert Burns Begg, sister's son to Robert Burns the poet, taught at that time a small side school at a place called Bent, on the estate of Blackwood, in the parish of Lesmahagow, two miles from Drafane. He afterwards became parish schoolmaster of Kinross. The Cunninghams attended his school at Bent in the year 1815. He well remembered the eldest of the three, a remarkable boy with a great curly head, clad in the schoolboy garb of those days—a close blue jacket, to which corduroy trousers were buttoned, and a white frill of a finger broad round the neck.

"William," he says, "was a remarkably engaging boy, and very smart. His blue eyes were always beaming with love, and his light-coloured hair curled up to the very crown of his head. He was very kind and affectionate with other boys; and when conversing with any one, had a habit of throwing his arm around the neck of his companion. He had an insatiable thirst for reading, and especially for reading stories of battles. When he had read all the books containing anything on the favourite subject that were to be found about the place, his mother said to him, 'I'll tell you what, Willie, there's no book that has so many battle stories as the Bible!' On this inducement he fell to, and read the whole Bible through, from Abraham's fight with Chedorlaomer to the battle of Armageddon."

Drafane had another resource for battle stories. A discharged

Peninsular soldier, Roy by name, had drifted thither, and opened a school for the younger children of the neighbourhood. "If a man is fit for nothing else, make him a schoolmaster." The Cunningham boys were all his scholars for a time, till they grew strong enough to walk the distance to the school of Mr Burns Begg. The old soldier frequently afforded them the glad surprise of unexpected holidays, when his potations were so deep as to unfit him for teaching. But he told them glorious stories about the "blood-red fields of Spain," and especially about Vittoria, the last of his battles. The condescending warrior would sit on a dyke, with William Cunningham at his side, and other little folk around him, and pour his tales into their ravished ears.

There is no game at which Scotch boys play more heartily than that of "stackie." It is an autumn game, and comes in season when harvest has filled the barnyard with corn stacks. The exuberant glee and merry shouts of the boys playing among the stacks seem to be a part of "the joy of harvest." The boys of the Bent school were great in this game, and stackie was at its height when Willie Cunningham played. It was not altogether for his powers at play, however, that his schoolfellows courted his company. To stackie, a quieter game succeeded. The boys gathered into a cosy nook among the stacks, to listen to Willie Cunningham speechifying or telling stories, which they were wont to call his "preaching." After a speech among the stacks, he used to break away abruptly, with "the meeting" at his heels striving to get him back to give them another speech. When winter came on, and put a stop to speechifying out of doors, the old soldier's schoolroom was resorted to. There a fire was kept up with coals which the boys brought in alternate contributions. Forms were set, and "preaching" was the order of the evening. Other boys sometimes tried it, but Willie Cunningham was master of the situation.

The old farmer of Drafane had some relation or friend in the office of the *London Courier*, by whom a copy of that paper was regularly sent to him. It was the only daily paper received at that time in those parts. There was a depôt of French prisoners at Lanark, who were allowed to walk within assigned bounds,

extending to four or five miles in a circuit. These sad exiles found out that Drafane farmhouse, by reason of its daily London paper, was a grand mart for the news of the world. A fever for news burned in their homesick hearts, and almost every day some of them broke their bounds to go to Drafane. One spring evening, as the Principal well remembered, he went down with his brothers to Burnfoot, on their customary errand to get the newspaper from the guard of the passing mail coach. They saw the coach coming with a white flag on the top, and the guard as he threw them the paper, shouted high above the rattle of the wheels, "Boney's beat!" This was the first news of the surrender of Paris. The boys ran back, shouting in wild excitement, "Boney's beat!" Near Drafane they met some French prisoners who had come as usual for news. To them in haste they told the news with boyish glee. Next moment they were subdued and awed by seeing those unfortunate warriors weeping sore for their country's disaster.

## DUNSE.

During the time that the widow and her boys lived at Drafane, death twice visited the farmhouse. The stout old grandfather died early in 1814. His son Andrew succeeded him in the lease of the farm, and things went on as before. But exactly a year afterwards, Andrew also died. The lease then fell to another brother of the widow, the Rev. George Cunningham, minister of Dunse, on the east border. He disposed of the lease for the remainder of the time it had to run, to the landlord, the Duke of Hamilton. Then came the displenishing sale; and the widow transferred her family back to Hamilton, where William attended the grammar school for a year or more, and then his mother resolved on removing to Dunse to be near her friends. Besides her brother, the minister there, she had a cousin, William Cunningham, who was married to her sister, established as a banker and writer in the town. Dunse presented another inducement. It was well-off in the matter of education. There was a special school there, got up by gentlemen in the neighbourhood, to prepare boys for the University. The master at

that time was the Rev. Thomas Maule, a man who had a fine antique zeal for the classics, and taught them admirably. The farm of Cheeklaw, about a mile south from Dunse town, was "led" at that time,—that is, one farmer had both that and another farm. Residing on the other, he had the Cheeklaw farmhouse to let, and Mrs Cunningham became the tenant. Fifty years ago, it would be thought rather a good house.

On one side, the windows looked into an extensive nursery garden. A painted board, which loudly lied, told to all passers-by that man-traps and spring guns were set there. The house is now much altered, and the door has been made to open into the nursery. But in the time of the Cunninghams, the entrance was from the farmyard on the other side of the house.

Dunse is a delightful little town in the midst of a rich and fertile country. Even in railway times, it is at a "competitive" distance from any large town, and hence better shops are to be seen there than in many places of more importance. The famous "Law"—which lies besides Bannockburn in a Scotchman's heart—is close to the town, which, in fact, has climbed as far up the Law as it conveniently can. On the top of the hill are still to be seen traces of the earthworks thrown up by that remarkable army in "hodden gray" in the summer of 1689. But, since Leslie's time, the old town has been destroyed by a great fire, and Dunse has rebuilt itself on the other side of the hill, leaving its former site to be still pointed out as the "Brunton," or burnt town.

The school which the Cunningham boys attended, stood in a shady lane, beside the old churchyard. Close to the same churchyard stood also the Parish School, to which Thomas Boston (of the "Fourfold State") went in his day "and there," as he tells, "I was providentially made to see, within an open coffin, in an unripe grave opened, the consuming body just brought to the consistence of thin mortar, and blackish, the which made an impression on me remaining to this day." Another memorable schoolboy once played in that shady lane, Thomas M'Crie, the biographer of Knox and Melville.

William Cunningham left his mark in Mr Maule's school. The

venerable master, now no more, seemed to dilate and grow taller as he spoke of his illustrious scholar. "At the annual examination of 1819," he said, "his extensive acquaintance with the classics of Greece and Rome astonished the examinators." In after years, when the examination day came round, the remark was often made that "while the pupils had acquitted themselves well, there was no Willie Cunningham among them."

A friend has furnished the following tradition. Mr Maule had threatened to flog any boy found cutting the desks or benches. One day he found a desk freshly cut. Getting no answer to the general question, "Who cut that desk ? " he said, "William Cunningham, did you cut it ?" "No." "Do you know who cut it ?" "Yes." "Who did it ?" No answer. "If you do not tell me, I must flog you ; will you tell who did it ?" "No." The flogging thereupon began, or was to begin, when his schoolfellow, John Thomson, started up and said, "Don't flog him ; it was me that did it." Some time before, the two boys had had a battle, which had ended in mutual respect. I find it recorded by Mr Thomson's widow, in a letter of reminiscences addressed to a member of Dr Cunningham's family : "Once they quarrelled hotly, and fought it out until both, I suppose, were literally beaten to their heart's content ; and from that time until death, their friendship continued without change or check. I have often heard my husband say that of all men he ever knew, Dr Cunningham was the most essentially true, single-hearted, and thoroughly unselfish. These are what we have all felt to be his crowning qualities—exemplified in a thousand ways."

"He was a determined lover of impartial justice and fair play," Mr Maule said ; "ever ready to put forth his great bodily strength to back the right among his schoolfellows,"—just as in after days he was wont to back the right with great strength of another kind. Mr Maule often watched with delight "with what energy he grappled with a difficult passage ; while his fine, mild, but penetrating blue eye was lifted to his teacher from time to time, appealing for the truth and correctness of his translation." "His teacher will never forget," adds Mr Maule, "the happy influence which his whole

conduct and habits exercised over all his class-fellows, and all the pupils then attending the school." Thirty years afterwards, Dr Cunningham went down the shady lane, and stopped opposite to the old school. "I received the most important part of my education there," he said; and repeated it, as his manner was, when he wished to say a thing with emphasis.

The annual game of handball between married and single on Fastern's E'en* is a great affair in the town of Dunse. The door of the Parish Church is set wide open. The ball is thrown up in the market-place. The married players endeavour to drive it, or carry it, into the church. The unmarried strive to get it to a mill, two miles from the town, which forms the other goal. The players, in a mass, close round the ball, and the tug of war begins. Sometimes the eager crowd will sway to and fro for an hour, before either side can advance a yard towards its goal. Then the single men, perhaps, get the ball passed to their rear, and a player, extricating himself from the crowd, speeds away on the road to the mill, and gets a good start before his evasion is discovered. Then the married men pursue, and the single hinder, and the tide surges backwards and forwards till one or the other goal be won. Boys, not too small, are allowed to join the host of the single, and nimble players they make. There was no keener player in this sturdy Border game than William Cunningham, and in the crowd of Fastern's E'en, his lithe figure and curly head were always to be seen.

When Mrs Cunningham came to Dunse, her worldly wealth did not reach forty pounds a year. This was all her income for many years, but her good management made the most of it. Her brother, the minister, was kind enough. Her cousin, the banker, a vigorous and prosperous man of business, would often have helped her with his purse in the upbringing of her boys. She freely went to this most excellent man for advice in all her affairs; she lived in most sisterly friendship with him; but she never would accept the gift of a single shilling. The brave woman had a sore struggle for many years; but she did her part nobly, and brought up her boys independently. William wore no clothes but such as were entirely of

* Shrove Tuesday.

his mother's making till he went to college. She was a tall, stately-looking woman, and a strict disciplinarian over her boys, to whom "she never needed to speak twice." Her family, as they could clearly trace, were descended from the old Covenanting Pedens. Alexander Peden left the cave which was his lurking-place in "the Killing Time," to die in his brother's house at Auchincloich, near Cumnock. From that brother the Cunninghams sprung. "Peden," says Dodds in his 'Scottish Covenanters,' "was a man of a massive frame, and a noble and impressive countenance. . . . . One old journalist, relating some of his conversations, begins with this expression, 'and he laid his heavy head upon my shoulder,' implying weight and massiveness." Peden's massive build, as well as Peden's fearless spirit, came down to our Principal.

William Cunningham was thirteen years old, when one evening, as his mother proceeded "to take the Book" for the usual family worship, he said, "Mother, I think I can do that for you." She was surprised, but allowed him to try. The boy read a chapter, and then knelt down and prayed. From that time forward, he conducted family worship every night as long as he remained in his mother's house.

His choice of the ministry, as the work of his life, was early and decided. It seemed to be the result of long and deep thought. His mother asked him, searchingly, if he was aware of the deep responsibilities of the pastor's office. "He knew and felt all that," he said, "but still he felt that he *must* go on."

## CHAPTER II.

### *COLLEGE.*

EARLY in November 1820, Cunningham left home to enter the University. It was on a dark winter morning that he travelled on the outside of the Dunse coach to Edinburgh, where he was soon established in a lodging at the north-east corner of St Patrick Square; and there he lived for four sessions. In after days, he never passed that way without looking up to the window of the old familiar room.

It was the time of frantic excitement about the "Queen's Trial" when the young student arrived. Edinburgh, like other towns, burned much vain tallow in a grand illumination to celebrate the doubtful triumph of Caroline the Foolish over George the Gross. This was the first of city spectacles to William Cunningham. Much window-breaking, and a bayonet charge on the mob, but no skin scratched, gave variety to that lively evening.

It was a vehement time, and politics intruded their ferocity everywhere. John Wilson—"Christopher North"—had just carried the Moral Philosophy Chair in Edinburgh against Sir William Hamilton—that is, Tory had carried it against Whig—after a party contest described by leonine John as "of a most savage nature," and quite beyond our powers to conceive in these decorous days.

The Scottish Universities divide the year into two nearly equal parts. The winter half-year is the session or term, and the summer half-year is the vacation. Two or three sessions of attendance in the Latin class, and as many in the Greek, two or three sessions in Mathematics, one in Logic, one in Moral Philosophy, and one in Natural Philosophy, make up the curriculum of arts. These classes

are made to interlap, so that the whole attendance can be overtaken conveniently enough in four years. Falling in with the usual track, William Cunningham's work during the first session was to attend the Latin class under Professor Pillans, and the Greek, under Professor Dunbar. One of his fellow-students was John Brown Patterson, a little, dark, curly lad in spectacles, most gentle and loveable, and of rare promise. He was older than Cunningham by nearly two years. His widowed mother lived in Edinburgh, and he had been a distinguished scholar in the High School there. From the rectorship of the High School, Pillans had just been promoted to the professorial chair, so that Patterson, in changing from school to college, did not change his teacher. He carried with him an extraordinary share of classical knowledge. One is astonished at specimens of his Greek and Latin poetry, written in those early years, and preserved in a published memoir of his life. The High School dux, as the first few weeks of the session shewed, was the best and foremost scholar in the Latin class at College. But if the High School boy was first, the younger boy from the Border was clearly second. Patterson and Cunningham became most loving friends, till death parted them in their manhood. Old classfellows to this day never speak of the one without the other.

Boyish friendships are lightly made and commonly soon forgotten; but the friendships which William Cunningham made in his first college year were to last for life. "In the first year of his attendance at the University," says the Rev. John Bonar of Greenock, "I made his acquaintance, and prevailed on him, and John B. Patterson, and Robert Johnstone, to join the Diagnostic Society." He never to his dying day had any friends more loved and trusted than these.

That Diagnostic Society to which Dr Bonar introduced him, is quite a power in Edinburgh College. It was begun in the house of Mr Bonar's father. It then met in Robert Haldane's Tabernacle in Leith Walk, and there Cunningham made his first attempt at a speech. It next migrated to the vestry of St Andrew's Church, and finally rested in a cryptic apartment near the college gate. It was called at first the Speculating Society, then the Speculative, and lastly the Diagnostic, or Thorough Knowledge Society.

In those days, when the penny post was not, our young student's chief or only communication with home was through the carrier. Thomas Penney, the Dunse carrier, was an important institution for that pleasant town. Every week his slow-plodding cart went to Edinburgh and returned. Besides the ponderable goods which he carried, he was a vivacious retailer of news; and for the sake of a little talk from home, William Cunningham loved to repair to the yard of the "Harrow" Inn, where, in ante-railway days, a synod of carriers met each Wednesday. Every third week he received a box by Thomas Penney's cart, containing his clothes, washed and done up by loving hands, and fragrant of the gowans of Cheeklaw. Provisions, too, were sent in the box—welcome additions to his town fare, but more welcome still because they brought up

"Some thoughts sweet and kind."

What Scottish student can ever forget his box from home, packed by a mother's hands—that toiling, loving, venerated mother!

That book-hunger which whole libraries could not satisfy, was already strong in young Cunningham. The boy was already a book-collector. He had a peculiar, restless, shuffling motion with his feet at study, a habit which never left him. To sit with these restless feet unslippered was the ruin of stockings, and his stockings came to Cheeklaw a doleful wreck. Strict injunctions to buy a pair of slippers, and money to pay for them, were sent. But the stockings continued to reach Cheeklaw as woe-begone as ever. Explanation was demanded, and it came out that the slipper-money had gone to purchase some irresistible book.

At the end of his first session at college, Cunningham gained the Brown bursary of £10.

His first three vacations were spent under his mother's roof at Cheeklaw. The second summer he began to keep a journal of his reading, which he continued for the next six years, up to the termination of his course in Divinity. The books he read are carefully classified, with sub-divisions, under the heads of *Classics, General Literature, Philosophy and Science, Theology.* His reading, during the five months of the vacation first chronicled, amounts to eighty volumes. "The whole of 'Homer's Iliad'" in Greek appears

as one of the books read—not amiss for a boy under seventeen. By this time he had acquired French, for he reads Molière. Barrow's Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy, and Jeremy Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium, also appear among the books read that summer.

The entire list contains 530 distinct works, besides pamphlets, magazines, &c. It affords glimpses at once of the progress of his mind, and of the subjects that successively occupied or excited the public mind at that fermenting period. He reads Greek and Latin in immense quantities, and French in great abundance. There is evidently a strong tendency to metaphysics, but gradually theology carries it over everything. All the controversies of the day engage the young divine: "Sir John Leslie's case," when the old Moderates of the Scotch Church became suddenly hot in their zeal for orthodoxy: "The Apocrypha Controversy," when the great axe of Robert Haldane gleamed in the forest, and was lifted up on thick trees: "Dr Inglis on Church Establishments," when the Voluntary war was beginning. Many odd volumes and broken sets appear in the list, significant of the difficulty of access to books in far-off country quarters. Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton, Swift, Washington Irving, Scott, Byron, and the Ettrick Shepherd, indicate that lighter literature was not forgotten.

In his second session, besides the classes of Greek and Latin, he attended those of Logic and Mathematics. In the third winter besides continuing his attendance upon the classes of Greek, Latin, and Mathematics, he studied Moral Philosophy under Professor Wilson, whom, with loving emphasis, Edinburgh students called "the Professor." His college friendships had opened to him a few houses in the city. "Young Cunningham," says Dr Alexander Patterson, brother of his classfellow, "was one of several likeminded youths who were then wont to visit us. But Cunningham was he towards whom my brother, and erelong I myself, felt most of the blended respect and love which, even in young hearts, eminent talents, a generous nature and downright honesty, are fitted to inspire. All these characteristics pertained to Cunningham, and were even then prelusive of what in maturer life he approved himself to be."

The summer of 1823 was the last that he spent at Cheeklaw. If

let alone, the young student would sit almost continuously at his books; but if his brothers or cousins wished him to join in their plays, or in a walk, or to help them in any way, he rose from his work with his usual happy smile, and did it. A mile down the road from Cheeklaw runs the Verter Burn, in which name it needs the aid of a local interpreter to find the *Virtue* Burn, so called from the reputed virtues of a well springing on its margin. A large tree, supporting what is called a "water-gate," lay from bank to bank of the stream, and it was a feat for rustic lads to walk across it. The children liked to see this feat performed, and cousin William used to do it as often as they asked him.

His ruling passion comes out strongly in a letter to his friend Patterson, written this summer:—"I bought a copy of Bishop Hoadley's Discourses on the terms of our acceptance with God, and several other scarce books in divinity, very cheap, at a sale of books in Dunse lately. I got St Chrysostom on the Priesthood, with a Discourse of St Gregory of Nazianzus on the same subject, with Notes, and a Latin translation, for sixpence; the whole works of Lactantius, excellent order, with Notes, for the same sum; the Apostolic Constitutions, by Clemens Romanus, for twopence. I bought also, for small sums, Clarke on the Attributes, Waterland's Vindication of Christ's Divinity, Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity, and several others."

Considering that the writer was still under eighteen years of age, it must be owned that we have here a pretty decided indication of a strong natural taste.

At this time, he was so sturdy a Tory that he would read no newspaper but the *John Bull*. "When I first knew him," says Dr Patterson, "he was a Tory in civil, and a Moderate in ecclesiastical politics. An admirer of Inglis in the latter of these departments, he was wont, in terms of surpassing laudation, to celebrate Burke, and especially Pitt in the other."

During his fourth session at college, he renounced his sympathy with Moderatism. "In that year," continues Dr Patterson, "he came within the sphere of evangelical preaching; and during the winter, and for several years thereafter, he attended, with great

relish and hearty appreciation, the ministry of Dr Gordon, and very frequently that of Dr John Brown. Indeed, I have a strong impression that to these two distinguished ministers of Christ, as instruments in a higher hand than man's, he was indebted for his 'translation from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'" Mr Bonar testifies that "his change was thorough, decisive, and manifest to all; but those who were constantly with him, and to whom he revealed himself freely, saw its depth and intensity." The same early and greatly loved friend, speaking of the early years of his College course, says: "All this while he was without God. He was virtuous, but he was not holy. He was amiable, but he was not renewed. He did not neglect the Bible, but he believed not in Christ. He was not far from the kingdom of God, but it was rather its bulwarks he admired than its fellowship he sought for. At length the Spirit touched his heart, and the truth shone full upon his mind. By the end of his third literary year, the grand question of his relation to God had risen almost unconciously within him; and he earnestly waited Sabbath after Sabbath on the ministers whom he was in the habit of hearing (at that time those of the Moderate party), with a view of being directed how a lost sinner might be saved. To that first of questions, however, as he used to declare, 'not one of them gave him an answer.' And his anxiety might have ended in a profounder sleep. But what man could not furnish, he won from the Bible, and on his knees."

A lady has kindly communicated reminiscences of those student days. This may be the best place to introduce them.

"My acquaintance with Dr Cunningham began at the time of his coming to Edinburgh to attend College. Dunse having been my mother's native town, she was well acquainted with all his relations, and cordially welcomed the young student, then in his seventeenth year. His features, even then, were strongly marked—his person slender—his appearance interesting—his manner unassuming—and everything about him impressed one with the singular simplicity and straightforwardness of his character. As time went on he became more and more intimate in our family, and I being seldom from home—more seldom than any of the other members—came to

be very much on the footing of a sister, doing any sisterly offices I could for him.

"At that period there was nothing to impress me with the idea of his being *religious*, though I supposed that he must be so, as he intended to be a minister. He had been associated with, and accustomed to hear, Moderate preachers, and then generally attended the Old Greyfriars' Church, having a great admiration for the powerful intellect of Dr John Inglis—besides agreeing with him in Church politics. Happily, however, for himself, he became intimate with a number of superior and estimable young men—fellow-students—much about his own age and standing—the Rev. John Patterson, afterwards of Falkirk; Rev. J. J. Bonar, now of Greenock; the late Robert Johnstone, W.S.; and, at a later period, the Rev. Dr Bannerman, late of the Free Church College; Rev. W. B. Cunningham, Prestonpans; Rev. Mr Duncan, late of Newcastle, &c. They always wrote of each other, and were designated by us, as the 'Coterie,' and I feel assured exerted a most favourable influence on one another from the commencement of their friendship.

"When Dr Cunningham began to appreciate Gospel truth, he frequently went to hear the morning lectures of Dr Thomas M'Crie, the venerable biographer of Knox and Melville; but for the most part he attended the ministry of Dr Gordon, first at Hope Park, and then in the New North Church, to which Dr Gordon was translated. During his attendance at the Divinity Hall he used often to deplore the inefficiency of the Professors who filled the different Chairs, and so hailed with delight Dr Chalmers' appointment. In a letter, received in the autumn of 1827, I find him saying, 'with Thomson in St George's, and Chalmers in the Divinity Chair, we may hope that the time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, has come.' At first, Dr Chalmers, taking up too hasty an impression of him, described him to a friend as 'a fierce, redheaded* Moderate;' but he very soon formed a different estimate of him on personal acquaintance, and gave him a cordial recommendation on going to Greenock.

* An instance of genius idealising. It may be congruous to a 'fierce Moderate' to be redheaded, but Cunningham was not so. No doubt there was a character about his hair as impressive as if it *had* been red.

"He had evidently undergone a very decided change, spiritually, after a few years' residence in Edinburgh; one of the principal means being the singularly impressive ministry of Dr Gordon, for whom, to the last, he cherished the greatest reverence and affection. One Sabbath evening in 1828 (3d August), he had been reading to my mother and myself one of Dr Gordon's sermons, in the only volume published during his life, inscribed to the Hope Park congregation. The text was 'Being born again by the Word of God.' When he had closed, on my mother leaving the room, he said to me, '*That* was the sermon that most deeply impressed me, and first led me to embrace right views of the truth.' I, of course, felt much interest in hearing this from himself, and immediately marked with my pencil the sermon, and the date of his reading it.

"He used often to bring an essay or address, delivered at the debating or some other society with which he was connected, and read it aloud as we sat at work. Once I remember him standing, manuscript in hand, with his back to the fire, facing his little audience; and, getting interested in his subject, he became very vehement in his gesticulations, so that my mother looked up from her work, and said, 'Willie, Willie, if you go on at that rate in the pulpit, you'll knock all the dust out, and blind the poor old bodies sitting below.' So that essay ended in a laugh.

"Being first in lodgings, and then resident tutor in private families, he had no convenient place in which to deposit his many handsomely-bound books—prizes, or presents from admiring friends. From time to time, therefore, he had brought them to leave under my care; and when the period arrived which was to transfer him to Greenock, and he came to remove the volumes which had so long had their place in my small bookcase, it seemed as if a friendship of so many years' standing, and in many respects so interesting to me, had now come to a close. He knew and saw how deeply I felt it, and evinced no little emotion himself. Coming back on the following day, on my entering the room, I was surprised to find him pacing backwards and forwards in a state of considerable excitement. Referring to our last meeting, he immediately said, 'I have just

been praying for you.' I need not say that this touched me *even more* than the removal of the books had done.

"There are other reminiscences of my beloved friend which I cherish; but, as you may think of those I have given, they are not very suitable for insertion in the life of such a man as Dr Cunningham."

His fourth session was occupied with the study of Natural Philosophy under Sir John Leslie; and at the end of it, Professor Pillans recommended him for tutor in the family of a country gentleman, Mr Scott of Synton. A tutorship, with bed, board, and forty or fifty pounds a year, is a great help to many a Scotch aspirant to the ministry. It is the first humble step on the way up. When the family which he enters is possessed of sense and kindliness, the situation is comfortable enough. The Scotts of Synton lived in George Square, Edinburgh, during the winter months; removing to the family seat in the country in summer. Synton is a beautiful property on the water of Aill, known to anglers. It is a piece of Selkirkshire set down in the midst of Roxburghshire. Of old, it belonged, with much other land there, to Glasgow Cathedral, and the Bishops often came to enjoy the sport of falconry among the sweet pastoral hills. Cunningham went down with the Scotts to Synton in May 1824, and resided with them in country and in town till the spring of 1827. These were years of anguish to the nation. In 1825 seventy banks broke in three weeks; and the commercial prostration of one year was followed by the drought and famine of the next. "The hind calved in the field, and forsook it; because there was no grass."

The only reminiscence of Cunningham which seems to linger about Synton is that he was a "very quiet, retiring young man." Its proximity to Dunse enabled him to enjoy the pleasure of frequent visits to his mother's house, when his gentle presence brought gladness to all the little circle. If the happy group of brothers and cousins wanted play he joined in it heartily. But if they were in a quieter mood, he seized the opportunity to turn the conversation to the one thing needful, "and," says a survivor of that pleasant company, "most earnestly and decidedly, but

with a kindness and gentleness peculiar to himself, he would say to us words which even at the time sunk more deeply than he knew, and which never have been, and never will be, forgotten while we live."

The strong bent of his mind appears in a letter to his friend Patterson during his first summer at Synton:—"I have spent a good deal of time in reading the famous Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, more in consequence of Locke's well-known recommendation of him—'If you wish your son to be a good reasoner, make him read Chillingworth'—than from the subject of the work; though I have always, I don't know why, felt considerable interest in the examination of the Roman Catholic Controversy. The work, I am inclined to think, is well deserving of the high character Locke has given it. The author is certainly a most acute and subtle disputant."

In the beginning of November the Synton family returned to town, and Cunningham entered the Divinity Hall. Hugh Miller was working at Niddry House that winter, and perhaps the two men who were afterwards to love each other so well, may have met, all unconsciously, as the mason took his Saturday rambles in the town.

According to the evil custom then tolerated, the Professors of Divinity were all clergymen holding parochial charges at the same time. An old Edinburgh student thus describes Brunton, the Professor of Hebrew:*—"An old gentleman with a great, squab, bald head, fat, pinkish-white cheeks, portly, and punctiliously clean general appearance and very fat calves neatly encased in black stockings. How so fat-faced and placid a man, in such specklessly clean linen and apparel, should have been so near an approach to inutility personified, I do not know." A very near approach certainly; yet it is doubtful whether one or both of his colleagues did not make a nearer approach still. Dr Ritchie, Professor of Theology—the same who as incumbent of St Andrew's, Glasgow, began the organ controversy in the Church of Scotland—was described by Carlyle, as "simply raying out darkness for a quarter of a century." Dr Meiklejohn, Professor of Church History, was a

* In *Macmillan's Magazine.*

large, jolly man, who had a habit of yawning when engaged in public prayer, and these yawns seemed to express truly enough his interest in the whole business.

The students quite freely indulged in newspapers and conversation in the classes. Every day thirty or forty of them, after answering to their names at roll-call, slipped out, and wasted no more time on what they felt to be a sham. "We called out '*Here!*' but the next moment we were there no longer." This was Dr Cunningham's own description of these doings in after days.

### EDUCATING INFLUENCES.

The education for the work of his life was due to other powers than any within the classroom. The controversies of the time formed his mind. Controversies made Edinburgh in those days a very cave of Æolus, full of struggling wrecks and the din of tempests. These controversies, unintelligible to the hasty beholder as the airy "skirmishes of the kites and crows," had all a plan and a purpose, if we but believe in the providence of God.

In the year 1820, war was declared between the Moderates in the Church and the *Christian Instructor.* The managers in the General Assembly, tortured by the trenchant periodical, passed a vote of censure upon it as "highly injurious and calumnious." The *Instructor* enjoyed the storm. If they wanted battle, they should have it. Month after month, the *Instructor* lashed them; Assembly after Assembly, it kept them in fear. The evangelical party gathered courage as their champion dealt his telling blows. Other controversies, powerful in forming ecclesiastical character, contributed to the training of Cunningham for his great part in the discussions of a later period. The "Little Dunkeld Case" formed the subject of a three years' strife. Little Dunkeld, at the mouth of the Highlands, is a parish of 3000 people, four-fifths of them Gaelic-speaking. A person ignorant of Gaelic was presented for minister to the parish. The Moderates would have settled this man as spiritual instructor of a people whose language he did not understand, if they had not been prevented by the small majority of eight in the General Assembly. "Little Dunkeld," said Andrew Thomson, "is the mouth

of the Highlands, and ought certainly to have a Gaelic tongue in it." It seems strange that there should have been any controversy about such a case. But it was necessary that the question should be raised: "For what use does a gospel ministry exist?" Much came out of that question. It led at last to the Disruption of 1843.

The controversy regarding pluralities was the same struggle under another name—the struggle to secure a qualified, a labouring, and an efficient ministry. The abuse of pluralities in the Church of Scotland was at that time amazingly barefaced. Thus, we read of "one individual uniting in his single person the offices of Professor of Humanity, and Natural History, and Chemistry, with the collegiate charge of a tremendous parish of 20,000 people." "I see it," said an honest countryman to a pluralist, "I see it; you just want to make a bye job of our souls."

That was the time, too, when the Apocrypha controversy raged. Robert Haldane being in London, called at the office of the British and Foreign Bible Society in East Street, and forgot his umbrella. That umbrella had consequences. Returning for it next day, Haldane got into conversation with a sub-committee, and was surprised and pained to learn that it was the practice of the Society to intermingle the Apocrypha with their editions of the Bible, under the idea of rendering the Word of God more acceptable to the people of the Greek and Romish Churches. The great Apocrypha controversy ensued, a fierce battle that raged many years, agitating the whole Christian world, and involving the whole question of the canon and inspiration of Scripture.

As Andrew Thomson said to Robert Haldane, "All of human infirmity that now obscures this great work will pass away like smoke, but the flame will continue to burn, and prove a beacon to distant posterity." It has been said with truth of the great champion of a pure Bible: "He drove home to the mind of the Protestant world the conviction that the Bible must be purified from this remaining taint. It ought to have been accomplished by Luther; its accomplishment will preserve for ever the name of Andrew Thomson."

To that time, also, belongs the great agitation for the abolition

of slavery in our West Indian Islands, in which Wilberforce and Buxton won their fame, and Brougham did valiantly; and which issued, after a struggle of so many years, in freedom to 800,000 slaves, and our deliverance from a great national crime.

These controversies were Cunningham's school. He took a profound interest in them. "I remember," says Dr Patterson, "how, when one of the controversies which raged in Edinburgh in his early days, had somewhat fretted and discomposed his mind, he went and bought James's work on Christian Charity, alleging that he greatly needed admonition with respect to that grace." The public battles of the time were fought over again by the students in their debating societies. "The spirit and animation of these juvenile proceedings are extraordinary; and the perfection of the drill for public life which college lads have contrived for themselves is quite wonderful."

Not long after he had entered the Hall, great abuses were found to exist in the management of the theological library; and to secure their correction, and prevent their recurrence, a committee of students was organised, of which Cunningham was the secretary. This was the first controversy in which he had ever engaged, but he threw himself into it with great energy, and carried it on unweariedly for more than three years. Small as it now appears, it involved a collision with the whole theological faculty, and led to legal consultation with James Moncreiff and Thomas Thomson, as counsel for the students. Much time was in this way consumed, and a good deal of discussion was needed. Minutes had to be kept, memorials had to be drawn up, counsel had to be instructed. But never did Cunningham seem more in his element than when carrying on this case; and a friend well remembers that once, after a long day's sederunt on the matter, when he was asked, "Are you not tired of controversy?" his reply was: "If my life is spared, it will be spent in controversy, I believe."

In 1827, a few young men, students for the Church, formed themselves, into a "Church Law Society." Its object was to cultivate acquaintance with the history, constitution, laws, and forms of the Church of Scotland. In the course of its existence, the

Society achieved a printed volume, "The Book of Styles," whose red cover was long a familiar object on the table beside the clerk in church courts.

At the meetings of the Society, an essay was read by one of the members, and then the subject, like the football at Dunse, was flung up for discussion. A heavy, folio volume, in shape and size like a ledger, was procured, into which it was intended that each essayist should copy his essay. The most part of this great book remains blank paper to this day, only three or four of the essayists having had the patience to copy out their essays. Among these, fortunately, was William Cunningham, who wrote the Introductory Essay. It is called "An Essay on the Constitution of the Church of Scotland," and occupies forty-seven pages of the great book. Considering that it was written by a young man of two-and-twenty, the remarkable thing about it is, that there is not the slightest flavour of youth in the whole of it. It is closely and securely reasoned, and every position in it bears unquestionable traces of having been elaborately thought out. The very same views of the nature and inherent powers of the Church of Christ, the very same singularly moderate but singularly firm Presbyterianism, the very same views of the peculiar constitutional standing of the Church of Scotland, exactly as he was wont to assert and maintain them in mature life, are all there. Cunningham's writings usually defy extracts. Everything of his is so logically compact, that the whole must be read in order to get the effect of any part. But the following passage from the Church Law Society Essay is extremely characteristic, and must not be omitted:—

"Though the rights of the Church are confirmed and sanctioned to her by the law of the land, it is not to be supposed for a moment that they are derived originally from that authority; especially when, as in our own Church, the State has expressly sanctioned the claim which the church advances to these rights from her intrinsic and inherent power as a Church. It was a missing of this distinction, simple and obvious as it is, which occasioned the broad and unqualified assertion of the infidel doctrine of Hobbes in that strange display of ignorance, folly, and arrogance which was made by the

supreme civil judge of Scotland in the General Assemby before last (1826)—a doctrine which made the Church in the fullest sense the tool and creature of the State. The doctrine was substantially this, that the Church of Scotland has no power or authority *as a Church*, but derives whatever power or authority she has, or can have, from the State; a doctrine, the very reverse of which is asserted in express terms in our Confession of Faith, and is of course confirmed by the law of the land itself. Had the doctrine of the learned judge been the law of the land, then the Church of Scotland would have been bound to have renounced her connection with the State which had thus deprived her of her inherent and inalienable right as a Church of Christ."

The supreme civil judge of Scotland whose speech is thus commented on was the Right Honourable Charles Hope, Lord President of the Court of Session. Citizens of Edinburgh yet remember his erect figure and determined step, as he walked the streets with a staff of the old school as tall as himself. "He was," Lord Cockburn says, "a man of a hot temperament not cooled by a sound head." We shall have more of him anon. The occasion of his speech in the General Assembly of 1826 was a debate on the subject of pluralities. The evangelical party had renewed their attack on that great abuse. Godly Makgill of Glasgow, outspoken Carment of Rosskeen, and other earnest men lifted up their voices against it. The Lord President was a member of Assembly, and took upon him to lecture them roundly. "It was in vain," he said, "for the Church to talk of inherent powers. It has neither legal nor delegated powers except what it has received from Parliament."

During the year 1827 and the half of 1828, Cunningham lived as tutor in a family where his work appears to have been uninteresting enough, but he did it faithfully. As Samuel Johnson said of the dull book which he had undertaken to read, "Why, sir, I cannot say that I like it much; but I'll go through with it." When the duties of this situation became too irksome, he gave it up, and betook himself to private teaching while living in lodgings with his brothers Andrew and Charles, who were now in Edinburgh learning the writer and accountant business. The three brothers

occupied a room and two bed-closets in Adam Street. Andrew took charge of the housekeeping, and was notable for making the most of their slender means. Dr Chalmers, at Kilmany, invented a coffee of his own, the beverage being an infusion of burnt rye. Some ingenious shopkeeper in Edinburgh invented a coffee also, made of roasted oats. Andrew Cunningham bought a supply for breakfast; and William, with an utter indifference to small comforts which characterised him all his life, placidly drank the gruel-like beverage without a single remark.

During his last session at the Divinity Hall, he attended a class of Anatomy under Dr Knox, who was in great repute then as a lecturer and demonstrator. Sir George Sinclair and Lord Glenorchy, afterwards Marquis of Breadalbane, attended the class that session. It was remarked among the students that subjects for dissection were very plentiful that winter,—a fact which came to have a shocking significance when the dreadful story of the West Port murders broke out immediately afterwards. There could be no doubt that the bodies on which they had seen the demonstrations given were those of the victims in those appalling atrocities, by which, as Sir Walter Scott said, the beggar had lost his privilege of being safe from robbery, and the poet's saying was no longer true—

"Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator."

Meanwhile his correspondence with his friend Patterson goes steadily on. Books read and essays written occupy, as may be supposed, a good deal of it. An essay, for instance, on the Evidences, and "the controversy between Mearns and Chalmers," leads him, as in after days, into wide mazes of reading. The literature "on the origin of evil" has to be read up, among other departments; and here he "can as yet hardly form any estimate of its satisfactoriness as a solution of the whole of this very difficult question." In later days he had formed a decided estimate. Not without interest, we see Clarke's *à priori* argument carrying him captive. "Law* reasons very strenuously and very ably against it." But "I don't think that Law is successful. To be sure, every person capable of understanding must, I think, have a predilection for this

* Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle.

celebrated argument, and wish it to be conclusive. For there is something very sublime in the simplicity of the argument by which the existence of the infinite and eternal Being is deduced immediately from the nature and existence of space and duration. The argument, indeed, is so simple, that its conclusiveness must be determined, not so much by reasoning, as by a simple appeal to consciousness."

On which follows a compact statement of the gist of it, and what the acceptance or rejection of it must turn upon. Yet though he sympathises with Clarke, he cannot but admire Law; and so he gets his "Considerations:"—

"He is one of those *sleepers and filthy dreamers,* as Warburton calls them, who deny the immateriality and natural immortality of the soul, and, of course, its existence as a sentient and percipient being between death and the resurrection."

Here follows a brief and complete indication of the relation of this view to Socinianism, especially in its bearing on Christology and the Atonement, quite in the style of the notes on books which his students knew so well. Yet he can forgive Law much for one thing:—

"One thing I like very much in Law's works is the great number of references he makes to other authors who have already treated of these subjects. It is a kind of knowledge of which I am very fond."

In November 1828 Dr Chalmers came to Edinburgh, and Cunningham's connection with the Library immediately brought them into contact.

"Dr Chalmers came to town, and was installed on Thursday se'ennight. He sent a message to me that night, and I had a long conversation with him next morning on the subject of the Divinity Library. I have talked a good deal with him, not only about the Library, but also about his plans of teaching; and from all I have seen and heard, both in public and in private, I have no doubt, looking only to the natural operation of means, that he will prove an instrument of almost incalculable usefulness, and that his appointment will form a bright era in the history of our Church. It is impossible not to indulge the hope that the time to favour our Zion, yea, the set time, is come."

The following is not exactly the subject on which those who only half knew Cunningham would expect him to become enthusiastic. No doubt Dr Chalmers swept all before him in the rush of his eloquence. But it was in the hearer as well as in the orator. Cunningham had in him, and kept to the end, that which thrilled to the assertion and vindication of the main Christian interests, and the vitalities of the Christian experience. It might be his lot to spend much of his life in harness, contending on the borders against Edom and Moab. But what moved his arm and animated his battle was that which those frontiers defended—the length and breadth of the Promised Land, and that goodly mountain and Lebanon :—

"Chalmers' first lecture lasted an hour and three-quarters. It was most decidedly successful—worthy of the man, the occasion, and the subject. It contained a general view of the subjects and divisions of theological science, and a view of the general principles of philosophic investigation, as applicable to theology. He concluded with a splendid pleading in behalf of men of imagination and feeling against the charge of being mere declaimers; and shewed, with great strength of argument and force of illustration, that in theology, the feelings and emotions which the contemplation of truth is fitted to excite are the ultimate and terminating object of our labours ; and that the discovery and establishment of truths, or the operations of the understanding on divine things, are essential, indeed, but still essential only as means to an end—that is, as the proper means of producing emotion or feeling in a rational being."

It can be discerned, also, that there has been speculation in the community and among the students, whether Dr Chalmers, with all his eloquence and power, will prove well enough read, and sufficiently careful of doctrinal accuracy, for the work of a Professor of Divinity. No doubt, those of the Moderate side have been doubtful and supercilious on this subject. Cunningham, as the champion of the Evangelicals in the Divinity Hall, has doubtless had his private anxieties, looking forward to possible weak points in the Professor which would have to be covered and defended. All the more does he triumph in announcing that—

"The most surprising, and at the same time the most valuable,

feature in all his lectures, has been the singular *soundness and correctness** of the views and opinions which they brought before us. Upon all the difficult subjects of theology, and the connection between natural theology and the evidences of Christianity; and where, perhaps, he was more likely still to have failed, on the nature aud importance of the relative objects and spheres of Biblical criticism and systematic theology, his views have been as judicious, the lights in which he has viewed the subject have been as correct, as if he had been one of those cold and heartless syllogisers whom he ridiculed in his first lecture as dealing only in the 'osteology,' the 'technology,' and the 'mere nominalities of science.'"

Who does not see the expression of approving satisfaction on this student's face as the lecture clears the rocks he knows so well? who does not hear the decisive utterances as he issues from the class, which make it plain that if any one has any objection to make to this professor, such objector's downfall is prepared for him then and there?

James Begg came to Edinburgh that winter to enjoy a closing session under Chalmers. He joined a debating society connected with the University. It was the hot time of the Row heresy, and the subject of debate one evening was, Whether assurance is, or is not, of the essence of faith? The debate was opened for the affirmative by one student. Then a very tall and thin young man rose and delivered a speech on the other side, of astonishing power, and shewing a wonderful command of language. This was William Cunningham; and Dr Begg says that, magnificently as he spoke in after years, he perhaps never surpassed this speech in the debating society. If, according to Macaulay, every speaker learns his art at the expense of his audience, few speakers have ever cost their audiences less than William Cunningham.

In the autumn of 1828, when he was looking forward to receive his licence to preach the gospel, he expressed himself thus on the choice of a profession, in a letter to his friend Patterson:—

"I don't think it at all necessary, to entitle a man to adopt any profession, that he be, or think himself, more fit for that particular

* Underlined in the original.

profession than for any other. I think myself entitled and called upon to become a minister, although I believe there are other professions for which I am more fit than this; for there are professions, the duties of which I could discharge *adequately*, which is a great deal more than I expect ever to be able to do with regard to the duties of the pastoral office. All that appears to be necessary to entitle a man to adopt a profession is simply, *that he be fit for that profession.* When a man is fit for any particular profession, *his own inclination to engage in it*, concurring with an opportunity in God's providence, seems to me all that is necessary to constitute a call upon him to adopt it."

Early in December 1828, he went out to Dunse to be licensed by the Presbytery there to preach the gospel. A friend met him in a state of great agitation on his way to the place where the Presbytery met that day. It was a room in the Swan Inn at Dunse. He writes to Patterson on the occasion: "I have been so much occupied of late with business, that I am afraid I have not devoted sufficient time to the proper and peculiar preparation for this interesting transaction—to meditation and prayer, and to the serious and careful examinations of those doctrines to which I have expressed my solemn assent. How very imperfectly do we often employ, for the purposed deepening of our impressions of divine things, even those dispensations which are best fitted in their own nature to produce this! With regard to the Confession of Faith, I think I can say sincerely, that I believe the whole doctrine contained in it. I believe to be true every doctrine which is really and expressly asserted in it, though I don't feel myself called upon to maintain that all its statements are expressed in the most strictly correct and appropriate language."

His first sermon was preached in Mr Bonar's Church at Larbert. He took for his text, Psalm xxiii. 6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever"—that grand strain of exulting hope to which the soul rises in contemplation of the loving-kindness of the Lord. The Sabbath following, he preached the same sermon for Dr Jones in Lady Glenorchy's Church, Edinburgh. A number of

his fellow-students were present to hear. The discourse was read; and the young preacher, not perfectly self-possessed perhaps, happened, in the course of it, to turn over two leaves at once, and did not discover his mistake till it was too late to correct it. Deeply annoyed, he met his friends after service, expecting no mercy at their hands. But a more mortifying discovery was behind. Not one of them—alas for logic!—had noticed the gap in the sermon at all.

Dr Alexander Duff has a vivid recollection of meeting him about this time. "The first occasion," says Dr Duff, "on which I ever saw him, or heard him speak, or even heard his name, was when on a visit to Edinburgh in the early spring of 1829, to consult with Drs Inglis, Muir, Chalmers, and Thomson, relative to my proposed appointment as the Church of Scotland's first missionary to India. The whole country was then in the throes of a most violent convulsion and upheaving on the subject of 'Catholic Emancipation,' as it was called. The great Edinburgh meeting had newly been held, at which Dr Chalmers delivered his celebrated speech that shot with the rapidity and force of forked lightning over the whole land. A meeting of theological students was to be held to discuss the subject. Curiosity drew me to it. After several speakers had addressed it, one rose up, taller than his fellows, with a head which, once seen, left an indelible impression on the mind. His speech was as remarkable as his personal appearance. Fraught with varied information, closely argumentative in its style, sharp in repartee, terrible in invective, merciless in its exposure of fallacies, and yet translucently clear in expression, without any flowers of rhetoric—it evidently produced a deep impression. With eager anxiety I asked for the name. It was 'Mr Cunningham,' who was then 'finishing his studies at the Hall.' 'Well, well,' was my involuntary exclamation, 'if that man live, he will, in debate and controversy, be another Dr Andrew Thomson.'"

Looking forward to his life's work, he received from his friend Patterson the news that the latter had been appointed to the charge of the parish of Falkirk. The letter which this drew from Cunningham, affords the best illustration of the nature of their

friendship, and it brings to view the deeper springs of his own life. It is therefore printed nearly entire :—

"I most sincerely rejoice that the parish of Falkirk is to have you for its minister. I look upon it as a special interposition of the great Head of the church, and as a subject of heartfelt gratitude. In the circumstances of the case there was little probability that, except by your appointment, the vacancy would be well supplied." . . . "You will, I have no doubt, see in this matter, especially when viewed in connection with your recent prospects and situation, an additional instance of that goodness which has led you all your life long ; and I trust and pray that you may be enabled to devote faithfully all your faculties and all your energies to the work which is to be committed to you. The parish of Falkirk will afford abundant scope for all your energies of body and of mind ; but you will not attempt the discharge of your duties in your own strength, for the fulness that is treasured up in Christ is inexhaustible. You have before you a larger scope for Christian ambition,—that of turning many to righteousness, and shining as the stars for ever and ever,—and a wider field of Christian usefulness in promoting God's glory and the interests of Christ's kingdom,—than you would probably have had in any other parish in Scotland. I cannot help thinking, from the present state of religion in Falkirk, viewed in connection with the general spirit and prospects of the age, there is good reason to hope that the introduction of a faithful, zealous, and pains-taking ministry among them would produce a great reaction, and is likely to be eminently blessed. Should you be instrumental in producing this reaction, I trust that you will feel that it is a work which God claims as peculiarly his own, and the glory of which He will not give to another ; and that you will be enabled at all times to feel, as you have felt in regard to honours infinitely inferior, that you have nothing which you have not received, that it is wholly of God's grace that you are what you are. Whatever may be your success, you will certainly meet with many difficulties and many crosses. You will see the preaching of the gospel proving in many cases a savour of death unto death. But you know where to apply for encouragement and consolation. You must make great sacrifices of ease and taste ; but you are in possession of principles which, if conscientiously applied, will enable you to make them cheerfully and willingly. The great principle which a parish minister ought always to keep in view is, that the spiritual edification of the people committed to his charge is his direct, immediate, and paramount duty—the duty which supersedes every other. In Falkirk you will be under the necessity of deriving your chief enjoyment from the discharge of your parochial duties ; and this very necessity will be a valuable principle in the formation of character. It is not unattended with collateral advantages and pleasures."

Here, or a little later probably, belongs an incident which may

best be told in the words of the lady who witnessed it, the widow of Dr Cunningham's dearest friend, addressed to Mrs Cunningham. An amusing instance of your husband's fearlessness occurs to me. There was to be a great debate in the General Assembly, and the crush on entering the house was great. Instead of going to their allotted places in the house, Cunningham and Patterson went with a party to the gallery. Most of us had got established to our satisfaction, when we perceived your poor husband wedged into the crowd at the door, his lofty head bending against a gothic arch. A scrap of pencilled paper conveyed to him the intelligence that there was room for him beside us, *if he could reach us.* He looked before and behind, but there was no road. In a moment he mounted the book-board in front of the gallery, and, to the dismay of the Moderates below, half-a-dozen of whom his fall would have annihilated, he balanced himself from the one end of the gallery to the other—a feat which drew from the house a deafening cheer, such as would have shaken the nerves of any ordinary man. That was the first cheer with which he was greeted in the General Assembly—the first time he scattered dismay in the Moderates' side of the house."

# CHAPTER III.

## *GREENOCK.*

IN the month of May 1829, among other ministers who came up to Edinburgh to attend the Assembly, was Dr Scott, the venerable pastor of the New Middle Parish, Greenock. He was walking and talking with a friend, when a sudden attack of paralysis came on. From this attack he recovered to some extent. But he remained permanently disabled, and never again took part in public service. Thenceforward his ministerial work had to be done by substitute. As soon as he saw that he was to remain "feeble and sore broken," he requested a friend in Edinburgh, the Rev. James Marshall, then of the Tolbooth parish, to look out for some promising young preacher to be his assistant. Mr Marshall spoke to Mr John J. Bonar, and asked him to go. But Mr Bonar was prevented by a previous engagement of the same nature in another part of the country. "Is there any preacher of your acquaintance whom you can recommend?" was the next inquiry. Bonar suggested his friend Cunningham, whose name was thereupon reported to Dr Scott. Dr Chalmers, who knew and greatly loved Dr Scott, wrote to him with characteristic warmth in favour of his young friend. The result was an arrangement that Mr Cunningham should give a trial of his gifts to the Congregation. He went to Greenock with seven sermons—his whole stock—in his valise, preached for three Sabbaths and on one week-day, and then returned to Edinburgh. Soon afterwards he received a kindly letter from Dr Scott, who, with the hearty concurrence of the Kirk-session and Congregation, engaged him to be his assistant for one year from January 1830. It was in the end of December 1829 that Mr Cunningham was thus welcomed

to his first sphere of labour as a preacher of the Gospel. It was a pleasant introduction to his life-work.

The town of Greenock is beautifully set between its fine stretch of hills and the noble Clyde. That part of a plant which is below the earth does not differ more from the part above the earth, than one end of the town differs from the other. The old town, a black, unsightly root, has shot out towards the west, and flowered into as beautiful a city as one could wish to see. Greenock is as lively and as full of bustle as a town upon the Clyde should be. Much that was characteristic of the West of Scotland, so stout and true in the old time, still lingers about it. There is something droll in its kindly and homely familiarity. People, even of good position, who have anything of the old school in them, address each other as 'Sandie," and "Willie," and "Robbie." "Much of my good nature towards mankind," says John Galt in his Autobiography, "is owing to my associates in Greenock. Even when dipping the tip of its rod into the honey of gossip, practical Greenock is good-natured. Its people are as void of malice as the leech that sucks blood from instinct, and sometimes effects a cure, when it only thinks of gratifying an appetite."

The Middle Parish Church, situated in Cathcart Square, and therefore known locally as the "Square Church," is a large, comfortable, elderly building, capable of containing fourteen or fifteen hundred people. When Cunningham entered on his labours, it was full, but it soon became overflowing. Additional sittings were fitted up in window recesses and other spare corners. The pulpit and gallery stairs were crowded. More and more impressed by his discourses, people remarked: "There is great *outcome* in that young man." After he had been assistant to Dr Scott for four or five months, the growing attachment of the Congregation shaped itself into a movement to have him ordained and settled as his colleague and successor. In this movement the venerable Dr Scott heartily concurred. To the Magistrates, in whom jointly with other parties the patronage of the living was vested, he addressed a letter conveying his own and his people's desire:—

"To this situation," he said, "Mr Cunningham's relation to the

Congregation and me recommend him in a peculiar manner. He came to us a stranger, recommended by the most competent judges, and for nearly six months has he more than sustained the high character given him, in private society, as a catechist, as visitor of the sick, or leader of the exercises of religious societies, and as a lecturer and preacher of the gospel. His youth, vigour and talents, his piety and zeal, with modesty and prudence, his learning and good taste, fit him in a singular manner for the arduous duties of this parish and Congregation. To me he has been all I could wish in his situation, and to him I desire to be all he could wish in my situation. But while Mr Cunningham acquires esteem and affection among us in proportion as he becomes known, I cannot but perceive that he commends himself to other parishes looking out for a minister, and who naturally desire one so tried and approved. And could any one blame a young man of distinguished abilities for relinquishing an uncertain for a certain situation?"

Mr Cunningham received a "presentation" as colleague and successor. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Paisley, to which ecclesiastical division Greenock then belonged, on the 15th of October 1830, a few days after he had completed his twenty-fifth year. On the following Sabbath he was "introduced" to his flock, as the custom is, by his friend Mr Patterson of Falkirk. In the afternoon of that day, he preached on the text: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. ii. 3). Many in Greenock still remember the touching humility and noble manliness of that sermon.

He was now a minister of that Church of Scotland regarding which he had thus expressed himself to his friend Patterson, in a letter written a few months before. If it be written in a tone of youthful enthusiasm, the sentiments are such as Cunningham in his maturer years would not have modified :—

"What an admirable system ours is for the Christian government of a country! and how admirably suited, when admininistered by faithful men, for subordinating all the relations of society and all the occupations of life, as well as the duties resulting from them, to the obligations incumbent upon men as members of Christ's

church and subjects of Christ's authority. In fact, I do not recollect in the history of Christianity, anything at all corresponding to the idea of a Christian Church except what was exemplified when Presbyterianism flourished in its glory and in its strength. There is no other example of a country where Christianity, viewed both as a system of faith and manners, and also as a system of government and discipline, so moulded the general aspect of society, and gave it its peculiar and distinctive character. There is no example of a nation, where all the obligations incumbent upon men as members of the Christian Church were so thoroughly enforced, and so generally and distinctly recognised as operating principles. Perhaps Edward Irving and some of his followers make too much of the Church, and have too great a tendency to sink our character as individual Christians in one general character as Churchmen or Church members; but I cannot help thinking that there is a much more general tendency to the other extreme, viz., to sink our character as members of the Christian society in our character as individual Christians, and to lose sight of the Church as a distinct society, divinely constituted, and invested with certain rights and prerogatives."

Dr Scott had been minister of the Middle Parish for nearly forty years. A powerful, useful ministry his had been. He had known great sorrows, and his life, as well as his lips, had taught great lessons to his people. His weight of character gave him great authority in the parish. The relation of colleague and successor to an aged minister does not always work well. It is not easy for the old and failing man to witness the favour and popularity of the younger. It is not easy for the younger man to accommodate himself to the ways of the older.

"Crabbed age and youth cannot live together."

But Mr Cunningham's connection with Dr Scott was free from all such unpleasing features. Two or three times every week the assistant went up to the manse to converse about the state of the parish. Every Saturday he spent an hour or two with the old divine in talking over his intended subjects of discourse. Every Monday morning he invariably took breakfast at the manse. The Sabbath services were talked over, with all manly frankness on the

one side, and all the rich fulness of Christian experience on the other. Whenever Cunningham had to go from home on any of the numerous calls of duty which keep a Presbyterian minister so much on the highway, the first thing he did on his return was to visit Dr Scott, and tell him all the news. At communion seasons, Dr Scott, very frail and tottering, was assisted to the table by the young minister with gentle care, as a father by a son. Many years afterwards, Dr Cunningham thus expressed himself in an introductory notice to a volume of Dr Scott's sermons:—"I can only say of him, as Burnet said of Leighton, that I have the greatest veneration for his memory, and that I reckon my knowledge of him among the greatest blessings of my life, and for which I know I must give an account to God in the great day."

It was not a light thing for a young man of twenty-five to become the instructor of the people who had so long enjoyed the thoroughly able ministry of Dr Scott. The amount of his labours would have broken down most young men. He lectured and preached every Sabbath, according to the wise old custom of Scotland, which requires the combination of textual with expository preaching. He lectured every Wednesday evening. Every Thursday he had a large class of young men, and another of young women. He was most laborious in pastoral visitation and in visiting the sick. He found in the Middle Parish a vigorous specimen of the noble old parochial economy. There was a fine staff of elders and of deacons. There was an admirable system of Sabbath Schools. The minister who is the centre of a machinery like this does not lack work. Dr Scott, appreciating his gift for the systematic treatment of theology, advised him to preach a course of sermons upon the basis of the Shorter Catechism. He did so; and, beginning with the first question, he went regularly on, taking up a question along with a suitable text of Scripture every Sabbath afternoon.

The congregation of the Square Church early became aware that their young minister was a rising man. Long before this, his old Hamilton teacher, Mr Kemp, had come to settle in Greenock. A lady, who happened to be a member of Dr Scott's congregation, asked him once whether he ever had among his pupils one in whom

he saw the promise of future eminence. "Yes," he said, "there was a boy named William Cunningham, once a scholar of his, in whom he certainly saw the elements of future greatness. If that boy lived, time would shew that he had not erred in his anticipation." He spoke so emphatically, that the scholar's name was imprinted on the lady's memory, and when Cunningham filled the Middle Parish pulpit, she called to mind the prediction, and, in the matchless power and vigour of the young divine, she saw its approaching fulfilment.

His frank, kindly, simple ways, had a great charm for that frank and cordial people. The Scottish people are quick to mark the slight indications of character—those unconscious discoveries of himself in little things by which a man is most truly and thoroughly known. In these unconscious ways the young pastor discovered himself to a flock who grew more attached to him every day. A sailor had died at sea, leaving a widow and young family, one of them an infant that had never seen its father. Cunningham frequently called to comfort the sorrowing heart. Entering the house one day, he found the babe alone in its cradle, the mother having gone out on some little errand, as poor full-handed women must. The child stirred and began to cry, and when the mother returned the minister was busy rocking the cradle—a simple act, which, of course, never was forgotten. A gentleman, with whom I have conversed, gave me a curious proof of the ardent love in which Cunningham was held by his Greenock flock. It was the custom of himself and some others of the congregation to follow him home from the church to his lodging on prayer-meeting nights. They never made up to him or spoke to him. They merely kept his tall figure in sight, as he walked home with his usual rolling stride; and the pleasure of simply looking upon one so beloved was all they sought. Blessings on their kindly hearts that could so love a servant of Jesus for the Master's sake!

"I have everything to learn," the young pastor had said, when paying his first visit as an ordained minister to one of the families of the Middle Parish, and he said it so humbly that he won their hearts. There was no stiffness or formality about him. He would

enter the shop of some hearer, and chat for half an hour if business was not brisk. If he found a sympathiser—and Greenock seems to have produced sympathisers rather abundantly—a rapid intercommunion of snuff boxes went on the while.

The elders of the Middle Parish were in the habit of holding a fellowship meeting among themselves. A portion of Scripture was read, and they all gave their remarks upon it. Cunningham, identifying himself like a true presbyter with his brother elders, attended the meeting, joining in the exercises, and quietly giving his remarks on the portion of Scripture when it came to his turn.

At any hour of the day or night he was ready to visit the sick. A dying man wished to see him on one occasion, and a message was sent him to that effect. Something hindered his getting away immediately, but he promised to come that same evening. He fell, however, into other occupations, and forgot. Next morning he remembered, and set off immediately to visit the sufferer. Meeting one of his elders, he told him where he was going. "Ah! sir, he is beyond your reach; he died this morning." The young minister was greatly affected. "That is a lesson to me," he said, "never to trifle with such a solemn duty." He went straight to the new-made widow, and told her his fault, with strong words of self-condemnation, and with a humility at which she wondered.

A young man lay ill of typhus fever. Mr Cunningham went to visit him. The young man's sister thoughtfully placed a chair for the minister as far as possible from the bed, to lessen the danger of infection. She had occasion to leave the room, and returning, she found that Mr Cunningham had moved the chair close up to the bed, and was bending over it, earnestly speaking to the patient. He had evidently forgotten the danger in the desire to do good to the sick man's soul.

He had a rare power of winning the affections and confidence of children. To the end of his life it was wonderful to hear him talk to a child. He seemed to be able to seize a boy's heart at once. Mr Henry Scott, a commercial gentleman in Glasgow, thus describes the commencement of his love for Cunningham, and enduring vene-

ration for his name. His parents attended the Square Church in Greenock. His father died, leaving him a young orphan. On the funeral day friends gathered in the room beside the coffin. Cunningham was there, and read the Scriptures and prayed as usual. The company then moved out, and as it happened, the minister and the fatherless boy were last in the room. Mr Scott remembers the inexpressibly kind and pitying look which he fixed upon him. Putting his arms round him, and holding him for an instant to his breast, he passed out without a word, but the boy's heart was gained for life.

The skill to deal profitably with the afflicted scarcely comes to us before sorrow has visited ourselves. We learn that strange and painful love in the furnace. It is remarkable that among surviving members of Cunningham's Greenock flock such ample testimony is borne to the richness and fulness of his conversations with the afflicted, and to the weight and ripeness of his counsels, young as he then was.

During the greater part of his ministry at Greenock, Cunningham kept a regular diary or journal. It is kept with the most perfect exactness for three years, all but a few weeks, literally not a single day being omitted. But a man must have more self-consciousness than Cunningham ever had to make a good diary-writer. He could not sit before the looking-glass and write about himself. His diary is a mere day-book, shewing the expenditure, not of money, but of time. It seems to have been kept entirely as a means to the economy of time. Rigorously watching against a besetting sin, he tied himself down to keep an account-book of time, as other men, to check expense, keep an account-book of money. In a letter to a friend, which nearly corresponds in date with the beginning of the diary, he says, "I am very thankful that I have been placed in a situation where I cannot with any decency be idle; for I am afraid that in a small country parish I would have been very lazy. And sometimes I think of it as a delightful aspect in which heaven is set before us in Scripture as a *rest* that remaineth for the people of God."

It is very evident from the diary that the habit of putting off

work—the preparation of sermons, for example, till the pressure of approaching Sabbath drove him to it—was strong upon him. The light in his lodging at the corner of Nicolson Street, or the shadow of his tall figure striding through the room, was to be seen long after every other window in the street was dark. Many traces appear of those tremendous spells of labour by which arrears of work are overtaken at so heavy a cost to the constitution. In the diary, he does not indulge in a single reflection or remark of any kind. He records with great minuteness the occupations in which each day was spent,—study, parochial visitation, classes, prayer-meetings, Board of Health meetings in the dismal cholera time of 1832, Bible Society meetings, Anti-Patronage meetings, lectures on popery, and all the endless details of a minister's work in a populous town. One duty he evidently rated high, that, namely, of maintaining a free, friendly, unofficial intercourse with his people. Nearly every day he calls in an easy way upon several families. He drops in and drinks tea with one or another household three or four times a week. In fact, tea-drinking seems to have been quite as great an institution with him as it was with Robert Hall himself. Happy is the minister who can make social intercourse a power for good. In the hours of relaxation he is enlarging his place in the hearts of his people, and disposing them to receive the lessons which intercourse with them is teaching him to adapt. But whatever might be his employments, the habit of enormous reading suffered no intermission and no abatement. *Luther de Servo Arbitrio, Marckii Medulla, Picteti Theologia, Curcellæus, Amesius, Cloppenbergius, Ernesti Interpres,* and many other formidable names figure in his diary. Even on Sabbath evenings, when his tired mind might have craved lighter food, many hours are spent over these and other such ponderous divines.

Many still live who remember the Anti-Patronage Society of Dr Andrew Thomson's time. The idea then was to raise money and buy up the patronages. For this purpose there was an organisation and collectors who went round collecting quarterly subscriptions. Directly this endeavour did not come to much, but the agitation thus carried on unquestionably had a great effect on the public

mind. Greenock had its branch of the Anti-Patronage Society. It happened once, when there was a remittance of £50 to make to Edinburgh, an elder of the Middle Parish was going there, and took the money with him. He found out Dr Thomson, and was shewn into a room where Watson Gordon was in the act of painting his portrait. The painter was just saying as the elder entered, "Doctor, I can't make you out." The Greenock man told his errand, and presented the money. Thomson brightened immediately. "What," he said, "from my old friends at Greenock, Willie Cunningham at the head of them!" The painter caught his expression that instant. "Now, Doctor, I have got you," he said; and the portrait, of which the engraving is still to be seen in many Scotch houses, owes its joyous expression to the Greenock man's visit.

But Cunningham, though his views were strongly anti-patronage, was not a leader of the Greenock Anti-Patronage Society, nor did he quite agree with it, although co-operating with it, and lending his help at its meetings.

## ROW HERESY.

Soon after the commencement of his ministry in Greenock, another subject claimed his attention. It was about this time that those wild vagaries arose which made Edward Irving pass away like a blazing meteor, instead of shining as a fixed star of the first magnitude. The memory of the "Row heresy," the Scottish offshoot or affluent of the London extravagances, is now faint enough, but the bruit of it was loud in those days. John Campbell, minister of the parish of Row in Dumbartonshire, was an earnest, affectionate preacher, whose ministry had told with no small effect on his own flock and neighbourhood. But he lost his doctrinal way, and ended by holding universal pardon and other errors. Perfectly candid and honest in avowing his doctrines, he was strangely insensible to the dishonesty of eating the bread of a church from whose doctrines he differed. The Church was certainly not hasty with him, for he had gone on preaching his errors for three or four years before he was deposed in 1831. When his trial for heresy first came on before the Presbytery of Dumbarton, in June 1830, Mr

Cunningham was summoned as a witness against him. He appeared and underwent a short examination. He had gone one evening in the previous spring into the floating chapel which was kept moored in Greenock dock to suit the convenience and the taste of seafaring men. There he heard Mr Campbell preach the doctrine of universal pardon, and utter sentiments so strange, that he took them down in writing on the spot. These notes he now produced, and gave evidence accordingly. His evidence had an important share in establishing one of the counts or charges in the libel.

While the process against Mr Campbell was agitating all Scotland, Edward Irving, with the lurid splendours of his eloquence, was exciting the public mind about the mysteries of prophecy, and the immediate personal advent of the Lord. Among other wild follies of that lamentable time, devout and honourable women kept covered tables, with bread and wine set forth, and window open to the east, to receive the immediately expected Saviour. Another dream of the great visionary was, that the miraculous powers of the apostolic age belong to the church in all ages, but have been kept in abeyance by the weakness of faith. "These signs shall follow them that believe"—now, as well as in the age of Paul. Many ardent souls caught up the idea, and gave themselves to prayer for "the power." The fire smouldered for a time, and then burst out. On a Sabbath evening, in the month of March 1831, Mary Campbell, an excitable invalid, broke forth with a stream of sounds, which she and a few friends who were present, believed to be a *tongue* like the tongues at Pentecost. There was at that time in the town of Port-Glasgow, on the opposite side of the Clyde, a family of Macdonalds, consisting of two brothers and three sisters. One of the sisters was an invalid. They, too, were expectants of "the power." One day when the brothers came in for dinner, the invalid sister addressed them at great length, "concluding with a prayer for James, that he might at that time be endowed with the power." James said calmly, "I have got it." He walked up to his sister's bedside, took her by the hand, and said, "Arise, and stand upright," which she did. James wrote that same day to Mary Campbell. This young woman with whom the "gift of

tongues" began, was a sufferer from abscesses in the lungs, which from time to time burst, and in doing so, reduced her to great weakness. During the intervals, she would rally and enjoy comparatively good health. James Macdonald related in his letter to her what had happened to his sister, and commanded her also to arise in the name of the Lord. She obeyed, and arose immediately.

The excitement spread like wildfire. Miracles—"modern miracles"—abounded. Many congregations were disturbed with the unknown tongues. As loaded guns go off in a burning ship when the fire reaches them, so the strange sounds burst forth in one place after another. Gifts of healing were supposed to be found in many places, and even raising of the dead was tried! All which things astonish us no more than the doings of any other fanatics or ecstatics, from Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, to Luckie Buchan in the days of William Pitt. Admiral Duncan of Camperdown was uncle to the Haldanes. "I remember, when I was a child," says James Haldane, "asking him whether he thought he was as strong as the devil, and I asked the question in all seriousness. He told me he was not, and I believed him. Now, if I thought myself as strong as the devil, I should be less afraid of quitting the plain ground of Scripture, and embarking in speculative enquiries." But what he remembered, many dreamy sons and daughters of the mist forgot, and quitting the sure Word of God, they made pitiful shipwreck.

The town of Greenock, situated in the very district where this wild outbreak began, shared in the commotion. One most sad and touching incident was, that the Rev. Alexander Scott, assistant to Edward Irving in London, and son to the venerable Dr Scott of Greenock, had to be deprived of his license to preach the gospel by his native presbytery, for participating in his master's error. Mr Cunningham, as a member of presbytery, was a party to this most painful act of discipline, and while he sat in judgment upon the son, he was in close and affectionate communication with the father—surely a delicate and difficult position! But the noble old man, loyal to the cause of truth, approved the righteousness of the sentence, and bowed his head to the sore affliction.

Another painful duty devolved upon Cunningham in connection with the Row heresy. An estimable elder of the Middle Parish had a son, a member of the congregation, who was carried away with these errors. In regard to him, the session was obliged to take action, for he "had lifted up a testimony," and the matter was public. The father, firm for the truth, sat in the session and concurred with his brethren in carrying out the discipline of the Church in the case of his own son. Mr Cunningham, as moderator of the session, had to state the case before the Presbytery (December 1831).

When Dr Andrew Thomson, who "knew a man when he saw him," was told that Cunningham was to be settled at Greenock, he said, "Good, he'll be a capital fellow for knocking the Row heresy on the head." And the event justified his anticipation. The Row heresy awoke all Cunningham's energy, and proved the occasion of drawing out his great powers as a controversialist. The congregation of the Middle Parish, so long and so thoroughly trained under the able ministry of Dr Scott, were unusually well able to appreciate a theological argument. Their warm appreciation gave him the encouragement he required. Recognising himself as set for the defence of the truth, he threw himself, heart and soul, into the battle. In delivering a course of lectures on the Gospel of Mark, he was led to deal with the whole subject of miracles, and stood before his people in all his strength, Sabbath after Sabbath, as a champion for the truth. Rowites, and persons having a twist that way, came to hear; but each mighty blow "took away their breath for a while." The lectures soon drew the attention of the whole district, and gave the young pastor a commanding position in the community. He learned at the same time where his strength lay, and acquired confidence in his own powers. A stirring seaport town of the busy Clyde seemed a place ill adapted for a man whose tastes lay so decidedly in the direction of books and study; yet Providence had sent him thither as to a school, where, all unconsciously, he was prepared for the great work of his life.

His discourses were profoundly logical and argumentative, but withal so clear that even children could understand them. Some

waters are so magically transparent and pure, that the coral floor of the ocean, and the beautiful things of the deep, can be clearly seen fathoms down. He shewed the things of God in beauty, for he shewed them in clearness, and these holy beauties, once seen, draw the heart for evermore. I have conversed with many who declare that the love of Bible truth was first awakened in them by the arresting clearness of Cunningham's expositions.

One illustration of his power as a preacher was published in 1835, in the *Scottish Christian Herald,* by Mr Alexander Tough, a citizen of Greenock. The circumstances did not come to Mr Cunningham's knowledge till he read them there. As Mr Tough was passing down the mid quay of Greenock, he noticed two old men in close conversation, each leaning on the top of his staff. His attention was powerfully arrested by hearing from one of them these words: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, poor miserable sinners, that we should be called the sons of God." He was so much struck by hearing these words, amid the bustle of a wharf, that he lingered near and listened. "I am truly glad to hear you speak in this manner," said the other old man. "Yes," was the reply, "you know well that I was one of the chief of sinners, when the Lord arrested me in my mad career. One Sabbath morning as I was carelessly passing through the Square, I heard the voice of praise coming from the Middle Parish Church. I stood for a moment, and the thought immediately passed through my mind that I would enter the church. I went in and sat down on the stair. Mr Cunningham preached from the text, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.' His words entered into my soul like a sword, and laid open the awful wickedness of my heart. I went home in great distress of mind. I tossed and tumbled like a wild bull in a net. Day after day I saw more of the wickedness of my heart. I found it was impossible for me to answer the demands of the law, though I made many vain attempts for many weeks. After all these attempts had failed, the Lord heard my cry, and, by giving me to see that salvation is entirely by faith in Christ, gave me peace and joy in believing."

Mr Tough adds, that his desire to know something more of the

old man induced him to seek him out, and call upon him. "I found him in very poor circumstances in relation to this world, but rich in faith. He had been a great sinner, but his conversion to God was sound and genuine. He lived but a few weeks after I became acquainted with him. During that time, however, I saw him once and again, and had much pleasure in conversing with him, and I rejoice in the conviction that he died in the faith and hope of the gospel."

It was Mr Cunningham's practice, during a considerable portion of his Greenock ministry, to preach without "the paper." The journal shews him engaged every Saturday in "mandating" his discourses. But this begins to be omitted, and finally ceases to occur, and he ever after used the manuscript in the pulpit—a great error in any man, but in him very great. Gladstone has said of the mutual influence of the orator and the audience, that what goes down to them in rivers, comes back to him in vapours. This influence of his audience Cunningham felt as much as any speaker ever did. It roused him, he shook himself and put forth his strength. But with the eye and the mind arrested on the paper, the speaker cannot freely quaff this animating influence. No man ever less needed to read his discourses, for his readiness was wonderful. One Sabbath, about the height of the Row heresy, Campbell of Row himself walked into the Square Church, after the sermon had begun, and placed himself conspicuously in front of the pulpit. The discourse was one levelled against the Row errors throughout. Next day, one of the elders remarked to him, "Mr Cunningham, you were fortunate in having your discourse prepared for Mr Campbell's hearing." "It was not what I had prepared at all," he answered, "but I thought it better to say to the man's face what I have been saying behind his back." On one occasion, there was to be a meeting in the Gaelic Church on Highland Schools. Cunningham undertook to make the first motion, a motion simply for approval of the Report. Something occurred to detain him, and the motion assigned to him had to be got over without his help. When he came into the Church, the form of a motion was slipped into his hand, to this effect: "As the apostles were commanded to

preach repentance and the remission of sins, in the name of Jesus, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, so Christians in this country should recognise the same principle in providing the means of grace for their own countrymen." Without even sitting down, he stepped at once to the platform, and delivered upon this motion one of his most telling speeches. At the close of the meeting, an old woman in a cloak—to appearance not one of the guinea-giving sort—gave a guinea to the treasurer, whispering that after such a speech she felt bound to do it.

In the summer of 1832 Mr Cunningham enjoyed a visit from his mother. It had been remarked by his people, as an indication of his rightmindedness and simplicity of character, how much he liked to talk of that noble, self-denying mother to whom he owed so much. And now they were a noticeable pair, as they were to be seen on Greenock streets together; the mother, erect and stately, leaning with such evident gladness of heart on the arm of her manly son. He had the satisfaction of introducing her to many a hospitable house, where they delighted to shew her kindness for his sake. Above all, he had the pleasure of introducing her to the family of the Dennistons,—a family from which she was, by-and-bye, to receive a daughter. In many personal characteristics, and ways both of speaking and acting, the son greatly resembled the mother. Persons who knew her long tell me that the leading feature of her mind was an entire and most uncompromising devotion to what she believed to be duty. Duty was her life-plan. Duty was to be done at any cost of effort or of pain; and when done, it was its own reward. This was the root and core of her strongly-marked character. And it was in this that Cunningham's resemblance to his mother was strongest.

Towards the end of 1832 the parish of Old Kilpatrick, upon the Clyde, was vacant. The parishioners had hopes that the patron would give some heed to their wishes in the appointment of a pastor. They turned their eyes, among others, to the young minister of the Middle Parish of Greenock. A report arose in the town that he was actually to receive the appointment. A question on the subject from a jealous and loving elder made Cunningham

aware of the rumour. A few days afterwards Cunningham entered the elder's shop. Slapping the counter with his glove, he exclaimed, "Well, I'll take Kilpatrick if I can get it, to keep out a Moderate of the name of Candlish, assistant at Bonhill." Such was his first knowledge of his future fellow-labourer in the great work of his life.

It was not long after this, that the parish of St Andrew's, in Glasgow, being vacant, the charge was offered to Cunningham, and, as it appears, pressed upon him. The income offered him was more than double that which he had in Greenock, and the position was of course much higher than that of a mere assistant. He declined it, however, not being able to see that a superior field of usefulness was offered. In his journal he despatches the matter thus sententiously: "Wrote to Glasgow declining St Andrew's." Then, some days later: "Have an interview with the Provost about St Andrew's Church." And, finally: "Wrote to the Provost of Glasgow again, declining St Andrew's Church."

In August 1833, the first publication to which he ever put his hand issued from the press. It was an edition of Some's Catechism which he published, with an introduction recommending it to the public. Some's Catechism is so happily contrived for its purpose,—"exceedingly well adapted to lead young persons not only to search the Scriptures, but really to exercise their faculties on them,"—that one wonders it is so seldom to be seen. "Among the many works that have been written to illustrate the Shorter Catechism," says Cunningham in his preface, "we know none better adapted for common use in schools and classes than that published by Mr D. Some, an excellent Dissenting minister in Leicestershire. His personal excellence, his very superior ministerial qualifications and success, must be familiar to all who have read the works of Doddridge, who was at one time his assistant in the ministry."

After his refusal to go to Glasgow, the Greenock people calculated on keeping their minister a good space among them. But it was not to be so.

"He was on a visit to the manse of Falkirk," says Dr A. S.

Patterson, "when he received the intelligence of his appointment to Trinity College Church, Edinburgh. The intelligence greatly disconcerted him. Half in jest, I said to him that I considered what he took so much to heart one of the *lesser* trials of life." He did not hesitate, however. His journal devotes a whole line to the matter: "Write agreeing to accept the College Church."

He had little more to do among his Greenock flock, except to bid them farewell. The parting was a keen trial on both sides. To this day, old people speak of it as men speak of a great affliction. He was not the man to part with a loving people without deep pain. His farewell call is still remembered in many families. Before parting with his class of young men, he got them to promise to keep up a prayer-meeting among themselves; which they did, meeting each Friday evening for many years. He preached his farewell sermon on the first Sabbath of 1834, the anniversary of the day on which he had first preached in the Square Church as Dr Scott's assistant. The four years of his ministry he might hope had been successful, as they certainly were happy. "The kindness of the Greenock people," he said, "I can never forget on this side the grave."

Wm Cunningham

AETATIS SUAE 55

## CHAPTER IV.

### *FIRST YEARS OF PUBLIC LIFE IN EDINBURGH.*

WHEN Cunningham removed from Greenock to Edinburgh, the Church of Scotland was entering upon "actions of a very high nature, leading to untrodden paths."

The Church in Scotland is Presbyterian. An Englishman may be surprised to hear that the British Constitution is also Presbyterian. Yet it is so. The government of this country is a Parliamentary government, a free government, by the freely chosen representatives of the people. And a Presbyterian Church is simply a Church with a free representative government—a government by the people for the people. Presbyterians do verily think that free representative government—a thing so excellent in the State—is an excellent thing in the Church as well. Britain, without her free government, would soon find among the nations none so poor as do her reverence. Presbyterians think that freedom, vital to the nation as the breath of life, is not less vital to the Church. The people of England in times past have struggled wisely and nobly for freedom in the State. As wisely and nobly have the people of Scotland struggled for freedom in the Church—which two facts are a great part of the history of England and of Scotland during the last three centuries. Look into our history. It is the record of an undying struggle for liberty, maintained with varying success ever since the Reformation,—

> "Advanced, forced back, now low, now high,
> The banner sunk and rose."

The profligate politicians of Queen Anne's time filched away the freedom of the Scottish Church among their intrigues to bring

back the house of Stuart, and thereon hangs a tale of a century of mischiefs. The Pretender to the British throne had no stouter enemy than the Church of Scotland. She was strong at that time in the attachment of her people—that resolute and noble people who had clung to her through eight-and-twenty years of suffering and blood. She was strong in the confidence and love with which the people regarded their clergy. But she might be weakened. The people might be made to distrust their clergy. So the system of lay-patronage in the appointment of ministers was forced on. The effect expected from it was to raise a mist between clergy and people. A minister who held his living by the gift of some great man could scarcely be so much identified with the people as one chosen by their own free vote. A minister who owed his making to a patron was likely, they thought, to be the patron's most humble servant. "Why should he not worship his creator?" as the Scottish people bitterly said. A patron's man was sure to be very unlike a people's man. The man sent down to them by a Jacobite proprietor could scarcely be the trusted friend and counsellor of an anti-Jacobite people. All this was calculated. The law for imposing patronage, as Bishop Burnet tells, was "made on design to weaken and undermine" the Church of Scotland. It is worth a curious man's while to mark how the appointment of Scotch parish ministers was planned at St Germains.

Some burglaries are found to have been committed by "persons evidently well acquainted with the premises." The Jacobite scheme of patronage was plainly the work of persons well acquainted with the premises; intriguers who knew well the disposition of the Scottish people, and who calculated with nice cunning the effects of their plan for disgusting them with their Church. In one point only they erred. The process of disgusting the people with their Church went on less quickly than Jacobite politicians expected. The scheme was not so rapidly prolific of mischiefs as they hoped. But within forty years it had driven out two Secessions from the Church of Scotland. From the time that the first meeting-house was built for manly Ralph Erskine, at Dunfermline,—a building, with a tar roof, which old men there still remember as the "Pic,"

or Pitch Church,—the Seceders built a hundred and twenty churches in less than thirty years. At the end of a century, the two Secessions comprehended between them a full third of the Scottish people.

Under the system of patronage, there grew up, like an unwholesome fungus in the dark shadow of the wood, the thing called *Moderatism;* which, however, is by no means an exclusively Scottish thing. When Cunningham visited America, he found it there also. "The Unitarianism of Massachusetts," he said, "is neither more nor less in substance than just the religion which prevailed so extensively in the Continental Churches, and in the Established Churches of England and Scotland during the latter half of last century. On the Continent it was called Rationalism; in the Church of England, Orthodoxy; and in the Church of Scotland, Moderatism; but, in all, it was just substantially Pelagian Unitarianism; *i.e.,* the natural religion of irreligious men, who had no sound views and impressions of the doctrines of the Gospel, but who did not find it convenient to throw off altogether a profession of Christianity."

Many high and brave things are to be found in the history of the Church of Scotland. The flowers of truth and worth, taking mayhap peculiar tints from our northern soil, bloom there so abundantly that Scotland may be said to have a *Flora* of her own. But such things do not occur during the age of MODERATISM. That period is incredibly mean in the annals of our Church—as mean as a clergy, alike sycophant and tyrannical, could make it. Dr Carlyle of Inveresk, whose autobiography should have been called, "The Confessions of a Moderate," tells us, "that acting once as carver at a public table, he had "to divide a haunch of venison among fifteen without getting any portion of the fat for myself." Men intent on getting portions of the fat to themselves make a mean appearance in history; and, therefore, the age of Moderatism is mean.

Once, in the course of a debate in the General Assembly, a clever gentleman illustrated the inexpediency of giving the people a voice in the choice of their minister, by referring to a well-authenticated tradition of the Western Isles. To avenge some injury inflicted on them by the Macdonalds of Eigg, the Macleods of Skye landed on

Eigg, tracked the inhabitants to a cave where they lay concealed, heaped fire over the cave's mouth, and stifled every creature within. The bones of the victims still lie thick on the floor of the cave. "Now," said the speaker, "my name is Macleod ; if I were presented to the island of Eigg, the Macdonalds might object to me, just because I am a Macleod. And would not this be very hard !"

Mr Begg of Liberton, a stout man-at-arms, and afterwards well-known, spoke in the same debate. He dwelt upon the doings of the Moderates—how a minister was forced upon Jedburgh, though all the parishioners but five were against him, and two thousand people forsook the church in a single day in consequence—how a minister, useless, because destitute of an audible voice, was forced upon Biggar—how a minister, stone-blind, was forced upon Kirkcudbright. Here the clever gentleman interrupted the speaker, for such things could not be pleasant for a Moderate to hear. "Sir," said Begg, "I was only inviting gentlemen on that side of the house to view the bones of the murdered Macdonalds." He who wishes to understand Cunningham's work, and the times that went over him and over Scotland, must visit the cave of the bones.

The first thirty years or thereby of the present century form an animating chapter in the history of religion in Scotland. A life-wave rose and spread. The Spirit of God breathed, and life began to return after long years of death, and the rottenness of death. The noble works of M'Crie, his Lives of Knox and Melville, which have been justly termed the "Iliad and Odyssey of the Scottish Church," revived the slumbering veneration for its great Reformers in the heart of the nation. Men lived when they touched the bones of these old prophets. "Chalmers and his consequences arose." The consequences of Chalmers ! Who can tell how great they were and are ? The only image that Francis Jeffrey could find to suggest an idea of his eloquence and stupendous energy was, "He buried his adversaries under the fragments of burning mountains."

Then the vehement, impetuous agitation for Reform in Parliament came on, with its thousand exciting incidents. The people demanded their rights ; and the Legislature granted, trembling,

what could no longer be withheld. But why should we be politically free and ecclesiastically enslaved? The awakening Church of Scotland arose and shook herself. Amid impulses of various kinds, but above all, under the impulse of growing spiritual life, the reforming movement set in and gathered strength.

There were plenty of abuses to correct, and foremost among these, the abuses connected with Patronage. The people had long been robbed of their right of freely choosing their spiritual guides, and their own clergy connived at the robbery. At first this evil was attacked with great caution. The reforming party in the Church conceived that they could obviate it by arranging that no minister should be settled in a parish when the majority of the male heads of families formally signified their disapproval of him. In the General Assembly of 1833, Dr Chalmers made a motion to this effect, but did not succeed in carrying it. It was the first stricken field in which the rights of the people were fairly set before the combatants as the object of the struggle. At this stage of the strife Cunningham dealt his first blow.

The Assembly met that year in the Tolbooth Church, one of the three churches—amazing achievements in ugliness—into which St Giles' Cathedral is divided. Centuries of Scottish history look out upon us from the windows of that venerable sanctuary. Here Knox thundered, and here the bones of Regent Murray lie. James VI. made his farewell speech here, before he departed to wear the English crown. Here Janet Geddes threw the stool that levelled a king's throne. Cromwell's tread has sounded under that portal. Past that doorway almost every current of Scottish history has rolled.

Early in the day, the debate began, and continued till the evening was wearing late. The house was thin. Members who wished to slink away and shun the vote had left. Many who meant to vote, had gone out for a breath of cool air. The debate was at that languishing stage when all the arguments have been used up, and the threshed straw is threshed over again. A tall young man with an immense curly head arose, under the gallery beside a pillar, and began to speak. "Who is that?" ran in loud whispers about the

house, and the answer was not at once forthcoming—"Cunningham of Greenock." The attention of the house was roused in a moment. The loungers in the Parliament Square crowded back to their places. It required but a few minutes to shew that a man had stepped into the arena.

The speech is evidently unpremeditated, an answer to other speeches delivered during the debate. The *Presbyterian Review*, then a vigorous quarterly, publishes a report of the debate. To twelve speakers immediately preceding Cunningham, it devotes just sixteen lines; but Cunningham was requested to write out his speech in full for it. He did so, after the violently condensed manner in which a man who dislikes writing—and he did dislike it wonderfully—forces himself to go through a task of penmanship. The speech of two hours is contained in less than six octavo pages. Those who heard it, speak of it with wonder to this day. Such power, wealth, and precision of language they had never heard.

Dr Duncan Macfarlane, Principal of the University of Glasgow, rashly put himself in Cunningham's way, and suffered a fall in the shock. The Moderate leaders had admitted in that day's debate, that Presbyteries had a right to take into account not only a man's general fitness to be a minister, but his special qualifications for the particular parish to which he is presented. "This principle," Cunningham said, "has often been denied in theory; it has been almost wholly overlooked in practice. Principal Macfarlane, indeed, was pleased to say, that he did not know that it had been overlooked in practice. This, Sir, is a very strange assertion." Principal Macfarlane rose and said that he did not remember of having said so, but that he had said that he would enquire. "Moderator," said Cunningham, "this does not mend the matter; for men are not in the habit of enquiring into those things which they know already. Now, Sir, short as my life has been, and small as my knowledge is in comparison with that of the Rev. Principal, I know and I assert that the principle now conceded has been overlooked in practice; nay, more, that this very principle formed the main subject of controversy in the grand struggle between the two parties in the Church during the latter half of last century, and that the result

of that struggle was, that the principle of the Presbytery having no right to judge of a man's special fitness to be minister of the particular parish to which he was presented, was established by the votes of a decided majority of this house, and constantly acted upon."

The magnates, or "specials of the kirk," sit about "the table," and a man must have begun to be somebody before he ventures on that upper ground. Dr Macknight (son of the commentator, who expounded the Epistle to the Romans without discovering the doctrine of justification by faith) looked over to Dr Cook. "That's Andrew come back," said he—Andrew Thomson come alive again to be the hammer of the Moderates. Men's minds went back to George Gillespie, who, in riding-boots, and with whip in hand, as he had just ridden up from Scotland, delivered such a speech in the famous Westminster Assembly, that great Selden said: "This young man, by a single speech, has swept away the learning and labour of my life." And, indeed, no two men would have resembled each other more, in vastness of learning acquired long before youth was past, in free and perfect command of it, and in the instantaneous readiness and marvellous accuracy with which they could use it.

It was in that same Assembly that for the first time was heard the gentle voice of Alexander Dunlop, who soon became as loved and trusted as Warristoun, the learned and eloquent lawyer of Covenanting days.

John Learmonth of Dean, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh at the time, sat in the Assembly of 1833 as an elder. When Cunningham sat down, Learmonth turned to his neighbour and said, "Well, if a vacancy occurs in a City charge during my term of office, that young man shall have it." A vacancy did occur a few months thereafter, in consequence of the deposition of the Rev. Adam Tait, minister of Trinity College Church, who, though a sincerely good man, became involved in the Row heresy; and, as has already been stated in a previous chapter, Cunningham received and accepted the appointment.

Trinity College Church, taken down now, and removed amid Lord

Cockburn's tears, was a notable architectural feature of Edinburgh. "The last and finest Gothic fragment of Edinburgh, though implored for by about four centuries," had to disappear for the accommodation of a railway. It was built by Mary of Gueldres, Queen of James of the fiery face, and it held her bones. It had stood there, low in a deep valley, through a "thousand heavy times" of fierce old Scotland. It was there when the Scottish king and host marched to their doom at Flodden; it was there when Mary was brought in from Carberry Hill, her fair face all defiled with tears and dust; it was there when Edinburgh fought its own Castle in the Douglas wars. It lay under the guns of the battery erected on the overhanging crag to protect the cool Scottish Parliament which sat for three days, under a fire of musketry and artillery, beside the Cross of St John in the Canongate.

When Cunningham was appointed to this Church, it was almost without a congregation. The aberrations of poor Mr Tait had driven many away, and many had followed him to a place of worship in which he continued to minister. But Cunningham's great reputation immediately filled the Church. Every seat was taken in which it was possible to obtain a view of the pulpit, past the great gothic pillars. The pew-rents of the City Churches were fixed and levied by the Corporation or Town Council. The Corporation was bankrupt then, and it was their practice to require the highest pew-rents in those Churches whose pulpits were filled by the most popular ministers. Cheap seats and poor preaching went together; and good preaching was a luxury kept for the rich. Viewing Mr Cunningham as a good speculation, the Town Council greatly increased (even to the double in some cases) the pew-rents in the College Church; and as so promising a speculation justified some outlay, they outraged the fine old Gothic building by creating three hideous galleries—all in the way of business.

Very soon after his removal to Edinburgh, Cunningham was summoned to London to give evidence on the subject of Patronage before a Committee of the House of Commons. The history of this matter will be best given in the words of Sir George Sinclair, who had the most to do with it:—"During upwards of twenty years

before that period" says Sir George in a communication with which he has favoured me, "I had taken a great interest in the Anti-patronage movement, and co-operated with Dr Andrew Thomson and Dr M'Crie in furtherance of several plans for the mitigation of an evil, which (as we thought) would, if persevered in, prove fatal to the Church of Scotland, to which we were devotedly attached. Our efforts, however, were only partially responded to. They were strenuously opposed by the then dominant party in the Church, and even Dr Chalmers, Sir Henry Moncreiff, and his excellent son, Lord Moncreiff, gave no countenance to the movement, and contended, in preference, for the Veto, to which, however, at that time the Moderates were as adverse as to the entire abolition of Patronage.

"When I was unexpectedly returned to Parliament (after a long interval of retirement) in 1831, the friends with whom I had for some years been acting upon this question, strenuously urged me to bring the abolition of Patronage under the consideration of the House of Commons. To this course I was myself opposed, not from any change of opinion, but from a conviction that success was altogether hopeless, there being very few Scotch, and no English or Irish, members in favour of such a motion; and with the exception of my late friend, Lord Breadalbane, not a single adherent of the cause in the House of Lords. In order, however, to satisfy them on that head, I obtained from Lord Althorp, with the sanction of Lord Jeffrey, at that time Lord Advocate, the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry, of which I, of course, acted as chairman. The great majority of its members were opposed to my views, in fact, my worthy friend Andrew Johnston, Member for the Fife Burghs, was my only decided supporter. I was anxious, however, to procure a mass of useful and important evidence which might enlighten the minds of those who perused it, and perhaps be found serviceable at some future time.

"I accordingly wrote to each of the witnesses, both friendly and adverse, and intimated what were the points on which he would chiefly be examined, and I informed him that being anxious to secure judicious and carefully considered statements, I wished him to draw up a series of questions and answers in writing, which I

would put *seriatim* from the chair, and when they had been gone through, the members of committee would put such additional queries as they might deem necessary or desirable. This plan was approved of, and adopted by all the witnesses (with the exception of Dr Lee). Dr Chalmers, at his own urgent request, and to my great regret, was not examined before the Committee, but his sentiments were understood to be fully developed in the evidence of Lord Moncreiff, both in favour of the *Veto*, and against the abolition of Patronage.

"I remember having the honour to receive Lord Moncreiff at breakfast, after which he placed his manuscript in my hands, and we drove together to the Committee room on the most amicable terms, although he was diametrically opposed to me. The great advantage of this plan was, that it afforded to the distinguished parties on both sides an opportunity to state their views much more fully and more explicitly than if they had been elicited by a series of loose and independent interrogations. Mr Cunningham was one of the witnesses on whose evidence I mainly relied. He prepared a very able and elaborate series of questions and answers, which excited, by their uncompromising straightforwardness and strength of expression, no small displeasure in the minds of my friends, Admiral Gordon, Major Cumming Bruce, and several other members of the committee, of whom I am bound to record, that though altogether adverse to my views, they manifested on all occasions the greatest courtesy and forbearance. Mr Cunningham, when his written evidence had been gone through, was cross-examined at great length by the Committee, but maintained his presence of mind undiminished, and used great plainness of speech.

"When the inquiry was at length concluded, I saw that if a careful and circumstantial report adverse to Patronage were drawn up by me, it would be negatived by an overwhelming majority, and I was glad to compromise by submitting to the Committee a few brief sentences in which the question of Patronage was altogether waived."

It was about this time that Cunningham became acquainted with that Mr Candlish, once assistant at Bonhill, now assistant at St

George's, Edinburgh, of whom he had said, "I'll take Kilpatrick if I can get it, to keep out a Moderate of the name of Candlish." But Mr Candlish, if a Moderate then, which we doubt, was now a Moderate no more.

Worsted in the General Assembly of 1833, the Evangelical party achieved its first notable success in the Assembly of 1834. This Assembly met in the Tron Church—the Church built near by the ancient "Tron" or public weighing-machine of the city. An anxious crowd filled the place of meeting, for all felt that a crisis had arrived. Moderatism and Evangelism were come to Bethshemesh, and "looked one another in the face." The two conflicting principles which gendered instincts and tendencies so opposite, and which had struggled in the Church, like Rachel's twins, for more than a century, were to try wager of battle that day. The question between the parties was to be debated with much recondite learning repulsive enough, and mingled with many technical terms uncouth to the general ear. Formally the difference between them regarded merely a question of Church arrangement. But at root it was the difference which mere men of the world never do understand, which they even angrily deny.

On a May forenoon the debate began. Lord Moncreiff was a member of Assembly, and the husky voice of the learned judge was heard supporting the motion he had brought forward to this effect, that if the majority of the male heads of families in full communion with the Church shall disapprove of the person "presented" to be their pastor, such disapproval shall be deemed sufficient ground for the Presbytery rejecting that person, and declining to settle him as minister of that congregation.

It was an old and fundamental law of the Church of Scotland, that "no pastor shall be intruded on a congregation contrary to the will of the people." For generations this law had been tyrannically violated, and the motion only proposed that the Church should violate her own law no more.

After a long day's discussion, at midnight victory rested with the Evangelical side by a majority of forty-six. Thus the Veto Law passed,—a thing once famous in Scotland. It is gone from the

earth, and the history of it is already growing dim, as if it were written in black letter. But it has left results—deeper, perhaps, and wider than we see as yet. Curiously enough, with the exception of Dunlop, none of the men who afterwards bore the burden of defending the Veto Law had a part in passing it. Neither Chalmers nor Cunningham was a member of the Assembly of 1834, and Candlish had not yet a seat in Church Courts at all.

In July that year, Cunningham was united in marriage to Miss Denniston, a young lady every way suitable for a helpmeet to him. A "servant of the Book," the sentiment of duty had the same commanding hold and noble mastery of her that it had of his mother. The Dennistons were a family of great Christian worth and of old commercial repute in the town of Greenock. The marriage ceremony was performed by John Brown Patterson, in the old family house of the Dennistons, which stands on the strangely-metamorphosed glebe land of Greenock.

Thus early in life—he was little more than eighty-and-twenty—he had reached the summit of professional advancement. He was an Edinburgh minister; and our Scottish folks have a saying that "every minister would like to go to heaven by the way of Edinburgh." A life of quiet labour and "worksome blessedness" seemed to lie before him.

Trinity College Parish, in the Old Town of Edinburgh, contained as deep strata of heathenism as ever cried for excavation. The dark-mouthed closes which ran down the steep slope from the north side of the High Street might be caves or passages in a mine, but for the narrow slit high up at the distant eaves, through which a thin slice of the sky is seen. The population swarms enormously. In some tall tenements, a population almost equal to that of a small parish lived up a single stair. One such tenement (or "land," as they call it in Edinburgh) fell to the ground in an avalanche of ruins, one bright moonlight night some years ago. It was six storeys high at the front and seven at the back, and was inhabited by twenty-five families, many of whom kept lodgers. There were probably not fewer than a hundred and fifty human beings dwelling in that house. It was very old, and in the dead of night it fell to

the ground with a dull crash, hurling more than thirty of its sleeping inmates to destruction. That crowded tenement was far from being the most populous in the College Parish.

From the beginning of Cunningham's ministry, the whole machinery of an evangelical church was set in motion there. Week-day and Sabbath schools were established. The parish was divided into districts, to which elders were appointed. On Sabbath evenings the minister and the elders visited the schools, which were taught by zealous, active young men. When Elisha of old would raise to life the Shunamite's dead son, "he put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child," suiting himself to the little form. It is not easy to suit ourselves to little minds, but Cunningham did it in a way that was quite wonderful. It was delightful to hear him, the man of iron logic, talk to children. Some of us who were Sabbath-school teachers under him remember it with admiration to this day.

He had a singular power of winning hearts. On one occasion a man and his wife, very young persons, called at his house in Claremont Street, wishing to be admitted to the communion.

It is always a weighty matter for Scottish youth to call upon the minister on such an occasion. It was, besides, the hot time of the Voluntary war; and the idea of Cunningham, as he appeared on platforms, a mighty, fighting man, bore heavily on the minds of the young people. They slipped timidly into the formidable presence; but his frank, kind manner and gentle voice soon put them at their ease, and they were surprised to find themselves conversing quite freely. The Communion Sabbath came. The young couple, after hearing the action sermon, retired from the church, intending to be back in time for the last table. They returned too late, and would have missed the opportunity of receiving the communion, had not one of the elders taken them in hand, and introduced them to Lady Glenorchy's Church, a few yards off, where they were still in time to partake. Such a misadventure was sure to be keenly felt. Mr Cunningham had seen it, and the very next morning he called upon the young people at their house. It was a simple, friendly call, in-

tended, as they gratefully felt, to soothe their hurt feelings, though the fault was all their own. It was but a sample of his loving care and attention to his flock.

The young man had just begun business in a very small way as a bookbinder. Mr Cunningham entered into conversation with him about his trade and prospects. One advice which he gave, the young man never forgot: "When making a purchase of leather or any other material, if you really think the article worth the price asked for it, do not undervalue it or affect to depreciate it. By doing so, you may sometimes get it a little cheaper; but it is neither truthful nor honest, and it will not be for your advantage in the long run." Solomon had the same thing in his eye when he sketched the homely picture: "It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." Only a shrewd and true man would have thought of giving such an advice. But if a tradesman is taught to set his standard of integrity so high that he conscientiously abstains from undervaluing the article he wishes to buy, there is little fear that he will overvalue the article which he wishes to sell.

The young bookbinder had a sore struggle, and through many an anxious day he thought he would be beaten. Often he thought of giving in, and seeking work as a journeyman. But for one thing he would have yielded. His minister had taken an interest in him, had given him much kindly encouragement, and had acquired such an ascendancy over him, that he could not bear the idea of owning defeat and failure to him. He must hold on. He held on, and things began to be more hopeful. One day he shewed to Mr Cunningham his humble balance-sheet. Cunningham saw that, though it was the day of very small things, the business had a look of health. He advised him to strike out a little sail, to procure a good journeyman at once, and go hopefully on. He did so, and became a prosperous and successful tradesman. Long afterwards, when Cunningham was Principal of the New College, the bookbinder testified his gratitude in a pleasing way. He bound, free of charge, five hundred volumes of the College Library, to mark his deep sense of obligation to his old minister.

Besides the Sabbath work, Cunningham instituted regular week-day visitations throughout the parish of all and sundry, whether they belonged to the congregation or not. There were regular weekly prayer-meetings in the districts. A preacher was employed in the parish as missionary, whose salary Mr Cunningham paid wholly himself. The Rev. Thomas Wilson, of Friockheim, filled the situation of missionary for two years. "I never can forget," says Mr Wilson, "the delicacy which he manifested when he had anything to mention which he would like me to attend to in the parish, or when he wished me to preach for him, or assist him in any other way. He kept the furthest away possible from speaking in anything like the tone of authority. He seemed afraid lest he should seem to be asking anything on the ground of right. It was only on such occasions, or in reference to such matters, that he ever seemed to have the slightest difficulty in expressing himself."

Trinity College Church, beautiful as a specimen of Gothic architecture, was miserable as a place of worship. It was cold and damp as a cellar, and had wretched access. The passenger along the North Bridge, as he looked down upon its roof, wondered that men should even have thought of building a church in that deep bottom. Such a church was cruelly adverse to the efforts of the minister and to the prosperity of the congregation. Still, it is not to be denied that Cunningham did not succeed as a preacher in Edinburgh. Some accounted for it by saying that he forgot wherein his great strength lay, and became *too* practical. There was, however, a much simpler and more obvious explanation, quite sufficient, when taken with the church he preached in. Sagacious Hugh Miller said, as we left the College Church one day after hearing its minister, "Oh that Cunningham would preach a speech!" That was it. If his sermons had been like his speeches, the church would have been crammed to the door. There is a generation that is far too wise to believe in so simple a cause for so great an effort; but every man who really knows the Scottish people is perfectly aware that they have in their hearts an intense dislike to sermons read from the manuscript. "And the people," as Sir David Brewster once said, "have the philosophy of the matter on their side." Let it be

granted that a read discourse can be better ordered and better digested; yet as to the power of rousing and sustaining attention between the two modes, there is simply no comparison. In Greenock, Cunningham did not read his sermons, or, at most, read them very seldom; and in Greenock he was a popular minister with a crowded church. The sacrifice of pulpit power which he incurred through reading was immense. The congregation did not keep up in spite of the abundant careful labours of the minister in his parish.

Not long after he came to Edinburgh, a deplorable occurrence, which took place in a country parish in the neighbourhood, brought the ignorance of the population under his notice in a way that took a strong and painful hold of his mind.

Mrs Elizabeth Banks, a woman of fifty-four, dwelt in the hamlet of Dewarton, in the parish of Borthwick. She had lived happily for thirty years with her first husband, to whom she bore two sons and six daughters. The husband of her youth died, and she married again, but the marriage turned out so miserably, that she became desperate, and made up her mind to seek death. She bought arsenic to destroy herself. According to the loose practice then endured, she obtained for twopence in a village shop as much of the deadly drug as would have destroyed three lives. She went home thus fearfully provided, and laid up the arsenic in a secret corner. Then her temptation changed. The husband one day ill-treated her worse than usual, struck her, and left the marks of his violence on her face. Maddened by this outrage, she mixed the arsenic with some Epsom salts which the husband had procured for his own use. He drunk, and died in horrible agonies.

She was tried and condemned on the clearest evidence. According to old use and wont, the city ministers of Edinburgh take in rotation the sad duty of attending as spiritual advisers on prisoners under sentence of death. It fell to the minister of College Parish to attend Mrs Banks. He visited her daily in prison, and was with her on the scaffold. He found her in a deplorable state of ignorance as to all religious truth. A church was a place to which she and her family had never entered. At first she tried to die by refusing all food. But hunger was too mighty for her. With true

Scottish feeling she deplored the disgrace which she had brought upon her family and friends; but she never shed a tear for anything else. As her fatal day approached she became subdued and gentle, and confessed her crime. "My heart is like to burst," she said, as the hangman's hands were busy pinioning her arms. Supported on Cunningham's arm, she stepped out upon the scaffold. "I am come to the place at last," she said. She was a thin, spare woman, and appeared on the scaffold neatly clad in black, with a widow's cap. She leaned heavily on Cunningham, while he offered up a most solemn prayer, quickly cast away the handkerchief, and went on her dark journey.

This affair made a deep impression on Cunningham. It deepened his feeling of solemn pity for his perishing countrymen. He spoke of it with an emotion which filled his boys with awe, as he pointed out to them, many years afterwards, the spot where the scaffold stood.

## CHAPTER V.

### *PUBLIC QUESTIONS.*

BEFORE pursuing the history of these discussions directly affecting his own church, in which Cunningham took so prominent a part, it may be well to advert to some other subjects which engaged his attention during the first few years after his settlement in Edinburgh. The first of them is

#### THE SABBATH QUESTION.

Sir Andrew Agnew, of the ancient Norman house of the Agnews in Wigtonshire, found his way on a certain Sabbath into Dr M'Crie's chapel in Edinburgh, and there heard a robust sermon on the text, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Before that day he had looked upon the Sabbath as little more than a church holiday. But thenceforward he knew that Sabbath observance is an essential branch of morality, based on the eternal law of God. He was a mild, humble-hearted man, and his staunch perseverance was power. Returned to Parliament a year or two later, he took up the cause of the Sabbath with beautiful devotedness. The Lord's-Day Society requested him to move in the House of Commons for a Select Committee to inquire into the laws and practices relating to the observance of the Sabbath. He did so in 1832. The committee was granted, and he entered upon a struggle which, in Parliament and out of it, he never relaxed to the end of his life. The conflict was unpopular, because it was holy. It exposed him to much obloquy. But still he held on his way undaunted. His "Bill to promote the better observance of the Lord's Day" had a parliamentary history of five years. It was on

the table of the House when William IV. died, and Parliament was dissolved. In the general election which followed, Sir Andrew Agnew failed to secure his seat, and his bill fell to the ground. Cunningham felt a deep interest in the Sabbath question, and took his full share in supporting Sir Andrew Agnew. There is an article from his pen on the subject of Sabbath Legislation in the *Presbyterian Review* for November 1837. It is a paper of remarkable logical completeness, though hardly exceeding a dozen pages. A time will come when the work of Sabbath legislation will be taken up again—when the sons of toil will see that the Sabbath rest is their right, and will demand it. When that time comes, the profound and thoughtful views of Cunningham may chance to be sought out in the old sets of the *Presbyterian Review.*

No human laws, he says, can directly promote the cordial and conscientious observance of the Lord's day. You may by Sabbath legislation deprive men of some of their ordinary indulgences on that day, but this, instead of keeping the fourth commandment, will probably lead them to break the third. But much may be done by legislation to promote the outward rest of the Sabbath. Much may be done to afford protection to those who are desirous to rest on that day from their ordinary occupations, and to devote it to religious purposes if they are inclined to do so. The object of Sabbath legislation is therefore protection to those who cannot protect themselves—protection of many thousands and tens of thousands of the lower orders, who are made the slaves of their fellow-subjects, and sacrificed, body and soul, for their comfort and convenience.

But how far can this protective legislation go? There are certain obvious limits within which it ought to be restricted. Two rules define these limits. The first rule is, that no act of Sabbath violation should be prohibited under a penalty unless it is capable of being clearly and unambiguously described and defined, so as to be easily distinguished from other similar acts. The other rule is, that no act of Sabbath violation should be prohibited unless it is capable of being detected and proved without any interference with the privacy of domestic arrangements. Sabbath legislation is sound

and safe within these limits, otherwise its operation would be oppressive and inquisitorial.

Now, upon these two grounds jointly, it is necessary to set aside the whole intercourse between master and servant, as not coming under the proper province of Sabbath legislation. To attempt legislation for the observance of the Sabbath in the intercourse between master and domestic servant would be unwarrantable, since the offences in general could not be described with sufficient precision, and could not be proved without an inquisitorial investigation into domestic privacy, which should not be tolerated. It is quite true that many violations of the Sabbath, most offensive in the eyes of God, will thus escape all legal punishment. But this is no reason for attempting to stretch the province of law and its penalties beyond what sound reason prescribes. True, this leaves the appearance of ground for the objection of partiality to the rich. Such legislation, it may be said, leaves the rich untouched, and interferes with the enjoyment of the poor. The rich, just because of their riches, can always command greater means of sinful enjoyment on the Lord's day; but we must not be tempted to pass the safe bounds of Sabbath legislation merely for the sake of escaping a cavilling objection.

Upon these principles, then, the law should prohibit all places of public amusement on the Lord's day, all trading, and all travelling by public hired conveyances. All these can be clearly described and defined. All these can be detected and punished by means of a public police without intruding into the privacy of domestic arrangements.

## POPERY.

Another subject which deeply engaged Cunningham's mind about this time was that of Popery.

Part of the appointed punishment of Popery would seem to be to roll the stone up the hill, and as often as the summit is all but reached, to see it rolling down again. The stone was well up the hill when the last of the Stuarts came to the throne, and it rushed thundering down at the Revolution three years afterwards. The

popish controversy raged hotly about that period. An English priest named Gother, published a book under the title, "A Papist Misrepresented and Represented," a plausible, clever, Jesuitical book. Gother's papist is a much-wronged, greatly calumniated personage, suffering grievously under the mistakes and misrepresentations of Protestants. The papists of succeeding times have thought so much of the dashing, unscrupulous Gother, that some thirty editions of his work have been published. Stillingfleet, the illustrious Bishop of Worcester, published a reply to Gother under the title, "The Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome truly Represented;" and the able, true man rent the sophistries of the clever, lying man like a spider's web.

Cunningham had occasion, at a meeting of the "Protestant Association" in Edinburgh, in December 1835, to quote Gother's book. He described it as being "full of misrepresentations from beginning to end;" "a Jesuitical gloss upon all their doctrines and opinions;" "a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end." At the same time, he admitted, with characteristic fairness, that it was a "very clever pamphlet." Soon afterwards, a prospectus of a new edition of Gother appeared, and was profusely circulated from house to house, in newspapers, and on the walls. It was written in such a style, that it was scarcely possible for laics to guess whether Gother was in favour of Popery or against it. But it quoted prominently Cunningham's words, "a very clever pamphlet," and omitted everything else that he had said about it.

This smart trick, as the way is with most tricks, turned out to be rather foolish. Cunningham immediately resolved to republish Stillingfleet. He carried out the design in 1837. The original matter added by him forms one half of the volume, and the book, Stillingfleet *plus* Cunningham, is perhaps the best summary of the whole Popish controversy in existence. The reader will find in it heads of argument on every point of the controversy, and most ample directions to the best sources of information on all the subjects in dispute between us and Rome. Cunningham has not left anything behind him that displays his learning more remarkably than his edition of Stillingfleet. It is a lasting service to the

student of theology, a very tower of David, on which hang a thousand shields.

The book was finished and ready for the printer on the day that his third child, a daughter, was born. The preface, therefore, became a household memorial, as it bore the date of that daughter's birthday—his Helen, who, in mental characteristics, resembled him most of all his family, and who has already, in the flower of her youth, resembled him in the serene triumph of her deathbed.

Few things that ever came from his pen are more characteristic than the following remarks taken from the Preface to Stillingfleet:—

"Since man fell there have been three leading forms of the true religion, all embodying the same fundamental principles; the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian. The great enemy of mankind, having secured a most important advantage in man's fall, has exerted himself to corrupt and pervert each of those forms of the true religion, and to make them subservient to the accomplishment of his own purposes. He has displayed his cunning in this respect, by adapting his measures not merely to the leading features of man's depraved nature, but likewise to the particular circumstances in which men in these different periods were placed, the degree of light which they enjoyed, and the character of the dispensation under which they lived. Under his agency the Patriarchal religion degenerated among the mass of mankind into Paganism; the Mosaic, into that state of things which is described in the gospel history, and which, for want of a better word, may be called Pharisaism; and the Christian religion into Popery. There is a very remarkable resemblance among these three corruptions of the true religion, which might be traced at once in their leading principles, and in many minute points of detail, and especially in the singular conformity between the rites and ceremonies of Paganism and of Popery. Men must have something in the shape of religion, and the object of their great enemy is to provide that they shall have as little as possible, and that what they shall have shall be inconsistent with the great principles which God has revealed as regulating his intercourse with fallen man. The leading feature of

Paganism is idolatry, that is, worshipping those who are no gods, or worshipping God by images. This was addressed to that feature in the character of fallen man which prompted our first parents to hide themselves among the trees of the garden, and to that evil heart of unbelief which inclines all their posterity to depart from the living God. This very idolatry, although in a more mitigated form, corresponding to the greater light of the Christian dispensation, is still a leading feature of Popery, and serves to a large extent, among its deluded votaries, the object of withdrawing men from contemplating God, and holding communion with the Father of their spirits. The Jewish religion, in many of its provisions, was specially intended to guard the chosen people of God from the idolatry that prevailed among the rest of mankind; and it effected that important object to a great extent, especially during the latter period of that dispensation; for it is well known that there was no open idolatry among the Jews after the return from the Babylonish captivity. The state of religion among the Jews in the time of our Saviour, however, was such as to afford abundant proof of the ingenuity and activity of the great enemy of God and man. Pharisaism was a complete perversion of the true religion as revealed by God through Moses, and had a very striking resemblance to Popery, especially in these important particulars,—that it was founded, not upon the written word of God, but upon the traditions of men; that the true ground of a sinner's hope was obscured, if not overthrown, by a principle of self-righteousness; that personal religion was supposed to consist in the observance of outward rites and ceremonies, rather than in genuine holiness of heart and life; and that, to a considerable extent, the authority of the Divine law was made void by human traditions. The Sadducees may be fitly regarded as representing that infidelity which, in certain circumstances, has been generally the fruit of the prevalence of Popery; and the union of the Pharisees and Sadducees in opposing the Lord Jesus Christ bears a striking resemblance to the combination of papists and infidels in the present day in opposing the true Protestantism of the Bible."

Not long after the republication of Stillingfleet, an affair which

gave him some annoyance arose out of his share in the Popish controversy.

The Roman Catholics were full of hope and insolence at that time. They had got emancipation, and they had O'Connell. A Protestant meeting was held in Edinburgh in 1836. The Marquis of Tweeddale was in the chair. The Earl of Dalhousie, afterwards Governor-General of India, and a quite weighty platform of gentry and clergy, graced the occasion. Cunningham spoke at length, for the Popish controversy was his favourite subject, and the insolence of the Papists had made men keen. In the course of his speech he said, they "all knew the 'Encyclopædia Brittanica,' a valuable and very important work, and that a new edition of it had lately been issued. At the time it began, the Papists, ever alive to the advancement of their own purposes, sent a communication to the publisher, to the effect that unless he would allow them to revise and superintend the articles in the work in connection with Popery, they would use their influence to prevent its circulation. He referred to this as an illustration of the zeal of the Papists. With the mode of its reception he had nothing to do, but he might take the liberty of saying, that he believed concessions were made by the proprietors of the work; and he knew that in the new edition of it, to which he was a subscriber, there were various plain traces of Popish influences in altering several articles from the way in which they stood in former editions."

This statement was held to mean "that in consequence of an application by Roman Catholics to write or revise the articles affecting them, a concession had been made inconsistent with the proper editorial care of the 'Encyclopædia'"; and Mr Adam Black, the proprietor of the 'Encyclopædia,' immediately raised an action of damages against him.

The information on which Cunningham had spoken was given to him by a minister of the Episcopal Church, then officiating in Edinburgh. A man needs to burn his fingers once or twice before he learns to be sufficiently careful of his facts, and perhaps Mr —— had not been sufficiently careful. At all events, though a most excellent, he was a timid man, and Cunningham found at

once that he was to have no backing from him. He compromised the action, consenting to publish a statement, in which he said,—

"I am now satisfied that the information on which I acted does not warrant the inference that any concession was made, or any inference injurious to the character of the 'Encyclopædia Brittanica.'" He engaged, at the same time, to pay the expense of publishing the apology, so that it might circulate as widely as the offence. This was an engagement of which ungenerous advantage might easily be taken. Indignant friends did say to him that ungenerous advantage was taken, but he only smiled his quiet smile, and said nothing.

He was all his life ready—too ready—to make apologies and retractations. Whenever he thought he had gone too far, there was a reaction in his nature which caused him, almost with a kind of self-contempt, to make the most ample acknowledgments against himself. He was a mighty defender of a principle, but he was a poor defender of William Cunningham.

Disagreeable as the affair of the 'Encyclopædia' was, it wanted not a compensation in the love and confidence of many generous friends which it brought out. They raised among themselves a sum sufficient to cover all expenses.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *THE VOLUNTARY CONTROVERSY.*

THE General Assembly of 1835 was made glad by the presence and wonderful eloquence of Duff the missionary. Even Moderatism was almost galvanised into life for a time. But this gladness was dashed by the death of Cunningham's friend, John Brown Patterson, on whom so much hope had fixed. On the Sabbath before the meeting of the Assembly, after preaching twice in his own pulpit, he walked to Grangemouth, three miles, preached, and walked home through the rain. When he arrived at home, he threw himself, wet and exhausted, upon a sofa, and dropped asleep. Next day, he went to Edinburgh, and took up his residence under his mother's roof. He attended the Assembly, but he seemed to sit in a state of abstraction, as if he neither saw nor heard what was going on around him.

Next day he fevered, and was unable to leave his room. He recovered so far as to go abroad, but then a fatal relapse came on. His mind wavered, and consciousness was lost. "He wandered, but it was from earth to heaven." In less than three days after the second attack, his life was cut off, with all its brilliant promise unfulfilled. A widow remained to mourn him, and an infant son, too young to know his loss. It was a bitter sorrow to Cunningham, and caused him to walk softly many days.

Never were two men more entirely unlike, yet so perfectly united. From early college days, each had seen in the other the promise of future eminence. Each rejoiced in the success and honours of the other as in his own. By word and by letter they cheered each other on in the preparation for the ministry; and, when student life was

finished, and they had entered upon their separate fields of labour, they remained the same to each other that they had ever been.

The only public work in which they were associated was in the Edinburgh course of lectures on Church Establishments in the winter of 1834–5, a few months before Patterson's death. These lectures were given at the instance of the "Edinburgh Young Men's Society for promoting the interests of the Church of Scotland." Cunningham was president of this society, and delivered the first lecture; and the series, consisting of twelve lectures, was afterwards published. The volume, one well-thumbed in many a Scottish household, is still sometimes to be seen on cottage shelves. Cunningham's introductory lecture was on "The Nature and Lawfulness of Union between Church and State." The principles there laid down regarding the only possible lawful union between Church and State, is exactly that which, at the Disruption, he was called upon to "translate into fact."

"It is willingly conceded that Christ's Church or kingdom is not of this world, but is purely spiritual, and that if it can be proved that union or connection between Church and State, of any kind or in any degree, *necessarily* implies the headship over the Church of any other than Jesus Christ himself—the subtraction of any of the privileges conferred by Christ on the office-bearers or members of his Church—or the imposition of any restraint upon them in the discharge of any of their duties; all such union or connection is *unlawful*." A principle to be heard of yet again before the Church and State question is settled!

Some of the lecturers were the very flower of the rising minds of Scotland. Besides Cunningham and Patterson, there was Charles J. Brown, who, when health allows, sometimes rises even yet to rare heights of Christian eloquence; Candlish, the most lithe and agile intellect of his day; Dunlop, with his high-toned chivalry of spirit, and his penetrating sagacity; Andrew Gray, with weight and sharpness like the keen and heavy Indian Tulwar, which, lightly dropped on a man's arm, shreds it like a sapling; John Bruce,

"An opulent soul
Dropt in my path, like a great cup of gold."

At that time the Voluntary controversy was at its height. After all, it was but a preliminary skirmish of the great Church and State battle. Here, in Scotland, it commenced on this wise.

About the year 1829, the Rev. Mr Ballantyne, a Dissenting minister in the northern town of Stonehaven, published a "Comparison of Dissenting and Established Churches." He was a man of considerable parts, but his book attracted little notice. Cobbett says that the profits of his first publishing adventure "amounted to eleven pence three farthings, quite entirely clear of all deduction whatsoever." It is doubtful if Mr Ballantyne came off so well. Some little time afterwards, the Rev. Mr Marshall of Kirkintilloch picked up the spent shot and fired it off anew. He preached a sermon before the "Glasgow Association for propagating the gospel in connection with the United Secession Church," which sermon was immediately published under the title of "Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered." Marshall was a bold, honest, strong-willed man, and a vigorous preacher. The Glasgow sermon, which subsequent events rendered historical, was preached from the words: "Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." He argued that Ecclesiastical Establishments are unscriptural, unjust, inefficient, and unnecessary. The sermon produced an immense impression, and ran rapidly through several editions. The Scotch Seceders, it is well known, had long been more or less leavened with anti-Establishment principles, so that the sturdy preacher in the west scattered his seed in fully prepared soil.

Except an anonymous writer in the *Christian Instructor*, whose article was republished in a separate form, no one took the field on the side of Establishments for a considerable time. The diffusion of Voluntary principles went on briskly. The Dissenters organised. Every town and village throughout Scotland had its Voluntary Church Association. At length, the friends of the Establishment began to stir. Mr Marshall, unhappy in quotation, cried in the words of Goliath of Gath, "Give me a man, that we may fight together." He had his wish. Dr John Inglis, a profoundly sagacious and able man, came out, in 1833, with his "Vindication of

Ecclesiastical Establishments;" and Mr Marshall was more than matched. The conflict waxed warm. By this time, the Reform Act had given political power to the great middle class. Men in their hot youth will mistake their strength and overstrain themselves in attempting feats beyond it. The Dissenters, greatly mistaking their strength, thought that the time had come for the overthrow of the Established Church. They began an attack so brisk, that it seemed for a time not unlikely to succeed. They had newspapers and monthly magazines, and it snowed pamphlets and tracts. They had itinerant lecturers constantly addressing public meetings, whose incessant activity kept the country in a flame. The question of Church or no Church divided every hamlet.

If the friends of the Church had been slow to meet the attack, they, at least, shewed no want of vigour when they had begun. The Controversy accumulated a multitudinous literature, able, trenchant, unsparing. Seven quarterly or monthly magazines laboured at the furnace. The *Voluntary Magazine* and the *Church of Scotland Magazine* were got up expressly for the battle. The *Secession Magazine*, and the *Christian Journal*, the *Christian Instructor*, the *Presbyterian Review*, and the *Presbyterian Magazine*, previously existing organs, ranged themselves on their respective sides. There was an endless procession of books and treatises, pamphlets, essays, letters, and lectures. About fifty thousand tracts on the Establishment side alone, left Collins' warehouse each month during the heat of the Controversy. The pulpit took a vehement part in the discussion. Public debates, in which the champions met by challenge to discuss the question, gave the greatest possible impulse to the common people who gathered to see them fight it out.

Many of the meetings were wild and fierce to an incredible degree. The saintly Robert M'Cheyne—no agitator, certainly—thought it his duty to stand up on behalf of the Established Church. One evening he appeared before a meeting in a village of the county of Fife. He came forward, and attempted to speak. But the storm of yells and groans which saluted him, and the sea of angry faces before him, were too much for his gentle nature. He turned pale, and gave up the attempt.

The population of Scotland, believed to be about a million at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had increased to two millions and a-half. But the Moderates, each man looking after his own portion of fat, had never thought of extending the Church to meet the wants of this rapidly-extending population. As soon, however, as the reforming party became the majority, there was a grand outburst of energetic endeavour to provide gospel ordinances for every soul in the land. The number of new churches built in connection with the Establishment during the previous hundred years was just sixty-three. In the very first year after the evangelical and reforming men became a majority, the number of additional churches built was sixty-four. In four years they had built 187 new churches, raising for this purpose a yearly revenue of £50,000,—a thing not so wonderful now, when Christian liberality has grown familiar with far greater deeds, but amazing enough then.

The Church, as a National Church, thought that if she built the places of worship by her own endeavour, the State ought to provide, at least, a partial support for the ministers. The assistance of the State was accordingly solicited. Nearly seven hundred petitions in favour of this object were presented to Parliament,—a thing totally unprecedented from Scotland, as the Lord Advocate of the day told the House of Commons, on any subject since the Union. The Ministry of the day put a recommendation of it into the King's Speech, at the opening of Parliament in 1835. The Dissenters, who saw in the efforts of the Church to extend herself to the "outfield population," a plan to crush themselves, were roused to the most vigorous opposition. It was the old battle of State Churches over again, with a slight change of ground.

All that Government ever did was to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole subject of the means of religious instruction in Scotland. The Commission did their work laboriously and honestly enough. They visited every town. They held open sittings, examined witnesses of all kinds, and allowed every one who chose to cross-examine them through the chairman. Churchmen and Dissenters badgered each other before the Commission in every town. Bitter disputes and controversies sprang up behind

them like a crop of nettles wherever they came. The visit of the Commission opened the lists for combat in every locality, and the battle, like Absalom's, "was scattered over the face of the whole country."

Many speakers, good and bad, took part in the Voluntary agitation, from pulpit and platform, who must go down to forgetfulness, like yesterday's murmur of the waves on the shore. But among them were two remarkable men who cannot easily be forgotten.

Charles Leckie was born in Ireland, of a Scotch father and an Irish mother. He came over to Scotland when a boy, and obtained work in a cotton mill at Barrhead. At a Sabbath school there, divine truth took hold of his mind. The lad devoted himself to his Bible till he almost had it by heart; and to Church History, till his proficiency in it was amazing. The only school that he ever attended was the Sabbath school. But the mightiest educational influence in Scotland is that to which men go at the sound of the Sabbath bells. Charles Leckie enjoyed that in great excellence under the ministry of the Rev. Dr Symington, of the Reformed Presbyterians. He was first heard of in connection with a public discussion which he maintained with some Romanists in the town of Paisley, The "Reformation Society" of those days took hold of him, and employed him as their travelling agent. His debating power was quite marvellous. His ready wit and brilliant repartee came, perhaps, from his Irish blood; but he drove home the rivets of his argument like a Scot of the Scots. He was a slightly-made man, of middle height. His features were small and regular, his complexion dark, and his coal-black hair stood straight up from his compact forehead. A working man himself, he could deal with meetings of the working classes as no other man in Scotland could do. He encountered many a stormy scene, battling with the fierce democracy; but his good humour was never ruffled, and his cool self-possession never failed. He was a gentle, happy, humble-hearted Christian. The Established Church found one of its most effective defenders in this remarkable cotton-spinner. Some of his public debates lasted for three, and one of them for

ten, consecutive evenings. Sometimes the eager crowd sat on till gray daylight streamed in upon them.

The Voluntary controversy drew another remarkable combatant into the field. This was Makgill of Rankeillour, a gentleman of ancient family in the county of Fife. He was a man of distinguished personal appearance; for the Makgills, like the Bertrams of Sir Walter's tale, were "aye the wale of the country side." Perhaps since Erskine of Dun, the friend of Knox, went about preaching the gospel in Angus, no Scottish gentleman gave his life with a more heroic heart to the cause of God and his Church. His mind was rich with the treasures of English literature; he was intrepid and ready in debate; he possessed a fervid and stirring eloquence; and his voice of immense power, and yet silvery charms, was such as is seldom given to man. He itinerated with Charles Leslie in the cause of the Church against the Voluntaries. It will be long enough before such a pair of travellers visit our towns and villages again.

Cunningham's language was very strong—as strong as John Milton's in his pamphlets. At the first meeting held in Edinburgh in defence of the Church, he used words to this effect: "The friends of the Church had determined to stem the tide of atheism, infidelity, popery, and voluntaryism, and to resist the attacks made upon them by an apostate and perjured Secession." He meant those who professed Secession principles in connection with Voluntaryism, and to whom he did not hesitate to apply the epithets of apostacy and perjury. "This statement," he says himself, "occasioned a considerable sensation, and called forth a great deal of wrath and bitterness"—not wonderful, upon the whole. The Voluntary Seceders challenged him to make good the charge.

Long afterwards, Dr Cunningham described what took place in these words: "I was led in the excitement of debate to apply a very strong and unwarrantable expression to the position of the Voluntaries in the Secession. I applied the terms apostacy and perjury—terms which were used by some of our friends among the Old Light Seceders, and which I inconsiderately adopted in debate. In the articles," which had been referred to, "there was certainly an

explanation or defence of the grounds of the statement; but the expression I at once admitted was unwarrantable and improper." The articles referred to were no fewer than seven in as many consecutive numbers of the *Church of Scotland Magazine*. The aim of them was to prove or establish the inconsistency to which Dr Cunningham's expression pointed. He confessed the expression to be unwarrantable, but he "asserted and maintained" the inconsistency.

All ministers of the Secession Church at that time declared, at their ordination, their approval of the principles and design of the Secession, and pledged themselves to prosecute that "design." Was that consistent with Voluntaryism? The first Seceders were no Voluntaries; they left the Established Church with a noble sorrow in their hearts, and reserved their right to return in better days. Their successors were of quite another mind. How could they keep on swearing to follow up the design of their fathers? Cunningham, to whom truth was a sacred *numen* whose very skirts were holy, could not understand this, and pressed the charge vigorously. Moreover, they signed the Westminster Confession, bating only a caveat against intolerance and persecution. But did that cover, or was it wide enough to permit, Voluntaryism? There were replies, of course, both as to the "design," and as to the "Confession." They did not satisfy Cunningham's judgment. But some moralisings of his on this whole collision will meet us later.

Dr John Ritchie was a well-known character in those days. He was minister of the Secession Church in Potterrow, Edinburgh, where the Covenanters had their cannon-foundry blazing in Dunse Law days. He had natural eloquence, humour, and cleverness; was impulsive and ardent, and liked the excitement of popular agitation. Under the influence of that excitement, he no doubt sometimes made demonstrations which his friends would have wished unmade. But yet he was a man in whom those that knew him found not a little to love. He is daguerreotyped in the minds of most survivors of that generation. His pleasant countenance and handsome person were set off by peculiar integuments. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, saucer deep in the crown; a quaker-cut coat;

and, discarding pantaloons, his shapely calves were attired in silk stockings. His activity in the Voluntary controversy was immense. He made speeches of five hours and a half. He expatiated over the whole of Scotland, nothing but the bar of the Gaelic vernacular keeping him out of any corner of it. Many stories are yet alive of his pleasantries and audacities, his adventures, and also his misadventures, in the course of his career.

Dr Ritchie became in a manner the focus of some of the severest hitting connected with this "perjury and apostacy" business; because he met the challenge with great emphasis of repudiation, and yet was not circumspect in the handling of his line of battle. He said, or was said to have said, that it was utterly impossible *he* could be perjured, for he had never taken an oath. Hereupon his adversaries went about to prove that he had "engaged in Covenanting work," *i.e.*, joined in renewal of the Covenant, which involved words of solemn swearing; and, as it was maintained, *not* swearing to Voluntaryism. Nobody spared anybody in those days, if anybody was in a corner. It may be supposed, therefore, what high words of denunciation were levelled at Dr Ritchie.

In the year 1847, when Dr Cunningham took up his abode in Salisbury Road, his next door neighbour was the same Dr Ritchie. Not waiting to be called upon, Dr and Mrs Cunningham made the first step in an intercourse which became extremely cordial. Dr Ritchie, indeed, was known to have averred that he must have the garden wall pulled down, and suffer no dividing lines between himself and his friend. He sympathised strongly with many of Dr Cunningham's theological tendencies; and was wont to compare notes with his old antagonist with great satisfaction. When he was laid upon his deathbed, Dr Cunningham repeatedly visited him, and prayed with him, as an intimate Christian friend; and he mourned with the bereaved family. Within a year afterwards, he had himself followed him beyond the veil.*

### OBEDIENCE DUE TO CIVIL RULERS.

The reforming party in the Church of Scotland were advancing

* Letter from Miss Ritchie.

towards a point where they would have to choose between obeying God and obeying man. It was surely a kindness of Providence that while that hour was approaching, circumstances forced upon them the consideration of a Christian's duty to the law of the land from various standpoints. The great question of the duty of civil obedience came up about this time in a very animated form, and received a most thorough discussion. Naples has its Vesuvius, with its sullen rumblings, and fiery emissions, and perpetual bitter smoke. Edinburgh had its Vesuvius, too, in the shape of the Annuity-Tax, a very lively Vesuvius indeed. The Annuity-Tax was a tax of six *per cent.* on rental paid by the occupiers of houses for the support of the Edinburgh city clergy. It has been the cause of untold irritation in that fair town. It is an old tax, going back as far as the time of Charles I., and suitable enough, perhaps, when the whole nation was of one church, but quite obnoxious now, and fitted to make the support of the clergy an occasion of strife and bitterness. Since the days we speak of, successive battles have as good as made an end of it. In the heat of the Voluntary controversy, popular fury turned against the Annuity-Tax, and many who had hitherto paid it unwillingly, refused to pay it any more. Warrants went out against two thousand persons. The state of inflammation in the town may be imagined.

Dr John Brown, the eminent minister of Broughton Place, and Professor of Divinity to the United Secession Church, had long filled an important and influential place in Edinburgh. He was a man of great polemical power and Biblical skill, and a beautiful character, admired and loved by all who knew him. In the midst of the excitement, a great meeting was held to form an association for the abolition of the Annuity-Tax. At that meeting, Dr Brown came forward and read a formal paper, in which he pledged himself to suffer any penalty, even to bonds and imprisonment, rather than pay the Annuity-Tax any more.

He was as good as his word. On his refusal to pay, warrant went out against him, the officers of the law entered his dwelling, and laid their hands on his eight-day clock, an article which was destined to make more noise than any other eight-day clock ever did

before. Dr Brown suffered the law to take its course, and the clock was put up to public sale. A rough and clamorous mob crammed the place of sale, and performed the operation of "bonnetting" any one who was seen to make a bid.

However, in spite of the tumult, the clock was sold, for as much happily as paid the debt and expenses; but the exasperation in Edinburgh is not to be told.

Robert Haldane, to whom Scotland and the truth owe so much, viewed the conduct of Dr Brown with strong disapprobation, and told him, in a letter published in the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, that his refusal to pay tribute was plain disobedience to the law of Christ. Dr Brown replied through the same channel, and alleged, among other things, the example of "our covenanting ancestors," as refusing to pay taxes levied for purposes which they considered sinful. He referred to the book called, "The Hind let Loose," by Alexander Shields, as containing an able abstract of their case. "The Hind let Loose" does not contain the case of our "covenanting ancestors," but only the case of a small party of them, who broke off from the rest towards the end of the great persecution.

Memory does play a man annoying tricks, and Dr Brown, in making the statement, must have trusted to memory. "There is no one," said Wellington, "in whose presence it is more unsafe to make a false movement than in that of Napoleon." It was very unsafe to make a mistake with Cunningham in front. He at once exposed the weakness of the historical plea in the *Advertiser*. Dr Brown, in his reply, appealed to the relations in which Cunningham had formerly stood to him as "his grateful pupil." But he was met in that blunt fashion which is destructive to sentiment. Cunningham acknowledged that, as a student, he had derived both pleasure and profit from hearing Dr Brown preach, and from attending a class which he conducted for the critical study of the New Testament, but he would not allow that these circumstances had any bearing on the question whether "The Hind let Loose" was a proper authority for the opinions of our "covenanting ancestors." Since, however, personal relations had been appealed to, he explained what these were, and did so pretty sharply.

Robert Haldane continued his letters in the *Advertiser*, and Dr Brown delivered two Sabbath evening lectures in reply to them. These lectures were published, and ran through several editions, which were gradually enlarged by an immense body of notes and extracts, till the thick pamphlet grew into a volume of 500 pages. Dr Brown's biographer says, "Probably none but its author could have drawn from so wide a range of reading in the Biblical, and especially in ecclesiastico-political literature—the whole number of authors quoted being upwards of three hundred. Almost the whole history of opinion in regard to the province of the civil magistrate is contained in the selected extracts."* Perhaps there was only one man on the other side who could have taken up this remarkable publication, with its enormous erudition, and put his finger upon its weak points. That Cunningham could do it, the *Presbyterian Review* for October 1839 abundantly proved. The powerful article on Civil Obedience from his pen, which appears in that number, was written almost off-hand, amid the distractions of those conflicts which had meanwhile arisen within the Established Church. It is written with unsparing keenness. In open battle, Cunningham was always the keenest of combatants, but no heart had ever more generous reactions than his. What he thought of his controversy with Dr Brown will be seen in the sequel.

Why should we scruple to speak of these old heats between two Churches which are evidently destined to become one in the hand of the Lord? It is a mere question of time. And they will not honour one another the less because each has proved to the other in keen conflict its invincible loyalty to the truth.

Surely it ought to be noticed as one of the many marked providences which preceded the Disruption, that this memorable discussion arose regarding the limitations of the obedience due to civil rulers. There are such limitations, as every Christian man admits. When God was about to bring his people to a point where they would be compelled to recognise such a limitation, He sent them to study the whole question, and to reason it out in an intense and animated controversy. Whoever shall seek out the *Presbyterian*

* "Memoir of John Brown, D.D.," p. 189.

*Review* for 1839, for the sake of Cunningham's articles, will be astonished at the marvellous learning which they display, and will regret that they should be buried in an old ephemeral. But they served their end; nor can we doubt that the controversy ripened men's minds upon the duty of refusing to Cæsar the things that are God's.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *CHURCH REFORM.*

IT is now time to resume the narrative of those internal reforms and controversies which agitated the Church of Scotland during the years preceding the Disruption.

Cunningham, writing to his friend Patterson, had declared that he "did not know, in the history of Christianity, anything coming up to the idea of a church," so fully as was the case in Scotland when Presbytery flourished in its glory and in its strength. But the Church of Scotland had thrown away her strength during a false, hollow, and "Moderate" age. The story of the infant baptized in a frozen pool, in a Highland moor, is but a vivid illustration of the miserable carelessness to be found in many a parish. James Macdonald, catechist in the parish of Reay, had a son born during a vacancy in the parish. He was obliged, therefore, to apply to a neighbouring minister for the baptism of his child. On a December day, he and his wife set out with the infant to that minister's house. On reaching it, they found that the minister was out shooting, and would not be back till night. They set out across the moor on their way home again. As they plodded on, they met the reverend sportsman. He had no idea, however, of leaving his sport to return with them to the house, but he was quite ready to baptise the infant on the spot. They were standing beside a frozen pool, and, after muttering a few words of prayer, he broke the ice with the butt of his gun, lifted a little water in the hollow of his hand, and sprinkled it on the face of the infant, as he repeated the solemn words of baptism. The infant thus baptized

from a frozen pool, on the open moor, lived and grew, and became the celebrated Dr Macdonald, the Apostle of the North.

The deepest wish of Cunningham's heart was to see the Church, which he loved with such reverent affection, reanimated to the efficiency of former times. He burned to see her delivered from the corruptions of a hundred years. This was the ruling passion of his heart, and in the years before us, the hope of success was as ardent as the desire was deep and strong.

Our fathers had a sharp, decisive way of reaching their drones by "presbyterial visitation." Each presbytery, in the exercise of its episcopal power, visited all the parishes within its bounds at short intervals, and the circuit went on continually. They examined into the state of matters with unflinching rigour. They looked to see that the minister's library was sufficiently stored with good and useful books. They inquired into the matter and manner of his preaching, his constancy in study, his visitation of the sick and of his parish, his rule in his own house, his faithfulness in reproving sin, his prudence, his laboriousness in teaching the young and ignorant. Under such a system, if a sentinel fell asleep, it was at his peril. The system, no doubt, was primitive in its details, and might be found something less than suitable to modern times. But the idea of it was excellent, and it might be revived and adapted to the present day.

Cunningham introduced an overture* in the provincial Synod of Lothian in the autumn of 1835, to revive the practice. The overture was carried, and went up to the General Assembly. That cautious body, after taking a year to think of it, declared that Presbyteries had the right to make parochial visitations if they thought proper. Many presbyteries, in which evangelical men had the majority, did think proper. The Moderates, where they were in a majority, thought proper to let them alone.

This same master-desire to see the beloved Church of Scotland purged from every blot and flaw, and filled with fresh energy to bless the land, drew him into many a vehement collision, for which ample occasion arose in the miniature parliaments of

* *Overture*—opening of the question.

the Presbyterian church, where parties met face to face every month.

One of many sharp fights which took place between Moderate and Evangelical was on the question of bonds for the stipend of ministers in the new churches. When a gospel labourer is set down among a neglected population, it would be a comfort, no doubt, if you could obtain for him legal security for his income, or, at least, for as much of it as would be subsistence-money. But suppose that a poor and humble community have been engaged in building a church. They have watched it as it rose from the first stone, till, after long months of painful effort, the cope-stone has been brought forth with shoutings. They come before the Presbytery, and state that it is impossible, and indeed would be a mockery, for them to give a bond, but that they are willing to do all they can for the support of their minister. Shall they be told, There must be a legal bond, or you can have no minister? The Evangelical party were for declaring it competent for presbyteries to settle ministers without bonds. A labourer of the right sort would have no fear about his hire in God's vineyard, and this matter of stamped paper should not be suffered to prove a hindrance to the work of Christianising the land. The Moderates were for what they called "soberer views," and were stout for bonds.

The question happened to be before the Presbytery of Edinburgh one day. Mr James Macfarlane, minister of St Bernard's Church, made a long speech in favour of bonds. Referring to this speech, Cunningham remarked that Mr Macfarlane had had recourse to sneers. He had talked of their hopes that blessings would descend upon the land like showers of gold, from the mere building of chapels. But for the sake of a sneer, he had grossly misrepresented the truth, and cast candour and fairness aside. Somebody rose to order. Mr Macfarlane would simply remark, that there were some people whose tongues were no scandal. Dr Muir of St Stephen's, a man full of deep reverence for the "clerical enamel," also rose and put it to Mr Cunningham, whether on his knees in secret, and in the presence of his God, he could justify to himself the language he had now been using? Mr

Cunningham said, "I believe that no debate or discussion ever occurred in which men did not speak in a manner which, when tried by the standard of God's law, might be properly called sinful. Mr Macfarlane was guilty of sin when he misrepresented the sentiments of those who advocated the admission of chapel ministers into the Church Courts. I was guilty of sin in the sight of God when I characterised his conduct as I did. Although I cannot admit the necessity, or see the propriety of such a direct personal application to myself as Dr Muir has made, I desire to receive the rebuke in a right spirit, and to improve it as a call to guard more carefully against the appearance of evil."

Perhaps there was no man in the Presbytery that day who did not assent to the remark made by one of its members: "The way in which Mr Cunningham has received the animadversions of his brethren does equal honour to his head and his heart."

### A LESSON.

For some years previous to 1834, the General Assembly had a Committee on Church Accommodation, of which Dr Brunton was Convener. But the Committee effected nothing, until, on Dr Brunton's resignation in 1834, the Assembly appointed Dr Chalmers to the charge of the business. The torpid Committee became vital and full of force immediately, and the work of extending the Church, and bringing the blessings of religion to the homes of the poorest in the land, went on with amazing energy and success. Just in the midst of this energetic and happy time, a sudden quarrel blazed up among the leading men of the enterprise. We have learned much confidence since those days in the power of the Christian church to support and extend herself. We thought then that if the people built churches in poor and destitute localities, it was necessary, and might fairly be expected, that the Government should bear the annual expense. A national church is charged with the duty of putting the ordinances of religion within the reach of all in the land. It is reasonable that the state should afford some measure of assistance, and at that time we verily thought that without Government assistance it could not be done. This, then,

was the point of intensest interest in the Church of Scotland in the years 1836–7,—Will the Government support, or help to support, the churches we have built and are building? The head of the Government of that day was the able and indolent Lord Melbourne, that servant of the hour, who "tried letting it alone" with everything that would let him alone.

Dr Lee, at that time minister of the Old Church, Edinburgh, was a prominent man in the Church of Scotland, and has left some memory of himself on the earth. His knowledge of old books and of Scottish antiquities was extraordinary, and his library was a book-hunter's paradise. He was principal clerk to the General Assembly, where his worn, sad looking face and rigorous costume were a familiar sight. When he rose to speak, he held his long feathery quill in his gloved hand, sawing the air with mild flourishes. He had been spoken of as Moderator of the next General Assembly. He was clearly a *vir papabilis,* and his friends made no doubt of his appointment to the honour.

The mode of designation for the Moderatorship was certainly too much like the close system of the old town corporations. The former Moderators met and agreed among themselves whom to recommend to the approaching Assembly, and this recommendation was usually adopted as a matter of course. On this occasion, the conclave of old Moderators did not recommend Dr Lee, but quite a different man, Dr Gardiner of Bothwell. They notified it, as the manner was, by circular to the different Presbyteries. The friends of Dr Lee were not slow to express their surprise and displeasure. They held a meeting, and issued an indignant manifesto. The old Moderators were quite ready to tell why they had passed by Dr Lee. He was understood to be indifferently affected to the cause of church extension. He had given evidence before the Royal Commission in Edinburgh—"a question process of two days"—and his evidence was "most injurious to the cause of Church extension." Were they, just at that time, to elect to the highest honour in the Church a man whom they could not trust upon by far the most important question before the Church? Could they place him in a position where he would be called upon to represent

the views and wishes of the Church to the Government of the day?*

Angry sparks began to fly about in the shape of newspaper paragraphs. Then came all the heavy artillery of articles and pamphlets. Dr Chalmers published a pamphlet against Dr Lee. The friends of Dr Lee replied in a "Statement" keen and cutting. Procurator Bell published a pamphlet. John Bruce of St Andrew's Church also published one, phosphorescent with the light of his quaint and sterling genius. Cunningham came into the field with a Reply to the "Statement," in a pamphlet of fifty pages. The authors of the Statement seemed to him to have forgotten the respect due to the great name of Chalmers, and Cunningham's heart swelled with indignation. He strikes his blow on the side of Chalmers with all his immense force. The help thus generously rendered was received with touching gratitude. Cunningham appears to have reverently preserved every line from Chalmers that he ever received in the course of his life, down to dinner invitations, and there is one note among them, in which Chalmers says of this pamphlet, "I cannot help viewing it as the most important act of kindness which I and my family ever have received from any individual."

Dr Lee published a refutation of the charges brought against him, and his complaint, uttered in his quaintly beautiful Bible style, is really touching. "Alas!" he cries, "that the days of our years should be passed away in unprofitable contention, which, if I have in any way contributed to begin, assuredly I meant not so, neither did my heart think so. I was not panting for any pre-eminence; I was not seeking to be exalted to an ephemeral dignity that I might be better known in the gates, sitting among the elders of the land; nor had I been vainly dreaming that during the toils and the joy of harvest my brethren's sheaves should do obeisance

* The case of the supporters of Dr Lee rested on two allegations: 1st, That the old Moderators, or the most influential of them, had committed themselves to a nomination of Dr Lee, and made that known; 2d, That after this they withdrew his name and substituted another in a manner fitted to fix on Dr Lee an aspersion which was groundless. The other side met the first assertion with a "distinguo," and on the second, they undertook to prove the charge against Dr Lee.—R.

to mine. As little did I suspect that I was to be branded as the enemy of the Church for speaking the things which I knew, or that I would be accused before the whole world of having harboured malignant devices which my heart within me abhors. It is not in man to sit tamely by, when they who are younger than I are holding me in derision."

The vote of the General Assembly went against Dr Lee, and Dr Gardiner was Moderator by a majority of nearly five to one. But the moderatorship controversy, a huge fire kindled by a wretchedly small spark, left a trail of miserable consequences. Like the whisperer, it separated chief friends. So deep was the alienation, that some of those who were afterwards to be leaders in the Disruption, ceased to be on speaking terms.

Yet the hand of Providence is clear even in this seemingly deplorable controversy. As far as man is concerned, we might wish it forgotten, for it tended to no man's praise. But it is to be remembered to the praise of Him who can work out His wise purposes by our follies. The Lord was about to lead his people into a momentous conflict. But before the Disruption came on, He permitted those whom He designed to make the leaders in His cause, to learn by painful experience in this moderatorship controversy the bitter fruits of self-will. They had quarrelled about a matter really of no moment. They came out of the embroilment humbled and saddened; but they had received a lesson which men of generous minds could never forget of the danger and misery of falling out by the way.

A small affair which occurred about the beginning of 1837 is so illustrative of Cunningham, as to be worth noticing in spite of its insignificance.

Dr John Hunter, Principal of one of the colleges of St Andrews, died. The great scholar was carried to his long home under the shadow of the grand cathedral ruins, with simple and affecting state, his gown of office covering his coffin instead of a pall, and the students following, a sad and silent throng.

Very soon the college had a new principal appointed over it,—Dr John Lee of the Old Church Parish, Edinburgh, he of the unlucky

moderatorship controversy. He accepted the new office of Principal, but month after month passed, and he did not resign his old office of pastor. After all that had taken place on the subject of pluralities, it was not supposed that he could dream of keeping both. Still the parish which could not tell whether it had a minister or not, was entitled to call itself ill-used. The members of the Edinburgh Presbytery were indignant, and Dr Lee's conduct was the subject of much severe remark in private. Time wore on, and still Dr Lee was a parish minister in Edinburgh, and principal of a college in St Andrews.

Other members of Presbytery might talk, but Cunningham brought the matter to an issue. It was not in his nature to hesitate or shrink. He gave notice of a motion that unless Dr Lee should resign his parochial charge by a certain day, the Presbytery should take up his conduct for consideration. Before the day came for discussing this motion, Dr Lee, to the astonishment of all, resigned the office of Principal. As Principal, he had voted in the Senatus of St Andrews, had delivered an introductory lecture at the commencement of the session, and had drawn half a year's salary. There is no doubt that he had fully intended to remove to St Andrews, and that he incurred expenses in connection with the principalship, which the half year's salary did not cover. Probably he found upon trial that he could not afford to be Principal, as his income in that capacity would have been much less than what he had in Edinburgh. No one questioned his integrity; but the affair had an awkward appearance.

On Dr Lee's resignation, Mr Cunningham at once intimated that he would not press any motion against him personally. He would still, however, call on the Presbytery to take steps to prevent the recurrence of any such proceeding.

It was an unpleasant affair, and it would seem that the Presbytery were very reluctant to meddle with it at all, for Dr Lee complained, that "inasmuch as all the Presbytery, with one exception, had preserved a total silence on the subject, he was altogether unable to gather the general opinion of the Presbytery with respect to the matter." It takes a firm as well as an unselfish man to

incur odium, when he might pass by on the other side. Cunningham was a young minister then, and it would have been no discredit to him to refrain, when so many older men were silent. But there was that in the aspect of the transaction which his sense of duty could not brook. He had divested his motion, he said, of all personal reference to Dr Lee, but he might not find it possible to omit all reference to Dr Lee in his speech. He must refer to what Dr Lee had done as the very kind of thing which ought not to be allowed. When a minister accepted the office of professor or principal, held it for six months, then resigned it, and returned to his parochial charge, it was dealing in a very light and unbecoming way with the sacred office. It was fitted to bring the office into contempt. Besides, it afforded endless facilities for jobbing. If a clergyman might hold such an office for half a year or a year without vacating his parochial benefice, he might have half a year's or a year's salary of it, as payment, perhaps, for some political service done to the Government of the day which gave him the appointment.

The motion which Cunningham made and supported by a powerful address, and the Presbytery adopted unanimously, called upon the General Assembly to declare that induction into one charge necessarily involved the abandonment of the other.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *JUDGE-MADE LAW.*

DR CHALMERS, in 1838, delivered those London lectures on Church Establishments which made a greater sensation than any other lectures in the modern times. Dukes and marquises, earls and viscounts, barons and baronets, bishops and members of Parliament, swarmed in the brilliant throng, and joined in the tumultuous cheer when the lecturer asserted the freedom and independence of our Scottish Church under the happy similitude of the Englishman's castle. "What Lord Chatham said of the poor man's house is true, in all its parts, of the Church to which I have the honour to belong: 'In England, every man's house is his castle —not that it is surrounded with walls and battlements. It may be a straw-built shed; every wind of heaven may whistle round it, every element of heaven may enter it, but the king cannot—the king dare not.'"

What if the Englishman should awake to find all the mighty legal entrenchments of his cottage gone, and his house, his castle no more, but open to every ruffian tread? It was this very thing that befell the Church of Scotland. All the legal entrenchments of its freedom and independence were swept away by a form of iniquity which Englishmen once understood very well—the iniquity of judge-made law.

The fisherman in the Eastern tale, drawing his net, brought up out of the sea a casket sealed with the seal of Solomon. When he had opened it, a thick smoke arose, towered aloft to the height of a palm tree, and gradually took the form of a destroying *genie*. The reader must have patience to watch the development of the malig-

nant genie out of the smoke, if he would understand a memorable period in Scottish history.

Even if the Church of Scotland had kept on in the old "Moderate" way,—each man intent on getting his own "portion of the fat,"—it is by no means certain that she could have made good weather to herself as times went then. At all events, her attempt at self-reform brought trouble soon enough.

Auchterarder is a long, large village in Perthshire, notable for assiduous weavers and diligent shuttle-driving. It is an old place, old enough to have been the subject of a jest of George Buchanan's in the days of James VI. An Englishman was boasting the greatness and grandeur of the towns in England, and running down the Scotch towns. "Tush, sir," said Buchanan, "I know a town in Scotland that has fifty drawbridges." Auchterarder had a "stank" which ran through the middle of its one long street, and every cottage had a plank laid across for communication with its opposite neighbour.

In the year of Sheriffmuir, the man who called himself James VIII. burned the long village to the ground, promising to pay for damages done, but never paying. It was a cruel scene, in a wild winter morning, amid driving snow. In quieter times, the government paid "burning money" to the poor people thus summarily unhoused. In 1834 was kindled in Auchterarder the first spark of a fire which was to blaze through all Scotland.

A certain Mr Robert Young, a probationer for the ministry in the Scottish Church, was nephew to the Earl of Kinnoull's factor. Auchterarder falling vacant, the Earl of Kinnoull, as patron, presented Mr Young to the living. He went to Auchterarder, and preached two several Sabbaths in the Parish Church, as Church law required. It was the law of the Church of Scotland, that while the title to a benefice is founded on the patron's presentation, the title to the pastoral office is founded on the call of the congregation. Mr Young had got the one title, but he failed to obtain the other. A few years earlier, that would not have been a material circumstance. He would have got the benefice of Auchterarder, whether the people liked or no. But now the people had the means of pro-

tecting themselves. By the Veto Law just passed, no man could be inducted into a parish in the teeth of a dissenting majority. Seven-eighths of those entitled to a voice, dissented from Mr Young's settlement; while out of a population of 3000, he had only two supporters, a banker, named Michael Tod, and a farmer, named Peter Clark. These names were destined to become historical.

Mr John Hope was Dean of the Faculty of Advocates at that time. His father, a high Tory, was Lord President of the Court of Session. That is to say, the father was head of the Scottish bench, and the son was head of the Scottish bar. How the Dean of Faculty and the presentee to Auchterarder got together, and became the authors of that mighty mischief which the one could not have wrought without the other, must remain a point for the curious. The conjunction of these two certainly did produce a very remarkable revolution in our ancient kingdom.

When the Veto Law first came into operation, it entered into no man's idea that it was beyond the power of the Church to pass such a law. The form of a call, signed by the people, had always existed in the Church from her earliest time. No man could be inducted to a parish without it. But for generations it had become a sham. All that the Church now did was to require that it should once more become a reality, as the very existence of the form proved that it had once been a reality. Accordingly, Mr Young and his friends did not at first make any complaint whatever against the Veto Law, but only alleged some paltry informality in its application to him. This gave room for an appeal to the Assembly of 1835, and served to waste some months of time. The Assembly found the objection futile, and ruled that the proceedings of the Presbytery had been quite in order. Whereupon the Presbytery, at their next meeting, finally rejected Mr Young.

At this stage, it seems that Mr John Hope took him up, and undertook to put him into the priest's office, that he might eat his bit of bread. In November 1835, the Commission of the General Assembly, or Standing Committee of the whole house, held its ordinary quarterly meeting. The *Scottish Guardian*, a newspaper

long extinct, but still lovingly remembered by all who have any memory of those struggling days, in its report of that meeting says: "The moderator brought before them the case of the Parish of Auchterarder. It will be recollected that this is a case where the patron, Lord Kinnoull, had presented Mr Young to the parish, who was rejected by a majority of the communicants in the parish, according to the recent law of the General Assembly. In consequence of this, his Lordship and Mr Young have raised *an action of declarator* against the Presbytery of Auchterarder, in which they demand to have it found that the presentee is entitled to the emoluments of the living, the same as if he had been inducted into the parish; and failing the presentee, that the emoluments ought to go to the patron."

The emoluments of Auchterarder benefice are worth some four hundred pounds or thereby in the year, and this is the sum for which an ancient national institution, more precious to Scotland than anything else which she possessed, was to be riven and destroyed. Lord Kinnoull allowed his name to be used in the action, but further he neither knew nor cared. Dwelling in his superb palace of Dupplin, with its long-withdrawing beech-tree aisles, what was our "poor man's castle" to him?

The Church seems to have heard of the action with some surprise, but no uneasiness. There was, and is, an old law of the Church of Scotland which declares that no man shall attempt to obtain "any ecclesiastical function, office, promotion, or benefice," by means of the civil power, under pain of summary excommunication—so utterly resolute were our fathers against any such thing. Perhaps the Commission that day thought, that when Mr Young came to be aware of the position in which he had placed himself, he would be glad enough to draw out of his action. At any rate, the matter was very little talked about, on this, the first occasion on which the attention of the Superior Church Court was called to it. Mr Dunlop, alone of those present, seemed to have a suspicion that large consequences might ensue, and evidently did not like the look of it at all.

Nevertheless, this action in its first form was a perfectly com-

petent action for the civil court to take up. "Give me the stipend of Auchterarder," was all that Mr Young craved. The answer which the presbytery made to the action was, that as they pretended no right to the stipend, they had been improperly called as parties in the cause at all, and had nothing whatever to say. Mr Hope felt himself checkmated for the moment. He craved leave to amend his action, and got it. By this time, he saw well enough that no law could be found to warrant the giving of the benefice to a mere laymen without ordination or induction. The form of the action was changed accordingly; and now the thing sought was to have it declared, that the Presbytery of Auchterarder was bound to take Mr Young on trials for ordination, and if he could pass them, to ordain; and that the presbytery had acted illegally in rejecting him in respect of the veto of the parishioners. According to this new form of action, it was not the pecuniary interest of Mr Young, but the conduct of the presbytery which was brought before the civil court. The Court of Session was asked to exercise powers of review over the courts of the Church. It was called upon to assert its own jurisdiction over a Church which had always maintained that "the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hands of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate, and not subordinate thereto."

The reforming party in the Church began to see the formidable consequences to which this might lead. Cunningham was profoundly moved by it. "The thing is of the Lord," he said to an old Greenock friend, "and we shall know more about it a few years hence."

The Presbytery of Auchterarder came to the General Assembly of 1836, asking to be advised as to the steps they ought to take. The advice they got was to do nothing till the action was decided. The Church might have taken from Mr Young his licence as a preacher. There was clear law for the deprivation of any man seeking any "ecclesiastical function, office, promotion, or benefice," by aid of the civil power without the authority of the Church. They might have cut away the ground from under his feet by depriving him of his ecclesiastical status which gave him his right

to appear in the case. But this they would not do. They would not even seem to try to get rid of the case by a side wind.

The civil court, as the Church held, had no right to command or forbid ordinations, or to entertain any action with a view to a decision of that kind. Why, then, did the Church plead before the civil court at all? Just because the stipend of Auchterarder is not a spiritual thing. The Church followed the action into the law courts, because it was her duty to secure the stipend for the maintenance of a gospel ministry at Auchterarder, if she could. The matter was clear enough for a child to understand, yet the confusion of ideas which ran riot in men's minds on this point was indescribable.

While the Auchterarder case was still before the Court of Session, another topic, though a closely related one, became the subject of renewed debate. Cunningham was a member of the General Assembly of 1837. "In our last number, published immediately before the meeting of Assembly," says the *Presbyterian Review* for August of that year, "we expressed some doubts as to the usefulness of debating the Patronage question again this year, without any interval after the discussion in the immediately preceding year, unless for the purpose of obtaining a speech on it from Mr Cunningham. That speech has been obtained, and it more than realises all our expectations. Never was a challenge to discuss a great question of principle more courageously given, or more powerfully maintained; and never was it more feebly answered or more wretchedly evaded. No one on the Patronage side ventured to grapple with the argument of Mr Cunningham, and had it not been that one or two speakers on the anti-Patronage side unhappily took up the argument on expediency, and thereby afforded an opportunity to their opponents to expatiate on another field, they would have been reduced to absolute silence."

The *Scottish Guardian* (of 6th June 1837) said: "That debate will form an era in the history of the controversy, on account of the admirable speeches of Mr Cunningham, both in opening the question and in reply. Mr Cunningham's great logical powers and talent in debate were never exhibited to more advantage than on this occa-

sion. With uncommon force of argument, he shewed how the Scriptures bore upon the question, and how the present law interfered with the independent, spiritual constitution of the Church; that the evil principle did not consist in one man or many men being vested with the power, but in the qualification being fixed, and the power regulated by the civil law; and that the sound principle consisted not so much in the power being lodged with one man or many men, as in the right of the Church to regulate and determine the whole matter of the appointment of ministers as part of her own proper jurisdiction."

Many years afterwards, Dr Cunningham shewed to his daughter Helen three notebooks, and said, "these are all the speeches I have made in my life." The three notebooks represent the complete series of his speeches from 1832 down to 1860. The first is a speech before the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, on the division of the Greenock Presbytery into a Greenock Presbytery and a Paisley Presbytery. The last is a speech at laying the foundation-stone of the Free Church at Pitlochrie, within a few months of his death. He always had one of these notebooks in his hand while delivering a speech. Very thumbed and brown they are—affecting memorials of the vast power that William Cunningham wielded over his fellow-men. At sight of the notebook, the sign that a speech from him impended, friends exulted, and opponents looked nervous and uneasy. He held the notebook commonly in his left hand, with his forefinger between the leaves. A very few glances at it in the course of a speech was all the use he made of it. The best way to give an idea of his method in preparing his speeches, is to print a specimen of his notes entire. In the Appendix* will be found the notes of his great speech in the General Assembly of 1837 on Patronage. These notes contain all his written preparation, and he never followed any other method. The skeleton thus framed, he developed in language of the moment into perfect proportion, breathing into it the intensity of his own convictions, and pervading it with the uprightness, energy, and clearness of his own intellectual process.

At last the Auchterarder case, slowly hauled through the tortuous

* See Appendix A.

channels of law, came to a hearing in the Court of Session. This was towards the end of November 1837. The leading Edinburgh newspaper of the 29th of that month devotes to it a paragraph of about a finger-length, so faintly had the idea of its importance dawned as yet on the public mind.*

The whole court of thirteen Lords gave judgment upon it—most of them, not likely to be remembered beyond their day; but there were three of them who will not be so soon forgotten. Lord Jeffrey, so long the editor of the *Edinburgh Review,* had occupied for thirty years the highest literary tribunal in Europe. Lord Cockburn has left in his "Life and Times" a piece of our domestic history written with genius so quaint and rare, that it will be read in distant times with boundless curiosity and delight; and wherever our famous judges are named, the name of Lord Moncreiff will not be omitted. The debating of the case by a numerous and learned Bar occupied seventeen days. Their Lordships then took two months to consider, and then delivered their opinions in the beginning of March, a process which occupied eight days. Seven of the judges gave their opinions in succession against the Church, before one spoke on her side, and judgment was ultimately given against her by a majority of eight to five—Jeffrey, Cockburn, and Moncreiff, being in the minority.

The printed report of the Auchterarder case fills two large octavo volumes—a vast dead sea of legal eloquence. If any man of a future generation, when the spirituality of the Church shall perhaps be better understood than it is now, shall happen to read the report, he will be astounded at the gross secularity of the views put forth by the pursuers in the action. Not the barest rudiment of an idea have these lawyers of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

"The question I advert to," cries Dean Hope, "involves the claim of Divine right, of a power to legislate and govern, as bestowed on the Church by its great spiritual Head, and inalienable, as in a pre-eminent manner derived from the authority, and accompanied

* The public mind is not quick to discover the germ of a great thing. In that same paper, five lines are devoted to inform the public that a Committee of the House of Commons had been appointed to examine into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr Rowland Hill.

by the blessing, of God. This, my Lords, is the most pernicious error by which the blessed truths of Christianity can be perverted, and its influence on the social system blighted and destroyed."

The judgment of the court, when given, was rather a threat than a blow. It merely laid down a general doctrine. The Presbytery was declared to have acted illegally in rejecting Mr Young on the sole ground of the people's veto according to the law of the Church. But the court did not, at this stage, venture to apply its own doctrine. It enjoined nothing; it only declared a principle. What bitter things lay in that principle time would shew.

### INDEPENDENCE RESOLUTIONS.

A huge encroachment on the liberty and independence of the Church had commenced, beyond a doubt. But the mind of Scotland was only beginning to awake to it. Here and there Scotchmen of the old type, earnest, God-fearing men, deeply read in the history of our old religious struggles, had begun to feel an uneasy interest in the proceedings of the civil court. Men of this sort were to be found in almost every village, humble men whose minds dwelt with strong, quiet enthusiasm on the good fight fought by the Scottish Church for her freedom in other days, and who had drunk deeply into the spirit of our fathers. In the eyes of this type of Scotchmen, lay-patronage in the Church was the worst of all abuses, no better than making the temple a house of merchandise.

They had exulted to see the resolution and vigour with which the growing spirit of reform in the Church had striven to repress the evil. And now that the threat was muttered to put back the course of reformation by force, they felt it to be an ominous thing.

From every corner of the Presbyterian Church there is the easiest access to the supreme court. Any one of her Presbyteries throughout the land has only to send to the Assembly in Edinburgh an overture or proposal to open any question, and the Assembly takes up that question as a matter of course. Many overtures from Presbyteries in all parts of the country came to the General Assembly of 1838, calling upon that venerable court to take fitting steps for vindicating the threatened independence of the Church. Meanwhile, Mr

Young had returned to the Presbytery of Auchterarder armed with the judgment of the Court of Session, and demanded to be "taken on trials" preparatory to ordination for the ministry. For a man who had sworn obedience to the courts and laws of the Church, this was an astonishing impudence. It was a demand that the Presbytery should set aside its own deliberate recorded judgment, and should act in direct violation of a law of the Church, merely at the bidding of a civil court.

The Presbytery were cautious and temperate. They simply resolved to refer the whole matter to the Synod, as next superior Church court, for advice. Mr Young thereupon handed in a formal legal protest, holding them, and each one of them, liable to him in damages, for all loss that he might incur by their delay. Perhaps Mr Young's managers thought that a little wholesome intimidation would induce the presbytery to yield. It was so rumoured at the time. It was this vulgar idea that drew on the conflict. No persecutor of the Church of Christ ever had an idea at first how far he would go. When a little pressure failed to bring submission, a little more pressure would certainly do it—and then a little more—on to the rack and the stake.

When the General Assembly came on in May, the subject which was daily exciting a deeper interest in the public mind was duly taken up. The Rev. Robert Buchanan of Glasgow began the debate by moving certain resolutions, still vivid in the memories of the men who fought in those battles, as the "Independence Resolutions." These famous resolutions are very brief. They embody an unqualified acknowledgment of the exclusive jurisdiction of the civil courts in civil things, and an emphatic declaration of the exclusive jurisdiction of the spiritual courts in spiritual things. "And the General Assembly resolve that this spiritual jurisdiction, and the supremacy and sole Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, on which it depends, they will assert, and at all hazards defend, by the help and blessing of that great God who, in the days of old, enabled their fathers, amid manifold persecutions, to maintain a testimony, even to the death, for Christ's kingdom and crown; and finally, that they will enforce obedience upon all members and ministers of this

Church, by the execution of her laws, in the exercise of the ecclesiastical authority wherewith they are invested." Buchanan was a young man then, and when he rose in the Assembly that day his person was unknown to many of the members. It is scarcely too much to say, that his is as clear and sure a head for business as can be found in all Scotland, and there is no man who has a more perfect power of clear and forcible statement. The General Assembly had an eminent example of his gift in the speech which he delivered on that memorable day. A calm, temperate, luminous, impressive, resolute speech it was.

Dr Cook, a consummate tactician, with an unrivalled knowledge of the forms and precedents of the house, put forth all his skill on behalf of the cause which had so long been in the ascendant there. His sonorous, pathetic, plausible voice, rolled forth assertions of the Church's independence, which sounded as brave and stout as if they had meant something. "There is no language which Mr Buchanan could use, stronger than I should be inclined to adopt to assert the spiritual independence of the Church, and to vindicate the power which we have received from its great Head." "My reverend friend will find that if there is any opposition to this doctrine, if we conceived there was any danger of its violation, we and he would display the banner of our great King and Head, and, if necessary, perish under it."

Dr Cook asserted the spiritual independence of the Church, but then if the civil court should say that the proceedings of the Church affected any man's civil interests, he held that the Church ought to yield. The Church was supreme in spiritual matters, but he left it to the civil courts to say what matters are spiritual. An ancient Queen-Regent of Scotland pressed a Douglas to give over to her his Castle of Tantallon, the pride of old Scottish fortifications. "Yes, Madam," said the Douglas, "Tantallon shall be yours, but I shall keep it for you." Dr Cook said to the Church, Independence is yours, but the Court of Session shall keep it for you.

The Independence Resolutions were carried by a majority of forty-one. The effect of a great debate in the General Assembly in maturing public opinion is vast and rapid. Intelligent readers

throughout all Scotland devour it eagerly, and canvass it shrewdly; and in an incredibly short space of time, the sentiments which have been under discussion percolate the public mind. A deep excitement spread through the nation upon the decision of this Assembly. The General Assembly is the most characteristic institution in Scotland. It has had a mighty influence in the development of the national liberties. It is an embodiment of the national opinions, a vivid expression of the national character, and the truest representative of the national will. Altogether there is not a more Scottish thing in Scotland. The Church had now formally committed herself to her course, and the many friends of her cause over the country were now convinced that she meant to stand to her colours. The Assembly of 1838 must hold a great place in our history. If its decision on the great question of spiritual independence had been different, it would have changed the course of events down to the present time, and perhaps to the remote future.

Mr Cunningham was not a member of this Assembly: but seated among the "ministers not members," he missed scarce an hour of its sittings, or a sentence of its debates.

He was at the bar for the Presbytery of Edinburgh in a translation case. A new church, which they named St Paul's, had been built in a poor and populous part of Edinburgh. This church was regarded as a most interesting experiment. "It was the first," said Cunningham from the bar, "by which the truth of the extension principle was to be tested. It was to have an endowment attached to it, so as not to render it necessary to collect a congregation from all quarters, but to enable one to be formed from the locality. One of the main principles of the Church Extension scheme, is to shew that without some endowment it will be impossible to meet, to the full extent, the destitution which exists." Great care had been taken to select a likely man to conduct the St Paul's experiment. Mr M'Naughton of Paisley was a man so popular then that he would have "filled a church on the top of Arthur's Seat." Yet it was thought impossible that such a man could support himself in a locality inhabited by working men without some endowment.

Mr M'Naughton himself was undecided, and the Assembly refused to translate.

In the summer of 1838, Cunningham was brought to the gates of the grave by a dangerous illness. He had gone with his wife and little ones—he had now two—to the pleasant watering place of Ashton, on the Clyde, within easy walking distance of his old Greenock home. Here he enjoyed a few weeks' rest and leisure, as only hard wrought men can enjoy them. One day he went to Greenock on the pleasant errand of marrying his old friend, the Rev. J. J. Bonar. He was very happy that day, but he came home at night with a strange shiver upon him. Then came a burning heat, with dull pains in the head and back. He grew rapidly worse, and his anxious wife sent for the doctor. The disease soon declared itself to be typhus fever of the most alarming kind. For many days his life hung in doubt. Dr A. D. Anderson of Glasgow visited him at the request of his friend, Mr Thomas Farie. "I found him," says Dr Anderson, "labouring under an aggravated attack of typhus fever, with the eruptive character of that disease, but which had not been previously noticed. It was then about the ninth or tenth day, and he was delirious, and totally prostrate. He continued so for five days more, when, at my daily visit, I found him so ill, that I remained with him all night. He had the crisis next morning, and knew and named me before I left him. His convalescence was slow, he having had a relapse, with returning incoherence, which seemed to be connected with extensive exfoliation of the cuticle after the eruption."

When it was known in Edinburgh that a dangerous illness had stricken him down, a deep and painful sensation was produced. Meetings for prayer were held to ask of God to spare a life so valuable to the Church.

Dr Gilchrist, one of the ministers of Canongate parish, was a wellknown personage in the Presbytery of Edinburgh in those days. He was a Moderate,—dry, blunt, caustic, and shrewd. Meeting Mr Begg of Liberton on the street one day, while Cunningham lay sick at Ashton, he anxiously inquired if there was any fresh news of him. "Yes, and I'm glad to say he is somewhat better." "I'm

happy at that," said the crusty doctor; "I'm happy at that. I wish we had him back again *rampagin'* among us." Considering the tremendous execution which Cunningham was in the habit of doing on the Moderates of Edinburgh Presbytery, it really was a good-natured thing for Dr Gilchrist to wish him back so kindly. But his opponents in his own Presbytery, who saw his gentle ways in private life, and knew him so much better than he could be known from his mere public gladiatorship, could not choose but feel kindly towards him.

Robert Paul, a venerable man long known and loved amongst us, was at Ashton that summer, and saw much of Cunningham at that stage of recovery when, as a popular writer has it, the patient, lifting up his hands, wonders that they are so thin, and yet they are so heavy. "I used to go in and out to see him," says Mr Paul, "when the immediate danger was past, and he was slowly recovering. I remember how exceedingly interesting I thought it was to observe a strong, vigorous, and manly mind like his emerging again into life, after a season of great prostration and suffering, and, for some days, of unconsciousness. Everything looked new and strange to him, and yet there was a *vis vitæ* about him which, even when he was in a state of great weakness, crept out in inquiries as to what was going on in the world and in the Church, blended with a childlike subduedness of feeling, and many expressions of the great mercies he had received. Altogether, it was very touching."

His recovery, once fairly begun, was steady. Before the middle of October, he was on a visit at Dunse. Dr Chalmers writes him from Haddington, gladly agreeing to his request to preach for him, and "rejoicing to see your fist again, though the characters which are traced by it are fully as obscure and mystical as my own."

## CHAPTER IX.

### *NEW CASES AND NEW FORCES.*

WHILE Cunningham was prostrate on his fever-bed at Ashton, a new complication of the Church's difficulties rose to public view. The Presbytery of "fair Dunkeld" came up to Edinburgh to the quarterly meeting of the General Assembly's Commission, or Committee of the whole house, and craved advice in a matter which had occurred in their bounds. Lethendy is a small and thinly-peopled parish, lying picturesquely among its lochs in the district of "the Stormont," at the head of the great valley of Strathmore. The minister of this parish was an infirm old man. To him the Crown, as patron, had appointed a certain Mr Thomas Clark for colleague and successor two or three years before. The parish, exercising the right which the Veto Law gave them, declined to receive this person as their minister, with good reason too, as his subsequent life but too clearly proved. The Presbytery accordingly set him aside, and no more was heard of him for a time. Then he came to the surface again, brought up, as it was believed, by the hand of Dean Hope. When the old minister of Lethendy died, the Crown appointed another man to the parish,—Mr Kessen,—an honest, true-hearted labourer in the gospel. The steps preparatory to ordination in the Scottish Church are elaborate and formal certainly, but no one will think them too much so, who feels what a solemn thing it is to be ordained to the ministry of Christ. All was ready for the ordination of Mr Kessen, when an interdict from the Court of Session, or prohibition under pains and penalties, was served upon the Presbytery in the name of Mr Clark. The Presbytery, thus molested in the act of making their arrangements

regarding the preaching of the gospel, reported to the General Assembly the strange interruption.

A Presbyterian Church is an admirable thing for prompt and combined action. The whole strength of the Church can be directed immediately to the front. It added immensely to the power of the old English archery that they "shot wholly together." A Presbyterian organisation shoots wholly together. It cannot be taken in detail. He who meddles with any part, meddles with the whole. The General Assembly forthwith made the affair of Lethendy its own. They ordered the Presbytery of Dunkeld to go on with the ordination of Mr Kessen. They did not pretend to have any power over the benefice. It might turn out that he had no legal title to it. But the Church had a perfect right to ordain Mr Kessen, and to support him, if necessary, at her own expense. No man had ever yet disputed that. On such terms, the Church was perfectly free to ordain whomsoever she pleased. The Presbytery of Dunkeld was, therefore, ordered to ordain Mr Kessen simply upon the call which he had received from the people. But even this was not to be permitted. A new interdict, served upon the Presbytery, prohibited them from ordaining Mr Kessen on any ground whatever, and prohibited Mr Kessen from accepting ordination.

The Presbytery had thus an order from their ecclesiastical superiors commanding them to ordain, and a threat of pains and penalties from the Court of Session if they did ordain. It was the second interdict that had again brought up the Presbytery of Dunkeld to ask the instructions of their ecclesiastical superiors. The instructions they got were, to meet on a certain fixed day, and straightway to ordain Mr Kessen, a purely spiritual act, with which the Court of Session had nothing to do.

The day came, and the Presbytery met. It was only by the casting vote of their Moderator, that a motion was carried for immediately proceeding with the ordination. An attempt to intimidate them by coarse threatenings was tried. A law agent appeared on the part of Mr Clark, and read an "opinion" from Mr John Hope, in which that unflinching believer in brute force told them: "The expectation that the supreme court will allow its interdict to

be set at defiance is the most vain and idle with which parties can delude themselves; and it is equally absurd to imagine that (whatever be the nature of the case) there will be the smallest difficulty in compelling the ultimate submission of all other bodies, whether of the Established Church or not. The members of the Presbytery of Dunkeld will most infallibly be committed to prison, and most justly, for an offence of a most grave character, and the more aggravated in proportion to the station of the parties by whom it is committed."

These insulting menaces from the head of the Bar were, no doubt, expected to terrify simple country ministers. But the majority of the Presbytery of Dunkeld were not men to be frightened. The orders of the General Assembly were carried out to the letter, and Mr Kessen was ordained to the ministry of the Gospel among the people of Lethendy, according to their own call.

The Presbytery were not long left in doubt as to the real hazard in which they stood. Mr Thomas Clark (or the Dean of Faculty through him) presented a petition and complaint to the Court of Session, calling upon them to fine or commit to jail the men who had dared to exercise their spiritual functions without regard to mandates of a civil court. The court pronounced the members of Presbytery who concurred in Mr Kessen's ordination, and Mr Kessen himself, guilty of breach of interdict, and summoned them to appear at their Bar.

The set day came, and the Presbytery made their appearance before their assembled Lordships. The senior Minister of the Presbytery, "with a demeanour touching from its calm, respectful simplicity," read a short statement: "My Lords, we appear in obedience to the citation of your Lordships, inasmuch as we hold it to be the duty of all subjects to render their personal compearance when cited by the civil courts; and being deeply impressed with the obligation of giving all honour and reverence to the Judges of the land, we disclaim any intention of disrespect to the court in what we have done; but in ordaining to the office of the holy ministry, and in admitting to the pastoral charge, to which in our proceedings we limited ourselves, we acted in obedience to the superior Church judicatories, to

which in matters spiritual we are subordinate, and to which at ordination we vowed obedience." The court adjourned the matter for four days to consider their sentence. Five of the Judges voted for a sentence of imprisonment; six voted for a rebuke, and the Lord President did not vote at all. The rebuke was accordingly administered, with a threat, that any other Presbytery doing as that of Dunkeld had done, would be sent to prison. The law expenses thrown upon them came to fifty pounds each man—a tolerably smart fine to begin with. Never, since the days of Charles II., had men stood at the Bar for refusing to acknowledge the civil supremacy in matters spiritual. Had the shadow gone back on the dial?

Such was the Lethendy case, which, so far as it had then emerged, Robert Paul narrated at Cunningham's bedside at Ashton, in reply to his inquiries as to what was going on in the world and the Church.

### THE BONES OF THE PROPHETS.

The year 1838 fell in remarkably with the revival of the principles and recollections of old Scotland. That year was the second centenary of the famous General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, held in Glasgow in 1638. Those were the times when England and Scotland, little aware what a great thing they were doing, raised the question, Shall Rex be Lex, or shall Lex be Rex? —shall the king be the law, or shall the law be king? England raised the question in its civil branch, Scotland in its religious; and the debate went on till the Revolution of 1688 brought in a verdict. The Glasgow Assembly was a capital event in the fifty years' struggle of the Scottish Covenanters, and in the history of our freedom it has a place for evermore.

The first thing that Scotland did, after being organised and banded together under the Covenant in those old heroic days, was to demand from King Charles a free Parliament and a free General Assembly. There had been neither for many a year. The Covenanters were strong and resolute, and they made it very plain, that if they could not obtain the king's permission to hold their General Assembly, they would hold it unpermitted. Seeing this

the king caused an Assembly to be summoned, to amuse them until it was convenient to put them down. The Assembly might meet, but the king would take care that it should do no harm. Many years before, he and his father, King James, had thrust bishops upon the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and she had always been restive under their yoke. Charles was determined that the Assembly should not meddle with his bishops. If it ventured to do so, the Royal Commissioner then present, the Marquis of Hamilton, had instructions to dissolve it on the instant in the king's name.

The Assembly did meddle with the bishops, and that trenchantly. It proceeded to sit in judgment upon their right to be bishops at all. The Commissioner, acting upon his instructions, dissolved the Assembly, and withdrew. The Assembly declined to be dissolved, but continued to meet from day to day till it had finished its work. Just before the Commissioner departed, the Moderator said they would do to their king what the Jews did to Alexander the Great. "When he came to Jerusalem, he desired that his picture might be placed in the temple. This they refused to grant unto him, as being unlawful so to pollute the house of the Lord. But they granted him a thing less blameable, and far more convenient for the promulgation of his honour—to wit, that they would begin the calculation of their years from the time that he came to Jerusalem, likewise that they would call all their male first-born by the name of Alexander. Which thing he accepted. So, whatever is ours, we will render it to his Majesty, even our lives, lands, liberties, and all; but for it that is God's, and the liberties of his house, we do think neither will his Majesty's piety suffer him to crave; neither may we grant them, even though he should crave it." Alexander the Great accepted the offer of the Jews, but Charles Stewart had not sense to accept the offer of the Covenanters. If he had accepted it, he would not have come to the front of Whitehall.

To the simple and brave hearts who held the Glasgow Assembly, this was most clear, that as Christ has appointed a kingdom in this world, surely, if the subjects of that kingdom have any rights at all, they have a right to meet peacefully together, and consult about its

affairs. Christ's servants surely have a right to do their Master's work. The right of serving Him is all they ask. When will worldly policy cease to misunderstand them, and begin to see that it is just, wise, and safe, to let them have this right in peace?

As the bicentenary period approached, the famous Glasgow Assembly came much into mind. Once more things were driving on to a crisis wherein men would have to ask their magistrates "Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to obey man rather than God, judge ye?" History seemed about to repeat itself. The idea of a commemoration of the Glasgow Assembly was started, was received with fervour, and was rapidly brought into shape. Historical commemorations are usually artificial affairs. Not so this commemoration, into which the circumstances of the time put immense life and force. It took place on the 20th of December, the day on which the Glasgow Assembly terminated, after filling one great month with its deeds. It was quite a festival in many towns over Scotland. Glasgow made the day her own, as she had a good right to do. Her magistrates, in their robes of office, accompanied by the magistrates of Anderston, Gorbals, and Calton, the Presbytery, and a large body of citizens, walked in procession through an immense crowd of spectators to the High Church—the very Church that heard the great voices of 1638. There sermon was preached to a vast crowd. In the evening there were services suited to the occasion in several churches. Five hundred of the most influential citizens met in the Trades' Hall, and held the commemoration after a truly aldermanic conception. They dined, and toasted the principles of 1638 in after-dinner speeches. Dr Chalmers was among them, and gave his toast with the rest. "Union with Seceders adhering to the constitution and standards of the Church of Scotland." This was his toast, but his speech was upon the great ruling idea of that time—Church Extension.

In Edinburgh, the commemoration was limited to one great meeting. A short account of the General Assembly of 1638, from the graphic pen of the younger M'Crie, had been previously circulated. The place of meeting was the Assembly Rooms in George Street, a huge hall which is still the great arena for Edinburgh eloquence.

Sir George Sinclair presided, and the exquisitely classical address with which he opened the meeting was characteristic of the man. The flower of the rising talent of the Church was there. Begg, in whom keen sagacity rises to genius—Charles Brown, than whom no more acute intellect has appeared in our time—Candlish, whose voice has often sounded so stirring when intrepid action was wanted in a critical time—and Guthrie, who was then beginning to discover the charm which he has wielded over the Scottish metropolis for well-nigh a generation. But as an artist, looking at a photographic group, can point out the special figure on which the whole group has been focussed, so it is easy to see that Cunningham was the central figure that evening. "It was a fine thing," says the *Scottish Guardian* of the day, "to witness the prolonged enthusiasm of that great meeting when Cunningham rose. Since he had appeared at any meeting, the Christian people of Scotland had been tried with anxiety and fear lest his talents and gifts should have been withdrawn from the service of the church below. And their recognition of him now, when his health is almost re-established, was a gratifying tribute to one who, among public men, is distinguished, not only by his intellectual power, but by the soundness of his principles, very uncommon honesty of purpose, and fearlessness in applying his principles to the regulation of conduct."

The speeches, sent abroad in the poor reports given by the newspapers of the day, and more sufficiently in a pamphlet form, made many a bosom beat high with the old Scottish feeling. Scotland contains thousands among her humble folk, cobblers in their stalls, weavers at their looms, shepherds on their hill-sides, to whom the Covenanters and their doings are familiar as household words. To all such the commemoration shewed that a race of ministers had risen up in whom was the very spirit of the Covenant. They who commemorated 1638, who revived its great names, and gloried in its principles, did but act up to these principles in 1843. Men need not have been surprised. The principles of the Covenanters, which produced such great results in the seventeenth century, were capable of doing great things in the nineteenth. But some very

sharp minds never can see the possibility of a generous or heroic action.

A few days after the commemoration, crusty Dr Gilchrist had his wish. Cunningham was back again "*rampagin'*" in the presbytery. He moved in a powerful speech a resolution approving the conduct of the Presbytery of Dunkeld in settling Mr Kessen at Lethendy in disregard of the interdict by the Court of Session. There was no difficulty in carrying the motion. At this time, the Moderates themselves were indignant at the invasion of the Church's freedom by the civil power. Even Cunningham's old Hebrew professor, Dr Brunton, was aroused to unwonted animation, and declared that "he must proceed in the exercise of his ecclesiastical functions, disregarding any such interference."

### SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE.

At this time the working classes were only beginning to be roused to take an interest in the fast-deepening struggle in which the Church was engaged. The first sign of it, perhaps, was given by the "Tradesmen's Association for advancing the interests of the Church of Scotland" in Edinburgh. These working men got up a meeting in the "Great Assembly Room," in George Street —the second within a few months—at which Mr Cunningham complied with their request to deliver a plain and simple exposition of the Independence question. The spirited and intelligent working-men immediately published it in a separate form with a preface of their own. "The question," they say, "relative to the independence of the Church, possesses, under existing circumstances, a peculiar interest, in reference particularly to the Auchterarder case. The arguments with regard to this great question have hitherto been stated more or less in technical language, adapted to the civil and ecclesiastical judicatories before which the subject has been discussed. It is thought, however, that a perspicuous and popular exposition (as the speech now published is) of the views entertained by the party, of which Mr Cunningham is one of the most distinguished leaders, will not be unacceptable, and indeed is exceedingly desirable, with the view of imparting correct informa-

tion to the public as to the principles involved in the controversy on the subject of the intrinsic authority of the Church—a controversy which is little more than commenced, and which is obviously destined to exercise a powerful influence on the fortunes of the Church of Scotland." Remarkable sentences to have been penned by working men surely! In what other country of the world could working-men be found to care about such things?

The reforming party did not delude themselves. If their cause was Christ's cause, they could not expect the favour of the world; and they did not expect it. Cunningham, in the address which the working-men published, gives this most unpromising view of their position:—

"We have been assailed on all hands,—by men of all descriptions of politics, by men of the most opposite parties. By asserting the independent jurisdiction of the Church, we have drawn upon our head the wrath of Tories, Whigs, and Radicals. We have been attacked by High Church Episcopalians on the one hand, and by ferocious Voluntaries on the other. *There is scarcely an organ of public opinion that supports our principles;* and if you attend to the public press, you will find perhaps the attack of a High Church journal on Friday followed up on Saturday by a Voluntary print. . . . . I think we are somewhat to blame in not having taken sufficient pains to explain this matter; but in spite of all misrepresentation from such a variety of quarters, we are confident in the goodness of our cause, and are most anxious to make a full and frank appeal on this subject to the understandings and consciences of our countrymen."

The men of the reforming party knew full well that they had nothing but the goodness of their cause to depend upon. The Whigs were in office at that time, but a deep alienation had taken place between them and the Scottish Church. The conduct of the party in the Chapel Endowment question had been faithless and mean. Dr Chalmers publicly called their treatment of the Church "jockeyship." The Church thoroughly distrusted them; and, not yet so enlightened about politicians as she afterwards became, threw her influence into the Tory scale. There is no doubt that

this cause did much to produce in Scotland that reaction against the Whigs which took place during the ministry of Lord Melbourne. The Tories affected friendship, and made a good deal of political capital out of the opportunity. But the Church had now taken up a position which converted the Tories at once into her bitterest enemies. The claims that she was now putting forward, as to popular rights and spiritual independence, were abhorrent to Toryism. The two great political parties of the nation were hostile, and the people were still, to a great extent, indifferent. If any calculation of probabilities had been allowed to have a feather's weight with them, the Non-Intrusionists would have abandoned their cause.

### THE FIRST AUCHTERARDER CASE DECIDED.

In the beginning of May 1839, came the decision of the House of Lords upon the Church's appeal in the case of Auchterarder. Lord Brougham had an old classmate in Edinburgh College, a much respected minister of the reforming party in the Church,—Dr Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, the founder of savings' banks. Urged by the deep anxiety then painfully felt by thousands in Scotland about the forthcoming decision, Dr Duncan wrote to his eminent friend. Brougham gave good words, and Dr Duncan, a man guileless as Nathanael, believed them. He published a single-hearted, sanguine letter in the newspapers, which raised to a high pitch the hopes of a favourable decision. That was soon at an end. The judgment of the House of Lords unhesitatingly affirmed the judgment of the Court of Session. The idea that the people had any rights in the calling of ministers was treated with scorn. Lord Brougham contemptuously declared that the objections of the people were of no more consequence in the settlement of ministers, than the recalcitration of the champion's horse in Westminster Hall, at the coronation of our kings.

And this in the church of John Knox! The reader may chance to remember how Knox himself became a minister. "After sermon, John Rough directed his speech to John Knox, saying, 'Brother, You shall not be offended although I speak to you that

which I have in charge from all those that are here present, which is this:—In the name of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of those that do presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not this holy vocation, but that you take upon you the public office of preaching, even as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure. Was not that your charge to me,' he said to those present, 'and do ye not approve?' They answer, 'It was, and we approve it.'"

It required the call of the people to make John Knox a minister, and without that call he immovably refused to open his mouth. Without their call, he saw no warrant to enter, and no possibility of entering, the preacher's office. Is it within any man's power of credulity to believe that the call of the people had no place whatever in the Church founded by him? It might as well be said that there is no Wesleyanism in the Church founded by Wesley, and no Lutheranism among the followers of Luther. But it was now ruled by the court of last resort, that the people had no standing whatever in the settlement of their ministers. Their conscientious objections signified no more than the recalcitration of the champion's horse.

It was on the 2d of May that the House of Lords pronounced its decision,—just fourteen days before the meeting of the General Assembly. What could the General Assembly do? The ship was upon the rocks, beyond a doubt. She might be backed off, but how much would need to be thrown overboard first? If the Church would have consented to give up the rights of the people, and to surrender what the civil courts were usurping,—her own right of self-government,—all would have been smooth enough. Her enemies seemed to have had no doubt that she would give way, as a matter of course. The whole struggle, as they saw it, was but an affair of wire-pulling, and of pride and positiveness, among a few ecclesiastics. Checkmated in the game, the beaten players must now retire with what grace they could.

Men of the world thought the matter quite simple. One thing which was very marked on the eve of this Assembly might have warned them if they could have understood it. That thing was the

multiplication of special meetings for prayer throughout the country, to supplicate the Lord on behalf of the Assembly, that it might have wisdom to know, and boldness to do, the right. At Bannockburn, the Scottish army knelt and made a short prayer before the battle began. "Yon folk kneel to ask mercy," said King Edward. "You say true," quoth the Earl of Umfraville; "They kneel, but not to you. Believe me, they will win or die." But men of the world could not understand what the kneeling meant.

Dr Cook, the leader of the Moderates, began the great debate in the Assembly of 1839 with a motion astounding for its servility. It involved nothing else than the entire and absolute surrender of the Church's independence. It simply proposed to haul down the flag. Because the Veto Law had been found to touch civil interests, he moved, not its repeal, but that it should be held to have been null and void from the first. There was no need of the form of repealing it. They should proceed as if the Veto Law had never been passed, and the decision rejecting the unacceptable presentee to Auchterarder had never been pronounced. He never hinted at any limitation of the obedience due by the ecclesiastical to the civil courts. His principle seemed to be, that whenever the civil courts say that any act of the Church has infringed upon civil rights, the Church must cancel her decisions and throw aside her laws. And yet this man had written a three-volume history of the Reformation in Scotland, and surely knew that three-fourths of our history as a Church consists of struggles against the supremacy of the civil power, in behalf of that liberty of conscience which is the inalienable right of all men, both collectively and individually. Could a man traverse Scotland, and not see our mountains?

Dr Chalmers rose in his great strength to the height of the occasion. His speech that day was one of the most splendid efforts of his genius. The motion with which he met that of Dr Cook, admitted, of course, that the judgment of the civil court settled all questions of civil right. But it declared that the principle that no presentee shall be forced on a parish contrary to the will of the congregation, could not and would not be abandoned. It was lawful for the Church to surrender any of the State's gifts, but it was not

lawful for the Church to surrender one of her own fundamental principles, which she believed to be according to the Word of God. Such was the substance of the motion, which ended by proposing the appointment of a Committee to confer with the Government, in the hope that some way might be found of keeping the harmony between Church and State unimpaired.

The debate began at mid-day, and the vote was taken in the broad daylight of next morning, when the motion of Dr Chalmers was carried by the decisive majority of forty-nine. Cunningham was not a member of this Assembly. But Candlish was. It was his first Assembly, and he effectively took his place among the foremost there. "I remember," said Dr Buchanan, from the Moderator's chair of the Free Assembly in 1861, "I remember as if it had been yesterday, though it is nearly a quarter of a century ago, writing an urgent letter to the then comparatively youthful minister of St George's, entreating him to be prepared to take a part in the proceedings of the Assembly of 1839, which it was known was to be an Assembly of vital importance to our cause. Up till that time, no fitting opportunity had occurred of bringing into the arena of ecclesiastical discussion those extraordinary powers which he subsequently exhibited, and the fact of his possessing which, from the very first, no one doubted but himself. His answer assured me that he was no speaker, and that he could be of no use in a debate, and concluded with these words: 'Novus homo et inexpertus non loquor.'" Such was the humble self-estimate of him who was to surpass in facility and readiness every speaker of his age.

## THE "WITNESS."

The leading actors in this memorable conflict were now all before the public, except one.

The Evangelical party never did a wiser thing than when they set up the *Witness* newspaper. There were sixty-three newspapers published in Scotland at that time, and only eight of them took the side of the Church. The Evangelical leaders had long set their hearts upon having an organ in Edinburgh. The difficulty was to

find an editor. They were keenly on the outlook, when the man wanted turned up in a most unexpected quarter.

Hugh Miller, the Cromarty mason, had been thoughtfully looking on as the entanglements of the Church thickened around her. His anxiety deepened, till it began to break his rest. "For at least one night," he tells, "after reading the speech of Lord Brougham and the decision of the House of Lords on the Auchterarder Case, I slept none." It troubled the sleep of the Cromarty mason, and yet, years after this, men called it a mere clerical question. Feeling thus deeply, he wrote his "Letter from one of the Scottish people to the Right Honourable Lord Brougham, on the opinions expressed by his Lordship on the Auchterarder Case." Miller had by this time laid down his mallet, having obtained a situation of seventy pounds a year in a branch bank in his native town. He sent the manuscript of his letter to Brougham, to the head of his bank in Edinburgh, Robert Paul. Mr Paul took it to Mr Candlish. The stone mason wrote a very minute hand, due, as he was won't to tell, to the strong necessity of economising paper in his early days. The clear, minute manuscript was read, and Candlish cried at once, "That's your editor!"

The newspaper was started upon a small capital. Forty members of the Evangelical party made up a thousand pounds by subscribing £25 a-piece. A publisher was found, the once well-known John Johnstone of Hunter Square, to whom the sum was paid over, he undertaking to carry on the paper for one year. A practical printer put some hundreds more into the concern. Better still, he put himself into it,—a quiet man, with perfect practical skill, and —rare combination—the highest literary discernment. Robert Fairly became to Hugh Miller all that William Laidlaw was to Walter Scott.

Cunningham was, of course, one of the projectors of the *Witness*, and a subscriber to its capital fund. Miller came to Edinburgh, and entered on his new duties. His writing was not, at first, free from a certain stiffness and formality, but he soon found his hands. A powerful combatant had entered the field, and all who dared to fight with him sunk under the weight of his blows. Rival

editors he tomahawked and scalped. Despairing pamphleteers called him "the sledge-hammer of the Non-Intrusion party." His style was clear, strong, Cobbett-like English, rich with allusion and illustration, irresistible in mirth, and terrible in sarcasm. He wrote slowly, and made laborious corrections, speaking out to himself as he wrote, and trying every sentence upon his ear, as a money-changer weighs a piece of gold on his practised finger-tip. "You must write very easily," said a complimentary gentleman to him one day. "Let me tell you, sir," was the reply, "that it takes a good deal of hard labour to make writing look easy."

The publishing days of the *Witness* were Wednesday and Saturday. Each of these was preceded by labour in writing so severe that Miller used to say, "I can never remember the names of my fossils on publication days till about tea-time, when they begin to come back to me, reappearing to memory like letters written in invisible ink when you hold the paper to the fire." The labour must have been very heavy which paralysed memory for so many hours.

Miller's acquaintance with English literature was enormous. His faculty of criticism alone, when literary subjects came in his way, would have made him a reputation. He was familiar with the strange, stirring history of the Church whose battles he had come to fight. He understood the Moderates thoroughly. And he understood the people of Scotland. Never had any people a truer representative than *they* had in him. A future historian will find in the files of the *Witness*, lights and shadows of the Scottish character which have eluded both Burns and Scott.

Although achieving a reputation with such rapidity, Hugh Miller remained as humble as when he wore the leather apron. He was simple and child-like in his ways, a true man, and kept his truth by walking with God. In his family evening prayers, he would often supplicate, "Lord, keep us from all hollow-*hertedness*." No man who has heard the yearning tone of his soft voice, making that petition, will ever forget it.

No single influence told more mightily on the Church controversy than the influence of Hugh Miller and the *Witness*. Perhaps it

did more than the clerical mind was altogether prompt to admit. Generations of a selfish Moderatism had fatally weakened the confidence of the Scottish people in their clergy. The doctrine of atonement by the blood of the Son of God had been in many quarters well-nigh eliminated from the pulpit. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," said an old Scottish matron, and the same wail rose in many a heart. During those Moderate generations, the man most keenly alive to the world in the whole parish had too often been the minister. The carelessness with which he went through the routine of service on the Sabbath day, told the congregation all too plainly that his heart was not in his Master's work, but in the acres which he farmed. The consequence was inevitable. The mind of Scotland settled down into a chronic state of cool distrust. It was a tide not easily turned. No doubt confidence was coming. But there cannot be imagined a more happy providence that that which gave one of the people themselves to represent the Evangelical cause in the periodical press. The editor of the Evangelical organ had leaped, almost at a bound, into the foremost rank of Scottish literature. But it was all the better that he had been a quarryman and stone-hewer—that he came from the midst of the people, with nothing clerical about him. Altogether, the brain that lay under that shaggy head was the most powerful reinforcement that ever cheered the struggling party.

*Postscript.*—The obligations of the Free Church to Hugh Miller are in no degree overrated in the tribute here paid to his memory. It may be proper to remind the reader that Mr Mackenzie had a special right to utter his testimony on the subject. He was associated with Hugh Miller in those early days of the *Witness,* was a constant and welcome guest in his house, and became qualified to speak of him with peculiar knowledge and peculiar love. Among Mr Mackenzie's jottings, I find one which I may here add:—"The printing office of the *Witness* was in the old Horse Wynd—once the main entrance to Edinburgh from the south, now a region squalid beyond all telling. Cunningham

would often step up our dingy stair—not unfrequently would have to spend an hour touching up an article, to make it legible for the printer. He has shared our coffee on publishing nights, when we manufactured it in our gigantic coffee-pot —Hugh Miller, meanwhile, contriving to toast cheese by the help of the fire-shovel. It was a cheery time, in spite of over-hanging responsibilities."—R.

## CHAPTER X.

### *STRATHBOGIE.*

IN the summer and autumn of 1839, the quantity of printed matter flung abroad by the press shewed how far and wide the agitation had spead.

The Non-intrusion leaders, half-a-dozen of them, kept up a series of tracts for three months. They were published every Saturday, and were sold in thousands for sixpence a dozen. Chalmers, Dunlop, Candlish, Charles J. Brown, Guthrie, Cunningham, were the writers. Cunningham wrote three of them.

John Hamilton, an advocate at the Scottish bar, was a strong "Conservative." He was a calm, reflective man, of a clear judgment, and an earnest heart. He saw how utterly the Conservative party were misunderstanding the Church, and he ventured an attempt to rescue them from a mistake so mischievous. He published a masterly statement of the whole case in the form of a letter to the Duke of Wellington, "under the conviction that happily for the country at the present day, your Grace's judgment in every matter of public importance commands more profound and general respect than that of any other individual."

Gray of Perth, whose face and head, so strikingly suggestive of Oliver Goldsmith, were long familiar in our Assemblies, published his "Present Conflict between the Civil and Ecclesiastical Courts Examined, with Historical and Statutory Evidence for the Jurisdiction of the Church of Scotland." He had an intellect of singular force and keenness, and his strength in debate was prodigious. Most men who had proved him would say, "Lay thine hand upon

him, remember the battle, do no more." This pamphlet was a marvel of power and clearness.

In the course of the autumn, too, appeared the Dean of Faculty's "Letter to the Lord Chancellor, on the Claims of the Church of Scotland in regard to its Jurisdiction, and on the proposed changes in its Polity." It was a huge production of about 300 pages. With laborious minuteness and cumbrous perseverance, he plods through a wilderness of dull details which cast no light on the question in hand. According to him, the lust of power in the clergy was the one cause of the whole imbroglio. Theirs was a scheme to establish an ecclesiastical tyranny, by means as unscrupulous as their motives were unjustifiable. After dealing forth his charges and launching his assertions, he publicly announced in the Edinburgh newspapers his resolution to read nothing in the shape of a reply. He took means to circulate his pamphlet far beyond any natural demand that there could have been for it, and there is every reason to believe that he preoccupied and prejudiced the minds of Sir Robert Peel, the Earl of Aberdeen, and the Duke of Wellington.

Dunlop published an answer to the big pamphlet, distinguished by his usual high-toned courtesy, his vast range of not merely legal but constitutional knowledge, and his statesmanlike grasp of his subject.

Dr Chalmers also answered the Dean, in his grandly rolling style. "I have felt, he says, "in the study of this controversy, as if there were an impregnable wall of separation between the understandings on each side of it. It looks to me as if there were an organic difference in the minds. It is a great deal more than that they reason differently. The difference appears to be as great as if, in virtue of a different physical construction in their eyes, they saw differently."

Cunningham, too, came out with an answer, in the shape of a letter, to the Dean. There was everything in the big pamphlet to excite his indignation and scorn—reckless charges, base insinuations, and laboured efforts to raise prejudice. He treats the head of the bar without the least ceremony, and in the most unsparing style

demonstrates under the three divisions, "Ignorance," "Misrepresentation," and "Evasion," his incompetency for the task he had undertaken.* The proof of all the three is very complete certainly; but of what avail were replies or arguments addressed to a man who had pledged himself not to read them?

## THE MARNOCH CASE.

In the winter of 1839, complications thickened fast, and the position of the Church grew more and more heavily entangled. The Strathbogie complication was now attracting the attention of the whole kingdom. This famous case was one of open mutiny and broad defiance to the authority of the Church. In its origin it closely resembled the cases of Auchterarder and Lethendy.

The parish of Marnoch, in the Presbytery of Strathbogie, had fallen vacant, and the patron (or the patron's trustees) had given the presentation to Mr John Edwards, who could not find more than *one* supporter out of the three thousand inhabitants of the parish. The presbytery, very unwillingly, had to apply the law of the Church, and Mr Edwards was rejected. He thereupon applied to the Court of Session, and obtained a decree holding the presbytery bound to proceed with his settlement. After a couple of years of moving to and fro between presbytery and synod, Court of Session and General Assembly, the case came to this pass, that the Presbytery of Strathbogie formally declared their resolution to obey the Court of Session and to disobey the Church.

It was manifestly time for the Church to assert her authority. A presbytery of her own ministers had proclaimed their purpose of committing an act of open rebellion. If they could do that with impunity, there was an end of her government. An extraordinary meeting of the Commission of Assembly was held, to face the crisis

* A statement has been made that this pamphlet, being very severe, was suppressed by its author. I can produce a certificate under his own hand to the contrary. His deliberate judgment was that the pamphlet was far less severe than the Dean's demerits would have justified.—R.

which had arisen. That Commission took a decided step. It suspended the seven ministers who formed the majority of the Presbytery of Strathbogie from the office of the holy ministry, prohibited them from the exercise of their functions, and declared all official acts which they might attempt to perform, null and void. Any or all of them might be "reponed," however, on their signing an assurance that they would submit themselves to the Church; which, as they were already under oath to do it, was surely not a hard condition.

The seven, thus placed under arrest, defiantly broke it within four days. They met as a presbytery, and formally resolved to disown the authority of the Church. They applied to the Court of Session to interpose between them and their ecclesiastical superiors. The court interposed accordingly. It interdicted all persons whatsoever from using the churches, churchyards, and parish schoolhouses, in intimating the sentence passed upon the seven.

If the court had had the least insight into the Church's principle of rendering unto Cæsar all that is Cæsar's, but none of what is God's, it must have seen the utter futility of a measure like this. It unquestionably belonged to the civil courts to determine questions of property. They had shut up the churches and the other parochial property, allowing to the seven alone the right of setting foot within them. The Church, of course, obeyed at once. But with her own discipline the civil court had no right to interfere. The sentence must be publicly intimated, and the ministers sent to do it did their duty in the open fields, dead of winter though it was. They published the sentence; and they did more, they preached the gospel, a new thing in Strathbogie.

The Duchess of Gordon lived in the very heart of the district, and for long years she had grieved over the spiritual death that reigned in the parishes around her. "Nobody need tell me about the Moderates, I know them well," she said. "We must pray, pray very hard, that the Lord may send us pastors after His own heart." This was in 1837. Her desire was granted at last. There was plenty of evangelical preaching in Strathbogie. The Church having

suspended the seven from the office of the ministry, was bound to supply their parishes with the ordinances of the gospel so long as that suspension continued.

The flower of the Evangelical preachers from all Scotland were sent to Strathbogie that winter—M'Donald, "the Apostle of the North," Robert M'Cheyne of Dundee, Charles J. Brown, Moody Stuart, and many more. It was like the stirring in the valley of dry bones. "The desire which prevails in those parishes for the simple preaching of the gospel can scarce be conceived by one who has not witnessed it. The people will come eight, ten, twelve miles to hear a sermon. No length of service fatigues them."

The interdict was "limited" at first. It only shut the churches, but left the parishes open. After a few weeks it was "extended," and the whole seven parishes were made forbidden ground. None but the seven suspended men, or those authorised by them, might preach there. It is very clear that the Court had allowed itself to become heated, and had thoroughly lost its temper and its prudence. The Lord President Hope, in granting the "extended interdict," poured forth a passionate declamation against the Church. There was one point which the majority of their Lordships seemed quite incapable of understanding. The Church had gone into Court on the case of Auchterarder. When the decision went against her, why did she not submit? they said.

So far as the temporalities of the benefice of Auchterarder were concerned, she did submit at once; and it was in respect of them alone that she had gone into the civil courts. As to her own spiritual rights and duties, she "gave place by subjection—no, not for an hour." But this was a distinction which the judges could not understand. The Lord President stigmatised the course pursued by the Church as "absolute profligacy." "It was the old thimble-rigging trick," he said; "odds I win, evens you lose. If the judgment be given in my favour I will obey; if not, I won't." Another of the judges, with solemn vehemence, charged the majority of the Church with a violation of their oath of allegiance to Queen Victoria!

Ten days after the "extended interdict" was granted came the regular monthly meeting of the Presbytery of Edinburgh. It is Presbyterian use and wont that notice of every motion to be considered shall be given at a previous meeting. This time Mr Cunningham departed from this practice. He said, "The motion he intended to propose was one of which he had given notice, not in the usual form at the previous meeting of presbytery, but by private notes to each member of the court. Although it was the practice of the court to give notice of a motion, yet, as it was not the law, and as the circumstances of the case were extraordinary, he had no doubt the means he had taken to intimate his intention would be approved of by the presbytery."

The motion proposed a memorial to Government, setting forth the anxiety and alarm caused by the doings of the Court of Session in the Strathbogie business, as an infringement on the rights and privileges of the Church, and urging the immediate necessity of legislative interference. It passed unanimously; for both parties, Moderates as well as Evangelicals, were then at one in thinking that the Court of Session had gone beyond its province.

At that time the Presbytery of Edinburgh met in St David Street, in the hall belonging to the Trustees of the Widows' Fund of the Church of Scotland. It was a small place below the level of the street. A diminutive pulpit stood in a corner, into which trembling students mounted to deliver their trial discourses. Portraits of various bygone worthies hung round the walls. A back door gave entrance from a narrow lane behind. The hall used to be crammed to suffocation, and a crowd blocked the lane around the back door whenever it was understood that Cunningham was to speak.

At the meeting now referred to, Cunningham deliberately reviewed and answered the speeches of the judges with extraordinary power, but not with extraordinary ceremony. One reference to the adverse majority of the Court of Session gave great offence. "We did succeed," he said, "in convincing five of the judges—five of the most eminent men on the bench; and I venture to say, that if the

votes had been weighed instead of counted, the decision would have been in our favour."

Such an antagonism between the judges of the land and a court of the Established Church was truly unfortunate. It was not edifying to have judges shewn up as ignorant of the fundamental principles. But when the judges attacked the Church, and from the seat that ought to be so passionless and calm charged her with "absolute profligacy" and "thimble-rigging," was it to be thought that men possessing the gift of speech in a transcendant degree, and a platform from which they could speak to all Scotland, should keep silence under charges so atrocious?

For many months relays of ministers went to the interdicted parishes to preach the gospel. Cunningham was sent among the rest. Each was duly met with an interdict on his arrival, and each as duly disregarded it. Many ministers yet alive keep their copy of the interdict as a memorial of a time which had got so strangely out of joint. The violation of an interdict involves pains and penalties so formidable that no man would lightly incur them, especially in this law-revering country. But deliberately and openly as the Strathbogie interdicts were broken, they were broken with perfect impunity. After all, it appeared that the Court of Session was not sufficiently sure of its position to vindicate the authority it had assumed.

## THE REEL OF BOGIE.

At the spring meeting of the Commission in 1840, a petition came up from the inhabitants of Kemback, a parish in one of the sweetest nooks of Fife, complaining of their presbytery—the Presbytery of St Andrews. A son of Dr Cook, the Moderate leader, had been presented to that parish. The people vetoed him, but the presbytery had resolved to disregard their veto, and were going on to his settlement. Against this the people of Kemback sought protection from the Commission. It was impossible to falter, if authority was to be maintained at all, for the case was one of plain insurrection. Were the Presbytery of St Andrews, said Dr

Chalmers, going to join the Presbytery of Strathbogie "in the dance of this mazy and multiform confusion?" There is an old song which magnifies the reel of Bogie above all saltatory delights. Dr Chalmers, whose humour sometimes broke out in the quaintest drollery, made what he called "a classical allusion" to the peerless reel. "The great and unknown master of the game in Edinburgh, if such there be, will, no doubt, congratulate himself on the success of his tactics in having set these two presbyteries so hopefully agoing; and more especially if it be in obedience to a signal from him, that so dignified a personage as the Presbytery of St Andrews has come forth as a performer on the stage of public observation to play her part in the reel of Bogie."

The same meeting of Commission resolved to present an address to the Queen, and petitions to Parliament, craving protection against the unconstitutional encroachments of the Court of Session. Mr Candlish made the motion, in one of those stirring and eloquent speeches of which he was so amazingly prolific in those days. Dr Chalmers again spoke. There were not two ways, he said, of resolving the question of the Church's spiritual independence. It was a question of principle, a question on which compromise was impossible. They could "give place by subjection, no, not by an hairsbreadth."

Some little time after, there appeared one of the best hits in caricature which Scotland has ever produced. It was called "The Reel of Bogie, a Clerical Dance," and was published on a large quarto sheet. Four dancers, in gown and bands, appear footing it with tremendous energy. Dr Chalmers and Dr Gordon, Mr Candlish and Mr Cunningham. The massive figure of Chalmers waves aloft a flag inscribed, "Retract!!! no! not a hairsbreadth." Exalted upon a hogshead, Dr John Ritchie plays the fiddle, while on the wall behind him hangs a picture of Nero fiddling when Rome was burning. The Lord President of the Court of Session shews his angry face upon the scene from behind a half-open door. His outstretched hand holds a long sword aloft over the head of Dr Chalmers, while Dr Ritchie smilingly says, "That's right, hit him hard, my Lord; he's got no friends." The situation of matters as it then

stood was happily touched off. The Dissenters, represented in the picture by Dr Ritchie, were supposed to be not ill-pleased at the difficulties of the Established Church. The Voluntary Dissenters could hardly be expected to sympathise with the party struggling for spiritual independence in connection with the State. That connection they considered to be unscriptural and incompatible with spiritual independence. "Friends" the Church had none. The two great political parties were equally adverse to her claims. If the Court of Session were illegally exceeding its power, it had little chance of being called to account either by the Government or the Legislature.

Dr Gordon, a saintly man, whose weight of character in Edinburgh and throughout the Church was immense, appears in the "Reel" as unwillingly whirled round in the determined grasp of Cunningham. It was a common idea at the time, that the whole disturbance was due to a few turbulent agitators, and Cunningham generally got the credit of being the most violent. Dr Gordon was supposed to be a reluctant supporter of the party, and the caricaturist makes him cry, "I have really considerable difficulty in doing it." There never was a greater mistake. This mild and retiring man, so full of Christian gravity and meekness, was of all men the most immovably resolute in maintaining the spiritual independence of the Church. In the end his only difficulty was, not about coming out from the connection with the State, but about remaining in so long.

All the portraits were good except Cunningham's. Its expression was that of coarse ferocity, just what the popular notion at that time ascribed to him. People hearing him on the platform could not imagine him as anything else than the resistless and unsparing gladiator. Slowly and gradually it came out that in private he was as different as possible—gentle, affable, quiet to an extraordinary degree. Park, a sculptor of some reputation in those days, was employed to make a bust of him, which is in the possession of his brother-in-law, Mr Dennistoun of Greenock. "Let me tell you, sir," said the sculptor to him, "I modelled that bust four times before I succeeded. Three times I modelled

it under the idea that ferocity was the prevailing expression of the face. I was entirely mistaken. The prevailing expression is repose."

The sculptor had surrendered himself to the popular idea, and his misconception of the character imposed upon him a misconception of the face—not all at once corrected.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT.*

THE celebrated interdict against preaching did very much to open the eyes of the public to the encroachments of the Court of Session. The excitment throughout the country was unparalleled. The "rebellion" of the non-intrusionists made a noise as great as if it had had its Prestonpans or Culloden.

Meanwhile the non-intrusion party plied every means for a righteous extrication. The Whig government of the day had virtually been a party to the passing of the Veto Law, out of which the whole entanglement began. Reasonably, therefore, it might be expected that the Whig government would lend some aid to deliver the Church out of her difficulty. A deputation went to London, in the summer of 1839, to meet with political men there. They saw Lord John Russell at the Home Office. But, says Dr Chalmers, "Such a feckless and fushionless entertainment of the whole matter, I never witnessed in my life. I could not but laugh when we came out, and I looked at the blank faces of all and sundry." Sir Robert Peel was very bland, but cautious and cold in the extreme. Sir James Graham was hearty, outspoken, and cordial. Upon the whole, the deputation came home "more hopeful than ever of matters being brought to a speedy and successful termination."

Very early in the ensuing year another deputation went to London. Laboriously and vainly they tried to explain their views to political men. The Whigs were in office, but scarcely in power, and perhaps could not have settled the Scotch Church question even if they had been inclined. But they had no inclination. The deputation who waited on Lord Melbourne were received with

blunt and careless good humour—"chaffed," in fact. It was then, as it is still, the favourite scheme of statesmen to bring all churches whatsoever into a state of subjection to the secular power, and to use them as tools for political ends.

"The supremacy of the legislature," says Hallam in his "Constitutional History," "is like the collar of the watch-dog, the price of food and shelter, and the condition upon which alone a religious society can be endowed and established by a prudent commonwealth." A sickening grossness of idea, which still has its undisturbed habitat in the political mind.

What hope was there that worldly-minded men would listen to the claims of Christ's spiritual kingdom? Numberless were the interviews granted to the deputations of the Church, but the weak and reluctant Whigs would not shake themselves into motion. "Government felt itself shut up to the conclusion not to move at present in the affair at all."

### THE ABERDEEN EPISODE.

All through the winter and spring of 1840 the movement gathered strength. Not such a movement as restless men can get up by bold agitation, but a movement of a far deeper character, having the silent strength of a growing disposition to cry unto the Lord. Calculators of political forces have little idea of this kind of force, and therefore the force of the Scottish movement was misunderstood and miscalculated to the last. Yet signs of its depth were not wanting, if men could have read them.

The Earl of Aberdeen had once or twice indicated a friendly feeling to the reforming party in the Scottish Church. Any words of a friendly sound were eagerly caught up. A correspondence began between the Earl and the Evangelical leaders. He came to Edinburgh, and had a long interview with the General Assembly's Committee. After much letter-writing and negotiating they imagined that they had got him fully to understand their grievances. The encroaching civil courts must be kept within their own province. The self-government of the Church must be recognised. No minister must be forced on the people against their will. His

Lordship undertook to bring a Bill into Parliament. He looked so friendly, and he wrote so courteously, that the Committee really had hopes, and hope trickled out over the Church.

In the beginning of May the Bill was introduced into the House of Lords, and then the sorry truth came out. It purported to be a "declaratory" bill, and the law which it declared was identical with the law as interpreted by the Court of Session. It legalised the very wrongs of which the Church complained. It laid her open to civil interference at every pore. The people were to have the power of stating objections, of which the Church Courts were to judge. Only if they could persuade their ecclesiastical masters that their objections were valid and weighty, were the people to have any influence in the appointment of their own religious teachers. The fact of conscientious and resolved objection on the part of the people was not to be itself a reason which the Presbytery could sustain.

Such was the Earl of Aberdeen's Bill. Instead of an egg it gave a scorpion. This was that Earl of Aberdeen under whose well-meaning administration the country, at a later period, "drifted into war,"—the dismal and bloody war in the Crimea. Men who came close to him said that their chief feeling was one of surprise that a man of his evidently moderate talent could have attained such a position and importance as he certainly had.

He could not have intended to deceive the Evangelical men; there was no object in deceiving them. His confidence that his Bill would please them was perfectly jubilant. When the Bill was brought in, the General Assembly was at hand. "If reason shall maintain its sway in that body," his Lordship said, "I am sanguine as to the results of the approaching meeting." The first sounds of discontent began to be heard from the lesser ecclesiastical spheres. Cunningham delivered one of his shattering speeches in his own Synod, in which the Bill, like the golden calf, was broken to pieces and ground to powder.* The Earl deigned to notice it in the

* Not that the Bill was lightly rejected. The impossibility of accepting it was a bitter disappointment. It was too evident that the failure of this effort destroyed almost all hope. A friend calling on another Church leader, found Dr Cunningham

House of Lords in a way which was probably intended to grind the daring Presbytery to powder. He read some confused and garbled extracts from the speech, adding, "My Lords, I believe I said on a former occasion, that I hoped my Bill would receive the support of all rational and moderate people, and I think from the specimen I have given, that I could not have included the reverend gentleman."

The Assembly came. Robert M'Cheyne, just returned from his mission of inquiry to the Jews, was there. His youthful face beamed with love, and his soft yearning voice thrilled, as he told the fathers and brethren how his heart burned within him to "communicate the vivid feeling of compassion given to himself by seeing the dry bones in the open valley, very many and very dry. There was an intense life about these old Assemblies, and they were full of character. There was an old powerful party, not comprehending the new time which had come upon them, and taking in hot wrath the operation of dethronement. There was a rising party, confident in their cause, superb in vigour, elate with the wonderful flush of talent in their ranks, scornful of the sorry efforts to restrain them by force from that freedom of Christ's kingdom without which liberty is robbed of its brightest jewel. So crowded and so long continued were the sittings in those days of keen animated debate, that what with heat, fatigue, late hours, and bad ventilation, "few Assemblies passed, without the sacrifice, more or less directly, of one or more lives of its members." People began to gather at the doors of the Tron Church as early as eight, and even seven o'clock, in the morning. At ten o'clock the doors were opened, and the sitting which then began continued till the adjournment at five in the afternoon. Before seven the galleries were crammed again, and sometimes morning broke before the House separated. The debate on Lord Aberdeen's Bill occupied two days. In the end, the

and him going over the Bill together. The former was in the deepest anxiety, and again and again returned to the Bill to pore over its clauses, as if he could not make up his mind to the cruel conviction, that it kept carefully short of the essential and indispensable provisions, and that all the consequences of rejecting it must be faced.—R.

Assembly resolved by an overwhelming majority, to use every effort to prevent its passing into law.

Cunningham was not a member of this Assembly; but a month later, he had an opportunity in his own Presbytery of taking part in the opposition to the Bill, for the Earl seemed haughtily bent on pushing it through. The Presbytery met in their humble hall. Hugh Miller sat in the crush behind the little bar, looking on with his quiet grey eyes. His next paper photographed the speakers in all the vivid beauty of his style. Cunningham's speech impressed him marvellously. "Mr Cunningham opened the debate in a speech of tremendous power. The elements were various,—a clear logic, at once severely nice and popular; an unhesitating readiness of language, select and forcible, and well-fitted to express every minute shade of meaning, but plain and devoid of figure; above all, an extent of erudition and an acquaintance with Church history that, in every instance in which the arguments turned on a matter of fact, seemed to render opposition hopeless. But what gave peculiar emphasis to the whole, was what we shall venture to term the propelling power of the mind; that animal energy which seems to act the part of the moving power in the mechanism of intellect, which gives force to action, and depth to the tones of the voice, and impresses the hearer with an idea of immense momentum."

A few days after this, the Earl of Aberdeen sullenly gave up his Bill, from which so much had been expected. He published the whole correspondence between himself and the General Assembly's Committee, with all the confidence of integrity. The misunderstanding between him and the Committee was strange. They had laboured to be so plain and precise as to render misunderstanding impossible. They thought they had succeeded, and that his Lordship was perfectly at one with them. Yet it came out at last that there was, and had all along been, a gulf between them. The mystery is inexplicable, unless this be the way to it, that worldly men cannot understand spiritual things, and, worse still, think they can.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *CHURCH PRINCIPLES.*

DURING the time that the attention of the Church was occupied with Lord Aberdeen and his abortive Bill, Cunningham had on his hands a laborious task, for which he of all men was most capable. It was thrown upon him in this way.

The Rev. James Robertson, minister of Ellon, was a notable figure in the Scottish struggle. He was respectable from his talents and from his personal integrity. He had great acuteness and ingenuity, but was given to quibble, without apparently being aware that he was quibbling, and would "repose himself on a bit of sophistry as well pleased as if he had discovered the golden fleece." He was an uncouth, powerful man to look at, massive in his build, a Hercules in all but the stature. His voice grated harsh thunder, and when he raised it, it cracked.

In the autumn of 1839 he delivered a speech of "five hours and twenty minutes" in his synod against the Veto Law. During the winter he expanded the speech into a bulky pamphlet, which he published in spring. With the publication of his "Observations on the Veto Law," Robertson at once stepped to the front of his party, their acknowledged ablest man. Charles Lamb was wont to be eloquent on the "virtue of suppression in writing,"—a virtue which Mr Robertson of Ellon had certainly failed to practise.

In a month after Robertson's pamphlet appeared, Cunningham came out with the first part of a reply. Not being able, under the pressure of work, to get the second part ready before the meeting of the General Assembly, he published a letter in the *Witness*, indicating his intended line of argument. Robertson's party were

loudly boasting of his performance. It had a show of learning which was imposing and impressive. Cunningham's short note to the *Witness* ended all that. "Mr Robertson," he said, "had evidently taken his quotations from Calvin and Beza, from the speech of one of the Lords of Session on the Auchterarder case, Lord Medwyn, and not consulted—perhaps never seen—the originals. He faithfully copies Lord Medwyn's blunders, giving us in the first quotation, as he found it in Lord Medwyn, '*octodecim*' for '*octiduum*,' which is the word in the original." Lord Medwyn, a dry, pedantic man, seemed to feel it like a blot on his ermine. He, too, published a letter in the hated *Witness*, laying the blame upon the printer. Hugh Miller, whose amazing fertility of illustration was one of his most remarkable gifts, took up the affair. A case of murder, he said, had been tried in a criminal court a few years before, and a conviction had been obtained by the circumstance that the iron heel of the murderer's shoe wanted one of the nails. The error pointed out by Mr Cunningham was the missing nail of the shoe. "It proves in Lord Medwyn's speech merely the negligence of the printer; but it proves in Mr Robertson's pamphlet that one of the best informed of the Intrusionists is in reality a very superficial man."

Six months after, Cunningham's "Defence of the Rights of the Christian People" appeared,—a volume rather than a pamphlet. The *Witness* thought it "one of the most learned, intensely argumentative, irresistible, and victorious pamphlets that controversy has ever produced." His literary executors have wisely included it in the fourth volume of his Works, published since his death. Its value rises far above the temporary uses of controversy. It is a weighty contribution to ecclesiastical literature. It contains the whole history of opinion upon the influence of the people in the appointment of pastors, from the days of the apostles downwards.

The pamphlet was not one fitted for popular reading; but it told prodigiously on the controversy, and the service done by it was immense. It was a great service to have it proved that the consent of Protestant Churches fully sanctions the principle of the popular will in the choice of their pastor. The time for making

sacrifices was near; and it aided mightily in the preparation of men's minds to have it established in so resistless a demonstration that they were occupying the old ancestral ground of their own Church, and that their way forth was "by the footsteps of the flock."

Perhaps no other man, then or now living, could have traversed with so free a mastery the enormous field of ecclesiastical literature into which the controversy led. Robertson's pamphlet had been loudly vaunted by his party. The Earls of Aberdeen and Dalhousie had quoted it in the House of Lords, amid the cheers of that august assembly. For one abnormal night, the Upper House was brilliant with the glow of learning. Members were dazzled with the cold glitter of Latin quotations, and overawed by the names of Calvin and Beza. Olympus brandished thunderbolts which the Aberdeenshire Vulcan had forged. But the minister of Ellon had ventured into a field where neither he nor any living man was a match for Cunningham. He had posted himself up with laborious care for the undertaking. But these were Cunningham's native fields. It was easy for him to convict his opponent of ignorance, mistakes, and misrepresentations. Robertson was smitten hip and thigh, and his laboured argument, of which elated friends had so indiscreetly boasted, collapsed in ruins.

### THE ASSEMBLY OF 1841.

The Assembly of 1841 brought fresh occasion for the advocacy of these principles, for once again Dr Cunningham moved a resolution on Patronage, lost this time by only 120 to 109. A still grave and more memorable duty devolved on him,—that of seconding the motion for the deposition of the Strathbogie Seven, the ministers who had persistently defied the authority of the Church courts, and whose case, long and patiently dealt with, required now to be closed. Dr Chalmers made the motion. The speech of Dr Cunningham may be best characterised by introducing here a letter addressed to Mrs Cunningham by the Rev. Hugh Martin, late of Greyfriar's Free Church, Edinburgh. It serves the double purpose of vividly representing the speaker, and recalling the vivacity of interest on the part of the audiences in those great days:—

"You wish me to record the circumstances in connection with which, unknown to himself, Dr Cunningham, thirty years ago, placed me under great obligation to him, and entirely decided for me, under God, the direction of my whole public life. The circumstances were these:—

"At that time, in the spring namely of 1841, I was a Divinity Student of two years' standing, residing in my native city of Aberdeen. Though brought up under Evangelical influences as regards doctrine,—and I must mention with feelings of deep veneration the name of my minister, the late Dr James Foote,—I was, as concerning ecclesiastical policy, a very decided Moderate. The Veto Law I could not contemplate with patience, and the suspension of the seven Strathbogie ministers I regarded as a piece of ecclesiastical despotism. Nevertheless, though I knew that the 'Non-Intrusionists' were carrying it all their own way, I conceived an intense desire to be present at the General Assembly, then soon about to meet.

"Chalmers had been round on his Church Extension tour in 1838, and, in the North Church, late on a Saturday evening,—when the old man eloquent, standing in the precentor's desk, with a solitary gas light shining on his great head and grey locks, 'would not let us away, so near was it to the Sabbath of the Lord, without speaking more directly to our eternal interests,'—I had known for the first time what it was to be 'spell-bound,' to yield to the resistless iron-clampings going round my arms and my chest and holding me till *he* chose. And *he* was to be there. From my old class-fellow also, (now Professor) David Masson, who had been for a year or two in Edinburgh, we had occasional reports of the intense intellectual action going on in the metropolis; of the anticipations, in particular, of how fine an Assembly this would be; and of how Greek would meet with Greek in chiefest tug of war. Altogether the young student nature in me had a great longing to see the Assembly of 1841.

"It was far from an easy matter, however, to compass my desire; and I mention this because of the seriousness of the issues, to meward, which were to be settled. I was immersed in private

teaching in several different families; and how to provide for the discharge of these duties during my absence it was hard to see. My excellent college friend (now the Rev.) William Pirie Smith—the father of Professor W. R. Smith of Aberdeen—though himself engaged during six hours a day in public teaching, most kindly took charge of two hours of my daily work, rather than see my project break down; and after a series of complicated negotiations and arrangements, I was able to leave home with a light heart, and attend the meetings of that celebrated Assembly.

"And the substance of what I have to say in this communication is, that whereas my moderatism sternly stood its ground for eight days, and as still a Moderate I listened to the opening sentences of Mr Cunningham's speech in vindicating the motion for the deposition of the seven Strathbogie ministers, I became conclusively and completely a Free Churchman before that speech was done. The demonstration of the righteousness and necessity of the course he counselled was so conclusive, and the exposure of the untenableness of the allegations and arguments on the side of his opponents so complete, that I felt it utterly impossible to remain honest in my own eyes without admitting that I had been absolutely convinced. I need not describe the characteristics of the speech. They were the habitual characteristics of his speaking, in a very fine instance thereof,—intellectual simplicity, directness, and power; unaffected moral earnestness; the manly courage which springs from strong dutifulness, combined with perfect self-oblivion; the clear stating of the question; the rejection of irrelevancies; the total absence of all side-thoughts that should retard or perplex; the adducing of precisely what was requisite, the placing of it in the unmistakable light; the insistence till this was accomplished, and no more; and then *on* in the work of cumulating his materials, until all he promised at the outset was achieved, to the delight of friends, the dismay of foes, and the rectification of at least one listener;—all this, in sentences of most direct construction and perfect transparency of meaning, serving his thinking like mirrors, and bodying forth his facts and arguments like instant incarnations of them: here was *demonstration*. At college I had learned to like my

Euclid; and here again, in wholly another field, and with inevitable difference, was *demonstration*. I could enjoy the gorgeousness of the eloquence of Chalmers, and answer to his terrific forthcalling of emotion; and I could appreciate in my measure the brave battling, the subtle reasoning, the able replies, the keen sarcasm, the finished rhetoric of others, and yet refuse to be convinced in the main. Here was *demonstration;* and until it was disposed of, either unto rejection or acceptance, as if a circle had been drawn round one on the sand, one had no right to be conscious of a single subordinate thought or feeling concerning it. It was not a treat; it was not a display; nor was it possible uprightly so to deal with it. It was a direct, immediate, exclusive business transaction of an intellect with other intellects. And not of pure intellect (often a meaningless phrase). For there is a high *morale* in the faithful conduct of intellect—God's natural image in man—to which moral law demands our loyalty; and it was eminently obvious here, demanding settlement of this high business transaction. I need not say how thankful to God I have been, ever since, that I was mercifully enabled to settle it in truth, and to gain a great victory by owning a total defeat.

"To my excellent student friends, Cobban, Philip, and Duncan,—the last of whom, the late Rev. James Duncan of Gartly, is fallen asleep, the others, now the Rev. Alexander Cobban of Inverallochy, and the Rev. John Philip of Fordoun,—it was a great pleasure that 'Martin had come right.' We all lodged together, and we were now, more than ever, a very joyous 'quaternion.' We resided in James's Square, with a respectable family who were members of Dr Cunningham's congregation; they almost adored their minister, and gave us, very warm-heartedly, an account of a pastoral visit he had lately been paying them. Two of the 'quaternion'—I give no names—were great mimics; and the good people must occasionally have been in great danger of coming to the conclusion that the student strangers in the big parlour were enjoying a pastoral visit too, and that the minister had brought several distinguished members of Assembly with him who were taking the opportunity of rehearsing their speeches.

"We continued to take growing delight in the Assembly till the close, with a deepening sense of the historical and decisive character of its proceedings. On the afternoon of the second Sabbath we all repaired to St Giles's to hear Dr Cunningham preach before the Lord High Commissioner. The text was, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' And we agreed that the opening sentences were eminently characteristic. 'You all know who Jesus Christ is; and you all know what it is to be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It is not explanation that the text needs; it is application.' The sermon was subsequently preached and printed on the occasion of the death of Dr Robert Gordon, under whose ministry Dr Cunningham had sat from the time of his appointment to his professorship in 1843.*

"On my translation from Panbride to Greyfriars in 1858, I was enabled, through Dr Cunningham's kindness, to attend, very frequently, his second course of lectures, and thus had the great benefit and pleasure of hearing about four-fifths of the second volume of the 'HISTORICAL THEOLOGY.' His character and powers as a lecturer on theology will be set forth by far abler pens than mine. I mention only one impression he produced on my mind,—the impression, namely, of his splendid combination of *largeness* of views with *definiteness* of views. He had manifestly a great dislike of narrowness, combined with an equal or perhaps still greater contempt of the idea that narrowness can be avoided by indefiniteness. I am persuaded that there are few more important general lessons to be learned from his works than this, and few more imperatively demanding attention at the present day. I mention also one incident of my attendance at his class, as illustrating his great kindliness of disposition. He one day, before pronouncing the blessing, addressed me by name, and requested me to speak with him in his private room. My observation, if not experience, of a professor summoning a student in this manner to a private audience, must have been unfortunate; for, as I really sat in this class with all the feelings of a student, I was startled for a moment into the

* The remainder of Mr Martin's letter refers to later years; but it seems better to give it here.

conviction that I must have done something very wrong. I was speedily set at rest, however, by the kindly welcome; and after the usual courteous greetings, Dr Cunningham said:—'My more immediate object in requesting you to speak with me just now, is to ask if you have read Mr ——'s book.' I had, and had liked it very much. 'Yes, he had no doubt it was a very able book; and as he knew I was a personal friend of the author, would I review it for the *British and Foreign Evangelical*?' (of which Dr Cunningham was then the editor). Dr Cunningham and the able author had lately, in some important Church matters, not been, so to speak, 'saying all one way.' And the generous editor was anxious that the reviewing of the book should be in friendly hands.

"During the succeeding winter, I repeatedly met Dr Cunningham returning through the Meadow Walk from his class, and always when I could, I tarried or turned with him, to enjoy his conversation. It was usually very memorable; and sometimes, when it was not completed, in his great geniality he would do me the kindly compliment of turning with me at Salisbury Road till it was. I remember one instance specially. The topic was the Cardross case. He had no difficulty about 'satisfying production,' agreeing, of course, with Gillespie in his 91st Proposition. But looking to the possibility of the future, I was anxious to have his mind as to the limits of what the Church could possibly submit to, and where she must make a final stand. I do not remember the details: but I have a very memorable impression of the beautiful manner in which he led on the thought, and brought it up exactly to the exact border line, and as if pointing across it, with the usual wave of the hand and forefinger reserved to the last, said, '*and that's persecution.*' On another occasion the conversation turned on an article of Dr Charles Hodge, on National Observance of the Sabbath, which had been reprinted in the *British and Foreign Evangelical*, and which I had lately very fully quoted from and commented on in the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh as Convener of the Sabbath Observance Committee. He agreed with me that that article was a vindication of Free Church principle; and he ended by saying, 'And no Voluntary will face it.' During the same winter he did me the honour of

dining with me in Grange Road, to meet my excellent friend, his old friend and first missionary in Edinburgh, the Rev. Thomas Wilson of Friockheim, for whom he had always cherished a warm regard. He was 'great good company,' placed us perfectly at our ease with him, and never seemed to imagine that he was speaking to other than his peers. His great power of memory was illustrated by his turning immediately to the desired page or part of the page of a volume of pamphlets on the Moderatorship Controversy, which he had not seen for twenty-five years; and there was no little hilarity over a Note in which he had told some unfortunate gentleman that he had totally misunderstood the whole matter involved, 'notwithstanding that he had done his uttermost to render it level to his capacities.' I shall always regard it as a matter of melancholy pleasure, that the preaching of his last sermon was a personal favour to myself. It was in Free Greyfriars, in the early period of my long and severe illness. Nor was the choice—or rather overruling of the choice—of the text without some signature of that 'preciousness in the sight of the Lord of the death of his saints,' which is often manifested in those outward arrangements which the gracious Master makes in bringing the public duties of a faithful servant to a close. The text was, 'Whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'"

## CUNNINGHAM ON PRESBYTERY.

In those days the Rev. James Marshall was minister of the Tolbooth Parish in Edinburgh. He was rather a weak, uncomfortable man, but popular as a preacher, and there was every reason to believe that his labours had been blessed. He was deeply pious, but also somewhat sentimental. Upon this not very robust and healthy mind, the sharp, intense controversies of the time produced an extremely disturbing effect. As the storm grew high, and the frightful cracking of the edifice was heard, the disturbance was greater than he could bear. He looked around; his eye rested upon the mighty Church of England; and what is now a deep that

leviathan maketh to boil as a pot, seemed a bright and smiling sea, in which were many islets of serene repose.

A son of his, once a curate in the English Church, but long since drifted into Popery, has published a memoir of his father. Among other extracts from the good man's diary, it contains the following :—"In the event of the Church of Scotland breaking up, Episcopacy is the only form of Church government likely to have stability, or to exercise any powerful influence over society in general. Is it not my duty, with the convictions I have, to identify myself with what is likely to become influential, and so far as God may enable, to leaven it with evangelical truth?"

He entered into correspondence with an English clergyman. To him he declared his belief that many of the more educated classes in Scotland "are staggered and confounded with the exhibition Presbyterianism has made. Many of them are halting between two opinions, but know not how to decide." By this time he had nearly made up his mind to join the English Church. He writes to his Church of England friend: "In such circumstances, a step of the kind I am contemplating, is invested with a peculiar degree of responsibility. It will do more harm to Presbyterianism than a similar movement at any past era in the history of this country, not from any importance in the individual who makes the change, but from the state of men's minds and feelings at the period of the transition. And it is this consideration which, I think, makes the question on what terms he will receive a minister of the Church of Scotland, not unworthy of the serious consideration of any English bishop who really attaches importance to the cause of Episcopacy." "Did bishops of the nineteenth century," he adds, "know as well as I do the state of feeling at present in this country, I am convinced they would not be slow to provide Episcopacy for the many who, I am satisfied, are willing to receive it."

And now Mr Marshall's mind being made up, he proceeded to action. The Presbytery of Edinburgh, at their meeting in September 1841, were surprised by a letter intimating that their brother could no longer remain a minister of the Church of Scotland. They appointed a committee to talk the matter over with him, of

which committee Mr Cunningham was one. He appears to have been at great pains, and probably succeeded no worse than he expected. Mr Marshall went over to the Church of England, but went alone. The affair made some noise, but had no result whatever. No one knowing the ineradicable Presbyterianism of the Scottish people ever supposed that it would. Mr Marshall's old flock continued to have a kindly feeling towards him. When he obtained a living in the Church of England, they were pleased to know it. They were always glad to hear of his welfare, but not one man of them ever thought of following his example. The affair is worth remembering solely on account of a characteristic letter which it drew from Cunningham to Marshall, and which is as follows:—*

"*October 6th* 1841.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I think it exceedingly evident, though, of course, you are not conscious of it, that you have been led to change your views on Church government, not from argument, but from feeling; not from a full and impartial investigation of the subject, but from an indulgence in feelings which are of a somewhat equivocal kind, and, in my opinion, quite as much opposed to the spirit of Christ and his apostles as any which have been manifested by those who have taken a prominent part in recent discussions. Entertaining this opinion, of course, I have no hope of impressing your mind by anything that could be said on the merits of the subject, and I have no intention of attempting it, but still I think it right to lay before you one or two considerations suggested to me by the conference we had with you on Monday.

"I cannot but regard your abstinence from full and frank consultation with some of your fathers in the ministry, about the conscientious doubts and difficulties which had sprung up in your mind, as scarcely consistent with an impartial search after truth in the matter, and as plainly indicating the operation of some perverted and perverting feeling, which, without your being conscious

* The copy of this Letter printed in Mr Marshall's Life by his Son, has some manifest errata. A copy found among Dr Cunningham's Papers has, therefore, been preferred.—R.

of it, had biassed your judgment on the subject. I fear, also, that your study of the subject has been somewhat meagre and scanty. You may have read other Presbyterian works, as that point was not formally put to you at the conference, but the only works then mentioned as having been read by you on that side were, 'Anderson's Defence' and the 'Plea for Presbytery,' by ministers of the Synod of Ulster.

"Now, these are both excellent works, and, in my opinion, contain matter which no Episcopalian can answer; but they are not sufficient for a full investigation of the subject, and they are not the best books that might be recommended, especially to a person of your temperament. They are just controversies with individuals, and though I do not object to the spirit in which they are written, yet there is a degree of severity about them which might perhaps be grating and offensive to a person very squeamish on the subject of controversy. Had you consulted any Presbyterian well acquainted with the subject, you would probably have been told, that it was scarcely decent or becoming in any minister of the Church of Scotland to leave his own Church and join the Episcopal one, unless he had read and studied 'Calderwood's Altare Damascuum,' the leading work by a minister of our Church, against the constitution of the Church of England; that some of the books which you ought to read, either on the ground of their intrinsic excellence, or their freedom from personal controversy and bitterness of spirit, were such as 'Baxter's Works on Non-conformity,' 'Calamy's Defence of Moderate Non-conformity,' 'King on the Primitive Church,' 'The Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry,' by the London ministers, 'The Case of the Accommodation,' in answer to 'Leighton's Proposals,' 'Jamieson's Sum of the Episcopal Controversy,' and 'Williams's Letters from a Parochial Bishop;' and that, if you really wished to make yourself master of the subject, before taking so serious and important a step as that which you have adopted, you were bound in fairness to have read the works of the most learned men who have written against Episcopacy, such as Cartwright, Beza, Blondel, and Salmasius.

"You told us you had thoroughly examined the controversy

about the Epistles of Ignatius, a statement which can scarcely be considered well founded, unless you have read Daillé's work, to which Pearson replied, and Larroque's work in reply to Pearson.

"Nothing was said by any of the brethren at the conference, as to what you said in your paper about the Liturgy, and therefore I think it right to remind you, that what you said on that point applied solely to the case of a private person worshipping in the communion of the Episcopal Church, and contained nothing like a defence of what a minister in that Church must do. There is something plausible to be said for Episcopacy, and for the use of *a* Liturgy. Much allowance is to be made for those who have been born and bred in the Church of England; but I must say that I regard it as a very extraordinary thing, that a man of your character, who had officiated with so much acceptance and usefulness as a Presbyterian minister, should, on deliberately examining the subject, be able to make up his mind to the prospect of habitually using, *as a minister*, the baptismal and burial services in the Book of Common Prayer.

"There is only another point to which I mean to advert; and I confess that it was this that first suggested to me the idea of writing to you at all, viz., the statements contained in your paper about the reformers, and Calvin, and Beza, and Knox. I intended to have adverted to them at the time, but I forgot. You said, in substance, that the reformers laid aside Episcopacy, and introduced Presbytery *from necessity*. Now, I am aware that almost all Episcopalian controversialists, galled at the fact that almost all the Churches of the Reformation abandoned Episcopacy, have asserted this, but I know also, that they have produced no evidence of its truth, that it is unquestionably false, and that its falsehood has been often demonstrated by Presbyterian writers. If you wish to see a proof of its utter falsehood *by an Episcopalian*, you will find it in 'Brett's Divine Right of Episcopacy,' pp. 123–144.

"You gave a pretended quotation from Calvin and another from Beza, which have often been produced by Episcopalian controversialists, and as often proved by Presbyterians to have been dishonestly garbled and perverted. Of course, I do not mean to

charge you with dishonesty in the use of them, for I presume you just copied them from some Episcopalian author, but you must allow me to say, that it was not very creditable to you to produce such quotations without having ascertained their accuracy and relevancy, and that you must be very ignorant of the controversy if you did not know that Presbyterian writers have often alleged, and, as I think, proved, that the use that has so often been made by Episcopalians of these extracts, and of some others of a similar kind from Calvin and Beza, was unwarranted and unfair. If you had been familiar even with the 'Plea for Presbytery,' which, I think, you said you had read, you would not have taken Episcopalian extracts from Calvin and Beza upon trust.

"Your statement about the superintendents was to this effect, that learned Episcopalians had openly asserted that, in defending Episcopacy, they asked for nothing more than such functionaries as the superintendent. It is true that this statement has been made; but it is also true, that the man must be very grossly ignorant, either of the Church of Scotland, or of the fundamental principles of Episcopacy, who believes it, as you seem to do. The unquestionable liability of the superintendents to be censured and deposed by Synods and General Assemblies, is plainly inconsistent with Episcopal notions of the standing and jurisdiction of bishops, as a distinct and higher order of pastors. This is frankly admitted by Sage in his 'Fundamental Charter of Presbytery.' The Episcopalian writers who made the statement you referred to, asserted what they must have known to be false. You adopted it, of course, from ignorance; but an ignorance which, I must again say, was very gross and very discreditable in one who had resolved to take so important a step.

"These statements about the Reformers of the Continent and of our own country, I think you are called upon to retract, and to make your retractation known to those to whom you addressed them,—I mean the members of the Tolbooth Session; and if this is not done, I shall probably consider it a duty which I owe to the cause of truth to take some opportunity of exposing them.

"I have, probably, spoken rather more plainly than may be

agreeable to you; but I do not feel that I have said anything inconsistent with the respect and esteem which I really cherish for your character, or anything more than the interests of truth warranted and required.

"Nothing would give me more pleasure than to learn, that a more full and impartial study of the subject of Church government had convinced you that it was your duty to remain in that Church in which you have been so long an honoured and useful pastor. With best wishes for your happiness and comfort, I remain, my dear Sir, sincerely yours,

"WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *TRAITS OF CHARACTER.*

EARLY in 1842 a meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was called to take into consideration the alarming and critical position of the Church of Scotland; for our generous-hearted Irish brethren were always full of sympathy with our cause. Dr Buchanan and Mr Cunningham were sent to be present at the meeting of Assembly. Some time before this, the Moderates had transmitted to Government a party manifesto, or "Memorial," as they called it, signed in their name by Dr Cook. They had the assurance to send a copy of this memorial to the Irish Assembly. Several of the Irish brethren alluded in their speeches to this document in terms of unmeasured reprehension.

Mr Cunningham also referred to it, perhaps with all the more acerbity that he was suffering from bodily indisposition at the time. At all events, his words were certainly unguarded. "They have the audacity to say in this memorial that this is the first time that these principles of non-intrusion and spiritual independence have been mooted in the Church of Scotland. Every one who has the slightest knowledge of the ecclesiastical history of Scotland must know that this assertion is scandalously untrue. Dr Cook, who signs this memorial, knows the assertion to be untrue, and I could get materials from his own History of the Church to prove this. At the same time, it is but right to mention that it is understood that, though Dr Cook signs, he did not write this memorial. It is said to be written by a young advocate in Edinburgh, who has published some other articles on the same subject, especially in

*Blackwood's Magazine*—articles characterised by the same gross ignorance and reckless mendacity which characterise this memorial. Still, though written by this young gentleman, Dr Cook is responsible for its contents, and may perhaps be called upon to account for some of them."*

Mr Cunningham had not returned home more than a few days, when he received a lawyer's letter on the part of Dr Cook, intimating that legal proceedings would be commenced against him on the ground of his speech. A similar intimation was made on the part of Mr John Inglis, the young advocate alluded to (now Lord President of the Court of Session), who laid his damages at £1000. Mr Cunningham put himself into the hands of a legal friend, Mr Robert Johnstone; and by his advice published a retractation and apology to Dr Cook, and a retractation and apology to Mr John Inglis. The threatened actions were of course dropped. But though Cunningham had published apologies enough to satisfy the lawyers, his own conscience exacted further satisfaction.

About a week afterwards there was a great Anti-Patronage meeting held in Edinburgh. The Lord Provost of the city presided, and the foremost orators of the Church were there to take part. Never did Cunningham get a more enthusiastic reception than he did that night. In the course of his speech he said:—

"Now, I have another matter to advert to, as connected with the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. You have all heard before, that to the late meeting of the Irish Assembly our friends of the minority sent a memorial embodying their views. You are probably also aware that on that occasion I adverted to that memorial, and to some of the statements which it contained. You are

* About this time *Blackwood's Magazine* contained such statements as the following:—

"The contest between the fanatical, or non-intrusion party of the Scottish Church, as they style themselves, is the same at bottom with that in which Henry II. was so long engaged with the Church of Rome, and for which Thomas a-Becket was slain on the steps of the high altar of Canterbury Cathedral."

"We can see no difference whatever between the measures advocated by the Scotch Non-Intrusionists, and those which were supported by the French Jacobins, and which are now contended for by the Chartists of England."

aware that on that occasion I specifically and decidedly denied the accuracy of some of the historical statements which that memorial contains, and the soundness of the principles which it embodies. I did that, as I was entitled to do. I do it still, and I intend to continue to do it on every occasion when I am called to discuss that memorial.

"At the same time, it is right I should say, and I say it with deep humility, that in discussing that memorial, and in controverting, as I was entitled to do, the accuracy of its statements and the soundness of its principles, I am bound to confess, as I do now confess, that I was led by the impulse of the moment to give way too much to the spirit of indignation which the memorial had excited in my breast, and to make rash and unwarrantable statements, throwing personal imputations on two individuals.

"I did do so. I certainly did not deliberately intend to make personal imputations upon these men; but on the impulse of the moment I let slip words which bore fairly that construction. I did not mean to assert or to insinuate that the authors of the memorial were guilty of infidelity or falsehood; but unfortunately, on the impulse of the moment, I allowed words to escape me which I now see fairly bore that construction. It becomes, therefore, my undoubted and imperative duty to retract that statement, and to apologise to these gentlemen. That duty I now discharge.

"It becomes me undoubtedly to cherish a deep feeling of humility in confessing this infirmity which I then manifested; and what is more, to derive from this matter the useful lesson which it is fitted and intended to teach. When a great, and important, and exciting controversy is raging, we are very apt to mix up feelings of carnal anger with the zeal with which we ought to promote the cause of truth; and in this way we are tempted to make statements which may fairly be held to infringe upon that love which is the fulfilling of the law, and are led to overlook and to disregard the spirit and the import of that injunction of our Lord and Master: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'"

This apology, at least, was no impulse of the moment; for in the note-book then in use, and which contains the embryo of so many

grand and noble orations, the preparation for the apology is still to be seen. The *Witness*, in reporting the meeting, said: "For Mr Cunningham we cherish a profounder respect than ever." The feeling was one in which, despite the violence of controversy, not a few even of his opponents shared. A portion of the press, indeed, triumphed over him with coarse exultation. A staring caricature, representing him on his knees before Mr Inglis, ruefully beseeching mercy, kept its place in the shop-windows for some weeks. Cunningham smiled his quiet smile, and kept his tranquillity. He had the happy temperament, that when he had done all he should, or all he could, the matter, whatever it was, ceased to dwell in his thoughts. All the excitement, anxiety, perplexity, and responsibility of the Disruption period never robbed him of an hour's rest. He had quite a Duke of Wellington's faculty of going quietly to sleep when duty was done.

For the rest, he always shewed a singular readiness to apologise for words used by him in the heat of controversy, but which were not justified in the severe review of his own conscience. And he was always a solemnly self-judging man. Some time before the affair now narrated, he was in the house of a clerical friend connected with the Highlands, and in the course of conversation was led to ask about a northern minister once conspicuous on the Evangelical side, but who had now left it. "How do you account for that?" said Cunningham. "What can be the reason?" "Vanity," replied the other; "the lairds got about him, and flattered him." "Yes, I understand," answered he quietly; "that does account for it." He was then silent for a minute, and seemed to be engaged in prayer, after which he added with great emphasis: "Mr ——, there is no principle in our nature that we ought more to watch and pray against than vanity. I believe that there is no principle in our nature which, if indulged, will sooner turn a man into a scoundrel."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *THE LAST YEAR OF THE UNBROKEN CHURCH.*

#### ASSEMBLY OF 1842—THE CLAIM OF RIGHT.

NEHEMIAH of old, in his night ride about Jerusalem, saw a dreary sight. Between him and the sky stretched the dim length of the broken wall, with many a breach wide gaping. The streets were blocked with mounds of ruin. The burnt remnants hanging to shattered arches shewed where gates had been.

The Church of Scotland had come to be a dreary sight too. She had implicitly believed in her own freedom and independence. She had trusted in her gates and bars, her protecting wall of civil statutes. But now her gates had been forced, her walls riven with many a breach. Jerusalem was become heaps. Jerusalem which was builded as a city compact together.

The invading power had left her scarcely a shred of freedom. The civil court had asserted its power of prohibiting any part of the Church's procedure. "Interdicts" were brought to bear at every point. Without incurring the liability to civil pains and penalties, the Church could carry out neither her government nor her discipline. Her own ministers, who had sworn at their ordination to obey her in her own department, could not keep their oath without exposing themselves to heavy damages. Her sentences were pronounced null and void by the civil court. The preaching of the Gospel was interdicted in a whole district of country. A minister found guilty of theft was protected by interdict. The trial of another minister on a charge of fraud was forbidden by interdict. The very constitution of the Church courts was assailed by interdict, the Court of Session claiming the right to say who might, and who

might not sit in them. The Chapel ministers, about two hundred in number, had been admitted as members of Church courts by a decision of the Assembly of 1834, but now their admission was declared by the Court of Session to be illegal, and their presence was held to vitiate the acts of the Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly in which they sat.

The reforming party presented a firm front to their difficulties, though now fully alive to the perils which threatened them. They did all their work with formal exactness. Lord Nelson, in the battle of the Baltic, refused a wafer and called for wax to seal his letter with due deliberation. Deliberately the Assembly of 1842 went on to exercise discipline on those ministers who had defied its authority. Firmly and calmly they stood to their rights. And they did not abate one jot of their efforts in the mission fields at home and abroad.

Things, however, could not go on much longer as they were. Cherishing a deep value for their position as an Established Church, they were fully aware that only one thing could now save it. A servant of the State had browbeaten them, but none of the violence which they had suffered had been directly the work of the State itself. They might carry their complaint of the grievous and harassing wrongs done them to the feet of the Legislature, where they might possibly get redress.

They stated their whole case in the document known as the Church of Scotland's Claim of Right, which was drawn up with singular ability by Mr Dunlop. It set forth historically the true position of the Church of Scotland, with the jurisdiction and privileges she had always claimed, which had been ratified by Acts of Parliament, recognised and confirmed by the Treaty of Union between Scotland and England, and which every Sovereign of this country swears to maintain. It described the unconstitutional inroads upon her government and discipline recently made by the Court of Session, and claimed the protection of the Legislature against such encroachments. It re-asserted the principles of spiritual independence and non-intrusion, as principles which she must maintain at all hazards, and called upon all the members of the Church to stand

by each other in maintaining them. It protested that if, through the refusal of their just demands, they should be compelled to relinquish the secular benefits conferred by the State, they were not to be held as renouncing the right to claim these benefits on the terms on which they were originally secured to them; but it called all Christians throughout the world to witness that they would rather forego the advantages of an Establishment than disown the Headship of Christ, or betray the liberties of His people. The Assembly adopted this solemn appeal to the Legislature by a majority of 241 to 110.

### PATRONAGE.

Within the Church of Scotland there has been from the Reformation downwards, a more or less sustained struggle against Patronage, that system abhorred by every true Presbyterian Scot. From the year 1712—the year when Patronage was reinforced for the purpose of disgusting the Scottish people with their Church—down to the year 1784, the Assembly annually made it an instruction to its Commission to apply for redress of the grievance of Patronage. The Assembly kept up this annual form long after it had ceased to think Patronage a grievance. The last decided public effort to procure redress was made in 1735, when a deputation was sent to London to renew the application for repeal of the Act. A bill for the purpose was actually framed by the Lord Advocate of the day, Duncan Forbes of Culloden; but meeting with small and cold support, it was withdrawn. In 1784, the Moderates, under the leadership of Dr Hill, dropped the annual instruction to the Commission against Patronage, and thought the matter was settled for ever.

A reforming generation arose. The Church retraced every step of her defection in doctrine and practice. One thing only was wanting to complete her testimony as a reforming Church. She had not yet condemned the system of Patronage. The progress of the clerical mind upon that subject was slow. In 1833, the Anti-Patronage men could muster only 33 votes in the General Assembly.

In 1837, when Cunningham made a great speech, already described, the minority had grown to 96. In 1841 they numbered 133, being only six votes below the majority. The clergy followed reluctantly the national opinion on this subject. Very slowly they came to see that lay Patronage in the Church was the source of all their troubles. But in 1842 this had become very clear. The minority of 33 had grown into a majority of 215, outnumbering their opponents by 69.

Cunningham made the Anti-Patronage motion of 1842:—"That the General Assembly, having considered the overtures and petitions against Patronage, resolve and declare that Patronage is a grievance, has been attended with much injury to the cause of true religion in this Church and kingdom, is the main cause of the difficulties in which the Church is at present involved, and that it ought to be abolished." The speech in which he supported this motion was magnificent. Makgill Crichton, in his hearty, outspoken way, exclaimed, "I cannot help expressing the unmingled delight which I feel. Mr Cunningham, who has all his life been a champion of the principle of the election of pastors by the Christian people, has opened this debate with a power which cannot be surpassed, if it can possibly be equalled, in this house."

Stewart of Cromarty, a rare genius, who lived and died in a remote corner of the land, used to say: "Cunningham gives me the idea of one of those mighty steamers on the Clyde, to which all the craft in the river pay homage by getting out of their way." The homage of getting out of his way was very fully paid to him in this debate. The opposition did not venture to do more than move that it was "inexpedient in present circumstances to seek the abolition of Patronage." Their battle was weak. Robertson of Ellon declared that he "did not think the arguments of Mr Cunningham had been answered." His own attempt to answer them was a palpable sophistry. Dr Chalmers stepped over upon Anti-Patronage ground. "We have been shut up to this, that there is no conclusive and comfortable settlement but in the utter extinction of Patronage." Many more had been forced to the same conviction, in spite of strong leanings the other way.

A mummy, they say, is swathed in linen rolls, hundreds of yards long. Every old abuse is sure to have as intricate a swaddling. Patronage was defended that day as ancient, natural, expedient, safe, beneficial. Cunningham, with his clear insight, went directly to the heart of the matter. The real question before me, he said, is, How ought pastors to be appointed to Christian congregations? What are pastors? Pastors are men appointed to the care of souls, and to administer the laws of Christ's visible kingdom. We must seek information as to the mode of their appointment from the same source from which they derive their authority for executing the functions committed to them, that is, from the Scripture, and nowhere else. As they are appointed to conduct and administer the affairs of a free and independent society, their appointment should not be determined or controlled by any foreign authority—by any authority beyond the society itself. Surely it is manifest that an authority which is purely civil, which rests exclusively on human law, and which is based on secular and worldly considerations, must be foreign and alien to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To these views the Church of Christ everywhere must come—is visibly coming—and has made palpable progress since the year 1842. She will perfectly adopt them in that day when she fully understands her own spirituality.

The note-book which Cunningham held in his hand in the Anti-Patronage debate is excessively blurred and blotted at this speech, indicative to me—remembering that day—of the enormously crowded house, and the overwhelming heat. The little book, still stained with the sweat of that great battle, is a curious memorial of the Anti-Patronage debate of 1842.

### THE ELDERSHIP.

Another matter on which his heart was greatly set, was settled in that Assembly. He had long laboured in conjunction with Mr Dunlop at the renovation of the elder's office in the Church of Scotland. The Presbyterian eldership is a noble institution, when

the office is filled by men who fear God. Under Moderatism it had been allowed to fall into uselessness and contempt. Many parishes had no elder, and in many more, the elder was the mere creature and tool of the minister. Cunningham was fully satisfied that the office could not be restored, unless the election to it was put into the hands of Church members. Then, when elders should be elected by their own people among whom they dwelt, it might be hoped that right men would be called to the office. Then the whole ideal of an eldership might be realised. A small number of the gravest and the best in each congregation, associated with the minister as his council—each elder having twenty or thirty families allotted to his care, whom he visits in health, in sickness, or in sorrow, and to whom his relation is almost paternal —an unequalled machinery for the spiritual oversight of a people. Eight years before, Dunlop and Cunningham had begun to labour in this direction, but it was not till the Assembly of 1842 that they had the pleasure of seeing an Act passed by which election to the eldership was put into the hands of the people.

## MINISTERIAL COMMUNION.

In the most melancholy time of the Church of Scotland, a very few years after the Assembly had declared that they would take no part in the blessed work of spreading the gospel among the heathen, there had been a law passed which isolated the Scottish pulpit from all the world. It prohibited every minister of the Church of Scotland from employing any minister of another church to preach in his pulpit. It was directed mainly against the labours of men who had been eminently blessed of God, such as the Haldanes, and Simeon of Cambridge; and the motive of it was nothing else than a hatred to the cause of evangelical truth. The last Assembly of the unbroken Church has the credit of having abolished this narrow and illiberal restriction. Cunningham proposed its repeal. "It would tend indirectly," he said, "but yet speedily and certainly, to a much more thorough and

complete amalgamation of the various Presbyterian bodies in Scotland."

Thus far he looked before him. This way it works, beyond question. Amalgamation is coming—though hindered as yet by an idiosyncrasy peculiar to Scotland. In the receiver of an air-pump, a guinea and a feather weigh alike. In our Scottish minds, all principles are alike weighty. We are not always discriminating in our loyalty.

### LITERARY LABOURS.

The Wodrow Society was a well known undertaking of the literary antiquarian sort. It may be said to have originated in two separate causes. The first was the revival of a spirit of literary antiquarianism, indicated by the institution of the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs. Certain persons who took an interest in the antiquities of our Scottish Church, thought it desirable to have a Society, formed on a similar, but more popular basis, for the purpose of publishing historical and ecclesiastical works of our Reformers, which had been preserved in manuscript or concealed in rare publications. The first idea of such a Society was suggested by Dr David Laing of the Signet Library in Edinburgh,—that rare antiquarian, learned, modest, and ever-obliging, who has guided the spades of so many diggers.

Along with this, however, a deep and wide-spread interest in the history of the Church, her men, her principles, and her struggles, was awakened by the controversy that had waxed so hot. The frequent references made by the contending parties to the standards and documents of the Scottish Church at this time, inspired many with a curiosity to know something of the original works to which the disputants appealed. Thus, curiously enough, the antiquarian spirit combined with the popular feeling to give birth to an association embracing persons of all ranks and classes, for the reproduction of works which had lain in obscurity for two or three hundred years. The Society took its name from old Robert Wodrow, whose MS. collections deposited in the Advocates' Library, furnished the quarry from which much of the materials were drawn.

The leaders of the reforming party in the Church naturally took a prominent part in forming the Society, and in guiding its operations. The working committee consisted of three: Thomas Maitland (afterwards Lord Dundrennan), the younger M'Crie, and Cunningham. Maitland was an accomplished antiquarian. M'Crie is unsurpassed by any writer of the present day in his knowledge of the facts connected with the ecclesiastical history of his own country. And, as was remarked by the *Witness* at the time, "for a minute and thorough acquaintance with the history of religious opinion as developed in the controversies in which the Churches of Britain and the Continent have been engaged, Mr Cunningham takes precedence of, perhaps, every living Scotsman."

In the Committee, Mr Cunningham was specially active and influential. The success of the Society was remarkable. Merchants, artizans, and servant girls were among the subscribers, getting four bulky volumes for their guinea. By and bye, however, they discovered that they were getting more books than they could read, or even find accommodation for. Remembering the racy stories which historians had gathered painfully out of the old manuscripts, they seem to have anticipated a perfect feast. The consequence may be imagined. M'Crie expressed to Cunningham one day his fears that the numerous subscribers to the Society would find themselves disappointed with the books put into their hands. Cunningham quite agreed, but added with a significant smile, "It is a great matter that we have got them *printed* at any rate." And so it was. Many valuable works which might have crumbled into oblivion with the mouldering manuscripts from which they were transferred, had been made imperishable, and the rich, quaint literature of the old Church of Scotland made accessible to all.

Cunningham edited one of the volumes of the series. The Sermons and Life of Robert Bruce. Bruce was a minister at Edinburgh in the time of James VI.—a man of majestic presence and powerful speech, possessing such weight in that rude age, that he kept the peace of the kingdom as it had never been kept before, all the time of the king's absence, when he went to bring home his queen from Denmark. During the long reign of James, there was

one half year of good government, and that was when the king was out of the kingdom. Before setting off, he made Mr Bruce a Privy Councillor, relying, he said, on him above all his nobles for maintaining the peace of the realm; which was one wise thing that he did, if he never did another.

Bruce took a great part, along with the famous Andrew Melville, in the important struggle which the Church of Scotland carried on with James VI. in defence of her rights and liberties.

Cunningham did his editorial work on the volume of his Life and Sermons in the autumn and winter of 1842, in such snatches of time as that anxious year allowed. Nothing could have been more appropriate. Bruce was instrumental, more than any other man, in bringing about that Act of Parliament in the year 1592 which has been called the Charter of privileges of the Church of Scotland, and which was so often quoted and discussed in the non-intrusion controversy. Bruce's life, for thirty years and more, was little else than one long struggle, with banishments and jeopardies of the axe, against kingly encroachments on the liberty of the pulpit and the freedom of the Church. Once he was sent for by Chancellor Seaton, who conveyed to him the king's express order to preach no more. The Chancellor was friendly, and held out some sort of hope of relaxation, if he would only desist for nine or ten days. Bruce consented to this, thinking it but of small moment for so short a time. "But he quickly knew how deep the smallest deviation from his Master's cause and interest might go into the devoted heart; for that night, as he himself afterwards declared, his body was cast into a fever, and he felt such terror of conscience as made him resolve to obey such commands no more." The brave, tender soul! A king's wrath could not move him, but when he thought that he had obeyed man rather than God, "his body was cast into a fever." Such were the men to whom we owe our liberty. Were the men who in our day drank deep into their spirit, men likely to retract?

As editor of Bruce's Sermons, Cunningham's task was laborious. He bestowed upon them a very great amount of care and pains. They are "curious as specimens of composition in the Scottish

language, within a few years of the time when it was generally laid aside by our writers." But the original Scottish edition, from which the Wodrow edition is a reprint, is perfectly lawless in the matter of spelling. Cunningham wrought out a spelling reformation with his own hand all through the book.

In the autumn of 1842, the College of Princeton conferred on him the degree of Doctor in Divinity. None of our Scotch Colleges had liberality of mind enough to do themselves that honour. In Lord Cockburn's early days, the Scotch banks were all Tory, and would by no means discount a Whig bill. A Scotch College in Disruption times would have stood aghast at a proposal to grant a degree to a leader of the popular party. Princeton College stepped in and did it. "Distance of space is equal to distance of time"—not quite, but nearly. A man conspicuous to his contemporaries across an ocean, will probably be seen by posterity too. It seems there are 250 degree-granting colleges in the United States, but there is only one Princeton. Dr Cunningham's degree, all things considered, was a thing to be valued as a high and honourable encouragement.

Dr James Cannahan was president at Princeton then. A simple letter under his hand conveyed the degree, without the formality of wax and parchment:—"In consideration of your attainments in sacred literature and theological science, and also of your distinguished labours in the cause of Truth and Righteousness, the Trustees of the College of New Jersey have conferred on you the Degree of Doctor in Divinity."

With his strong liking for academic ways, Cunningham desired to have the old formal diploma. He wrote to Dr Cannahan expressing that wish, and the diploma duly engrossed on parchment was sent accordingly. The total expenses (fees there were none) came to four and a quarter dollars. This was the only degree that he ever had.

### THE CONVOCATION.

The Queen's first visit to Scotland took place in the summer of 1842, and warmed the loyalty of her northern subjects into a

paroxysm which overtopped for a time the all-absorbing Church question. When George IV. was in Scotland twenty years before, he attended public worship in the Established Church. Queen Victoria was expected to do the same, but she did not. The nation felt hurt, and the reforming party in the Church understood it to be meant as a public censure upon them, and were indignant at the ministry who had put their sovereign to such a use.

Of old, our criminal judges could order culprits to be pressed to death under tons of cold iron. Heavy weights of another kind had been laid on the Church of Scotland. The pressure was fast growing greater than she could bear. One addition more made it beyond bearing.

A second Auchterarder case had been running its course through the courts of law, Robert Young, or Robert Young's manipulator, sought to obtain a decree ordaining the Presbytery to examine him as preparatory to his ordination, and sustaining his claim for damages in the event of their refusal. The amount claimed was £10,000. Robert Young gained his suit both in the Court of Session and in the House of Lords. Lyndhurst was the Lord Chancellor of the day, and with him were Lords Cottenham, Brougham, and Campbell.

"It is a striking and significant fact," says Buchanan in his "Ten Years' Conflict," "that from one end to the other of their judicial opinions, there is not to be found so much as one solitary reference to those laws by which the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of Scotland is declared and ratified, nor one single precedent adduced from the history of the Church of Scotland, to support the doctrine which this decision laid down."

This decision came in August. The important point was now conclusively settled, that the courts of the Church were liable to be coerced by the pains and penalties of law in the performance of their spiritual duties. Judge-made law had made a great stride since the first Auchterarder decision. Our fathers died rather than submit to the civil supremacy in the things of Christ. Was it now to be submitted to? Between the alternatives of sin and suffering there was not a moment's hesitation. With a kind of solemn

promptitude, measures were taken to prepare for the inevitable sacrifice.

A convocation of ministers was first held, for a full and calm conference over the whole matter. The Evangelical party were there to a man—nothing short of physical impossibility hindering. A public contribution met their travelling expenses, and the citizens of Edinburgh threw open their houses to entertain them.

The convocation met in a small church in an obscure street in Edinburgh, the church of which Dr James Hamilton was once the pastor. Sweeter light never burned under a bushel. Four hundred and sixty-five ministers met there in the gloom of November, amid mean surroundings, to do a thing which made the mean locality memorable for evermore. The minute-book which records their proceedings still remains, and one handles it reverently, but not without disappointment. No meeting of road trustees ever minuted their proceedings more drily.*

Two series of resolutions were adopted by the convocation. The first series set forth, that the recent decisions of the Civil Courts involved on their part a claim of supremacy over the courts of the Established Church in the exercise of their spiritual functions; a claim which was at once subversive of the constitution of the Church, and repugnant to her principles and to the consciences of her office-bearers.

The second series of resolutions declares, that while the Church solemnly protests against the invasion of her jurisdiction by the Civil Court, as contrary to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the constitution of this kingdom, she cannot resist the supreme power of the State otherwise than by remonstrance and warning; that she recognises the right of the State to decide on its own responsibility on what terms it will continue to her its countenance and support, but that if, by refusing to relieve her from the interference of the civil courts, the State shall sanction that interference in matters spiritual as a condition of her establishment, then it must be her duty, "and, consequently, in dependence on the grace of God, it is the determination of the brethren now

* A natural remark in the circumstances. But minutes ought to be dry.—R.

assembled,—if no measure such as they have declared to be indispensable be granted,—to tender the resignation of those civil advantages which they can no longer hold in consistency with the free and full exercise of their spiritual functions, and to cast themselves on such provision as God in his providence may afford."

It was agreed to embody these resolutions in a last solemn appeal to the Government, setting forth the peril of the Established Church, the impossibility of longer postponing a settlement of her claims, and the pain with which they contemplated an inevitable separation from the State, should no remedy be provided.

The ministers came up to the convocation in heaviness of spirit. But it was remarked that they went home light and jubilant, like men from whom a great load had been lifted. And so it was, for they had come up burdened with doubt as to the course of duty. Now they saw the path of duty clear; and what does a true man want more to make him glad?

The convocation closed its deliberations on the 24th of November. On the 5th December Dr Cunningham met with his congregation, and addressed them on the position of the Church. With characteristic clearness and force of statement he sketched the course which the Church had pursued, and the principles by which she had been guided, in the long conflict now so nearly over. Sweeping away the irrelevant matters by which the question had been perplexed and obscured, the conduct of the Church had been simply this: looking at her duty in the settling of ministers in the light of God's Word, and as recognised by the State itself when it ratified the constitution of the Church as part of the law of the land, she felt that she was not at liberty to intrude unacceptable ministers on unwilling congregations. The Court of Session, in seeking by its decrees to compel her to do this, was not only doing what was wrong in itself, but was stepping beyond its own legitimate province.

He alluded to the extraordinary and unwarrantable power assumed by the Court of Session; how, by one decree after another, it had asserted an absolute control over the whole judicial powers of the Church in her government and discipline, to the extent

even of suspending or cancelling her sentences against the drunken and disorderly. It had thus set itself above all the ecclesiastical courts, and claimed for itself the powers of a court of last resort in ecclesiastical questions.

All this being a direct encroachment upon the liberty with which Christ has made his Church free, and involving a virtual denial of his Headship over her, she was bound, from a regard to His honour, to oppose at whatever hazard. It was upon this ground that the convocation of her ministers had resolved, that if the legislature—whose prerogative alone it was to determine the conditions upon which the Church was to enjoy a State endowment—should either reject or disregard the appeal of the Church on the subject of her inherent rights as a church of Christ, they must renounce their connection with the State, and forfeit the benefits of an Established Church, rather than the character of a church of Christ.

The Church was bound to acknowledge the right of the State to determine, in the exercise of its own legitimate power and upon its own responsibility, the conditions upon which it would confer upon a church the benefits of a national establishment. The right, after this, to insist upon the civil power to do its duty in the matter, lies with the nation, to whom the legislature stands in a different relation. If the nation was contented to accept of such a Church Establishment as the Court of Session might choose to allow it, there was an end of the controversy.

In reference to the assertion so often made, that an Established Church must necessarily be fettered with conditions of the State's imposing, he admitted that for the most part churches had been so established. The Church of Scotland, indeed, formed the only exception to this rule. If she were defeated in her present endeavours to maintain her independent privileges as an Established Church of Christ, the world would present the dismal spectacle of being entirely destitute of a scriptural Establishment.

He then alluded to the strong and inveterate hostility which prevailed among many of the higher classes to the principle of a Free State Church, in which the Headship of Jesus Christ should

be fully recognised. The propagation of pure and undefiled religion is not altogether dependent upon the establishment of the Church by the State. It would be the duty of the Church, if deprived of State countenance and support, just to go on in the faithful discharge of her duty to her great Head without such aid, encouraged by the assurance that He would still continue to bless her, and to make her an instrument in advancing the cause of truth and godliness in the land. Such was the tenor of his address to his congregation in that season of painful suspense. There were many such addresses.

Mr George Henderson of Newholm gives the following account of a day spent with Dr Cunningham when they were endeavouring to prepare the country for the coming event. It will give some idea of the toils of that time. Newholm lies on the banks of the Nith, opposite to the ruins of "sweet Lincluden":—

"In January 1843 a deputation consisting of Dr Cunningham and the Rev. Wm. Chalmers, then of Dailly, visited Dumfries and the parishes in our Presbytery. After the deputation had addressed meetings in the town of Dumfries, arrangements were entered into for holding meetings in all the parishes and villages around. A friend started off with Mr Chalmers in his gig, and it fell to me to accompany Dr Cunningham.

"It was a cold, frosty, winter morning, and the ground was covered with snow. When we started, Dr Cunningham was rather downcast. He had just received a letter informing him of a disaster which had befallen Dr Candlish, in the upsetting of a boat in Largo Bay, by which he very narrowly escaped being drowned. I was afterwards told by one who was present when he received this letter, that when reading it, he shed tears like a child.

"After travelling three miles, we came to the village of Locherbriggs, where the first meeting for that day was to be held in a barn. We waited in the cottage of a mason till the people gathered. As we sat in the cottage, Dr Cunningham conversed with the family. His gentle frankness put them all at ease. Before leaving, he engaged in prayer, and I remember the impression of that prayer still. Before that day I had seen him only as

he could be seen by outsiders, and looked upon him merely as a great fighting man, to be approached not without fear. I was astonished to find him so humble and so gentle.

"The meeting was held, and we then drove off three miles farther to the largest village in Tinwald parish, where our second meeting was to be held in the parish school. We found the place of meeting quite filled with people. Dr Cunningham delivered another long address here, after which we set out for the place where the third meeting was to be held, in the parish of Kirkmahoe. On the highway, it being now afternoon, we partook of some refreshments, with which my worthy mother had provisioned the gig, knowing that friends in those parishes were then few and far between.

"Our third meeting was to be held in the old Cameronian Church in the upper part of the parish. Here there was some delay, for the door of the old church was locked, and an enemy had run off with the key. However, we got a boy, who, with help, crept through a broken pane in one of the windows, and undid a door from within. Admittance was thus obtained, and the meeting held.

"There was yet a fourth place to be visited. The village beside the Parish Church. We had considerable difficulty in getting a place for a meeting. The people were unwilling to give accommodation, lest they should offend their minister, who was of the Moderate school, and a bitter *bodie*. After trying several places, we at last got leave to hold the meeting in the barn of an adjoining farm. Notice was sent round to the people of the village. Meanwhile, we called at a small inn, the only one in the parish, and asked the landlady to give us tea. She seemed quite willing. It was dark by this time, and she had not suspected who her customers were. But when we got more within the range of the light, she guessed at once, from Dr Cunningham's clerical dress, I suppose. She at once vehemently declared that she could give us no tea, and that her house was full. Turned out from the inn, we went to the farm-house where the meeting was to be held. The family were absent, and the only accommodation we had was in the

kitchen. We warmed ourselves at a blazing peat-fire, and Dr Cunningham held a *crack* with the servants till the people had gathered into the barn.

"Dr Cunningham having addressed the meeting, we left, and drove back to Dumfries, where we arrived about eight o'clock. He had been engaged for more than ten hours, and had addressed four meetings. With the exception of the short time in the mason's cottage in the morning, and the short time in the farm-house in the evening, he had been engaged either in addressing meetings, or driving in an open gig throughout the whole day, and had no refreshment of any kind, except what he partook of on the public road, standing on the snow. I heard not a single murmur from his lips against either Moderate ministers, lairds, or farmers. The deputation continued their labours in this district for a fortnight or more, and the result abides to this day."

## CHAPTER XV.

### *THE DISRUPTION.*

THE day came which rent the Church of Scotland in twain, never more to be united as an Establishment. An oak tree split by lightning does not re-unite. The Protest of the Evangelical party was read in the General Assembly. Dr Welsh left the chair, and made his parting reverence to the Royal Commissioner. "Come away now," said Dr Chalmers to the elder sitting next him,—remembered, in that exciting time, as conveying, by its perfectly common-place character, the truth, that nothing more remained to be done or said. The whole "left" streamed out, into the crowded streets, and to the great bare hall prepared for them,—out into a new social position, with relations, responsibilities, dangers—all new.

"The manses of Scotland are pleasant houses—always so beautifully situated,—now on the brink of the mountain stream singing its wild way through the woods,—now in the centre of rich orchards and fruitful fields,—now on sunny braes overlooking the whole parish prostrate in its loveliness at their feet,—and now surrounded and shadowed by broad old oaks and tall black pine trees." Pleasant houses they are, and leaving them could not be a light trial. But strength was given when the time came.

It is a shallow mistake to think that our great separation turned merely upon a question of Church government. However true it be that the Scotch are remarkably intelligent upon the subject of Church policy, it is just as true that masses of them who left the Establishment knew and cared very little about it. *Their* disruption was upon religious grounds altogether, and had a deeper reason

than they could have told. The Evangelical ministers whose preaching they loved, and whose doctrine fed their souls went out, and they went with them. "Our instincts are truer than our judgments," says a well-known author. Following their religious instincts, our people came out.

Hugh Miller, in his notable letters to Lord Brougham, says: "We have but one Bible and one Confession of Faith in our Scottish Establishment, but we have *two religions* in it; and these, though they bear exactly the same name and speak nearly the same language, are yet fundamentally and vitally different." One might look long enough on the surface without discovering this, but for all that it is a profound truth. The Disruption was the separation of the two religions.

Isaac Taylor, who had studied well the phenomena of Scottish Moderatism, says of it, "The anti-Christianity of Scotland and its non-Christianity was not mere worldliness. It was a distinctly-pronounced scheme, framed for the express purpose of shutting out the Gospel." The religious people of Scotland had found this out as well as the acute Englishman.

The number of the clergy who left the Establishment went far beyond what unfriendly men had ever believed probable. A dozen or two of the most prominent and the most deeply committed might come out, they thought, but the majority would come to their senses when the critical moment arrived. One gentlemanly Moderate known to me and still alive, declared from the pulpit in the public service on a Sabbath day in a populous burgh town, that he would *eat* all the ministers who would come out.

The view of the Disruption now given is not the less true, though it is also true that there were bad people who came out, as well as good people who stayed in. Some of the ministers who came out were bad men, afterwards proved to be so. What the motives were we need not conjecture. The rush of a great movement always carries mixed material with it. But the character of the movement was definite and clear. One of the "religions" came out and the other stayed in.

The simple patience and cheerfulness with which the out-going

ministers bore the hard alteration of their condition was a fine thing to behold. Their up-putting was often poor enough. Country villages seldom have a house to let, and the homeless minister was too glad to get a roof of any kind over his head. But there was sunshine in their poor abodes, and to this day they look back upon that year as the happiest of their lives.

"It's a blessing to be shaken out of your selfishness," said one; and a man shaken out of his selfishness is pretty sure to be light of heart. Dr Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, the originator of Savings' Banks, left a manse which his taste, during forty years, had made a paradise. He took up his abode in a labourer's cottage on the side of the turnpike road from Dumfries to Carlisle. It contained a room, a kitchen, and a bed-closet. Behind it lay a great old quarry with unsightly rubbish mounds and deep pools of water. I saw the fine old gentleman in his roadside cottage about the year 1846. He entertained his company—a few ministers of the neighbourhood—with the polished courtesy of the old school. Dinner over, he said, "Will you go to the drawing-room, gentlemen?" His guests, puzzled where the drawing-room could be, rose and followed him. Opening the back-door of the cottage, "My drawing-room is the great drawing-room of nature," he said. He stepped out, and there was the deserted quarry, its rubbish mounds all planted with spruce and larch, winding paths led among them, a rustic bridge made by his own hands, spanning a strait between two great pools, and the whole huge deformity transformed into beauty by the cleverest landscape gardening. But the same contented cheerfulness dwelt in the poor abode of every Disruption minister.

Some time after the Disruption, a book called "The Wheat and the Chaff" was published by James M'Cosh, editor of the *Dundee Warder*, and a man of keen, vigorous, and shrewd intellect. It is a book dreadful in its severity, though it is simply a classified list of the clergy of the Church of Scotland at the time, calm as the pages of a ledger. The names of the retiring clergy are given without note of any kind. The old Moderates are given in the same way. Both had been consistent to their principles, and there was nothing to say of them. The third class comprises the names of all who had

professed Evangelical principles, but had preferred their places. With them a severe thing is done. They are mercilessly confronted with their own antecedents. Some had preached and printed on behalf of their principles, but could not suffer for them. They had been flaming professors as long as it was quite safe, but gradually hedged when matters became serious. Some had signed the Convocation resolutions, but had not found courage to keep their pledge. One or two came out, and then in an agony of irresolution, went back again to be the derision of their colleagues and the pity of their parishes. It is a miserable picture of poor human nature.

Things were at a white heat in Scotland that summer, and it would have been small wonder if the popular excitement had effervesced in acts of violence. But of violence there was scarcely the shadow. There was indeed some trifling rioting in the Ross-shire Highlands. The people of Logie and Resolis, Free Church almost to a man, were refused a site whereon to build a place of worship for themselves. The narrow-minded proprietor of the soil sternly forbade the people of Resolis to meet for worship in the open air on a piece of waste ground where the gipsies were wont to encamp. The simple-minded people took up the idea that if they were to keep the lairds and their friends out of the Parish Church, the lairds would be glad to give them ground for a Free Church. Accordingly, when the Presbytery of the Established Church met to induct a successor to the outgoing minister, they found a mob lying in leaguer around the Parish Church. A mob always goes further than it intended. The mob at Resolis kirk, after a discharge of stones, drove the Presbytery and their concurrents down the hill with a rush. But the victors lost one of their number, taken prisoner. A woman, guilty of "cheering on the mob," was captured, and carried to Cromarty in a gig, and there lodged in jail. That evening a party of Resolis men entered the town of Cromarty, marched through the streets, and halted in front of the jail. They had come, they said, to bail out the woman. They remained for two full hours urging on the authorities to accept their bail, and release the woman. Finding that their bail was not to be accepted, they rushed upon the prison, broke in the doors, set

the woman free, and bore her back in triumph to Resolis. A detachment of them, in investing the jail, had to make their way through the flower garden of a lady in the neighbourhood. She was looking at them with extreme anxiety, well aware of the mischief into which they were running themselves; but mistaking the cause of her anxiety, they imagined that she was merely alarmed for her flowers. "Ah lady," they said, as they carefully threaded the narrow walks, "dinna be feart for the floors; we winna tramp ane o' them"; and they kept their word. Such were the Ross-shire rioters. Surely never were more gentle-hearted men forced into collision with the law.

The patient endurance manifested throughout Scotland was as remarkable as the unflinching stedfastness of the people. Looking back now, it seems incredible how "the screw" was put on at the Disruption. Dismissing servants, turning out cottars, grinding tenants, ejecting schoolmasters, refusing sites for manses or churches, and a thousand other pitiful things, were common. There is a certain southern parish where the Free Church people gathered from great distances in a thinly-peopled district for public worship. The summer of 1843 was warm and dry, and that congregation found untold comfort in a fine spring of cool, delicious water which issued from a bank by the road side near their place of meeting. This was observed. The proprietor of the soil had a drain dug, and cut off the spring. Such things are remembered still. Sometimes the people retaliated so far as to perpetrate some gentle jokes at the expense of the renegade ministers. One of these near Edinburgh, big-talking, had publicly declared that for his principles he would lay his head on the block as calmly as ever he laid it on his pillow. But when the Free Church ministers left their houses, he sat still in his. Local waggery took its joke. On a summer morning, as the minister stepped out to take his delight in his garden, just before his door there stood an axe and a block. What thoughts he had at sight of the grim pair, he did not divulge.

The headquarters of the famous regiment of Scots Greys were at Ipswich at the time of the Disruption of the Scottish Church.

Before that time the men had been marched to the Parish Church, without asking them whether they had a mind in the matter. The news which they heard from Scotland, however, set many of them a-thinking. They *had* a mind in the matter, and they resolved to call their souls their own. Soldiers get their daily ration of bread in small round loaves, a loaf to every two men. If the two are on good terms they eat their loaf amicably together. If not on good terms, they divide the loaf, and each consumes his half apart. In barrack dialect, they "split the bun." As a portion of the Greys were determined to attend a place of worship more according to their liking than that to which they were wont to be marched, while the rest did not care, they determined to "split the bun." One Sabbath day a number of them refused to go to the Parish Church. The commanding officer stormed, but the men were firm. They would enter the Parish Church neither on that day nor any other day. The thing went to the highest military authorities in the land, and dragged through difficulties enough. But in the end, the Greys were found to be in the right, and the soldiers' freedom of conscience was acknowledged. It had civil consequences too, for the chaplain's allowance was transferred to the Independent minister whom the Greys chose for their pastor.

Had there been a statesman wise enough to concede to the people of Scotland the privilege successfully asserted by the Greys, there would have been no disruption.

### "LOSING HOLD."

No people in the world give a deeper deference to their local aristocracy than the Scotch do. If the aristocrat has reason or sense at all, he can "win them and have them at his will." Both the best and the worst parts of the Scottish character—lofty devotedness and mean servility—come out under the great man's shadow. The great Lord of Buccleuch is held in most worshipful reverence over a wide region of the south of Scotland. In the romantic Border district of Eskdale, the head of that princely house reigns supreme. Dr Cunningham visited this district in November of the Disruption year. The Rev. Mr Hope of Wam-

phray, an Eskdale man himself, intimately acquainted with the feelings of the dalesmen, saw much of him during that visit.

"The celebrated Canobie interdict had just been launched," Mr Hope writes, "and had driven the Free Church congregation from the moss and lands of the Duke of Buccleuch;" in other words, from the whole surface of the parish except the public road. When this extreme step was taken by the proprietor, the "Acting Committee" in Edinburgh requested Dr Cunningham and the venerable Dr Clason to visit the district, and do what they could to encourage the congregation. They preached on the public road on two successive Sabbaths, and in the intervening week held evening meetings, one at Langholm and another in the parish of Half Morton, at one or other of which the Canobie people might attend.

"I have a very vivid recollection of Dr Cunningham's speech at the Langholm meeting," Mr Hope writes. "After explaining the principles of the Free Church, he referred to the refusal of sites. Having mentioned a case, or series of cases, of site refusing in the north, which then attracted much attention, he proceeded very nearly in the following words: 'But we need not go so far as Sutherland for an instance of this form of oppression. Your neighbours in Canobie have been subjected to the same treatment. They too have been refused standing-room on the soil of their native parish for the worship of God. The proprietor of the soil expects that he will thus put down the Free Church cause. But it won't do. The Free Church of Scotland is strong enough to fight the Duke of Buccleuch. We bid him defiance.'

"I shall never forget the effect of these words upon the audience, spoken as they were with a deliberate distinctness which shewed that he weighed every word he uttered, and meant everything he said, and with all the emphasis which Cunningham could give to them. Who could give such emphasis as he? Some held down their heads in fear. Others looked at the speaker with amazement. They had never heard 'the Duke' so handled before. They had never supposed it possible that any mortal man would dare so to handle him, especially in Eskdale. The scene has often reminded me of the incident in the life of the Apostle Paul, when the people

of Melita thought 'that he would have fallen down dead,' but when they saw no harm come to him, 'they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.' When Cunningham was denouncing the conduct of site-refusers, and in his own fearless way, named the great man of the district as a culprit, and when, drawing himself up to his full height, and speaking slowly and deliberately, he bade him defiance, many present held their breath with astonishment, and seemed half to expect that such unheard of audacity could scarcely fail to bring some judgment on the bold declaimer. But when they saw him continue scatheless and unmoved, they changed their mind, and began to cherish thoughts which they had never dared to think before. Then for the first time was lodged in the minds of the people of Canobie the idea that they might possibly make good their position even against 'the Duke,' that the struggle was not hopeless, and the great lord of the soil not omnipotent. I have always looked upon that speech as being in reality the turning-point of the conflict in that district. It might seem, indeed, to be but the commencement of it, but it fixed the resolution of the people to persevere, and in doing so, it virtually determined the issue.

"It would have surprised many, who at certain portions of his speech had listened to him with astonishment, and almost alarm, to have seen him at the fireside in the evening so easy and gentle and full of hilarity."

The Scottish aristocracy, "howbeit they meant not so, neither did their heart think so," surely did a great deal to educate the Scottish people to independence of thought and action. They lost then what they will not soon have to lose again.

Reminiscences like these might be multiplied to any extent. Every locality preserves its own. They may recall to older, and represent to younger, men the social physiognomy of Scotland in those days. The key to all the stir and all the excitement lay simply in the fact, that a great sacrifice for truth had been made,—a great tribute to the supremacy of conscience had been rendered. Men responded to the impulse thus supplied according to their

several dispositions. While all who valued the principles of the Free Church exulted in the moral position which their cause assumed, and others, hitherto cautious or incredulous, were now attracted to the principles by the manifest sincerity of the men, the influence extended far beyond those classes. Thoughtful men, who had not been led to agree with Free Church views, felt, notwithstanding, that religion was strengthened in the whole community, by the proof of integrity on the part of Christian ministers which the Disruption supplied. On the other hand, men of no church and of no religion were manifestly both enraged and appalled. It could be seen even in their faces. It was to them a very unwelcome assertion of the reality of Divine truth, and the obligation to adhere to it at all costs. Few will doubt now that, if the hopes had been fulfilled which were cherished in various quarters, that the Evangelical party would, in the end, sacrifice their professed principles in order to retain their stipends, the effect would have been an almost irretrievable blow to religion in Scotland.

In what spirit and with what convictions the men of the Disruption looked back on the course by which they had been led, and forward to the work before them, may be illustrated by two statements which Dr Cunningham made about this time.

In the Disruption Assembly of the Free Church, a motion was made by the Rev. Dr Macfarlane of Greenock, that a deed of separation be prepared and signed, renouncing all rights to the benefices held by the ministers who adhered to the Free Church. Dr Cunningham addressed the Assembly. In the course of that address he said—

"There is one circumstance which, though certainly very much accidental, has given me some little claim to occupy a portion of your time before the final disruption of the Church is effected; and it is a circumstance to which I cannot refer without feelings of profound humiliation and self-abasement, viz.: that it pleased the Lord, in his sovereignty, to give me, unworthy as I am of any such honour, the honour of taking the first step, and striking the first blow in this battle.

"The first overt act taken in reference to this great controversy was when I had the honour of moving, in the Presbytery of Edinburgh, an overture, after the decision of the Court of Session in the Auchterarder case, to the Assembly, to

adopt a declaration of those principles held by the Church, and which was adopted in the month of May following, on the motion of my friend Dr Buchanan of Glasgow. On that occasion, in the first speech made on this controversy, I stated those great principles for which we have been contending, as to the right of Christ to reign in His own house, as to taking His holy Word as the only rule of ecclesiastical affairs, and as to the exclusive jurisdiction of Christ's office-bearers in the regulation of the affairs of his house.

"Ever since, we have been contending for these great principles, and for none other. We distinctly understood at the time what our principles were,—we have never lost sight of them,—and we have never had much difficulty in the application of them, having a good confidence that they are not only embodied in our standards, but founded on the Word of God, and are the same principles for which our fathers endured so much. We have been enabled, by God's grace, to apply them to the varied circumstances in which we were placed. So full and comprehensive have been our principles, and so easy the application of them, that in the whole controversy I have always felt that we needed, not so much wisdom to decide what ought to be done, as courage and faithfulness in doing it. These were the qualities we most needed; and now, when God has been pleased to make trial of our faith, though we have to lament many exceptions and short-comings, through the weakness of human nature, on account of which we should be humbled before him, we see also much cause to thank God and take courage, rejoicing that he has been pleased to put us in a position where we have been called to contend for such great truths, founded on his own blessed Word.

"It is impossible," he added, "not to feel that this controversy has borne plain traces of being a controversy for divine truth, carried on with the enmity of the world. This must be felt by all who know what scriptural truth is. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Church has produced the enmity which has been raised against her, just because she began to feel that she was a Church of Christ, and was determined to act in that character. . . . We have now no alternative but to abandon our emoluments as ministers of the Established Church. This is a clear matter of principle about which there is no room to doubt; and perhaps there should be less of anxiety and lamentation on the one hand, and of boasting on the other, than we might be inclined sometimes to exhibit. We have been placed in circumstances in which God has been pleased to call us to the discharge of this duty, and we should endeavour to recognise the voice of God,—on the one hand without any boasting, and on the other, without any anxiety,—and just take the course which God has so plainly pointed out to us."

On the 14th of June 1843, Dr Cunningham addressed a great meeting in the City Hall, Glasgow. Here his address took a more prospective character. In the course of it he said:—

"We have left that Establishment,—we do not regret having left it,—and now, though we may require occasionally to refer to such occurrences as these, we feel that it is a more pleasant occupation to direct our thoughts to the position in which God has placed us, and to the obligations under which we lie. It is true that in a certain sense we have been beaten in this controversy: neither have our opponents gained their leading object."

Each side, in fact, had partly succeeded and partly failed. The Moderates, of whose influence in Scotland he gave a withering description, had gained the ascendancy they desired in the Establishment, but failed to gain this in the way of burying and suppressing, in the country generally, the principles they opposed. Their opponents, whose desire had been to secure a "full, vigorous, and efficient Church of Christ,—enjoying the favour of the State if possible, but, if not, without,"—they too had

". . . failed in getting our principles maintained in connection with the State; but then, we have already substantially succeeded in establishing a Church in accordance with the Word of God, based on the great truths revealed in the Scriptures, holding forth the word of truth with regard to the true character and claims of the Lord Jesus, and, therefore, a Church on which we have every reason to expect the divine blessing,—a Church likely to be extensively honoured throughout the length and breadth of the land. God has given us this already. Bright prospects of usefulness are opening up to us; and is this not in substance really all that any man who truly loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is concerned for the salvation of souls, ought to have most concern about,—that there is now a Church in this land, unconnected with the State, and deprived of many external advantages, but possessed of many opportunities of diffusing the knowledge of Christ over the land,—a Church on which we can ask, and confidently expect, that blessing which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow?

"In these circumstances, our sole object should be to realise that position,—to set our faces to the duties that lie before us. Our first duty, in some sense, is to assert and maintain the principles for which we have been contending, and from a regard to which we have sacrificed our connection with the Establishment. These principles are peculiarly committed to our care. They have been the peculiar deposit of the Church of Scotland in every age; and it is a marvellous token of His kindness and compassion, that again, in those latter days, He has honoured the Church of Scotland to contend, as before, for the sole Headship and for the sole and exclusive right of Christ to reign in His own kingdom. These principles we must still hold forth, contending earnestly for them, taking care never to renounce or abjure them, or place ourselves in circumstances that,

on fair and honest construction, would imply that we had renounced them, and taking care to embrace every opportunity to press these principles on the consideration of all with whom we may come into contact.

"But of course our great and fundamental duty is to embrace the position God has placed us in, and the opportunities He is now affording us, for diffusing sound views of Christian truth and duty over the length and breadth of the land. There is much that leads us to cherish the expectation that great things will be done in this way,—that it is God's purpose to bless our Zion in prosecuting His work,—and that the time to favour her is indeed come. We are set free from the trammels and entanglements we experienced in connection with the Establishment; we can now go over the length and breadth of the land without let or hindrance; and we have reason to think that many will be more disposed than they ever were to listen to the preaching of Christ's truth. I may safely say, and without hesitation or exaggeration, that during the two last Lord's days, a larger number of immortal beings heard the preaching of the gospel than on any two Lord's days before in Scotland. I believe that this, in some measure at least, is likely, more or less, to continue. Here there is a field of labour opened up to us, in which we are called to embark, with a full sense of the magnitude of the crisis, and the magnitude of the responsibility we undertake. There is surely room to expect that God has a great work to work by our hands.

"In the proceedings of the Free Assembly, there was much to strengthen us in the conviction that Christ had gone with us, and that he was guiding and directing us in our councils; and much that has occurred since has led us to the conviction that we are enjoying his countenance and blessing. And it becomes us, in these circumstances, to feel that it requires much wisdom, and zeal, and exertions of no ordinary character, to go forth to the duty before us. Be encouraged by the conviction, that by ardent zeal, and wisdom, and cordial co-operation, and united exertion, by making sacrifices of your own ease, and comfort, and enjoyment, you may secure, in a short period, a larger, fuller, and more affectionate dispensation of the means of grace, and the ordinances of God's appointment, throughout the length and breadth of the land, than ever we have enjoyed before; and that over the whole extent of Scotland something may yet be seen and realised similar to that described in the language of Scripture, that a 'nation was born in a day.'"

The quotation is a long one: but one only regrets the inability to make larger extracts. In those old newspaper files and "blue books," there lie hid many characteristic passages, bearing the stamp of a time in which it may, without overboldness, be said, "great grace was upon them all."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *AMERICA.*

ONE of the earliest cares of the Free Church was to provide for the education of a rising ministry. They set a Committee over the whole department of education. When the idea of a new theological seminary was first seriously entertained, men turned their eyes at once to Dr Cunningham as one of its professors. The Education Committee, within a few weeks of the Disruption, appointed Dr Cunningham to the office of professor in the New College already projected. Dr Chalmers in the Presbytery of Edinburgh expressed the universal mind of the Church in regard to the appointment:—"I have been particularly satisfied and delighted with the appointment of Dr Cunningham as a Professor of Theology; he being an individual in whom, as you all know, is exemplified a very rare combination of qualities which seldom meet together in one and the same individual. He has a mighty and overwhelming power of argument, combined with a rich and varied theological erudition; indeed, I know no man so versed in the lore of ecclesiastical antiquity and of all ecclesiastical literature."

The Education Committee took another step quite in keeping with the healthy force which inspired the whole proceedings of the Free Church in those days. "Deeply impressed with the great importance of having the theological instruction in the New College conducted according to the best principles, and after the most approved models, and assured that for accomplishing this, great benefit would be derived from a personal investigation by an individual so qualified for the important duty as Dr Cunningham, into

the constitution and working of some of the most eminent of the American Theological Institutions, the Committee unanimously resolved that he should proceed for this purpose to America."

Dr Cunningham accepted this commission at once. It was quite after his own heart. With the investigation into the state of theological instruction in America, another object was combined. There were many in America who felt the keenest sympathy with the cause of the Free Church. Eight hundred churches were to be built in Scotland, and it was reported that America would help in that work. It was resolved that Dr Cunningham should address meetings and gather in the fruits of American liberality. An associate to accompany him in this mission was required. The Free Church was signally fortunate in her agents. There was a marked felicity in the adaptation of every man to his work. The deputy chosen to go with Dr Cunningham to the United States was Mr Henry Ferguson, a merchant in Dundee, and an elder,—as remarkable a man as ever chose to live a retired and quiet life.

In the "Forty Years' Familiar Letters" which form the unique Autobiography of Dr J. W. Alexander of New York, he tells the impression which the Scotch elder produced upon him. Apparently he had not seen in him the outward marks of eloquence, neither was his name known in Free Church debates. Dr Alexander confesses surprise at his having been sent as deputy, "especially when I found that Chalmers had picked him out. But my wonder ceased when I heard him on the evening of the 18th. He spoke an hour and three quarters by the watch; I wish it had been twice as long. In the first half of his speech he erred by causing too much laughter. His *vis comica* is amazing. In the latter part he arose to a height of passion such as I have seldom witnessed. A critic would have condemned everything in the elocution, but the eloquence was penetrating and transporting. I found Addison (his brother) affected precisely as I was. In a word it is utterly vain for me to give you any idea of the degree of his power. As he rose his diction became elegant and sublime; and yet he is only a merchant of Dundee."

Such was the companion with whom Dr Cunningham was to

co-operate. But before he could set out he was to see his first great sorrow. His family now consisted of five children. Hooping-cough came into the house in the fall of the year and, of course, went round. Some anxiety was felt about the oldest girl, but none at all about any of the others. Willie, a beautiful boy of four, with bright golden hair, seemed at first not particularly ill. By and bye things looked rather more serious. One day during the doctor's visit—Abercromby himself, along with Dr Begbie—without any special warning symptom, the child died. It was a crushing blow —an agony which only parents who have buried children can understand. Friends speak still, at the distance of nearly thirty years, of the greatness of Cunningham's grief. "He was my first propine and hansel to heaven," as James Melville says over his dead boy ; and the father "marvelled that his heart was so wrung."

Willie died in October, and Dr Cunningham left for America in the beginning of December. The outward voyage was favourable, but all sea-voyaging was misery to him. He was in America from the 18th of December to the 1st of May. Almost every Sabbath he preached three times, and he addressed nearly forty public meetings in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Richmond, Baltimore and many other places. The old and new school Presbyterians received him with open arms. Methodists, Independents, and Baptists, all were kind. Mr Ferguson, who was with him all through his tour, thinks that he never rose to his full height in any of the orations he delivered in America. On American soil he never equalled himself. When the distracting influences of travel are considered, its fatigues, and the thousand interests which engage a man's attention in a new country, this was perhaps inevitable. And the want of present adversaries must count for something.

There was one topic on which he was instantly called to give explanations. The Americans were generally opposed to State Churches, and wished to know what position the Free Church was likely to occupy in future in that respect, before deciding on the measure of sympathy and help which they ought to extend to her. Dr Cunningham's statement on that point was given without delay, and was accepted as perfectly satisfactory. It will be found in the

Appendix.* He very soon found his way to Princeton, and more than once returned to it. Within a few days of his arrival in America he writes to Mrs Cunningham :—

"As I have not much public business till next week, I have come out to spend a few days in Princeton. I have had great pleasure in the society of the theological professors here, who are all men eminent for their talents and learning, and are known in Britain by their writings. I am staying with Dr Hodge—a very admirable and estimable man, whose wife is a great grand-daughter of Dr Franklin. There is another thing which makes this place very interesting. It is the place where Jonathan Edwards and Witherspoon, who were both presidents of the college, lived and laboured. I have visited the place where they lived and died, and the place where they were buried."

Dr J. W. Alexander, in the Autobiography already cited, gives us a glimpse of him as he appeared to American eyes :—

"Dr Cunningham has been here (Princeton) for several days, but this is not his main visit. He is altogether the most satisfactory foreigner I have seen. By the Scotch papers I perceive he ranks among the first four or five in the Free Church. Height about six feet, and large in proportion, a stout but finely-formed man ; very handsomely dressed, and in an eminent degree the gentleman, in everything but excess of snuff. Age, I reckon about forty-one ;† spectacles. A stock of thick curly hair. He has no airs of patronage. Powerful reasoning and sound judgment seem to be his characteristics; and he is a walking treasury of facts, dates, and ecclesiastical law. I heard him for an hour on Friday in a speech to the students. Indescribable Scotch intonation, but little idiom and convulsion of body, but flowing, elegant language, and amazing power in presenting argument. . . . I wonder if he will wake up the Philadelphians much. He is a powerful fellow, and a noble instance of what may be done without any pathos or any decoration. . . . Did you observe how distinctly he said *juty* for *duty?*"

Dr Hodge, writing after Dr Cunningham's death, records his impressions and recollections of their intercourse :—

* See App. B.

† In reality, thirty-eight.

"He was twice at Princeton, and on both occasions made my house his home. He was a man whom you knew well as soon as you knew him at all. He revealed himself at once, and secured at once the confidence and love of those in whom he felt confidence. I do not recollect of ever having met any one to whom I was so much drawn, and for whom I entertained so high a respect and so warm a regard as I did for him, on such a short acquaintance. His strength of intellect and force of character were manifest at first sight. With this strength was combined a winning gentleness of spirit and manner in private social intercourse. It was, however, seen to be the gentleness of the lion in repose. His visit was one of those sunny spots on which, whenever I look back on my life, my eyes rest with delight."

Dr J. A. Alexander was present at Dr Cunningham's first meeting with Dr Hodge, and thus describes it:—

"You know brother Hodge is one of the most reserved of men, nor is a first acquaintance with him generally very assuring or attractive to strangers. But I remarked with what warmth and cordiality he met Dr Cunningham, as if he had met an old friend from whom he had been long separated. And it was so with Cunningham too. The two greatest theologians of the age were at once friends and brothers. They seemed at once to read and know each the other's great and noble mind."

Many of the acquaintanceships formed at this time grew into life-long friendships; but the acquaintance with Dr Hodge was friendship at first sight.

Dr Cunningham's letters from America are undeniably dry. They are clearly written as mere pegs on which to hang more ample narrative when he should come home. Besides the necessary information about travels and doings, they mainly express great enjoyment, and a cordial sense of American kindness and hospitality. His three weeks' stay at Philadelphia is distinguished, perhaps, by emphatic and grateful appreciation. I glean a few items. The first will interest Disruption ministers, recalling old memories by its allusion to the *res angusta domi* of days when

men were so uncertain what their income was to be. He says, addressing Mrs Cunningham,—

"I am much gratified by your kindness in thinking of my books, and allowing me some money to purchase them. I rather suspect, however, that in spite of our poverty, I would have ventured to spend a few pounds on books, even though you had not offered me some portion of *your* money."

Quite a just suspicion. Another home matter turns up. In those days when "schemes" had not yet had their "marches redd," and funds had not been multiplied, Professors were paid out of the Sustentation Fund, *i. e.*, their salaries came out of that fund, and they had their fees besides. The scale of payment had to be settled, and it had been thought, it seems, that looking to what large town congregations were able and willing to pay their ministers, Professors ought not to be paid less; therefore, it was proposed to make up their income, including their fees, to £500 each. Dr Cunningham objects as follows: —"I think the salaries which they propose to give to the professors are too large in the present state of the Church, and when many country brethren are suffering so much. With from £250 to £300 from fees, they should get no more this year than their £80 from the Sustentation Fund, and I certainly will take no more for my own use than £250 as in lieu of fees.* What wealthy congregations may do for their own ministers is a totally different thing, though certainly the giving of much in this way at present is not to be encouraged. What they give to their own ministers might not have come to the general fund. But to take money from the general funds subscribed for the support of ministers (many of whom are exposed to severe privations), and for the promotion of the great objects of the Church, in order to raise the salaries of the professors to £500, is, I think, unwarrantable and inexpedient.

* The Church having sent Dr Cunningham to America, and deprived him of the opportunity of earning fees for that year, he states that he will accept £250 as the low average of what he might have earned in fees at home (according to the number of students, and the rate of fee at that time), in addition to the ordinary dividend from the Sustentation Fund, which, when he left Scotland, was expected to be £80 to each minister for the first year. At the year's end it turned out to be £100.

I will write about this either to Dr Chalmers or Dr Candlish." His remonstrances must have been thoroughly successful. There has been no proposal to resume the extravagant scale of which he disapproved ever since.

Instances of liberal contributions to Free Church funds from friends in America are mentioned: "One Presbyterian minister with whom I spent a night, Dr Janeway of New Brunswick, gave 500 dollars, or about one hundred guineas. Of course he is much richer than the generality of his brethren. . . . Two congregations in New York have raised about £1000 each. But one of them is a very wealthy congregation, containing many native Scotsmen, with a few zealous individuals to go round and make personal applications in private; and the other contains our noble benefactor, Mr Lenox, who, with his sisters, furnishes, it is understood, the principal part of the £1000. He has sent home since I came here £500 for our India Mission; making altogether £3000 contributed to the Free Church."

After all, the contribution which perhaps most delighted Dr Cunningham, judging by the manner in which he spoke of it, was an offering of ten dollars from Robert Dalgleish, a working gardener at Providence.

Writing from Baltimore, on 17th February, we find him referring to Dr Breckinridge, in whose hospitable home he remained during his stay:—"A very able and interesting man, a good deal in many respects like Dr Cooke of Belfast. He was one of the leading controversialists in the discussion between the Old and New School, which led to the division of the Presbyterian Church in this country. And being a man of an ardent temperament, and with a good deal of the reckless spirit of a Kentuckian—as he is—he incurred some odium from the castigations which he occasionally inflicted. He is, however, a man of a kind, noble, and generous nature, of high talent, and altogether a very interesting companion."

That one sympathises with a noble and generous-minded man, who has incurred odium from inflicting occasional castigations, is perfectly intelligible.

Under the same cover comes a letter to his eldest daughter. Parents will understand why he specifies all the names at the end.

"My Dear Little Janet,—

"I received your letter by Mr Ferguson, and was greatly delighted with it. It gives me great pleasure to hear that you are able to go out again on fine days. I hope you are thankful to God who has restored your health, and that you will never forget that He alone can preserve you in health, and make your health a blessing to you. I expect to find you and Helen good scholars when I come home. And so you have begun to have music, writing, and arithmetic! All this will give you a good deal to do, and I hope to find when I return that you have made at least as much progress in these different branches as your sister Helen.

"I have seen a great many curious things in this country, but I have too little leisure to be able to write to you any account of them. I hope, if I am spared to come home again, to amuse you by telling you some of the things I have seen. I am at present at Baltimore, in Maryland, where there are a good many black people, and some of them are slaves. There is a black man and a black woman in the house where I am, but they are not slaves.

"Give my love to your sisters and brother—to Helen, and Janie, and Johnnie; and believe me, my dear little Janet, your affectionate father,—W. C."

In March he visited Washington and Richmond. During his stay in these quarters a very sad event took place:—"You will have seen in the newspapers an account of a dreadful accident which occurred in the neighbourhood of Washington, by the bursting of a large cannon on board a steamboat. The President and all the leading men of the government were on board, and two out of the six members of the American Cabinet, with other three men of eminence, were killed upon the spot. I was at Washington the day that this dreadful accident occurred. I had gone down from Baltimore the day before, attended the President's levee that night, been introduced to several of the gentlemen who were killed next day, and in particular, I had had some conversation with one of them, Mr Gilmore, the secretary of the navy, who told me that his grandfather was a Scotchman." In this neighbourhood he notes, of course, Mount Vernon, the "residence and burial-place of Washington, of whom every American is proud, and very reasonably. He was undoubtedly one of the noblest and purest characters recorded in history, and immeasurably superior to the common herd of kings and conquerors."

Dr Cunningham was to have preached before Congress at the

capitol: but a sharp attack of lumbago, the only attack of illness he had in America, disabled him from fulfilling the engagement, to his great disappointment.

Some of the American ministers were disappointed that the contributions from their churches were not upon a larger scale. Dr Cunningham did not share this feeling. He was simply and greatly gratified with the reception given to the Scottish deputation. He feared, however, that his friends in Scotland, judging by the large contributions given by one or two wealthy congregations in America, might have formed unreasonable expectations. He, therefore, expresses his own view of the case:—

"Their own wants, and especially in the vast and rapidly increasing regions in the West, are so great, and the demands upon them so numerous and urgent, that unless the standard of giving were to be elevated above what has been in any Church since the apostolic times, they could not afford to give as much. Although a few wealthy congregations in large towns spend a great deal of money upon their Churches, and give handsome stipends to their ministers, the generality of ministers in the country are very poorly supported, and have not on an average, more than £80 a-year. The other day, there was an advertisement in the Presbyterian papers, calling upon the churches to make collections, as the Professors at Princeton had not got the whole of their former quarter's salary, and there was nothing to pay another quarter now due. In such circumstances it is not reasonable to expect much money. We are received everywhere with great kindness and cordiality, and they contribute rather as an expression of brotherly kindness and sympathy, than from any strong sense that our case in Scotland is much stronger in a pecuniary point of view, as to its urgency, than in their own Western territories."

These remarks, it will be remembered, apply to the circumstances of the American Churches twenty-seven years ago, and may be less literally applicable now.

Mr Ferguson has already been referred to as Dr Cunningham's fellow-labourer. Besides him, the Rev. G. Lewis, then of Ormiston, and Dr Burns, then of Paisley, were in America as deputies during Dr Cunningham's stay. Mr Lewis soon proceeded to the Southern States. Dr Burns, on the contrary, was associated with Dr Cunningham during a large part of their operations. He is frequently referred to both in Dr Cunningham's letters and in those of his

American correspondents,—always in ways that throw a picturesque light upon his vivacious idiosnycracies. Anyone who knew the Doctor, so full of knowledge, so pronounced in judgments, so instantaneous, copious, and unintermittent in utterance, so prompt to give voice to the precise reactions which the impressions of the moment caused in a mind somewhat singularly set,—any one who knew how little he dreamt of giving offence, and how much he enjoyed a tilt with any apparently objectionable person or idea, may conceive the situation. Such a man—his mind full of the animation of those days, and of the excitement of travel—coming into the midst of a society new to him, where many things were unexpected, and all more or less strange, was sure to have plenty of thoughts. As at home, so in America, he was always ready, in public and private, to tell his auditors all he thought of their ways and of their institutions, great and small; and this in a flow of rounded sentences so finished, plentiful, and epigrammatic, that his hearers must have thought he had spent his whole voyage across the Atlantic in concocting them. I have seen a letter from Dr Burns, in which he notes that his "testifying processes" began on the very day he arrived at Princeton. He reports also that Dr Cunningham did not consider "testifying" to be any part of their appointed work, nor likely to be highly valued by our American cousins. It turned out, however, as he intimates, that his efforts in this line did *not* prove to have any tendency to produce serious embarrassments.

This is not precisely the impression one derives from some of the letters written to Dr Cunningham by perplexed Americans,—sometimes even in the name of their kirk-sessions,—desiring with much seriousness to know the range of commission which the Free Church had given to her deputies, and the amount of discretion which they claimed in the discharge of it. By degrees, however, our Transatlantic brethren seemed to have begun to understand the case, though they still comment on it in a droll, dry way. But Dr Cunningham thought it necessary at length to take some responsibility in the matter, and to watch the developments of his fellow-deputy. It was characteristic of Dr Cunningham, when he had found an expression to his mind, always to abide by it, as often as

the same idea recurred, never varying the phrase with a view to any charm of style. Whenever, therefore, he touches this subject in the course of his correspondence, it is simply to reiterate in letter after letter the remark, that he "had felt called upon" to admonish Dr Burns "*of the duty of being swift to hear, and slow to speak.*" It would have been worth a great deal to have been present at one of those admonitions.

The source of this temporary embarrassment was simply that immense constitutional eagerness which was closely connected with some of Dr Burns' best gifts and aptitudes for service. As age tamed it down,—not quenching what it chastened,—it left that venerable old man, whose appearances in extreme old age in recent General Assemblies were surpassed only by his appearances in the pulpit: the zeal for his Master's cause and gospel absorbing and ennobling all the man, and the wonderful stream of utterance coming more manifestly than ever from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.

Dr Cunningham left America on the 1st of May. He constantly retained a great value for the friendships he had formed there, and cherished a lively impression of the uniform kindness and goodwill with which he was received. He was always ready to stand forth to explain what seemed misunderstood, to defend what seemed unjustly attacked in American churches and institutions. Nay, in the course of subsequent vexations, he used to give vent to his feelings by expressing a resolution to seek an American appointment.

Before he sailed for Scotland, the Trustees of Lafayette College, Pennsylvania, paid Cunningham an unusual compliment. "Learning," says the Rev. Mr Gray, "that you had mentioned the name of the Rev. Mr Smith of Lochwinnoch, as a gentleman and scholar, deserving of being honoured by his brethren, I presented his name before my brother trustees of Lafayette College as a candidate for the honorary degree of D.D., which was conferred in due course. I communicate this to you, because it was through you, and on your account, it was done. And permit me in this connection to say, that in any other case where you think that such a mark of

respect might subserve the cause of Christ, or worthily be bestowed on distinguished merit, that a suggestion from you shall always be respectfully received and attended to." Of this very uncommon privilege he made a very modest use, never having exercised it, so far as is known, above once.

On his departure many kindly letters "accompanied him to the ship." One is from Dr Breckinridge, whose character we have seen already.* Coming from an anti-slavery man, it exhibits very well one phase of American sentiment in those days, and a good specimen is worth a hundred descriptions. It is dated April 24. From some symptoms in Glasgow newspapers, he sees reason to fear "violent proceedings" in Courts of the Free Church about America and the "unhappy position of the African race in America."

"You know my sentiments on this whole matter—the Church and the country know them. But not only have I been allowed to say and do here what we will not bear to have said and done in Glasgow, but even I would advise you to say, and love you for saying *to* us, and in *our* Church Courts, what I fear the old Adam would not let me bear to have you say *of* us, and at Edinburgh. Moreover, the united sentiment of the world would not move one man among us one jot, except it might be in the opposite direction, out of spite. I do not expect, I do not desire, that you or anybody should say slavery is right, is even innocent; it is neither, as I have openly said for twenty-five years. But I must insist the Churches of America are far less worthy of censure than most foreigners suppose; their power for good far less also, in this matter, than strangers imagine; and the way to do good far different from what they think. All I mean to say now is, if possible let the peace be kept between your Church and ours. . . . We have quietly dropped all intercourse with the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and refused to answer the letters of the United Secession Church of Scotland. . . . And what good has it done to them, or produced to us, that they made their company so offensive to us that we cut their acquaintance? And what is to be gained by an explosion between us and you? All this I urge, even supposing there is nothing to say for ourselves or against our friends and enemies in Britain. And I am sure you will believe my only reason for saying it at all, is a strong desire to see the bonds which unite us to you made stronger instead of weaker."

"Old Adam" has a good deal to do with ecclesiastical affairs, and perhaps it is best to confess that frankly. One has known

* P. 208.

many a case of vehement and high-toned protest, that would have been far more pithily put by simply saying, "'Old Adam' will not allow me to bear it."

The close of this letter is characteristically affectionate and warm-hearted :—

"I consider the good providence which brought you to our country and to my house a great mercy, and my family will not cease to cherish with every sentiment of kindness the recollection of your visit to us. I have been able to do so little for the glorious cause committed to us,—and there is so little prospect that my life will be continued,—that it fills my heart with inexpressible joy when I meet with fellow-servants who are both able and willing to do great things for my Master and my King. I thank you on behalf of His precious but suffering cause, for all you have done and suffered for His name's sake; and I will not cease to pray for grace to be continued to you, that you may yet do more and better things for Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

"My wife and little ones join with me in cordial solicitations and best wishes for you, and for a safe and happy return for you to the bosom of your family. May the blessing of Almighty God be with you evermore.—Your faithful friend and brother in the Lord Jesus, W. J. BRECKINRIDGE."

Dr Murray, the well-known "Kirwan," wrote :—

"You, my dear sir, will never be forgotten in America by the present generation of Presbyterians. Although your appeal to our churches has been less successful in the way of funds than I had anticipated, it has been a great blessing to us. Your example in Scotland is putting new life into the religious world. Switzerland is feeling it, India, Canada, all America. Your action in favour of a free gospel and church, and of a living Christianity, will tell upon the world and through unborn generations. The time will perhaps come when I can look in upon your free Assembly—then I shall die in peace."

Another letter is from the venerable Moses Stewart. The date is 30th April, the day before Dr Cunningham embarked. It refers, in the first place, to a severe illness which had been coming on when Dr Cunningham was at Andover, and then to some promises which that sickness had disabled him from fulfilling :—

. . . "I am now barely beginning to mend. I was out a little way yesterday. But my state is unpromising. I am nearly worn out. Still it may be that I shall have a little longer season for labour in the vineyard of the Lord. If not, 'the Judge of all the earth will do right.' Pray for me, that I may cheerfully acquiesce in His will.

"I had a short interview with Mr Ferguson. I am much pleased with his frank and warm-hearted disposition. I was too unwell to enjoy his society long. Remember me most kindly to him.

"May He who ruleth the winds and the waves, guide you to Him, and make your way prosperous! Deep is the interest I feel in your undertaking. Persevere. It is the cause of truth and duty. The Great Head of the Church will smile upon it, and bless you sooner or later. Never—never—commit the precious Church to the hands of graceless politicians.

"My hand begins to tremble, while I have a thousand things I wish to say to you. I can only say one: God bless you, and the cause in which you and your friends labour."

Another letter from Andover is worth preserving as a specimen of frank and friendly admonition. It was written by Dr Leonard Words. He speaks in the outset of long remembering Dr Cunningham's visit, and expresses the hope of meeting him again here, or, through God's abounding grace, in the kingdom of heaven. Then he proceeds:—

"Perhaps I ought to make some apology to you, my dear brother, for the great freedom I used in referring to a habit of yours. My apology is this; I had seen one president of a college and one professor of divinity, greatly injured as to speaking, and one of them as to health, by the habit of using snuff; and I had known several ministers whose usefulness was much diminished by the same habit. And then I thought of the great importance of the station you are to occupy, and my heart's desire was, that you should be as near perfection as possible, and that nothing should interfere with your usefulness. And it occurred to me, that though everybody was noticing the thing and speaking about it in the way of lamentation, very few, if any, would be likely to mention it to you; and that a hint from me might conduce greatly to the amount of good which you would accomplish, and so might prove to be an act of the sincerest friendship to you, and indeed to others. And let me say one thing more in the way of apology, namely, that I have long made it my rule not to neglect anything that I might be able to do, that would be adapted to increase the usefulness or happiness of any minister of Christ, or of any one preparing for the sacred office. My prayer is, and shall be, that you, and those connected with you in the great work you have in hand, may shine in the beauties of holiness, and be freed from everything that would in the least hinder your usefulness or your joy."

The letter closes in very warm and affectionate terms. It may be as well to explain that "everybody noticing the thing" was connected partly with the fact that an opinion against snuffing, as a

form of self-indulgence not becoming in ministers, had come to prevail very decidedly in American religious circles before Dr Cunningham went over.

The accused, who was willing enough at all times to plead guilty to charges brought against himself personally, did not see, on consideration, that snuff-taking was abstractly defensible; and some years after his return to this country he broke it off, making frequent references to American opinion in connection with the effort he thus made. However, as the matter never was very important in his eyes, he did not become a total abstainer, but merely ceased to keep a box of his own; and as he had many friends whose boxes and consciences dwelt peaceably together, his conversion from snuff became a standing joke whenever he was offered a pinch or *asked for one.* Ultimately a box given him as a memorial of a departed friend became the occasion of his setting up again on his own resources. In fact, while the course of things in America might favour a reforming snuff-taker, it was very different on our side of the water. Some of Dr Cunningham's venerated and valued friends, with Dr Gordon at their head, sturdily rejected his (theoretical) judgment against snuff, regarded it as a mere American neology, maintained their boxes to his face as orthodox institutions, and always argued, as long as they lived, that Dr Cunningham's occasional asceticisms in the matter of snuff, had only injured his health and tried his temper.*

Dr Cunningham had a prosperous voyage home, and was in time to appear at the General Assembly held in May 1844, and to give in a report of his proceedings. He dwelt on those points which had struck him as peculiarities, and especially, as excellencies, in the system of the American Churches. While naturally sympathising most fully with the Old School Presbyterians, he spoke gratefully of the kindness experienced from Christians of other denominations;

* In Dr Cunningham's student days, a very intimate lady friend once remonstrated with him, in playful terms, on this habit, which was even then commencing. With a gesture which invited her to catch it, he tossed his box over, saying, "Very well; I give it up for a year; You take charge of it for me." That day twelvemonths he returned to reclaim it. The good-humoured compliance, the fidelity to his promise, and the accuracy of his re-appearance were all characteristic.

and he expressed a generous confidence with regard to the future of the New School Presbyterians in particular. He explained various circumstances necessary to be known in order to form a correct judgment of the relation in which the American Churches stood to slavery, and the mode of view with respect to it which prevailed among them. And he also touched on the point on which he had found it needful to explain himself at landing in America, viz., the Church and State question; only, whereas on that occasion he explained the position of the Free Church, now he gave his impression of the view generally cherished among American Presbyterians.

"The only difference between us was in regard to National Establishments of religion. Even in regard to this there was not so much difference of principle as at first sight might appear. It is true, in that country a general horror is entertained of a union between the Church and the State. The great body of those you meet are rather anxious to express their abhorrence of any union between the Church and the State. But I find at the same time a very general admission of the great scriptural principle for which alone we contend, that in virtue of the principles embodied in God's word, the obligation is laid upon nations and rulers to have regard to the moral government of God as supreme, and to the welfare of the Church of Christ. The general admission of this doctrine is all that we care about.

"I have not seen nor heard anything in America at all fitted to shake my firmness in this principle as a principle of our Church; but I have seen much fitted to modify the impressions which some of us may once have entertained of the importance of State assistance to the Church of Christ and the cause of religion. I have seen much, yea abundant evidence, that a vast deal of good, and good in the highest sense, may be done by churches which have no State assistance, and I have seen much to confirm me in the belief that there is nothing to which the energies of the Church of Christ, when animated by the Spirit of Christ, are not fully adequate."

The impression made in America by Dr Cunningham's address was very favourable. In the end of June, Dr Sprague, writing from Albany, and referring to the movements of the other members of the deputation, says:—

"I confess to you that the aggregate of the collection, so far, is not by any means what I think it should have been; and that, so far as that is concerned,

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I feel rather mortified than gratified by the result.* But though we may not have done *you* much good, I am sure that your mission has been of great use to *us*; and, let me say, the most important thing connected with it, so far as we are concerned, I verily believe, is your speech before the General Assembly, which reached us by the last steamer. You are aware that there has been for some time a growing spirit of conciliation between the Old and New School in our Church, and your remarks cannot fail to contribute greatly to increase this spirit of union. The New School brethren, so far as I have heard, are quite enraptured with the charitable tone of your remarks concerning them; and if there are any on our side by whom they are not relished, it will be only a few ultra spirits, whose stomachs are so much disordered that they will bear nothing but the tincture of acrimony. Everything shows that we are on the eve of a better day, and I cannot doubt that your visit, and especially your speech, will do much to hasten it."

One of the subjects on which Dr Cunningham dwelt in his speech in the Assembly, as the reader may have observed, was American slavery. Uneasy mutterings had been heard in one or two quarters of the Church about having so much to do with Americans without an explicit settlement regarding their alleged slavery defections; and a vehement attack from some of the American Abolitionists was in preparation. It was rather a hard case for Dr Cunningham to be pinned to the position of seeming to apologise for a great evil; for he fully shared the views and feelings of the Abolitionists of this country, and no man was more willing, as few were more able, to give expression to those views on fit occasion. As it was, however, the question to be decided was simply this, Whether people in this country were at liberty to suspend intercourse with Christian churches elsewhere, merely on the ground that those churches did not excommunicate, or exclude from office, persons who held slaves? And this again depended on the question, Whether the American Churches were bound or entitled to subject such persons to discipline? More briefly:—in a country where the social customs and the laws create and sustain an extensive slave system, is it always a sin to own slaves, and are churches, in such countries, bound to treat it as a sin? It is conceded that cruel treatment of slaves, or the use of legal power in

* Dr Cunningham's view of *this* matter, which differed from Dr Sprague's, has been given above, p. 210.

order to inflict capricious severities upon them, is sin, and is a subject for discipline; but does the existence of the relation of master and slave as such, imply sin in the case of the former? It was very natural that many excellent people, simply anxious to make war against a bad system, should not care much how the question should be stated, and should simply demand that slavery be attacked with all possible weapons. But it was equally natural that Dr Cunningham, and all men who held a responsible position, should feel the necessity of being precise. Slavery was a bad thing, but the churches did not cause it; and, existing in the midst of it, they could visit mere slaveholding (apart from cruelty, &c.,) with discipline, only if slaveholding, in such circumstances, is directly and properly, and in all cases, sinful. Dr Cunningham had, of course, to maintain that it was not so; and he had to explain many circumstances of American life, and of the relations of American Churches to politics, upon a misunderstanding of which unjust censures were grounded. As I have said, he was far from defending the system of slavery, which he hated with his whole soul; nor did he think that the American Christians and Churches were discharging their full duty on the subject; for he believed that, like ourselves, they evinced the common infirmity of resigning themselves too easily to existing evils; and he thought that they too readily allowed themselves to be driven by the wilder Abolitionists into the attitude of defending merely their existing practice. But he believed it hardly possible for strangers like himself to form any satisfactory estimate of the responsibilities, or of the shortcomings of American Churches in these respects. And especially he believed that on the main question, as to the propriety of not excluding members merely on the ground of holding slaves, they were not only right, but clearly and demonstrably right. Therefore all the more that the defence of his American friends *on that point* involved some risk of odium and misconstruction, all the more resolutely on that account was the defence to be maintained. In order to keep due regard to the various possibilities of misconstruction, some rather careful and balanced resolutions had occasionally to be drawn up by the Courts of the Free Church; for

the agitation lumbered on in a sort of discontinuous way, by spirts and jerks, for as much as three years. Our American cousins looked on, in the humour which Dr Breckinridge thus describes (November 1844):—

"The only effect that will be produced in this country by the recent action of your Commission, on the subject of slavery here, will be to sour, a little, two sets of persons: the Abolitionists, technically so called, and the pro-slavery people. But I believe you will have little or nothing from this side of the water, in regard to it, from any public body. It has been published in some of the newspapers, but excited no attention so far as I know. The great mass of the American people, Christians and all, are fully settled in their views on this subject: such as 1. That slavery is a great evil, and ought to be somehow and sometime brought to an end. 2. That it is not a *sin*, in the proper sense of the word, and, therefore, cannot be made a ground of expulsion from the Church. Meantime, two other results are also produced: 1. The deep conviction that the religious, the social, and the physical condition of the slaves, is better than that of the free negroes—better than that of the labouring white poor in most parts of the world, including England; 2. That the abuse heaped on us, on this subject, would be just as bad for some other subject, if this was out of the way, being the result of national hereditary animosity. I do not say, *precisely*, that all this is *exactly* true, though it is not *very far* from my own opinion; but I am satisfied these are the convictions of the immense majority of the American people."

Dr Breckinridge administers his "counter-check" very well. In doing so, he illustrates, however, the weaker aspects of the attitude maintained by many American Christians. For it is not true that the outcry on the English side was all from national animosity. It had been raised just as earnestly and more fiercely against our own West India planters and their supporters. The allegations about the labouring white poor, were they ever so true, would amount merely to the old story of the accused kettle recriminating on the pot, which is an idle occupation for Christian men. The tremendous national crisis through which God brought American slavery to an end, determined Dr Breckinridge's "sometime, somehow." It fell, if I am not mistaken, on his own latter days, and subjected him to a full share of the anxiety and sorrow which then overtook so many American homes. It was the price which he and many others paid for a consummation they had desired to see, though they had not dreamed of the path along which it was to be reached.

The discussion on this subject originated in two very different quarters. A few ministers of the Free Church, including one or two men of the highest character, questioned the views maintained by Dr Cunningham as to the duty of churches, situated as the American Churches were, and as to the manner in which the Free Church ought to discharge her own duty towards them. With them the difference could be discussed calmly, but it had to be discussed elaborately, because they were earnest and ingenious, and the casuistry of the question was capable of being spun very fine. On the other hand, some of the American Abolitionists ("technically so called," as Dr Breckinridge says), seeing some likelihood of troubled waters, came across to fish in them. That party included, as is very well known, a number of persons who were not particular in their choice of weapons. They vilified the Free Church as associating with slaveholders for the sake of pecuniary gain, and raised the cry of "Send back the money." As their antecedents became known, however, and their methods of warfare were observed, they lost influence, and vanished again. A pamphlet on the "Free Church and her Accusers," by Rev. A. Cameron, now of Melbourne, which appeared in 1846, and had an extraordinary run, brought so much light to bear upon the party, that respectable people in general grew shy of them. From about the middle of 1847 the matter was heard of no more.

During these debates, Dr Cunningham found it necessary to make at least four great speeches, and to write repeatedly to the newspapers. Some of these speeches are not inferior to any he ever made in the power they evince of stripping the question of everything extrinsic and accessory, and concentrating attention on its essentials, throughout all the windings of a casuistical discussion. As the whole topic has ceased to have practical importance, I refrain from making quotations. But these speeches contain many characteristic passages, and they are full of interest for men who study the ecclesiastical relations of ethical questions. They may be found in the Assembly Proceedings of 1845, 1846, 1847, and in the *Witness* of February 15. 1845.

# CHAPTER XXI.

## *PROFESSORSHIP.*

ONE learns with some surprise, from correspondence still in existence, that when College arrangements were in hand, in 1843, a proposal was made, and even pressed,* to entrust to Dr Cunningham a Chair of Logic, as more suited to his powers than a Theological Professorship. The proposal was grounded, no doubt, on his eminence as a dialectician; if so, the reasoning was bad. Eminent teachers of Logic have been often very untrustworthy reasoners, and first-rate reasoners are not necessarily men who feel any peculiar vocation to teach Logic. It is marvellous enough how any one could dream of burying Dr Cunningham's theological tastes and acquirements in a Chair of Logic. Nor, I am sure, could any of his students, without a smile, represent him to themselves as thundering from his Chair upon the mysteries of mood and figure. A very rigorous treatment of the Fallacies would, no doubt, have been experienced; but, presumably, the course would have failed to restrain itself within the limits of *pure* Logic.

As Junior Professor of Theology, Dr Cunningham's first duty was to prepare a course upon the Evidences of Revealed Religion. The course comprehended lectures on the province of Reason and Faith, and also on the subject of the Rule of Faith. This course, comprehending upwards of fifty lectures, was delivered during the session 1844–45. Those who, like myself, were students in that year, remember well the impulse which we received, not more from the material contents of the lectures, than from the example of method (in the highest sense of that word) which they embodied. For the

* In a rather authoritative quarter, but not by any one now surviving.

great object of the course was to illustrate the method of the Christian argument, not to dwell on its details. How the various questions arise into which the one great question branches; what precisely the state of the question is, at each successive stage; how the various arguments bear on the question so stated, and in what measure the various materials commonly adduced are properly, or may be erroneously applied; how each class of objections is logically related to the argument; which of these objections are properly and truly adverse arguments requiring to be met and redargued, and which of them embody mere difficulties; at what points and on what ground difficulties are to be admitted and accepted,—these, and points like these, were the points continually in hand. Then the nature, order, and relation of the questions, supreme and subordinate, being stated, and the "way and manner" in which the several classes of arguments and evidences bear logically upon them being cleared, we were referred to our reading for the filling up; extremely copious notices of the works in which the material *pro* and *con* is provided being added for our guidance. These conversational notes on books occupied the Thursday, and formed a very pleasant and profitable element in the class-work. Both by what the course treated, and by what it declined to treat, it produced an extremely definite impression of the conditions of argument under which the Christian evidence must be applied. It introduced light and order into the somewhat miscellaneous reading which students affect, and the somewhat general and miscellaneous impressions with which they are apt to be contented; and it corrected the disproportioned occupancy with single aspects and single departments of a great question, which is apt to ensnare them. Many a day we left the class with a droll sense of disgrace, awakening, as it were, to discern the moral enormity of the mental confusion which we had heretofore tolerated or cherished. The first vivid impression of what it is to face, and sift, and do honest justice to a theological question, came to many of us on those benches in George Street. There, too, the hill of knowledge rose before us to new dimensions, as an actual and very considerable *hill*, as we had disclosed to us the amount of reading requisite in order

to a "decent and respectable" acquaintance with our chosen profession; while the summits on which a man might claim a more complete and comprehensive mastery rose in dim perspective far away. We all retain, and shall retain till we die, a peculiar association with the standard of a "decent and respectable acquaintance" with any subject whatever.*

On the 7th of July 1843, Dr Welsh, announcing to Dr Cunningham his appointment as professor, had expressed the "delight with which he looked forward to the calm intercourse we may enjoy upon academic ground," in forming plans for the new institution, and in carrying them out. In forming and executing plans in this department, Dr Welsh did noble service; his courage and large-heartedness qualified him to cherish great conceptions, and to carry them out vigorously. The scale of the college buildings, and of the library, are in this respect his permanent memorials. But in 1845 he was removed by death from the chair (that of Church History) which he filled with so much advantage to the Church, and Dr Cunningham was appointed to succeed him. I have no doubt that the change was a welcome one to Dr Cunningham on some accounts. The duties assigned at that time to the Junior Theological Chair required of him the treatment of the *prolegomena* of Theology, rather than of Theology itself. No one who knew Dr Cunningham can doubt, that questions arising in the territory of divine truth itself, interested his mind far more than those, however important, which concern matters merely preparatory and propædeutic. The transference certainly imposed upon him heavy additional labour. The course he had just completed became useless, and several fresh courses had to be constructed. But he had an idea of his own as to the way in which a chair of Church History could best be made to fulfil its share of the work of theological training, and he must have desired to work that idea out. The appointment was cordially gone into by the Church. It was hailed especially by the first year

* This course, though once or twice re-delivered on occasion of vacancies in the chair of Apologetics, was never revised, nor brought up to the later developments of the argument. Dr Cunningham's literary executors did not therefore think themselves justified in including these lectures in his published works.

students of the previous session, who rejoiced in the thought of meeting their Professor again on new ground. Yet there is always somebody to object to everything. On the day of his appointment to his new office, Dr Cunningham met a friend, a young lady, who offered her congratulations, and spoke of the satisfaction with which the appointment was regarded. "Well," was the reply, "I'm told that some people are opposed to it on this ground, that I have no imagination. Don't you think a want of imagination is rather a good feature in a historian?"

During the three sessions which followed, three new courses of lectures were successively produced. The composition was generally and deliberately postponed, until all possible time had been devoted to mastering the literature which the respective courses had to cover. From the plan which he had decided on adopting, the literature to be disposed of was enormous; and whether in reviewing what he had read before, or in completing his acquaintance with the various departments which he meant to comprehend and account for, his claims upon himself were not small. Winter, therefore, found him with his lectures still unwritten, and with the work before him of actually unfolding the statements and arguments of his course. The dominion and use of his summer survey of materials were secured to him by a clear and resolute theological judgment, and a singularly tenacious and accurate memory. The effort, continued through three successive years, was very great, all the more that circumstances threw upon him the burden of delivering more than once the apologetic course already described; and he was also obliged to take much more than his own share of the labour involved in reading privately, and hearing publicly, the essays and discourses of a very numerous body of students. By the time he got through the third session of Church History (fourth from his first appointment as a professor), he was visibly and greatly exhausted. I am disposed to doubt, indeed, whether his health ever recovered perfectly from the strain to which it was then subjected.*

* Yet the accuracy with which he got through details of duty under all this pressure was wonderful. My own discourses of those days, Latin and English, bear witness. The pencil marks are extant on them, which prove how thoroughly

When the arrangements of the New College were adjusted, the three years' course now described was compressed into two years. It continued to be delivered in this form, with only minor changes; and after Dr Cunningham's death, it was published under the title of Historical Theology. The fruits of studies subsequent to the completion and adjustment of his lectures, in so far as they might involve fresh topics, were generally published as essays in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review,* or were delivered at the opening and closing of the Hall as addresses to the students.

I have said that Dr Cunningham had views of his own as to the proper place and function of a Church History Class in a Theological course. The existing practice at the time of his appointment was to rehearse the history of the Church in successive lectures, very much as it might be narrated in a tolerably full compendium,—the professor dwelling in more detail on topics which happened to interest him, and adding such reflections as the insight he possessed enabled him to make. It seemed to Dr Cunningham that all this involved considerable waste of time and faculty. The positive information afforded could be far more compendiously and rapidly acquired; and any reflections or comments introduced were too miscellaneous, and too dispersed and fragmentary, to perform an effectual service to the student. The class, he thought, could retain its claims on the Church and the student, only if it fulfilled some definite function closely related to the main end of theological education, which is to train the student to a scientific apprehension of the truth which God has revealed,—the message which God has commissioned his servants to declare. Hence, when intimating to the Assembly his acceptance of the Chair, he made the following remarks :—

"My plan is to confine myself to a two years' course, in one of which I will go over, not the external history of the Church, but rather its theological history,—the history of doctrines; and give an historical exhibition of the various deviations which, in the course of eighteen centuries, had occurred from the truth laid

he read them, and how carefully he noted what was faulty. This was in a session in which he had at least a hundred to read.

down in the Holy Scriptures,—the only standard we recognise as affording a test of error. My second year's course will be devoted to polemic theology, in which I will give a detailed view of some of the great leading controversies which from time to time have agitated men's minds, and which have exerted the greatest influence on belief and doctrine."

Such was his original conception. It was not, however, exactly carried out. The course did not fall into two divisions, but formed a continuous whole, formed on one leading conception.

The actual work of the class was arranged in accordance with these views of the end to be attained. Acquaintance with the outline of Church History in its various leading departments was secured by the use of a text-book. One day in the week was devoted to examination upon it. Nothing more was attempted formally in this line, except that some lectures, not very many, were devoted to depict the general character of an era, or to sketch the history and influence of a great theologian. What was still lacking was left to be supplied by private reading—the class being well aware of the Professor's hope "that none of you will feel himself justified in being contented with the meagre outline of these important matters which is all that the text-book supplies;"—and the Thursday notes on books gave ample indications where the supplementary information could be found. The immense miscellany of matters referable to Church History being thus disposed of, the lectures—three weekly in each class—were concentrated on the work of surveying the nature and the result of the doctrinal movements which have affected successively the apprehensions of the Church concerning the faith. It was, in short, a course of doctrine history, but conceived in a peculiar manner, and guided by a special object.

Without affecting great exactness, it may be said that there are three forms which the history of doctrine, or the study of historical theology, may assume. First, it may take the form of a simple report upon the question, What was believed and maintained during given periods of the Church's history? What is aimed at in this investigation may be either a mere report on facts, governed by a purely historical interest, and conducted without regard to the

influence which the facts reported may have upon existing questions —such are the compendiums of doctrine history so common in Germany, and of which Hagenbach is perhaps in this country the best known specimen. Or the survey may be undertaken with a distinct polemical aim, as an application of history to controversy— namely, with a view to prove that the authority of particular schools or ages is in favour of a given set of doctrines. In this case, it becomes a citation and criticism of testimonies, in order to plead them as authorities. Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith may serve as an instance.

Secondly, the object proposed may be to illustrate the genetic development of doctrines in history,—to explain the nature of each theological tendency, the soil it grew in, and the fruit it bore,—to trace the forces, intellectual and moral, which formed and guided each theological school,—and to shew how the various influences, inherent in the theology, or working on it from without, explain the course of speculation, or of controversy. In short, it is the physiology of the history which this method proposes to set forth,—it explains the conditions on which the phenomena depended, and the way in which the phenomena were realised from those conditions. In the use of this method, as of the former, the author may either write as simply desirous to understand and explain history; or he may have it for his declared object to draw a moral from the history in favour of some doctrinal results which he believes it to favour. In either case, the discussions which proceed in the method now referred to, are always largely biassed by the personal convictions of the writer. On this account the method must be admitted to be exposed to considerable dangers and temptations; but it is too charming and too powerful to be laid aside on that ground. Baur's History of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Dorner's History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ, may serve as specimens.

But there is a third method of studying and applying the materials bearing on the history of theology. It refuses to be contented with the bare reporting of the first method; but it also refuses to linger, like the second, over speculations as to causes and

consequences. It presses on at once to the practical and ultimate question in which the theologian is interested, viz., What is true? As a general rule it refuses to inquire, in regard to an opinion, argument, or mode of statement, which in any past period came to honour, *How* it came there? It rather asks, What light came of it for the student of a succeeding age, who is investigating the main problems of theology? In a word, this method treats of the doctrinal discussions, which have taken place at various periods, and on successive topics, of theological inquiry, with a view to make plain what the questions are which have proved to be the inevitable questions, the true causes of difference and discussion; what materials, if any, have proved to be available for settling them; what considerations and arguments have been adduced; how these really bear on the question in hand; and what their validity and force are in their connection. The benefit to be derived from this method depends on compression and compendious handling; everything falls away excepting this question, applied to each great discussion, What was truly in debate? What was the real argument in the case? What were the true hinges of it? and what was it all worth when summed and sifted? The history of doctrine treated in this method was the main substance of Dr Cunningham's course. The charm of historic detail was necessarily sacrificed; the cross lights from human nature and human experience faded away; the course became severe, and depended wholly on one great interest as its motive and justification. But the service performed for the student became extremely definite; the element introduced into his training became a marked and powerful one. And when this service was performed as Dr Cunningham performed it, it gave a grasp and vantage of the field of theological discussion which were of inestimable value. He here selected with his usual judgment the field in which his gifts and acquirements could yield their fruits most completely and usefully to his students and to the Church. The sparingness in detail, not merely in detail of history, but in detail of argument and detail of evidence, was essential to the conception of the course. The object was to exhibit the great lines of force and of resistance to which, as far as

the history of doctrinal discussion is concerned, all details must be subordinate.

The peculiar treatment of Historical Theology embodied in these Lectures is different from that adopted, as far as I know, in any work that exists.* It was closely connected with his method and tendencies as a theologian, which will be spoken of elsewhere. Meanwhile, it may be remembered, that the turn which he thus gives to the work of his own Chair, illustrated his conception of the proper object and means of Theological training. The object is to give a student a clear view and sure grasp of revealed truth. This is to be effected along a double line of training. On the one hand, the discipline of Biblical study and interpretation (which, he thought, ought to extend along the whole course—four years in the Free Church) trains the student to evolve the teaching of the sacred record, and places him in constant contact with revealed truth, in the very form which God has been pleased to deliver it. On the other hand, Systematic Theology, proceeding on Biblical ground and working with Biblical materials, developes the body of main truths in their rational coherence; not shutting out of view the debates that have been raised, yet still mainly occupied with positive construction. Meanwhile, the class of Historic Theology, which he placed somewhat lower than the other two in point of absolute necessity and importance, takes up the same body of belief, as belief which has been eagerly questioned, and which has, to a large extent, been shaped and cleared in the fire of controversy. The human fortunes of the deposit of faith, during the conflict of ages, are here treated, in order that the experiment of controversy may illustrate and test the processes by which men make sure their conviction of the divine meaning. All these lines of study conduce to vindicate the Church Theology and the Church Confession.

It may seem that, in this mode of treatment, the corrective and

* Among writers of the Church of Rome, Petavius and Thomassinus naturally occur for comparison, as well as some parts of the history of Natalis Alexander. It would be too long a digression to illustrate the different conceptions which mould the materials in the several cases. The totally different conception of the importance of the Fathers in relation to Theology, is one of the most striking contrasts between Dr Cunningham and most writers in this field.

humanising influence of a philosophic and sympathising survey were too much sacrificed, and that the widening influence on the mind which history should exert was too much set aside. Dr Cunningham was not insensible to those important ends. But he believed that to attempt them would lead both teacher and pupil into matter too vague to be gathered into any result. A class to which students are required to devote a large proportion of their time, ought to perform a clear, definite professional service. Other things, which are important, yet in their nature pertain rather to the general toning of the mind, must be left to reading and reflection, in connection with the tendencies established by earlier studies in arts and in philosophy.

The rigour with which the conception was carried out is illustrated by one manifest feature of the course. No man was fuller than Dr Cunningham of *detail*, about churches, men, and books. He had the keen eye and the sure grasp which give possession of historical detail, and he had the love for it which always accompanies those faculties. It came out, plentifully enough, *on Thursdays.* But the Lectures are conspicuously bare. Nothing is allowed to distract the attention from the one point, viz., the "state of the question," and in connection with that, the conditions and merits of the argument.

Another conspicuous feature of the course I shall give in the words of an old student, who has furnished some recollections:—"We could not but admire the clearness with which he saw the limit of human knowledge. When he arrived at the boundary line—the line where insoluble mystery begins, he plainly told us that it had not been crossed, and that in all probability it never would with our present imperfect faculties. He never attempted to explain the Trinity; he gave no encouragement to expect any solution of the awful mystery of the origin of evil; he warned us against supposing that we could fully comprehend the problem of moral inability coupled with responsibility; he insisted that the doctrine of imputation is to be found in Scripture, but that, while it gives a more rational explanation of human depravity than can be found in the systems of those who deny it, the doctrine is nevertheless enshrouded in deep and inscrutable mystery. It was obviously his conviction that the full appro-

priation of what lies on this side the veil ought not to be hindered, because *at* the veil difficulties arise that are insoluble."

To accept those difficulties, he always maintained, was not only reasonable, but could be *proved* to be reasonable.

In the didactic dexterities which belong to teaching as a profession, Dr Cunningham had no particular eminence, and he did not greatly affect them. One great virtue he had, indeed, which shone in his oral examinations, and it would be well for students if all examiners had it. He was perfectly clear and definite in his questions, so that there was never a doubt about his meaning. But the obstetric art of some great teachers could not be ascribed to him. And it would have been somewhat alien from his character, and from the very qualities for which his students admired and loved him.

What first of all gave him his influence over his students was his power, the intellectual force and momentum, of his lecturing, and, indeed, of his whole class work. His estimate of a book, his characterisation of a theological debate, his chance allusion to an opinion, everything he said bore the stamp at once of knowledge and of power. Then it was power, not quiescent or distant, but exerted with constant and eager interest in the matter in hand, taking for granted the student's interest, and working at the day's duties with a full confidence that his class went with him. "I seem to see him even now," says one, "seated at his desk reading his lectures, hurried along by the course of his argument like a torrent, his right arm swinging behind his desk, and his eye sometimes kindling into a glare of enthusiasm." It both challenged us and drew us. Very seldom in those days was the catalogue called. The crowded benches shewed how needless that was. Then there was the thoroughness of his style and of his work. The question in hand was obviously to him a great moral business, the right disposal of which claimed all the resources of thorough knowledge and thorough discussion. Then there was that indescribable manliness—a feature in which many features assembled. It included his simplicity, his independence, his elevation, his fairness, his keenness, and his gentleness. His simplicity—(*ae-fauldness* in

our vernacular),—so that you always felt you saw to the bottom of him; he, meanwhile, not thinking whether you saw him or not. His independence,—the fearless assertion of his own judgment in straightforward language, and the absolute disregard of mere opinion apart from grounds. His elevation,—in minding the main things; for it was always evident that he had at hand quantities of student lore which he refused to trifle with, or encourage us to trifle with, and knew of plenty of topics and debates from which he turned aside. His fairness,—going at once to the heart of a debate, taking the issue on the main points, and stating carefully the opposing view; a fairness all the more captivating that it was the fairness of a keen disputant, not of a *soi disant* neutral or unbiassed person. His keenness itself,—giving all the zeal of contest to his lecturing, and adding the fire of the irascible sentiment in vigorous, denunciatory windings up. His great gentleness in all private intercourse, his fairness and patience with a student's difficulties, his prompt recollection, kindly advice, constant desire to give all possible help. Nor that it was a gentleness to be trifled with. Dignity on his side, and reverence on ours, were habitual; and it must have required more than common impudence to have attempted to take liberties with him.* Add to all this the peculiar sense of mastery, of unexhausted resource in the Professor, which it is the privilege of some men to produce irresistibly in those about them, and Dr Cunningham's power over his students may be in part understood.†

A distinguished student who joined Dr Cunningham's class in 1844, writes:—

"I had just come from the University of Edinburgh, in which,

* I never saw, during four years, the least approach to any improper liberty on the part of a single student, nor heard of any. There is a tradition that a man under examination took upon him once to controvert the Principal, and to debate with him. But the broad, full look, and the monosyllable of inquiry were too much for him, and he collapsed.

† In the Appendix will be found some extracts from an address delivered by Dr Cunningham at the opening of the New College in 1851. They are introduced for the purpose of placing on record some views regarding the aims and methods of Theological Colleges, to which he attached importance. See Appendix C.

during a five years' course, I had had an opportunity of listening to the lectures, and observing the method of teaching of a considerable number of professors; but I have never hesitated to say that Dr Cunningham's class that year, in the freshness and power of the lectures, and the thoroughness of the drill, and the conscientiousness with which every part of the work was attended to, seemed to me to be unequalled in interest and value by any other through which I had previously passed.

"There seemed," he adds, "a sort of paradox in his nature. If one had only listened to him in the class, and heard him at times employing a strength of expression which approximated to the denunciatory, the impression might have been formed that he was a man of violent feelings, and not to be approached without caution. If, however, you went immediately afterwards into his retiring room, you found him gentleness itself. In this combination of the lion and the lamb, lies, I believe, in great measure, the secret of the extraordinary power which he came to have over many of us. The truth was that, in the highest sense of the word, he was a NOBLE man; and it will ever be to me a ground of pride and satisfaction that I sat at his feet as a student, and enjoyed afterwards a measure of his friendship. I say a measure of his friendship, for though on very many accounts he was well entitled to maintain an attitude of distance in his intercourse with me, I could read over the correspondence which at various times I had with him, and forget that he was above me in any sense at all."

A rather curious difference of impression will be found to exist as to his facility in making intercourse with his students (in his own house for instance) smooth and successful. Many will concur in the testimony of one who speaks of the "genial way in which he was wont to treat us, placing himself beside us very much as a fellow-student, taking a lively interest in everything relating to us, and especially to our studies, and delighted to aid in clearing up any difficulties we felt." Others again describe him as willing, indeed, but not always able to draw out and draw on his guests. The truth is, he might either be comparatively silent, or comparatively fluent. He was not a conversationist. He had not the

imaginative flexibility of mind, which knows always how to set talk agoing, and can drop with ease into a score of different but appropriate topics with the different members of an evening party. If people had nothing to say, and nothing about which they wanted to hear, he sometimes did not make great way. All the more, perhaps, on that account, was the benevolence conspicuous with which he exerted himself to set things agoing, and to get alongside of one after another. But when people knew what they wanted to know, and opened the way by getting to the border land of their own knowledge, he was anything but silent. He poured out information and judicial deliverances, and charmed his guests by the readiness with which he discussed the whole affair. A good deal depended, therefore, on the degree in which he was drawn out. An active-minded person with some knowledge, enough to perceive where his ignorance lay, or anxious to compare his impressions with the professor's, found no difficulty in setting the stream agoing and prolonging it as long as he pleased. This talk was perfectly companionable, and free from anything magisterial, only strong and full of knowledge.*

It will, I hope, be forgiven to an old student, to have dwelt so long on these matters. There is still an important point which must be mentioned, his concern for the spiritual wellbeing of his students. He sought to promote it privately, by shewing interest

* At all times the readiness as well as retentiveness of his memory was remarkable. A very small reminiscence may illustrate the impression which his students had of this gift of his :— "Only once in four sessions do I remember an effort required for a statement which he had to make. That was a very small matter. He was to mention the name of a student who was to read a discourse next day, but he could not recall the name. He hesitated, and turned over the leaves of his notebook, but the name was still refractory. He rose at length to pronounce the blessing and dismiss the class, conquered for the moment, but only for the moment, for when he had finished the words of blessing, the name was at command and duly intimated, amid the cheers of the class, who had hoped in vain to see him beaten for once." He had a most special memory for the names and faces of students, never indeed seeming to forget any of them. He followed the career of each, when he left college, and they were often astonished at meeting him in after days to find him well acquainted with all their movements. Men grew to feel that Cunningham was watching their career.

in their position and prospects, always in a manner that was not obtrusive. He sought to promote it publicly, by taking opportunities to enforce the obligations which lie on candidates for the ministry. These exhortations turned mainly on two points: the absurdity and sin of men becoming ministers who were not themselves under the influence of God's grace; and the cheerful, unreserved, lifelong devotedness which every consideration bound them to cherish and evince. He did not think that the leading arrangements of a theological seminary should be planned as if the promotion of spiritual wellbeing were the direct end to be attained. It should be arranged with a view to efficient theological education, which is its proper office. But all concerned ought to make it their object to cherish spiritual life among the students. As he once rather characteristically expressed it: "To promote the spiritual wellbeing of students is a part of the work of teachers of theology, though not the direct object of a theological institute. Or, to use a common scholastic distinction, conversion of sinners in the case of a theological institute, is not the *finis operis*, but the *finis operantis*. It is an object which theological teachers, in the discharge of their functions as such, are bound to aim at."

Hence in an Assembly conference on the spiritual state of students, we find him expressing himself in these terms:—"There can be no difference of opinion on the qualifications necessary for aspirants to the ministry. We are of one mind as to the indispensable necessity of having converted men; we are of one mind as to the sinfulness and absurdity of any man entering on the functions of the gospel ministry, unless he has been born again, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We are of one mind as to the obligation on the part of the Church to take care, as far as she can, that she admit no men to the office of the ministry, unless there is reason to believe that they have really given themselves to Christ. . . . . We are all of one mind on this subject. What we are defective in is just this, that we come all far short in a due sense of the obligations under which we lie to aim at the spiritual welfare of those committed to our care. We ought to feel as strongly our responsibility and concern in the spiritual welfare of our theological

students, as in the spiritual welfare of those who are our children according to the flesh; and we should seek to cherish a similar frame of mind in regard to them. . . . . I would fain hope that the proceedings and exercises of this day, so well fitted in many ways to come home to the understanding and the heart, may lead all of us who stand in any special relation to students, to see more clearly, and feel more deeply, how far short of our duty we have come; to give us a deeper sense of our obligations, and to constrain us, in time to come, to use all means, whereby, by God's blessing, Christ may be formed in them the hope of glory, and they may be led honestly to devote themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to the service of Christ. And, I think, I can repeat the assurance which I have given already, that those to whom the Church has committed the immediate superintendence of her students, will gladly and willingly receive any statements fitted to deepen their impressions, or suggest means of a practical kind for the more perfect training of the youth under their charge."

Very ample materials lie around me in the shape of passages from lectures and addresses to illustrate the way in which he used to present these solemn matters to the students themselves. Without quoting further, this remark may be added, that in urging any point of practical duty, his power of producing the sense of obligation,—precise, inevitable, irresistible obligation,—was unequalled, I think, by any Professor of his time, even by Dr Chalmers. With the cogent plainness of exhortation there was often an unceremonious reference to the temptations and infirmities presumably present in his auditor's heart; and both together were so presented that the sense of present urgent duty became peremptory.

Students who had gone forth into the work were never forgotten. He liked to visit them in their spheres of labour, and was always ready to countenance, encourage, and stimulate them. In their case, more perhaps than in that of any other class of persons, he found a facility in uttering the interest he felt, and in addressing direct personal admonition. His sayings on these occasions were especially pithy and straightforward. One day he met in Edinburgh the late Henry Douglas, a distinguished student, and a

minister of singular promise, which was cut short by his early death. He stopped and welcomed him with the old smile. "Well," he said, "I see you are settled in Kirkcaldy; a very important charge; it will need a great deal of prayer, pains, prudence, and patience—prayer, pains, prudence, and patience"; with which unforgettable advice he parted and rolled on to his class.

There are none of us, I should think, who are not haunted by echoes of his class prayers; the emphasis and peculiar cadence of those confessions that "we are indeed very ignorant and foolish, very depraved and sinful, very slothful and unprofitable," and the sweep of his supplication, that under the influence of the truth as it is in Jesus, we might become thoroughly devoted, "with all we are and all we have, all our time and all our faculties, our whole soul and our whole strength," to the service of the Lord in the Gospel.

In a letter addressed to Dr Cunningham by one of his students, there is a passage which many of them would endorse. The writer is asking that a work published by him may be noticed in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, of which Dr Cunningham was then Editor:—

"It would be a great joy to me to think that you liked this effort of mine. I know that you will regard it with favour; for I know that you love all your old students in some such way as a father loves his children. I would rather have the notice from your hand than anybody's; because I know either your praise or your blame will be deserved."

One other specimen of the mode of feeling cherished and expressed towards him, shall close this chapter:—

"My Dear Dr Cunningham,—

"It is with no small trepidation that I venture on sending you a copy of this little volume. I have still a most vivid remembrance of the report that came to us ———ians, of what a terrible fellow Cunningham was,—so we speak of our superiors behind their backs,—and how terrible was the havoc he made of the Latin discourses delivered to him; and then I well remember the agonies of my six months' composition of my Latin discourse; and how, with fear and trembling, it was brought up and put in the lion's paw—

and how awful was the announcement of the day when it should be judged, and —as I feared—condemned. And oh the relief and joy of the sentence, that it was 'a highly respectable performance, and might serve as a model to other students'—for so highly, I pray you to remember, you spoke of my thesis. Well, I say, remembering all this, it is with fear and trembling that I again venture into the lion's den, having got once so creditably out.

"If I only had you in a corner of my pew in ——— Church, instead of that critical chair of yours, I would not be so afraid of you. If I had only the help of my voice, and were speaking *ex cathedra*, I could find hope, but——[Here follows a blank.]

"I am sure you will be glad to know that, despite of all difficulties and discouragements and drawbacks, I have steadily adhered to the good old way of lecturing; and that I am able to report that I have not been once in my pulpit in a forenoon without a lecture fully written out.

"I am sure also that you will be glad to be told that in all the heavy debates of the past years, I have remained leal to my old professor, and that though I have not had the pleasure and privilege of fighting under you, yet I have rejoiced to strike as many blows as I could as a volunteer. I never weary thinking lovingly of you for all your noble qualities, and thank God on your behalf that he enabled you to stand fast in the midst of all the obloquy you had to endure.

"I often thought of writing, just to say that I was of your part, and stood in the breach, or in the pillory if you like, and rejoiced to take my share of the balls or viler missiles that were hurled at you.

"Of this be sure, that you have the thorough and cordial approval of at least one honest man. And if I had not felt that to even a very great man, and from a very small man, this utterance would be valuable, I had not made it.

"May you long be preserved and strengthened in the outer and inner man for your work. And may you have many students that do you more credit—few you can have that love and esteem you more and better than, my dear Dr Cunningham, your old student and humble friend, ———."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS.*

CONTEMPORANEOUSLY with his return from America, and his entrance on the duties of his Professorship, Dr Cunningham found himself called to exert influence on the constitution of the Free Church, and on the course of her affairs. His position laid him under special responsibilities with reference to the wise guidance of the Disruption Church. He engaged cordially and strenuously in the departments of work which called for his services. His own tastes would have led him to study, and when necessary, to the discussion of questions of principle. But he took his share conscientiously in the practical administration of the Church; and here his great gift was a calm sagacity with reference to the objects to be aimed at and the line to be taken,—a sagacity which recoiled instinctively from confusion, exaggeration, and extravagance. He was accustomed to underrate his own capacity for details and for Committee work, and to express unbounded and unfeigned admiration for the measure of the administrative capacity and energy which were displayed by one or two of his distinguished coadjutors. But he was far removed from the littleness of affecting to regard necessary Church work as beneath him, and withdrawing to a more cosmopolitan position. At a later period, he did withdraw for some years almost entirely from Church work, except that which necessarily devolved upon him as head of his College; and he formed for the time a very strong impression of the undesirableness of his engaging afresh in some forms and kinds of it. But his abiding disposition was to render service frankly wherever he could render it, even where he was disposed to think that *his* service could only be subsidiary and

subordinate. It was not often, in point of fact, of so humble a rank.

The reader will be at no loss to understand that the exposition of the principles of the Free Church, when occasion called for it, was a duty for which Dr Cunningham was always ready, after the Disruption as before it. To dwell on this, or to give specimens of his manner of statement, would be only to reiterate what has been amply illustrated in previous pages, and is still more largely contained in his published works.* It is proper, however, to place on record the remarks which he made in 1846 when moving in the General Assembly the adoption of the "Act upon the Formula," which regulates the terms of office in the Free Church. These remarks will be found in the Appendix.†

It may be worth while to notice, in this connection, that a rather curious difference of opinion came to light some years after the Disruption, as to some of the ways in which Free Church principles might be stated. It had respect to the precise way in which the relation between those principles and the doctrine of our Lord's Headship of the Church visible—a relation asserted by all Free Churchmen—ought to be explained. The Duke of Argyll raised the point into prominence in 1848 by some criticisms on Free Church Statements in his "Presbytery Examined;" but the point already existed as a point of difference within the Free Church, and it gave rise to some lively little passages in 1857 and again in 1860.

Dr Cunningham's way of regarding this topic will appear from the following passage, taken from an article in the *North British Review*, vol. x., p. 453 :—

"We have taught no doctrine on the subject of the Headship of Christ but what we profess to prove from Scripture ; *and we have not brought forward the doctrine of Christ's Headship as furnishing directly and immediately the proper ground or reason of anything we have done ourselves or have called upon others to do.* We admit that the only inference directly and immediately deducible from the doctrine of Christ's sole Headship is, that every intimation which He has given of His will as to the constitution and government of His Church, and the

* The seventh and three following chapters of "Discussions on Church Principles" may be especially referred to.

† See Appendix D.

manner in which the administration of its affairs should be conducted, ought to be implicitly obeyed. We admit further that this general inference does not directly and of itself, afford a full vindication of the proceedings which led to the Disruption; and that with that view it is needful, in addition, to establish from Scripture the doctrines of the exclusive supremacy of the Bible, and the exclusive jurisdiction of ecclesiastical office-bearers, as involved in or flowing from the doctrine of Christ's sole Headship. It is with these two doctrines of the exclusive supremacy of the Bible and the exclusive jurisdiction of ecclesiastical office-bearers, that we directly and immediately connect the formal defence of our cause as a question of dialectics. We do not introduce the doctrine of Christ's Headship as affording a distinct and independent argument on which to rest our vindication, but rather as the basis and foundation of these two subordinate, but still important truths, the application of which, to the practical matter in hand, constitutes the direct and proper argument on which we rest our case, and with which we call our opponents to deal.

"The Headship of Christ, then, is not to be regarded in this matter as a distinct or separate doctrine from the exclusive supremacy of the Bible and the exclusive jurisdiction of ecclesiastical office-bearers, or as introducing any new and independent element immediately into the strict and proper argumentation of the question; but as a great general Scripture principle including or comprehending these two doctrines, furnishing the basis on which they rest, the source from which they spring, the point to which they are attached. The right use and application of the doctrine of Christ's Headship in the present question, is not that it should be held forth as the direct and immediate ground of the precise argument by which the course pursued by the Free Church is to be defended against opponents; but rather that it should be employed to enforce the importance of the doctrines comprehended under it and flowing from it, on which the strict argument more immediately depends, to illustrate the deep responsibility connected with the faithful maintenance and the full and honest application of these doctrines, and to animate and encourage to an uncompromising discharge of the Church's duty with respect to everything involved in, or flowing from, or in any way connected with 'the crown rights of the Redeemer,' to whatever dangers she may in consequence be exposed. This was the use and application of the doctrine of Christ's Headship by the Scottish Presbyterians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and this is the use and application made of it by Free Churchmen. No other use or application of it is required by any of the principles they have ever professed, or by any of the arguments they have employed in defence of them, and no other is needed for the full vindication of the cause they have pursued."

Holding these views, he was disposed to admit that some measure of confusion and exaggeration had occasionally been manifested in

the way in which our Lord's Headship over the Church was referred to and brought into the argument. And he reckoned it of some importance that the views just now cited, with respect to its proper place, should be had regard to and applied. The topic, however, bearing merely on a detail as to the mode of exhibiting argument, never attracted much attention.

The Free Church meanwhile had been enjoying a measure of success which, before the Disruption, it would have been deemed madness to anticipate. Funds increased, congregations multiplied, schools arose, mission schemes were prosecuted with increasing energy. A measure of successs was achieved, attended, no doubt, with some of the temptations which such success brings with it, but yet in the highest degree encouraging. A certain relaxation, or backward eddy, about 1848, had no permanent bad effect, although it led to a good deal of discussion, and to some revision of the administrative system. Questions more or less connected with this will meet us again. Meanwhile, the same years were raising various questions with respect to the public action of the Church, and the relation which she ought to sustain to institutions and societies outside of her own borders. With these were mingled others, less directly concerning the Church as such, because her means of influencing them by ecclesiastical action were small, but very interesting to her members as Christian citizens.

The reader can hardly need to be reminded that the years preceding and following the middle point of the century were many ways eventful. History probably will count them still more important for the silent development of forces tending to change. than even for the events which arrested so forcibly the attention of mankind. We are not here concerned with the influences which wrought or came to light in the fields of European or of British politics. But the development of the results of Tractarianism, and the counter development of Broad Churchism, revealed the currents which were running in the Church of England. Rome came forward with an audacity unprecedented for generations to reap the fruits which seemed to be offered to her. Irish difficulties made continual progress towards the results which have recently been reached. More than

all, and urged on by all these influences, new ways of conceiving the relation of states to religion and to churches, made continual progress among political men, and modified more and more decidedly the alternatives that were practically open upon a class of questions which always move profoundly the heart of nations. Such a period of change intensifies all controversies, and sets new controversies agoing. The Free Church, trained by her experience to intense precision in theory, and yet suddenly subjected to a very great change of actual position and relations, could not but feel the liveliest interest in all this. In dealing with the questions arising for herself in her new position, a lively consciousness of the forces at work around could not but be present whether these were regarded as forces to be resisted, or as in some degree to be taken advantage of and utilised.

During a period of twelve or fourteen years following his return from America, the life of Dr Cunningham resolves into a statement of the views he put forth on current public questions. The matters with respect to which we find him exerting influence—say from 1844 to about 1857 or 1858—do not admit of being taken up in chronological order. The only recourse is to group them according to their intrinsic character, and dispose of them successively.

It is of some importance to have correct conceptions of the medium through which, in those days, Free Churchmen were apt to contemplate public questions. Thus we shall best understand the problems arising for those on whose guidance and advice that Church mainly relied.

With this view, we must recall the tone of sentiment prevailing in the Church generally. A fugitive publication recently issued speaks truly of "the peculiar glow, the moral elevation and exhilaration of the years which succeeded the Disruption. In the case of many good men, who had taken risk and suffered loss for a cause which they deemed to be the cause of Christ, this was nothing else than the Spirit of glory and of God resting on them. In the case of many who were not so spiritual, it was the contagious

enthusiasm which a worthy cause, guided by high-hearted leaders, always propagates through the ranks of its adherents. In the case of the Church generally, it was the feeling of sympathy with a great movement; a movement believed to be authenticated from on high, felt also to be borne on below by whatever in the Church was manly, generous, and self-forgetting. People who are themselves no heroes feel, in being associated with such a movement, a touch of the heroic, which elevates and expands them. Mingling with all this, there was much humility, prayer, gratitude, dependence on God, expectation, and hope. In the skirts of it, there was, no doubt, a good deal of pride, vanity, and assumption. We were, I fear, rather intolerable to the other churches in those days, as a company lost in mutual gratulations. Yet with all our faults, the mode of feeling which prevailed among us was not in the main unworthy. No Free Churchman who shared it will ever think so. It was an experience never to be forgotten; always to be gratefully looked back upon. It made men capable of larger thoughts, and greater deeds, and more willing endurance. It will abide with us till we die, as one of the things for the sake of which a man is glad to have lived. And it was attended, as I say, with a singular glow and exhilaration. It was a kind of 'mount,' from which we had no wish and no intention to come down."

The writer follows up his description with applications which have been strongly contested. We have no concern with these in this place. It is enough to remark, that a church animated by the temper thus described, so united, energetic, and enthusiastic, might be expected to exert a vigorous influence on public questions as they arose. Yet this impulse was subject to some peculiar modifications due, in a measure, to that same Disruption "glow."

The main thing to be kept in view, is the tendency to a high and somewhat defiant idealism which the whole experience of the Free Church had strongly tended to develop. For years the Church had been carrying on an anxious struggle with the courts of law, with statesmen, with political parties. Her convictions in regard to principle and duty had continually become clearer and more intense as the struggle went on. The object of it had been to

secure, if possible, some mode of arrangement,—imperfect it might be, and not free from elements of restraint, hardship, and injustice, —yet such as might allow her honestly to abide by her own convictions, such as should not impose upon her the necessity of denying her own principles. The struggle had been peculiarly weary and harassing, full of temptation, involving constant dangers to the Church's consistency and integrity. It ended in failure. Then the Church shook herself clear of all entanglements, reasserted her own principles in their highest form, and moved out, free to apply them at her own discretion,—henceforth under obligation to reckon with nothing and with no one, save with conscience and her own convictions, about her Lord's will. The relief was immense:—great in its deliverance from harassment and worry; but almost infinitely greater still in its deliverance from anxious and entangling questions regarding duty. To be done with all that, to be breathing the free fresh air, to have a church articulately one in all her principles, obliged to reckon with no one about her principles, and called only to work heartily on the foundation which these supplied—this was one of the felt blessings of the Disruption.

But then, public questions as they arose, brought inevitably in their wake that weary question about the practical and the practicable; and also that anxious question as to whether the practicable may be accepted, concurred in, promoted, in consistency with principle. For what was practicable depended of course on the social, ecclesiastical, and political forces extant at the time; and those forces were far from being all or always orthodox in the Free Church sense. If she entered on this new field, the Church must have to transact again with the old parties; transacting on matters no doubt less vitally connected with her own duty than before, but still important enough. This was very unwelcome; and hence arose a considerable disposition in the Free Church to hold aloof somewhat from those questions, and to hold herself, as it were, above them. It might be all well to reiterate her settled principles, which shewed clearly enough the full duty of states and churches; but to take part again in questions of more or less, of possible concessions and practical adjustments—were we not too weary of work of that kind, and too

distrustful of those we had to deal with, and too happy in being as we were? Moreover, the self-reliant temper of the Disruption came in to aid this feeling. Were there important public interests more or less connected with those questions? Well, why should the Free Church be afraid to take them up at her own hand? If, in addition to strict church work, there were interests bearing more or less on religion and morals, why not undertake to care for them by her own sole and independent action? "Let us work out these problems our own way, and leave other people alone. If money is to be raised, we have learned that it can be raised. If institutions are wanted, they can be created. Perhaps we can do the work ourselves; and can do it with the vigour and the freedom proper to those who understand one another, who have the same principles, and interests, and ends." This temper might have led the Church to undertake responsibilities too heavy for her; it might have lured her beyond the proper line of church action, and it might have induced her to forego her proper share of activity and responsibility in the way of procuring a national settlement of those questions which the nation ought to settle, as part of its own business.

It ought to be added, that the strong sense of unity existing in the Free Church operated in a somewhat similar direction. The Church was constituted, of course, of those who were intensely united in principle; that union of heart and judgment had been consecrated by many earnest prayers and communings, and sealed by common sacrifices and common efforts. The sense of it was very delightful; and the desire to continue always and only to pull together was very strong. It seemed easier to make sure of that by reiterating simply the common principles, and pursuing earnestly the immense and various work opening before the Church. New public questions might lead to diversities of judgment; they might even lead to questions as to the course demanded or permitted by the Church's confessed principles, and might thus occasion painful imputations. The approach of the first discussion deserving the name of a debate, in the Assembly, a couple of years after the Disruption, was contemplated with a kind of awe, and repeated congratulations

were uttered as it drew to a close, that it had passed off in so worthy and brotherly a spirit.

It may be understood, therefore, that it was with a certain air of çaution and reluctance that the Free Church began to take up public questions, at least in so far as taking them up involved the recognition of an obligation to combine with other parties to carry them through to a practical result. And in dealing with them, a certain divergence immediately began to appear. The great body of the Church recognised the obligation to lend help to carry public questions to the best solution the case admitted of, by those means and steps which existing circumstances indicated as reasonable and fitting; taking care at the same time to do nothing really inconsistent with the Church's own principles. Dr Cunningham constantly lent his influence and his advice to guide the Church in this path, and in this all the leading men of the Disruption were substantially at one, though minor differences emerged. To others, this course seemed fitted to obscure the ideal completeness of the Church's position, and to lower her testimony; and they were wont to express a fear that it involved a want of faithfulness to her principles. They would have had the Church to indicate, in regard to each question, the complete ideal solution which, if men and things were what they ought to be, the Church's principles would suggest: and they advised her to decline action and responsibility in connection with any partial or imperfect schemes. This party was always small. Their method would have involved simply an obstinate blindness to the conditions under which we work in this world. But it was the extreme manifestation of a tendency which every one felt. And so, even in the larger party, there remained always a strong reluctance to move far from the high table-land of the pure idea; a strong tendency to debate anxiously, at every step, the question of consistency and of fidelity to first principles.

In particular, and on one class of questions, differences of opinion were found arising from the fact, that while the members of the Free Church maintained their principles unchanged, they had experienced, providentially, a very great change of position. Heretofore, they had worked as a Church strongly planted within the

constitution of the country. They had sought to secure the Christian order and good of the community in the way which naturally offers itself to an Established Church—that is to say, they tried to maintain and strengthen the connection between the Church and the various institutions which surrounded it. This could still be maintained in theory; but for practice, the essential *datum* of a defensible Established Church had departed. Now, no one wished to spend time or strength on attacking the Establishment as such; the Establishment could be let alone. But what was to be done about those national institutions, such as universities and schools, which the Establishment claimed to carry in its train? Some wished the Church to keep as near as possible to the old modes of utterance; the Church should simply say, let the Government establish the right Church, and *so* maintain the old tests, and the old arrangements. To say this, and only this, might involve the annihilation of the influence of the Free Church for practical purposes; but it was the language which, in their view, she was bound to hold. But others maintained that the very same ends which the Church had always aimed at, must now be sought along an altered line of action. A revolution, for which the Free Church was not responsible, had altered all the conditions. The Church ought to make up her mind what was *now* the right mode of regulating and influencing such institutions, so as to make the best of existing circumstances; and she ought to declare for that frankly. This was the line which the Church, on the whole, steadily adopted. Naturally, however, it was often difficult to arrive at a harmonious judgment regarding the way in which the old ends should be sought amid the new conditions; particularly as the Church always wished to combine with her action a clear disclaimer of responsibility for those elements in the altered condition of public affairs which her own principles led her to condemn.

Some of the questions, then, which arose during ten or fifteen years after the Disruption had reference to the relations which ought to subsist between the Free Church and other bodies of Christians, especially the disestablished Presbyterian bodies. Hitherto the dividing line between Established and non-Established had

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settled the relations in a simple, practical way. Now that barrier had vanished, and what should be thought of the remaining barriers became a more obvious and urgent question. That, again, was only part of the larger question, viz., What principles ought to regulate the relations of individual Christians and Churches to one another?

Another class of questions had respect to the attitude and action of the State towards religious and ecclesiastical interests. The right and duty of the State to aid the cause of Christ had been strenuously asserted before the Disruption, and there was not the least disposition to renounce the assertion now. But the doubt came now far more pressingly than ten or twelve years before, What if the pretext of aiding Christ's cause comes to be the means of doing, and the temptation to do, the very opposite? It was not merely the changed position of the Free Church—now extruded, and no more able to point to a single defensible Establishment—which raised this doubt so forcibly. The whole train of causes which brought about the Disruption as one of their effects were still in full and increasing operation. The moral and spiritual awakening, the intensifying of men's convictions for good and for evil, the general regress to first principles which marked the century, constituted a set of elements persistently operating and ever presenting new problems. The changes in the civil constitution, of which the Roman Catholic Relief Bill was a part and a type, constituted another set of elements, not less fruitful. Principles were everywhere at work which led to churches and churchmen being more pronounced, definite, uncompromising. Principles were also at work which more and more inclined the Legislature to hold itself incompetent to decide, and absolved from the duty of deciding, between them.

On such terms the existing arrangements became both confusing and dangerous. The Church of England presented one great problem, too arduous to admit of hasty judgment. That of Ireland presented another, perhaps admitting of more certain and confident solution. The claims of Romanism, ever pressing more to the front, supplied a strong reason for looking at existing arrange-

ments, and judging of them, not according to abstract theory merely, but according to their practical tendency.

Closely connected with this Church and State question was a group of Education questions—sufficiently near the former to be involved, to a large extent, in the same perplexities—sufficiently distinct to require the application of principles appropriate to themselves. They constitute a third division, to be considered separately.

For reasons of convenience I shall invert the order of the second and third groups, and take education in the second place. These various matters, along with some debated questions relative to the internal economy of the Free Church, will occupy the next four or five chapters. Chronologically, as I have said they stretch over a period of about thirteen years, *i. e.*, to 1857.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *ALLIANCE AND UNION MOVEMENTS.*

AS the present century approached its middle point, the cultivation of friendly feeling between Evangelical Protestants—always recognised as right in theory, often overlooked in practice—began to engage the minds of men in different countries. The growing zeal of the Church of Rome, and the development of Tractarianism in the Church of England, acted as admonitions to genuine Protestants to close their ranks. The subject was early taken up in Scotland. The Disruption, though it formed a new ecclesiastical division, was not felt to be a discouragement; indeed, the position in which the Free Church had now been providentially placed, rather tended to facilitate a practical understanding between various sections of the community. The initiative, however, did not come from the Free Church, but from the Secession. A layman of that body, the late John Henderson of Park, a man of high character, large means, and great Christian benevolence, had been led to take up this subject, and he devoted himself to it with unwavering zeal and expectation. Of a most catholic spirit himself, he became the pivot and rallying point for all men of like tendencies in his own religious denomination, and he did much to awaken a responsive feeling elsewhere. Probably, it was in no small measure due to his influence that steps were taken by members of Synod of the United Secession Church in May 1845, towards ascertaining the possibility of something like public and declared alliance between ministers and members of different Protestant Churches. A public meeting was held which drew attention to the subject. And in the General Assembly of the

Free Church, which met immediately afterwards, a Committee was "authorised to represent the Free Church in any conference bearing on the subject of Christian Union, but only with power to appear along with the representatives of other bodies for the purpose of consultation on the subject." In the same year conferences began to be held (especially at Liverpool in the month of October), and the proceedings thus taken resulted in the formal inauguration of the Evangelical Alliance in the month of August 1846.

Dr Cunningham attended the Liverpool conference, took part in its proceedings, was deeply gratified by the spirit which pervaded them, and approved of the principles on which they were based. He reported to his presbytery to that effect on his return. At the same time he guarded against the idea, that such a demonstration as the Evangelical Alliance might constitute, embodied the ultimate aim. It was well that Christian men and ministers should recognise one another's Christianity, own their claims to mutual regard, pledge themselves to renewed watchfulness against the manifestation of an unbrotherly spirit in discussing the differences which still divided their Churches, and hold themselves ready to co-operate in matters on which they were agreed. But as Dr Cunningham reminded the Presbytery, the ultimate object to aim at was entire agreement in all points. "They were somewhat in danger of overlooking this, that so long as the Christian Church was broken up by denominational differences, there was something wrong, something to be deplored, something for which to be humbled, and an important object still to be gained." He added his impression, from what he had seen at Liverpool, that a higher measure of Christian union, and more important results as the fruit of it might with reason be more confidently expected, and more earnestly prayed for.

Meanwhile, however, a measure of doubt and disapprobation began to be expressed within the Free Church itself. It was thought, it appears, by some, that the Alliance might trench injuriously on the province of the Church, as the Divine institution for expressing and giving effect to the unity of believers. It was thought, moreover,

that the drawing out of a few selected topics, however important, as the basis of the Alliance, must have the effect of throwing into undue subordination, as comparatively unimportant, the points which divided the Churches, and, therefore, *e. g.*, the points for which the Free Church had felt called upon to contend and testify. Finally, a doubt was felt how far the Free Church as a Church, was or might be compromised and committed to the Alliance and to its basis; for those who had taken part in the Liverpool conference were prominent members of the Assembly's Committee on Union, and it was feared that through that Committee the Church might be made responsible for steps on which there was not unanimous agreement in the Church herself. A large number of Free Churchmen did not feel called upon to join the Alliance, mainly from a doubt whether any important object was likely to be secured by it. But they had no wish to question the right of those to join it who chose to do so. In point of fact, almost all the leading names in the Free Church were enrolled in the Alliance. A small party of extreme men continued to promote action in the Church courts with the purpose of damaging the Alliance, and dissuading the Church from countenancing it. For a little while this attempt looked somewhat formidable.

In connection with this state of affairs, a conference was summoned* in order to full consultation on all the bearings of the subject. It was held early in March 1846, and as the result of it, the explanations tendered to the Commission of the General Assembly, which met in that month, were unanimously accepted as satisfactory.†

When the Assembly met in May a finding substantially equivalent to that of the Commission in March was adopted. But it was not adopted without discussion. A counter-motion, intended to bear more unfavourably on the Alliance and its friends, was proposed by Mr, now Dr Gibson, and seconded by Mr M'Gilvray of Keith, and a full debate followed, which was noticed at the time as the first

* By Drs Chalmers, Cunningham, R. Buchanan, Smyth, Candlish, and M'Farlan.

† It was agreed, at the same time, that the Committee, as a Committee, should do nothing more at present in the matter with which it had been charged.

formal debate in the Free Church Assembly since the Disruption. Dr Cunningham spoke briefly. He pointed out that the fallacy of the party he opposed lay in ascribing to the Alliance the character of a Church, and applying to it and its proceedings the tests applicable to a Church, while the Alliance and its friends explicitly disclaimed for it any such character; and he strongly deprecated needless Church decisions on the points raised. The adverse motion found only seven supporters in a house of between three and four hundred members.

The Evangelical Alliance hardly justified the expectations at one time formed of it, probably because it devoted itself too much to mere demonstration of brotherly love, and failed to find a path of effective labour either in promoting substantial Christian work, or in opposing anti-Christian influences and efforts. But it served an important purpose at the time; it strongly turned men's minds to some important duties which are often overlooked for want of a summons to regard them; and it afforded a pleasant and profitable meeting-place for men who were not ordinarily brought together in the sphere of their common life, or who, in that sphere, had become alienated from one another. In Dr Cunningham's own case, the Alliance meetings became the occasion of a re-approximation with his old friend, Dr John Brown, of the United Secession Church, During the Voluntary controversy a collision had occurred, which has already been referred to. At one of the meetings of the Alliance, several members adverted to the usual acrimony of debate, as an evil to be deplored, acknowledged that they were themselves chargeable with it, and expressed their desire to cultivate more watchfulness and self-control in any future discussions. Dr Brown was in the chair. Dr Cunningham rose to support a resolution on the subject moved by Mr Bickersteth, and remarked, that as confessions were the order of the day, he had his to make also. Having done so in general terms, like those who preceded him, he made a marked allusion in closing, to the circumstance that he had been led in the heat of controversy to speak of Dr Brown in terms which he now regretted. "I have peculiar satisfaction," he added, "in making such acknowledgments in an assembly where

you, sir, preside." The thing was so done, as to make a very deep impression on all present; and Dr Brown, who was greatly gratified, immediately expressed his sense of the magnanimity of the declaration, and of the degree in which it exalted its author in his esteem.*

If this passage was interesting to the bystanders, it was much more interesting to Dr Cunningham. Dr Brown added to his known theological accomplishments, and to his influence in his own denomination, a Christian character of great purity and intensity. To be in a position to express freely his regard for such a man, was to Dr Cunningham very gratifying. Henceforth, though he differed from his friend on some points, and never avoided resolute discussion of the questions on which they differed, he gladly took opportunities of giving expression to the regard he felt. He did so especially on the occasion of Dr Brown's "jubilee," with a warmth and earnestness which were fully appreciated by Dr Brown's friends.

### UNION PROJECTS.

The idea of union with the Original Seceders—the body of which Dr M'Crie, the author of the "Life of Knox," was so great an ornament,—arose naturally very soon after the Disruption. That body differed from the Free Church mainly in the place they gave to the historical obligations imposed on the church and country of the Covenant. There could be no great difficulty on the side of the Free Church; for ministers and members of her communion were free to hold, if they chose, the descending obligation of the covenants, and a few of them did so, in point of fact. The mere circumstance that the Original Seceders might not in every point adopt the view of historical facts and rights which prevailed in the Free Church, was not allowed to form a barrier. The main difficulty was felt on the side of the Original Seceders themselves, who had to settle the question whether they should merge themselves in a body, not prepared to adopt and advocate, *as a body,* the peculiar

* I find a difference of recollection as to the details of this scene, and think it safest to follow, in the main, the account given in Dr Cairns's Life of Dr Brown.

principles on which Original Seceders had testified. As usual, this resolved into the question as to what was the substance and essence of principle, and what its mere outward form. In the end, the Original Secession, by a large majority, decided on joining the Free Church; but a certain number had scruples which could not be overcome, and they did and do retain a separate position. I have no call to write the history of this negotiation. I may mention, however, that in 1847, a document was brought forward in the General Assembly, which it was proposed to send down to presbyteries for consideration, as an exposition of the testimony of the Free Church. It was understood at the time that one object in view was to present a testimony in a form which should be as far as possible satisfactory to the brethren of the Original Secession, and which might facilitate the union. Accordingly, the document dwelt on the past attainments of the Scottish Church, on the engagements made at different times with a view to thorough reformation, and on the obligations and responsibilities thus entailed on the Scottish Church, and on all who claimed to be its representatives. In stating these points, the peculiar views of the Covenanters were not adopted, but a certain approximation, in language at least, was visible. This document was brought forward by Dr Candlish, and was supported by Dr Cunningham, both of them admitting that it would be unreasonable to pledge the Assembly to it in detail, but advocating its being sent to presbyteries for consideration. There was not time, however, for full and satisfactory discussion, and besides, a strong and emphatic opposition to some portions of the document was expressed by some members of Assembly. It was therefore withdrawn. In the course of his speech on this occasion, Dr Cunningham took occasion to explain how far he could go in the direction of what, in Scotland, is called Cameronianism, and at what point he felt compelled to halt. The discussion on this subject is one of those curious and intricate pieces of argument of which our Scottish soil has proved fertile; and those who care to see what Dr Cunningham thought of it, may consult his speech in the Assembly proceedings for 1847.

The final union with the Original Seceders took place in 1852.

The formal motion on that occasion was seconded by Sir George Sinclair, who might claim a special interest in the proceedings, for he had been an older labourer in the cause of Presbyterian reunion than almost any man then present.

### SIR GEORGE SINCLAIR'S RESOLUTIONS.

For the sake of grouping together matters which have a common character, a project will be here disposed of which was developed much later, near the end of the period now before us. The object contemplated was an ultimate union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians. In a letter from Sir George Sinclair to the late Mr Mackenzie of Dunfermline, I find it referred to in the following terms:—

"In 1857, it was my anxious wish to effect a union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians. In this effort I was strenuously supported by Dr Guthrie, Dr A. Thomson, and Dr Harper. Mr George Dalziel gave me most valuable and efficient aid, and the Earl of Dalhousie took that prominent lead to which his great talents and powerful influence so well entitled him. Dr Cunningham attended more than one meeting at my house, and expressed his decided approval of the measure, though he stated at the same time that his official position prevented him from taking as active a part as he otherwise would have done. I found him, however, on all occasions most frank and most conciliatory, and deeply impressed with the importance of effecting a cordial union amongst the various unendowed Presbyterian bodies in Scotland. Eight years have now elapsed without any result having been obtained. Many of the active friends of the measure have been removed by death, and I do not myself expect to live to witness the consummation of my wishes."

The bearing of Sir George's statement may be better understood by the following explanation:—

Some years before the Original Seceders united with the Free Church, the United Secession had completed its union with the Relief Church. The United Presbyterian body, thus constituted, formed a very influential communion. Constant co-operation in

Christian enterprises brought the leading ministers and laymen of the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches into much friendly intercourse, and promoted mutual appreciation. Voluntaryism remained as a dividing influence; but on principles explained by Mr Dunlop and Dr Cunningham in 1845,* it had no great effect in producing divided action; the principles and interests of both Churches alike led them to withstand steadily the claims of the Established Church; and as regards the question of National Education, on which some difference could not fail to come to light, means had been found, by the year 1853 or 1854 at latest, for promoting common and concerted action. All this indicated the importance of promoting still more thoroughly a friendly and cordial feeling between the two denominations. As an expression of this feeling, a breakfast was held in Edinburgh in June 1855, attended by leading members of the Edinburgh Presbyteries of the two churches. Dr Cunningham was one of those who called the meeting, and who attended it. The object, as I have said, extended no farther than to promote brotherly feeling. Next year, indeed, at a similar meeting, held in the month of March, some rather vague ideas on "confederation" seem to have been thrown out; but there is no reason to think that Dr Cunningham was in any degree responsible for them. In 1857, however, the idea of incorporation was put formally before the churches, as we have seen, and created a good deal of attention and of discussion.

It was very natural that the friendly relations which existed should awaken in some minds the question, whether a closer and more permanent union could not be effected; and this, again, raised the question whether Voluntaryism, as it in point of fact existed among the United Presbyterians, and the Establishment principle, as it was maintained in the Free Church, involved an amount of difference such as to warrant and require continued separation. The unions which began to be contemplated and carried out in the colonies among Presbyterian Churches, representing all the branches of the Presbyterian Church at home, could not but give an impulse to these views. At the same time, a

* See Chapter XXI.

very strong sense of the difficulties to be overcome was present to the minds of most men. In the Free Church especially, there was, for reasons already stated, a strong disinclination to any step that would alter the existing composition of the body, and tend to vary its historic identity, as a union on a large scale must necessarily do. At least equally strong was the indisposition to be forced into discussion about the amount of latitude in regard to Church and State questions which might consist with essential principle. Men did not want to be forced to think out that topic; they shrank, also, from the possible misunderstandings which might arise out of the discussion. Many were not disposed to think it likely that a union could be effected on safe and satisfactory grounds, and others were at least inclined to reckon the difficulties great, and the prospect of success remote. It is probable that even those who were then prepared, in point of principle, to advocate union, would not so soon have mooted the question publicly, had not a new force appeared upon the scene, in the person of Sir George Sinclair.

Sir George Sinclair had manifested a lively interest in the evangelical revival of the Church of Scotland. He had taken a prominent and creditable part in the efforts made to abolish Patronage. When the Disruption was drawing near, he interposed with a proposal, designed to avert the catastrophe and produce an understanding between the Church and the Government. His plan, beyond all doubt well intended, proved, however, to be unsatisfactory, and the Church felt constrained to decline committing herself to it. Vexed at the failure of this effort to avert the Disruption, and believing that if his advice had been followed the substantial interests would have been secured, he had remained for some time connected with the Established Church. But in 1851 he found he could stay no longer, and he publicly announced his adherence to the Free Church. He "arrived at the conclusion, that as I am unable to act in matters of grave importance with the most respectable and influential office-bearers of the Establishment, it is more becoming in me to retire from its communion than to remain a reluctant spectator of proceedings for which, as a member of that Church, I might to a certain extent be held responsible, but which

my heart and conscience condemn." He took this step, he added, without one companion or adviser. From that time he acted as an elder of the Free Church, and resumed that place among many old friends, which was due not less to his character than to his accomplishments.

One who knew Sir George well, has spoken of the "amazing catholicity of his temper." No one can read his biography without feeling the justice of the epithet. All sorts of men felt the charm of his disposition and of his attainments; with all sorts of men he established the most cordial relations. Joseph Hume and Wilson Croker, William IV. and Daniel O'Connell, Philpotts of Exeter and Charles Simeon, Charles X. of France and Sir Francis Burdett, Lord Roden and Mr Carlyle, Dr Candlish and Mr John Hope, the Dean of Faculty,—he appreciated and was appreciated by them all. No man could find it more easy to believe that mere personal antipathies and estrangements could be overcome: his whole life was an experimental testimony, in his own case at least, that they could. With all this, the same life made it plain that one main current shaped his course, that one great interest ruled over all others. A man who touched life at so many points, who felt the force of so many social attractions, was under no common temptations to sacrifice religious conviction to the impressions of the hour. All the more admirable was the decision with which he declared his principles; all the more impressive his evangelical earnestness and warmth, and the diligence in seeking to do good which characterised him to his latest hour.

The reunion of Scottish Presbyterians was not a new subject to Sir George. Thirty years before, he had corresponded on the subject with the elder M'Crie;* and a desire for this object had been one of the motives which animated his anti-patronage efforts. Then his hope had been that the Presbyterian Dissenters might be reunited to the Established Church. Now his thoughts turned to the possibility of combining those who, on various grounds and at various times, had separated from the State. In their case, the complications arising from statutes and legal decisions did not exist. If

* Life of Dr M'Crie, p. 291.

the Churches could be moved, the additional labour of moving the Government would not require to be undertaken.

The line of action which Sir George Sinclair was induced to take, was to draw up a set of resolutions on the subject of union between the two Churches, and the terms on which it might be effected, and to get them subscribed by influential elders and other laymen connected with both denominations. The critical point was the resolution which was to express the position of the united Church with respect to Voluntaryism. The late Mr Murray Dunlop has mentioned, that when Sir George brought the resolutions as originally drafted to him, he found that the resolution bearing on the point now referred to was couched in terms to which he could not accede. Sir George then requested him to draw up resolutions of his own. He did so, guiding himself by the views which he knew to prevail among the Voluntaries of America, and which, therefore, might, he thought, prove acceptable to Voluntaries in this country.

To this stage of the business, the testimony, spontaneously offered, of the Rev. W. Welsh of Broughton applies. Dr Cunningham visited Mr Welsh about the time referred to, and the subject naturally was touched upon as a topic of present interest. "I recollect," says Mr Welsh, "having some conversation with Dr Cunningham about the proposal for union between the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church, which emanated from some of the most distinguished elders of both churches. He informed me that Mr Murray Dunlop had, before signing the document, written to him, stating some difficulties, and asking his advice. He also informed me that in answer, he told Mr Dunlop that he saw that there were difficulties, but that if he were in Mr Dunlop's position he would take the responsibility of signing the proposal." Any one indeed who knows the peculiar relations then subsisting between Mr Dunlop and Dr Cunningham, can understand that the former would not be willing to take any public step towards a movement of this kind without being first assured that it was not disapproved by Dr Cunningham.

The resolutions, thus adjusted, were signed by a large and very influential body of office-bearers. A prefatory note states

that "nothing is further from their wishes or intentions than to excite any premature discussions in Church Courts or at public meetings, or any precipitate attempt to accomplish the great object which they have in view. Without committing themselves to any future line of action, their desire at present simply is, that the subject should be deliberately considered by the members of both Communions in the spirit of Christian brotherhood and love."

The resolutions bearing especially on the province of the State, are these:—

"VI. That in the judgment of both Communions it is a duty incumbent upon all men, and especially upon those in authority (from whom He who has given them much is entitled to expect the more), to recognise the paramount supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, as being the Governor among the nations, as well as the Supreme Head of his Church, and, consequently, to regulate their conduct, in whatever capacity, by his laws. But as those who entirely concur in all other ecclesiastical matters, may, and do, entertain different views as to the course which the State is bound to pursue in reference to the interests of the Church, and more especially on the question of endowment (some holding that one denomination should be supported at the public cost; others, that different sects should be so simultaneously and proportionally; and others, that the pastors should be maintained by the members of their own Communion), this point ought to be left as a question of forbearance, on which ministers and members may be allowed to entertain such a view as they deem most consonant with Scripture, and most conducive to the welfare of the Church,—more especially as any formal deliverance on this subject is of no practical consequence in the case of self-supporting Communions."

"VII. That both Communions attach equal and paramount importance to the predominance of the religious, and, more especially, of the Scriptural, element in all the schools and seminaries which are subject to their own influence and control. But that as not only among themselves, but in all denominations, considerable difference of opinion prevails as to the power and province of the State in reference to Education, it is not necessary that any fixed principle on this subject should be laid down in the event of a union being happily effected."

"VIII. That both Churches . . . concur in regarding it as the duty and province of a Christian legislature to enact such laws as are necessary, not for enforcing attendance on Divine worship, but for protecting against encroachments a privilege which ought, as far as possible, to be secured for all, of resting from their week-day occupations, and devoting the Lord's day to his service."

The Marquis of Breadalbane, the Earl of Kintore, and Lord Panmure—now Earl of Dalhousie—headed the list of signatures. A number of names of Free Churchmen, now gone from us, follow: Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, Mr Murray Dunlop, General Munro of Teaninich, Mr Dunlop of Craigton, Sir James Y. Simpson, Mr John Hunter, Mr George Dalziel, Mr John Maitland, Professor Makdougall, and Sheriff Jameson, are among the number. As first published, May 2. 1857, there were nearly seventy Free Church signatures, and about as many United Presbyterian.

The publication of this document produced a considerable sensation. A watchful trumpet in the West was immediately blown, and a strong disposition evinced to suppress the movement, if that were possible. To a great many, beyond all question, it was unwelcome, on the simple ground that they did not wish the question raised; they deprecated being laid under the necessity of deciding it themselves, and they deprecated the Church being entangled with it. An overture from Glasgow was to bring the matter before the Assembly with a view to "discourage" it, and it was understood that, in response to this challenge, a muster was made of the friends of the union resolutions to sustain their cause. Notices of motion were given,—by Dr Hanna on behalf of the signers, and by Dr Candlish, acting with Mr Gray of Perth, on the other side,—and a discussion seemed impending, which was regarded by some members of Assembly with a good deal of apprehension, while others thought it would do no harm. It was agreed, however, without debate, to "pass from the consideration of the overture;" and Sir George Sinclair's movement, though it gave a considerable impulse to the question in the general mind of the Church, subsided for the present, without assuming any regular ecclesiastical form.

As Dr Cunningham seems to have taken a friendly interest in the movement in its original form, so he took an interest in the defence of it when it seemed likely to be assailed. The Rev. John Purves of Jedburgh, states that being a member of Assembly in 1857, he agreed, at Dr Cunningham's request, to take part in the expected debate, in defence of the elders and their resolutions, and against the attack which, it was believed, was to be made upon them. At Dr

Cunningham's request also he attended along with him a meeting with Lord Dalhousie, where arrangements were made with a view to the discussion. Mr Purves has also stated publicly that "being a little nervous about such a step, and especially about the line of argument I meant to follow, I asked Dr Cunningham, with whom I was to spend the evening, if he would allow me to read the speech which I had written, and which out and out advocates the proposed union with the United Presbyterians. . . . I did so, and without, of course, committing himself to every individual expression, he gave to the main argument and object of the speech, which I still possess in MS., the sanction of his entire concurrence."

Dr Cunningham made no public appearance on this question, and no private MS. of his, bearing on the subject, has come to my knowledge. I have laid before the reader such testimonies, applicable to this passage of history, as I possess.

It is important to observe, however, how far these testimonies carry us. Dr Cunningham approved of the idea of union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians being kept in view, and he approved of the proposal of union, on the grounds stated in the resolutions, being brought before the Church. He "saw some difficulties;" but any attempt on the part of the Church to discountenance or frown down the movement, met with his decided disapprobation. It does not follow that he would have approved of an attempt to commit the Church, at that time, by action through her courts, or to involve her in direct negotiations. The resolutions themselves expressly disclaimed any such intention. The Church was still disinclined to be drawn into questions of this kind; an impression that division and mutual suspicion would follow in the wake of formal discussion with a view to speedy decision, existed in all quarters and among all sorts of men. Dr Cunningham certainly deferred to this feeling; I believe that he also shared it. He thought it right that the minds of men in both Churches should be turned to the subject; but he would probably have deprecated and discouraged any immediate ecclesiastical action.

# CHAPTER XX.

## *PUBLIC QUESTIONS CONTINUED.*

### EDUCATION.

THERE were three aspects in which the question of Education came before the Free Church, connected, 1, with her relation to the universities; 2, with her power of aiding the elementary education of the country; 3, with the influence she ought to exert on the construction of a sufficient national system. The second might be taken in connection with the topics of another chapter, but it is more convenient to include it here. All these matters attracted Dr Cunningham's attention, and interested him strongly. He took part in the discussion of them mainly as a churchman that is to say, as one concerned to ascertain the peculiar duty and responsibilities of the Church, and to guide her action. But he was eminently unsectarian in the general tendency of his thinking on these topics. He sympathised strongly with those who looked at the questions involved from the point of view of the nation and the citizen. Indeed, on these and on several other questions of the same mixed character, it was habitual with him to mark carefully the point at which the duty and responsibility of the Church, as such, ended; and he was often inclined to arrest Church action where others saw no difficulty in urging it on.

### UNIVERSITY TESTS.

The connection of the universities with the Church of Scotland had gradually become less absolute and exclusive than it had once been. The theological chairs alone continued to be occupied exclusively by ministers of that Church, who were also subject to

the Church's discipline. The only doubt here was whether the Professorship of Hebrew was to be reckoned, in all the universities, a theological chair. As regards the other chairs, the connection had become lax and nominal; the law, indeed, remained unaltered, but there had come about a gradual change in the practice, grounded partly on the peculiar character of the legal provisions. The law required every professor, before his induction, to sign a formula in which he declared his adherence to the Confession of Faith and to the Established Church. It was, in fact, a provision dictated by the spirit of our old constitution; which, in Scotland, was a constitution of defence not only against Popery, but against Prelacy also. As time wore on, however, feelings changed. We may claim credit in Scotland for this at least, loud as the charges against our bigotry may be, that no casuistical or sectarian difficulties have been allowed to interfere with the efficiency of our educational arrangements. By degrees men began to be appointed to the secular chairs who were not members of the Established Church, nor believers in the whole Confession. Moreover, it turned out that while the law required a precise and full subscription, it required nothing *but* subscription; there was no provision for ascertaining that the candidate was at the time of subscription, or afterwards continued to be, what his subscription declared. No penalty or forfeiture followed on his forsaking the Confession he had subscribed. Still further, while it was the duty of the Senatus of his college to see that the entrant on a professorship had subscribed the formula, no power was given to the Church in any of its courts, to seek a legal remedy in the event of the Senatus choosing to neglect its duty. Hence the subscription had the value which the subscriber himself chose to give it, and no more; while even the subscription, dubious as its value was, could not be enforced by the Church, nor by any party but the university authorities. In these circumstances diversities of practice arose. In some of the universities subscription was exacted, though it was kept up as a mere matter of form. In others, as in Edinburgh, the preferable practice prevailed of not imposing an obligation which was not to be observed or enforced, and subscription was not required of entrants on non-theological chairs.

At the Disruption, Free Churchmen who occupied Theological Chairs in the Universities resigned them, as a matter of course. But Free Churchmen in secular Professorships, as a matter of course also, maintained their positions. Every disposition to assail them was shewn on the part of the Establishment; for it was thought that the formal renunciation of the Establishment signed by Free Church ministers and elders might lay a sufficient legal ground for ousting them from their Chairs. The attempt failed; and Sir David Brewster, for instance, maintained his Principalship at St Andrews. But though Free Church Professors could not be ousted, it remained possible to prevent the admission of Free Churchmen nominated or presented to vacant Chairs. At Glasgow, for instance, every such nominee would be called on to declare his adherence to the Confession of Faith and to the Established Church. No doubt the statute would be sufficiently complied with, as there was every reason to believe, by a subscription accompanied by a declaration that it was given solely as a statutory formality, and in no other sense. But men of high feeling could not reconcile it to their conscience to subscribe so, nor could any Church encourage and recommend such a course. The case was hardest precisely for the man who had the best right to be admitted. A member of the Church of England might persuade himself that no important principle forbade him to swallow a formula of adherence to a Confession and a Church about which he knew little and cared less. Yet he was precisely the man whom the test was originally meant to exclude. A Free Churchman, on the other hand, could not put himself in the position of declaring adherence to a Church which only yesterday he had felt called upon expressly to renounce. Yet he was the man who most steadily maintained the principles which the test was originally designed to support. All this set the question of University Tests a-going. Besides the support of a certain number of Established Church laity, and a declaration of general concurrence from one or two of the ministers, the Free Church had the advantage of the cordial co-operation of the other Dissenters.

The question, however, as to the line to be taken was not free from difficulty. The ministers and members of the Free Church

held, not merely strongly, but enthusiastically, that states and nations are under obligation to the religion and Church of Christ. They had very recently maintained this principle in a most practical application of it, as members of an Established Church. They had strong convictions also of the importance of education being carried on in conformity with religious principle, and they believed that states and nations engaging in education ought to care for its being conducted in a right way. Further, they had all been accustomed to maintain, and to maintain strongly, that the Confession of Faith embodied the doctrinal *concordat* of Church and State in Scotland. Whatever objection there might be, therefore, to the tie which bound the Universities to the existing Establishment, there was every disposition to affirm the religious obligations of the State, and to do so, as nearly as possible, in the old way. Hence there were some who would have had the Church press for continued subscription to the Confession of Faith. Some even maintained that the Church's Claim of Right bound her to take up that ground; although they failed to follow the principle out to its legitimate conclusion, viz., that all Professors ought to sign adherence to the Free Church, and that the Church should demand that arrangement at the hands of the Government. A good deal of apprehension was manifested by some, who did not belong to either of these classes, lest the action of the Church should favour the views of those who regarded it as unwarrantable for the State to take any security for the religious character of those entrusted with the business of education. Dr Cunningham's view of this question (not peculiar to him, but advocated by all the leading men in the Church) may be shortly stated. He held that it was reasonable and right that the State should make provision for the religious and moral character of those whom it entrusted with the work of national education. Therefore he was not against tests, when tests were of such a kind, and used in such circumstances, as to afford ground to believe that they would tend to that result. With regard to the object which the State should aim at, he indicated clearly enough that he disapproved of restricting the secular Chairs to those who could sign the Confession of Faith, and held that

these Chairs in Scotland should be open, at any rate, to all Evangelical Protestants. He did not indicate any means by which the existence of this character in occupants of Chairs could be ascertained or secured on the part of the State. And I am inclined to think he would have conceded, and that the more readily as time advanced, that in existing circumstances there are no practical or attainable means of formally securing this which the State could be advised to adopt, except taking care to place the patronage in the hands of those who are likely to exercise it with a due regard to public opinion. But he argued that the existing tests, at any rate, were a mere hypocrisy, were in no sense a security for anything or against anything, and operated solely in the way of excluding from Professorships a certain number of conscientious men. Hence, he maintained that the mere abolition of them, without any further provision, would be a valuable improvement. On this ground he thought the bill for abolishing tests ought to be supported, as right so far as it went; while yet the Church might and should indicate that she thought it desirable that some means, in addition, should be taken to afford confidence to the religious public with respect to the proper selection of men. The petition from the Presbytery of Edinburgh, moved by Dr Candlish, and supported by Dr Cunningham, was to pass the bill, and also adopt such measures as may be necessary to render the Universities worthy of the confidence of the religious public.*

I have mentioned that Dr Cunningham expressed his disapprobation of men appointed to non-theological chairs in the national Universities being called upon to subscribe a theological statement so extensive as the Confession of Faith. I may add that, in order to evince the sincerity of his opinion on this point (for the imputation was not withheld that mere opposition to the Establishment was the source of the whole movement), he stated on a public

* The whole subject was discussed in the General Assembly of 1849. A motion conformed to the views now stated, and supported by Dr Cunningham, was carried by a majority of 190 to 29. The counter-motion, brought forward by Dr Gibson, was for maintaining subscription to the Confession of Faith, but not to the discipline of the Established Church.

occasion that even in her own College, maintained at her own expense, the Free Church had not required, in all cases, subscription to her Confession of those appointed to her chairs. In proof, he referred to the fact that Mr Isaac Taylor had been invited to occupy the Moral Philosophy Chair in the New College (ultimately filled by Professor Macdougall), although he was neither a Presbyterian, nor prepared to receive the whole doctrine of the Confession.*

The settlement of the question was considerably promoted by proceedings which took place in 1852. In the University of Edinburgh, by the consent of all parties, the test had been wholly disused for a long period, except in the case of theological chairs. On the retirement of Professor Wilson from the chair he had occupied so brilliantly, Mr Macdougall, at that time Professor of Moral Philosophy in the Free Church College, was elected to the vacant professorship in the University. No man probably ever existed less likely to abuse his influence for sectarian purposes than Professor Macdougall. The fact of his being a Free Churchman, however, roused the ire of a section of the ministers of the Established Church, and they stirred up a considerable ferment in some of the Church Courts. They appealed fervently to the Act of Security, which required the Professors in the national Universities to be properly tested, and they took legal opinions (which turned out, however, to be hopelessly adverse) on the question, Whether the Church had not power to insist on the statutory securities being observed? They did not venture, in the face of a public opinion all but unanimous, to maintain that in all cases the occupants of secular chairs should be persons qualified according to the statute. But they pleaded for the propriety of the Church having the power to secure herself when necessary by applying the test at her own discretion. They went the length of calling a special meeting of the Commission to face this grave emergency. A public meeting to expose and denounce their policy was immediately summoned by those, both in the Establishment and in the Dissenting bodies, who were against the tests. At this meeting Dr Cunningham

* Speech, October 1852.

appeared and spoke. The meeting of the Commission had not been unanimous, and the resolution proposed had been carried against a minority, embracing, beyond all doubt, the most weighty and enlightened members of the Court. Accordingly, Dr Cunningham expressed his satisfaction at finding himself opposed in this question, not to the Establishment, but only to a faction within it:—

"There are very few persons nowadays," he said, "who are prepared to maintain that subscription to the Westminster Confession ought to be required as a qualification for admission to the secular chairs of the Universities. There are very few men nowadays who will be found to maintain that the mere requirement of subscription to the Westminster Confession, or indeed to any document whatever, affords anything like security for its being believed in. There are nowadays very few who will come forward and openly venture to say that, in the existing condition of the community, it is right and just in itself, or for the interest of our academical institutions, that those selected to teach within their walls ought to be confined to members of the Established Church. I doubt whether there is any man who will have the boldness openly to come forward and assert that proposition; and yet we know that there is a certain class of persons who assert this practically, if not in words,—a certain class whose whole course of procedure asserts it, though they shrink from doing so in words. These individuals must either abandon altogether their blustering about the Act of Security, or they must be held to undertake virtually the defence of this position. And yet there is, I believe, no man who will venture publicly to assert this. The patrons of the University are convinced of the absurdity and folly of all this, the Senatus are convinced of the absurdity of it, and the community are convinced of it. And no man now ventures to affirm it in deeds, still less in words, except an extreme party among the clergy of the Established Church."

He adverted to the fact that the opponents declined to maintain that the Act of Security should be enforced in all cases; that one of them had stated that he would not be very hard upon an Episcopalian, or even a Roman Catholic, who might be appointed to one of these chairs; and yet they proposed to enforce the test in the case of the existing vacancy, to exclude a candidate who was unexceptionable in acquirements, character, and orthodoxy, and objectionable solely as a Free Churchman; and he exposed the curious combination of exclusive Establishment prerogative, and personal

and party spite, each asserted and each forsaken in turn, which the proceedings presented.

"An old couplet remains in my memory. It is to this effect,—

'So glorious is the privilege to kill,
All wish the power, but none avow the will.'

These persons, however, have plainly avowed the will. They openly tell us they wish the law to remain as it is; not that they would always exercise it, but that they may be able to exercise it whenever they feel disposed, or whenever they find it convenient. When such a system is openly avowed, it should be held up to the scorn and execration of the community. It would be a great deal better that the present law should continue to be enforced in every instance, than that such a nefarious system as this should be allowed. In the former case it would be gross tyranny and despotism, and it would be most injurious to the best interests of religion and to the best interests of the community; but still it would want one of the worst features of tyranny, namely, arbitrary discretion and caprice. Whereas now we are to have all the tyranny in principle; and in the arrangements an opportunity is to be given for indulging personal spite and malignity on the part of certain persons whenever they think proper. And who, my Lord, are the men who would hold that high prerogative? Who are the men to whom this full discretionary power is to be given of holding the law over the heads of the community, and of carrying it into effect whenever they please? Who are the men to whose wisdom the community are to commit the execution of so peculiarly delicate and difficult a law? who are the men in whose discretion we are to repose this trust? Why, so far as we can judge from the past public history of this outcry, they are just Dr Macfarlane of Duddingston and Mr Stevenson of St George's! This iniquitous system is to be preserved and maintained in order that these persons may enjoy the pleasure and satisfaction of knocking off the head of any poor Free Churchman or Voluntary who may chance to come within their reach. I believe that whoever might have been the presentee to the Moral Philosophy chair very little would have been said about the matter, unless he had been a Free Churchman. He might have been an Episcopalian,—of the party against whom the test was originally directed. He might have been a man who made no profession of religion. He might have been a man careless and irregular in his attendance at public worship. He might have been a man of no theological opinions whatever, because he had never thought of theological subjects, or paid the least attention to them. He might have been any or all of these, and yet I believe he would have been admitted to the chair without one word of opposition, without any attempt to apply the test. Really, in such a case as this, it is right and just that we should express our indignation at the attempt now made to revive these tests.

"I think," he said, in closing his speech, "the proceedings which have taken place will hasten the downfall of the present system of tests; inasmuch as they will arouse more fully the moral indignation of the community against them; inasmuch as they will unite more closely those who are opposed to the existing system; and inasmuch as they will produce more vigorous and combined efforts to bring to an end a state of things which really is a disgrace to this age and country, which is fitted to exert the most injurious influence, and which, it is now openly avowed, is to be kept up mainly for the purpose of affording to certain persons an occasional opportunity of indulging their spite and malignity."

An Act of Parliament soon afterwards fulfilled this prediction, and the University Tests were slain and buried. Those who desire to know what *coronach* was sung over their grave may find it in the proceedings of the Established Presbytery of Edinburgh in February 1854. The extremely curious speeches made on that occasion formed a fitting wail over the departed.

## FREE CHURCH EDUCATION SCHEME.

The Free Church brought out with it from the Establishment strong dispositions to take a lively interest in Elementary Education. The tie between the Church and the school was, as is well-known, one of the marked and peculiar features of rural Scotland. Moreover, for nearly thirty years before the Disruption, a good deal of pains had been bestowed in reforming and re-animating the parish school instruction, which had previously sunk away from its old standard of efficiency. It will not be denied that those who subsequently became Free Church ministers were among the foremost in this matter. They had become accustomed to look on a good school as one of the chief agencies to be cherished in a well ordered parish. Such men could not but miss the school department in their new ecclesiastical condition. Still, there was so much to do, so much to build, and so much to provide for, that the Church might have been disposed to let the subject drop with some wistful looks. Indeed, there were some of the members of the Free Church who very deliberately believed that to make a great effort in the way of schools, was to over-burden the Church's strength, and was in no respect her proper duty. But on the other hand, the beginning of a school department, was as it were, thrown upon the Free

Church without her asking for it. In the first place, the Establishment saw it to be right to expel from their positions those teachers of Parish and Assembly schools who had joined the Free Church. The number was not very great, but still it was sufficient to lay upon the Church the responsibility of considering the question, Whether she ought not to assist these men by furnishing them with professional employment in schools of her own? Besides this, the two Normal Schools in Edinburgh and Glasgow, which had been set up in connection with the Church of Scotland by private efforts, both seceded in a body, teachers and taught, furnishing in this way the prospect and the means of influencing Elementary Education through an agency that was extremely energetic, high-hearted, and efficient. Finally, Mr Macdonald of Blairgowrie, now Dr Macdonald of Leith, full of the memories of his own work as parish minister in the parish school, and representing to himself the yearnings of like-minded brethren, took courage and came forward with a practical proposal. He suggested the raising of a central fund of £50,000 to give grants in aid of local efforts for the erection of schools. He was invited to realise his own suggestion, and he did so in a style of advocacy which disarmed all opposition, and created enthusiasm for the object in view. Everywhere schools began to be planned, schoolmasters to be sought, aid from head-quarters to be solicited. The Church in this way became committed to a scheme which has at present on its lists two normal schools, 596 congregational schools, and which educates 65,000 children.

Originating in this way, and expanding rapidly at a time when many other necessary objects were drawing on the resources of the Church, the scheme had to struggle for a time with great financial difficulties. The burden of those difficulties was fully experienced by Dr Cunningham, for during the years 1844 to 1846 he was Convener of the Education Committee, and had to discharge the duty of meeting, as best he could, the claims which pressed on its resources. He gave long afterwards, a very lively account of the difficulties with which the Committee had to struggle, inasmuch as the desire for schools outran the Committee's means to supply them; and at last, as he said, the work of the Committee and its Convener

became very much that of "staving off, as best they could, the applications for grants and salaries." "The great difficulty we had to contend with was to make selections from among the applications made to us, and we found it difficult to adhere to any general rule in making these selections, as we found strong and peculiar cases of all kinds demanding consideration. . . . . The work which the Committee had to discharge was very arduous and perplexing, and it was fully as great as was required of any of the committees of the Church." The trouble and the expenditure of thought and time became so great that he resolved to get rid of it, and Dr Candlish was appointed Convener. Dr Cunningham explained the transfer of functions on the ground that "in these circumstances it was perfectly manifest that Dr Candlish must become Convener," and "that it was plain nobody could do the work as well as he could, or rather, that nobody could do it in the circumstances except Dr Candlish." Dr Candlish's energy and administrative powers, like Dr Cunningham's, found enough to do. Ultimately, the fund for schoolmasters, dependent at first on an annual collection at the Church doors, was organised upon the plan of monthly contributions collected in the same manner as the ministers' Sustentation Fund. In this way the main difficulties were overcome.

Some years after Dr Cunningham's convenership, a rather lively controversy arose within the Free Church with respect to the Education scheme. The main subject of controversy was the bearing which it had upon the prospect of an increased and reformed national provision for the education of the people. A certain number of those Free Churchmen who took a lively interest in the cause of national education, began to regard the Free Church scheme as in some degree fitted to obstruct the object which they had in view. Some of these acknowledged that it was proper for the Free Church to do something in the way of promoting and improving the education of the children of her own members. But it was stated that her education scheme had been planned and carried on as if the Free Church herself could meet a want which only the nation could really and adequately supply. And it was also stated, that in the prosecution of her own scheme, the Free

Church was losing sight of the responsibility which lay upon Government, was failing to exert her influence to procure a national scheme, and was so far misleading the Government and the country. By others the accusations were more strongly pressed. It was maintained that the Free Church scheme had been based on a complete disregard of the interest which all the churches had, and should claim, in the national schools; that it involved a misapprehension of the true nature of the teacher's office, as if that were properly religious or ecclesiastical, instead of being secular; that it tended to propagate and promote that misapprehension in the public mind; and that it had been pushed further than the convictions of the people warranted, and further than the resources of the Church would bear. In short, the scheme was regarded as embodying a sort of propaganda of false notions about education, as largely founded on exaggerations in its original conception, and as pervaded in its arrangement by the same extravagant and exaggerative influences. The Church was called upon to retire to her own place of subordinate and supplementary effort, and to leave the ground clear for the Government to step in and do its own work. The reply made to all this by the defenders of the scheme was in substance that a national scheme was both right and desirable, and that the Church would gladly concur in urging the Government to attempt it; but that in the meantime, and in existing circumstances, the Free Church scheme (availing itself of a form of Government aid, which Government, on its own responsibility, had proffered) was no more, and had been urged no further, than was called for by the necessities of the case, and the plain indications of existing circumstances.

These discussions derived a great deal of interest from the part taken in them by Mr Hugh Miller, in his capacity of editor of the *Witness*. In long, frequent, and able articles, he sifted, with at least sufficient severity, the merits of the scheme, and of its management. He had thought deeply upon the subject of education, especially as regards the way in which the schoolmaster ought to be related to the great elements of the social system—to State, Church, Parent, and so forth. Hence, altogether apart from the questions

of temporary interest then canvassed, and from the personalities into which the discussion occasionally diverged, his articles were extremely interesting and suggestive. They formed a contribution of great value towards the advancement and elevation of the standard of public thinking on educational questions. And they took, deservedly, a strong hold of the public mind.

Dr Cunningham, as we shall soon have occasion to shew, advocated a national system of education. But at the same time, he believed that the Free Church had been placed in circumstances in which she could not legitimately escape from the burden of her education scheme; and he believed that the arrangements devised for it, and the extension given to it, were substantially those which circumstances indicated, and which the case required. At a time when these educational matters are still unsettled, it may be as well to record Dr Cunningham's testimony on this point. It may be found in a speech, from which we have already quoted, delivered in the Presbytery of Edinburgh in March 1850. After referring to the origin of the scheme, and to his own appointment, in 1844, to the Convenership of the Education Committee, he proceeded :—

"Soon after my appointment, the whole of the difficulties connected with the subject, both of the question of the obligation resting on the Church to undertake the education scheme, and of the practicability of carrying it out, were pressed upon my attention by a very able and ingenious friend. I was somewhat struck by the plausibility of his statements, and I was led in consequence, at that time, to give to the whole question a very full and deliberate consideration. I endeavoured to subject all the difficulties that were pressed upon me, and all the facts of the case to the fullest deliberation; and the result was, that I came to be thoroughly satisfied that an obligation rested upon us to maintain and extend a scholastic system; not, it is true, an obligation of the same kind as lies upon us with respect to the preaching of the gospel. No doubt difficulties might be expected in undertaking so great and important a work. I was satisfied, however, that in the existing position of the Free Church, it was her duty to undertake and carry on this scheme, and to undertake the burden of educating her adhering population. The grounds of this opinion are very obvious. The ejection of the parochial teachers after the Disruption, the condition of the parochial schools, which were at that time to a large extent under the influence of a hostile aristocracy, worked in such a way as to injure the prosperity of the Free Church, the undoubted fact that Scotland, as a whole, required a great many more schools

than she then possessed, the very strong and urgent feeling on the part of the community to have schools in connection with the Free Church, and the fact that the Free Church had not access to any good and sufficient system of education of which she could safely, honourably, and conveniently take advantage,—these were all considerations important enough to induce the Free Church to undertake her own education. These are the grounds on which I feel that the matter ought to be put; and they are the only grounds on which it ought ever to have been put. We have heard, indeed, from some persons, the idea of making the Free Church Education Scheme a national scheme, but this is certainly an unreasonable and extravagant proposition. The only ground on which I ever defended the scheme is, that there was a clear call on the Free Church to provide for all her adhering population a better education than they could otherwise obtain. Of the soundness of my conviction, that it was then the duty of the Church to undertake and carry through her own education scheme, I have never since had the slightest doubt. I feel that she could not have neglected that duty without sin, and without incurring a great responsibility."

He proceeded to point out that the position of the Committee had not been that of urging an unwilling community to provide schools, but that of dealing with the propositions of an over-eager community, which the Committee knew not how to dispose of. He added:—

"I don't mean to say the Free Church had never done anything but what was reasonable, for there had been unreasonable expectations cherished, and unwarrantable plans proposed. But I am thoroughly persuaded that, up to the present time, there is nothing in the arrangements of the education scheme to which this character is applicable, and nothing fitted to throw doubt upon our course of duty. Even in regard to sanguine expectations, that is a very small matter to be brought as a charge against any man. Every one must see that the Free Church could not have accomplished a tenth or a twentieth part of what she has effected unless she had cherished large expectations. And, I believe, that the large expectations which had been formed and carried out, especially through the labours of Dr Candlish, have been the means of doing an amount of good to Scotland as a whole, and to the Free Church as a portion of it, which any man may envy, if envy were a lawful thing."

Ultimately these discussions died away. Those who expected satisfactory results only from a national system were propitiated by the efforts which the Church made to encourage and support the Government in all reasonable attempts towards a national system; while the difficulties which were encountered, and which still, at the

end of twenty years, have not been overcome, confirmed the impression on the general mind of the Church, that her clear duty in the meantime was to maintain vigorously her own scheme.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION.

I have had occasion to refer to the subject of National Education as a subject which more or less affected the history of the special education scheme of the Free Church. It was a subject, however, which directly, and on its own merits, exercised the mind of the Church, and called forth lively and prolonged discussion. Dr Cunningham felt a very deep interest in the question. He devoted much thought to the difficulties connected with it. He was not disposed to commit himself rashly to a solution of those difficulties, but he was still less disposed to exaggerate them, or to allow them to seduce him into an impracticable and obstructive position. His influence was exerted, on the whole, in the same direction with that of Dr Chalmers. And it contributed largely to determine the line taken by the Free Church on this question. He may be said to have occupied for a time a position somewhere between that of Dr Buchanan and Dr Candlish on the one hand, and that of Dr Begg and Dr Guthrie upon the other. He repeatedly confessed the difficulty which he felt in conclusively forming a judgment with respect to all the elements of the question. The ultimate tendency of his mind upon it was a growing unwillingness to obstruct the discharge by Government of its substantial duty in carrying on the education of the people, merely on the ground that they did not propose to discharge what he, along with the mass of the Free Church, regarded as their whole duty, or to discharge it in the most perfect manner.

The parish schools in Scotland, which, with whatever drawbacks, have been an unspeakable blessing to the country, had by law a threefold tie to the Established Church. First, the parish minister was an *ex officio* member of the Local Board, which elected the teacher, and generally regulated school matters. Secondly, the teacher was required to make a declaration of adherence to the Church and her Confession, similar to that already referred to in

the case of Professors. Thirdly, the Presbyteries had a general oversight of the schools, in the way of inspection, and had a legal right to see the law enforced. There was no statutory obligation with respect to the teaching of religion in the schools. But that came, as it were, of itself, in the circumstances in which the schools were placed. Bible and Catechism were as little departed from as the alphabet, or the rule of three. On this subject there was neither dispute nor doubt. And in private or adventure schools, taught by Churchmen or Dissenters, the same rule prevailed, with exceptions so trifling as to be wellnigh invisible. At the same time, with equal unanimity, and with equal lack of dispute or discussion, the ends of a conscience clause were provided for. If a child's parents did not wish it to learn the Catechism, or some part of it, that was so arranged. Hence, Roman Catholic children came unhesitatingly to the parish school—the parents sometimes stipulating for exemption from the religious teaching—sometimes not giving themselves any trouble on the subject.

Already, at the time of the Disruption, the provision thus made for the education of the country was felt to be insufficient. Not only in the towns, the enormous growth of which was left to be provided for, as far as education was concerned, in the most precarious way, but in the country also, owing partly to the growth and partly to the movement of population, the old schools were felt to require a great addition, and it was seen that private effort could not thoroughly overtake the work. Moreover, the parish school system was felt to be capable of being carried further in point of efficiency, as well as in the way of pervading the country more thoroughly. Men's minds had begun to be turned to all this with great earnestness, in connection with the views put forth by Dr Chalmers regarding the Christian training of the people. Indeed, before Dr Chalmers, the state of the schools had attracted the attention and called forth the efforts of the reforming leaders within the Church of Scotland. Dr Andrew Thomson, in particular, deeply impressed with the decay of vitality and efficiency which in the earlier part of the century had befallen many of the schools, had thrown himself into the cause of improved education with all his remarkable energy

and determination, and with very considerable success. But the general views of Dr Chalmers upon the state and wants of the people were sure to bear fruit in the direction of the Education question. Some of his followers and disciples devoted themselves to it. They strove to impress the public mind with the conviction that Scotland, after all the boastful statements made on her behalf, was only, after all, a half-educated country.* While, therefore, the conviction that something effective needed to be done for England was growing in the minds of statesmen, and while the system for Ireland was passing through the stormy period of its incubation and establishment, the impression of the wants of Scotland was gaining ground, at least within the country itself. In all mission work in the towns, the establishment of good schools was, of course, a prominent feature; but the efforts made only revealed the want which existed. Probably this subject might have been earlier pressed upon the Government had it not been that first the Church Extension movement took precedence, and then the relations of the Church to the State in Scotland became so peculiar and perplexing. Men of different denominations, alive to the educational wants of the country, might make it their mission to testify on the subject; but the tide of public opinion could not as yet be turned into the channel of demanding and facilitating Government action.†

I have already said, that when the Disruption took place, the Church courts of the Establishment judged it to be their duty to oust all teachers who adhered to the Free Church from parish and General Assembly schools. The state of the law placed it quite within their power to take this step, which probably appeared to them to be only a proper act of self-defence. It was thus forced on the attention of the Free Church that they were ousted from taking part in, or directly influencing the education of the people, so far as that depended on the ancient Scottish legal provisions.

* "Scotland a Half-educated Nation." By Rev. George Lewis. 1834.

† Privy Council grants for *school buildings* were the earliest form of Government aid towards meeting this educational destitution. They commenced without occasioning so much attention and discussion as the Privy Council scheme for salaries.

Persons who recall those days will remember the peculiar modes of feeling with which all these incidents of the new position were realised. One of the most vivid was a certain pride and exultation with which every instance of our being in a manner outside the constitution was faced and welcomed; and the instant impulse (whether of faith, or of self-reliance, or of both), accepting that position, to create for ourselves, outside the constitution, whatever it was that we were thus deprived of within it. This impulse went strongly into the school scheme of the Free Church; and there, as in other matters, it was accompanied in the case of many by a strong impulse to renounce emphatically all connection with that which renounced us—for example, with the parish schools. This was only a pulse of feeling, though it found some tangible expression. But even so, it was strongly protested against by influential Free Churchmen as unreasonable and as misleading. The Free Church, instead of accepting the position assigned her by the action of the Establishment under the existing law, ought to reclaim, by a movement in some effective form, her part in the parish schools. In doing so, the bodies which had earlier separated from the Established Church would, of course, prove ready allies. Hitherto they had not been led to agitate the school question; but, of course, there could be no doubt which side they would take. The Free Church, however, was too busy otherwise to engage in this agitation; and in the case of very many of her ministers and members, utterly indisposed to everything of the kind. To go to work on our own responsibility and with our own resources,—quite willing to testify its duty to the State in the highest form, but with an utter distrust of all parties, an utter want of expectation of any good from any of them, a sheer weariness of the fruitless labour of negotiating with politicians,—that was the prevailing temper.

The point of view meanwhile of the Established Church, if one outside may venture to guess at it, was of this sort. They could not imagine that the position of the Establishment with respect to the schools was free from risk. At the same time, they believed (justly) that any other formal test or security for the schools but that supplied by a connection with the Establishment would prove

to be legislatively impossible. The movement that should assail it must be a movement for *no test,* no formal legislative security, at least in the way of ecclesiastical supervision. In such a movement, they persuaded themselves, the Free Church could not consistently join, seeing that a few years before those now in the Free Church would have defended the propriety of the existing statutory provisions. Nay, the Free Church must not only forbear to join in such a movement; they must oppose it, for they must feel surely that the connection with the Established Church, being a security for religion in the schools, ought to be maintained. Therefore they had not only won the battle from the Free Church party, and ousted them from the Establishment and the school system; they had placed the Free Church in a position in which she could hardly make an effective movement, on legislative ground, against the victors. She might indeed claim to be reponed and substituted for the Establishment both in Church and school. But that was a line of action at which the Establishment could afford to smile.

Here it may be remarked, that Free Churchmen were quite prepared to express their mind on the alternative thus offered them, or rather upon the proposal that the Free Church should connive at or support the sole rights of the Establishment in the schools and their own exclusion, on the ground that the influence of the Establishment over the schools was the only security for religion and against irreligious education. I shall shew how that was disposed of, in the words of Dr Cunningham. Afterwards I shall shew the principles on which the Free Church was led positively to direct the measure of public influence which it possessed on this question.

With reference, then, to the duty of the non-established bodies, in relation to the guardianship over the religious department of National Education claimed by the Establishment, Dr Cunningham spoke as follows. The date is comparatively late; it was at a meeting in Edinburgh in January 1854. But on this point his views never altered, and one could select representative utterances with equal confidence from any part of his public life subsequent to the Disruption:—

"Why, my Lord, we might be disposed to deviate from the sound principles applicable to the arrangement of this matter,—we might be disposed to give up our right to equal privileges as citizens of Scotland,—if it could be proved that some important public benefit would result from our giving up these rights, and if it could be further proved that this benefit could not be secured in any other way. For instance, the Noncomformists of England, in the reign of Charles II., consented to the passing of the Test and Corporation Acts, by which they were shut out from all public offices. They did so for this reason, that they thought at that time it was of the last importance to exclude Papists from public offices, and because in the actual condition of things they did not very well see how they could secure the exclusion of the Papists, without consenting to exclude themselves. Now this was a patriotic act; the motive was noble and honourable; and I would not hesitate, my Lord, to apply the same idea to this matter of religious education, religious instruction as an essential element in national education. If it could be shewn to me that the continuance of the exclusive rights and privileges of the Established Church is really a good and sufficient security for the religious element; and if it could be further shewn that there is no other good and reasonable security for the introduction, and the preservation in vigour of this primary and vital necessity—'a sound religious education,' as my motion says—I would be inclined to act like the Noncomformists of old, and to consent to their continuing to enjoy the same exclusive rights and privileges. But in the utter absence, my Lord, of anything like reasonable and satisfactory evidence in support of these two propositions, I hold myself not only entitled but bound . . . to insist that the fair, liberal, comprehensive principles applicable to this matter should be applied to it,—that these exclusive rights and privileges which do no good, but are a barrier and obstruction to what is good, should be taken away. I am strongly impressed with the conviction that at this moment the only real danger in regard to the religious element in our education, at least the main and principal danger, is to be found in the obstinate infatuation with which the clergy of the Established Church are clinging to their exclusive rights and privileges. . . . There is a strong and general determination—a determination which will be carried into effect—that the whole people must be educated; we must have provision for the education of the whole people. I believe statesmen are bent upon that; and if, by the constant pressing of these exclusive rights and privileges on the part of the Established Church, any serious and real difficulty were to be introduced into this matter, or any obstacle thrown in the way that could not be easily removed, I would have some fear lest statesmen, feeling the obligation resting upon them to educate the community, might be rather tempted in the long run, just to make provision for secular education, omitting the religious element altogether. This is the danger to which, I think, we are exposed; and I believe that nothing tends more to increase and extend that danger than just this determination of the Estab-

lished clergy to assert and maintain their exclusive rights in regard to these matters."

Turning from the question of the position of the Establishment, the action of the Free Church is now to be described. Down to the year 1847, her tendency, on grounds already indicated, was to push education by her own resources in her own way. A day might come when Government could be prepared to co-operate with her on sound principles, but that day was probably not near. In 1847, however, the question was raised very directly by the announcement of the Privy Council scheme. The Free Church had to make up her mind promptly, for the General Assembly, which must utter it, was already drawing near, when the plans of the Government were announced. Some fluctuation as to the course to be taken was natural. But by the time when the Assembly met, the Church had settled down to the line which she never afterwards forsook.

The Privy Council scheme, as every one knows, proposed to help the educational efforts of all parties in the country by grants of fixed amount, on condition of a fixed expenditure by the parties assisted, and on condition of suitable qualifications on the part of the teachers. Government did not undertake to fix anything as to the religious doctrine taught, leaving that to be determined by those who were aided. But it did require that religious teaching according to some creed should be part of the business of the school; and an annual certificate to the effect that religious teaching to the satisfaction of the managers was carried on, formed one of the conditions required by Government on which the payment of the grant depended. The "religious difficulty" was thus disposed of. The method adopted was due, we may believe, partly to a sincere desire on the part of the Government to go as far in the direction of religious education as circumstances permitted; partly, also, to a desire to avoid the odious imputation of intending a mere secular or "godless" system, and the difficulties with which that imputation would burden the scheme.

The objection to the plan, as viewed from the Free Church standpoint, will be stated presently in the words of Dr Cunningham. It

was briefly this, that while the scheme made provision for the religious element, it deliberately put all religions on a level. It made all or any of them indifferently part of the nation's contract with the school. But the attitude to be taken by the Church towards a scheme in this particular respect objectionable, was a point of some difficulty. For there was no disposition to overlook the perplexities which beset the action of Government; and no one imputed to Government any intention but that of dealing with those perplexities as best it could. And, on the other hand, there were some perplexities which beset the Church herself. There was a certain class of minds to which it seemed natural to reason in this way: education ought to be religious; it is vitiated, and becomes a doubtful good or a positive danger where it is not so; the religious element in it ought to be true religion—that, and no other; those who undertake to educate ought to educate *so;* we, as a Church, have simply to proclaim what we regard as true religion; to call for education which embodies that; to oppose every scheme of education which does not embody it, or which embodies all kinds of religion indifferently. This was plain sailing reasoning, in so far as it moved easily to a conclusion, encountered no theological difficulty, and might furnish a good cry. It was a mode of reasoning, however, which, if equally adopted by the other Churches, must have made all Government action impossible, and doomed the nation to the consequences. The difficulty was to indicate an alternative line sufficiently clear, and in principle thoroughly defensible. The manifestations in the Church Courts, previous to the Assembly, tended two ways. In some, motions were carried which decidedly condemned the scheme, and petitioned against it, on the ground of its objectionable features, religiously considered. These motions so far tended to commit the Church to the plausibilities just now referred to, inasmuch as they were consistent enough with that line of action, and did not clearly indicate any other. Moreover, among some of the supporters of those motions, a tendency appeared to commit the Church against accepting aid for educational purposes under the scheme, if it should be sanctioned by the House of Commons, and proceeded with by Government. On the other

hand, motions were also carried which, while noting the objectionable feature, postponed a final opinion, and petitioned Government to delay their action in order to give time for correspondence with the Government, and for duly weighing all the considerations applicable to the case.

Dr Cunningham stated in his Presbytery his reasons for preferring the second of these courses, and for refusing to go farther. He "had not much difficulty" in coming to the conclusion that there was something to be distinctly objected to in the Government scheme; but he did not wish to be hurried into a decision as to the position to be taken up on the whole question. On the ulterior question he saw no difficulty. He saw no principle that should hinder them from taking the benefit of the Government grant if the scheme were carried into effect.*

In the debates which took place on this occasion, the line which the Church was likely to take was clearly enough indicated. There would be satisfaction at the Government recognising its duty in the matter of Education, dissatisfaction with the mode in which the religious question was treated, in so far as Government expressly professed to take security for religion, but on the principle of placing all religions on a level; recognition, however, of the immense difficulties attending the question, particularly in England; admission that Government may find itself in circumstances in which it cannot do all that is absolutely desirable with reference to religion, and that, in such circumstances, it may and ought to do what it can for the general education of the country, leaving it to other parties to do what Government cannot do; assertion that, in that case, it must not base its own action on any false principle with respect to religion; and finally, an emphatic testimony to the comparative ease with which an Educational system for Scotland might be planned and organised on the ground of the almost unanimous

* It may be right to say that, in a letter to the newspapers called forth by some remarks in a Glasgow paper, Dr Cunningham mentioned that this speech had not been satisfactorily reported, and that he had been represented (on the strength of it) as somewhat more antagonistic to the Government scheme than he really was.

harmony of opinion in Scotland as to the Education, secular and religious, which ought to be imparted.

The General Assembly agreed to a series of resolutions which embodied these views, and which, as they constitute a landmark in the question, so far as the Free Church is concerned, I reprint below.* These resolutions take up practically the same ground which Dr Chalmers recommended in a letter to Mr Fox Maule (now Earl of Dalhousie) about the same time. The important clauses of Dr Chalmers' letter will appear in a subsequent page.

An extract or two from Dr Cunningham's speech in the Assembly of 1847 may be inserted here, to illustrate the position he then

* "1. That this Assembly, while holding it to be the duty of the State to assist in promoting the education of the people, and having a deep sense of the educational destitution existing in the land, are, at the same time, much impressed with the great practical difficulties attending the adjustment of a satisfactory measure in the present divided state of the country, and desire to acknowledge the laudable zeal of the Government in behalf of this great object.

"2. That it is the duty of this Church, as the Church of Christ, to be willing to co-operate with the Government, and to avail herself of the means which may be placed at her disposal, by grants of public money, for increasing the extent and efficiency of her own educational institutions, provided always that due care be taken to secure, on the one hand, that no conditions be annexed to these grants inconsistent with the entire preservation of her liberty and jurisdiction in the management of her schools; and, on the other hand, that this Church do not incur the responsibility of approving of any false and erroneous principles that may be involved in such measures as the Government may propose and adopt.

"3. That the position of Scotland, in respect of education, is such as to afford peculiar facilities for the adoption of a system of popular education, which might be generally acceptable to the community on the one hand, and consistent with sound principle on the other, were Scotland now, as in former days, considered and dealt with as a distinct nation—on the footing of her national standing and attainments: inasmuch as, *first*, there would seem to be almost a universal concurrence among those of all denominations who are practically carrying on the work in Scotland, notwithstanding important differences in other matters, and the use in all their schools, not only of the Holy Scriptures, but also of the Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly; *secondly*, all such parties agree in the propriety, and adopt the practice, of opening all public schools to those who wish to avail themselves of the merely secular part of the instruction embraced in them, without requiring attendance at any religious service or exercise, either on week-day or Sabbath-day; and it appears to this Assembly, not only that the people of Scotland have the strongest claim to be treated, in this matter, as a portion of the empire distinct from the

occupied upon the question. He supported the resolutions, drawn, no doubt, by Dr Candlish, in full consultation with himself. In reply to his friend, Sheriff Spiers, who was inclined to deprecate any expression of dissatisfaction with the doubtful element in the scheme, he stated that he could not get over the difficulty on that point so as to advise the Church to refrain from stating its disapprobation. Reiterating his argument in the court below, he said,

"Government have introduced religion into their scheme: they have made it an essential part of their arrangements; and that being the case, I think we are bound to follow up the introduction of the religious element, by applying to that element the only standard by which any religious matter ought to be examined and estimated. No doubt it is a great and important principle, taken in the

rest; but that it would be the highest honour and soundest policy of a wise, Christian, and patriotic Government to make Scotland the field for thus exemplifying a plan of national education, evangelical and scriptural on the one hand, and yet thoroughly catholic on the other.

"4. In reference, however, to the present proposal of the Government, the Assembly are constrained to record their disapproval of those provisions in the scheme, which, while requiring religious instruction to be communicated, and religious qualifications to be attested, in all the schools aided by public grant, do not appear to discriminate sufficiently between truth and error, and, without determining how far, in the embarrassments which the religious divisions, especially in other parts of the empire, occasion, the Government might not be warranted in acting upon the plan of giving aid to all schools which profess to furnish the secular branches required, to the satisfaction of the Government inspector, without taking any cognizance at all of anything beyond these branches, excepting only in the exercise of its undoubted right to see that nothing contrary to social order be anywhere inculcated: the Assembly cannot but consider as unsound and latitudinarian such a plan as implies that the Government make themselves responsible for the schools aided by them being religious, without discriminating between the evangelical faith of the Protestant Churches, and the many vital errors which pass under the name of religion.

"5. In accordance with the preceding Resolutions, the Assembly instruct their Education Committee to communicate with Her Majesty's Government, as they have opportunity, in order to bring under their notice the views contained in the said Resolutions, and generally to aim at the accomplishment of the desirable object indicated in them. And, in the meantime, the General Assembly being of opinion that there is no valid objection in principle in the way of accepting aid from public grants, given unconditionally and freely, for the support of the schools of this Church, remit also to their Education Committee, along with the Presbyteries, to give advice with such parties as may wish to apply for grants."

abstract, on which the scheme is based, that education ought to be admitted on religious grounds and pervaded by religious principles; but while we concur in that general thesis, we come immediately, if the matter is to be carried out practically, to ask, what is the religion that is to be countenanced and assisted? and if we find a radical defect there, we are called to apply to it the right standard; and according to its conformity or disconformity with that standard, we must approve or condemn it. Now, I do not see how by any process of fair argument it can be shewn that the Government do not take, under this scheme, a measure of responsibility for the whole religious instruction that can be communicated in the schools which they aid. . . . I think we are called upon to object to that."

He then dwelt on the suggestion contained in the fourth resolution,* as to the preferable way of dealing with the matter. The solution of the difficulty was obviously this, that they should have so constructed their scheme as not to take the responsibility for the religious instruction communicated in their schools. In other words, government should have so regulated their measure as to afford secular education,—the capacity of reading and writing and the ordinary elements of mental culture,—and not to take upon themselves the responsibility of the religious instruction. The religious instruction might have been left to be communicated by other parties on their own responsibility. Having dwelt on this point, he proceeded,—

"Now, I think it is of some importance that we should suggest to Government the propriety of examining this mattter,—whether this be not, in the existing circumstances of the country, a principle that is less objectionable,—that is substantially free from any serious objection,—and just that by which they ought to be guided in their intended provision for the education of Papists. I have no objection whatever that Papists and Socinians should be aided in securing Education out of the resources of the empire. I think they ought to receive that aid. I think it is the duty of the government of Great Britain to provide, if possible, that the Popish children of the community should be all educated. Of course, neither I nor any other member of this House could ever become a consenting party to the funds of the nation being employed in teaching Popery or Socinianism. . . . We seem to be shut up to this, that on the whole, in existing circumstances, the least objectionable mode of dealing with the matter is

* *So* contained that the Assembly was not committed to a formal judgment on the suggestion; but it supplied the real theory of their procedure, and was at all events deliberately approved by Dr Cunningham.

this, that the Government, while professing their sense of the importance of religious education, should decline to take the responsibility of communicating it, while at the same time they would also with equal plainness, declare that they are ready and willing to aid the efforts of others in promoting the education of all classes in the community who need education, and who are willing to take it in that way."

The resolutions were carried by 294 to 5.

In all probability Government were a little surprised at the pains bestowed on estimating and criticising the "principle," on which they dealt with religion in the Privy Council scheme. There is no reason to believe that they intended to assume upon themselves religious responsibilities, or, having assumed them, meant to commit the nation and themselves to a judgment as to the equality or indifference of all religions. They had formed their scheme, no doubt, on a deliberate judgment, precisely such as the Free Church indicated, that in existing circumstances it was not possible for them to decide anything about the religion in the schools. But they were too timid to avow that principle frankly. They feared, as Sheriff Monteith said, that "the cry of an infidel scheme would be raised against them, and they had not courage to face that cry." To avoid that, and to indicate the desire of the Legislature for religious influence in education, they had introduced the provision. But that provision did involve an objectionable principle. It was of great consequence to point it out, inasmuch as once accepted, it might easily be carried further. And it was especially of importance, to keep the churches in the position of consistent hostility to the political schemes of indiscriminate endowment; for which a precedent might be found in the Privy Council scheme, not the less dangerous as a precedent that it might not be so intended.

The Free Church took advantage of the Privy Council scheme with excellent effect. But from this time, the possibility of procuring a national system for Scotland, was the question which exercised the minds of Scottish educationists. There were those who disliked the idea of merging the Free Church schools in any general system, and who did not believe that any national scheme would prove so safe and useful as one in which Christian churches took the responsibility, as well as watched the working. The late Mr

Gray of Perth seems strongly to have held this view. With these were associated a good many more who fully conceded that a national system was the right one, and that it was the duty of Government to provide it, and the duty of the Church to encourage them to do so; but they cherished uncomfortable doubts as to what a Government scheme might turn out to be; the relation which such a scheme might turn out to have to religion was problematical. They thought, therefore, that the vigorous working out of the Free Church scheme, with Privy Council aid, offered many advantages; and they argued that these ought not to be undervalued, and ought not to be lightly set aside for the unknown scheme which might be drawn from the lottery of Parliament. This was the practical view advocated at that time by Dr Candlish. But a large and vigorous party henceforth advocated the necessity of a national scheme, based on the opening of the parish schools, and designed to meet thoroughly and systematically the whole wants of the country. The duty of the Church, they said, was to press with all possible energy for this result. The *Witness* expounded these views with great vigour, and they were represented in the ecclesiastical world by such men as Dr Guthrie and Dr Begg.

The position that the parish schools should be opened up, and that the Free Church should demand it was indisputable, all parties concurred in it. The Assembly of 1848 appointed a Committee to promote it. That of 1849 did not find time to take up the subject; but the debate on University Tests that year gave an impulse to the school question, and from this date the discussion went vigorously on. In the beginning of 1850, a series of resolutions appeared in the newspapers setting forth the views entertained by many leading men connected with different religious bodies, as to the necessity of a thorough national system for Scotland, and as to the principles on which such a system should be constructed. An Association was formed on the basis of these resolutions in April of the same year, and was very powerfully supported. The only portion of the scheme which created any difference of opinion, was the mode adopted for getting over the religious difficulty. This is set forth in the 5th and 6th resolutions.

"5. That the duty and responsibility of communicating religious instruction to children, have in the opinion of the subscribers been committed by God to their parents, and through them to such teachers as they may choose to intrust with that duty; that in the numerous schools throughout Scotland which have been founded and supported by private contribution, the religious element has always held a prominent place; and that were the power of selecting the masters, fixing the branches taught, and managing the schools, at present vested by law in the heritors of Scotland and the Presbyteries of the Established Church, to be transferred to the heads of families under a national system of education, the subscribers would regard such an arrangement as affording not only a basis of union for the great mass of the people of this country, but a far better security than any which at present exists both for a good secular and a good Christian education.

"6. That in regard to a legislative measure, the subscribers are of opinion with the late lamented Dr Chalmers, that "that there is no other method of extrication" from the difficulties with which the question of education in connection with religion is encompassed in this country, than the plan suggested by him as the only practicable one, viz., 'That in any practical measure for helping on the education of the people, Government should abstain from introducing the element of religion at all into their part of the scheme; and this, not because they held the matter to be insignificant—the contrary might be strongly expressed in the preamble of their Act—but on the ground that in the present divided state of the Christian world they would take no cognisance of, just because they would attempt no control over, the religion of applicants for aid,—leaving this matter entire to the parties who had to do with the erection and management of the schools which they had been called upon to assist. A grant of the State upon this footing might be regarded as being appropriately and exclusively the expression of their value for a good secular education.'" [The opinion expressed by Dr Chalmers, as may be seen by the phraseology employed, had reference to the Privy Council scheme, *i. e.*, to a supplementary or aid scheme. Whether Dr Chalmers would have applied the same

principle to a national scheme supported mainly by Government, was a point contested for a time.] The resolutions went on to state that there ought to be local boards formed by giving a franchise to all male heads of families being householders; and that some general supervising authority should be constituted. The local boards were to have the ordinary management and the direction of the branches to be taught. The object of these resolutions was to provide a platform on which Free Churchmen, United Presbyterians, and in fact all who strongly desired a national scheme, could stand together and combine their influence to produce the result.

About the time when these resolutions first appeared, the subject was introduced into the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh by Dr Begg, and gave rise to an able and interesting discussion. Indeed this discussion, along with another in the same presbytery in November 1853, may be said to exhaust all that can be said on the subject, and to anticipate everything of importance that has been said since then.

There were two motions, not worth quoting, for the motions drew all their significance from the speeches made in support of them. All parties approved in principle of a national scheme, and all parties had the same object in view, viz., that if an adequate national scheme were introduced, it should embody in point of fact the same religious teaching as heretofore. Dr Begg, who advocated the plan of the association already described, might plead more strongly for the urgent necessity of a national system. Dr Candlish, who was averse to the Association's plan being favoured by the Church, might be more inclined to balance against the advantages of the national scheme, the risks, especially to the religious interest, that might attend an agitation for it; and might be more inclined to think that the Privy Council scheme, obviously imperfect as he thought it, admitted of a style of educational work which, under such a national scheme, might possibly be hindered and obstructed. But both regarded a national scheme as the natural and proper discharge of the duty of Government in the matter of education. The difference had respect to the kind of security to be taken for the religious instruction. Dr Begg argued that the security all along had been the religious convictions and

wishes of the people of Scotland, and that this security, on which the association's plan relied, was still satisfactory and sufficient. Dr Candlish looked on the existing arrangements as in point of fact enabling the churches to take all the securities they chose for the mass of the existing schools; and if a new system was to be set up, in which all existing schools should be merged, he desiderated a legislative security for the kind of religion to be taught, some kind of guarantee or influence tending to the result desired, to be embodied in the system itself, and not merely in those who might work it. Yet here again, the difference was one of degree, and depended largely on what each judged likely to be useful and to work well. Dr Begg had personally no objection to a legislative security; but he judged the other security to be good, indeed the best; and he thought that in aiming at the legislature, a course was taken of doubtful wisdom in the existing circumstances, because fitted to divide those whose united strength was necessary to carry any bill at all. And Dr Candlish did not maintain that if it were clearly impossible for Government to take the course he desired, the Church was precluded from accepting and submitting to a scheme such as Dr Begg recommended. I have said so much of the position occupied respectively by the movers of the two motions, in order that I may with more ease indicate Dr Cunningham's. He went, I may say, fully with Dr Begg as to the pressing urgency of a national scheme, and its preferableness to a denominational one. But he voted with Dr Candlish on this ground, that he then thought it fairly practicable, and within the bounds of reasonable expectation, that a national scheme, with a legislative provision for teaching Bible and Catechism, according to the universal practice of Scotland, might be introduced. Believing this, and looking on such a security as more satisfactory and complete, he did not think it fit that the Church should call upon the Government to do less. At the same time, he indicated very clearly that if Government, on its own responsibility, should introduce a measure, not going all the length which he thought practicable, he would be very slow indeed to oppose it. The whole speech, which had manifestly been thoroughly considered, deserves to be quoted; I select a few pas-

sages. After stating that he had felt great difficulties, and was still groping his way on various points, he dwelt on various advantages which a national system must, in his opinion, be admitted to possess. He then protested against the tendency to view the education of the country as properly an ecclesiastical function:—

"Education does not come under the head of the duty of a national government to promote the cause of Christ as such, but it comes under the more general head of its duty to promote the good of the nation. I think there is no ground for preferring a denominational to a national system except on some such assumption as this: that Government, in promoting the education of the community, are discharging that special department of their duty which consists in their obligation to advance the cause of Christ—a view which I decidedly repudiate. I hold hat the nation is bound to provide for the education of the community, altogether irrespective of the obligation to promote the cause of Christ, and that this would still be its duty, even if Christianity were expelled out of the world."

Having observed that he looked favourably on the idea of compulsory education, carried to a certain extent, he proceeded thus:—

"I do not take very strong or high ground as to the unlawfulness of some such scheme or plan as has been proposed by Dr Begg and his friends, or as to the incompatibility of his plan with principle. I think I could see my way, were the Government undertaking the responsibility of introducing a really national system to provide for the educational wants of the whole community, to the lawfulness of acquiescing in the scheme, countenancing and supporting it, and making it as extensively useful as possible. But I do not see my way to ask the Church to interfere as a Church in asking Government to do any such thing, or that the Church would be warranted in leaving the position she at present occupies for such a plan as Dr Begg's. It would at least be an inferior security in some important respects to that which we at present enjoy."

After touching on the disputed point in regard to Dr Chalmers' opinions, he returned to his main point:—

"I think I could see my way without much difficulty, if the Government were to introduce a really national system of education, which left the religious element to other parties—a system which would supersede the present parochial system and our Free Church scheme—to acquiesce in it; and to feel that, in that case, the duty of the Church would be to endeavour to make that system as extensively available as possible for promoting the welfare and the education of the community; but I do not at present see my way to interposing any influence which

we may possess, in order to get the Government to do anything which confessedly would, in some sense, be an imperfect discharge of their duty, though it might be all that was practicable in existing circumstances. . . . . I believe that at this moment Government might introduce a really national system, on the basis of the Bible and Shorter Catechism, which would meet with the acquiescence, if not the approbation, of nineteen-twentieths of the community at large. If that be practicable, as I believe it to be, I think that it is the duty of Government to introduce it; and believing it a right thing for them to do, and not being satisfied of its impracticability, I do not at present see my way to bring any influence of ours to bear upon the Government, with a view to the adoption of a measure less perfect and complete than that which it is within the power of Government to introduce."

After remarking that there was no such thing as a perfect security, and that in Germany the Church itself had been the avenue through which infidelity reached the schools, he expressed his desire to keep his mind open :—

"I have little doubt, however," he said, in conclusion, "that the more we take into consideration the clamant necessity of the case, the more we shall be impressed with the necessity of making full provision for national education, and the more our minds will tend to consider favourably any scheme having that object in view."

Early in the year 1851, Dr Cunningham took part, along with Dr Candlish, Mr Earle Monteith, and Dr A. Wood, in submitting to Government a rather detailed statement of a scheme of national education for Scotland. They recommended it as likely, in their opinion, to secure, if introduced, an amount of active support and of acquiescence which would justify the Government in carrying it. It is needless now to dwell on the details of the plan. The Bible and Catechism were to be taught, local boards dispensed with, a large amount of superintendence left with the Sheriffs of counties, and Normal Schools were to receive grants, "in which the branches hereinafter specified are taught." Among those branches the Bible and Catechism appeared. The plan, of course, was merely a means of at once influencing public opinion, and pressing the subject on the attention of Government. Some leading advocates of the national system, as proposed by the Association, had made a rather violent attack on the Free Church scheme, and on its convener, Dr Candlish. This had produced, of course, some angry feeling, and had rather distracted attention from the public interest involved in

the education question. The publication of the proposal now put forth by Drs Candlish, Cunningham, and their friends, was intended probably, in part, to do what was practicable, on their side, to place again before the community the true question before them.

During the year 1852, a strong impulse, in the direction of some practical solution of the question, arose from the discovery that parochial teachers were about to be exposed to the danger of a sudden fall of their salaries. Those salaries, according to the existing law, were to be fixed anew every five and twenty years, according to the price of grain. The period ran out in 1853, and the great change in the price of grain since 1828 would manifestly have the effect of suddenly and greatly lowering their salaries. The ground taken on this point by the Scottish community, so far as not connected with the Established Church, was to admit the reasonableness of revising the scale of salaries; but to insist that this must be connected, at least, with an abolition of the statutory provision, which bound the teachers to the Established Church. The increase of salaries was ultimately effected on those terms. But the necessity for action drew attention to the question afresh: the emancipation of the parish schools from the Establishment, it was well known, could be little more than nominal, as long as the existing management continued. The concession of the principle, that the teachers need not be members of the Established Church, paved the way for demanding a thorough remodelling of the whole system with an eye to the actual condition of the country; and the fact that this change had been so easily carried, greatly strengthened the impression that a thorough provision for the wants of the country was politically practicable, if the question were taken up with sufficient earnestness.

In these circumstances, a decided approximation took place between those who had hitherto differed as to the best and most practicable measure. It was, at all events, manifestly important that these differences should not be allowed to obscure the responsibility of Government, or to hinder the opportunity arising from the existing circumstances being duly taken advantage of. Hence, while the advocates of the association plan resumed the public agita-

tion of the question,* demonstrations, in which they and those who preferred legislative securities for the religious education took part in common, were set a-going, both in the Church courts and in the form of public meetings. In the Presbytery of Edinburgh, on 12th November 1853, Dr Candlish introduced resolutions to the effect that the Church ought to press upon the Legislature the necessity for a measure for the reform and extension of the parish school system,—so as to make it, on the one hand, truly national and unsectarian, and adequate to the educational wants of the country; and, on the other hand, to secure that religious instruction shall be given in the schools in the manner hitherto in use. The motion was unanimously agreed to. Each speaker freely indicated his own preference as to the kind of security to be relied on in the matter of religion, but all agreed that the main thing was to press the Government and Legislature to face and settle the question. Dr Candlish still desired a legislative decision on the subject of religious teaching, though mainly, as he explained, to avert trouble and misunderstanding on that point in the local boards. Dr Begg, on his part, compared together the various conceivable securities that might be provided, and declared his opinion that the "best, and, in point of fact, the only real security," was to be found in the general good sense and Christian feeling of the people of Scotland themselves, if the boards were elected by the people at large. Dr Cunningham urged that the "great and paramount duty at present was fully to testify their decided preference for a comprehensive, unsectarian, national system, and unequivocally to bring whatever influence they might possess, by their past efforts in the cause of education, to bear upon the community and the Government, in order to secure that result." He argued that a truly national system was on all accounts to be preferred to a denominational. No other system gave a prospect of really and thoroughly educating the people. Moreover, it had the great advantage of bringing the children together in the schools apart from denominational distinctions. Still further, it supplied a field for cordial co-operation on

* Meeting in Glasgow, and addresses by Drs Begg, Harper, and Adam Black, Esquire, 7th November 1853.

the part of Christian men of all denominations. "The great difficulty," he went on to say, "will be in getting Government to take up the matter. I fear the Government has not become sufficiently alive to the peculiar facilities which exist for establishing a national system in Scotland, and which make it pretty much a matter of plain sailing." He feared that they had themselves done something to blind the Government to the facilities that existed, by dwelling on theoretical differences among themselves; and the point was to make it clear, that though it might be difficult to get every one to agree beforehand as to what precisely the bill should be, any reasonable measure would, in fact, meet with all but universal acquiescence. He then touched on the question of religious securities. He had no great fear as to the kind of measure, as a whole, which Government might give; and therefore he sat somewhat loose, though not entirely, on the more specific question as to the kind of security they should look for. All the leading members of Government, he remarked, were in favour of a religious system of education. It was scarcely possible to introduce into Scotland any system but that which existed. The people of Scotland notoriously desired no change; therefore the natural thing for the Government was to take the system as they found it, retaining its general character, provisions, and arrangements, and adjusting it to the altered condition of the community. On these grounds he felt confident that some way or other sufficient security would be found for the religious element being retained. Extreme views would be found confined mainly to a handful of ministers in the Established Church, a handful in the Free Church, and a handful among the Voluntaries. The great body of the people of Scotland concurred in wishing the continuance of the present system in its leading features, with such changes as were rendered manifestly necessary by the altered condition of the community; and in order especially to adapt it to the fact, that a very large number of the people of Scotland were not now receiving the elements of education at all. He was therefore disposed to keep the matter as to the security somewhat in abeyance, as not equal, in point of importance, to the great question of doing all they could to obtain a national system;

all the more because he felt no serious alarm as to the way in which it might be adjusted.

The same way of getting over the difference was adopted at the great public meetings which now began to be held over the country. The speakers indicated, as they chose, their individual preferences; but the resolutions pressed this as the one essential thing, that the time was come for the government to take up the question, and that they could hardly go far wrong in settling it, if they once took it up in earnest. At a meeting, for instance, held in Edinburgh on 28th January 1854, Dr Cunningham and Dr Guthrie stood side by side with Drs Harper and Cairns, with Adam Black, and with laymen and practical educationists of every persuasion. The meeting was in the highest degree influential and enthusiastic. It met in the afternoon, adjourned to the evening, and was prolonged till near midnight. Similar meetings were held in Glasgow and throughout the country.

Encouraged by these symptoms, Government resolved to introduce a bill. Beyond all doubt this resolution was due in a large measure to the circumstance that the Lord Advocate, Mr Moncreiff (now Lord Justice Clerk), had long taken a patriotic interest in the question, and was alike able and disposed to press upon the Government the peculiar grounds which existed for endeavouring to pass a Bill adapted to Scotland. The measure was introduced into the House of Commons in February, and the only remaining utterances by Dr Cunningham on the education question that are of much interest and importance had reference to the Bill.

So many Education Bills have run their course since then, that it may be useful to specify the leading provisions of the Bill of 1854. A general board was to be appointed consisting of a chairman and five members appointed by the Crown, four appointed by the Scottish Universities, and the Lord Advocate and Solicitor General, *ex officio*. This board had power to appoint inspectors, decide as to additional schools needed, judge (with or without appeal) as to removal of teachers, grant retiring allowances, and generally supervise education in Scotland. Schools were distinguished into parochial and public. Parochial schools were left in the hands of

the heritors and parish ministers, who were to constitute the school committee, exercising their functions pretty much in the old way, with some minor modifications. This concession was the price to be paid in order to conciliate the Establishment and propitiate the House of Lords. Teachers of parish schools were not to be subjected to any test. Heritors might, if they chose, transfer the parish school to the rates; the school then passed under the control of the Public Schools Committee, and in this case only the parish minister was to be *ex officio* member of such Committee. Superintendence of Presbyteries over parish schools was to cease. Public schools were to be founded where need for them was ascertained to exist by the general board,—if the rate-payers consented, in the rural districts,—whether the rate-payers consented or not, in the burghs. In burghs the town council was to be the school committee. In county parishes the committee was to be formed of heritors and rate-payers in equal numbers, not exceeding ten of each. Provision was made for examining teachers before induction, and for removing them if they failed in character or efficiency Farther, a general rate not exceeding one penny in the pound was to be expended in support of industrial and reformatory schools; in aiding, at so much per scholar, denominational schools, reported by the inspector to be useful and efficient, and complying with the rules of the Board and Privy Council; and in aiding public schools in parishes which had voluntarily assessed themselves, but in which additional resources were necessary to meet the wants of the district.

As regards the religious question, that was disposed of by two clauses. First, a clause in the preamble ran in these terms:—"Whereas instruction in the principles of religious knowledge, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, as heretofore in use in the parochial and other schools in that country [Scotland] is consonant to the opinions and religious profession of the great body of the people, while at the same time ordinary secular instruction has been and should be available to children of all denominations"; and a clause in the body of the Bill (27) enacted that "Every school committee shall appoint certain stated hours for ordinary religious instruction by the master, at which children shall not be

bound to attend if their parents or guardians object and no additional or separate charge shall be made in respect of the attendance of the children at such separate hours." The last clause averted all discussion at the boards as to whether there should be religious instruction, and how it should be paid for, but left the question open what the religion taught should be. The clause in the preamble had of course no operative effect, but it was an authoritative record of an important fact, and was intended to make it clear that the Bill was not designed to interfere with the continuance of the state of things referred to. The theory of the bill, therefore, was to settle that there should be religious instruction, leaving it to the school board to settle of what kind it should be. There was no doubt that with exceptions hardly appreciable it would be accordant with the system "heretofore in use in Scotland."

At a special meeting of Free Church Commission held on 21st March, a Report on this Bill by a Committee previously appointed, was brought under consideration. Among other suggestions bearing on the details of the measure, the Report represented it as desirable, that in the interpretation clause religious instruction should be defined to be the instruction described in the preamble, and that teachers, before being inducted, should express their willingness to give such instruction.

Dr Candlish moved that the Commission should petition in favour of the Bill; also that the Report should be adopted by the Commission, as their instruction to the Committee on Parochial Schools for their guidance, in negotiating with parties in authority for the improvement of the Bill. This motion was adopted without a division, one member dissenting. The gist of Dr Cunningham's statement is contained in the following extract. The opening sentence refers to doubts expressed by one or two members as to the effect of the Bill in the northern counties of Scotland, in so far as it left the parish the schools in the hands of the heritors and parish minister. "I suppose that we all feel that there are many things in it we could have wished otherwise, but we have to consider whether it is on the whole a good and desirable thing that this Bill should be passed. I have no hesitation in saying, that I would like

to see that Bill as it now stands passed by the Legislature and adopted by the country, as upon the whole a good and excellent measure. I would decidedly prefer that either to the Bill being defeated and thrown out, or postponed for any considerable length of time. Having come to that view upon the whole matter, we ought to be careful lest we take a position that would be inconsistent with that opinion; but the whole of the important suggestions in this Report would, if adopted, be improvements on the Bill, while they all possess this special characteristic, that they are not inconsistent with the fundamental principle on which the Bill is based. . . . . I will not occupy the time of the Commission by going over the particulars of the Bill again. The truth is, that the more I have seen men of various sects and opinions pressing their particular views in regard to the Bill, I feel thereby the more inclined to swallow the Bill as a whole, to express my cordial concurrence in it as a general measure, and to shrink from taking any course that might seem to endanger the Bill, or seem to throw an influence in the way of obstructing the passage of it. This is a very important era in the history of this country, and we should make a combined effort to secure an efficient national system of education. We have long complained of the want of education, and my friend Mr Lewis of Ormiston brought out the fact about twenty years ago, that Scotland was then a half educated nation. I believe that is still to a large extent true; I believe the additional provision for education made since that time has not done more than provide for the increasing population, and that we must look upon Scotland as a half educated nation still. . . . . This is the first time we find the Government grappling with this great question, for which they deserve the highest credit. I highly approve of the two great fundamental principles of the Bill, which are, first, the breaking up of the exclusive monopoly of the Established Church in regard to the holders of office and the superintendence of the schools; and then, secondly, the provision for conjoining religious instruction with secular education, as a part of the ordinary arrangements of the school. Of these two fundamental principles of the Bill I cordially approve."

The Bill was thrown out in the Commons on the second reading, May 12th, by a majority of 193 to 184. The adverse majority included Conservatives, Roman Catholics, and extreme English Dissenters, the latter opposing on Voluntary principles. The Scottish members were in favour of the Bill by nearly three to one—36 voting in the minority, and 14 only in the majority.

Since then various education bills have run their course, and been defeated at various stages. I do not remember that Dr Cunningham was led to take a prominent part in any of the discussions. What his sentiments were, none who were in the way of talking with him on such subjects could mistake. He continued to think some measure of legislative security for the religious teaching was a legitimate, and, if it could be had, a desirable element in a Scottish Education Bill. But the question with respect to that matter, in his mind, had mainly been what was practicable. He became more impressed with the difficulties attending clauses of that kind, and indeed with the difficulties which obstruct all legislation on education. Beyond all doubt, his sense of the urgent importance of a national system became more positive and pronounced with every year of his life. I think it probable that he would have continued to dissuade the Church from asking, of her own accord, for a measure that should leave out all legislative provision for religious teaching. He would have done so on the ground that if, possibly, such a provision might still be practicable, it was more becoming for the Church not to take the initiative in setting that possibility aside. But he was in favour of citizens and churches calling on Government to face the educational wants of the country. And in case of Government bringing in a Bill, on its own responsibility, containing reasonable arrangements to supply education to the people, he was increasingly disinclined to oppose or obstruct it, merely on the ground that Government renounced responsibility for the religious element, and declared itself unable, in existing circumstances, to undertake to regulate that department.

# CHAPTER XXI.

## *PUBLIC QUESTIONS CONTINUED.*

### RELATIONS OF THE STATE TO TRUTH AND ERROR.

HERE it may be well to notice, in the first place, the attitude which Dr Cunningham maintained on questions in which Romanism was concerned. His views and feelings with respect to Popery have been dwelt upon in an earlier part of the volume; and I will not repeat what is there said. During the period now under review, however, several fresh questions arose, on which Dr Cunningham expressed himself in a manner worth recording.

First there came the proposal of Sir Robert Peel's government, to convert the grant to Maynooth (which had been provided by an annual vote up to that time) into a permanent endowment by Act of Parliament. Agitation immediately began, and the subject was brought into the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh (March 1845) with a proposal that, among other steps, they should petition against the Bill. Dr Cunningham at first rather discouraged this step, mainly on the ground that the Church ought not to be drawn into steps of that kind, unless there was a clear prospect of doing some good. He doubted whether the Church, as such, should enter on agitation; whether it should not confine itself to its own church avocations. There was not, he feared, sufficient prospect of success to warrant more. He thought in this case they had better confine themselves to calling the attention of their people to the subject, and proclaiming their own views. The ground of his hesitation, was a strong impression that Government was determined to play into the hands of the Church of Rome, and that no agitation was likely to be successful. By April, however, the opposition to the measure, through-

out the country, assumed such a character, that it could no longer be considered manifestly hopeless; and he intimated that his objections to petitioning were now removed :—"I cannot say," he said, "that my opinion is much shaken as to the hopelessness of preventing this national sin, notwithstanding the increased zeal and activity of the community." He went on to declare his impression, that almost any scheme based on false principles, religiously, was more likely, in existing circumstances, to succeed in high quarters than to fail; and he had no doubt that the grant to Maynooth would also gain the concurrence of the Legislature. Still he saw ground for expecting at least this amount of good from a movement against the measure, viz., that it might tend to rally and combine the evangelical Dissenters on Protestant ground.

The Bill was carried as everybody knows. Dr Cunningham continued to regard it as a measure involving clear national sin, and quite opposed to every sound view of national interests. He, therefore, of course regarded it as a national duty to undo that evil. At the same time he did not concur in all the uses subsequently made of the cry for the repeal of the measure. I have heard him express very strongly his conviction that to make a mere cry on such a point, the test, and especially the sole test, in sending men to Parliament, was an ill-judged and mischievous thing. He argued that it often had the effect of shutting out men who were sound and good members, merely because in their honest judgment a movement for the repeal of the grant was not practicable at the time, while it let in others who were prepared to take up any cry that might open a way for them to Parliament. The longer he lived, he said, the more he was impressed with the importance of sending men to Parliament on account of the general soundness of their opinions and the weight of their characters, and not on the ground of any mere cry in which they might be prepared to join.

In 1847 the question of diplomatic relations with the Pope began to agitate the public mind. A project of this kind, suggested no doubt by Irish questions, was entertained by the Government, and, after some incubation, took shape in a bill to remove doubts as to the power of the Crown to maintain diplomatic relations with

Rome. The Protestantism of the kingdom stirred to prevent the change, and to oppose the policy it indicated. In connection with a proposed petition on this subject, Dr Cunningham made a short speech. The measure had been argued against, by previous speakers, as a direct way of countenancing Popery, as one in a series of national sins—following on the endowment of Maynooth, and probably to be itself succeeded by the endowment of the Romish priesthood—and as a direct form of becoming partaker of the sins of Rome. Dr Cunningham made the following distinction, which is worth noticing:—

"He had no doubt about the propriety of condemning and opposing this measure, though he was not satisfied that it necessarily involved a violation of principle in the higher and stricter sense of the word. He had no doubt that the measure was to be traced to the dangerous corruption of sentiment that now generally prevailed on the subject of Popery, and he had no doubt that if it passed, it would be wrought by the Papists for the promotion of their cause. As a British subject, he felt it a foul degradation that this country should be making concessions to the Pope in order to secure his assistance in governing Ireland. But he was not quite sure that the measure, viewed in itself, could be proved necessarily to involve a violation of Protestant principle. It was, of course, manifest that, so far as concerned the motives and objects of the parties proposing this measure, the allegation that the Pope was a temporal prince was a mere pretence. Still it was a fact that he is a temporal prince; and he could not see that the fact of his also claiming to be the head of the Church rendered it positively unlawful to apply to him any of the ordinary principles applicable to the intercourse of temporal princes with each other; and unless this were maintained, he could not see that the measure in itself, and apart from the motives and objects of the parties proposing it, could be proved to involve what was directly and positively sinful. He could not concur in the statement which had been made, that, in point of principle, this measure stood on the same footing as the endowment of Maynooth, or the endowment of the Popish priesthood—measures which could be clearly proved necessarily to involve, in their very nature, a sinful countenancing of Papacy as such. And his only motive for making this observation was, that he thought it of great practical importance to keep the line of demarcation clear and distinct between the class of measures which could be proved to involve necessarily, and in their own nature, a direct violation of Protestant principle, and those measures in regard to which this could not be very clearly established, or could be made out only by construction and inference, by going beyond what was necessarily involved in

the nature of the measure itself, and taking into account the motives and objects of the parties proposing it. There were many grounds on which he could oppose this measure; but the chief ground on which he concurred in the Presbytery petitioning against it was, that he had no doubt that the Pope would contrive to make the proposed interchange of ambassadors a means of advancing the interests of Papacy."

In the year 1850 the memorable "Papal aggression" stirred the country. The Pope re-established the Papal hierarchy in England, dividing the country into sees, and appointing the incumbents to wear territorial titles, corresponding to the designation of their dioceses. The effect was to set the country in a blaze, and to produce an Anti-Papal ferment, which a year before no one would have believed that any Papal proceeding whatever could produce. It was a memorable instance of the fact that the way of doing a thing is often more important than the thing itself. Far more serious mischiefs might have been attempted by the Pope, or attempted on the Pope's behalf by British statesmen, without exciting half the animosity; but the blast of trumpets from "the Flaminian Gate," and the arrogance of the curial style, woke up the slumbering lion. People only wanted to know what they could do to repel the aggression. The sudden interest, and the strong feeling aroused, gave great encouragement to those who had long laboured to direct attention to the progress of Popery, and the importance of resisting it. At the same time it was very important to make a right use of the opportunity, and to give a reasonable direction to the popular feeling.

In England, especially in the Church of England, the natural tendency was to fall back at once on the supremacy of the Crown, and on the laws which fence it. That supremacy, as asserted against Papal encroachments, was laid down in terms so unlimited, as to deny the independence of the church, *i.e.* of any church. The unqualified application of this principle to the case in hand was obviously unsatisfactory. It tended, indeed, to strengthen ultimately the position of the Romanists, inasmuch as it offered them the position of persons maintaining the rights of conscience, and suffering for those rights. The Free Church, with her recent

contest full in her recollection, could not possibly oppose the Papal aggression on the ground of the supremacy, or represent it as the duty of any church to take direction in spiritual concerns from the civil government. Yet Free Churchmen found no difficulty in joining in the cry of indignation which went through the country, nor did they see anything unjust or objectionable in the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, passed early in the next year. They maintained that the Papal arrangements must be taken and construed in the light of known Popish doctrine as to the effects claimed for these arrangements, and as to the incidents which they carried with them. In this view the Papal Bull had a meaning, and embodied a claim, which clearly transgressed the just limits of ecclesiastical liberty, and which deserved to be vigorously repelled.

Dr Cunningham, at a meeting of the Commission of Assembly, put the point in this way:—

"We are all prepared to express concurrence with the strong outburst of national indignation, although we must guard against its being supposed that we concur in all the grounds on which the opposition is based. We cannot concur in the ground taken of the Pope's act being an infringement of the spiritual supremacy of the crown, because we have no such principle in the constitution of Scotland, and because we believe that according to God's Word no earthly sovereign ought to exercise such a supremacy. Nor can we take up any ground relating to the validity of English orders. We have Episcopalians in Scotland who deny the validity of Presbyterian orders, but we can afford to laugh at that. On the part of the Bishop of Rome, however, it is a different thing, and we cannot afford to laugh at his acts or despise them. In regard to any act of that antichristian system, or of its representatives, it becomes us to learn one of the most obvious lessons taught in history, viz., that we ought not to look merely at the act itself as it might be viewed in the abstract, but we must view it in the light of the claims, pretensions, and designs of Popery; in the light of what we know we shall ultimately have to face wherever Popery prevails and gets into power. The Papacy has always been in the habit of shuffling between civil and spiritual things, shifting from one side to the other, and calling an act a civil act when it served her purpose, and calling it a spiritual one when that answers the object she has in view. This is just one of the tricks by which Popery contrives to blind men's minds. In the present transaction they must view Popery in her complex character, in order to bring out the true character of the system."

Having illustrated this "shuffle between the civil and the spiritual" by the case of the inquisition, which of old was repre-

sented as spiritual, and now, when it better serves Popish purposes, as civil, he referred to the way in which Cromwell dealt with this plea, when the Portuguese Government replied to his demand for redress in the case of persecuted British subjects, that the Inquisition being spiritual they could not meddle with it. Cromwell's reply was that in that case he must send a fleet against the House of the Inquisition at Lisbon.

"That is the way in which many of these equivocal and complex claims of the Church of Rome must be met now. It is a constant tendency of Popery to shuffle from the spiritual to the civil and from the civil to the spiritual, according as it served her purpose, to blind men to her complex character, and to ride off when pressed with particular acts or measures which it does not answer her interests to acknowledge at the time. It is sometimes very difficult to deal with this constant shuffling, and on a mere abstract question, we may sometimes be involved in perplexities."

Therefore the Acts of the Papacy must be considered and dealt with in their broad complex character. Hence, when Lord John Russell's Bill (passed as the Ecclesiastical Titles' Act) was introduced, Dr Cunningham supported it against depreciatory remarks by some of his friends. He thought it of great importance that the Legislature should take some step, be it what it might. It expressed the general principle of the right of legislative interference. He thought they might do more without infringing on the right of toleration. The rights of Romanists must be respected, but he maintained it to be of great importance that nothing more should be conceded to them. He illustrated this from the law of mortmain, and added that he was inclined to think that it was fairly within the limits of reasonable legislation to abolish nunneries. On the last point, Mr Dunlop immediately expressed a different opinion.

I feel that in touching on some of these points, I am dealing with matters, the interest of which has been killed out of them within the last two years. The most serious fears were entertained during the decennium beginning in 1844, that the long-cherished policy of endowing the Popish priesthood, opening diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome, and governing Ireland by the help of a *Concordat,* would be carried into effect. Leading statesmen of both parties were known to cherish these views, and there seemed no

effective means of hindering them, so much the less as the maintenance of the Irish Establishment was regarded by many as dependent on this policy, which thus procured adherents in the unlikeliest quarters. Dr Cunningham, in particular, repeatedly expressed the deepest discouragement at the prospect which lay before the country. The vanishing of the Irish Establishment, and of all endowments in that country, and the abolition of the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, have made an end of these perplexities for the present. But it does not follow that they will not return in the same or in other forms. And, beyond doubt, as long as it exists, Romanism will tend to embarrass Government, and will continue to lay out all its resources to ensnare statesmen.

The notices now given apply to particular occasions on which the efforts of Romanists to secure their position in the country had to be resisted. His views as to the way in which Popery ought at all times to be regarded and dealt with by Protestant communities and Churches ought, however, to be more fully represented. He thought much and spoke often on the subject ; indeed, he thought no subject more deserving of the attention of religious men, for his persuasion of the real and unalterable character of Romanism was one of the deepest convictions of his mind. But for its length, a speech delivered, almost literally *extempore*, at a meeting held to sympathise with the Madiai,—those meek and noble sufferers under the intolerance of the Duke of Tuscany,—might have been quoted. It is remarkable both for power and for vivacity. The following statement, made in his own Presbytery, exhibits his views more briefly. The occasion was a motion by Dr Tweedie proposing certain steps with a view to enlighten the community on this subject :—

"I shall not say much about the general character of Popery. It is, indeed, the masterpiece of Satan—his greatest and most successful scheme for frustrating the great designs of the Christian religion. This is the light in which it ought ever to be contemplated. This being, then, Satan's great scheme for frustrating the Christian revelation, the right mode of dealing with it, and the maintenance of a right position in regard to it, must virtually form the chief duty of a Christian Church. Experience fully shews that the general character of a Church of Christ, and her usefulness and efficiency, are all dependent to a large extent just on the position she assumes in regard to this mystery of iniquity, which was work-

ing in the apostles' days, and has been doing so ever since; and which, ever since it came into existence, has deeply affected the general condition of the Church of Christ. It is materially affecting the condition of the Church at this day, and will do so until it is destroyed. And I believe that the blessing of God upon any Church is dependent to no inconsiderable extent on the position she assumes in regard to Christ's great adversary. I believe that the Church is never in a more becoming and safe position than when openly and actively contending against the man of sin in the use of all right and scriptural means. We are called now to take this position more decidedly and openly than we have yet done. I have no respect for those men who talk with contempt of Popery. It is utter folly for any man to despise it, either as a mere subject of argumentative discussion, or as a source of extraordinary influence upon the minds of men. In both of these aspects it is not to be despised; and the man that despises it, thereby shews that he knows nothing about it,—that he has never reflected on what Popery is; and he is not only not fitted to contend with Papists, but he is in some danger of being perverted by Popish sophisms. We can no longer count on the people of this country remaining in ignorance of Popery. We should now assume it as a thing certain, as far as man can see, that Popery, in its most plausible and attractive form, and accompanied by the most specious arguments that can be adduced in support of it, will be brought before the people of this country, and pressed on their attention. We ought to lay our account with that, and we ought to be prepared for it. I am not in the least surprised at the conversion of men to the Church of Rome. I do not regard it as a proof of the want of wisdom, except in the sense in which Dr Tweedie has referred to it. It is no proof of want of high talent, of great learning, and of great political skill and sagacity, that men join the ranks of the Church of Rome. It is no proof of the want of those great qualities which we usually look for in the statesman and the scholar; for we have abundant evidence that men possessing all these qualities, and therefore wise in the common sense of the word, are going every day to that Church; and I would not be at all surprised if Popery were to gain converts from other Churches than the Church of England. Papists are directing their attention chiefly to the removal of one great barrier in the way of more direct measures of conversion. They are labouring to break down the sense which used to obtain in Scotland of something peculiarly offensive in Popish doctrine and practice. We used to regard it with something of a feeling of horror. In course of time, from a want of knowledge of the subject, that feeling ceased to rest on an intelligent basis, on a full acquaintance with the grounds on which it ought to rest. And now it is in a great measure removed. We now see little or none of those special feelings of abhorrence which our countrymen used to entertain towards Popery. It is considered only as another division of Christians added to the many which exist, without any adequate sense being felt of the peculiar character of Popery, as set before us in the Word of God, as

Christ's great antagonist; or as a system, the tendency and ordinary effect of which is to lead men to base their hopes of salvation on a false ground, and which is thereby injurious to their souls. This is the sum and substance of Popery; the priests virtually undertaking for the salvation of the people, on the condition of the people giving themselves up to be ruled by the priests as they please. Every part of the system is most skillfully adapted, at once to serve Satan's purpose of leading men to trust upon a false foundation, and, at the same time, to become the dupes or creatures of the priests. I do not wish to encourage mere abhorrence, without having it resting on intelligent grounds. Mere ignorance forms no barrier against Popery. Intelligent knowledge can be revived if we take measures for drawing men's attention to Popery, and to its bearing on the welfare of man."

Holding these views, Dr Cunningham took an interest in every agency which seemed likely to give effect to them. He took a prominent part in the formation of the Scottish Reformation Society; and when the Tercentenary of the Scottish Reformation was celebrated under its auspices, he lent all possible help to make the commemoration effective. He wrote repeatedly also in the early numbers of the *Bulwark*. Nominally, he was revising editor; but this office was merely nominal, and he took occasion to declare that "its success was owing to the ability and energy of Dr Begg." Countless speeches were devoted to the same cause; for he never missed a fair opportunity of promoting it.

### CONTINUANCE OF EXISTING ESTABLISHED CHURCHES.

The policy of alliance with Rome, and of indiscriminate endowment, tended to force on other questions. Statesmen brought the existing Establishments into their argument in two ways. On the one hand, those Establishments, maintained only for a section of the people, imposed, it was said, an obligation in justice to make a similar provision for other sections. On the other hand, the endowment of other sects, would tend to strengthen the Establishments, and so to consolidate the constitution. Dr Cunningham was certainly not in the least moved by these arguments, as arguments. He was moved, however, by the circumstance, that the prevailing views of men tended to give great weight to the pleas thus proposed. And, therefore, while he had not the least disposition to entangle himself, or

let the Free Church be entangled, in a needless crusade against any of the Establishments, he did not conceal his impression of the altered state of the question as a practical question. If Established Churches were to be maintained, not as a homage to truth, but on a footing which sanctions and invites concurrent endowment of Churches, or indefinite latitudinarianism in the Church endowed, then he held it better that Establishments should disappear. For a nation is not always bound to promote religion by establishing the Church; but it is always bound to abstain from countenancing error and sanctioning indifference.

He was not in the least moved, in coming to this conclusion, by any of the arguments produced in the Voluntary controversy against Establishments. He was on terms of friendship with many persons of Voluntary views, co-operated with them constantly, and promoted that co-operation on the part of his brethren. But their arguments had no increased weight in his mind. He believed, as of old, that the endowment of ministers of religion was a matter within the discretion, and which might be in the line of the duty, of civil rulers; and he did not believe that any oppression or injustice were necessarily involved in this step, even although a portion of the people might not accept the services of the endowed Church. No doubt, he rated the importance of that question less highly than of old; for he came to have very grave doubts whether in the existing condition of Christendom, Establishments do not do more hurt by the heart-burnings they create, than they do good by the material support they offer. But while he might make this concession on the question of expediency, he never, I believe, felt his judgment moved by the adverse arguments based on the province of civil government. He would have argued these points to the last, if compelled to argue, in the very same way as he did at the first. But he certainly considered that, in point of fact, the maintenance of the existing system had become associated with great dangers. By the nature of the case, the Irish Establishment was mainly in view; for that was the case, as all men felt, most manifestly requiring a re-adjustment on one principle or other.

An important declaration on this subject was made by Dr Cun-

ningham at a banquet given in Edinburgh to Mr Murray Dunlop, on the occasion of his contesting Greenock (unsuccesfully at that time) as an opponent of the Endowment of Maynooth. The date was May 1845. For the sake of connection, I introduce first a statement made by Mr Dunlop, the guest of the evening. He said :—

"I know that the Voluntaries and I differ on what I hold to be a great and important principle. I hold it to be the duty of nations, as nations, to advance the cause of the Redeemer's kingdom; and as a sequence from that, I hold that wherever circumstances are such that the establishment or endowment of the true religion will promote the Redeemer's cause, it is the duty of nations to do so. But then, on the other hand, I never looked upon the establishment of religion as being the inherent duty of governments in all circumstances, or as necessarily and in all circumstances resulting from the principles which I maintain. For instance, the idea of promoting the true religion in India by the establishment of Christianity, appears to me to be absurd, and to be not only not called for by my principles, but actually condemned by them; because I think that such a step, so far from promoting, would tend to retard the propagation of the truth in that country. While Voluntaries would say that they objected to the establishment of religion there, because they objected against *all* establishments, I would equally object, because it ran counter to my fundamental principle, that it is the duty of the State to further the advancement of the cause of truth. And just in the same way, when I see that things are brought to this condition in this country, that in order to the endowment of truth at all, we must endow it jointly with error, and that in so far as truth is to be endowed it must be placed under fetters and restrictions which are inconsistent with the Word of God,—I say when things are brought to the alternative that we must either have endowments on this footing, or no endowments or establishment at all, I cannot hesitate a moment in my choice; and I would, therefore, at once say, let there be no establishment—let there be no endowments at all. I have no hesitation in saying so, because my principle not only does not require me—it actually forbids me—to make common cause with error, even to support an Established Church, or when, as the price of this, we have to give up the freedom wherewith Christ has made His people free. I have no difficulty, then, in taking up practically the same ground with a determined Voluntary. We differ, indeed, in our principles, and we take different roads, but we arrive at the same result. Now, I don't say this contingently,—I don't say this with reference to circumstances which may happen in the future. The time, in my opinion, has already come. We are now brought to the alternative, either of agreeing to the establishment of truth along with error, and to the establishment of truth under fetters, which no Christian can consistently submit to, or of having no establishment at all. I therefore make my election now;

and neither I nor any consistent Free Churchman can hesitate for a moment in adopting the latter alternative, and fighting as firmly in opposition to Establishments, as those who hold in the abstract that in no circumstances should there ever be an Establishment at all."

Mr Dunlop added some remarks on the altered position, alike of opponents and defenders, of Established Churches.

A subsequent speaker, Mr (now Dr) Johnstone of the United Secession Church, referred to Mr Dunlop's remarks, and in doing so, happened to use terms which seemed to imply that the latter gentleman had spoken of giving up the Establishment *principle*. Dr Cunningham (whose speech was mainly devoted to illustrate how reasonably Voluntaries and Free Churchmen might unite in opposition to the Maynooth Grant) thought fit to notice this, which he did as follows:—

"I am not quite sure if Mr Johnstone (unintentionally I have no doubt) stated precisely the import of what was said by Mr Dunlop in regard to abandoning the principle of the Establishment. We are not prepared to abandon the principle of an Establishment. We hold it on the ground that on rulers there rests an obligation to promote the cause of truth; but I suppose that we are coming practically to unite against the Establishment, that is, against the prolonged existence of the existing Establishment. We can with perfect consistency tell the Government that it is their duty to overturn the existing Establishment,—but that it is also their duty to consider seriously whether it is practicable,—it is not very likely, but it is a question which they are bound to consider,—whether or not it is practicable for them to do something for the promotion of true Christianity. We value the principle of an Establishment only as a professed homage paid to truth, and when all regard to the distinction between truth and error is openly abandoned, when the Government tells us that they do not intend to pay any homage to truth,—that they know not what is truth,—and that they believe truth and error to be the same,—when they proclaim this by their actions, we have no hesitation in saying, You had far better leave the matter altogether; withhold your unholy and polluted hands, and don't meddle with a matter which in your present condition,—in your present depravity of understanding,—in your present enmity against God's truth,—you cannot touch without defiling. The obligation to promote the cause of God was not limited to individuals, but was extended to man in his public capacity. But they were not to do evil that good might come, the more especially as there was another way by which the evil now proposed to be done could be avoided,—namely, by sweeping away the Irish Church Establishment altogether. He was thoroughly satisfied that the

continued existence of that Establishment in Ireland had no tendency to promote the interests of Protestantism. It might have a tendency to promote the interests of certain political parties calling themselves Protestants, but it had no tendency to promote the interests of Protestantism as it existed in men's hearts and lives. They were committed to this and nothing more, that in the position in which that country is now placed, the actual existence of the Establishment has no tendency to promote Protestantism."

The only remark which it is necessary to add is, that Dr Cunningham was not likely to lend himself readily to any public agitation of questions like these, except on some plain and obvious call. At that time the dangers apprehended, the alternatives which alone seemed open, seemed to him to require for a frank and plain declaration. In general he held a strong opinion (stronger, I think, than most of his brethren) that it is not desirable for churches, nor for ministers, to meddle with matters beyond the sphere of their ordinary responsibilities, except upon some obvious providential call. He applied that rule with some stringency to several of the public questions of his own time: and I have no doubt he applied it also to this one.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *DOMESTIC QUESTIONS OF THE FREE CHURCH.*

THERE are still to be noticed one or two subjects of discussion which interested Dr Cunningham, and which may be placed apart from those already noticed. I refer to questions arising out of the internal arrangements and administration of the Free Church. The College Controversy, as it was called, takes here a place of painful prominence. But there are one or two other matters which also deserve to be noticed.

#### SUSTENTATION FUND.

The Sustentation Fund, for instance, naturally underwent much discussion, and that during a good many years. For the most part, Dr Cunningham left these discussions to others. But he always took a very deep and lively interest in the prosperity of the Fund. I can myself bear witness to his exerting himself to prevent loss accruing to the Fund, and to promote the increase of it, at a time when party divisions on other subjects threatened to interfere with united and cordial efforts on this one.

In his views as to the best way of managing it, he simply followed Dr Chalmers. That is to say, he believed that some modification of the equal dividend system, some scheme designed to check the abuses incident to that system, ought to be adopted. On this ground he supported a plan introduced by the Sustentation Committee in 1852, which was then called the rating system, because an appreciation or estimate of the sum which each congregation ought in fairness to contribute, was to be taken as the basis with reference to which its claims on the fund were in some

measure to be regulated. Two years afterwards he came to the conclusion that this scheme was insufficient and inexpedient, and supported the movement for inquiry, with a view to something more stringent. The process of inquiry, when ultimately adopted, did much to produce both approximation of view and cordiality of feeling, and no important difference has since then taken place.

The plan of 1852, above referred to, was strongly disapproved of by Hugh Miller, and he directed the powerful artillery of the *Witness* against it. One of the positions on which he rested was, the incompetency of the Church to lay down any rule as to what the members should give or not give. It was a department in which the Church had no right to judge or exercise authority. To this it might have been enough to reply that the scheme proposed no proper exercise of authority; it merely proposed that a certain fund entrusted to the Assembly should be divided with some regard to an estimated *minimum* of ability and obligation in the case of each congregation. Dr Cunningham, however, was not content with this, but met Hugh Miller with a direct negative. The Church's authority was *not* so completely excluded from this field, although there might be many good reasons why the Church, except in extreme cases, should forbear to interpose authority, properly so called, in the matter. The subject interested him, and three successive letters from him appeared in the *Witness.* Hugh Miller, *pari passu,* kept up the fire on his side. It was the only tilt between them which ever took place publicly, as far as I know. The discussion was too theoretical to admit of its being further referred to here; yet it had its elements of interest, and, for an unbiassed spectator, of amusement too. Dr Cunningham singled out the assertion made, shewed its range and results; he laid down his theory of the nature and limits of Church power, adduced the well-considered maxims of those who had discussed such topics of old, and expounded the reasons why, on the one hand, the Church ought in general to feel and acknowledge that she had not sufficient materials for much or frequent exercise of authority in this matter; why, on the other hand, she ought not to hold herself excluded wholly from this field, or overlook the possibility of shortcoming

and sin in this department arising to a scandal, which she might and ought to deal with. Hugh Miller proceeded, as usual, with perfect command of language, allusion, and illustration; he kept mainly before his readers the difficulties of getting into any man's pocket without his own consent; and questioned the expediency of the Church trying it, even with the aid of all the "old divines."

The whole proceeding illustrated the strength of temptation which some subjects had for Dr Cunningham. As he said in his Presbytery, on the occasion of this discussion, "he had a strong and growing aversion to take any part in any of the public business of the Church." This aversion was connected with the state and prospects of the College Controversy, and was unquestionably, at that time, a very strong and rooted feeling. He could have declined taking any share in the matter with perfect propriety, or contented himself with stating his opinion in his Presbytery. But large and loose assertions in questions of Church principles, introduced to make a convenient road to some desired conclusion, was a thing that he perfectly hated; he felt it as most men would feel a personal injury; and on such occasions, therefore, he could not sit still; all resolutions to keep silence gave way to the impulse to clear up the true *status questionis*.

## FORM OF PROCESS.

Among the domestic concerns of the Free Church which interested Dr Cunningham, there was one, not remarkably interesting in itself, yet important enough in its way, viz., the method in use for doing justice when questions arise regarding the character and behaviour of ministers. There is not a great deal to be said upon this topic; but it was one with respect to which Dr Cunningham had very decided opinions. Hence it is hardly consistent with a biographer's duty to leave them unrecorded.

The body of rules sanctioned for the purpose of conducting judicial investigations into the matters referred to, is technically called the Form of Process. To those who are not acquainted with Scottish and Presbyterian peculiarities, it may be as well to say that the

said Form is, as to its essentials, of some antiquity, and survives without any considerable experience of those reforms which have been freely bestowed on the processes of the civil law. The court in which proceedings properly begin is the Presbytery. When a minister's conduct has been questioned, a preliminary investigation may result in satisfying all concerned that there is no ground for censure, and a finding by the Presbytery to that effect may close the business, and shelter the accused brother from further trouble. Or, on the other hand, a confession may put the Presbytery in circumstances to visit the offence with due censure without further delay. If, however, the case requires a formal trial, it must proceed by libel, *i.e.*, by a regular indictment; and here the trouble begins. When parties outside the Presbytery can be induced to undertake the charge of prosecuting, from a sense of public duty, the Presbytery's task is tolerably simple. They entertain an accusation lodged and supported according to fixed rules; they have merely to see that accuser and accused proceed regularly, and finally to do justice in the case. But prosecutors are not easily found in general, for the task is a somewhat odious, and often an expensive one; and as every one knows that the Presbytery must itself prosecute if no one else will, people are commonly willing to leave the duty to them. In this case, the Presbytery must make the preliminary precognitions, and must resolve that there is a case for libel; must prepare and serve the indictment or libel; and then, inasmuch as the Presbytery is the judge ordinary, they must themselves judge (*i.e.*, as court of first instance) any objections made against their own libel, and must judge the cause which they themselves are prosecuting, both in its intermediate steps and as to the ultimate finding. This odd combination of functions is extremely uncomfortable, and it is, moreover, the reverse of edifying. It exposes the course of justice to strong suspicions, and it subjects the court to a bias which may perplex the calmest and fairest minds. Next, it is to be observed, that in all cases, both those in which third parties appear as prosecutors, and those in which the Presbytery must themselves discharge that function, the Presbytery (like a court-martial) must combine the functions of judge and jury; they are judges both of law and of fact.

The failures of the Presbytery, if any befall them through the multiplicity of their functions, may be cured on appeal. But here arises a new defect. Appeals in our judicial cases fall under the general principle applicable to all our business, that any finding of a Presbytery may be appealed to the Synod and Assembly. Vexatious appeals for the purpose of procuring delay have been limited, by providing that the Presbytery, for certain stages of the case, is to proceed in face of all appeals. Ultimately, however, any and every decision may be brought under review. Hence, not only decisions of the Presbytery, as *judges*, on the law of the case, its forms, or its sentence are reviewed; but their decisions as *jury* are equally liable to challenge, and are appealed in the same form. There is, in short, appeal upon fact as well as upon law, and that to two superior courts successively. Those courts have not themselves heard the evidence; but it is all recorded, and is read, usually, to the Synod, and printed for the use of the Assembly. Synod and Assembly act as new juries; for the question which comes before them is not analogous to a motion in a superior court for new trial, on the ground of the verdict in the court below being against evidence. It is simply the first question of guilty or not guilty, which is anew decided by the Synod and by the Assembly as fresh juries; free certainly from some of the disadvantages which may occasionally influence the Presbytery; but yet juries which have not seen the witnesses, and which have not always a great deal of time to give to the minute examination of the evidence in intricate cases. Moreover, the General Assembly is a jury some five or six hundred strong! In cases of any intricacy or difficulty, and in all cases that are strongly defended, it is commonly the Assembly which pronounces sentence: for the appeals bring up the cause when the Presbytery has proceeded so far as to have decided the question of fact; and if on appeal the accused is found guilty by the Assembly, that court usually, though not necessarily, pronounces the sentence and terminates the case.

These are the main features of the system, considered as a judicial process. Another matter, however, deserves notice. According to the former usage, a minister under libel continued, or might con-

tinue, to officiate in the usual way during the whole process; on the principle of presuming him to be innocent till he was proved to be guilty. In the Free Church the law on this point has been altered, and in all cases in which a Presbytery resolves to serve a libel, the minister libelled is suspended from clerical functions until the case is disposed of. It is well understood that this suspension is not penal; it is intended to relieve the minister himself, and his people, from the pain and disadvantage under which a ministry carried on in such circumstances must labour.

The system thus described is, I believe, in general, worked so as to attain the ends of justice, though often in a rather rough and jarring way. There is, undoubtedly, a great desire to do right, and nothing but right, on the part of those who work it. One compensation it has for many defects, that it is very open, and the wind of public opinion blows very freely through it. Yet beyond all question the justice that *is* attained is reached by a rather questionable method. The arrangements are not favourable to the maintenance of a judicial temper; they are not fitted to secure that law and fact shall be ascertained by the best combination of knowledge, evidence, and good sense; and they are not fitted to produce confidence in the public mind, that this part of the Church's work is safely or rightly done,—a circumstance the more to be regretted, because the methods of the civil and the criminal law, once in some respects lax enough, are receiving continual improvement. Indeed, as regards this last point, the very publicity which I have noticed as tending to keep us right upon the whole, places us at a grievous disadvantage in the point of reputation. We brandish our weakness in the face of an admiring world. What passes in the consultations of ordinary juries is unknown. Judges in civil and criminal courts compare their opinions privately, and secure either an imposing unanimity; or, when they must differ, a difference conducted with great gravity and decorum. But when a Presbytery of thirty men, that are prosecutors, judges, and jury all in one, are discussing the decisions of the various perplexing points that arise, or when they are striving to keep in order some wily and audacious accused brother, who wishes nothing more than to exhibit himself as an ill-used martyr,

and who with this view worries the Presbytery in every plausible method, it is no wonder if the honesty and good sense of the court are obscured by occasional heats and bewilderments. And when a General Assembly, four or five hundred strong, begins somewhere about midnight to judge a case of evidence extending possibly to two hundred pages in print, after pleadings at the bar that have lasted for many hours, it is no wonder if sometimes an air of hurry and lack of deliberation seems to characterise the proceedings; or if, at other times, the speech of the ardent member who "brings down the galleries" seems to sway the vote unduly. I repeat, that I believe we do not, on the whole, frequently miss substantial justice. But I doubt if there exists anywhere a form of judicial proceedings more exposed to plausible criticism.

It proved tolerably easy to amend the existing law, to the effect that a minister under libel shall cease to exercise his functions, and also to effect minor improvements with reference to appeals, and to the order of procedure in serving libels. But the main defects were not so easily cured, because a cure implied very considerable alterations. In regard to evidence, it was obviously necessary to provide something in the nature of a jury, which should hear the evidence, and whose judgment, on fact, should be conclusive, except in the case of a new trial being ordered on specific grounds. In regard to the functions of the Presbytery, two methods were conceivable. The Presbytery might be relieved from the necessity of acting in any case as prosecutors, and might have their judicial functions preserved. In that case, some other body must be charged with the responsibility of deciding to prosecute, and of following out the prosecution. This method would better guard the dignity of the Presbytery, and might seem to comport best with the place of the Presbytery in the hierarchy of our courts. Or the Presbytery might have laid upon them the responsibility of prosecuting, and in that case a commission of some kind, named probably by the Assembly, must act as judges and hear the evidence. Those who desired a reform of the system were inclined, some to the one alternative, and some to the other. Dr Cunningham decidedly preferred the second. He saw difficulty in committing to any

hands but those of the Presbytery the decision to prosecute, *i.e.* the formal and solemn decision that a case requiring prosecution existed; they therefore must undertake the investigations and the processes by which that decision is reached. Moreover, it is just in these preliminary proceedings that the especial character of the Presbytery, as an ecclesiastical court, ought to be actively manifested. The Presbytery is a court of conscience, and during the preliminary inquiries into a case which involves a brother's character and a people's spiritual interests, they may and ought to be always ready to deal with the conscience of the parties, and to endeavour to bring about the acknowledgment of truth, and the recognition of duty, on Christian grounds. It is just at this stage that the Presbytery, considered as a Court of Christ, ought to be especially watchful and active. When this fails, and a trial must be resorted to, the opportunity for this kind of activity very much passes away. The question now is much more, What is the reasonable method of sifting evidence and ascertaining facts? what is the method which experience and common sense approve in all such cases? The Presbytery, therefore, as the proper spiritual superiors and overseers, ought not to be excluded from the former part of the case,—rather they ought to be especially charged with it. But if so, then they are disqualified from acting as unbiassed judges at the second stage; and this is just the stage at which, on general principles, it is less requisite that the Presbytery, as such, should have the whole process in their hands. It is the stage at which the intrinsic distinction between Church process and any other kind of process is reduced to a minimum. Views such as these were indicated by Dr Cunningham in a discussion in his own Presbytery in 1850. The occasion was a proposal by Mr Mackenzie of North Leith to appoint a Committee to prepare an overture on the subject.* An overture was sent up to the Assembly of 1851, proposing, among other improvements, that the judicial functions of presbyteries

* Mr Mackenzie (in common with some other members) appears to have preferred the plan of leaving the Presbytery to judge, and appointing a new authority with power to prosecute. But the overture was ultimately framed in accordance with Dr Cunningham's views, and no doubt under his influence.

should cease when they came to a decision to libel, that a Commission appointed by the Assembly should hear the evidence, and that they should report their finding to the Assembly, which should give sentence. The Assembly of that year sent down to presbyteries an overture in substantial accordance with the proposal thus made.* The requisite consent of Presbyteries, however, was not attained, although very nearly half the Presbyteries expressed approval either of the measure or of the general object designed by it, and forty or fifty suggested further consideration. In that Assembly and the next, however, some minor improvements were effected; and finally, by making the charge permissory, instead of compulsory, *i.e.*, giving the Presbytery leave to retain the old system, or adopt the new, at its own discretion, Acts of Assembly were passed in 1854 which rendered it possible at least for a new system to be tried. No Presbytery, however, has, as yet, elected to try it. Probably the undivided attention of the Church, and the undivided influence of her most trusted minds, would have been required in order to produce harmonious opinion and a thorough reform in this department. In 1853 and 1854, when the College Controversy was becoming daily more intense, those conditions could not, of course, be realised.

Dr Cunningham had throughout his life a very strong sense of the defective nature of the Church's arrangements in this department, and of the scandal and sin with which these defects rendered her chargeable. I remember very well an Assembly which I attended as a young minister, at which a case of libel had to be finally disposed of. It was not a case of the gravest kind, and, therefore, perhaps the Assembly had a less lively feeling of responsibility. At any rate, at one stage of the case, though no particular heats occurred, the Assembly became divided as to the course to be followed, and the views became so multifarious, and the ways of expressing them so conversational and loose, that the court became

* Those who wish to see the argument regarding it may consult two letters by Sir Henry Moncreiff in *Witness* newspaper of 3d and 7th January 1852, and his remarks in Presbytery of Hamilton in same newspaper, of date 7th April; and on the other side, letter by Dr Gibson in *Witness* of 14th April.

in a manner decomposed, and presented an appearance anything but judicial. There was, in fact, but one course which it was really reasonable to follow; the only thing to be done, therefore, was to stick to that, till the Assembly should come to see it. Dr Cunningham, who had spoken more than once, I believe, spied me on the outer verge of the house, and came up to shake hands with me as an old student, feeling apparently that he had done his share, and must leave things to come right of themselves. "Did you ever see the like of this?" he said; "did you ever see such a farce as to call this a judicial proceeding? Does it need argument to prove that a body like this is hopelessly incompetent to judge causes according to our Form of Process?" There could only be one answer, for the thing spoke for itself. Long afterwards, in the year in which he died, he took an opportunity of declaring, that so strong was his impression of the "irrationality and indecency" of the present mode of conducting cases, that he had felt himself shut up to the necessity of refusing to take any part in cases of libel involving questions of evidence before any of the courts. Entertaining these views, he regarded a thorough reform as a matter of clear and obvious duty, which the Church could not neglect without sin. He did not believe that men could help seeing that our existing form of process is in some respects unsuited to secure the ends of a judicial process, except through culpable disregard of the demands which God and man have a right to make of those who profess to deal with causes and do justice. When he found, therefore, that the peculiarities of the old process were defended as constitutional; and further, inasmuch as our constitution is scriptural, were vindicated as having a divine sanction, he regarded all this as a mere attempt to prove that Scripture and our constitution bind us to what is against truth, justice, and common sense. He always claimed the right to regard this style of argument with contempt, and to denounce it as pernicious to the Church. In dealing with it, I cannot say that he always kept his temper. I fear I cannot even pretend that he took any particular pains to keep it.

In connection with this subject, one cannot but add the remark, that Cunningham had all the qualities which go to make a great

advocate and judge. As judge, his charges would have been pre-eminently famous. When he took part in a case before the courts, he always did so with striking effect. In 1849,* a Glasgow minister, a popular preacher (and one of those who had been very noisy on the subject of slavery), was tried on charges of awful wickedness. The accused was a little, swarthy, heavy-eyed man. He spoke in a sharp-clipping voice, but had something of the natural orator in him. The Assembly heard the case in private. The accused spoke in his defence for more than four hours, from midnight till bright summer morning, and no flush ever tinged his sallow cheek. Hoarse and spent after his long battle for more than life, he sat down, and the Assembly adjourned to wait for the fresh strength of a new day. When they met again, the opinions expressed great diversity. The lawyers in the house took opposite sides. A long day wore through. At length a cry rose, "Cunningham! Cunningham!" It had no effect in drawing him out at first. It sank in silence oftener than once, but was so perseveringly renewed, that he came forward at length slowly and reluctantly. Leaning against the front of the platform, and placing both his hands behind him as if to confine them, he delivered in that attitude a most remarkable address. He arranged the facts in the voluminous record, as a magnet arranges the iron filings in a handful of dust. It seemed as if reasoning on evidence had been the business of his life. He moved to find proven; but not proven was found by a small majority. A few months later the accused fled the country.

## COLLEGE CONTROVERSY.

However the reader may choose to deal with this section, the biographer has no alternative but to write it. The interest of the topic discussed has in a great measure vanished in the past. Future discussions of the method of theological training may indeed borrow something from this controversy, but will not be encumbered with references to its minuter windings. The subject, however, lay too near Dr Cunningham's heart to admit of its being lightly passed

* This account of a very well remembered scene was found among Mr Mackenzie's jottings.

over. The discussion almost absorbed some years of the life which is here narrated, and it left its mark to the end. There are difficulties in this part of the narrative, which I shall endeavour to overcome by writing it very much on the understanding that, without resigning my own views, my special business is to do justice to his.

The College Controversy turned upon the question, what arrangements the Free Church ought to make for the education of the rising ministry; or rather, perhaps, in what respects the arrangements to be made should differ from those in existence before the Disruption. Different they must be, partly, on the one hand, because the Free Church wished a more efficient system, partly, on the other, because the means at her disposal were limited, and must be economised. The question arose, How many schools of theology ought the Free Church to endeavour to maintain, and what staff should be reckoned necessary efficiently to equip a theological school?

Each of the four Scottish universities possessed a theological faculty, and therefore a school of theology, connected with the Established Church. A four years' course was the regular *quantum* of theological training, the undergraduate classes having been previously passed through. To accomplish this, the professor of divinity was expected to conduct his students over a four years' course of systematic theology. Hebrew and Church History were combined with this under the tuition of other professors. Just before the Disruption, a Professorship of Biblical Criticism had been added by the Government of the day at one of the universities. These were the arrangements with which Free Church ministers were familiar, and under which their own training had been carried on. The system had great defects. Three in particular may be specified. In the first place, the divinity professor lectured one hour a day, his course proceeding continuously over four years. Once in four years the students beginning their studies fell in at the beginning of the course, and went through it in order; but in each of the other three years the beginners found the course at its middle or at its end; and they were obliged to lay in their theology upside down. Very nearly the same remark applied to the Church History. Next, there was no provision for training in the subjects of

Exegesis and Biblical Introduction. Investigative students read up these departments, but the arrangements for their training failed to suggest that such studies were incumbent. Thirdly, the arrangements for testing the acquirements of candidates for the ministry were very imperfect. This duty devolved on the presbyteries. There were some seventy or eighty presbyteries; each of these might examine in its own way. In many of them, the examination was, to a large extent, illusory; and a weak-kneed student, by residing for a period within the bounds of a facile presbytery, could always secure for himself the advantage of a short and easy shrift. All these defects, with others which need not be dwelt upon, gave to the system a loose unbusiness-like character. Human laziness, therefore, felt itself encouraged. The work of the professors was notoriously performed, in too many cases, in a perfunctory, inefficient way. And on the side of the students, the practice of what were called "partial" sessions crept in, and was sanctioned. A partial session was one in which the student enrolled in the class and paid the fee, came under an obligation, perhaps, to deliver a discourse, and for the rest returned to his native fields, and professed to study at home.* Altogether, while individual professors here and there might exert a useful and stimulating influence, the provision for theological training had become, to a large extent, useless; nay, even injurious, so far as it might suggest that there was no occasion for vigorous and progressive work. Energetic students, finding the system worthless, paid no regard to it, and carried on their own training; they often did so with great success. But even they were injured; and men who were not so independent were injured much more. With all these defects, however, the Church always called on her candidates for the ministry to spend four years in theological study, subsequent to their undergraduate course; and she made some provision for aiding and guiding them in their studies. This, in spite of all shortcomings, furnished the opportunity for acquiring thorough professional equipment, and was the means of producing it in many cases.

* Unless my memory much deceives me, Edward Irving took his whole theological course in "partial" sessions.

It was Dr Chalmers who first proclaimed forcibly the absolute necessity of reform. Very small progress, however, had been made when the Disruption came. That event imposed on the Free Church the necessity of creating for herself her own system. Everything was open, therefore everything could be reconsidered, and improved arrangements could be adopted. Out of this, but not in Dr Chalmers' lifetime, came the College Controversy. Some of the reforms required by the state of things which has been described, were cordially and unanimously effected. But at a certain point a divergence arose. For one party declared for multiplying the number of theological schools, the other for carrying one to the highest point of equipment and efficiency, as at least the first and preferable object.

One school at least was the first manifest necessity, and Edinburgh became the seat of it, as a matter of course; not only because of her metropolitan character, but because two theological professors, Dr Chalmers and Dr Welsh, who held chairs in Edinburgh, joined in the Disruption, and constituted at once the theological faculty in the city where they had laboured before. Another Professor, of distinguished learning, Dr Black, who held a chair in Aberdeen, also left the Establishment. But instead of remaining in Aberdeen, he saw cause to transfer his place of residence immediately to Edinburgh, and thus no nucleus of a theological school existed in any other place. To complete the Edinburgh College of the Free Church was clearly the course dictated by common sense. This, therefore, was immediately done, and on an improved scale of equipment; for two Professors of Systematic Divinity were appointed (instead of one), and the two undertook to teach between them four annual courses, thus putting an end to the "learning backwards" of which Dr Chalmers had complained so eloquently. As to the other University seats, in the course of 1844 the Presbytery at each of them was authorised to superintend and regulate the studies of students of theology who might be hindered by circumstances from attending at Edinburgh; an unsatisfactory arrangement obviously, but one which readily suggested itself to a generation familiar with "partial sessions," and which, in point of fact, only extended to a moderate number of exceptional cases.

So things arranged themselves for the present. As regarded what the Church should aim at for the future, it was speedily clear that to set up a theological school at St Andrews could hardly be contemplated. But Glasgow and Aberdeen were in a different position. If the Free Church was to have more divinity halls than one, these were the cities for which a claim would be put in. Aberdeen succeeded earliest in having an explicit recognition of the Church's hopes and intentions recorded in her favour. At the two Assemblies of 1845 (at Edinburgh and Inverness) the deliverances upon the College Report recognised an institution at Aberdeen as a thing in prospect, authorised the appointment of one Professor there in the meantime, to regulate the studies of students of theology in that quarter, and enacted that until a full theological faculty should be erected, students thus situated should be required to spend at least one session in Edinburgh.

I do not remember that any indication of so explicit an intention with respect to Glasgow exists. But there is little doubt that about that time both objects were before the mind of the Church, floating in a golden haze along with some other projects, hardly so reasonable, and certainly less feasible. One of these, and the only one that concerns us, was a great project about University Education. The Free Church, under the excitement of her wonderful success, felt as if almost any object she chose to aim at were within her reach. The attempts made (unsuccessfully) to expel members of the Free Church from secular chairs in the national Universities, and the efforts made, successfully, to obstruct the entrance to such chairs of Free Churchmen nominated in the ordinary way by the patrons, roused all her resolution. If the Universities renounced the Free Church, the Free Church could renounce the Universities. She could set up a better system, not inferior in scholarship, and animated by more satisfactory and better guaranteed religious principles than those of the national Universities, and she could compete with them on their own ground, not only for Free Church support, but for that of the evangelical churches generally. This was full in view and led to serious discussions in some portions of the Church, whether the

Professors to be appointed should be required to be of the Free Church, or whether the chairs should be thrown open to members of other religious denominations. The Church never committed herself formally to the project; but under the influences thus at work, she not only appointed a Professor of Natural Science in her College at Edinburgh, in order to secure for her divinity students a reasonable acquaintance with that department, but also Professors of Ethics and of Logic, and a Classical Tutor. The gentleman* appointed to the latter office, was a man of very great acquirements and high teaching power. The occupants of the chairs of Logic and Ethics were afterwards judged worthy of being transferred to corresponding chairs in the University of Edinburgh, when more tolerant legislation had made them eligible. So far, then, the Church had shewn her mettle and her capabilities. Yet these proceedings were symptomatic of an elasticity, if not an audacity, of hopefulness that could hardly fail to outrun prudence.

But days bring wisdom. After the first grand successes, there came to be difficulties about carrying on all the manifold schemes of the Free Church. Those difficulties proved to be passing,—a mere eddy of the stream,—yet they made men feel the importance of husbanding the Church's resources. The view strongly pressed by the Marquis of Breadalbane as early as 1845, that the Free Church ought not to attempt anything in the way of higher education beyond the theological instruction of her own ministers, and ought to bend all her efforts to a reform of the constitution of the Universities as regards religious tests, acquired growing influence in the Church, and at length universal acquiescence. The Professorships of Logic and Ethics in the New College remained most ably filled, but now with hardly a sufficient *raison d'etre* in the eye of the Free Church community.

Meanwhile Dr Cunningham's main anxiety in connection with College matters had been that a thoroughly good and efficient system of theological education—a proper "curriculum"—should be matured and enforced. He believed and maintained that the Free Church had an opportunity, which she was bound to take

* Mr John Miller.

advantage of, to reconsider the whole question of the professional acquirements and discipline which ministers nowadays ought to possess, and which a four years' course gives the opportunity of acquiring. The old system, under which he and his brethren had been trained, he unceremoniously denounced as "little better than a farce;" and a "farce" in a matter of this kind could not but seem to him altogether immoral and abominable. The circumstance of his being associated with so strenuous a reformer of theological education as Dr Chalmers had something to do, no doubt, in strengthening his sense of the importance of the object. And when, on Dr Chalmers' death (in 1847), Dr Cunningham was placed at the head of the Church's only College, feeling himself also (he could not but feel it) to be looked up to as her greatest theological name, he of course felt that he was in a peculiar manner the guardian of the interests of high and efficient theological culture in the Free Church. What *he* should claim in that interest would be regarded as the full measure it was reasonable to go. What he should concede or yield would certainly not be maintained, successfully at any rate, by any other. In 1845, when transferred from the Junior Chair of Systematic Divinity to that of Historical and Polemical Theology, he stated to the Assembly, in accepting the appointment, that "the first duty to which the Committee should direct its attention should be the formation and establishment of a full theological curriculum." He proceeded immediately to explain how he would modify the business of the Chair to which he had been just appointed, with a view to contribute to the promoting of this object. It was continually present to his mind, although the immense labours of the years from 1844 to 1848 may have delayed the maturing of his ideas, or at least hindered his presenting them more frequently and forcibly to the Church. Besides the arrangements made for supplying to the students of each year distinct progressive courses, the College Report of 1846 presented proposals for abolishing partial sessions, and for making more effective provision for the study of exegetics. The Report of 1847, which would have suggested further progress, was intercepted by Dr Chalmers' death during the Assembly. He had

meant to devote to the writing of it out the morning on which he died. In 1848 a fuller scheme of a curriculum was presented, embodying a plan for examination of students by a proper board before permitting them to begin their proper theological studies; and also a proposal for an additional Professor, to undertake the interpretation and literature of the New Testament as his special field, with suggestions as to the manner in which his work should enter into the general scheme of training. All these suggestions were ultimately carried out, some sooner, some later, with the addition of an examination by the Board on leaving the Hall. Already, however, the Church was passing into an atmosphere not favourable to quiet and progressive readjustment; for already the College Controversy was begun.

The Professor appointed at Aberdeen in 1845 had acted in that capacity during a part of the succeeding session. Next year strenuous representations that more help was needed came up to the Assembly, and were remitted to the Commission. The result was that, after some demur, a tutor was appointed to take charge of the teaching of Hebrew. This carried Aberdeen over another session; and then there came a more formal and pressing claim than ever to have the teaching staff completed, and the means of theological education fully provided. The Assembly of 1847 (that during the sittings of which the death of Dr Chalmers took place) postponed its decision. It directed Presbyteries of University seats to send a statement of their views to the College Committee. These statements, with the remarks of the Committee, were to be circulated, in order that the Presbyteries generally might express their opinion on the whole matter.

What the Church was to do for her students, and what she was to require of them, was now to be settled. How much the question might involve became very apparent at the Assembly of 1847. It was not merely the claims of Aberdeen, but the question of theological education at all the University seats, that began then to be canvassed. It was not proposed, indeed, that a full Hall should be set up either at Glasgow or at St Andrews. But some provision was pleaded for as necessary to the due discharge of the Church's duty

in the matter. On the other hand, the view taken by the College Committee (over which Dr Cunningham now presided) was expressed in the opinion which they sent to Presbyteries, along with the statements from the different University seats. The Committee said that they could not take the responsibility of recommending more than that at each of the University seats provision should be made for the pastoral superintendence of students connected with the Church, and that facilities should be provided for their acquiring the Hebrew language, as a pre-requisite to the formal study of theology. This meant, of course, that what the Church really needed, and ought to aim at, was one good theological school, and no more, for the present at any rate; and that the whole theological training of her students should take place there, with, perhaps, an exception in the meantime for Aberdeen students as regards part of their course.

### THE ARGUMENTS.

The grounds taken on both sides remained pretty much the same from the beginning of the discussions to the end. It was argued against the multiplication of Colleges, first of all, that more than one was not needed. It was not denied that some incidental advantages might be connected with the existence of more Colleges than one, or that some difficulties or hardships might occasionally be connected with the want of Free Church Colleges at the old University seats. Still, all this amounted to nothing like the proof of a reasonable necessity. Difficulties in the way of individual students who promised to be useful to the Church might be got over much more cheaply than by setting up new Divinity Halls. The number of students in preparation for the ministry of the Free Church did not require, and was not likely to require, more than one Hall; and three could not be instituted without manifest waste of teaching power, and, of course, of financial means. More particularly, debate arose at this point as to the number of divinity students which the Free Church ought to possess; and it was maintained by the advocates of one Hall only that the number already attending was as great as it was reasonable to look for or

to desire ; but that, if an increase in the number were desirable, it must be produced mainly by influences operating on the general mind of the Church, and could never be promoted to any very considerable degree by mere multiplication of Halls.

In the next place, it was argued that the Free Church could not count upon sufficient means being supplied to provide for the support of more than one efficient Divinity Hall. No endowments existed for the support of such institutions; and the professors already appointed were maintained by the proceeds of an annual collection at the Church doors. That collection was already barely sufficient for the burdens which the Church had laid upon it, and increased contributions were not to be counted upon. For contributions would depend on a conviction existing in the mind of the community that the effort was really required for some important object, and that the funds were judiciously expended; but it was impossible to convince the public that three Divinity Halls were necessary. The result might probably be that the Free Church, instead of continuing to have men devoting their undivided strength to professorial work, would be obliged to revert to the system adopted in some other Churches, and make theological tuition an appendage to the duties of a minister already burdened with the care of a large congregation. At all events, the tendency would be to eke out the system of theological education by makeshifts, instead of working out a well-contrived plan by the application of adequate means.

The line of argument connected with these impressions was vigorously urged by some of Dr Cunningham's friends, who made it the main ground of their action. Dr Cunningham himself held very strongly that the Free Church had not the means, and no reasonable prospect of having the means, of adequately supporting more than one Hall. He believed that the effect of attempting more would be that all the Halls would be insufficiently supported, and that the interests of all of them, especially that of which he was the head, would suffer. Besides the direct injury thus to be inflicted, he shrank also, with a peculiar sensitiveness, from having the cause of theological education, of

which in the Free Church he was the representative, publicly associated with ambitious projects rashly entered upon, with responsibilities undertaken without means to discharge them, with pecuniary deficits and spasmodic efforts to meet them. He, therefore, believed in the validity and conclusiveness of the argument just referred to, and he did not shrink from using it in debate. But it was not the argument on which he preferred to rest his case, nor was it the ground from which his opposition to multiplication of Halls drew its main force.

His "main reason" was his conviction that the proposal would "seal the fate of any attempt to improve and complete the system of theological education in the Free Church," that "it would scarcely be worth any man's while to give himself further trouble about the formation of a curriculum, or about the improvement of theological education." It is not difficult to explain what Dr Cunningham meant by statements like these—both made in 1848—and it may not be without use to do so, because the standpoint of his argument on this head is still misapprehended in many quarters. An improved curriculum, according to the system of the Scottish Churches, would imply two things, viz., improved and increased provision for carrying on theological instruction, and a legal obligation to take advantage of the provision thus made imposed on all who should be recognised as regular students of theology. That both were implied was disputed by no one. Without the improved and increased provision, there would be no opportunity or encouragement afforded to the student; without the legal obligation on all who were recognised as regular students of theology, there would be no security to the Church that the object of that provision was being attained.

This being understood, then, Dr Cunningham was further well aware that considerable difficulties might be expected in any case to obstruct the planning and carrying out of an improved system. The past history of the matter, in the Established Church, had illustrated the strength of the tendency to relaxation of rules and requirements. It might or might not be difficult to induce the Church to provide the means necessary for new appliances to meet

the growing wants of the age: it could hardly fail to be difficult to get the Church to enforce adequately the rules laid down for students. A variety of pleas for forbearance on that head lay close at hand, which would always dispose the Church to be slow to move. Yet the end could be attained only by the Church being induced to move by degrees, step after step, as proved defects required to be remedied, and attainable improvements presented themselves for adoption. In these circumstances, the Church, he thought, ought to concentrate attention upon one Divinity Hall, presenting to herself this as the first question, How can we most wisely and efficiently provide for the education of our students, in the way of enabling and requiring them to utilise the time devoted to theological study? He not only expected from this concentration a higher tension of work on the part of professors and students, but also that the interest of the Church would be secured for improvements of method as they might successively come into view,—that means would more readily be provided when those improved methods or arrangements required them,—and that little difficulty comparatively would be found in inducing the Church to make it imperative on the students to take advantage of the opportunities afforded them, or of the new studies introduced into the system. If, on the other hand, several Halls were set up, it was first of all to be anticipated, in his judgment, that under the difficulties connected with that attempt, the old temptation to yield to particular exigencies, and to be contented with the least that would plausibly suffice, would operate with increased and irresistible power. The system adopted would necessarily be to make shift as well as possible with a weak staff. Further, the introduction of improved methods would be resisted, because the increased teaching strength, or the increased pecuniary expenditure, required to carry them out could not be encountered, least of all encountered at each of three Halls. Besides, the number of students would be so small at each Hall, that anything beyond a small staff would be felt to be disproportionate and unjustifiable expenditure. And if, under all these difficulties, improvements remained practicable at one of them, they could not be made imperative, because the students at the remaining

Halls would be unable to comply with the new requirements. It was on these grounds that Dr Cunningham regarded the proposal to multiply Halls, as practically incompatible with the effective discharge of the duty lying on the Church to revise, reform, and perfect her methods of theological education.*

On the other side, the advantage and necessity of having more Halls than one was pressed by the advocates of extension. It would encourage theological scholarship by multiplying posts which would be objects of honourable ambition to learned men. It would remove important difficulties out of the way of students, for men might have means of maintaining themselves at the university seats where they had studied, which would fail them elsewhere. It would produce a certain variety in the style of training, and the mental tendencies of the rising ministry, whereas one Hall only might create the monotony of a single type. It would give the Church a guarantee against the danger which might arise from one of her institutions becoming pervaded by doctrinal eccentricities. Chiefly, and more particularly, it would increase the supply of students. For it was maintained that a larger number was requisite in order to give the Church and its congregations the requisite variety to choose from; and it was maintained that the multiplication of Halls, so as to place them at the university seats, was a natural way of encouraging and facilitating theological study, and so producing the increased supply demanded.

In regard to this head of argument, the opinion now, on a calm review, would probably be, that while one Hall was the indispensable requisite, the question whether the Church was likely to reap greater advantage from one Hall than three, was a question on which men were sure to differ according to their individual appreciation of different kinds of advantage. Those expected from a multiplication of Halls, it could hardly be denied, could not rank as necessary or indispensable. They were at most expedient or desirable; and men differed as to the likelihood that more important objects would be endangered by pursuing them.

As respects the question of means, the advocates of more Halls maintained, that if the Church were of opinion that these were

* See Appendix.

necessary and highly expedient, funds would be supplied, and that to suggest to the people that they could not be supplied, was to utter a prophecy which tended unfairly to cause its own fulfilment. It was also maintained that the erection of new institutions would create an interest, and open sufficient resources in the localities where they were set down. Indeed, the fundamental difference was perhaps this, that the extensionists believed there would be plentiful means for all desirable objects, and listened to the apprehensions of those opposed to them with incredulity. Some, on these grounds, would have proceeded pretty rapidly to set up the institutions, and incur the obligations connected with them. But the wiser extensionists, and the Church ultimately, chose a slower course; and affirming the principle of aiming at more Halls than one, they also laid it down that the steps towards their erection must be taken, as the Church saw her way to sufficient means. Dr Cunningham and his friends did not admit, however, that in practice this rule of prudence was observed.

Looking back now on this question of means, it will, I think, be granted that Dr Cunningham and his friends took somewhat too sombre a view of the prospects of the Church, and did not sufficiently appreciate the amount of money that might, sooner or later, be obtained for objects of this kind. Dr Cunningham was very far from being of a sanguine disposition with respect to the pecuniary support of objects in which he took an interest, and he had an invincible dislike to see the Church framing schemes and contracting obligations in connection with them, which, in his judgment, she had no good reason for expecting to be able to fulfil. Hence, in the course of the controversy, as one step after another was taken, he prophesied very freely that, in all probability, the Edinburgh institution would be speedily ruined, and that the tenure of office in it was of very little value indeed. The support of the Edinburgh institution, however, which is dependent principally upon the annual collection, has been maintained with no great margin indeed, but without reducing the scale of the salaries. The institution at Aberdeen, supported partly from the same collection, and partly from endowments produced from subscription,

has also maintained its ground; and recently large additional endowments, arising from the bequest of Mr Thomson of Banchory, has opened the prospect of the salaries being placed on a somewhat less inadequate footing. The Glasgow College was built and endowed mainly through the munificence of the late Dr Clark, aided by a few other gentlemen, without imposing any additional burdens on the Free Church community. Dr Cunningham, in his later days, would not have admitted that his argument on this head had substantially failed, for he would have maintained that these means had been in the main misapplied, and that, owing to the want of due direction and concentration of the expenditure, the true and highest interests of theological education had not been adequately secured, and were still likely to suffer. He would have admitted, however, that he had spoken too strongly, and that the pecuniary history of Free Church Colleges had, by no means, turned out so calamitous as he had feared. At the same time, it is to be remembered that, in all probability, the fact that endowments were provided, to a certain extent, at Aberdeen before burdens were incurred, and that the College at Glasgow was completely founded and endowed, instead of being left dependent, wholly or partly, on the general College Fund, was in no small measure due to the strength of the argument maintained with respect to the question of means, and the strength of the opposition directed, on this ground, against extension. The Glasgow endowment was not a thing to be counted on, and was not in view as a possibility even, till much later than 1848. The endowments for Aberdeen would hardly have been raised so soon unless it had been made very plain that extension could hardly be carried without them. The Colleges of the Free Church, and the cause of Theological Education in connection with them, would have been long ere now in a very uncomfortable condition if we had had institutions at Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Glasgow, not, perhaps, all on the scale in which they now exist, but yet all dependent mainly on the annual collection.

As regards the third head of argument—the curriculum—which with Dr Cunningham was the main one, what he would have complained of was not so much contradiction as want of appreciation.

It will be conceded, I suppose, that among his opponents on this question, there were those who sincerely and earnestly sympathised with his desire to promote improved methods in theological education, and who laboured vigorously in that cause. At the same time, the very circumstance that they did not place this object so unconditionally first, as he was disposed to do, and that they were in the position of withstanding his pleading on the subject, led them to speak of it sometimes in a tone which Dr Cunningham felt to be out of sympathy with his own. The real position which was occupied, or meant to be occupied, on this subject was described in the course of the debate in 1848, by Dr Candlish when he said:—"We have had this day brought out the two great objects which, in connection with theological education, this Church ought to keep in view, the one object being the providing of the most efficient theological instruction, and the other, the providing of an adequate supply of gospel ministers for all the land. If there be any difference of opinion at bottom between us and our friends who are opposed to us, it seems to be substantially in the order in which we place these two great ends." Those whom the speaker represented, maintained that extension might be aimed at, and in a gradual way attained, without sacrificing the object of an improved system of theological education. But Dr Cunningham could not understand how men who really appreciated that object as it deserved to be appreciated, could fail to be impressed with the risks and obstacles to which, in the circumstances of the Free Church, a multiplication of Halls would expose it. He believed also that, in point of fact, the exigencies of their cause led the extensionists actually to sacrifice substantial interests connected with theological education.

I have chosen to make at the outset this general statement of the ground taken up by the two parties, because it will enable me to pass more briefly over the successive stages of the controversy. For a similar reason I may indicate here my impression of the peculiar mode of feeling which Dr Cunningham experienced in connection with it—which gave their character to many of his utterances, and which tended to make the discussion what it

certainly was, one of the greatest trials of his life, though not of his alone.

He felt that the controversy was for him inevitable. Nothing could excuse him from taking the leading part in it. As the representative of the cause of theological education, as the head of the institution which he believed to be risked, he could not stand by in silence, and he could not make concessions which were contrary to his judgment. But he felt also, or he persuaded himself, that he might to a large extent have been spared the conflict. Without doubting that his opponents expressed their genuine views when they advocated College Extension, he could not persuade himself that they could attach so much importance to it, as to feel it necessary, for its own sake, to have a controversy about it. They might, he thought, have joined at least in a resolute postponement of extension for some years. The fact of finding himself embarked in the controversy, seemed therefore to indicate, on their part, either an indifference to the security of a good educational system, and to the interests of the Church's peace, or along with that, as he gradually came to think, a disposition to manage the Church by humouring its less intelligent and less thoughtful elements. Hence came the impression that the successive steps, of which he disapproved, were steps of progress towards a foregone conclusion—the conclusion being indefensible, and the steps taken without a full avowal of the end in view. To his friends on the other side, those steps seemed to be only the natural adjustments, at successive stages, of a question about which the Church was divided, which was no more at most than a question of expediency, and which must always be regarded as a matter on which it was reasonable to give and take.

As the question went on with its interminable train of compromises, understandings, misunderstandings, personal collisions, and alienations, all was aggravated by the peculiar relations existing between men who together had guided the Church through the dangers and perplexities of pre-Disruption and post-Disruption days.

It may be remarked that Dr Cunningham could have more easily forgiven his opponents if they had shewn more of a disposition to

fight out the merits of the question in regular and direct debate. He always complained that the merits were eluded, and this was to him, at all times, an irritating experience. The writer believed at the time that Dr Cunningham did not correctly estimate the state of mind with which he had to deal,—the amount and kind of conviction both with respect to the merits of the question and the reasonable way of disposing of it, which existed in the minds of his leading opponents, and of those who agreed with them. But this, after all, is a mere impression.

### FIRST STAGE.

The decision of the Assembly 1848—the first at which the question was fully discussed—was in favour of the views of Dr Cunningham. The motion on which the College Extensionists, led by Dr Candlish, ultimately divided against Dr Cunningham, was to the effect, that "The General Assembly, while they fully recognise the duty of raising the standard and improving the character of theological education, and while, in particular, they are deeply impressed with the importance of promoting the efficiency of the theological institute in Edinburgh, with especial reference to the exigencies of the age, are at the same time of opinion that the great object of providing a well-educated gospel ministry for this Church, national as it is in its character and claims, cannot be adequately attained by means solely of a central Divinity Hall in the metropolis"; and a committee was therefore to be appointed to consider how far it might be possible to take immediate steps towards extension at Aberdeen, and to report to the same Assembly. Dr Cunningham's motion was, that "the General Assembly, being deeply impressed with the importance of establishing and maintaining a high standard of qualification for candidates for the ministry, approve generally of the theological curriculum for the New College as proposed in the Report of the College Committee; and further, the General Assembly are of opinion that the Church is not called upon at present to make provision for extending the means of theological education by establishing another full Divinity Hall." This motion was carried by 189 to 126. Of the whole

number, 178 were ministers, of whom rather more than half voted against Dr Cunningham. The elders were nearly three to one in his favour. The discussion was animated, but quite free from any painful element, beyond the declared difference between those who had so long acted together. On a subsequent day the Assembly agreed to detailed instructions to the College Committee, conformable to the decision just adverted to. And they also agreed to send down to Presbyteries for sanction as a Standing Law of the Church, regulations intended to carry out the proposals of the Report with respect to the curriculum. One of these fixed the staff of the theological faculty at Edinburgh at five professors, who were to carry out the systematic combination of exegetical with systematical theology, on which Dr Cunningham laid so much stress. These proposals were unanimously adopted by the Assembly. On making them, Dr Cunningham is reported to have said that their friends who were in favour of multiplying Halls might reasonably allow them two or three years to complete the Hall at Edinburgh. He added, that he for one never asserted that the establishment of a curriculum as was proposed, necessarily, and in all circumstances, precluded the establishment of another Divinity Hall, even where the same perfect curriculum could not be fully carried into effect. Altogether the impression produced by no means prepared the Church to expect troubles so serious as those which by and by followed.

During this year, the attention of the Church was largely occupied by discussions with reference to the appointment to one of the Chairs of Theology. Dr Candlish had been elected, but considerations connected with the interests of his congregation induced him to resign before his duties began, and the chair remained vacant. It was not filled up till the Assembly of 1849, Dr Cunningham again undertaking to conduct the business of the class during the session which intervened. During these discussions, a tendency to widen the division already existing may be traced, otherwise they had no direct bearing on the College Controversy. That controversy, however, had not altogether gone to sleep. Certain northern Church courts renewed their representations in favour of a Hall at Aber-

deen. The Presbytery of Glasgow also agreed to send up an overture for taking such steps as might be practicable towards colleges both in Aberdeen and Glasgow. Some of those, however, who agreed in the general views presented, expressed some reluctance to send up the overture, as the decision of the Assembly might be accepted in the meantime. And when a similar overture was proposed in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr in April following, the transmission of it to the Assembly was successfully resisted on the same grounds. The difficulties in the way, presumably those connected with finance, induced Dr Cunningham himself in his own Presbytery to forbear to press the proposal for five professors as the theological staff at Edinburgh. He proposed instead of this to frame the Act so that the number should for the present be left undetermined.

In these circumstances, the Assembly of 1849, except in one small particular, was got over quietly enough. Arrangements at Aberdeen and Glasgow were left as they were. The vacant chair at Edinburgh, also, was filled in the manner which Dr Cunningham desired. Dr Bannerman, who now became his colleague, was already an intimate friend, but became henceforth one of his most trusted comrades. While he increased the reputation of the College by his attainments as a theologian and his efficiency as a teacher, he afforded to Dr Cunningham the support of an extremely clear and firm mind, thoroughly at one with his own on the public questions in which he was most interested, and thoroughly reliable alike in counsel and in action. The election did not take place without a division, for a powerful minority supported Dr Maclagan, the professor at Aberdeen. A difference on this matter could do no harm; but in the course of the discussion a point arose which unquestionably left unpleasant impressions, and bore fruit in due time. Most of those who had the warmest regard for Dr Maclagan, and felt the greatest confidence in him, were persons who felt also a special interest in the College at Aberdeen. While, therefore, they might be disposed to exert their influence to promote Dr Maclagan to a more important sphere, they were also anxious that his removal from Aberdeen should not shake the stability of the arrangements for theological education existing there. The question was put, whether his

removal, if the Assembly should agree to it, was understood to leave intact the claims of Aberdeen, so that his chair there would be filled up as a matter of course. Mr (now Dr) Gibson, who had seconded the motion for appointing Professor Maclagan, at once rose and said, that "most distinctly the appointment of Professor Maclagan could not be held as an injury to the claims of Aberdeen, which, of course, remained untouched." As this statement, if allowed to pass, would of course commit the House, Dr Cunningham interposed and said, that "in the case supposed the matter would probably stand where it was; but that if Professor Maclagan were removed from Aberdeen, some persons, and himself among them, might possibly feel it their duty to raise again the whole question of theological education at Aberdeen, and to raise the question, whether any person ought to appointed in his room." He added, that he had no wish to raise this question, and, in fact, deprecated being obliged to raise it; and he stated that this was in his mind one reason for preferring Mr Bannerman to Professor Maclagan. This statement made a considerable sensation, and unquestionably was heard with painful surprise, by a good many of those who took an active part in the management of Church affairs.*

The impression thus made was no doubt concerned in the steps taken at Aberdeen during the autumn with a view to erect and offer to the Free Church a building for College purposes. Hitherto only temporary accommodation had been provided; and the propriety of erecting premises could be defended on the ground that work was being done for which accommodation was desirable, and that if the Church was not pledged to carry on that work permanently, as little had she indicated any intention to discontinue it. It was natural to suppose, however, and I imagine it was the fact, that a desire to give more permanence and body to the position of Aberdeen, with reference to College questions, was largely influential with those who took this step. It was censured by the College Committee, in which Dr Cunningham's friends preponderated, as an unfair attempt to anticipate and to bias the Church's decision of a question which might arise at a future time. The discussions

* See Appendix F.

which followed illustrated so strongly the awkwardness of the situation, that earnest efforts were made to come to some understanding, and these led to an apparently successful result. In the Assembly of 1850, a series of resolutions was moved by Principal Cunningham, and seconded by Dr Candlish; they were supported also by Dr Robert Buchanan. Though opposed by a number of strenuous Extensionists, they were carried by a large majority, and they afforded a resting-place on which a tolerable degree of peace was maintained until the discussion broke out again in 1853. The platform embodied in these resolutions contained the following points:—First, That the provision for theological education ought not to depend permanently on a collection. Second, That the Church ought to encourage endowments by bequest and otherwise. Third, That the primary object of the Church ought to be the fulfilment of her existing engagements, and the endowment of one completely-equipped College. Fourthly, That the Church should hold herself open to accept endowments for collegiate education in particular localities, such as Aberdeen and Glasgow, in so far as these can be applied in such localities with due security to the maintenance of one thoroughly-equipped College, and of the Church's curriculum. Fifthly, While keeping in view the increase of provision for theological education at Aberdeen, so far as it can be done consistently with these resolutions, the existing arrangements for supplying a three years' course at Aberdeen were to terminate, and the Professor and Tutor there were henceforth to adapt their instructions to supply a two years' course, viz., the first two years of the curriculum. Sixthly, The arrangements for supplying theological instruction at Glasgow were to terminate wholly.

The concession on the side of the Extensionists was, that while the existing provision at Glasgow was extinguished, as not adapted effectively to carry out the Church's conception of theological education, that at Aberdeen was remodelled on the same ground, so that students should henceforth attend there only for the two years of the curriculum which the existing staff could effectively overtake. Further, they placed on record their recognition of the primary claims of the existing College, and the importance of having it en-

dowed; and they affirmed the principle that extension should take place elsewhere only so far as it could be done in consistency with existing obligations and with the maintenance of the curriculum. Moreover, endowment was the only mode of extension expressly mentioned. On the other hand, Dr Cunningham and his friends conceded that extension, merely as such, should not henceforth be objected to; that the only ground of discussion henceforth should be the compatibility of any extension that might be proposed with the discharge of existing obligations and the maintenance of the curriculum. The points that seemed to be left doubtful were these:—First, It was not expressly said that extension should take place only by endowment, *i.e.*, that it should not take place at the expense of the ordinary College Fund. Secondly, It was not expressly said whether the Church would be prepared to accept endowments for other localities, such as Aberdeen and Glasgow, *before* material progress was made with the endowment of Edinburgh. Probably it was felt that there were difficulties in giving or asking explicit pledges on points like these. In connection with them, however, it was obviously possible that the question regarding "compatibility of extension with existing obligations" might arise again.

Dr Cunningham in his opening speech, admitting that there might be difference of opinion on the abstract question of whether a Church like the Free Church should have more Halls than one, admitted also that there was probably a certain tendency, not very logical perhaps, but in some respects natural, to lean to the affirmative side. "He thought," therefore, "they might rely on it that they would, *de facto*, have an extension of the means of theological education in the Free Church, as soon as it could be done wisely, as soon as it could be done honestly, and he was not sure but they would have it before that." He thought, therefore, that Extensionists need not be extremely anxious about the ultimate realisation of their views. At the same time, he indicated his impression, that the ground on which the Assembly should shape its course must be, that there could certainly be no extension at present, and that "there was no very palpable prospect of being able to extend at all

without endowments," and that the maintenance of even one fully equipped Hall, dependent merely on an annual collection, was in a somewhat precarious condition. At the same time, even were this admitted, it is obvious that there might be considerable difference of opinion as to the way in which the resolutions agreed upon applied to particular steps which might be taken, and particular proposals that might be made. Hence, in his reply, he said, "These resolutions may still be worked in a way that will interfere with the peace and harmony of the Church. They may be worked in such a way as to run counter to the spirit and scope of the objects which the Church is bound to promote; and such local steps may still endanger the peace and harmony of the Church. At the same time, we admit that these movements are likely to arise, and we are willing to face the consideration of their object, and how they may be practically and safely accomplished." He would fain hope, he added, that these were the grounds on which the resolutions might commend themselves to men's understandings as a basis on which, for a few years at least, they might be contented to rest.

## SECOND STAGE.

Those Extensionists who considered the Assembly's decision to be unduly prejudicial to their cause, renewed their efforts in the inferior Church courts during the year that followed, and procured overtures from some of them in favour of their views. During the year also the overtures sent down from the Assembly with respect to the constitution of the College and the regulation of the curriculum, came under the notice of Presbyteries. The usual difficulty in getting the requisite consent of Presbyteries to an act involving a number of details was experienced in this instance, and it was only by degrees, and by dividing the proposals into separate acts, that the regulations, in a subsequent year, were ultimately passed into law.

During the autumn of 1850 the new College buildings at Edinburgh were completed, and the formal opening of them took place. The building had been proceeding for some years under the presiding care of Sheriff Monteith. It is striking alike from its site and from its architecture, and affords admirable accommodation for the

purposes intended. A special meeting of the Commission of Assembly was held in order to give additional *eclat* to the opening, and Dr Cunningham delivered an address on the occasion. It was devoted to the subject with respect to which he was chiefly anxious to see sound views formed and applied—namely, the course and character of a system of theological education adapted to the opportunities and wants of Scottish students.

When the Assembly met in 1851 the supporters of Aberdeen brought forward the subject again. Resting on the eleven overtures from courts below, they were prepared to ask the Assembly to make increased provision at Aberdeen, and to encourage the friends of the Church to provide additional Chairs both at Aberdeen and at Glasgow.

The renewal of the discussion obviously tended to bring back all the inconveniences which the deliverance of 1850 had been intended to avert. In order to bring this forcibly before the mind of the Assembly, a somewhat unusual course was adopted. It was moved by Dr Candlish, that it was not expedient to discuss the overtures on College Extension in this Assembly. The counter motion, by Dr Brown of Aberdeen, asserted the propriety of considering overtures which came up from four Synods and seven Presbyteries. But no division took place. It was prevented by the unusual turn of affairs which followed. The debate (in which Dr Cunningham took no part,—he would doubtless have spoken had it run its natural course) grew hot, and moved into awkward and delicate ground. At length, after a vehement argument by an earnest advocate of extension, Dr Robert Buchanan interposed, represented that painful consequences might follow on perseverance in this course of discussion, and suggested the expedient of appointing a large Committee to which it might be referred, to endeavour to draw up a finding in which all parties could acquiesce. The proposal was adopted, and a day or two after the result was reported to the House. A deliverance was presented which all parties in the Committee were prepared to accept, and in which all parties in the Assembly might, as it was thought, concur. It is reprinted below.* The theory of

* "I. That, under the resolutions of last Assembly, the admissibility of College

this deliverance seems to have been, first, not to vary substantially from the finding of 1850, but, second, to bring out more explicitly and fully than had been done in that finding, how far the Church could go, and was prepared to go, in the way of meeting the views of College Extensionists. A deliverance conceived generally in this way, arose naturally when the attempt was made to reconcile those who abode by the deliverance of 1850 with those who pressed the claims of College Extension, and of Aberdeen in particular, as demanding immediate and additional recognition. In two points, at least, it was announced that the Extensionists might count upon facilities, which the deliverance of 1850 had either not accorded, or not distinctly expressed. First, it was made plain that "further provision," in other words, the appointment of another professor at Aberdeen, was not *necessarily* dependent on an adequate endowment being provided for his support. The Church, if "at least a partial endowment" were provided, would be open to consider whether the general state of the resources warranted the setting up of an additional Chair. Secondly, it was made plain that the acceptance of endowments at Aberdeen and Glasgow was not made conditional on Edinburgh being first endowed. The Church's policy was to be still to proceed with the extension, only on condition that

Extension in general is no longer a matter of controversy in this Church, but a question of time and circumstances.

"2. That the Church is perfectly free to welcome, and will welcome, the benefactions of its friends, designed to provide theological education at Aberdeen and Glasgow, as well as at Edinburgh.

"3. That it must always be the right and duty of the Church to entertain any proposal for endowing a theological seminary, even irrespectively altogether of its bearing on existing institutions.

"4. That it be remitted to a Committee of this House, to be called 'the Finance and Endowment Committee,' to take all proper measures to prosecute the foregoing resolutions.

"And, with respect to Aberdeen, the Assembly should declare,—

"1. That the Presbytery of Aberdeen be authorised and instructed to superintend the Theological Institute at Aberdeen, and to report annually to the General Assembly thereon.

"2. That an additional professorship ought to be established at Aberdeen, as soon as sufficient means, inclusive of at least a partial endowment, shall be provided for that purpose."

the interests of her central theological institute were secured; but she made it plain that she did not regard the previous endowment of that institute as the indispensable security. This was a point which had been made matter of rather indignant questioning by a number of extensionist laymen in 1850, and it was now settled.* Dr Cunningham acquiesced in the finding, and defended his acquiescence against the objections of some of his friends. He said, he took it as simply supplementary to, and explanatory of, the finding of 1850. It went further, only in the way of declaring that the Church would set up another Professorship at Aberdeen as soon as she possessed the requisite means. That was not explicitly stated in 1850, but it was not inconsistent with the finding of 1850. He was willing, he said, to contemplate proceeding piecemeal with Aberdeen, especially because in that way a painful line of discussion might be avoided.

It is to be remembered, that whoever might be responsible for the excitement of that debate, Dr Cunningham was absolutely blameless. He had taken no part in it; and, indeed, the unexpected adjournment deprived him of every opportunity of speaking on the subject at that Assembly, except that he uttered a few sentences to explain his consistency in accepting the motion ultimately proposed. Afterwards he came to be very distinctly of opinion, that the finding of 1851 was a substantial variation from the compromise of 1850, and was indefensible in itself. He described also the state of mind with which he contemplated the proceedings at the time—"the disturbance got up, the Assembly frightened out of its wits the Committee appointed." And he declared, that about the whole business there was an amount of pressure, a "reign of terror," he called it, which deprived the apparently unanimous procedure of any particular claim to respect. His impression in this respect was not shared, was, indeed, contradicted by others. But the fact that he cherished that impression remained not the less. A thorough debate, ending if need be in a defeat, would have been to him every way preferable to a compromise, to which in his own mind he ascribed this character.

* See Appendix G.

THIRD STAGE—INTERVAL OF QUIET.

The Assembly's decision, however, appeared at first to have contributed something to allay the troubles. The year 1851 wore peacefully away. A slight grumble from Aberdeen directed against an Edinburgh appointment, did not materially disturb the quiet which prevailed. In the very end of the year, it became public that some effort was being made in Aberdeen to provide an endowment, so as to lay the foundation for a second professorship there, in terms of the Assembly's finding. At next Assembly (1852) the amount thus raised was found to be £2000, and it was tendered to the Assembly as the "partial endowment" which had been declared necessary in order to justify the erection of the chair. The Committee appointed by the Assembly to consider the matter, resolved to recommend that the offer should be declined, on the ground, that in the existing state of the College Fund, so small an endowment could not warrant the establishment of a new chair. On this, the gentlemen who represented the subscribers, renewed the offer in another form. They asked the Assembly to accept the money towards the endowment of a chair, which, however, should not be instituted until the Assembly should be satisfied that they had sufficient means; but on condition that the interest should be applied in the meantime to provide an assistant to the Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen. The Assembly agreed unanimously to this proposal.*

* "Inasmuch as it was resolved by last General Assembly that an additional professorship ought to be established at Aberdeen as soon as sufficient means, including at least a partial endowment, should be provided for that purpose; and inasmuch as the partial endowment of £2000 is now offered to establish said additional professorship, on the understanding that the interest arising from it should, in the meantime, be applied for securing the services of an assistant to the Divinity Professor at Aberdeen, the Assembly accept the said partial endowment of £2000, and establish the said professorship; and considering the report of the Special Committee now given in and approved of, to the effect that there are not sufficient means to enable the Church to establish the said professorship this year, the Assembly resolve that the interest of the said partial endowment of £2000 shall be applied for the present to the object of securing the services of an assistant to the Professor of Divinity at the Hall at Aberdeen, and remit to the Select Committee," &c.

At the meeting of Commission in August, the Select Committee announced that they had nominated to the assistantship for one session, the Rev. Patrick Fairbairn of Salton,—now Principal Fairbairn of Glasgow.

The step thus taken, illustrates what has been stated (in an Appendix referred to in a preceding page), that the deliverance of 1851 laid a foundation for action in the Aberdeen direction, and supplied a vindication of it which Dr Cunningham had probably not realised fully when he agreed to it. Instead of a state of things in which the Church, opening the ultimate prospect of further extension, still seemed to invite her sons mainly to keep in view at present thoroughness and efficiency and permanence in the central institute, there was now a state of things that seemed fitted rather to encourage action in other directions, and to postpone that main object to an indefinite period.

This year, however, an important end was gained in the passing into law of the "College Overtures." Difficulty had been experienced in getting the requisite assent of Presbyteries to the body of rules and arrangements heretofore sent down to them in connection with the College; for in order to pass an overture into a law, each presbytery must assent to it precisely as it stands: while it was natural that each presbytery might find something to question in an Act embodying a great variety of details. In the Assembly of 1851, the expedient was resorted to of dividing the College Overture into ten separate overtures. And now it was found that each of these had secured the assent of a majority of presbyteries. The existing quietness on college matters had no doubt contributed something to this result, inasmuch as men were unwilling to revive or prolong any of these differences. Besides important regulations as to the constitution and internal government of the College, and the management of its affairs, the Acts now passed secured some objects connected with theological education on which Dr Cunningham laid great stress. "Partial sessions" were placed under restrictions, which have pretty nearly made impossible the return of the old evils in that matter. Examination by a Central Board, both on entering the Hall and on leaving it to proceed to license,

was made imperative. Attendance on the class of Natural Science was made imperative on all students attending the Edinburgh Divinity Hall. The only remaining important matter bearing on the curriculum which Dr Cunningham can be said to have explicitly called upon the Church to effect, was the establishment of a fifth chair for New Testament Exegesis, and in connection with this, proper arrangements for the exact study of either Old Testament or New Testament by the student during every session of his course. He had as yet declined to press this, principally no doubt because the funds were not in a state to admit of the burden being imposed on them. The law establishing this chair, and arranging the curriculum accordingly, was destined to be passed at a subsequent and much more stormy epoch.

### FOURTH STAGE.

A melancholy event was destined to let loose the waters of strife again. In October 1852 Dr Maclagan died, greatly lamented by all who knew him. In the end of November a paragraph inserted in a provincial paper, paying a tribute to his memory, suggested in strong terms that the Aberdeen College should now be discontinued as a needless institution. In the succeeding months Presbyteries favourable to the general views of Dr Cunningham on College matters began to send overtures, raising the question of the continued existence of the Aberdeen Hall; and in February, notice of motion to the same effect was given by Dr Clason in the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Dr Cunningham approved of this step, and when the discussion came on in April, he vindicated the propriety of it with even more than his usual power and ability. Thus the whole question revived again: and it revived with increased intensity and acrimony. From this time till the Assembly of 1855 it went on without intermission, and for a year after that it continued to make its appearance—though less prominently—in the Church courts.

The form in which the question was raised in the Presbytery of Edinburgh was by an overture to the Assembly to take no steps towards filling up the vacancy at Aberdeen until the propriety of

maintaining a Hall there in present circumstances had been submitted to full and deliberate consideration, and means taken for ascertaining the opinion of the Church upon the subject. It was, therefore, simply a motion for reconsideration. But, of course, it was not likely to be supported by any but those who believed that the question could be fairly and wisely opened, and also that upon the merits there were reasons for altering the *status quo.*

The grounds on which Dr Cunningham supported this movement require to be stated. In order to understand them, it is necessary to advert to the view taken by himself and by his friends, of the relation in which the question stood to the mind of the Church. The only testing* division, in his opinion, yet taken in the question was that in the Assembly of 1848. That vote determined against proceeding further with Aberdeen, at least in the then existing circumstances; and the majority was created wholly by the great preponderance of the eldership on that side. It was natural to infer, that possibly or probably if extension had been simply resisted in the Assemblies of 1850 and 1851, a majority might have been secured. The compromises of those years, therefore, were not regarded by Dr Cunningham in any other light than as concessions on his part, into which he had led the opponents of extension, and which probably had the effect of misrepresenting considerably the real mind of the Church. Further, the vote of the elders in 1848 confirmed him strongly in the opinion, that the lay mind of the Church shared his own impression, that to maintain more than one College was a waste of money; and, therefore, he believed that it would prove eventually that the members of the Church would not supply funds for the support of more.

In the view then of Dr Cunningham and his friends, there was a very fair probability that the mind of the Church was opposed to increased provision at Aberdeen, as not necessary, and as not warranted by the financial position of the Church. And then, in that case, it was equally probable that the mind of the Church might be against the continued existence of a provision, which was so partial, and could only be inefficient; while yet it laid a substantial burden

* Not admitted by his opponents to be truly testing.

on the funds, which at the best, were not likely to be more than enough for the full equipment of a single Hall. Still more might they be against its existence if viewed as a foundation on which claims could continually be reared with a view to a complete Hall being established in the North. The question could not be raised while Dr Maclaggan was in occupation of the Chair. But now that a vacancy had occurred, it might be due to the Church and to Dr Cunningham's own convictions that the mind of the Church on the question should be deliberately expressed. A presumption lay against this course from the proceedings of 1850 and 1851; but that presumption it was possible to overcome.

With respect to 1850, Dr Cunningham expressed his willingness to stand by that compromise. That is to say, he would not object to extension as such, on the conditions expressed in the finding of 1850: but he would maintain, that unless some very extraordinary change took place, those conditions would be fulfilled only by endowments being provided to bear the whole expense of Aberdeen. But he did not mean to adhere to the proceedings of 1851 and 1852. He looked on them as destitute of moral weight, and he meant to pay no further regard to them. As regarded the question of his own personal consistency in taking this ground, he used in the Assembly of 1853 the following expressions. After acknowledging the awkwardness of his position as having been a party to those negotiations, and stating that he was not insensible to the peculiarity of his present position in consequence, which he would certainly have been disposed to avoid if he had been governed by any personal objects, he went on to say:—

"The explanation which I presume to give of the course which I have pursued in this matter is just this, that I have resolved to act solely from a sense of my duty as an office-bearer of this Church, and from the best judgment that I could form as to what is the Church's duty in the circumstances in which she is placed. I have made it my first object, or, at least, I have endeavoured to make it my first object, to form an honest and deliberate judgment as to what is the Church's present duty, and having ascertained this, I have resolved to hold the Church's duty to be my duty, as an office-bearer of this Church bound to consult for the good of the Church, and to endeavour to guide the Church to a right knowledge and discharge of her duty, however this may affect

myself, or the institution with which I am connected. . . . I did not engage in these negotiations as an individual man who had my own personal and separate interests to attend to in the matter, neither did I engage in them as representing the College of Edinburgh, as if it had a separate interest to be attended to,—it has none; there are no separate and opposite interests in the matter. I engaged in these negotiations simply as an office-bearer of the Church, consulting, and bound to consult, for the good of the Church, to ascertain the Church's present duty, not as if we had any different or opposite interests, but simply because of the diversity of opinion existing among different men, not as to interest, but as to the question of what was then the Church's duty. It was in that capacity, and that alone, that I engaged in these negotiations, and I cannot understand yet how men can, by any feeling of awkwardness or difficulty, get over their paramount obligation to discharge their present duty as office-bearers of the Church, by doing what they think is for the good of the Church."

With reference to the objection that the proposal would occasion much strife and mischief, Dr Cunningham declared that he had come very much to despair of peace. He had made sacrifices for the sake of it, being alive to the evil of these contentions. He had made concessions beyond what his judgment approved, borne a good deal of insolence without retaliating, withdrawn to a large extent from the public business of the Church. He was tired, he said, of this system of concessions and expedients, and he meant henceforth to do what his own judgment approved, without much regard to consequences, mainly anxious to exonerate his own conscience, and escape the responsibility of measures which he could not approve.

There can be little doubt that Dr Cunningham had thoroughly satisfied himself by this time, on grounds on which I do not offer any opinion, that the claims of Aberdeen for an extended and a complete Hall would be urged at every successive Assembly; that the question, under the findings of 1850 and 1851, would at each Assembly be, whether the Church could yet afford to make the precise addition which might be claimed; that in this way the matter would resolve into questions of detail, of which men would speedily weary; and that to be in the position of continually arguing such questions would be in the last degree irksome and invidious, inju-

rious to himself, and injurious to the institution of which he was the head. He had consented to the compromise of 1850 and 1851 under the impression that he might be spared the necessity of work of this kind, at least for an interval. He was now satisfied that each Assembly would bring up questions of the same kind. I repeat that I offer no opinion as to the grounds for the impression which he cherished so strongly in this respect. But entertaining this view, and feeling that his position in dealing with these questions of detail was a false one, he resolved, when the only opportunity for raising the whole question of Aberdeen that might ever arrive had arrived, that it should be clearly raised on its merits, and that his position should henceforth be regulated simply by his own convictions.

These are some of the reasons which actuated Dr Cunningham. But they could not be expected to be sympathised with, nay, they could hardly be understood at all,—I do not say by the ardent supporters of the Aberdeen Hall, but even by those more moderate Extensionists who were willing to go cautiously in the business; and their force was not acknowledged by some of those who, on general grounds, sympathised with the views of Dr Cunningham as to the best way of arranging College matters.

In the first place, and upon the merits, many who did not agree with Dr Cunningham were quite ready to acknowledge that reasons of weight could be adduced for preferring one Hall. At any rate, it was right to be cautious about laying any *additional* burden on the College Fund in connection with Aberdeen. But they were quite unable to represent to themselves the conception that the existence of Aberdeen, with its annual charge of a very few hundreds, could constitute a very grave or serious danger to the interests of Edinburgh, or of theological education as connected with the Edinburgh Hall. It could never be magnified, they thought, into a very important matter. No new financial element had necessitated a reduction of charges on the Fund. On the contrary, the removal of Professor Macdougall from the Ethical Chair to the corresponding Chair in the University of Edinburgh, reduced the charges on the Fund, because, in all the circumstances, it was very

improbable that any party in the Church would propose to fill up the Chair thus vacated.*

But then, in the next place, the decisions of the last three years seemed to have settled the question. Extensionists and anti-Extensionists had alike been parties to them. Those decisions might not impose an absolute obligation on the Church, or on parties in it, to forbear reviving the questions previously agitated. But at least they rendered it a natural thing,—a thing to be expected,—that henceforth, unless some considerable change of circumstances intervened, the continued existence of the Hall at Aberdeen should be treated as a settled point. Hence the movement for reconsideration was received with an amount of surprise, dismay, expostulation, and even denunciation, which seemed as natural to those from whom it proceeded as it was no doubt irritating to those to whom it was addressed; and a certain number of those who had either agreed with Dr Cunningham, or who had taken no part in the matter, regarding with great apprehension the consequences of re-awakening the controversy after so many steps had been taken which seemed to concede that it was closed, made up their minds to oppose him at this stage.

I do not know a better way of reproducing the feelings of such persons than by quoting words used in the Presbytery of Edinburgh:—"Long since," said Dr Bruce, "I have learned to cling with fondness to the sentiment of one whom, whilst he lived, I did all but ignorantly worship. For even now I think I could hear him say again, as he so often said in my present ear, 'Life is too short for controversy.' Moderator, I thus chance to be reminded of other days, in some respects to me most melancholy; but there are lights as well as shadows flitting across the lone bleak fields and graveyards of memory; and when I have thought how little I have ever done for the Church, it has, perhaps oddly enough, recurred upon me as being a matter of no unpleasant thought, that even in

* Although the Chair was not filled up, the relief to the Fund did not ultimately prove so great as was expected, because in the New College the fees accrue to the Common Fund, and Professor Macdougall had drawn a large sum for it in that way.

the days of my youth and comparative weakness, and by the help of giants who lived in those days, I slew an Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Emboldened by that exploit, long since forgotten, no doubt, by all but a few of those who hear me, I have come forth again to try to help others to seize by the tail this fiery-flying serpent, which, by some of the wisest certainly, but not the most wary, has most inadvertently been let loose in the midst of us; striving thereby to turn it, most certainly not into a rod of discipline or correction for any body, but into a divining rod. I am very far from confident of success again. And so will you just suffer me further to implore you once more, as I do most solemnly, to beware of committing what, if it be not really breach of faith, has at least the appearance of it. If not a real fiery-flying serpent, it looks at least very like it; it is quite impossible to deny that. I and thousands more may be frightened at a mere semblance; and others, who are better judges of all creeping and flying creatures, may be right in saying that ours is a false alarm. But while we, the vulgar, continue to be so frightened in spite of all their arguments, I do hold it to be their clear and most undeniable Christian duty to let the seeming serpent alone. 'Touch not, handle not.' 'Avoid,' saith an apostle, 'the very appearance of evil.'"*

It could not be otherwise than trying to Dr Cunningham to find his proceedings regarded and represented as due to no other cause than a wanton disregard of the peace of the Church, and an unreasonable determination to force on at all hazards a conflict mainly about personal opinions and local claims. It did not make the trial less that he saw, as he plainly said, that a large measure of countenance was given to these views by his now withdrawing (as he thought it his duty to do), concessions he had previously been induced to make. But the trial was keener still, in so far as he might be laid open to the imputation of proposing to the Church to resile from positive contracts and engagements,

* Those who need an explanation of the *allusions* in this statement may consult "A Testimony and Remonstrance regarding the Moderatorship of next General Assembly. By the Rev. John Bruce." 8vo. Edin. 1837.

or of himself resiling from an understanding which bound him in honour not to resile. Circumstances took place which brought this home to him keenly, and made him feel it painfully. With regard to the question as it affected the Church, he spoke at great length, both in the Presbytery of Edinburgh and in the General Assembly. I doubt if he ever spoke more ably. In my opinion he proved conclusively that the Church was under no obligation which fettered her discretion; though I still think he did not estimate sufficiently the degree in which her previous action had rendered it indiscreet and even dangerous for her, except upon the most cogent grounds, to take the course which he recommended. As regards his own position as an individual, I have already quoted one of the passages in which he explained and vindicated it. It was impossible for any one to doubt his perfect sincerity and uprightness; and I think even he himself (though by no means prone to take credit for a large share of men's good opinion) must soon have been satisfied that anything in the tone of expostulation or surprise which at first had grieved him, was connected with no permanent imputation against him in any mind. But even to be put on his defence in a matter of this kind was to him excessively harassing. These passages tended greatly to strengthen the feeling of sorrowful resentment with which he realised the amount and kind of separation which was growing up between him and the friends of other days.

The debate in the Assembly was vigorous and long. The majority for Dr Candlish's motion (to maintain the proceedings of 1850, 1851, and 1852) was 222 to 147. In consequence, Dr Maclaggan's Chair was filled by the appointment of Dr Fairbairn, who had acted as assistant during the previous session; and it was remitted to the College Committee to propose to the Commission the name of a minister to act as assistant for the coming session, and also the arrangements which they may think advisable as to the conducting of the theological classes at Aberdeen. When the November Commission came, the Committee proposed the appointment, as assistant, of Mr Smeaton,* which created no division.

* Now Dr Smeaton of New College, Edinburgh.

But when they proceeded to state the arrangement proposed for the distribution of work between the Professor and the Assistant, they encountered a decided opposition on Dr Cunningham's part. He maintained that the distribution proposed tended in effect to elevate the assistant into a Professor, by giving him Professor's work; also that it pointed in the direction of encouraging the attendance at Aberdeen of students at a stage of their course in which, according to the law of the Church, as he read it, they ought to be studying in Edinburgh. In both ways, the tendency was to make progress towards a fuller provision at Aberdeen, without the mind of the Church being consulted, and in a way not consistent with a full regard to existing laws. It was an unreasonable, and in effect insidious use of an advantage. He mentioned further that he did not hold the arrangement by which an assistant was originally provided to be warranted now in the altered circumstances, when they had a Professor whose health was in no respect infirm. Therefore, he reserved his right at any time to move its discontinuance. On the other side, it was maintained that everything proposed was within the existing legislation of the Church; and that the distribution of work was intended merely to make the most of the Professor and the Assistant, for the benefit of the students in attendance at Aberdeen; regard being had to the tastes and acquirements of the gentlemen occupying the offices.

The position in which the question now stood was, on all hands, confessed to be unsatisfactory and perplexing. The difference between the two parties was not a difference in principle; that is to say, if finally settled either way, all parties could well enough submit to the decision, however unwise they might think it. But there was no prospect of its coming to a conclusion; and in the meantime there was no way of arranging or compromising the differences so as to avert or assuage the series of concussions by which the question was likely to make progress. The attempt to plan a compromise had ended only in worse and more dangerous misunderstandings, and nothing was to be hoped from renewed efforts of that kind. It only remained that in successive years

the question should arise, Whether now the Church was in a position to take another step towards the object which she had declared to be in view? To this question each party would apply principles, which almost certainly would bring about collision. And then every step, besides being itself disputed, seemed to bring in its train fresh elements of misunderstanding and confusion.

In these circumstances, very soon after the meeting of Commission in August 1854, leading men among those who maintained the position of 1851 came to the conclusion, that if it were at all possible, the question ought to be brought to an end at once. The only way to do this, it seemed to them, was to take steps to complete the Divinity Hall at Aberdeen. Once completed and recognised as a Hall, capable of carrying the students through their whole course, the debate would be ended, and distressing contentions with respect to each arrangement of a provisional state of things, would, it might be hoped, be forgotten. In order to do this, however, without injuring the Edinburgh Hall, and postponing still further the completion of the staff there necessary to carry out the curriculum, the additional charge at Aberdeen, it was resolved, must be provided for by endowment, so that no additional burden should be laid on the annual College Collection. The object in view would thus be attained, on the footing of the concession, that not only a partial, but a complete endowment must precede the erection of the new Chair in Aberdeen. Such were some of the views which led Dr Buchanan and Dr Candlish, along with others, to resolve to move in the matter. Before taking any public steps, Dr Buchanan communicated privately to Dr Cunningham the proceedings which were contemplated, and the reasons for them. Dr Cunningham in reply, disclaimed all responsibility in connection with the movement and its consequences. He was indeed not at all inclined to view it with any feeling but one of hostility. The ground taken seemed to throw on him the responsibility for having made the movement necessary. He saw in it, besides, only a new manifestation of a zeal to spare the Aberdeen students the necessity of attendance at Edinburgh for one or two sessions,—a zeal, he thought, quite

out of proportion to the interest shewn in more important subjects connected with theological education. He thought that to canvass, or, as he preferred to express it, "convulse the Church," in an effort to raise endowments for this object, was totally unreasonable, a misplacing and a misleading of effort; and if it had become expedient to make such an effort in connection with past steps in the question, he thought this threw a very significant and damnatory light on the wisdom of those steps.

During the autumn and winter a sum of £4000 was raised, which, with the £2000 already provided, was thought a sufficient endowment for a second Chair. Without much previous discussion in the Church courts (a debate in the Presbytery of Edinburgh was the only important exception), the matter came before the Assembly in the shape of a tender of the endowment. Dr Cunningham did not resist the acceptance of it, but he moved a proviso which was not accepted by the Assembly.

In the course of his speech on this occasion, Dr Cunningham, who spoke with great temperance of language, and with a manifest desire to avoid anything that might occasion additional irritation, alluded to the grounds on which the movement had been put, in so far as his conduct at the Assembly, and subsequently at the Commission, had been held to indicate that he was prepared to attack and disturb the *status quo*. He vindicated himself from any such intention, and, in reference to the Commission, he explained why he thought the motion carried then was itself an invasion of the *status quo,*—was not a "fair, temperate, and reasonable following out" of the deliverance of the Assembly,—and he maintained that his resistance to it had been the least possible that could comport with his own consistency. In these circumstances, the movement to complete Aberdeen, with its alleged grounds, could hardly be looked on by him as a friendly one, or as one in the interest of peace. The true way of promoting peace, he added, would have been to insist that "our Aberdeen friends" must remain content for two or three years with the provision which they have. The reply was that, apart from all imputation of blame for invading the *status quo,* a variety of points had emerged, with respect to which

misunderstanding had proved to be continually recurring, and which there was no prospect of being able to avoid, except in the way of completing the Aberdeen Hall as soon as possible. Those who care to see the statement of this point will find it in the speech of Dr Candlish.

The Assembly took the only remaining step of importance which remained to be taken, by sending down to Presbyteries an overture to be passed into a standing law, to the effect that Aberdeen should be erected into a full Hall as soon as three professors should be provided there. Before doing this, however, the Assembly unanimously sent down another overture providing that the theological faculty at Edinburgh should consist of five professors. That which declared three to be sufficient at Aberdeen gave rise to a very animated and interesting discussion. To go into the details would occupy a great deal too much space. The obvious objection urged by Dr Cunningham and his friends was, that three professors could not undertake the full work of a four years' course in the various branches which the Church required, if taught fully and in their proper order. Hence, what was proposed was simply that the Church should sacrifice her deliberate conceptions of a proper course to the project of having a Hall at Aberdeen; and by doing so, the Church was about to verify all the statements made heretofore by anti-Extensionists, to the effect that lowered efficiency went hand in hand with College Extension. The answer was, that three men working among fewer students, and with smaller demands on their time in the form of private work, could carry on the instruction as efficiently as a larger number in a larger institution. But the argument turned on the practical arrangement of details, into which we cannot now enter. The ultimate solution, I may remark, was, that professors at Aberdeen, with diminished private work, might meet their classes three times a day. This would give in all nine hours a day of actual teaching, distributed over the students of four years. Five professors in Edinburgh, teaching two hours a day each, would give ten hours. It was maintained that the difference was not so great as to justify any great stand about it. The division

on this point was far closer than the previous vote. The proposal to send the overture down was carried by a majority of 166 to 136.

The year that followed may be said to have been the last of the College Controversy. It was unquestionably the worst. Dr Cunningham regarded the movement now going on, as extinguishing his hopes in connection with the object which he chiefly felt called on to promote and defend. He believed it to be conclusively adverse to an honest carrying out of the curriculum, not to say to any farther improvement of it. He believed that in connection with the establishment of an endowed theological seminary in Glasgow, better equipped than Aberdeen, but weaker than Edinburgh, which was understood to be near at hand, the motive for sustaining the Edinburgh Hall would become too feeble to sustain the collection, and that with its fall the ruin of the cause of theological education in the Free Church would be consummated. The object for which all this had been done (which he regarded as merely the convenience of a few Aberdeen students), appeared to him so utterly inadequate, that it increased the feeling of indignation. The fact that he had experienced the defeat on such a subject, and all the personal mortification connected with it, from men so associated with him in former days, was another element of pain. All this disposed him, in particular, to look with no very favourable eye on the general mode of management prevailing in the Church. For he was absolutely unable to convince himself, that men, like the leading men opposed to him, were influenced by a mere regard to the merits of the question itself. They must have been determined, consciously or unconsciously, by the supposed bearing of the line taken on this question on the successful management of the Church's affairs in other departments. This suspicion, once fixed in connection with the College, was sure to extend itself to other topics, and to the general management of the Church.

It chanced that this year an eager discussion broke out with respect to the Sustentation Fund. Dr Cunningham had always taken a warm interest in the success of this fund, and lent any help he could to further its interests. A mode of administration

(intended to avert some of the evils which are apt to attend an "equal dividend") had been adopted in 1852, with Dr Cunningham's approbation, but it had not, as yet at least, produced the effects that were desired. In the Assembly of 1854, the Report on the State of the Fund had not been perfectly satisfactory, but it was hoped that another year's experience might lead to more satisfactory results, and the Assembly was advised to wait for another year to see the result of the movement. This was agreed to. But some dissatisfaction was felt that more attention was not devoted to the subject, and more discussion with respect to it encouraged. Dr Cunningham shared the impression, and this fell in with his strong feelings on the College question, to establish in his mind a disposition to ascribe to the "leaders" (as at this time he constantly called them) an undue degree of policy, management, and manipulation of the Church's procedure on public questions. His feelings on this subject were not allowed to slumber. An organised effort was at this time made to reverse and alter the general policy heretofore followed out in the Free Church. Heterogeneous materials found no difficulty in working together, and the Edinburgh Presbytery became a kind of focus. As regards the Sustentation Fund, there were two views hostile to the Church's existing policy. One was that which Dr Cunningham adopted and consistently maintained, that the modification which had been made on the equal dividend system was insufficient. Another was, that every modification was bad, and that the equal dividend, pure and simple, ought to prevail. Dr Begg led the latter party; and he combined forces with Dr Cunningham, by means of a motion for inquiry. The same parties united now on the College question. Dr Begg had up to this time opposed Dr Cunningham's views; but now he maintained that Aberdeen ought to be contented, and that all further progress in the meantime should be sisted. Thus Dr Cunningham found himself at the head of a powerful body in his own Presbytery, and was inevitably placed under the responsibilities of leading it; and what he had to lead was a general assault on the aims and methods of his old friends. On different occasions during this year, painful troubles arose out of this posture of affairs. It is not worth while,

and would hardly be seemly or fit, to attempt to decide now between the judgment of those who thought that on these occasions the blame rested with Dr Cunningham, and of those who thought that unreasonable offence was taken, and that he was placed in an invidious and undeserved position, by the process of unduly pressing his words and actions. It is enough to say, that few of those who either cheered or censured him were aware of the pain he felt, or of the inward trial and sorrow out of which his utterances came. As if every element of discomfort had to meet, in this year the Clerkship of Assembly fell vacant, through the death of Mr Pitcairn. It was an appointment which in ordinary circumstances would have been at Cunningham's disposal; a tribute (if he wished it) to his known conversancy with the principles of Church Law; and an addition, not despicable, to an income far below what his position in the Church and his services to the Church demanded. Dr Cunningham was proposed, and agreed to stand. But the complications were too great; the proposal came to nothing.

Amid all this discomfort, the Assembly of 1855 drew on. It turned out that a majority of Presbyteries of nearly two to one voted in favour of the proposed curriculum at Aberdeen. The determination to make an end of the controversy in the quickest way was known to have had its influence among the causes which produced this decisive result. It was more or less the expression of a wish to have no more of it. In these circumstances, Dr Cunningham felt himself relieved from the necessity of engaging in formal discussion, and dividing the House. Nor did he interpose in the matter of the Glasgow College, the endowment for which was offered to this Assembly. "He now felt himself fully exempted from all further responsibility in opposing anything that might be proposed henceforward in regard to College Extension or theological education. He felt himself thoroughly exonerated from all responsibility in connection with any of these things, and he finally and conclusively washed his hands of them. He would not again discuss any question as to theological education, or a theological curriculum in that House."

So ended, as far as Dr Cunningham was concerned, the College Controversy. But the results were not ended. The wound was deep, and the pain continued. The feeling of alienation and distrust was in no degree assuaged; it often seemed to be deepened and increased during the three succeeding years. There was a bitterness in the posture of affairs which he made no effort to conceal; and, though he made no complaint on personal grounds, it was plain enough that his health suffered, and that his enjoyment of life was greatly marred. A morbid feeling that not his old friends only, but the greater part of the Church he had loved and served, looked on him with disapprobation, produced in him a somewhat grim and defiant humour. He ceased to appear in Church Courts; but his remarks in private conversation on Church affairs were often trenchant and unsparing. The feeling also—always a feeling near at hand with him—that whatever mistakes he could prove against the Church and her leaders, faults of some kind on his own side must no doubt be greatly concerned, somehow, in bringing things to the pass to which they had come, helped to throw some additional gloom over his mind. Yet, even then, far more than he had the least conception of, the whole Church, including those "leaders," mourned over this state of things, and over the complications which had brought it about. The whole Church shared largely in the feeling which was expressed by Dr Cunningham's unflinching comrade, Mr Murray Dunlop, in that Assembly of 1855:—

"I shall not refer to the personal questions which have arisen. I mourn over them, as do all the members of this Church and friends of religion. But yet I think this House will indulge me in the expression of a feeling which I cannot suppress, when, without throwing reflections on any one, I take this opportunity of renewing the expression of my firm unshaken confidence, my high and exalted admiration of one whose name has been brought much into this controversy,—one whose services to this Church have never been surpassed, and should never be forgotten,—whose soundness of judgment, whose generosity of nature, whose tenderness of heart, have gained him the love and affection of all who know him, and, most of all, of those who know him best; and I own that I shall think it an

evil omen for this Church if she shall be given over to the strong delusion of entertaining permanently any suspicions or hesitations as to the purity of the motives, the sincerity of the desires, the charity and earnest love towards his brethren, and the perfect honesty and fearlessness of honourable purpose of my revered, esteemed, and beloved friend, Dr Cunningham."

It must be added also, that the pain which Dr Cunningham felt, he did not feel alone. The estrangement from old intimacy was a grief to those on the other side as well as to him; how deep a grief to some of them the writer has occasion to know more fully perhaps than most men now surviving.

In after days, when broken friendships were renewed, and the old interest in Church affairs resumed, Dr Cunningham would have been ready enough to acknowledge that he had felt and spoken too strongly, and that he had allowed some aspects of the controversy to take undue possession of his mind. But I have no reason to think that he ever altered his view of the intrinsic merits of the College question, taken as a whole. I have no doubt that he continued to believe that the course of duty and wisdom would have been that for which he contended; and that the course adopted was not creditable to the good sense of the Church.

I have thought it necessary to state pretty fully the main steps of this business, for the reason which I stated at the outset. I have not thought it necessary to follow it into all the complications, nor into all the misunderstandings, into which it ran—which seemed to arise inevitably as by some malignant destiny—and which were attended by ever-deepening vexations. Had the difference been between men who stood merely in the ordinary relations of ecclesiastical fellowship, it might have been a good hard fight—but nothing more nor worse. As it was, old love, esteem, and admiration, necessitated the application to every step on either side of a very peculiar standard of judgment; and that again reacted on the succeeding steps of a process which it seemed impossible to close.

Nor do I think it any part of my duty to offer any closing verdict on the merits, either of the cause or of the parties. The Church

may be said to have decided the cause, rightly or wrongly; but as to the parties, the constant verdict of the whole Church, beyond doubt was, that themselves, their services, and their reputation, were among her dearest treasures, and that she would sacrifice neither.

In regard to Dr Cunningham, of whom alone it is my duty to speak here, I suppose there are few now who need to have explained to them the heart that beat in him through the fiercest and hottest of these contentions. Any who misunderstood him for a time came to understand him before he passed away. But lest there should be some who are still inclined to think that his zeal betokened a self-willed or ungenerous temper, I will add one or two reminiscences.

I will quote first from one who speaks of "that deplorable College Controversy which embittered Dr Cunningham's existence for years," as "not a very inviting subject, even for those who, like myself, thoroughly and throughout agreed with him on the merits of the question." "I have," he proceeds, "forgotten most of what was said and done on both sides of the controversy, and I have done so without much reluctance or regret. But I have not forgotten, and should not willingly forget, an incident which occurred when the strife was at the hottest, and when the Principal was in his bitterest mood against his opponents. He was spending a night with me, and during the evening he gave unrestrained and most emphatic expression to his views and feelings upon the subject; and it is needless to say that his language was more remarkable for vigour than softness or suavity. It happened that the conversation took place in the presence of a lady who was comparatively a stranger to the state of feeling in the Free Church at the time, but it may be easily believed that Dr Cunningham did not at the moment give much heed to this circumstance. In the morning I found him swinging uneasily round the breakfast table, exhibiting unmistakable signs of vexation and annoyance, and at last he broke out into strong expressions of regret for what he called his 'recklessness' in speaking as he had done, declaring that he had no more control over himself than when he was a student, blaming

himself for his 'outbreak' of the previous evening, wondering what the stranger must have thought of it, and earnestly hoping that she would not think much about it. I never saw anything like the self-abasement of that great man, or the severity with which, after serious reflection, he dealt, not with others, but with himself. I had observed with lively pleasure at the time, and have often thought of it with satisfaction since, that in the very heat of his onslaught, he spontaneously gave utterance to a pointed and emphatic declaration in favour of an old friend with whom he had come into collision. The expressions of censure have almost all faded from my recollection, but not the words by which the censure was qualified, nor the tones of respect and affection, struggling with present irritation; nor yet the striking scene of self-reproach and contrition in the morning."

The writer of this memoir was called, in 1853, from Huntly to the Free High Church in Edinburgh, then vacant by the death of Dr Gordon. Dr Cunningham was one of the elders, and came down to Huntly as deputy to get the translation carried through. Dr James Buchanan, Dr Bannerman, Mr Earle Monteith, were all members of the congregation. They all were thoroughly at one with Dr Cunningham in his views, felt keenly, and acted decidedly. Dr Gordon had given the great weight of his judgment and of his character to the same party; and after his death, Dr Cunningham was, no doubt, the man in the congregation who was most influential, most loved, trusted, and followed. In all probability there were very few in the congregation who differed with him on the College question. I came to Edinburgh when that question was becoming very unpleasant every way; and in the Presbytery and in the Church, things went from bad to worse for about three years, and, though by that time the fight was over, they continued to be very uncomfortable for two years more. It so happened that, on grounds not necessary to be explained, I had come to a different view from Dr Cunningham's as to the right and expedient way of dealing with the question, and did not feel at liberty to decline taking my share of the responsibilities. I therefore voted usually against him, in the stages of the question which

followed my settlement in the High Church, and did so sometimes with a very sore heart. I remember, with painful distinctness, one debate in the Presbytery, when the turn of the speaking seemed almost to challenge every one who loved him to stand by him. My own judgment (right or wrong) obliged me to vote the other way; and I remember that I was sitting close behind him, and gave my vote as it were over his shoulder. As one or two of my elders afterwards mentioned, somewhat reproachfully, he winced visibly as I voted; not of course that he had any particular regard for my judgment, but that the fact of an old student, who had become his minister, disregarding his arguments on the special subject of theological education, and his wishes in a matter known to lie so near his heart, could not but be painful. I wish now to state that, from first to last, intense as Dr Cunningham's feelings, on some points connected with this matter, were known to be, there never was a trace of coldness or unkindness in his intercourse with me. In every difficulty or perplexity, his advice and help were always ready. On his own affairs and mine, both family and professional, he was always frank, unrestrained, and friendly. He refrained from speaking to me on topics connected with the College question on all occasions, except when I myself introduced the subject, no doubt because he wished to avoid any appearance of applying pressure to my mind. When I introduced the subject at any time, he instantly came out with his opinions, with his usual force and decision, but with an invariable moderation in the tone of his remarks. All this simply meant, that in the relation between us, he was anxious to respect my independence, and preserve my comfort. He must, unquestionably, have thought the course I took, on different occasions, decidedly unreasonable; he could hardly help regarding it as hard and unkind. Yet, while himself feeling acute pain, he never uttered one syllable that could give pain to me. If he had simply allowed himself to talk, in his own strong way, among his friends in the congregation, what I cannot doubt he must have often thought, it could hardly have failed to have produced serious discomfort to me, whether his remarks had taken the shape of disapprobation or of depreciation. But, on the

contrary, I ascribe to the strong, constant, and cordial support of himself and of his immediate friends, a great part of the unbroken comfort which I enjoyed during these years.

I never told him how grateful I felt to him for this. Somehow it was not easy to do so. One felt as if it might be almost offensive to suggest to him that he could be imagined to act in any other way. I should not have introduced here a subject which is mainly interesting to myself, but for the illustration it affords of the manliness and generosity of his character. But I am glad at the same time to have the opportunity of recording how much I owe him on this account.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *FEATURES AND INCIDENTS OF MIDDLE LIFE.*

FOR the sake of following the College Controversy and some other questions to an end, I have touched on matters which fall as late as the year 1857. There are, however, some threads to be picked up which belong to earlier years; and the reader, while he follows the record of a busy public life must keep in view the changes of a personal and family kind, which in the period of middle life are usually both so gradual and so important. Among others, the growth of his children around him, the development of their characters, and the superintendence of their education, was, of course, an object of constant interest; while keen appreciation of his position on their part, and their vivid sympathy with his experiences, became a new source of influence acting on himself.

It is to be regretted that an almost total want of letters deprives us of the cross-lights by which chiefly the character of a family life can be made perceptible to readers. This *hiatus valde deflendus* is partly to be imputed to Cunningham's notorious aversion to letter-writing. He had, in fact, an antipathy to the mechanical operation of penmanship, which only the sense of duty could overcome. When he had occasion to communicate with any one on "the north side" of Edinburgh—a mile, or more, from his house—he would often go in person, rather than send a note; indeed, he has been known to say that he would rather walk five miles than write a page. With these dispositions, letter-writing was an unwelcome task, often delayed. Too manly to excuse himself on the pretext of much work and want of time, he simply owned his fault,

when at any time the delay was too long, and owned it with great humility.

The want of family letters, however, is not to be ascribed exclusively to the cause just referred to. The truth is, he was not often or long separated from his family; and never, therefore, had any urgent reason to become, for their sake, a better correspondent. It must suffice to say that his family life was the life of one who, amid all public cares and controversies, was always remarkable for kindly *rapprochement* in private intercourse, and who added to this general disposition peculiarly strong family affections. He had a great deal of unaffected kindliness in all his private ways, and irresistibly drew the love of those about him. One of his little boys used to plead for leave to be with him in the study; and though the condition was perfect quietness, there he would remain for hours together. It may be safely said that the boy who evinced this peculiar loyalty had as intense a healthy restlessness as any youth in the neighbourhood, nor would any motive, save the one, have availed to repress his activity.

Though he was averse to writing, he had great willingness to talk, when there was anything of interest to talk about. On his return from any excursion, nothing pleased him more than to get his family about him, and go over his doings and experience. Without a single note or jotting, he would go over weeks of travel, unhesitatingly representing the work of the several days and hours, dwelling on what interested him, and calling up the detail of his adventures. His hold over the relations of time was wonderfully accurate and sure. Equally accurate was his sense of locality. A place where he had once been, he thenceforth knew in all its relations and belongings. Naturally he found it difficult, as most men do who combine studious habits with busy public life, to give so much time to his family as he would have desired. Yet the strongest and earliest recollections of his sons are connected with the care with which he watched their education in their first school days. And as they advanced, "unwearied care" was bestowed, at the busiest times of his own work, to secure their thorough understanding of the texts they read. He was himself a thoroughly

accurate scholar, and an unsparing judge of Latin composition, as many a divinity student learned to his cost.

The kindliness which struck every one who met Dr Cunningham in private was joined with a transparency that never left you in doubt for a moment that you saw the whole man. What you thus saw was full of nobleness morally, and power intellectually. Then his faults or infirmities, which were perhaps the most unconcealed parts of him, were so allied to his force, clearness, and scorn of baseness,—were, indeed, such delightful exaggerative illustrations of these,—that they merely printed him larger on the mind; while the touch of exaggeration, or over-vehemence, soothed you with the sense of an imperfection to be tender to, and warmed the whole mode of feeling with which he was regarded. Indeed, it must have often crossed the mind of those who knew him, that what, no doubt, were Dr Cunningham's faults and weak points, and were so regarded by himself, were somehow the points in his character that nobody would have liked to dispense with; and if he had been enabled totally and absolutely to eradicate them, as there is no doubt he often and sorrowfully strove to do, I am much afraid his friends would never have forgiven him for his success; so near of kin were they to that in him which we admired and trusted. Nor was this feeling confined to friends. In all his successive controversies, the same feeling existed among opponents, if only they had chanced to get near enough to know the real man. During the College controversy, for instance, his fundamental popularity among those whom he hit hardest was never in danger. He himself was not the least aware of this, and mourned over his own isolation, and over the bitterness of feeling, of which a cruel destiny had made him the centre. Yet men who entirely sympathised with all his views have told me that at that very time, travelling in parts of the Free Church where the opposite views prevailed most thoroughly, they were amazed at the irrepressible good-will and kindly feeling that were everywhere cherished towards him.

"Whenever," says a correspondent who became acquainted with Dr Cunningham in 1841, "whenever any special object led me to call, I found that with all his manifold avocations he seemed to have

ample time to discuss the matter in hand. And not only so: he would launch out upon many other topics, and give the visitor the benefit of his opinion upon men and things in very plain and strong terms. He would roll himself in his easy chair, stretch out his legs to their full length, with his feet upon the fender—and then woe to some prominent personages of the day. And busy as he was, he always seemed to wish you to prolong your visit. When you rose to take leave he would say, 'Don't go yet, I am in no way particularly engaged to-day. Sit a little longer.' . . . I remember well a gentleman who was strongly opposed to the non-intrusion party, saying to me one day, 'Well, you will never hear *me* speak another word against Cunningham. What a fine fellow he is! I went to him the other day along with two or three other gentlemen to consult him about a public question, and there is not another man in Edinburgh who would have acted as he did. We found him far from well, and suffering great pain, and yet he took such a warm interest in our business, and took so much pains to clear up the matter, that we were quite ashamed of the trouble we were giving him, and I was conscience-stricken for all I had said against him. But nobody shall ever hear me utter another word of that kind.'"

The same observer (speaking of Dr Cunningham from the point of view of a much younger man) says with perfect truth, "He made you feel as much at ease in his company as if he had been a class-fellow. He never spoke with cautious and dignified reserve, as if it were not quite proper to open all his mind to a young man. In truth, it soon came to be regarded by others—and perhaps more slowly by himself—as one of his weaknesses, that he gave such free and unbridled vent to his sentiments. Yet there was in it a very great charm, especially to young students and probationers. It made them feel as if they were trusted and respected by this great man, and that he had a satisfaction in opening his mind to them. In short, even to young men, and comparative strangers, he was a delightful companion, as well as a most kind and valuable counsellor."

People were sometimes amusingly puzzled at his straightforwardness. The writer remembers a scene in his own vestry when he was

minister of the Free High Church. Dr Cunningham very often came into the vestry after sermon, to exchange greetings, and talk over matters that might suggest themselves. On this occasion a Congregational minister from London was ushered in, immediately after Dr Cunningham had entered. He had been commissioned, he said, to ask Dr Cunningham to preach, in London, the annual sermon of one of the great societies, probably that of the London Missionary Society. The instant reply was, "Oh, it is a mistake sir! an entire mistake; the Society could only apply to me in ignorance; it is entirely out of the question to ask me to preach on such an occasion." This was politely disbelieved by the deputy, who, though obviously staggered a little by the serious good faith of the statement, interposed the appropriate phrases. The Society, he said, knew very well what they were about, and had good reason to regard it as a very great object that Dr Cunningham should preach. He only brought down upon himself a demonstration, with all the best qualities of Dr Cunningham's argumentative speaking, that it was entirely out of the question to suppose that *he* could preach,—that if they wanted a Scotch preacher they must go to Candlish or to Guthrie,—that all the world knew and were settled in the opinion that to ask *him* to preach on an occasion in which a great many people were to be interested, was absolutely ridiculous and absurd. No man in his senses would do it. The scene was far too good to be spoilt by any interference from a third party, for the purpose of aiding either side. A slight perception of the queerness of the point he had to prove, gave just a touch of amused impatience to the Principal's manner. On the other side, the bewildered deputy, after striving in vain to make head, was fairly overborne at last by the weight and variety of the argument, and the conviction with which the case—so plain and obvious a case—was pushed home; and finally he capitulated—"he must not presume to contradict him on the point"—retiring with the air of a man who was convicted of having done an excessively absurd thing,—while at the same time he obviously could not see how it came to pass that so plain an errand should turn out so perplexing.

It has been explained already in some measure, how it happened that Dr Cunningham's pulpit popularity, so great in Greenock, had not been maintained in Edinburgh. He accepted the result with a great deal too much of good faith. Without saying anything about it, he manifestly laid it down in his own mind as "satisfactorily established" that he was not a successful preacher. This visibly injured his pulpit manner, because it took away the confident expectation of creating an impression, which contributes so much to produce the result. He quite decidedly under-rated the interest which his pulpit services created in the minds of all thoughtful hearers; for, in addition to their undisputed intellectual power, they possessed a peculiar moral force, which fully kept pace with the other element. It was, of course, however, a topic that could not be discussed. He was quite ready at all times to aid brethren by preaching for them, and was as ready to occupy the unduly low place he fixed for himself in this department, as to fill in other departments the leading positions which he could not avoid.

A few incidents that varied the ordinary course of his life during these years may now be briefly recorded.

In 1848 Dr Cunningham proceeded to Paris for the purpose, among other reasons, of being present at the meeting of the Synod of the French Protestant Church. The Revolution of that year had made great changes for that Church, as well as for all other French institutions. Hitherto, though receiving an allowance from the State, they had only been allowed to exist with limited powers, and under jealously-defined conditions. Now they were free to meet in Synod again, and to decide on their own responsibility with reference to their organisation, and with reference to the doctrines which they ought as a Church to confess and teach. They had no standards, no constitution, no government. The old Confession of the French Reformed Church had been long abandoned, and no ground existed for maintaining that any one man in their body was under obligation to profess or believe anything whatever. In these circumstances, the first opportunity for unimpeded action brought great responsibilities; and the proceedings were watched by Dr

Cunningham with very peculiar interest. M. Frederick Monod and Count de Gasparin pressed upon the Synod the duty of now adopting something of the nature of a confession or profession of faith, however simple. By a great majority, this proposition was rejected, though the rejection was put in the milder form of a postponement or adjournment. The majority was not composed of Rationalists solely; for a certain number of believing men shrank from the consequences of a decided step, and were willing to escape a crisis for which they thought their Church not yet prepared. MM. Monod and de Gasparin, however, felt constrained to leave the Synod on this declinature. "We heard," said Dr Cunningham, giving an account of the matter, "we heard our excellent friend M. Monod, seconded by Count de Gasparin, propose that the Synod should own the obligation to have something like a Confession of Faith, and should adopt or choose one. I could not imagine that a Church which had a fragment of an idea what a Church ought to be, should hesitate for a moment to accept such a proposal, far less that any Church should reject it. To our astonishment, however, the proposition was almost unanimously scouted by the Synod, who not only decided that it was not the duty of a Church to have a Confession of Faith, but would not even go the length of making a confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and His vicarious atonement. I believe there never was a more flagrant and scandalous repudiation of the duty of a Church of Christ than was exhibited on that occasion, and that there never were stronger grounds for secession from any Church than M. Monod and his associates had for separating themselves from the National Reformed Church of France, and constituting themselves, as they did, into the Evangelical Union of France." Of Frederick Monod's talents and devotion to the good cause, Dr Cunningham always cherished the highest opinion, and, as long as they both survived, he regarded him with great affection and esteem.

An accident which befell Dr Candlish just before the Assembly of 1849 met, threw the burden of conducting that year's business in a peculiar manner on Dr Cunningham. The Assembly has to get through an immense mass of business in ten or twelve days, and

much depends on the Convener of the Business Committee for getting it creditably and comfortably completed. Dr Cunningham performed his task with his usual clearness and vigour. Among other topics which came up at that Assembly was the question of the Marriage Affinity Bill. The agitation had even then made some progress, which now at the end of two-and-twenty years is still urged on, but too successfully, by a small, rich, and deeply interested party; and overtures from inferior Courts had called upon the Assembly to exert its influence for the dissemination of sound views upon the subject, and for the maintenance of the existing law.

In existing circumstances it may be right to give a specimen of Dr Cunningham's views upon this subject, all the more because the "Assembly Proceedings" give no report. He began with an elaborate statement of the Scripture argument, pointing out that there were two conspiring but independent lines of proof, establishing the view that the Scripture rule, especially as summed up in the Levitical law, excluded marriage in this case. The first was, that the law supported the general principle that a man may not marry of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own; for it was impossible to make sense of the prohibitions in Leviticus, except by taking them as exemplifying that general principle. The second was that, apart from that general principle, and looking merely to the degree of affinity, the prohibition against a woman's marrying two brothers, established, by parity of reason, the unlawfulness of a man's marrying two sisters. In both lines of argument, the character of the law, as not proceeding by complete enumeration of degrees, but by regulative specimens, was to be taken into account. Having further disposed of the objections grounded on the Levirate law, and also on the 18th verse of Lev. xviii., he went on to express "his thorough conviction that the case could be argued altogether independent of the authority of God, and on natural principles applicable to society. A good deal was founded in favour of the concession, and with some plausibility, on reasons of convenience. But the safe and wholesome rule for society was, that when a man marries, his wife's sister becomes his own, and is

to be treated in that light alone, both as to feeling and desire; and if the existing law were changed, the change would tend to break up much that was useful and agreeable in social life, and to remove a safeguard for the purity and virtue of the community,—and all this for a few cases of supposed convenience."

In dealing with the Jewish interpretation, he referred to the notorious looseness of Jewish interpretation on the whole subject of polygamy and the prohibited degrees. "Perhaps this might, in some measure, be traced to external influences. The Jews, in most places, were few in number, and only intermarried among themselves. The subject might have been brought before them in connection with cases of practical difficulty, and this might have led to a tendency loosely to interpret Scripture. It was a remarkable fact that there never had been any doubt among interpreters, as to marrying within the prohibited degrees, till early in last century, when certain Jews in Holland, desirous to legalise marriages with a deceased wife's sister and niece, and also between aunt and nephew by consanguinity, petitioned the State to legalise such a connection in the case of Jews. The State referred the question to the theological professors of the three universities of Holland, who gave in an elaborate report, and were unanimous in affirming, not only that such connections were unlawful, but that they were such as no Christian government should tolerate on the part of their subjects."

He added at the close, that "one was compelled to look with something like indignation at the statements of English Dissenters in reference to this measure. It had been set forth by them, that the prohibition against a man marrying a deceased wife's sister, was a mere piece of the discipline of the Church of England. It was extremely difficult to imagine how men of intelligence and information could put forth such a statement, or how it could be excused on the score of zeal for the object. Every one knew that the law was a law of the Church from the beginning, grounded upon the Word of God. There was no difference of opinion in the Church on this subject until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when some petty German princes wished to marry their wives' sisters. There was no

difference among the Reformers of the Continent, or of England, or of Scotland; they were of one mind on the point. They believed the prohibition to be part of the universal law of God for man; and for men to come before the public and pretend to justify their zeal for the Bill on the ground that the prohibition is founded on an ecclesiastical canon of the Church of England, was really an extraordinary exhibition. The beginning of any doubt on the subject occurred, as he had stated, from some German princes wishing to marry the sisters of their wives. In order to get a justification of the step, they asked some of the professors at the universities to undertake the defence of it. Two or three of them did so, and this was the origin of the discussion."

"The large measure of countenance given in our day to the view he controverted was," he said in conclusion, "a painful feature of the times. Some of it was due to the semi-infidelity now so prevalent, and a great deal of it to the influence of certain views which led men to disparage the authority of the Old Testament. He condemned the measure, alike on Christian grounds, and in its moral bearing on the community,—as tending to frustrate ecclesiastical discipline, and to subvert the domestic relations. Nothing should lead them to abandon their strong opposition to the measure."

In the year 1852 a case came before the courts of the Free Church, characterised by some features of a very peculiar kind. It concerned a minister in the West of Scotland, a man of considerable mental powers and very fair scholarship, and an impressive preacher. He took very high ground in point of orthodoxy, but still higher as regards the true exposition and enforcement of genuine religious experience; distinguishing "the precious from the vile" in a way which, as his people believed, and as he himself was thought to believe with them, was not approached except by a very select few in any of the Churches. This spiritual arrogance grew upon him, and at last he took to running down publicly some of his brethren in the ministry, including some who were looked upon as among the most useful ministers of the day. It went so far that it became necessary to call upon him to answer for his conduct. The case came before the Assembly of 1852. The party

concerned, of whom it is charitable to think that his egotism either began with or ended in some measure of insanity, did not behave in a perfectly manly and downright manner. It was impossible to get him to face directly the responsibilities of the position he had assumed. Ultimately he got out of it by leaving the Free Church, and setting up for himself. At the August Commission in that year he was finally separated from the ministry and membership of the Church. In concurring in the procedure adopted, Dr Cunningham "took the opportunity of saying, that he thought the whole history of this painful case afforded a striking warning of the extreme danger of men indulging in inordinate vanity and self-conceit. It was abundantly evident that this was Mr ———'s besetting sin; and as they were all very prone to think more highly of themselves than they ought, and to imagine that somewhat more than an average degree of self-conceit was comparatively a light and venial offence, it might be well if this case, and there were many others, would lead them to reflect that vanity and self-conceit, unless very carefully guarded against and mortified, had a very strong tendency to make men knaves, and to involve them in gross breaches of morality."

The day after this case was disposed of, Dr Cunningham proceeded on Church business to Holland. The occasion was peculiar. The Committee of the Free Church for Jewish Missions numbered Amsterdam among their stations. The work there carried on awakened a good deal of interest among Dutch Christians, and the Free Church Congregation connected with the Mission was recognised and fraternally treated by them. A lady,* resident near Amsterdam, who desired to promote Jewish Missions, proposed to transfer to the Free Church (in which she had been led to repose peculiar confidence) buildings suitable for Mission purposes, with an endowment. The arrangements connected with this very liberal donation required care, and involved some difficulties. At the request of the Committee, Dr Cunningham, accompanied by Dr Bannerman and one or two more, proceeded to Amsterdam to get

* Madame Zelte. The property offered consisted of a church, five class-rooms, and an endowment of £80 a year.

the business settled. After accomplishing their main object, Dr Cunningham and Dr Bannerman went up the Rhine, and returned by Strasbourg and Paris. The trip was often spoken of as a time of very great enjoyment, made more vivid in the retrospect by the domestic sorrows which followed.

They left Edinburgh on 16th August, and arrived at Rotterdam on the 19th. From letters, in which Dr Bannerman recorded their common impressions, I make one or two extracts. Nobody will be surprised to hear that as their first place of pilgrimage they "went up in the afternoon twelve miles by steamer to Dort, to see the place of meeting of the famous Synod. The Hall where the divines sat* is now converted into a school for gymnastics, filled with all the ordinary apparatus for climbing, leaping, &c. The town itself is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, in Holland, and unchanged in its antiquity. The streets, houses, manners, are pre-eminently Dutch, and we were specially interested in it."

One hopes that the conversion of the Hall into a place for gymnastics is not satirically intended by the modern Dutchmen. These were gymnastics of a kind, certainly, when the Synod sat there, as Dr Cunningham could not fail to remember,—the Arminians fencing obstinately with the Synod about modes of procedure, and the Synod striving to convince them that their business was to take direction in that matter, and not to give it. The *Acta* represent to us, through many a page, the Arminians parading out to consult, and in again to debate, and Episcopius in dexterous phrase announcing always some new quirk more disappointing than the last; till Bogermannus, the president, at length loses temper altogether, unhappily, and rates them from the chair in red-hot Latin as unprincipled deceivers. That scene rose before Cunningham's mind no doubt, but chiefly the thought of the great theological decisions ripened in that Hall, and the interests depending on those decisions. He spoke, when he came home, of the interest with which he had seen the places where the great Calvinistic divines of the 17th century lived and died,—"those

* A quaint woodcut of it,—Divines, Arminians, and all, may be seen in the authorised Acta, 4to. Dordrechti, 1620.

eminent men, who had exhausted and settled almost every really important point in Christian theology."

The evening was spent at Rotterdam, next morning at the Hague, and then the travellers proceeded to Amsterdam. On Saturday they attended the synagogue service,—"very peculiar, but, as a form of worship, very melancholy indeed"; and next day worshipped with the Church of England congregation,—"chaplain, an earnest Christian man," whose acquaintance they made. An accident to Mr Schwartz, the missionary, who was nearly drowned by the upsetting of his carriage into a canal, made this day memorable. Monday found them at Leyden:—

"The chief interest is the University, now much decayed, but the first in importance in Holland, and formerly one of the most celebrated in Europe, to which our best students used to resort from Scotland. The Senate Hall is filled with the portraits of the Professors from the earliest time, with which we were very much interested, the series embracing many of the old Dutch divines, from the Reformation downwards, with whom we are acquainted. We dressed up Dr Cunningham in a Dutch Professor's gown and cocked hat, and put him into the chair. The Library is also very interesting; more especially for an album containing the autographs of all the divines who sat in the Synod of Dort, which we examined with great interest.

"We returned to Amsterdam, and immediately set out by rail, once more, in the opposite direction, to visit the old lady who has given the building and endowments to the Free Church. She is between seventy and eighty; but strong, active, and energetic,—a very pious, good woman, who has suffered persecution in the shape of fines for the faith. She is very wealthy, but lives in the plainest style,—a specimen of old Dutch life, which even in this country, so much less liable to change than our own, is wearing out. She could not speak English, nor we Dutch; we had no common language understood by both parties, so that we had to communicate through an interpreter. She made a good feast for us, and loaded us with honour and food. Everything in the house, gardens, people, and the whole establishment, were intensely Dutch. She lives in a sort of patriarchal magnificence and simplicity,—she herself and the whole thing reminding me forcibly of 'Ma mère' in the Swedish novel. In the evening we returned to Amsterdam, heartily interested and worn out."

Two days followed devoted to business. Intercourse with divines, lawyers, and others interested, "carried on in Dutch, English, French, and Latin, with and without interpreters, with

and occasionally without understanding each other," gradually brought it to a close, and everything was got through well and satisfactorily at last. In the morning of the last day at Amsterdam "we had a sort of private meeting with deputies from nearly all parts of Holland who came to Amsterdam, and in the evening we had a public meeting in the Church, attended by a crowded audience, where we spoke in English, and were, sentence by sentence, translated into Dutch. It was rather a funny sort of speechifying, but all went off with great applause."

Utrecht was found not quite so interesting as Leyden. They went by Cologne, Bonn, and up the Rhine to Frankfort; and thence by Heidelberg to Strasburg. Here the common travellers' experience of losing their luggage befell them, with its customary awkward consequences; worth mentioning only as bringing out a trait of Dr Cunningham's. He valued himself on accuracy and success in all his travelling arrangements, and liked to be relied upon to manage the details. His travelling companion, therefore, took the occurrence all the more cheerfully, because it enabled him to dwell with exaggerative unction on Dr Cunningham's crestfallen air, both when the luggage failed to appear, and when, next morning, the necessaries being still astray, they were forced to appear at breakfast in a dilapidated condition. Paris was the next stage, and there, amid very active sight-seeing, Dr Cunningham paid particular attention to the libraries. Some of the early works bearing on French Protestantism were the objects in view; but I am inclined to believe that neither the Bibliothéque Imperiale, nor the other libraries to which he found access, contained the books which he especially desired to consult. The scarcity of such books has a very well known cause, and must have suggested thoughts of Louis XIV. and of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the reverse of benevolent. Brussels, Waterloo, Antwerp, completed the route, and from the latter port they sailed to Hull.

Unbroken health, unflagging spirits, and great enjoyment had made the expedition a peculiarly happy one, and Dr Cunningham was turning his face homeward gratified and buoyant, but sorrow was before him. His family were spending the summer at Inner-

kip, on the Clyde. A little daughter Elizabeth, not passing eighteen months old, kept up a strange talk about home. The child talked of it continually. An epidemic complaint broke out in the place. The little girl took it, and very soon "went home." Dr Cunningham was in Paris, and never saw her again. The news met him on his arrival in England; and he reached Scotland only the day before the funeral. But another bereavement was impending. Andrew, a fine boy of six, had taken the same disease. His father found him ill on his return, and after three or four days he also was taken. Dr Cunningham felt the stroke with peculiar severity. But he forgot himself in trying to console his companions in sorrow. "How is Dr Cunningham bearing up?" was asked of a relative who had been much in the house. "He seems to do nothing," was the answer, "but comfort others." The tidings were thus announced by him to his daughters in Edinburgh:—

"INNERKIP, 14*th September* 1862.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTERS,—It has pleased the Lord to remove your brother Andrew, we trust to a better world. He died this afternoon about half-past six, about two or three hours after I had despatched my former note to Janet. He suffered very severely for about twenty hours before his death, and during this time his mother never left him. His severe sufferings, by a wise provision of God, tended to reconcile us to his removal. His whole deportment during his illness was singularly pleasing, remarkable for its mildness and submissive patience, and concurred, with what he said of a more directly religious character, in confirming our hope that the Lord was dealing with his soul, to prepare him for heaven. He continued quite sensible till very near his end, and little more than two hours before his death a very interesting and pleasing incident occurred. I proposed to pray with him, and when I began to speak he quite unexpectedly, and altogether of his own accord, repeated audibly the words after me, and continued to do so till I had finished. May the Lord enable us all to receive aright and improve aright these painful trials.

"We propose coming all home on Thursday. . . . . I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, and remain, my dear girls, your affectionate father,

"WM. CUNNINGHAM."

On the same day he wrote to Dr Bannerman:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The Lord's hand lies very heavily upon me. My son Andrew, aged six years, was seized on Wednesday last with the same disease which cut off dear wee baby, and died this afternoon at half-past six. He

suffered very severely, but his whole deportment, as well as his particular statements, all tended to confirm our hope that the Lord was graciously dealing with his soul. This is a very striking series of dispensations, and you will, I am sure, unite with us in praying that it may not pass by unimproved, and that in the meantime we may not faint when thus rebuked of the Lord. Mrs Cunningham has hitherto been wonderfully upheld and strengthened, though I fear that she will now feel severely the effects of watching and sorrow.

"When I contrast the abundant enjoyment I had while with you on the continent, and, indeed, the abundant goodness of all the way through which the Lord has led me, with this accumulation of sorrows, I feel that I have special reason to adopt the language of Job and to say, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' But the great matter now is to see that the evil be converted into good."

He might maintain his composure, and be the comforter of others, but the wound bled inwardly. Like most strong yet tender-hearted men, he felt such sorrow with a pain as deep as it was silent. Those who have seen him in converse with any parent who had lost a very little child, will recall an unconscious, but very striking *reverence* in his bearing on such an occasion,—as of one in the presence of a very sore affliction, not to be lightly meddled with. He was measuring the case of others by never-to-be-forgotten losses of his own.

In July 1853, the visit of a daughter to friends in England gives occasion to a letter:—"It is three months since you left us, and I am ashamed that I have never written to you. The month of May was very much occupied with the unpleasant matters connected with the College debate. During the whole of June, and the first half of this month, I have scarcely been at home above a day at a time. I have visited Newcastle, Sunderland, Dumfries, Irvine, London, Dundee, Kinfauns Castle, and Belfast,—all, except Irvine and Kinfauns, on public business." Family news follow, and then some particulars about a sister's going to school, and the results expected. An old student can hardly read the passage without a smile, so vividly does it bring back that perfectly kindly yet rather awful truthfulness and accurate discrimination which, upon occasion, made faults and duties vivid to us with a precision that left one perfectly dumb. "She stands greatly in need (and *so, indeed,*

*do you, though on a somewhat different account, and in opposition to somewhat different natural tendencies*) of"—in short, of some of those perfections which young ladies going to school are usually only in process of acquiring. "I trust," Dr Cunningham adds, "that you have not only enjoyed but improved the opportunities you have lately had of acquiring some knowledge of the world and of society, and especially, that you have been taught thereby to make some progress in cultivating at once self-dependence and self-control. I trust, especially, that with all you have had of late to interest and amuse, you have not been neglecting what should be at all times and in all circumstances the great object of all of us, viz., growing in a knowledge of divine things, and in an impression of eternal realities."

In a closing passage of this letter, he speaks of "a very pleasant meeting at Belfast with some of my old students, now settled as ministers in the Irish Presbyterian Church." During the whole of Dr Cunningham's professorship, a contingent of Irish Presbyterian students had formed an addition to the Edinburgh "Hall," very acceptable alike to the professors and to their fellow students. They fell behind none of the Scots in admiration of "the Principal," and had seized the opportunity of testifying their regard by a gathering in honour of him.

In the year 1856 Dr Cunningham's eldest daughter, Janet, was united in marriage to George Carphin, Esq. The event might remind him that he had reached the point in life at which changes set in, and families begin to break up: in every other view, he regarded it with very great satisfaction.

In this same year, Dr Cunningham was induced to join a large party, organised by Dr Guthrie, for a trip on the Continent, with Switzerland as the chief object. The proposal fell in happily with special facilities towards the carrying of it out; for some of his friends, strongly impressed with a feeling that his health was not so vigorous as it had been, placed a liberal sum of money at his disposal, with an earnest request that he would employ it in seeking relaxation abroad. Dr Cunningham's professional income was not large; and as he always maintained a suitable and hospitable

*ménage*, and, on the other hand, was strict in controlling his expenditure so as to owe no man anything, he could hardly have been persuaded to spend much on his own personal enjoyment, unless his friends, in some such way, had taken the matter into their own hands. The party was a merry one, and the tour was a great success.

One of the letters written on this occasion illustrates what was said already of Dr Cunningham's strong interest in the secure and successful arrangement of the details of travel. Rather than risk the loss of letters, he has directed Mrs Cunningham to address to an advanced point in his journey, where he will not fail to find them. To a man so sensitive as he was about the welfare of his family, this involved considerable self-denial. But then he promised himself that it would deliver him from the risk of disappointments that vexed him more than he cared to own; and the accumulating hunger for home news would have its patience rewarded, by a supply not only large but secure. Isaac Taylor, somewhere in his monograph on Wesleyanism, advances the conjecture, that there are spirits who are neither very good nor very bad, but are chiefly remarkable for a propensity to petty mischief and practical jokes. Some such agent, one must suppose has sent *another* Cunningham before the Doctor, and on the very day when the latter arrives at Basle, his letters are spirited away in the manner he here describes—the minute detail, which fills more than half his sheet, at once supplying the measure of his annoyance, and suggesting the apology for the defeat of his plans :—

"In spite of all my great care and prudence in arranging that you were not to write to me till *I was quite sure* of getting your letters, I have been disappointed in regard to the receipt of the first letters from home, and the disappointment, though it has now been made up, was very painful. I came from Zurich to Basle on the afternoon of Saturday the 19th, and went straight to the post office . . *but no letters.* I digested my disappointment as well as I could, and returned next morning, but still found none. On inquiring more particularly, I found that two letters had come on Saturday to my address, but that as a person *of the same name* had some weeks before left directions that any letters that might come to him should be sent on to Zurich, they had assumed tha

mine were for him, and sent them on; so that they would arrive at Zurich the same time that I arrived at Basle. He proposed writing to get them sent back, but as this would have kept me two days longer in Basle, and as my movements for some days after leaving it were somewhat uncertain, I (still preferring certainty to speed) directed them to be sent to Frankfort, whither, in consequence, I came more speedily than otherwise I would have done. I came here on *Thursday* night, and *next* morning I had the pleasure of receiving your dear letter of the 15th. . . . . In accordance with your suggestion, I wrote to my mother yesterday; and as this is your birthday, I cannot lose the opportunity of writing to you,—of expressing my heartfelt wish and prayer that you may see many happy returns of this day, and my hope that we may henceforth be guided to do more than we have been in the habit of doing hitherto, for promoting one another's spiritual welfare and growth in grace.

"I wish I could hear that you had made some definite arrangements about sea-bathing. Nothing certainly could serve more fully the purpose for which the money was given to me, than an arrangement which might tend, by God's blessing, to promote your health and comfort."

He closes with a warm expression of satisfaction with a letter from his son-in-law, Mr Carphin, and with a word of encouragement addressed to him on entering on a new path of usefulness as an office-bearer in the Church.

An earlier letter addressed to his newly-married daughter from Berne goes a little more into details of travel :—

"I hope you have returned from your marriage jaunt in safety, and that you have now taken possession of your own home. I trust you will never forget that there is no true or real happiness to be found except in the favour and loving-kindness of God, and that he bestows this favour and loving-kindness only in the way of our waiting upon Him, and generally also in the way of our being called upon, and, if necessary, compelled in providence to practise much self-denial and self-restraint, much patience and forbearance.

"I wrote to mamma a week ago from Genoa, a place which presents a fine combination of most interesting historical associations, with beautiful scenery. We left it on the morning of Monday the 23d, and arrived here on Saturday afternoon, having had a whole week's travelling in most splendid weather, and an extraordinary combination of everything that is sublime and beautiful in the works of creation. On Monday, we went from Geneva to Chamounix at the foot of Mont Blanc, and we spent Tuesday there surveying from different points the great mountain and the great glacier,—the Mer de Glace. We were singularly fortunate in the state of the weather. We saw the mountain distinctly nearly all the time we were there, before sunrise and after sunset, in almost every

variety of aspect. On Wednesday we travelled by the Tete Noir to Martigny, a party of twelve, each one of us mounted upon a mule, except Mrs Greig, who was carried in a sort of chair, by six men relieving one another, twenty-four miles, over a most extraordinary series of ascents and descents."

Martigny and Vevay bring him to Freiburg, "a very singular old town, where we heard what is said to be the finest organ in the world, and which certainly astonished us about as much, through our sense of hearing, as the objects we had seen for some days previously astonished us through our sense of sight." And so they arrive at Berne. "We heard yesterday a very paltry Puseyite sermon here from the resident English clergyman, and thought it better to go in the afternoon to hear a German sermon, though we did not understand it. We proceeded to-day to Interlaken, where we intend to rest two or three days visiting the interesting scenes in that neighbourhood. The whole party continues to enjoy excellent health. We have met with no difficulties or disappointments. Everything has turned out as pleasant as we could have wished. We are all very happy, and feel that we have much reason to be thankful to God."

From this point Dr Cunningham went off by himself to Milan—more, as he confessed, for the sake of the associations with the great Bishop Ambrose, than for the æsthetic attractions.

Although not a great wanderer, according to the modern standard, Dr Cunningham had great enjoyment in travelling. He had a keen, sure eye for the form and colour of scenery, great delight in its details, and, moreover, a thorough aptitude for conceiving the lie of a country,—a geodesical instinct, in short, that made all questions of locality interesting and congenial to his mind. He joined this with a similarly keen perception and retention of historical associations—not by any means the ecclesiastical exclusively, although, no doubt, those emphatically. All such men enjoy travelling; the successful exercise of faculty, and the sense of permanent acquisition both of knowledge and impression, make that certain. In Dr Cunningham this was manifested by a quiet emphasis of satisfaction, which communicated to all about him the impression of genuine enjoyment, and suggested that it was their clear duty and calling

to enjoy themselves too. As to words, he pitched usually on some phrase declaring concerning the objects in view a position undeniably true, and also well within the mark, so as to be liable to no charge of exaggeration. This he would frequently come back to in the course of conversation, repeating it with great zest. All the pleasurable impressions and associations of the scene entwined themselves with this unassailable "position," and became for him a part, and the inspiring part, of the certainty it expressed. In the Alpine valleys, as a member of the party reports, the thesis he constantly maintained, with energetic reiteration, was—"What a marvellous combination!"

Including, as it did, Dr Guthrie, several members of Dr Guthrie's family, and other tried friends of Dr Cunningham's, the party must have been in the highest degree eligible to travel with. If he had wished principle, opinion, sympathy, wit, eloquence, and good humour to be combined for his gratification, he could hardly have been better off than he was. His enjoyment certainly was intense.

Various scraps came home besides the rather scanty notes in Dr Cunningham's letters. A bird of the air reported one matter, which all men laid hold of as intrinsically credible. The story was, that on one of the glorious days in Chamounix, and at a glorious point of view, Dr Cunningham was noticed descanting to a lady of the party with very great animation and lively action. Another fellow-traveller thereupon drew gradually near, desiring to participate in the Principal's emotions, and coming within earshot had the satisfaction of hearing this sentence uttered in the most conclusive and emphatic tones: "You may depend upon it, those Aberdeen men don't care one farthing for the Free Church—care for nothing earthly but Aberdeen." I don't in the least doubt the story. But I have always believed that the lady concerned laid a trap for the Doctor on this occasion, and drew him on the ice. It would have been easy enough to do it. But there is not a trace in his letters of his carrying cares of that kind abroad with him when it was possible to leave them behind.

Another day at Chamounix he was drawn into the church there to see baptism administered according to the Romish rite. His

companions took pleasure in observing, or imagining, his unwillingness to "assist," in the French sense, at such a ceremony, and amused themselves with reflections on the immense mass of anti-Popish controversy which was obliged to stand silent and submissive in his person while the little Papist concerned (who was *only three hours old*) was initiated into the career before him, with all the ceremonies which Rome has attached to baptism. I do not doubt, however, that he sent a silent prayer to the Lord of the ordinance to guide the little one in His own good way.

It may be remarked here—indeed the reader has perhaps already gathered it for himself—that those who judged Dr Cunningham merely by what he said, would probably not ascribe to him any very strong love of nature and scenery. There was nothing gushing about him in any case, and any deep feeling was just the thing he was least likely to talk about. It was in him, however, like several other qualities, not only strongly, but with a very attractive simplicity. An old friend,* to whom I owe various reminiscences, refers to it thus:—

"Did you ever have a long walk in the country with him in the more genial months of the year—more especially in the opening spring? I was frequently almost amused by the fervent admiration that he had for flowers, the more especially if blossoming in sequestered places. Though far from having the imaginative faculty in an active form, he had a large latent power of investing common things with attributes that were highly pleasing to his eye and his affections. For example, having been at the close of a session in Berwickshire, on a visit to old friends and haunts, he came to us on his way home, and was scarcely seated before he entered most enthusiastically into an account of a solitary walk he had had a day or two before, on the banks of the Whiteadder, where he had met with some of the commonest flowering plants of that season of the year, that were, however, in his eyes, invested with peculiar charms. His heart was overflowing with the sense of enjoyment, and that day by the side of the Whiteadder, and amid the spring flowers, was very much to him in after years what the daffodils were

* The Rev. W. B. Cunningham.

to Wordsworth. At later periods especially, I had frequent opportunities of remarking how this perceptiveness of the attractions of external nature grew in strength and delicacy. He never, I believe, came down our road—and many a time when he had a day to spare, he would unexpectedly come in at the close of a long, solitary walk—without, before opening the gate, giving a long, bright look at the gleaming waters of the bay, and the neighbouring hills, that in all seasons are remarkable for their alternating light and shade. Nor did he seem to think that he needed to modify the formula in which for years he had expressed his admiration. The scene was the same, and so was his heart, and thus he never departed from the first words he had used—'*This* IS a fine point of view.' With a sort of half melancholy pleasure, I recall the same deep interest in outward forms and hues that no sadness could altogether weaken. I spent a week with him at Whiting Bay in Arran, where he had a house for some months one summer. Occasionally he became greatly depressed by the apprehension of his becoming totally blind, and would, while in the house, sit for a considerable time in silence, and with a deep shade of sorrow clouding his features. And yet, as soon as we went out into the sunlight, and breathed the fresh sea wind, he was ready for one of his favourite walks—into secret nooks of greenness, or where he had discovered some little stream rushing forth from its course through the heather, and falling into some dark pool beneath. Once and again he would say, ' But there is another place worth looking at,' and then he would lead me from one part of the moorland to another, where he had, as in one case, come upon a picturesque tree keeping solitary guard over a tiny cascade.

Another memorable thing about him at all times, was his earnest satisfaction in the perusal of artistic and pure works of fiction, especially if grounded upon interesting historical facts, and wrought out so as to preserve the historical shape and colouring of the story. I have a very vivid remembrance of coming upon him one autumn day when, now sitting upon a rock, and then walking along the shore, he was deeply absorbed in one of Sir Walter Scott's novels. It was most amusing to listen to the varying language of praise

and blame in which he expressed his realistic judgment of the different characters in the tale. I do not suppose that Sir Walter ever achieved a higher triumph than in having so fascinated this strong man of logic and hard history, as that if he had been a boy of fifteen he could not have more entirely lost sight of the distance of fiction from history."

One of his trips ended in a little incident which was characteristic in its way. The family were somewhere at the sea-side. A servant was left to take charge of the house. The Principal arrived in town, meaning to stay for a day or two. When he came to his own house (which stands in a retired road, sheltered also from observation by a garden in front), he found the door locked, and all silent within. The servant had gone off on some errand of her own. The Principal sat patiently down before the door to await her return. About mid-afternoon, the servant of a lady who lived close by, entered the sitting-room of her mistress, with the exclamation, "Eh! ma'am, the Principal has been sitting this long time on his door-step, with his carpet-bag beside him." The lady sent and brought him into her house, where he waited many hours for his servant's return. It grew late, and he was at length prevailed upon to stay all night. Next day, he rang again at his own door, and this time the servant was there to open it. "Well," he said to the provoking delinquent, "you were very late last night." And that was all he said about it.

The only matter remaining to be noticed before closing this chapter, is Dr Cunningham's connection with the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. The first number edited by him was that which appeared in October 1855. He had previously contributed one or two articles during the editorship of Mr Cameron. The last number edited by him was that for October 1860. The *Review* then passed under the care of Professor Smeaton, but Dr Cunningham continued to contribute, and three important articles from his pen appeared in the volume for 1861. All the more important articles written by him are reprinted in his works, principally in the volume entitled "The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *MODERATORSHIP.*

DR CUNNINGHAM'S health had suffered under the strain of much arduous work and many exciting conflicts. The discomforts of the College Controversy, which survived the controversy itself, unquestionably told severely on him. Still there seemed every likelihood that he might retain to old age a fair measure of strength, and the complete use of all his faculties. But in 1858 the sight of his right eye suddenly failed. Men that are accustomed always to use both their eyes together, may lose the use of one without finding it out for a while; and Dr Cunningham discovered his loss in a rather accidental way. He had noticed a certain infelicity about some of his movements, as if his usual acute perception of what was before him and about him was failing. He did not know, however, what was wrong. But one day having gone out to dinner, he happened to turn to the right, and found beside him a lady with whom he was perfectly acquainted. He was astonished that he had not recognised her before, but set it down to inattention, and apologised. A little afterwards, in pouring out a glass of wine he spilt a portion on the table. As soon as he came home he tried his sight by covering each eye alternately, and the true state of the case was discovered. The sight of the right eye was gone. Medical advice was resorted to, but no treatment proved to be of any avail. The permanent result was, that only a perception of light remained. For every practical purpose the eye was useless, and it gradually shrank. The essential lesion was the bursting of a small blood-vessel in the back part of the eye.

One element in the treatment adopted, was to subject him to great restrictions in reading and writing. To a man of his habits this was a severe trial, which he bore very patiently. He tried the plan of being read to, and of writing by an amanuensis. He had willing assistants in the members of his own family; but no one will be surprised to hear, that the new system did not succeed very well. The habits of a lifetime could not easily be revolutionised. Discomforts like these, however, were of small account in comparison with the apprehension of losing both eyes, for the same constitutional tendency, or *défaillance,* which had deprived him of the one, might deprive him of the other. This was, for a time, a cause of great anxiety. Ultimately, as his general health was braced, and the lost eye settled into a tranquil condition, without fresh mischief occurring, the apprehension ceased to be so much felt. Progress had been so far made towards this condition of things, that by November 1858, the medical men gave him leave, under some restrictions, to teach his classes. On the opening day of the session, accordingly, he referred to the misfortune that had befallen him, and expressed his thankfulness that he was still able to perform the duties of his Chair.

It was only a short time before this public allusion to it, that his misfortune became generally known. It excited very great and general sympathy. He stood before the mind of his Church as a conspicuous embodiment of power, applied especially to the department of ecclesiastical learning. The possibility of his being crippled and reduced to dependence on others by the loss of sight, was in itself a touching thing. But besides that, he was greatly loved and trusted; the sense of the Church's obligations to him for services of the highest kind was very deep and strong, the collisions of late years had not effaced that feeling anywhere. It was known, besides, that those collisions had greatly grieved him; an impression of occupying a solitary position, of being disregarded by the Church he had served so well, was known to weigh upon his mind. The calamity which had befallen him seemed to suggest to every one the desire to assure him, that the old feeling of pride and confidence in him was stronger than ever, and that whatever touched his

welfare or his usefulness, was counted by the Church, through all her sections, to be her own concern.

One consoling result was at once seen emerging from the visitation, namely, the restoration of old friendships. "On the day," says Dr Candlish, "when the threatening affection of Cunningham's eye-sight became known, it came on me like a clap of thunder; I could not rest till on that same evening I wrote him a letter, in the old style, and with the old mode of address which had been discontinued for some time—on a very formal notice from him of suspended friendship. My letter was short, but cordial. It was the simple outpouring of my feelings. It contained an offer to help him in any way I could, as by reading his lectures, or otherwise. After sending my letter by a special messenger, I confess I began to have some misgivings as to how it might be received, and some fears lest it might only make matters worse. Under that apprehension I wrote to Guthrie, begging him to see Cunningham, and do what he could to put me right with him. Early next forenoon I had a note from Guthrie, saying that there had been no need of his interference, that Cunningham was quite melted, and that he would write me himself very soon, which he did, in the old style, and with all his wonted friendly warmth."

As far as I am able to ascertain, the first personal meeting of those too long separated brethren, whose names in all Free Church circles were wont to go together, took place in the following circumstances, the lively narrative of which has been supplied by the Rev. Dr Beith of Stirling:—

"As the Commission in November 1858 drew near, it became a fixed conviction in many minds that Principal Cunningham should be the next to fill the chair of the Assembly, and so to be the first Moderator to preside in our splendid new Assembly Hall. At the close of the business on Wednesday, 15th November, his nomination took place. The suggestion, when made, was acceded to unanimously, and with great cordiality. It was the duty of the officials to communicate to him formally his nomination, and to obtain his answer.

"On that day a party dined at Mr James Crawford's, at which I

was present, along with Dr Candlish and Sir Henry Moncreiff. In the evening Dr Candlish came over and sat down beside me, and in his usual lively style said :—

"'Beith, you must go over to Cunningham's, and, as the late Moderator, as well as the chairman of this day's meeting, announce to him what has been done. It will never do, in his case, to allow notice of his nomination to reach him in the ordinary way. Sir Henry thinks as I do, and he says that you must go.'

"'I will, with all my heart,' was my answer; 'but you must go with me. I return to Stirling in the forenoon to-morrow. Our visit, therefore, must be early—by *nine*, or half-past.'

"There was some demur upon Dr Candlish's part, and some difficulty about arranging a call next morning.

"'Then let us go now,' I said. 'Let us take a carriage, drive at once to Salisbury Road, and make an end of the matter.' It was eight o'clock—not more.

"'Do you think I might, Sir Henry?' Dr Candlish asked.

"'I do think you should.' Others present thought so too.

"Dr Candlish suggested that we might call at Dr Guthrie's house before going to Dr Cunningham's, as the two houses were close to each other, and that we might try to prevail with him to accompany us.

"A carriage was called. We all got into it, and drove off for Dr Guthrie's house. We found him at home, and in his usual flow of good humour. The object of our visit was explained to him.

"'Most gladly, gentlemen, will I accompany you on your mission, and help you to gain your purpose. I am not without hope that you will be successful.'

"He got himself ready. We walked the distance to the Principal's house. On arriving, our party were shewn upstairs to the drawing-room, where we found some of the younger members of the family, who, after a little, left us.

"In a few minutes our friend made his appearance, and cordially greeted us all. At first he seemed discomposed. He evidently had not expected such a visit. It was easy to perceive, however, that he was gratified,—that he felt even flattered. If the strange delu-

sion had taken possession of his mind that he had lost the confidence and esteem of valued brethren in the Church, and that he was not in their eyes what he had once been, the presence of the deputation who now waited on him may have had, for the time at least, some effect in qualifying his impression, if not of removing it.

"It fell to me to intimate to him the object of our visit, which I did in as kind a way, and with as few words as I could employ—the other members of our self-constituted deputation seconding me, and supplementing my statement. He looked grave, and said nothing in reply for a minute or two. On this, Dr Guthrie broke in with a very happy, well-timed, and judicious interlude:—

"'I tell you what it is, gentlemen,' he said, 'if Dr Cunningham refuse you, *Come to me*—I'll not refuse you! Do you know, a lady said to me only yesterday, "Dr Guthrie, if they make you Moderator, I'll give £200 a-year to the Sustentation Fund. I give already what I think becomes me, but I will give what I have said if they make you Moderator." Think of that, gentlemen. If Dr Cunningham says No, *Come to me!*'

"Dr Cunningham joined in the laugh, and we saw that something had been gained.

"He began his reply by saying that 'he had been altogether unprepared for being offered the Moderatorship of the next General Assembly. He counted this the highest honour the Church and his brethren could confer on him; he was sincerely and deeply gratified by the mark of confidence which in this they shewed him.' He added, that 'supposing other difficulties out of the way, he feared the state of his health might be an obstacle to his accepting the office, and might compel him to decline. He could give no definite reply until he had consulted his medical adviser and friend Dr Begbie, without whose approval he could not venture to give his assent to the kind proposal now made to him.'

"We all assured the good man that everything would be done to make the duties of the chair light for him. I undertook, for it became me as retiring Moderator to do so, to be always at hand to supply his place, and to do such things as I might be competent to, for relieving him. In the end, after much pleasant and most friendly

conversation, it was understood that, in case Dr Begbie approved, Dr Cunningham would consent to be proposed, God willing, as Moderator of the Assembly 1859. We all secretly rejoiced not a little.

"During the conversation we sat near and around a large table in the centre of the room. Dr Candlish at the side of the table, Dr Cunningham at the lower end, with some one of the company present intervening. When our business was completed, and whilst a general talk was going on, Dr Cunningham rose from where he had been seated during our conference, and went round to a chair beside Dr Candlish. Drawing it close to his old friend, who immediately made a motion to meet this, he said in his kindliest and frankest tones,

"'I have been intending to come over to call for you one of these days, to talk of one or two things as to which I should like to hear your views.'

"Dr Candlish's countenance beamed with the expression of lively gratification. We all saw it.

"'I will be delighted to see you. When will you come? I will wait for you in the house if you name the day.'

"'On Saturday, I think, I will be able to come.' He, at the same time, named the hour. Both seemed equally happy.

"For us who looked on with very peculiar emotions, it was a moment of great interest, not on private or partial grounds, but as affecting the interests of the Church and of the country at large. That two such men, who were indeed "pillars" among us, should have been under even a temporary alienation, was felt by all lovers of the truth to be a great calamity. It was all past now. These two good and great men were never afterwards for a day alienated the one from the other. Cunningham's course thereafter was short. Occasion of most lively joy it was, that reconciliation had taken place ere death came to remove either of them, and that, during the remaining years of the noble-minded Principal of the New College, they lived together in harmony of sentiment and action in advocating the living principles, and advancing the great interests, of Immanuel's kingdom.

"Our business done, the deputation took their departure—not

without being favoured with sundry humorous observations on the part of Dr Guthrie, who certainly was one of the happiest of men on the occasion. We enjoyed his sallies, and would have done so in our present state of mind although they had been less worthy of our satisfaction than they were.

"When seated again in our carriage, Dr Candlish, in high spirits, said, 'Now let us finish this matter off. Let us go direct to Dr Begbie; tell him what we have been about; state the case to him; and have his decision.'

"I agreed to go. Sir Henry could not. Neither could Mr Crawford. We set them down respectively at the points they desired, on our way to Dr Begbie's. Thither Dr Candlish and I went. We found the Doctor at home; explained all to him; and anxiously asked his opinion.

"'The very thing for him,' he exclaimed—evidently with heartfelt pleasure. 'He needs to be roused. The morbid state of his mind might become chronic. This will give him such excitement as will be valuable, and direct his energies into a new channel. I am rejoiced at what you have done. I will see him to-morrow, and make him all right about it.'

"We sat a while talking the matter over, for our minds were full of it. We then parted, resolved not to conceal from others what was to us cause of such genuine satisfaction. I at once noted down the things here given for use at some future day, thankful that I had a share in the proceedings of the occasion, and finishing my notes with the words,—"CUNNINGHAM and CANDLISH are not names doomed to die.""

Meanwhile, before the meeting so dramatically described, another movement was begun which ended with equal success. The conception of it was mainly due to the late George Dalziel, Esq. His idea was, that the Free Church community should take advantage of the event which suggested the possibility of Dr Cunningham's professional labours being abridged, to step in and tender to him a thankoffering for his services to the Church, and that in a form which might set his mind at rest as to a provision for his family. Many people felt strongly the disproportion of Dr Cunningham's

income to his services, and the impossibility of his making a suitable provision out of it. Everything concurred, therefore, to clear the way for success, if only the work were properly taken in hand, and the key-note properly pitched. The credit of doing this, which was half the battle, was entirely due to Mr Dalziel.

The result was very striking. Men of all parties and tendencies in the Church vied with one another in zeal and cordiality. Mr Dalziel strove hard to confine the movement to the laity, but it was impossible to keep the ministers wholly out of it. From all quarters of the country the responses came, not only with liberal subscriptions, but with expressions of delight and satisfaction that the movement had been thought of.

The proceedings were, of course, kept perfectly private, and only those were applied to who were believed to be persons in easy circumstances. The circular sent out was a composite structure, and the only good sentence in it, probably, was a tail-piece appended by Dr Guthrie:—“ We owe it to the Church of Christ to prove that while, as exhibited at the Disruption, there is such a thing as public principle, there is also such a thing as public gratitude.” The sum proposed to be raised was £5000. From about two hundred and seventy-five subscribers a sum of £7061 was realised. “ Accept my thanks for the opportunity you have given me of contributing,” was one of the common phrases with which subscriptions came in. I have before me many of these cordial letters. One may be given as an instance of many :—“ I rejoice in this noble movement on Dr Cunningham’s account; I rejoice in it on account of the character of the Free Church; and I rejoice in it as a thing that will exalt religion and our Divine Master in the eyes of all men who hear of it.”

However privately gone about, of course the project was known to a great many persons. Notwithstanding, Dr Cunningham and his family remained in entire ignorance of what was doing. One or two accidental hints which unskilful persons did let fall in quarters from which they were likely to be carried to Salisbury Road, exploded harmlessly. The subscribers in this way had the satisfaction of completing their movement without awakening the least

suspicion in the mind of the party principally concerned. And on the 22d December, Mr Dalziel, who had called but failed to see him, communicated to Dr Cunningham by letter the news of the movement and of its success.

The feeling awakened in Dr Cunningham's mind by this communication, was as visible as all his feelings were. It was a kind of bewilderment and amazement that men should make such an effort on his behalf. He did not for a moment hesitate about the most cordial response to the kindly intention which animated the movement. He accepted instantly, and with a kind of frank humility, the confutation it conveyed to the doubts he had recently cherished regarding his position in the Church, and the feelings of his brethren towards him. While his heart flowed out in the reciprocation of kindly feeling, the whole affair instantly took to his mind the form of admonition and obligation, in a way very characteristic of the man. To be very thankful to God; and to realise fully, and use faithfully, the place in his brethren's confidence and esteem which this testimonial indicated,—these were the lessons God was setting him to learn; he had not learned them sufficiently; he must learn them now;—such were the uppermost thoughts. A peculiar quietness and gentleness marked the tone and aspect of the man, and came out in little traits of speech and manner. As usual, he did not say very much, except that he was hardly able to realise the thing, and wholly unable to understand it.

Six thousand five hundred pounds were vested in trustees, under provisions arranged by Dr Cunningham. A piece of plate was presented to Mrs Cunningham as a memorial of this incident in the family history, and the remainder of the sum raised was paid over to Dr Cunningham.* The formal presentation took place at a very pleasant meeting of about five-and-twenty persons, in Mr Dalziel's house, on the 3d day of January 1859. According to a little memo-

* The piece of plate presented bore the following inscription: "To Mrs Cunningham, as a memorial of a sum of Six thousand five hundred pounds sterling, presented by members of the Free Church of Scotland, and other friends, to William Cunningham, D.D., Principal and Professor of Theology and Church History, New College, Edinburgh, in acknowledgment of labours in defence and confirma-

rial of the transaction printed for the subscribers, Dr Cunningham, in reply, said—

"That he felt himself placed in very peculiar and very delicate circumstances—circumstances well fitted to call forth the deepest and strongest emotions in his heart, but fitted, at the same time, to make it a difficult matter to give expression to them. Indeed, he would scarcely attempt anything more than just to assure them that he had been utterly amazed at this extraordinary manifestation of kindness and generosity; and that he was profoundly thankful for it,—thankful, he trusted, to the great Disposer of events—to the great Author of every good and perfect gift, and thankful also to those kind friends who on this occasion had been the instruments of dispensing this bounty. Amazement, indeed, he thought, had hitherto been the predominant feeling in his mind; but amazement was in its nature temporary, and could not last long. It was now giving way before 'the sober certainty of waking bliss,' to be replaced, he trusted, by gratitude—gratitude to God and to man, which, he hoped, would never decay, but last as long as he lived. He had, indeed, most abundant ground for thankfulness in everything connected with this matter, both in its substantials and its accessories, in the leading result, and in all its accompanying circumstances. It was quite unaccountable to him how so magnificent and generous a proposal should ever have been thought of, and still more how it should have more than succeeded. In its most obvious, material aspect, it was a very great boon to him and to his family—it was a large addition to his ordinary income—it was a full and liberal provision for his family, and completely put an end to all anxiety for them. But for their generosity, he had really no prospect of being able to make a comfortable provision for his family, if he had been taken away from them before they were able to provide for themselves. They certainly seemed to estimate his public services much more highly than he had ever done himself. Indeed, he had always felt, and especially of late years, that these services, whatever they might have been in themselves, had been greatly neutralised by infirmities of constitutional temperament, which he should have been more careful to watch against and subdue. But probably he had got into a somewhat morbid and perverted way of viewing this and other matters, and had thus, perhaps, been led to do some injustice to himself, as well as to other men. From all he had learned of the movement which had issued in this presentation, it would seem to be quite as much an

tion of the faith of Christ and of the Church of God, not to be recompensed on earth; and as a thank-offering from many hearts to one whose sound judgment, great learning, and many other admirable qualities and acquirements, have all been consecrated with true loyalty and Christian self-denial to the cause of the Free Church of Scotland, and of the crown and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ 1859."

expression of personal attachment to himself, as of a sense of the value of public services; and this view of the matter was still more gratifying than the other, and one about which he would both think and speak with greater comfort and satisfaction. He could not conclude without just adverting to the moral aspects of this matter,—to the wider and more public views that might be taken of it,—though he could not enlarge upon this point, as this might seem to be a magnifying of his own importance. He need not remind them that they were to regard in this matter the operation of God's hand—the silver and the gold were His, the hearts of men were in His hand. The whole transaction was to be viewed as occurring under His Providence, as managed and brought about by Him. Like all other providential events, it was intended to serve some useful purposes, and to teach some useful lessons. In seeking to understand and improve the whole transaction, considered in this aspect, they were surely warranted in regarding it as a token for good to the Free Church. He remembered being greatly struck many years ago by a remark of Dr Candlish's. They were talking of what was called the Moderatorship Controversy in 1837,—an affair which seemed for a time likely to be fraught with permanent mischief to the Church, by the alienations which it produced. Reference was made to the wonderful way in which the cloud had been dispelled, and the alienations removed, without leaving any painful consequences behind them; upon which Dr Candlish remarked that the result, though wonderful, could be easily explained—that the Lord had a great work for them to do, and had brought them all together again in order to do it. Surely, upon the same principle, they might, in the present position of things, see ground for hoping that God had yet a great work to be done by the Free Church both at home and abroad,—a work demanding and requiring the cordial and united efforts of all her sons. He would not presume to dwell on these aspects and bearings of this transaction, but he could assure them that he was deeply impressed with their value and importance; and he earnestly trusted that nothing would be wanting on his part in striving to aid in promoting such beneficial and blessed results. He had only further to say, that he was quite well aware that, however cordially this movement had been responded to, no result of such magnitude could have been secured without great zeal and activity on the part of a comparatively small number of individuals; and he could not but be aware that he was under special obligations to the kind friends now present, and to those who had acted along with them both here and in Glasgow. He knew also that in movements of this sort, a great deal often depended upon the exertions of a single individual, and he could have no doubt that its success was largely owing to the zeal and kindness, the wisdom and activity, of Mr Dalziel."

This proceeding fell just at the close of the Christmas holidays. When College opened again, the students, whose sympathies had

been greatly excited by their Professor's illness, and who exulted in anything that did him honour, were, of course, irrepressible. "We took our places," says one, "in anticipation of his entrance. When the door opened, and he entered the room, instead of rising as usual for the prayer that preceded the lecture, we kept our seats, and a burst of cheering and clapping of hands greeted him as he walked up to his desk. At first he appeared surprised, hesitated in his step, cast one of his quick glances over the class, and then, appearing to comprehend our meaning, he walked slowly to his desk and stood for a moment till the tumult of cheering had lulled. He then attempted to begin the prayer, but his heart was too full. His face quivered, he uttered a few broken and indistinct words, but his utterance was choked. Completely unable to regain the command of his voice, he abruptly sat down. We knew him better from that hour, and loved him more."

The Assembly met this year on the 19th of May. The expected Moderatorship of Dr Cunningham was itself enough to make the occasion one of unusual interest. His absence in recent years had been matter of great regret; his return was taken as the sign that past misunderstandings were indeed past, and that, in future, counsels and efforts should be united as of old. Another circumstance marked the meeting with a new feature. The place of meeting was to be the new Assembly Hall at the head of the Mound. Tanfield, with its enormous area, its low roof, its peculiar position and surroundings, had been rented year after year. Now the Assembly was to occupy its own Hall. Not with unmixed satisfaction was the transition made. Disruption and post-Disruption memories clung round the old place of meeting, and formed ties which it seemed hard to disregard. "Whilst we assume our place here," said Lord Panmure in seconding the motion of Dr Beith that Dr Cunningham should be called to the Chair, "I trust none of us will ever forget that which must be a matter of history in the Free Church—the glories and recollections of Tanfield Hall. Let us never forget that it was in Tanfield Hall that we first bore our testimony to the great principles of the Disruption, and I trust that every one present will consider this a fitting occasion to renew,

in their own mind at least, those vows which were taken in Tanfield Hall. I think that this is a fitting occasion for us mentally to renew those vows; and in selecting William Cunningham to be our Moderator, I am sure it is needless to remind this Assembly that none contended for those great and sacred principles more nobly, more eloquently, more courageously, than did William Cunningham." He felt, he added presently, and in this many felt with him, that the proposal marked the lapse of time. Hitherto the Moderators of the Free Church had been taken from among men of older standing. "We are, in the choice of our Moderator, entering on a new generation. The fathers of the Church, during the sixteen years of our existence as a Church, have been rapidly passing away. Within these few days we have seen carried to their last resting-place the remains of two more venerable fathers of our Church—Makellar and Burns. We have lost, too, from amongst the eldership since we last met, one whose memory must be dear to all who are now listening to me. Need I say that we deeply regret on our own account, though scarcely on his, that James Hog now sleeps in kindred dust with his fellow-elder Graham Spiers? These should be warnings to us, and I am sure they are so; but at the same time we ought to thank God that we have such men left among us as Principal Cunningham, whose wisdom can direct, whose gentleness can win us, whose firmness will maintain, in the face of the world, the character, the credit, and the honour of the Free Church of Scotland."

According to old practice, he was conducted into the Assembly by the seconder, the clerk, and other members. "When he entered," says an acute and sympathising observer, "the members rising in a body to receive him, every eye gazing at him with affectionate sympathy, the green shade at once indicating his indisposition, and partially concealing his emotion, few will ever forget his bow as he took the Chair. It seemed as if he flung from him a load of gratitude which was almost weighing him to the earth, and which he now discharged on those to whom he believed it to be due. I never imagined that so much meaning could be expressed by a gesture. It could hardly have been mere fancy

which so clothed a simple act with impressiveness, for I remember a respected minister of Edinburgh saying to me as we left the Hall, 'Was not that most affecting? Do you know I had great difficulty in refraining from tears.' I was not ashamed to reply by acknowledging that I could scarcely affirm I *had* refrained."

In the address delivered, according to custom, on assuming the Chair, he said that he had been of late the object of so much kindly interest, so unexpected and unmerited, that he could not but be deeply affected by it, while he felt it no easy matter to give expression to the emotions which it awakened. He thought, indeed, the proposal to call him to the Moderatorship at that time, "a somewhat hasty and unreasonable" expression of feeling. Yet he felt it to be entitled to deference and gratitude, and could not presume to decline it. "We may surely," he added, "without any undue presumption, regard this position of things as a token of the Lord's forbearance and favour. I am aware, indeed, that this statement is very apt to be misunderstood and misconstrued by those who have not been giving attention to the recent history of the proceedings of the Free Church. But I have no fear that any of my fathers and brethren will hesitate to concur in the sentiments I have expressed, or will ascribe the expression of them to anything like pride or presumption on my part. Apart from every consideration of a personal kind, all who are acquainted with the recent history of the Free Church will regard the present aspect of things amongst us as a token that the Lord is still waiting to be gracious towards us; that He is not dealing with us as we had deserved; that, as on many former occasions, He has again been disappointing our fears and surpassing our expectations; that He has been making the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraining the remainder of that wrath. We have been grievously provoking Him by our sins and shortcomings—by our miserable exhibitions of transgression and infirmity of various kinds, and in all the different departments of our duties; and we have found, just as the people of Israel did so often of old, that whenever we turned again to Him, and humbled ourselves before Him, He gave unequivocal tokens that He had not been provoked to cast us off, and that, notwithstanding all we had done to quench

and grieve His Holy Spirit, He was still ready and willing to heal all our backslidings, to receive us graciously, and to love us freely. It is right that we should be ashamed and confounded, and all the more because the Lord is indicating that He is pacified towards us." The frankness with which this feeling was expressed, was very characteristic, and all the more welcome, because the Church at large was so much disposed to concur in it. In the expression of it he kept quite clear of all distribution of responsibility or of blame for past discomfort between the various parties concerned. He left all men, former friends and former foes, to take their own share as each might be led; nobody could doubt meanwhile that he made a liberal estimate of *his*. "There *are*," he said, "some more specific admonitions and warnings obviously enough suggested by the different features of the way in which God has led us, which it is incumbent upon all of us, and upon none more than him who now addresses you, to attend to and to apply."

Among the topics on which the address chiefly dwelt, was the Revival which at that time had been going on for a year and a half in the Churches of the United States. It is a characteristic difference between the two countries, that in America, the progress of personal religion has been largely due to periods of deep and general interest in religious matters; while in this country, it has been mainly produced by a more quiet and gradual process. Referring to this fact, he claimed "more attention" for the peculiar features of the work in America. "This great work of God," as he firmly believed it to be, judging by all the evidence accessible to him, "had not yet excited the attention, or produced the practical results in this country, which might reasonably be expected from it; and the Churches here ought to beware of letting this most impressive manifestation pass by unimproved." He adverted also to the condition of the Continent of Europe and of the population of our own country. And he wound up by calling upon the Assembly, while diligently performing their ordinary necessary business, not to lose sight of the advancement of the cause of Christ throughout the world, and the spiritual welfare of our fellow-men :—

"And what are the lessons which even the mere conception of these great

subjects, independently of all detailed consideration of them, ought to impress? Are they not these: that we need, and, so to speak, *must have*, the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and that we are called upon, as it were, anew to consecrate ourselves, and all that we are and have, to His glory and service? Let it be the one great desire of our hearts that God would pour out His Spirit everywhere abundantly in connection with the preaching of the gospel; let this desire of our hearts be often offered up with all humility and earnestness, and let a real heart-felt anxiety that God would indeed do this, pervade and regulate the whole current of our desires and motives. And while we are importuning God and giving Him no rest, let us now again yield ourselves unto Him as alive from the dead; let us consecrate all that He has given us to His glory and service, professing our readiness to labour and exert ourselves for the advancement of His cause, in whatever way He may call upon us or afford us an opportunity to do so. (Applause.) By the steady maintenance of this pervading state of feeling and purpose, and by the full and cordial expression of it in words and deeds, we may be encouraged to cherish the confident hope and expectation that God's blessing will descend upon us; that His Holy Spirit will accompany all our efforts in promoting His cause, and make them effectual for securing the eternal welfare of many of our fellow-men; that our prayers, and efforts, and sacrifices in His cause, now so imperatively called forth, will be accepted and employed by Him for bringing in the glory of the latter days, and for hastening the time when all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and when all the kindreds of the nations shall bow before Him."

The years 1859 and 1860 brought with them Reformation memories. Three hundred years before, in 1559 and 1560, the Reformed Churches of France and of Scotland respectively, may be said to have taken shape, and assumed before the world the doctrinal and ecclesiastical responsibilities with which the history of each was to be associated. To do honour to the Tricentenary of the First National Synod of the Reformed Church of France, a diet of the Assembly was devoted, and the Moderator, by request of the House, delivered an address. He traced the circumstances and the progress of the Reformation in France. He dwelt lovingly on the chief names associated with it,—most of all on that of Calvin. In this connection, he stated the view which, as he believed, ought to be taken of the way in which church government was arranged in the Reformed churches generally. He shewed the consistency of something like Congregational practice, in the early stages, with Presbyterian convictions. And he vindi-

cated, as he never was weary of doing, the greatness of the services rendered to Christendom in this department by the wisdom and firmness of Calvin. The doctrinal history of the French Church led him to speak of the school of Saumsor, and of "the most injurious influence" which it exerted on the theology of the French Reformed Church, in obscuring and unsettling the Reformation landmarks. "It occupied very much the same position in regard to the spread of impure doctrine in the French Church, as Professor Simpson and the Divinity Hall in Glasgow did in our own country." A notice of the more recent history of French Protestantism, and the division which took place in 1848 (already referred to in a preceding chapter*), closed the address.

The interest which, in his opening address, Dr Cunningham claimed, in behalf of the spiritual condition of our own countrymen, was not withheld by the Assembly. In connection with the reports made on the state of religion, attention was called to the fact, that addresses delivered by various laymen seemed to have been largely blessed for the purpose of awakening religious concern, and guiding sinners to the Saviour. Among these laymen, Mr Brownlow North held a distinguished place,—not only on account of the extent and depth of impression produced by him, but on account of the ripe, thoughtful, and scriptural character of the addresses which he delivered. Many ministers and elders who had had opportunities of hearing him, believed that his exceptional gifts deserved exceptional recognition, and that the Church ought to give every facility for his finding access to her congregations. For this purpose it was proposed that he should be recognised and authorised in such a way that ministers might have no difficulty in welcoming his services, not only at occasional meetings, but at ordinary worship on the Sabbath. A committee having considered the matter, and conferred fully with Mr North on his personal history and his doctrinal views, brought up a strong and unanimous recommendation, that he should be publicly recognised as eminently qualified to address men on the things which belong to their peace. The Moderator was called upon to announce this to Mr North, and to

* Supra, p. 385.

give him public welcome in name of the Assembly. He did so "with great pleasure and heartfelt satisfaction." He "concurred heartily in the grounds on which this judgment had been come to." In the course of his address he expressed himself as follows:—

"It is proper, in the way of explanation, for me to say that I have adopted the resolution of declining to take any active part in promoting cases of deviation from our ordinary rules in regard to the licensing of probationers. I think that a prudent step in my circumstances, and I have resolved to act upon it as a general prudential resolution. But although I thought it prudent in my circumstances to adopt such a resolution, it did not arise in the least from any jealousy as to the perfect warrantableness and expediency of occasional deviations from our ordinary arrangements. I have had a strong and growing conviction that the Church ought to make provision for occasionally deviating from her ordinary arrangements. I never could see the warrantableness of any Church of Christ, however deeply impressed with its importance in ordinary circumstances, venturing to lay down as a resolution that she would not see, and would not recognise, gifts for preaching or for the ministry, except in men who had gone through the whole of the ordinary curriculum. No Church has a right to lay down that rule. This Church has not laid down that rule, and I trust never will. The Church must lay herself open to consider exceptional cases, mark God's hand, and make a fair use and application of what He has been doing. Everybody admits this in theory, but I have sometimes thought there was some unwillingness to apply it; but I must say I have been of late very desirous to see two or three very good cases of exception of that kind,—not only because I would like to see the Church practically recognising the principles to which I have referred, but for this additional reason, that I have a strong impression that in the actual position of the Church we will find considerable difficulty in keeping up a high standard in regard to the mass of our students, unless we leave an open way for occasional exceptions. I believe if we leave such an opening it will be of far more importance in enabling us to maintain a high standard, and full compliance with our strict regulations in regard to nineteen-twentieths of our students, than by attempting to carry out the same rule to the whole twenty-twentieths, and thereby running the risk of lowering the standard of the whole body, and losing, besides, the benefit of the exceptions."

After intimating his satisfaction with the testimony borne to Mr North, he added:—

"I have very great pleasure, Mr North, in tendering to you the right hand of fellowship, and welcoming you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as highly honoured by your Master. Perhaps you will allow me to say that your

position is a somewhat peculiar one—and that while you have many eminent gifts, there are, of course, difficulties and temptations to which, in your position, you are exposed. I have no doubt you will feel that you stand deeply in need of wisdom, and guidance, and direction; and I have no doubt you will feel that, in all the encouragement you have had, you have cause to wait upon God, and walk humbly with Him."

There came before this Assembly a rather heavy and anxious case from one of the Colleges, involving questions both about College discipline, and also about the character of opinions expressed by certain of the students. The decision of the Assembly, adopted after a long debate by a majority of about two to one,* supported the action of the College Committee, which declined to recognise any case of heterodoxy requiring to be dealt with. During the debate very strong statements were made as to the importance of the case, and the seriousness of the issue between the parties. It was, or seemed to be, asserted, that the views maintained on the different sides, were symptomatic of grave theological differences in the Church.

With reference to this matter, Dr Cunningham took an opportunity of making some statements in his closing address. The address was briefer and less formal than is usual, owing to the state of his health. Although he had not suffered from the work of the previous session, there had been a return, shortly before the Assembly, of some unpleasant symptoms in the organs of sight; and his health was otherwise rather uncertain. He had been obliged, in consequence, to withdraw himself from a good many of the evening diets; and he was precluded from making any preparation for the addresses he delivered. In these circumstances he was forced to content himself with a few valedictory sentences. Yet he felt it necessary to advert to the case above referred to, to state his concurrence with the view of it which prevailed in the Assembly, and to add some admonitions and reflections suggested by the occurrence. Thoughts such as he here expressed were often in his mind in his later years. He frequently gave utterance to them in private, and sometimes in a rather unsparing manner, and with a

* Dr Begg's motion 124, Dr Wood's 246.

certain indignation, that considerations so obvious should be repelled or disregarded. In applying them on this occasion to the case in hand, he spoke with manifest earnestness, but also with great temperance and dignity of statement. After saying that nothing had emerged that could fairly be regarded as either indicating or constituting any serious theological crisis, such as ought to call forth the anxiety or alarm of the Church:—

"I think," he proceeded, "that it would be a serious mischief if success should attend any efforts that may be made to convey the idea that a serious theological crisis had occurred; and I am satisfied that the more carefully the matter is investigated the less will this belief be entertained. I think that much more will not be done in the way of carrying on the controversy in this shape; and I think that a very serious responsibility would be incurred by those who might make such an attempt. I would earnestly impress upon my fathers and brethren the importance and desirableness of rather leaning to the other side,—to the side of holding that there is not much difference of opinion among us. Surely we ought to be very careful, especially in present circumstances, to guard against anything that might trample down the reviving peace and harmony we all rejoice in. Surely we are called upon to guard against anything that may obstruct the glorious prospect of Christian usefulness which, in the providence of God, seems to be opening up to us. . . . Having endeavoured to discharge my responsibility, by what is nothing more than a simple expression of opinion —for this is not the time or place for argument— . . . I may just again call upon the fathers and brethren to return with increased zeal and ardour to the Lord's work. Surely there is a wide and glorious field of usefulness before us: and it will be a sad thing now if we are again to be involved in painful personal contentions, and contentions in which doubts and suspicions about men's orthodoxy in the faith are spread abroad lightly and rashly,—a thing fitted to lead to most injurious consequences. No kind of discussion is more likely to be mischievous than this; the evils of it are great and manifold, and they ought to be most carefully guarded against. It is quite true, fathers and brethren, that the Lord, in His providence, does sometimes place His people in such circumstances that they are imperatively called upon to fight with the one hand while they are building with the other. And when the Lord does impose both these things as necessary, He can easily make both the fighting and the building, though going on together, to be successful. We have seen that in times past, and may see it again. But I cannot help having a strong feeling that God is placing us in circumstances in which there is so loud a call to be engaged in building the walls of Jerusalem,—to be engaged in building the temple of the Lrod,—that it becomes us to be very certain that there is a call to fight,—that we have real

adversaries to fight with, and not merely friends somewhat disguised,—that we have imposed upon us a serious contest, in which we must fight, and in which we must put forth our entire energies. I do not believe that any such contest has actually arisen in this Church, or that there are at present any materials for making such a contest; and I would earnestly call upon fathers and brethren to see whether or not, in the meantime, they ought not to give their main time, strength, and energy to the work of building the Lord's house,—to the work of strengthening and extending the Redeemer's kingdom around them. And let us all seek to realise more fully what is implied in this great work of building. It is a great and arduous work to be engaged in building the house of the Lord. It implies that we gird up the loins of our mind; it implies that we preserve our minds and hearts deeply pervaded by a sense of our own personal relation to the Saviour; it implies that we are carefully avoiding every appearance of evil, and giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed, and that we are cordially and willingly consecrating ourselves, and all that we have, to God's service; it implies that we are preserving such a frame of mind and heart as that we shall be ever waiting on God; for we must never forget that Christ alone can build the house, and that He must bear the glory. Let us all feel and remember that our duty is substantially this, that we build the Lord's house, and give ourselves heartily and cordially to that great and glorious work."

So ended his Moderatorship. From first to last the spirit of all his utterances was to urge the Church to realise her position, encouragements, and responsibilities, and to engage with unsparing devotedness and diligence in the Lord's service.

# CHAPTER XXV.

## *LATTER YEARS.*

THE two years and a half which followed his Moderatorship, were in some respects among the most tranquil years of Principal Cunningham's life. Restored to friendly intercourse with the other leading minds of his Church, he had the utmost facilities for taking part in the affairs which especially interested his mind, while at the same time he felt himself justified in abstaining from undertaking the burden of details. He thus occupied very much the position of a general adviser. The main use which he sought to make of the influence he wielded, was to promote the good order and usefulness of the Church. He was always ready, however, to interpose vigorously on any question of principle bearing on the wisdom or consistency of the Church's course; and, as his peculiar experience during previous years had extricated him from the position of leading a special party, or representing a special policy, when he did interpose his voice was welcomed by all alike as the voice to which they willingly deferred. The articles published by him during this time in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* are numerous, and remarkable for the vigour of thought and compass of reading which they display. Such papers as those on Calvinism with reference to some statements of Archbishop Whately, on Calvin and Beza, on Zuingle, on Melancthon, are a few instances of the series. They testify to the power with which his mental faculties were working, and at the same time to the tranquillity and absence of agitating and distracting influences which characterised the years to which we owe them. Along with the love and confidence of his own Church, he enjoyed a large measure of

the goodwill of the community at large. Those who had studied under him were now a numerous body in the ministry; and to mark their progress, and stimulate their well-doing, was a continual and ever-increasing enjoyment. To his friends and fellow-churchmen he seemed to have reached a position that prepared him to fill a long autumn of life with services not less valuable, and not less valued, than those which had signalised its spring and summer, and yet services subjecting himself to far less anxiety and fatigue. No one thought that the shadow was so near, and was to descend so suddenly.

A few incidents and a few reminiscences of these two years shall occupy this chapter. For the sake of many, still surviving, who can recall the man in traits that are insignificant to others, it seems fit to give a place, among the rest, even to little things, which the general reader may pardon and pass by.

With his friend, the Rev. W. B. Cunningham of Prestonpans, he had been appointed to attend the Synod of the English Presbyterian Church, which met at Sunderland in April 1860. A very cordial reception from many old students made the public errand a very great personal enjoyment. They gave him a breakfast one morning, in order to gain a better opportunity of expressing their regard. It was a very enthusiastic party, and rendered all the more agreeable by the "simplicity and humility," as an eye-witness reports it, with which it was all received.

On this occasion he had to address the Synod twice or thrice; and one of these addresses deserves some record. The Synod, mindful of its Scottish connections, devoted one of its meetings to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Scottish Reformation, which arrived in this year. Dr Cunningham was asked to speak, and in doing so, he took occasion to develope his views as to some of the lessons of the Reformation. He had a very strong persuasion, at all times, that sufficient attention had not been given to the presumptions fairly arising from some facts connected with the Reformation. In particular, he always maintained that if history may be allowed to establish presumptions as to the true and fair interpretation of Scripture, the strongest of such presumptions by far which it is

possible to produce, is that based upon the facts that the doctrine of all the Reformers (with variations of quite minor importance) was substantial Calvinism; and that, in so far as they professed to find in Scripture, or base on Scripture, a form of Church government, what they found was substantial Presbyterianism. He enforced these views with great energy in this address; taking the Calvinism and Presbyterianism of Scotland for his starting-point, and then proceeding to take a wider range. One sentence of unusual length unrolled his main thought: "A man like Calvin," he said, "situated as he was at the time of the Reformation,—a man of his prodigious powers of mind,—his thorough knowledge of all that had been brought out in connection with theological and ecclesiastical matters,—his great strength of will, and firm convictions,—his thorough adequacy to take a correct view of the existing condition of things,—such a man, looking back to the causes that led to it, to the vast system of heresy, of idolatry, of tyranny, which had prevailed over the whole Church, which was doing so much mischief, and wielding such fearful power,—such a man would soon come to the conclusion that the real and effectual way of going to the root of the mischief, of eradicating from its foundation the heresy which had perverted the way of salvation, the idolatry which had corrupted the worship of the gospel, and the tyranny which had prevailed in its government, was just to go back to the Calvinism and Presbyterianism of the New Testament. That was substantially what Calvin was led to conceive, to propound, and in a great measure to effect."

He proceeded to illustrate the position, that "other views coming short of these" might palliate evils and produce improvements, but only Calvinism and Presbyterianism went to the root of the matter. On the one hand, only in Calvinism could those great principles, which almost all evangelical churches professed to hold, be said to find their distinct and thorough development. On the other hand, how could "that monstrous system of Ritualism, Sacramentalism, Formalism, which were really the ground on which so many rested their hope of salvation," be dealt with, but by going back to the unadorned simplicity of the New Testament, and

bringing out the true connection of the believer with Christ and with the Church. And these views led also to the overthrow of the tyranny of Rome, and at once suggested the fitness of that "combination of aristocracy and democracy" which was represented in the New Testament as forming the real constitution of the Church. He dwelt on the contributions towards this result made by the various Reformers. And he also pointed to the remarkable manifestation of the power of Christian truth in influencing and elevating men exhibited in the great sisterhood of the Calvinistic Presbyterian Churches of Switzerland, Holland, France, of Great Britain and of America. The greatest results yet achieved by Christianity had been achieved under this administration of it. He concluded with "two things." The first was, that in surveying the history of the Christian Church for the last three centuries, they could find ample materials fitted to satisfy them that they need not be ashamed of their Calvinism and Presbyterianism. The second shall be given in his own words; for the way in which he phrased it, shews that it was a point in respect to which he was anxious not to be misunderstood:—

"The other thing was one which he could not abstain from saying, although he was aware that it touched upon points where there was some room for misconception, and where there might be a measure of jealousy and suspicion. He believed that Calvinism and Presbyterianism, in their great leading and fundamental principles, as they characterised and distinguished the Reformation, as a whole, and especially the Scottish Reformation,—and without going minutely into the points in which intelligent and honest Calvinists differed from each other, offered a fair and adequate basis for the harmonious union of the Christian Churches. He knew that statements of this kind were sometimes considered as savouring somewhat of what are called loose and latitudinarian views. He had no doubt that particular churches had been placed in circumstances, in regard to truths of comparatively minor importance, and on which intelligent Calvinists and Presbyterians might not inexcusably disagree, in which it was their imperative duty to make a stand for those truths, subordinate though they were. This, however, was a question of circumstance. It was usually a question of the fair construction of God's providential indications. But apart from such special interposition of Providence, and upon general grounds, universally applicable to all circumstances, what they were called upon to give forth as an indispensable and universal term of union, or ground of division,—which was the same in sub-

stance,—was just an honest and intelligent profession of Calvinism in doctrine and Presbyterianism in government. His conviction was that (apart from special indications of Providence) an honest, intelligent, and cordial agreement upon the great doctrines of Calvinism and the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, ought to be ordinarily and generally adequate grounds for the harmonious union of Christian Churches, not merely for the recognition of other churches as sister churches, but for their being substantially bound together in one. Events might stand in the way of this, but ordinarily it was a great general truth. Apart from special cases, there was ordinarily ground for blame or censure somewhere, when churches brought, in God's providence, into close contact with each other, bound together in an honest and intelligent profession of the principles of Calvinistic and Presbyterian doctrine, were not now united. It might be difficult sometimes to say where the blame lay; but he believed that this ought to be set forth as a great general truth, to be pressed upon men's attention, to be insisted on apart from special circumstances, as one to which they ought to take into their very serious consideration, which would produce its appropriate fruit. He believed this to be the grand common ground of Protestantism; and he was very much impressed by the fearful mischiefs which had been produced by the disagreements and contentions into which the Reformers fell among themselves. There was nothing more sad or deplorable—not in the history of Papacy itself—than the extent to which, upon points of minor importance, the Reformers quarrelled among themselves, and laid the foundation of contentions and divisions, which, in the course of a single generation, arrested the whole course of the Reformation. There was nothing more melancholy and deplorable than the renewed tokens which present themselves from day to day of the fearfully strong tendency in human nature to get into contentions and divisions upon matters of that kind, and thereby to tend so largely to frustrate the great ends for which the Church of Christ was established,—ends which they were bound by the most solemn obligations to aim at. He did not feel himself warranted in abstaining from adverting to this one great lesson which the Reformation so plainly and so palpably taught."

From Sunderland he went southward. "After a few days in London," says his fellow-traveller, Mr Bruce Cunningham, "we went down to Oxford on one of the last days of April, which had been a month of grievous severity and backwardness; so remarkably so, that the day before we went was bitter and ruthless in its cold and snow, and we had but a rueful prospect before us. Most happily, however, the winter of spring had exhausted itself, and the following day was warm, and genial exceedingly. How greatly he enjoyed that journey! I shall never forget it. We

found the fields on our westward way unexpectedly green, and as we passed trim farm houses and stately mansions, amidst their embowering woods, then brightening into greenness, his countenance repeated the old story, that the eye is not satisfied with seeing. Especially as we came near Reading, where, on both banks of the Thames, the early primrose was in myriads, his delight was, to my intense satisfaction, most manifest. I could not but feel that it was worth more than I could well understand then, or than, having known him so long, I had ever felt before, to visit such a country with such a man—so simple, so cheery, so full of enjoyment.

"We had, during our stay in Oxford, the great pleasure of being the guests of my old friend, the Rev. H. Linton, Rector of St Peter's le Bailey, whose kind attentions to us were most serviceable. Under his guidance, we visited the most memorable place of that most memorable city, the Bodleian being to Dr Cunningham an object of great wonder and admiration, while St John's College Library, with its relics of Archbishop Laud, was the scene of much interesting conversation with a member of the College, who was that year one of the Proctors. Having been invited by my friend Mr Holland—then in residence in New College—to attend the morning chapel on the following day, which was Sunday, when there was to be a full choral service, and afterwards to breakfast with him, we had that morning, which was clear, and yet not cold, a most favourable opportunity in our walk of admiring the marvellous attractions that, especially at that season, meet the eye, as cottages, towers, and spires, with opening foliage around and beneath them, come into view. Mr Holland, having invited several of his friends—the present Dean of St Paul's and the Warden of his own College among others—to meet us, we had a peculiarly choice and pleasant party, all of whom, and Dr Mansel especially, evidently valued the opportunity of meeting the goodly representative of Scottish Presbyterianism, whose frankness, simplicity, and robust manliness came out so agreeably. We thereafter adjourned with Dr Mansel to hear one of Dr Hessey's Bampton Lectures on 'Sunday' at the University Church, where the entire state of things, so new to Dr

Cunningham, afforded him a large amount of pleasure. Often as he had heard of the high pageantry of Doctors and Proctors moving in solemn procession to their wonted seats of honour, and of the great gathering of the University as well as of the citizens when the Bampton Lectures are in course of being preached, such a spectacle, as we then witnessed, was not what he was at all prepared for. He himself was manifestly an object of much interest to the undergraduate gallery, where, I suppose, he was recognised by not a few students from the North. In the Lecture he was much interested, and all the more especially, that while dissenting from many of Dr Hessey's statements as shaky and untenable, he was more deeply persuaded of the truth of what he had on one occasion some time before expressed to myself in regard to the argument for the authority of the Sabbath, when he urged the necessity, because of the many details needful to a right adjustment of that argument, of a more ample and formal discussion of the whole question viewed in relation to present times and circumstances.

"That being the communion Sabbath in many of the churches in Oxford, we found, that on leaving St Mary's, we were not only too late to go to any other place of worship, so as to be in proper time for the commencement of the morning service, but that our friend's house also was closed. On my remarking to him, that now we were for the time enforced anti-Sabbatarians, he agreed with me that there was no help for it, and so went out to the west of the city into the fields through which the Isis has its course, and had a large amount of pleasant talk, in the course of which he remarked, that 'as he became older, he in some respects was more latitudinarian, while in others he was more of a bigot,' thereby expressing what he had often said before, that while becoming more inclined to make much allowance for others, in many respects his attachment to the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterian polity increased in strength. In the afternoon we heard Dr Heurtley, the Margaret Professor of Divinity, preach in Mr Linton's church, and he was greatly pleased by the sacred fervour and evangelical character of his teaching. Having, during the course of the day, been at four services, I now recall the amused feeling that he shewed, when as, in the evening we were on

our way home to Northbourne (Mr Linton's house), one of our hospitable friend's daughters said to him, 'and Dr Cunningham, if you had been very anxious, you might have attended five services to-day.'

"Next day we were invited to dine with Dr Mansel. As, however, I had to return to London, I could not accompany him, but learned, when I met him the following morning, that he had greatly enjoyed his party, having had a large amount of most frank and pleasant discussion with several distinguished members of the University.

"It was altogether a most pleasant time. It is not only that I recall the genial intercourse we had with highly cultivated and friendly men, and the great pleasure that Dr Cunningham had in his first visit to Oxford,—where there is so rich and rare a combination of all those sources of interest that are especially attractive to a mind like his,—but that now and then when alone, we found ourselves in a peculiarly close alliance of beliefs and sympathies, which rendered all the past of our common lives not only peculiarly sweet but also uncommonly sacred."

A celebration of the Tercentenary of the Scottish Reformation was held at Edinburgh in August 1860. It was attended by ministers and laymen from all parts of Scotland, and also by very many from England, Ireland, and parts beyond, and lasted for several days. Among the papers read at this meeting was one by Dr Cunningham, on "The Principles of the Reformation not the Cause of Sects and Heresies." It embodies a criticism of the Romish imputations on Protestantism on the ground stated, sifting the logic of it, and shewing its groundlessness, when urged as an argument against the fundamental Protestant principles of the right and duty of private judgment, and the exclusive authority of the written word. Admitting that the divisions among Protestants have in point of fact done much to strengthen Romanism, he urges, in conclusion, the lessons which that fact is fitted to impress on the minds of the Protestant community.

The following slight memories find their place here:—"His first visit to us," says a lady resident in Perthshire, "was early

in October 1860. Before he came, a meeting had been intimated to be held by a student from Aberdeen. He offered, of course, to give up the service to the Principal. 'By no means,' he said, with his pleasant smile. He took the last prayer at the meeting, told the people of his joy at the good work of the Lord which was going on throughout the district, and begged of any who might be present in concern about their spiritual state, to remain. Some did so, and he spoke with them. Next morning, a little before eight, blew the great hurricane which scourged the forests from north to south. An old larch of great height, just before the house, yielded to that ten minutes of wind, which came like one continuous peal of thunder: it fell across the gravel as far as the front steps. Dr Cunningham was standing looking at it when we reached the spot. When we heard of his sudden death, we remembered that sight. I think he said it was his birthday.—When he called in August 1861, it happened to be the very hour of the funeral of a brother-in-law of ours in England. At once, when he heard it, he read a few verses of the Bible; and his prayer was indeed comforting, through his keen realising of the sorrow of earth and the joy of heaven. While lunch was being hastened, to enable him to fulfil an appointment at Pitlochrie, an alarm of fire was given. A beam which passed through the old kitchen chimney had taken fire, the servants had failed to extinguish it, and the work-people were at a distance in the fields. He seemed to pay little attention till he was asked if he would go to see it. Then, as coolly as a fireman would, he walked along, went up a ladder, threw a wet blanket down, and pailfuls of water, till the fire was out. Most sweetly he gave thanks at luncheon, using expressions from the 121st Psalm, seeming unaware that we owed him anything, or that he had made any exertion."

One or two reminiscences of a similar class were noted down by the late venerable Robert Paul:—"I met Dr Cunningham in Arran, in September 1859. He was residing at Whiting Bay, beyond Lamlash. I was on a visit to friends at King's Cross, where he came to spend a day, and was in the finest humour. We had a great deal of fun about the right way of eating brambles, of which

he was fond, and which were in great abundance around us. By way of a change, we had a long and full discussion on the Cardross case,* during a stroll which followed, along with the late Mr M'Rae of Kilmorie and Mr A. Melville. What struck us was not only the mastery of the various points of law, civil and ecclesiastical, which he possessed, but especially the firm conclusion to which his own mind had come as to the necessary issue of the case. 'The litigation,' he said, 'may be long and pertinacious, and there may be many intricate and difficult questions started; but you may depend on this,' he added, with great emphasis and force, 'it must and will come to this in the end, that they will have to allege and prove, distinctly and unmistakably, corrupt and malicious motives towards Mr Macmillan in the General Assembly before damages are awarded by any honest jury. That is the shape the case must ultimately take, unless it is abandoned.' Of course, I cannot now recall the train of his statements and arguments; but I can never forget the clearness and decidedness of his opinion, and the effect of it in removing from our minds any great anxiety as to the final result of the Cardross case.

"On the day that preceded this meeting, Dr Cunningham had preached a most striking sermon from James iv. 3, in a temporary wooden building at Lamlash. He frequently conducted service there for the benefit of the inhabitants and of the visitors, who were far from church.

"In August 1861, Dr Cunningham was spending his weeks of relaxation at Pitlochrie. Friends whom I visited at Moulin arranged a drive to Aberfeldy and the Falls of Moness, in which Dr Cunningham joined us. It was one continued scene of the most friendly and kind-hearted interchange of thought and sentiment, interspersed with continual merriment and good humour. I never saw him more at his ease, and I can still recall many of the trifles to which jokes, anecdotes, and raillery attached themselves. Two old students, by that time settled as Free Church ministers, were visited that day. The second call fell out in the following manner: —We were driving home as cheerful as children on a holiday, when

* See next Chapter.

we noticed the Principal becoming somewhat anxious and restless. On inquiring as to the cause, we found he had a great desire to make a halt, for the purpose of calling on Mr M——, but felt unwilling to detain the rest of the party. The halt was made, the call accomplished; Mr M—— came down with him to the carriage, and the Principal parted with him, with warm expressions of his desire for his personal comfort and his success in the ministry. For some time after this, he dwelt much on the interest he felt in those whom he had helped to train for the ministry, and expressed the gratification he had received from having that day seen two of them so happily employed in spheres of usefulness, and so comfortably settled in every way."

A good deal of important and interesting movement in the way of religious impression took place at this time in different parts of the country. There was great reason to believe that in very many places much abiding good was done, and that many persons believed to the saving of their souls. In these movements Dr Cunningham felt a warm interest. We have seen that from the chair of the Assembly as Moderator, he recommended a larger and more intelligent attention to such movements in America; and he was, of course, equally ready to evince interest in them when they took place among our own people. Like all considerate men, he was anxious that such impressions should be wisely guided, and was accustomed especially to recommend Jonathan Edwards' Thoughts on the Revival in New England. In some of his addresses delivered before the New College, and particularly at that delivered in 1861, at the close of the Session, he earnestly congratulated the students about to enter in the ministry, that they were to begin their work when appearances of this promising and hopeful kind existed; and he endeavoured to impress them with a sense both of the encouragement and the responsibility connected with that circumstance. Among the letters of reminiscence forwarded for the purposes of this biography, there are notices of the intercourse he held with men in humble life who had been instrumental in doing good in their respective neighbourhoods, the interest he evinced, and the minuteness with which

he questioned them on all that had taken place. "The men were uncommonly pleased with him," says one, reporting an incident of this kind, "and after the first five minutes entirely lost all sense of restraint at his presence." Unfortunately, however, these reminiscences are quite general, and add no special features of the conversations.

During the Session of College 1860–61, he happened to make the acquaintance of two ladies, very competent indeed to bring out his good points. One of the sisters has kindly supplied her notes of one or two interviews, which find their place in this rather miscellaneous chapter:—"4th Feb. 1861. My sister and I went to meet Miss J. Cunningham at the New College, in order to see the view. We were shewn into the Senate Hall, where Miss J. came in, followed immediately, to my surprise, by the Principal, whom we had not expected to see. He received us in the most genial manner, made us sit down, took a chair by the fire, and began to talk on the state of America,* with a flow of language that amazed me, having heard of him as silent. He gave us quite a lecture on the subject, speaking continuously and fluently, and with much action. After some time spent very pleasantly thus, the father and daughter took us up the tower to see the exquisite view. Dr Cunningham then, with a bunch of keys in his hand, shewed us all over the College, omitting nothing that could be of the slightest interest. We spent a long time in the library, Dr Cunningham pointing out everything that was remarkable. The keen theologian came out for a minute, when after taking down from the shelves a volume of Zuingle, and making some remark on his writings in general, he exclaimed, 'But the man wasted his strength in combating that wretched absurdity of Luther's, consubstantiation. WRETCHED absurdity!' he repeated, with rising energy, 'MOST wretched absurdity!' After devoting his whole hour of leisure to our gratification, he parted with us, asking us all to spend Friday evening at his house.

"On the day named, we all went to Salisbury Road. I had a great deal of talk with Dr Cunningham, whose kindness and sim-

* A country in which one of the sisters felt a special interest.

plicity were most agreeable. In speaking of 'Essays and Reviews,' he said, that 'no school of infidelity had exercised influence over more than a generation, while Popery had swayed men's minds for fifteen centuries, because it appealed to the deepest principles of human nature. This new Oxford School of Rationalism would infect a generation, and pass away like all its predecessors.' I expressed the hope, that by going so far the Essayists would produce a reaction; but Dr Cunningham said he feared not, 'because there is so little *in* the English mind; there is a want of clear, definite, theological views, they are at the mercy of every wind of doctrine.'"

The same lady having had occasion to apply to Dr Cunningham for information on some theological topics, speaks of the way in which "his stores seemed to overflow, pouring out on all sides at a touch. He not only answered the questions we asked, but gave us a little lecture on each, adroitly explaining anything we were not likely to be acquainted with. He took as much pains to make everything clear as if we were his students." Finding his questioners interested in the points raised, he offered to read them one of his lectures on the subject. "When the three of us were seated in his little room, he commenced reading, and soon seemed to forget he was not in his class, for he threw as much energy and action into the lecture as if a large audience were before him. The subject was the views of the early Church on our Lord's divinity. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and longed to have a whole course. I was especially struck, both to-day and last time, by his fairness to holders of opposite opinions."

"The state of America" is mentioned above as a topic of conversation. Soon afterwards it became very serious, for readers will remember that the struggle between North and South began in the year 1861. Various circumstances, chiefly the natural tendency to sympathise with the weaker side, led many people in this country to hail the early successes of the South, and to believe that they would ultimately establish their independence. Not so Dr Cunningham. He was resolute in his belief that the North must conquer; and he believed that to be the result on all accounts to be desired.

Amid these busy winters and pleasant summers, changes came, narrowing the old circle, and calling the thoughts away into the unseen world. Among others, his fellow-elder, Earle Monteith, was taken away. The writer remembers well the shade that fell over Dr Cunningham's face and the quiver in his voice, when he told him that the doctors had ceased to hope for Mr Monteith's recovery. Through all Disruption and post-Disruption affairs, through the College Controversy as well as others, they had been associated. Dr Cunningham loved to dwell, with a kind of wonder, on the combination of catholic openness of heart and mind with frank decision in the good cause which characterised his friend. It made a great blank in life, when that warm heart, that cheerful and manly nature, was withdrawn.

But there were bereavements which touched him still more nearly. It has been recorded in earlier chapters how much Cunningham owed to his mother. He often said that most women, in the circumstances in which her husband's unexpected death left her, and resolute as she was to be dependent on no one, would have felt it a hopeless thing to attempt to give her sons a liberal education. She not only did so, but she added that best education, the influence of her own high and sterling character. She was rewarded by their undying love and reverence, and of none more than the eldest. He never let a day pass without calling on his mother on his way to or from his class. Twice a week he brought her his copy of the *Witness;* for at that time Edinburgh dailies were not yet known. She took a lively interest in Church questions, particularly in *the* Church question in its great days, and she spoke of it to every one. "What else is there worth speaking about?" she said. Several years before her death the Principal took his mother to see her birthplace. It was the old castle of Aberdour, fallen since then into the last stage of neglect. Her father, farmer at Drafane when her son William was born, had lived at an earlier period of his life on the estate of the Earl of Morton, and occupied a wing of the old castle as his house. Old Mrs Cunningham had left it for more than seventy years when she returned with her son. Several members of his family accompanied them. It was a fine August day, and the

broad Forth spread its waters brightly before the old castle. The old lady, tall and erect at the age of upwards of eighty, as she had been half-a-century before, grew animated over the recollections of her youth, and pointed out the room in which she was born. In November 1860 she died. She and her three sons, left together by the bereavement of 1810, had been thus far spared to one another. Speedily one of them followed her. Charles Cunningham died early in 1861. In the end of that year, the subject of this memoir also was called suddenly away.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *THE SUMMING UP—LAST SPEECHES.*

IN the early part of the year 1861, the last year of Dr Cunningham's life, he had occasion—it may be truly said, he took occasion—to deliver two speeches on topics which then greatly interested the members of the Free Church. These were the "Cardross Case" and the "Australian Union." He was not so implicated in either, by any previous action of his own, as to be under obligation to take a prominent part in the discussion. But he felt a warm interest in both, and he welcomed the opportunity of delivering his mind upon them. Remarkably enough, these two speeches sum up, in a closing testimony, the chief lessons of his career, in so far as his career was ecclesiastical. During one part of his life he had been greatly conversant with the work of applying principles to guide the Church with reference to her relations to the State and to civil authority. After the Disruption his mind had turned more to the question, how principles should be applied to guide Protestant, and especially Presbyterian and Calvinistic, Churches as regards their relations to one another. The speech on the Cardross Case reasserts, and afresh applies, the well-tried principles in the first department. The speech on the Australian Union exhibits the result of his meditations in the second, as applied to a concrete case about which debate had arisen. The fruits of his labours as a theologian in the stricter sense, are, of course, to be sought elsewhere. But these speeches are his last and ripest utterance on the way in which principles ought to be applied to the chief current problems of our Churches.

## CARDROSS CASE.

In the year 1858, Mr John M'Millan, Free Church minister at Cardross, was accused of conduct inconsistent with the ministerial character. He was placed under process in the usual way, the libel or indictment embracing several distinct counts, and the case came by appeal before the Assembly of that year. The Assembly found him guilty on part of the indictment brought against him, and sentenced him to be suspended from the office of the ministry, and loosed from his charge. In the Assembly's finding, a portion of the third count was held to be proved, which had been found not proved by the Presbytery and Synod. The Presbytery's acquittal on that particular point had not been appealed to the Synod; but a minority of the Synod held that the verdict should have been guilty on the whole count, and that the Synod might and ought to find accordingly; for they maintained that the Synod had a right to look into the whole case. Being defeated in the Synod, they brought this point, along with others, to the Assembly. Mr M'Millan maintained that this portion of the charge had not been competently before the Synod, and was not now before the Assembly, and that the original judgment of the Presbytery, in so far as it acquitted him, could not now be disturbed. The evidence on all the counts was, however, before the Assembly, and the whole evidence, as applicable to them all, was pleaded upon from both sides of the bar. The Assembly decided that the appeal brought the whole case before them, and, as has been said, they decided against Mr M'Millan on the merits, as well as on the point of form.

The question of form thus raised was one which could be decided only by the known practice of the Courts of the Church, and by considerations of general equity, for there was no standing rule; neither, indeed, were the precedents very clear or numerous. The recent view and practice in the Free Church, however, had been in favour of the principle in which the Assembly acted in M'Millan's case. It was supported by the consideration, that unless the Supreme Court is able thus to review the whole case, our form of process would almost inevitably lend itself in many cases to produce

a failure of justice. The review of the whole case would indeed be improper, unless the evidence were before the court, and parties had opportunity to plead to it. But, that being supposed, there is no want of equity to the accused in establishing the principle referred to. Hence, in a case which happened some years before M'Millan's, Dr Cunningham maintained the right and duty of the Assembly to call on parties to plead to the whole case, of which part only had been appealed, and to judge it as the merits might seem to require.

Mr M'Millan, however, holding that the Assembly had mistaken their own forms, and transgressed the principles of justice, applied to the Court of Session for an interdict against the Assembly proceeding to carry out their sentence. Interdicts from the Court of Session, prohibiting the execution of spiritual sentences, had been very familiar, as the reader knows, in the days before the Disruption; the principles on which an interdict must be dealt with, if it had been granted, were thoroughly understood; and there is not the least reason to suppose that the Assembly would have felt any difficulty on that subject. In this case, the judge applied to refused to grant an interdict. But the attempt to concuss the Church in this manner, on the part of one of her own ministers, who, along with all his brethren, had solemnly declared all interference of this kind to be unscriptural, was a very high offence. As such, it was capable of being dealt with in different ways,—more prompt or more deliberate. The Assembly preferred that which was prompt. Mr M'Millan was called to the bar, questioned as to whether he had applied for and procured the interdict, and, on his own admission that he had, without being allowed to plead further, was forthwith deposed from the ministry. The chief reason for adopting this course was, that it precisely followed the direction of the old Act of Assembly applicable to such a case. On all this, Mr M'Millan brought his action in the Civil Court against the Assembly, naming certain selected members as representing it, and concluding for "reduction" of the Assembly's sentences, and for damages to large amounts. Thus arose the Cardross case, which created considerable sensation in Scotland during several years.

Dr Cunningham had no part in the case in its original form, as a cause in the Ecclesiastical Courts. He had no responsibility for any of the proceedings narrated up to this point. But he regarded the course taken by the Church as thoroughly defensible; and he regarded it as clear and obvious duty to take care that all interference by the Civil Courts with the ecclesiastical procedure of the Church should be firmly resisted. At the same time he fully appreciated the importance of not entangling the Church in any indefensible position, and of not imputing to the Civil Courts, except upon the clearest grounds, the disposition or intention to interfere with the Church's independence. These convictions led him to take a very deep interest in the consultations among Free Church men which occurred during the progress of the case, and to take a prominent part in the public defence of the attitude which the Church maintained.

I do not think it fitting to enter here into a minute account of this case in its legal bearings. It may be necessary, however, to make a few remarks upon it, were it only for the sake of averting misconception with respect to the views which Dr Cunningham entertained.

The importance of the case was, of course, wholly independent of the question whether the Assembly was right or wrong upon the point of form. Those who approved of the Assembly's judgment on that point, and those who disapproved of it, were thoroughly at one in resisting any review of it by the Civil Courts. Further, it was not denied on the part of the Church that ecclesiastical decisions might affect civil interests, or that decisions, professedly ecclesiastical, might assume or pretend to dispose of such interests; in which case, it was admitted, the Civil Court, if called upon, will dispose of the civil interests by its own authority, and on grounds satisfactory to itself. Hence, the Free Church produced the Assembly's sentence to the Civil Court for examination, as soon as it was made clear that by so doing she did not acquiesce in the competency of the Civil Court to reverse the ecclesiastical sentence. Further still, it was not denied that ecclesiastical proceedings may be corruptly and maliciously abused, so as to prejudice men in their civil interests and in their character; and that this might be competently

alleged and proved in a Civil Court as a ground for damages. It is obvious, indeed, that, unless care is exercised, substantial injustice might on this ground be inflicted on ecclesiastical persons. For ecclesiastical discipline must deal with questions of character, and allegations of corrupt or malicious purpose may be plausibly supported where in point of fact no such purpose existed. Still, the risk of this, it was admitted, does not entitle the Church to complain of it, as an injury or wrong, that the Civil Courts entertain actions laid on such grounds.

All this being admitted, the apprehensions of the Church were excited notwithstanding, by the action as laid on this ground, first of all, that the Civil Court seemed to have ascribed to it a power to review ecclesiastical proceedings, and to confirm or annul them according to its own judgment; and the Court, in entertaining the action, seemed to affirm that power. For the Court was called upon to *reduce* the judgment of the Assembly, and thereupon to proceed to assess damages. *Reduction* is the technical phrase in the Scottish law for a procedure by which a deed, act, or finding, is abrogated and made null. It is, I believe, of two kinds, either declarative, when a deed or a sentence is found to have been *ab initio* null and of no effect; or such that the procedure reduced, continued to be of force and effectual until reduced. The reduction in these actions was of the former kind. In effect, therefore, the action called upon the Court to find that M'Millan never had been validly suspended nor deposed, and then to assess damages on those who had represented him to be suspended and deposed, and had treated him as if he were. In entertaining the action, the Court found itself entitled to judge yea or nay on that issue. Now the sentence of a court of law, competently pronounced, imposes on the lieges a valid obligation to obey; and such a sentence, once issued, may be followed out by proper process to compel obedience; if, then, these reductive conclusions were competent matter for the Court, the Court was competent to impose on the Free Church a valid obligation to hold and treat Mr M'Millan as a man not suspended nor deposed. The competency of this was what the Free Church denied. Their apprehensions on the subject were sharpened by well-remembered

facts. In the memorable actions brought in the Court of Session before the Disruption, reductive conclusions, parallel to those in M'Millan's action, had been introduced. The Court had found in terms of them, ostensibly in the first instance for the purpose of getting at the civil interests in the case. But having once declared the ecclesiastical sentences to be null, they found it impossible to avoid the practical application of the principle, to the effect, namely, of prohibiting Church Courts from regarding those sentences as any more existent; and the immediate consequence of this was to bring about painful and scandalous collisions between the Civil Courts and the consciences of men.

The judges in the Court of Session in the course of their remarks at various stages of the Cardross Case, were good enough to take some pains to calm the apprehensions of Scottish churchmen on the point in debate. Among other explanations not quite so well fitted for the purpose, some of them laid stress on this, that it was not their intention, and not, as they thought, within the office of the Court, to require the Free Church to accept spiritual services from Mr M'Millan, or to engage in spiritual fellowship with him. The "reduction," therefore, supposing the Court ultimately to decide in favour of it, must be held to be a means merely of clearing the way to the question of Mr M'Millan's civil interests. Nothing more serious or alarming than that ought to be apprehended. The Church, however, was unable to see that the reductive conclusions were necessary for the purpose intended; or that they could be so innocent as they were represented. Not necessary: because if the Court found any civil contract, express or virtual, the extrication of which depended on a *regular* ecclesiastical sentence, and they came to regard the deposition as *not regular*, in the sense intended by that contract, and for its purposes, they could find so, without pretending to judge and reduce the ecclesiastical sentence to all effects. Not so innocent: for it was not apparent, if the Court should abrogate a sentence to *all* effects, how could they refuse, on proper application from Mr M'Millan, to interdict the continued publication and prosecution of that sentence to *any* effect? If, therefore the case had gone against the Church, this point would have been

carried to the House of Lords, as one of great importance; in the hope that, *at least*, a positive limitation of the effect of reductive sentences of the Civil Court might be achieved.

Another ground of apprehension, however, requires to be stated. It was sometimes mixed up with the other, but was in its own nature distinct and separate. The Church admitted that every alleged civil interest was matter for the Civil Court. In deciding a question of this kind, therefore, the Civil Court must be confessed to be within its competency, and the Church can have no difficulty in pleading the case, and accepting judgment. The judgment may be wrong,—it may inflict wrong,—but it cannot involve any question of conscience—it can be submitted to with a good conscience. Still principles may be assumed in deciding such questions which pervert the relations really involved in the case, and inflict gross injustice. The application of them may in effect amount to persecution, *i. e.*, to the infliction of suffering and loss on account of proceedings dictated by conscience, which ought not to be so visited. This, also, was apprehended in connection with the action, as it was laid, and as it seemed likely, at one stage, to be dealt with.

In the appendix, the reader will find a speech delivered by Dr Cunningham at a great meeting held in Edinburgh in 1861, with reference to the Cardross Case. It deserves a more permanent record than the files of a newspaper; and it may serve as a good specimen of Dr Cunningham's platform speaking. With this before him, the reader may be spared any further account of the matter. The lawsuit finally took a turn which utterly baffled Mr M'Millan, and produced on some minds the impression that the Court was not sorry to get rid of the case on a technical ground.

Before leaving this matter, however, it is proper to add one remark. In a letter cited in last chapter,* Mr Robert Paul has referred to the opinions entertained and expressed by Dr Cunningham during the progress of the case. Those statements are perfectly accurate. Dr Cunningham early satisfied himself that the Civil Court was not likely to go the length of professing to regulate

* See p. 434.

directly the ecclesiastical relations between a minister in Mr M'Millan's position and the Courts of the Church. If procedure by interdict had been adopted by the Court, serious complications might indeed have followed. As the case stood, he thought the Church's means of defence would turn out very considerable. He was quite prepared to believe it possible that they might take up positions and arrive at findings implying a view of the Church's case, which the Church must consider erroneous, and which might point towards possible damages being granted on grounds of which the Church had a right to complain. But he was convinced also, that by a proper use of the ordinary legal resources, the Church could so defend her position, that it would be impossible to inflict upon her any very serious inconvenience. "I am convinced," he used to say, "that Mr M'Millan will never get any effective decree against the Free Church, will never get any that will be in the least useful to him for any of the ends he seeks, unless he alleges and undertakes to prove legal malice on the part of the members of the Church Courts. If he does that he may succeed, for a jury may find malice where there is none; but on that issue we need have no difficulty in meeting him." Holding this, he held also that the duty of the Church was to employ every available legal means of defence to avert interference with her discipline. Some persons were inclined to think that the Church was precluded by principle from appearing in any action, which was so laid as to imply the possible infliction of damages, on the ground of her having followed, in a case of discipline. the course which was right in her own judgment. They thought it proper in such a case that the Church should decline to appear, and take the consequences, suffering judgment to go by default. Dr Cunningham was not disposed to acquiesce in this idea. He believed, of course, that the Church was bound to do her own duty, taking no direction from civil authorities in the discharge of it. But if an attempt were subsequently made to involve the Church in damages, on account of her decision, he thought she ought to be very slow to resign the right to avert that mischief, by any use of legal forms and pleas which might be open to her. She ought, at least, to be very clear that a distinct obligation on principle forbade

her to appear, before resigning so powerful a weapon into the hands of those who might be disposed to assail her discipline.

### AUSTRALIAN UNION.

The question just referred to involved the relations of the Free Church itself to the Civil Government and the Courts of Law. That to which we now pass on, was purely ecclesiastical, and it related to the Colonial Churches. Representatives of the various branches of Scottish Presbyterianism existed in most of the Colonies, and bore more or less the character of Colonial extensions of the home Churches. For some years previous to the point we have now reached, these ecclesiastical offshoots had been tending very decidedly, in almost every colony, to independence with reference to the home Churches, and to union among themselves. Everything in their circumstances suggested the propriety of this step. Their growing resources and numbers warranted an independent position; and to force on the Colonial community divisions of which the cause was Scottish only, was to inflict a needless injury on the common cause. Unions more or less comprehensive came to pass in most of the Colonies sooner or later—in Canada, in Nova Scotia, in New South Wales, in New Zealand, and in Victoria—and as the basis laid down was in each case substantially that of historical Scottish Presbyterianism, the Free Church had no hesitation in approving the steps thus taken, and offering to the United Churches any countenance and help which it lay in her power to render. But the last-named union, that in Victoria, gave occasion to a good deal of strife among the representatives of the Free Church in the Colony. The home Church, though not directly concerned in the business, was appealed to on both sides; and *her* position was settled and ascertained in a rather memorable Assembly debate.

There had been a branch of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria holding a certain statutory connection with the Established Church of Scotland. On account of this relation, the ministers and people holding Free Church principles had separated, and having received further supplies of ministry from home, existed as a distinct religious community. It was proposed at length by the branch which

represented the Established Church that union should take place on the footing of renouncing all special connection with any of the home Churches, as well as exclusive dependence upon any of them and that the united Church should take up the position of an independent branch of the great Presbyterian community. Ultimately the representatives in the Colony of the United Presbyterian Church (holding, generally, Voluntary views) were embraced in the scheme; but in the first instance the effort to embrace them in the union failed, and the two communities described above were the negotiating parties. A "basis" was drawn up, to which all agreed, and the union was only awaiting certain Acts of the Colonial Legislature, which were to regulate questions of property. During this delay, a few of the Free Church section began to entertain doubts, grounded on apprehensions as to the relation which the united Church, though independent, might or would hold with the Established Church of Scotland. They objected to going on with the union to which they had agreed; faults ensued on both sides; and finally, the Free Church Synod cut off the recalcitrants, with whom they found it hard to get on, by declaring them no longer ministers or members of that Church. The said recalcitrants immediately claimed to be the Free Church Synod, and maintained themselves to be the true and only representatives of the Free Church in the Colony. This took place in 1857. In 1859 the union of the negotiating churches took place upon a basis which had meanwhile been abbreviated and greatly improved by that process. This union, as now effected, comprehended the United Presbyterian Churches of Victoria and of Australia. The Free Church had meanwhile used all her influence to induce the recalcitrant minority to give up their separate position, and also to induce the majority to remove the obstacle to a reunion which their act of excision had interposed. The majority shewed great willingness to take this advice, offered to rescind, and ultimately, by an act of the united Church, did rescind the expulsion, and held out a hand of welcome to the separatist party. The latter, however, found that there were excellent reasons for refusing to come in, and sent home a deputy to claim from the Free Church recognition, as "the

Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria in ecclesiastical connection with the Free Church of Scotland." The Free Church Assembly of 1860 declined so to recognise them, but still expressed a strong desire that the breach might be healed. The attempts made for this purpose, however, again failed; and the question came up, much as it was before, to the Assembly of 1861. The deputy of the minority meanwhile (personally a very respectable and useful minister) had spent the year in endeavouring to awaken sympathy throughout the Church for his brethren and himself, as men suffering for Free Church principles. Moreover, he pleaded that all they wanted was merely to be recognised, and to have, if not the undivided help and countenance of the Free Church, at least a share of it.

Meanwhile, in the colony, the members of this small party were taking very considerable liberties with the Free Church principles which they had taken upon them to appropriate as peculiarly their own. They not only took leave to abuse as apostates and deceivers men every way of much higher standing than themselves, but they strove to identify the Free Church and its principles with themselves, and with their own narrow and bitter procedure. They started a periodical also, called the *Standard*, in which, exasperated at the Free Church denying them the countenance they sought, they railed bitterly against her, as forgetting, denying, and forsaking her own principles. They accused those who led the Church in the Cardross Case, Dr Candlish and Dr Buchanan for instance, of forsaking Free Churchism, and denying the just rights of the magistrate. They were lapsing, the Free Church was lapsing, into Voluntaryism. Arminianism and Pelagianism were also finding favour within her. Their idea seems to have been that the Australian dispute was to be the occasion of an insurrection in the Free Church and a reversal of its action, which would in effect endorse all their denunciation of eminent individuals.

Dr Cunningham had not said very much on the subject up to this time, though in the Assembly of 1860, in a few brief sentences, he had evinced a strong opinion that the Free Church should not be moved by representations from this party. But he cherished a

strong feeling on the subject, which increased in intensity as the Assembly of 1861 drew near. An impression went abroad that in pure weariness of discussing so small an affair, and under a feeling of aversion to make it the occasion of divisions in the Church at home, there was a chance of some course being consented to which would give the Australian anti-unionists the substance of what they desired. This would be a triumph, not to them only, but to those in the home Church who had taken their part, and shewed a disposition to adopt their mode of expounding and applying principles. I remember well Dr Cunningham speaking to me with very great emphasis of the mischief and disgrace which the mere possibility of the matter taking such a turn must entail on the Free Church. Accordingly, as early as February, again in March, and again in May, we find him moving in his Presbytery with a view to the approaching decision at the General Assembly.

Few things, indeed, roused him more than to see the principles he advocated made ridiculous by those who professed to be their especial defenders. That his principles should be attacked by men who denied them was natural and fair. The battle on that issue might be vehement; but with a good cause and a clear field, no man should complain of hard fighting. It was quite a different thing to see those principles run away with by incompetent men, or men who had mere ecclesiastical ends to serve. When such men took upon them to be the especial expounders and champions of Calvinism, or Free Churchism, or any cause he loved,—when they denounced as unfaithful those who would not adopt their crotchets, and when they seemed in some measure to succeed in identifying themselves with the cause in the public eye, and in lowering the reputation of it to their own level, Cunningham grew stern and dangerous. It was a thing he neither could nor would bear. As he grew older, he grew less tolerant of it, because he had a growing sense of the mischief that came of it. In the present instance he was resolute to avert the possibility of doubt as to the course which the Free Church approved. He would have been glad if the matter could have been kept out of the courts of the Free Church; for he regarded it as properly the business of the Australian Churches,

and he thought that the Free Church had only a very indirect interest in it. But since some resolution must be come to, he was resolved that there should, if possible, be no mistake about it.

The motion proposed in the Assembly was, in substance, to continue to recognise the United Church in Australia, as alone representing the Church with which heretofore the Free Church held ecclesiastical fellowship; to own that the dissentients had a right to judge for themselves; and to express a willingness, if they should cease to claim the position now occupied by the Victorian Church, to hold "such friendly intercourse with them, as a Church, as is consistent with this Church's past and present position." If Dr Cunningham had drawn up the motion, it would hardly have been so express and considerate in guarding the position of the dissentients. It went rather farther in that direction than he thought altogether necessary. The counter-motion was to recognise the dissentients as a Church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland.

The debate travelled over a good deal of ground: for the argument for the second motion rested partly on the plea that the dissentients, even if mistaken, had done nothing to forfeit Free Church recognition; partly on the plea that they were not mistaken, but had good and valid reasons for objecting to the union as proposed. Then, as to the second plea, there was this peculiarity, that the anti-Unionists in the colony had objected primarily on the ground that the basis was not pronounced enough against the defections of the Established Church, and took up its Voluntary defections as an afterthought; but their supporters in Scotland laid as much stress, or rather more, on this, that the basis was not pronounced enough against Voluntaryism, and was designed, in fact, to admit Voluntaries. Moreover, there was a first basis of union which had been supplanted by a second; and it was a question whether the objections to the second were applicable to the first. Cunningham's speech swept through these minutiæ and over them, without the least symptom of embarrassment.

Many recall minutely the incidents of that day, memorable for Cunningham's last great debating speech. Dr Candlish was Mode-

rator, and was prompt, definite, and decisive. Dr Cunningham enjoyed the whole debate. He spoke warmly of the merits of several speeches, particularly of Mr Balfour's and Mr Nixon's. As the evening advanced, and the House became tired, those who sat near him, fearing that he might come in too late to speak with effect, more than once asked, "Will you not rise now?" but he hesitated, almost with the air of a man who did not care to speak at all. Occasionally he opened his note-book, and made an entry with his pencil. At last, towards midnight, when men were becoming impatient for the vote, he rose. A country brother had caught the Moderator's eye; he spoke for a few minutes amid great impatience. When he had done, Cunningham rose again, and with clear, loud, prolonged cheering, the House settled down into still and fixed attention. The speaker said—

"In rising to say something upon this subject, I feel that I am treading on ground which is rather dangerous for me, because I have very strong views and feelings in regard to it. I cannot but be aware that I may be in some danger of being tempted to express these strong views somewhat too freely. I trust I shall be enabled to deal with it under something like a due restraint; that, though my feelings are strong, I may be enabled to discuss the topics to which I may advert, more in sorrow than in anger."

The main interest of the question lay in the future, and the procedure of the Free Church was important chiefly as it affected that future:

"We have no judicial authority over the Churches of that country; we have no right to direct or control them. They are independent Churches acting on their own responsibility to the Head of the Church, and we have merely to consider what we are called upon to do in relation to them in the way of exerting a certain moral influence on them, or in the way, it may be, of rendering them some material assistance. We are bound to see that we use that influence in the channel that may tend most to promote the interests of truth and righteousness."

Irrelevancies and minor topics had to be cleared away, and the main question looked at:

"The foundation of the whole case is, that this House substantially approves of the union which has been formed among the Presbyterians of Victoria; that this House believes the union to be substantially justifiable; that all parties concerned ought to have joined in it; that, hence, the House is resolved to re-

cognise the united body as standing now in the same relation to this Church as the Free Church did before; and that we should direct our moral and material influence in that channel and in no other. This is the sum and substance of the case now before the House; and if this view be correct, it substantially settles the whole question, and decides conclusively between the motions that are now before us. This is not a judicial deliverance upon proper ecclesiastical matters which have been brought under discussion. We are not their ecclesiastical superiors—we don't profess or pretend to judge them in that aspect—in their ecclesiastical standings and relations. We are not to judge for them; we are simply to judge for ourselves as to what we ought to do in our own sphere in the existing circumstances. If any differences arise in these Colonies among Presbyterians, it is our duty to do what we can to prevent differences disturbing their harmony; and, if we fail in that, our next duty is to consider which party was right upon the whole, and was best entitled to any assistance and any countenance which we could render. The Church has virtually settled that question, and we have heard nothing to-day which should induce us to alter that judgment."

By and by, the speaker turned to the allegations made against the basis, as an entirely new basis, and one incapable of defence:

"The most important question connected with this whole matter turns upon the substantial sufficiency and soundness of this basis. This is really and truly the only fundamentally and permanently important thing about it. . . . . . . . I believe that the basis can be thoroughly defended, and is free from all reasonable and substantial objections. I could adopt and subscribe it myself, but that is not sufficient; it might be defective even though there was nothing positively wrong or objectionable in it; but I believe, moreover, that the basis is such as to provide for the maintenance of the principles of the Free Church. . . I have been utterly unable to get hold of the grounds on which the basis has been objected to. It is a mere fighting with the wind, a mere fighting with words, an attempt to raise a cloud of dust, in which I can see nothing solid nor substantial. What we heard to-day, reminded me very strongly of a very happy expression of Richard Baxter. He talks of a class of men in his time who gave him a great deal of annoyance, whom he describes as 'dogmatical word-warriors'—a very felicitous expression, and a most admirable description of a great deal of what we have heard to-day upon the subject."

There were two lines of objection to the basis; one, that it failed to assert the independence of the Church, and the rights of the people, for which the Free Church had contended in the Disruption struggle; the other, that it virtually explained away or resigned the maintenance of the duty of the State, as asserted against the Voluntaries. In reference, manifestly, to the former of

these lines of objection, Dr Cunningham appealed to the fact that the united Church recognised the Second Book of Discipline as one of its standards :

"The Second Book of Discipline contains a more explicit statement of the grand principles which mark out the line of demarcation between the civil and ecclesiastical powers, and of the great principle of the spiritual independence of the Church of Christ of all civil control than the Confession of Faith does. The Second Book of Discipline contains also a very thorough condemnation of patronage in every form and shape . . . a distinct and explicit assertion of the great principle of non-intrusion in the only honest sense of it. These were the grounds of the Disruption, these are the fundamental principles of the Free Church, and I think it was a happy thought to bring in the Second Book of Discipline as embodying them. . . . No friend of patronage, and no friend of Erastianism, could adopt the Second Book of Discipline."

But then the Second Book of Discipline and all the other received Standards were qualified by an article in the basis.* That had been represented as very insidious and treacherous; but it was obviously necessary to protect men against being supposed to hold intolerant principles.

"I defy any man to produce anything like decent evidence that there is anything in this second article of the basis of the United Church which is not contained in the statement which we prefix to our own formula. . . . It has always been felt from the very beginning in regard to the matter of the civil magistrate that there was some need for explanation or qualification in regard to our Standards. . . . The United Presbyterian Church long ago adopted a certain explanation just in substance that which we have, and just in substance that which the United Church in Victoria has. Their explanation is simply, that in adopting the Westminister Confession, they do not adopt any statement which teaches or may be supposed to teach intolerant or compulsory principles of religion."

At this point the argument touched the presumption against the Union which might be conceived to arise from the circumstance

* II. That, inasmuch as there is a difference of opinion in regard to the doctrine contained in these Standards relative to the power and duty of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, the office-bearers of this Church, in subscribing these Standards and Formularies, are not to be held as countenancing any persecuting or intolerant principles, or as professing any views in reference to the power and duty of the civil magistrate inconsistent with liberty of personal conscience or the right of private judgment.

that the second Article in the basis resembled the phraseology employed by the United Presbyterians in this country, under the cover of which they hold themselves free to advocate Voluntary views. Moreover, as a matter of fact, ministers and people of the United Presbyterian Church, understood to hold Voluntary views, had joined the Colonial Union. These two circumstances might be held to imply that the basis involved a substantial variation from Free Church views in the Voluntary direction. In dealing with this presumption, Dr Cunningham took up an allusion made during the debate to an expression used by himself in the heat of the Voluntary controversy.* He had spoken of the Seceders as "perjured and apostate," because they maintained Voluntary views while they still proposed to adhere to the Westminster Confession, qualified only by disclaimer of "intolerant or compulsory principles." He had long ago admitted the phrase in which he made the charge to be indefensible, because all that ought to be charged was only an error of judgment: but he had continued to maintain that there was a real inconsistency between the Voluntary views of the Seceders, and the Standards to which they professed to adhere. On this point his judgment was still unaltered. But that old debate had "suggested some thoughts which were then very much impressed upon my mind, and which seem to bear very directly and immediately on the question now before us as to the sufficiency of this basis."

"I cannot yet understand how any Voluntary can adopt the 23d chapter of the Confession of Faith with so scanty and meagre an explanation. I feel the same difficulty as much as ever. But then the issue and application I make of that—and I think it fully germane to the matter before us—is that the examination of that question (of the difference of opinion upon the point whether the explanation is sufficient to admit a Voluntary) has strongly impressed my mind with certain views in regard to this whole matter which I believe to be true and sound, and which bear fully on the matter before us. And just because of the difference of opinion on the part of men equally conscientious and equally intelligent, I was very much impressed with the idea of the extreme difficulty of adjusting in a way that should be clear from all plausible objections this matter of subscription to the Formula, the extreme undesirableness of trying to press

* See p. 92.

the matter very far, or going into very full and minute details on the subject, and the extreme injustice of being very rigid in construing the different views which men may take as to the warrantableness and competency of questions of that nature. I believe still it is an awkward thing, as it seems to me, that men holding Voluntary views should subscribe the 23d chapter with the security of the meagre qualification to which I have referred; but that just impresses me with a sense of the difficulty of applying a strict and rigid construction in a matter of that sort, and of the absolute necessity of allowing some latitude to honest and intelligent men, in construing the precise bearing and import of minor points in the standards which they adopt, and in the formula which they may subscribe."

A second moral, equally important, was also to be deduced:

"I was further impressed with this conviction, that if men could honestly and intelligently subscribe the Confession of Faith, who profess to hold Voluntary views, with so meagre an explanation, that was sufficient to prove, or at least afforded a strong presumption, that at bottom, if men rightly understood one another, there was nothing so radically and fundamentally different betwixt us and many of our more reasonable Voluntary brethren. It is quite plain that the mere explanation that intolerant and compulsory principles are not held,—and that is all they had, and, I believe, still have,—it is quite plain that that does not repudiate or contradict the great principle of the responsibility of rulers and nations to God. It does not contradict the great principle of the universal supremacy of God's Word as the rule for all things to which it applies; and does not, with anything like clearness at least, exclude the idea of the competency of rulers and nations having some regard to the interests of religion and the welfare of the Church of Christ, and these are the great Scriptural principles we hold this subject."

The whole matter, therefore, resolved into divergent interpretations of the latitude afforded by qualifications which, in the case of the Free Church, the United Presbyterian Church and the United Church in Victoria were really the same:

"There is nothing in the formula of the United Presbyterian Church to which I have any objection. I could sign it myself. It does not contain an assertion of Voluntaryism, and they receive the Westminster Confession just with the very same qualification and explanation which we have now introduced into our formula, and which is just the very same as that embodied in this second article of the basis of the United Church in Victoria."

Hitherto the speech had dealt almost exclusively in argument. From this point the argument was mingled with, and received its

illustration from, a criticism of the "intelligent and conscientious Free Churchmen," for whose opposition to the union so much sympathy had been claimed. No one who heard it will ever forget that tremendous punishment; the scorn with which the pretensions of the dissidents and their supporters were scourged and crushed, and the chastisement with which their attacks on eminent names were visited. On the latter point Dr Cunningham felt peculiarly free to utter his mind :—

"I speak with more freedom of this paper" (the organ of the party), "because they have not abused me in it, so far as I have seen. I do not know whether that is a compliment or the reverse. I have this advantage by it, that it enables me to speak of them more freely and more plainly than otherwise I should have done. If they had reviled and insulted me so bitterly, so perseveringly, so offensively, as they have done Dr Candlish, I would probably have felt compelled to hold my tongue, and say nothing about them at all."

To all this, however, was added a conclusive and most unceremonious exposure of the effect which the party and their proceedings were likely to have on the interests of true religion and of Presbyterianism. From this latter half of the speech I refrain from making extracts, though it is full of characteristic passages; the immediate purpose was attained, and the pain which was salutary then need not be reawakened now. "Surely," Dr Cunningham said in conclusion,

"Surely there will be found many men, especially among those who are not ministers, who will regard all this in no other light than as miserable clerical wrangling. Surely we may expect that the great mass of the intelligent eldership of the Church will come vigorously forward to put down this agitation and stop this course of proceeding."

The speech finished the debate. It also finished the question both in Scotland and in the colonies. The division in the Assembly was something like six to one in favour of the motion which Dr Cunningham supported; the dissidents in the colony sank at once into obscurity, and their supporters in this country ceased to trouble the world on their behalf. It was a memorable experience of the power of a great speaker to propel into the minds of those who

heard him, not only his intellectual convictions, but his own moral judgments, accompanied by an impression of their validity and necessity, as well as of their intensity. Little else was spoken of during the rest of the Assembly. A country minister, who had been afraid that the Assembly might be mystified and perverted amid the intricacies of the affair, came into the corridor next morning, and unbosomed himself to one of the speakers in the debate. "O Dr ——," he said, "was not yon a wonderful speech of the Principal's? a wonderful speech! I have got no sleep all night thinking of that verse of the Psalm:—

'Then Phinehas rose, and judgment did,
And so the plague was stayed!'"*

The testimony which this speech embodies on some matters connected with an important class of questions deserves to be summed up. It will be observed that Dr Cunningham did not take up the question, whether Churches situated like those in the colonies might or might not warrantably content themselves with a less ample doctrinal basis than that which the Free Church embodies in her Standards. Questions of that kind Dr Cunningham was not fond of raising needlessly; if it had been raised, he would have dealt with it, no doubt, with notable circumspection. In this case he felt no need of raising it, because he was prepared to maintain that "the basis is such as to provide for the maintenance of the principles of the Free Church"—a position which enabled him to put his opponents all the more conspicuously in the wrong. Looking at the Union, then, as one in regard to which he maintained the position just stated, he delivered his judgment,—

1. That to adjust the matter of subscription to a formula in a way that shall be clear of all plausible objections, is extremely difficult.

2. That to be very rigid in trying to limit honest and intelligent men in the latitude of interpretation which they feel at liberty to give to the import of minor points in the standard and formula, proves to be undesirable and extremely unjust,—the illustration

* Psalm cvi. 30, metrical version.

in connection with which this is laid down being the difference between the Seceders and himself as to the consistency of holding Voluntary views along with the Confession of Faith, qualified only by a disclaimer of intolerant and compulsory principles.

3. That the explanation and justification of the necessity for forbearance just indicated, might be found, probably, in this, that if men rightly understood one another, there was "nothing so radically and fundamentally different" between the Free Church and many of the Voluntaries,—inasmuch as the latter might turn out not to disclaim (*a*) the responsibility of nations and rulers to God, nor (*b*) the universal supremacy of God's Word as the rule for all things to which it applies, nor (*c*) the competency of rulers and nations having some regard to the interests of religion and the welfare of the Church of Christ—which are the great scriptural principles held by the Free Church on this subject.

4. That there may be ministers connected with the Established Church who might concur, honestly and intelligently, to a large extent, in altered circumstances, in our statements regarding the Church's independence and the Headship of Christ, though, under the influence of various circumstances, they have failed at present to see the necessity of carrying out their professed principles on these points.

Two years after this debate, conference with reference to the possibility of union between the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches in this country was entered into by the Supreme Courts of both Churches. In taking this step, both Supreme Courts were unanimous. Dr Cunningham by that time had passed away. In four years more, differences, which still subsist, declared themselves in the Free Church; and those who had stood by Dr Cunningham's side on the Australian question were found separating,—Dr Begg and Mr Nixon ranging themselves with Dr Cunningham's old opponents against Dr Candlish, Dr Buchanan, Sir Henry Moncreiff, and Dr Bannerman. It is quite natural that in these circumstances men should endeavour to avail themselves of the authority of Dr Cunningham's name, and to argue from his recorded utterances how he would have decided existing questions had he been still

among us. In fact, his authority has been pleaded on both sides. It is enough for a biographer to record how he decided the questions which were actually before him.*

It may be right, however, to take this opportunity to make a few remarks with reference to the view which Dr Cunningham maintained in regard to subscription to standards, and especially with regard to the chief subordinate standard of his own Church—the Westminster Confession. It might possibly be imagined that the deprecation of "pressing matters very far," and of "being very rigid in construing the different views" on minor points, was connected in Dr Cunningham's mind with some theory of subscription more or less latitudinarian. This would be an entire mistake. Dr Cunningham unquestionably held that no man ought to subscribe standards, except as expressing his belief in all the doctrines they set forth. He need not be convinced that the standards are the best possible for their purpose, nor need he believe that the expression of doctrine is in every case the most happy and satisfactory. But he ought to subscribe, if he subscribes at all, and the Church ought to take his subscription, as expressing assent to the whole doctrine laid down. *That being supposed,* Dr Cunningham still held, *first,* that it should be carefully borne in mind that the authority of any Confession is quite different from that of Scripture; that neither does the office-bearer assent to the document, nor is the Church to apply it, as inspired Scripture is assented to and may be applied. *Secondly,* he held that honest and intelligent men will be found to differ as to the meaning that may fairly be ascribed to, and the inferences that may fairly be deduced from, clauses and phrases in such documents; that they will be and are found to do so in a degree that sometimes occasions mutual surprise; that this should be borne in mind as a thing proved, and as a thing to be expected. Therefore, while the Church cannot resign her right to interpret and apply her formulas, as the interests committed to her care, and especially the interests of sound doctrine may require, yet when difference of sentiment as to what comports with the standards affects minor points, men should be ready to estimate charitably and

* See Appendix I., "Dr Cunningham and Union with United Presbyterians."

liberally the latitude to which these honest diversities may extend, and to forbear to press precise constructions of formulas and inferences from them, even when those inferences seem fairly warranted in point of argument. To do anything else, he thought "extremely undesirable" and "extremely unjust." Still, the ground of this was to be honest diversity of construction and of inference on minor points; only he maintained that a somewhat larger latitude on this score than might at first sight seem reasonable was required by a due regard to plain facts.

Dr Cunningham, therefore, was not disposed to agree on this point with a man for whom he felt a very great regard, and in whose theological judgments generally, he felt greater confidence than in those of any divine now living; I mean Dr Hodge of Princeton. The formula of the old school Presbyterians contained this question, "Do you sincerely believe and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" Dr Hodge has expounded this to mean, not that belief of every proposition in the Confession of Faith is professed, but that the "system of doctrine," the known system of the Reformed Churches, is adopted. Of course, no one in this country will intrude into a discussion as to the true mind and intention of the American Presbyterian Church in the subscription it requires. On that point, Dr Hodge speaks with an authority which no one among us would think of contesting. But in so far as he maintains that this is a satisfactory and sufficient way of settling the obligations of subscription, and providing for the ends intended in a Confession of Faith, Dr Cunningham did not agree with him. He regarded this as too vague; so vague as to endanger all discipline. I shall not undertake to state how he would have developed his argument. But in reference to one statement of Dr Hodge, that it is impossible that a body of several thousand ministers and elders should think alike on all the topics embraced in such an extended and minute formula of belief, he would certainly have replied, that if a church comes to think so, the preferable remedy is to retrench the standards, and bring them down to a smaller compass of doctrine, of which you are prepared to ask the explicit acceptance, rather than to retain a

larger standard, leaving vague and indefinite the sense in which it is received.

But on this very ground he thought it wrong to call upon men to subscribe standards, unless those men were in circumstances to understand them thoroughly, and to take a deliberate survey of the evidence on which the determinations they contain, ought severally to be rested. He believed that men educated for the ministry might reasonably be called upon by the Church so to understand the Westminster Confession, and so to receive it. He did not think they could be qualified to do this without considerable training, or without earnest thought and inquiry; therefore he devoted much of his teaching to make clear to the students the theological place and grounds of the decisions which the Confession contains. The words yet ring in my ear which he addressed to us at the end of our fourth session:—"I must express a doubt whether there are any of you prepared at this moment intelligently and honestly to take that step; although I hope that there are not a few who, by a reasonable application of time and study during the next few months, may be prepared to do so." But while he was peremptory in demanding this from the ministers of the Church, he was not equally convinced of the propriety of the same requirement in other cases. It is known, for instance, that when the question of requiring Free Church schoolmasters to sign the Confession was debated, he agreed with those who desired to substitute some other test; simply on the ground that it was not reasonable to expect them to be suitably prepared for intelligent subscription. This feeling gained strength in his mind in later years. I remember very well his telling me that it was a great relief to his conscience, that in his position there was no risk of his having to preside at an ordination of deacons, and put to them a question which he perfectly knew they were not prepared to answer as it should be answered.

With regard to the question often mooted, as to the extent or compass of doctrine which churches are called upon to embody in their Confessions, and to require their office-bearers to subscribe to, passages will be found in "Reformers and Theology of Reformation," pp. 52, and 410, 412. The first may be found a little more fully in

the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, vol. ix. p. 489. Occasionally he used to impress the same views on students and young ministers in conversation, and warn them that it might be a question which they would have to face. It was not a question which he desired to see raised, or which he would ever have needlessly stirred himself. Like most men who have carefully studied, and studied in the light of history, the alternatives which present themselves on this question, he had a great respect for those determinations in which the churches have rested as the results of synodical decision, after successive theological crises and periods of conflict. Those determinations must be renounced or altered, if they are no longer judged to be according to God's Word; but so long as they are believed to be materially scriptural, the presumption arising from the fact that they were arrived at in the way indicated, had very considerable weight in his mind in favour of their being maintained as symbolical. Still, he certainly held that the presumption in favour of existing symbols was capable of being overcome by evidence that they were unduly extended. He conceived that to be very plainly the case with the symbols so long enforced in the Lutheran Churches, which he freely pointed out to his class as causes of great mischief, by their mere length and minuteness, and apart from the character of their teaching in point of Scriptural accuracy. He applied the same remark to two documents of the Reformed Church which he admired as theological decisions, and one of which he recommended constantly and in the strongest way for our guidance, but both of which he judged to be too extended and minute to serve aright the purpose of confessional documents meant to be subscribed by all ministers. These were the decrees of the Synod of Dort, and the Formula Consensus Helvetici. When I say that he admired these as theological decisions, I do not mean, of course, that he approved of the mode of statement regarding the text of Scripture adopted in the Formula Consensus. I do not think he was inclined to state any general theoretical criterion by which the range and minuteness of a Confession should be determined, or that he regarded any such criterion as capable of being assigned. The reader has seen the practical view which he suggested for the

consideration of Presbyterian and Calvinistic Churches in his address at Sunderland. With respect to his own Church, he held that, having in point of fact a Confession, not only thoroughly capable of defence on the ground of consistency with Scripture, but very eminently characterised by theological discrimination and good sense, it was a primary duty to make it plain to all her students that it does possess this character, and so to avert the misunderstandings which arise from confused views, thoughtlessness, and ignorance of the history and results of past discussions. This he regarded as one of the most important services which he could render, with a view to save the Church from dangers and perplexities with reference to her Confession.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *LAST ILLNESS.*

RETURNING to Edinburgh from Pitlochrie, Dr Cunningham prepared to resume the usual course of his winter duties. His last article in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* appeared in October. It was on the Practical Applications of Calvinism,—unconsciously, on his part, taking its fitting place as his concluding service in that cause. During that month a great gala day occurred in Edinburgh. The foundation-stones of the new Industrial Museum and of the new Post Office were laid on one day. Prince Albert performed the ceremony at the two sites successively, the Queen and he, with other members of the Royal family, having come to Edinburgh for the purpose on their way from Balmoral. Like other persons in public situations, Dr Cunningham was present, an interested spectator of the stir and ceremony. As soon as it was over, and while Edinburgh was still seething with the bustle, he took his way to the Library of the New College and spent the afternoon there. He was chief Librarian as well as Principal; and many a day, very many an afternoon, he spent in the Library, especially in summer when the great empty building was otherwise tenantless, and there was nothing to break in upon the long hours. A library of five-and-twenty or thirty thousand volumes, mainly theological, was a place of refuge that grew dearer as year followed year. He took his usual share in the services connected with the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at the end of the month; and when the College opened in November he was in his usual health. In that month, at the meeting of Commission, he addressed a conference on the subject of the

want of men to occupy suitably the mission stations. Another article in the *Review* had been planned and begun to be written. It was on the series of publications in which the late Bishop Philpotts of Exeter on the one hand, and Dr Goode on the other, had debated the questions which divide the High Church from the Evangelicals. He admired and respected Dr Goode, not only for his theology, but also for his sound and accurate learning, and for the ability with which he applied it. Differing widely, on the other hand, from the Bishop of Exeter in his theology, he conceded to him a measure of controversial ability, but he found him very defective in real theological knowledge, and that in a degree which was the more discreditable in proportion to the arrogance of tone and the confidence of assertion by which his writings were distinguished. He was tempted to diverge, on this pretext, into the subject of theological education, and the want of it in the Church of England, and with this digression the fragment ends; before he could resume his main subject, he was called away from controversy for ever.

What remains to be said may be best told in a narrative drawn up at the time by the members of his family for their own use:—

"On Wednesday the 4th December 1861, Dr Cunningham felt himself unable to undertake his class duties, and remained at home from College. He was thought by his medical attendant to be labouring under a bilious attack. He did not go out all that week, nor on Sabbath. The doctor saw him on that day, and from him Dr Cunningham obtained permission to resume his duties on Monday if he were no worse. On Monday the 9th, accordingly, though still very weak, he went to College and did his usual work, returning home greatly fatigued. Feeling much exhausted, he went to bed early on Monday evening, and passed a most wretched night. On Tuesday more anxious symptoms appeared, and in addition to Dr Warburton Begbie, who had seen him from the first, Dr Cunningham was visited by Dr Begbie senior. At this time the doctors hoped that the unfavourable symptoms might give way to treatment. But on Wednesday the illness had assumed a graver aspect, and Dr Begbie then saw plainly that inward paralysis had set in, but saw no reason to apprehend immediate danger. On

Wednesday Dr Cunningham was seized with a pleuritic affection, which caused much pain, and seriously impeded his breathing. For this he was cupped on Thursday forenoon, which somewhat relieved the pain, but his breathing was still laboured, and he spoke with difficulty.

"On Thursday evening the Rev. Charles J. Brown called to inquire if it would be agreeable to Mrs Cunningham that a meeting should be held to pray for Dr Cunningham's recovery. She, of course, consented, saying she would feel only grateful for such a proposal. It was agreed not to have the meeting until Saturday. Indeed, that was Dr Cunningham's own wish. So great was his dislike to bring himself in any way before the public, that he wished his illness kept as quiet as possible, and feared greatly that it might be mentioned in the newspapers. Before the time for the proposed prayer-meeting had come, he was beyond the reach, and beyond the need of prayer, and had entered upon his eternal employment of praise.

"On Thursday night he continued very poorly, sleeping none, but not suffering much pain. Not even on Friday morning did he conceive his illness to be dangerous, as a remark he then made will shew. He spoke of going to Ben Rhydding when he should be a little stronger. Mrs Cunningham, wishing to hint how ill she thought him, said he was not fit for anything like that, to which he replied, 'Oh not just now, but perhaps in a week.'

"During this day he did not seem to be getting worse, but the disease was making steady progress. On the second visit of the doctors that day about twelve o'clock, they saw reason to believe that his life could not be very much prolonged; but it was not for some hours after that he himself was made aware of their opinion.

"He was occupied during the day with various matters concerning his pecuniary affairs, which he thought it right to have settled. But that he did not anticipate a fatal termination to his illness, until distinctly told about four o'clock that it must be so, is evident from a message which, in the course of the afternoon, he desired might be sent to the College, to the effect that he had been prohibited doing any public work until after the Christmas holidays.

Shortly after four o'clock, the Rev. R. Rainy called to see him. Mr Rainy gives the following account of the conversation he held with Dr Cunningham :—

"'On this day (Friday 13th December 1861), between four and five o'clock, Dr Begbie, after visiting Dr Cunningham in consultation with his son, entered the study where I was. I learned from him that no hope could now be entertained of Dr Cunningham's recovery; and it was agreed between us that he ought to be informed of his situation. At this moment I received a message from Dr Cunningham, to the effect that, from having had to attend to various matters, his strength was exhausted, and that he was not able to engage in conversation, but should like to join with me in prayer. I immediately went up stairs, and found him obviously in great exhaustion. He held out his hand and welcomed me, repeating the substance of the message, that he was not strong enough to engage in conversation, having been obliged to exhaust his strength in arranging some temporal matters, but would be glad if I would at once engage in prayer. In reply to my remark, that I was sorry to find him so low, he said, "he was extremely weak, and crushed before the moth." Mrs Cunningham suggested the propriety of having the children in, and during the little delay which this occasioned, I said (as nearly as I can remember), that I was sorry to find that the doctors were so apprehensive about him. He replied with a assent and interrogation, "Yes, they are apprehensive?" I replied, "Yes, Dr Cunningham, they are very apprehensive—indeed, I am requested by Dr Begbie to say that they are very seriously apprehensive about the result." This statement, I think, was brought out in its full strength, partly in reply to an intermediate remark or query by Dr Cunningham, which, at this moment, I cannot perfectly recall. On its being made, he threw back his head slightly on his pillow as his manner was when a little surprised, while his eye lightened up inquiringly, and he said, "Aye, indeed?" In reply, I reiterated the statement in the same words. He immediately replied with great emphasis, "Thank you, thank you;" and then, turning to Mrs Cunningham, remarked that this was the best possible evidence of the opinion the medical men had of the case. Turning to me

he said something like, "They think me so very ill?" I replied that so far as I understood, the strength being so very low, and no improvement in the symptoms, made them apprehend the worst. He said, "Yes, they think there is not strength remaining in my constitution to throw off this illness." I replied, I believed that was exactly their opinion. The children having now come in, he indicated to me his wish that I should engage in prayer, closed his eyes and composed himself to the exercise. After it was over, he again indicated that he could not then converse. I turned to go, but said, "I trust, sir, you are enabled to rest upon the Lord." He replied, in a tone very usual with him, when substantially assenting to anything, and yet having something more to say or think about it, "Yes I hope so," as I understood at the time (and have no doubt now), believing that he had been resting there, but that one would need a little time to ascertain the posture of his own mind with reference to circumstances so grave, so keenly and suddenly announced to him. He went on to explain that he had not been led to regard death as the probable issue of his illness, partly because at first it seemed slight, and partly because, even latterly, his own feelings had been such as to lead him to believe he would recover.

"'He here referred to the comparative apathy which is wont to attend weakening illness, and which, in the later part of this, had, he indicated, been experienced by him to some extent. At one period of the interview, with his usual great kindness, he gave me his blessing, saying with much emphasis, "The Lord bless you, be with you, strengthen you, keep you." It is difficult to convey by any words an idea of the simple and natural way in which he seemed at once to adjust himself to his position.

"'I returned to Salisbury Road an hour or two afterwards, and after a while was sent for by Dr Cunningham, who wished to see me alone. When Mrs Cunningham was leaving the room, she begged him not to speak too much, to which he replied that he really could not speak much. He then said to me that he was not able to converse, that he could do little more than listen, that he had been listening to Mrs Cunningham reading the Olney Hymns, that he would be glad if I would speak, if I would read a chapter. I had

taken out my Bible to do so, when, as if anxious to make sure of not being led away, so as to forget putting the question, he went on to say, that he wished to know whether the doctors had said anything that could enable me to give him any indication how long he was likely to survive. He meant, he said, to put the same question to Dr Begbie, when he returned, but wished to know whether I could give him any information. I said that Dr Begbie had told me that he was apprehensive even about that night. He received this with interest, and after making sure that he understood it, he said, "I believe that according to all human probability, I must take it that my end is approaching, and that it is very near." I went on to say (partly desirous to fill up the pauses, and to leave him no temptation to exhaust himself by speech), that the foundation of hope was equal to all situations and exigencies, and that the love which had provided it would supply all wants. To every remark of this kind, his response was most hearty. I went on to repeat various texts. One suggested by some reference to his situation was, "He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with Him." Another was the text on which he preached about a year ago, "He died for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." He struck in with "the just for the unjust, that's it—a complete salvation; finished; perfect; secure." I repeated the hymn,—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

He said, "All their stains,—many a one they have."

"The dying thief rejoiced to see,
That fountain in his day;
And there have I as vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.

"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

At the end of each of these verses he took the word out of my

mouth, or said, with great emphasis, "That's it"—adding some remark in the way of strong assertion of the truth and preciousness of the gospel. Generally, I may remark, that all these statements relative to the truth on which a believing sinner rests, were made with a manner and with a strength of expression which it is impossible to convey, and which were made more remarkable by his weakness, and the panting utterance which now characterised his speech.

"'In reply to some remark, I observed that when the body was weak, and the mind possibly sharing its weakness, and we, therefore, less than ever able to lay hold of Christ and of the promises to our sensible comfort, He was able both to take hold and to keep hold of us. Dr Cunningham replied, with great animation and energy, "Oh yes, at once—at a stroke—at a dash—at a word." I had and have no doubt that he was adverting mentally to his own wish, if it had been the Lord's will, to have had a longer time to look forward to death, and to dwell advisedly on the truth in the prospect of it; and that his meaning was, that however desirable this might be, the Lord could, without such preparation, put him in comfortable possession of all that could be attained in that way. In a similar strain he remarked to Dr Begbie (as he has informed me), that his wish had been to have had a longer period to contemplate approaching death, and to dwell on the grounds of faith, in the prospect of it, —"but," he added, "the Lord can give me felt possession of the truth in one moment if need be, and I know He will."

"'After the above remark, he went on to say that once, when very ill with fever at Gourock, he had been given up, and that then he had been almost at the point of irrationality, almost past the use of his senses, before he apprehended his condition. When I caught his words, at the first moment I thought he said, "before I apprehended my spiritual condition;" but, from the whole tenor of what he said, I am impressed with the conviction either that I had mistaken the word he used, or, that he meant by it his condition as so near the world of eternal realities, and called to deal with it. His mind had been much impressed by this circumstance, and he had thought of it much during his convalescence. He had regarded it as a very dangerous experiment to have passed

through, and had hoped and desired that the Lord would never again so deal with him. On this occasion he would certainly have wished to have had much fuller, deeper, ampler warning, so as to have been able to review his position, and consider his readiness for a change. As it was, he said, he felt he must just cast himself on Christ.

"'At this point the arrival of his colleagues was announced, whom he felt it important to see immediately. He was unable to see me again, but the interruption of his statement is hardly to be regretted, for I have no doubt that the statement he made to his colleagues (as Dr Bannerman has reported it) about his own case, was precisely what he would have gone on to say to me, had the interview been prolonged.'

"Dr Buchanan gives the following account of the interview Dr Bannerman and he had with Dr Cunningham :—

"'When his colleagues were introduced into his bed-room, he signified that he wanted to see them alone; and, after shaking hands cordially with both, he said, "I was told to-day about four o'clock, that, in the opinion of my medical advisers, I had nearly finished my course, and that my constitution having been so enfeebled, they had little hope of its being able to throw off the disease under which I labour. I could have wished that a longer time had been given me for preparation before the great final change, and that I might have had leisure to re-examine the whole foundations of my faith and hope; for I feel that the only question now for me is, that of my personal relation to God."

"'On its being suggested that in his case the foundation had been settled long ago, he answered, "Yes; I was enabled at an early period of life to give myself to Christ, and to dedicate my life to His service, and notwithstanding many infirmities and many evil tendencies, I have still adhered to Him." He then expressed the great comfort he had enjoyed in the constant friendship and cordial co-operation of those who stood beside him, acknowledging that they had borne with his infirmities, and had acted towards him as true and faithful friends, to whom he was indebted for many acts of kindness for which he was deeply grateful. He said, however, that

he had a special object in sending for them at this time. He had been much occupied during the day, and was somewhat fatigued. He had been engaged in getting his will extended, and signed; but that deed dealt only with his pecuniary affairs, and did not contain any special instructions to his trustees respecting his papers and manuscripts. He wished, therefore, to commit to the care of his colleagues the entire charge of his papers and manuscripts connected with the College, to be deposited in the Library there, with power to them to dispose of them as they may think right, and to make such use of them as might seem best for the good of the Church, and the interests of his family. On its being asked whether, in speaking of his papers connected with the College, he meant to include his MS. lectures, he said, "I omitted to mention my lectures specially in my statement, but meant them to be included in the papers to which I referred." On this matter being settled, he added, "and my family, you will both remember my family."

"'On being asked if he had any message to the students of the New College, in whom he took a paternal interest, he lay back for some seconds in earnest thought, and then said, "I have no particular word for them except this, let them give themselves first to Christ, and then dedicate their whole lives to His service, seeking to be able and faithful ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the spirit." He then bade his colleagues affectionately farewell, and, as he grasped their hands with a cordial and prolonged pressure, repeated these lines:—

> "A few short years of evil past,
> We reach that happy shore,
> Where death-divided friends at last
> Shall meet to part no more."

His last words to them, twice repeated, were, "We shall meet at the right hand."'

"After the departure of his colleagues, his first remark was, 'I think I have quite prepared Dr Buchanan and Dr Bannerman that their first duty on Monday morning will be to announce my death to the students.'

"During the last few hours of his life, Dr Cunningham had

much conversation with the various members of his family. A portion of which follows, possibly not in the exact order in which it occurred, but as nearly as can be recollected. He spoke to each separately, and to all together, giving to each the most appropriate counsel. He spoke with particular earnestness to the three younger members of his family, impressing upon them the duty of complete submission to their mother in all matters, of anticipating, if possible, at all times her wishes, and of striving unceasingly to make their 'mother's house a house of peace,' so long as they should continue under its roof. He pointed out to his eldest son at home the important place he would henceforward occupy in the family, warning him that his position was an important one, not in the sense of exalting him in his own eyes, but in the sense of the great responsibilities it brought with it. He pointed out to him what in his view were his good qualities, and warned him most affectionately of what he thought were likely to prove his besetting sins. On being asked if he had any message for his eldest son, who was in Australia, after a few moments' reflection, he repeated a few words of solemn and affectionate advice, which he wished transmitted to his absent son.

"As some of his family stood round him, he said, 'If the Lord spares me two days longer, I mean to spend one in my study, and the other, the Sabbath, with my family.' Mrs Cunningham said to him she did not think it possible he would be able to do that, to which he replied, 'Well, I do not say I desire it, but if it please God to spare me so long, I should like to spend the time so.'

"In the course of the evening an incident of an interesting nature took place. Dr Cunningham requested that the Bible he was in the habit of using might be brought to him from his study; shortly after he asked for his Confession of Faith, and a copy of the Olney Hymns. He desired that they might be placed within his reach, and lay for some time with his hand resting on them, until on Mrs Cunningham entering the room, and fearing he was about to attempt to use the books, an effort for which she knew him to be unfit, she said to him, 'I think these had better be taken away.' With his usual willingness to comply with whatever she desired, he at once assented.

"He spoke of his mother, and how all her family had been spared to her during her long life. Being reminded of the honourable position he himself had occupied, he said, 'Yes, I can't deny that; but I know that I have nothing but what I have received. God has no need of any of us, he can easily raise up men to do his own work.'

"At another time he said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness. Greater weakness than mine could not be, but perfect Thy strength in my weakness, and save me with an everlasting salvation.'

"During the evening various hymns were read to him, to which he listened with great pleasure, especially to these two :—

'Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,' &c.

'Servant of God, well done,' &c.

One verse of the hymn on Prayer ends thus :—

'He enters heaven by prayer.'

When this was read, Dr Cunningham said, 'Lord, grant that I may enter the portals with prayer.' At the close of the second hymn, he said, 'That's one of the finest things I know, you must read that to me once more before I die, and also the one upon prayer.' Accordingly these two hymns were read to him once again before he died, and although his mind seemed to have been wandering slightly before, he evidently understood and enjoyed every word, and made the same assent as he had done the first time.

"Shortly before ten o'clock both his medical attendants visited him. To Dr Begbie senior he said, 'Thank you, my dear friend, for your kind honourable message sent to me by the hand of God's servant;' and on Dr. Begbie intimating his sorrow at having to make such a communication, Dr Cunningham most emphatically repeated the same words.* It was on this occasion, that on expressing to Dr Begbie his wish, if it had been the Lord's will, to have had longer time to contemplate death, he said, 'But God by a single glance can

* For Dr Begbie, and also for his son, Dr Cunningham cherished a very affectionate regard.

do this for me.' Dr Begbie replied, 'And He will do it, Dr Cunningham;' to which he answered, 'He has done it.'

"After this he requested to be left alone with his family, saying, he wished the house to be shut up at ten o'clock. Dr Warburton Begbie returned a short time before his death, and with the members of his family remained in attendance till all was over.

"At another time he said, 'You know it is said, "through much tribulation ye shall enter the kingdom;" but, I think, God is going to give me the kingdom without *much* tribulation. We have had our trials, but we cannot say much tribulation.' Again he said, 'Hosts of heavenly mansions' (an expression he frequently made use of), 'that's the "*terminus ad quem*," aye that's it.'

"Another time he said, 'God settles some things according to prayer, but not all; it has an important place in His government. Christ and His salvation are given in answer to prayer.' And again, 'I have done with all controversies and all fightings now, I am at rest for ever.' Then, raising his hand he very emphatically said twice, 'From the rage of theologians, good Lord deliver us.'

"He gave particular directions as to all necessary things he wanted done, even to the inscription on his tomb-stone, and the persons he wished to be present at his funeral; and said much to soothe and comfort those he was leaving behind him.

"During the last hour of his life there was a good deal of wandering, but even then at times he spoke quite collectedly.

"Not very long before his death, he said to Mrs Cunningham, 'I am sorry you have had so much of this painful work, but it won't be long now.' About eleven o'clock he desired that his watch might be wound up, and, not long after, he asked if it was near midnight, as he thought all would be over then.

"Seeing all his family round him, he said, 'I suppose you are all just waiting till I enter the kingdom'; and very soon again he said, 'I am going home quietly.' These were his last articulate words; his lips moved, and he seemed conscious for about a quarter of an hour after uttering the above words, but nothing was distinctly heard.

"And then, at twenty minutes past twelve, apparently without

pain, and with little of the struggle that frequently accompanies dissolution, his spirit fled to God who gave it, to be for ever with the Lord.

"'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' And so passed away from earth to that rest which remaineth for the people of God, William Cunningham, one of the strongest and bravest, one of the gentlest, most loving, and most loveable of Scottish men."

To this narrative it may be added, that during the short period when his mind was in some measure wandering, he seemed to be moving among the persons and events of the Reformation, and named Melancthon and Zuingle.

One of the expressions which he used when saying that he was "done with controversy" deserves notice:* "From the rage of theologians good Lord deliver us." These occurred to him, no doubt, as the words of Melancthon, that sorely-tried and wearied man. It is very well known that Dr Cunningham felt it due to truth to point out very distinctly the weaknesses of Melancthon's character. He sympathised much more with the firmer men of the Reformation; and he was himself, as a controversialist, thoroughly resolute, definite, and unsparing. He maintained also that there was such a thing as an "unscriptural longing for peace and unity"; that a warning against this was one of the main lessons of Melancthon's life; and that controversial discussion in behalf of truth, when necessary, is one of the great and leading duties of those who would serve Christ's Church. Yet with him the truth was far more than the combat. The impulse and the capacity to contend were indeed strong in him, when that which he deemed true was assailed; nor can we doubt that in the conflict he "drank delight of battle" as every good fighter must. But still this grew out of the desire to win his way to truth, to keep it when he found it, to vindicate it for others as well as for himself. Rest in possession was better than conflict for it. It was a rest not to be found by him in this world; for here "this battle," as John Knox called it, must still go on; and to remain beside the tents when the enemy was in the field was for Cunningham utterly impossible. Still

* A rabie theologorum libera nos, Domine.

all his later years are filled with deprecations of "needless" fighting. He was vexed and wearied, also, with the exaggerations and unreasonablenesses of controversy—not on the enemies' side alone—with the confusions never to be made straight, and irritations never to be soothed, of the well-intentioned, but the ill-conditioned. History was full of it, and of its consequences; and the old things are still reappearing under the sun. To labour amid all this, as the past and the present offered it, was his appointed calling, to be strenuously pursued. Yet there was a deliverance out of it to something far better. So he and Melancthon met and sympathised in the end of the day:—"A rabie theologorum libera nos, Domine."

From a short narrative, written at the time of Dr Cunningham's death, I may borrow the closing words:—"Perhaps every element which combined to constitute the natural power of the man could be illustrated from his closing hours, for never was he more truly himself. But after all, *the* impressive and truly great feature of the scene was the simplicity with which he took his place at the foot of the cross,—thankful to be there, rejoicing to be there,—responding to those simplest statements of the gospel which are level to the capacity of a child. To those who witnessed it, it was peculiarly elevating, instructive, and encouraging. It may be so also in some degree to those who read of it."

On the Wednesday following his death, a great procession followed his remains to the Grange Cemetery. He was laid by his mother, near the spot where what is mortal of Chalmers and Andrew Agnew, of Hugh Miller and Graham Speirs, with others whom he loved on earth, rests in hope.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *CONCLUDING REMARKS.*

DR CUNNINGHAM'S personal appearance was very typical of his moral and intellectual qualities; no one ever mistook him for any man, or any man for him. His tall form, slender in youth, early in life acquired sufficient bulk to fill the eye, and convey the impression of mass and strength. In his latter days, when the wear and tear of life were telling on him, there was a slight but manifest falling off. His height was produced by length of trunk as well as length of limb. Hence an oscillation of the upper part of the man as he walked, which bespoke him free from all care of attitudes. Hence, also, the peculiar and decisive swing of his person, so familiar to all who heard him speak. His "points" were often delivered with a gesture of the person and right arm, the head thrown slightly on one side, which suggested the idea of throwing a stone at some object far below. Alike in public addresses and in private conversation, whenever he grew animated his gestures became lively; they were expressive of easy and vigorous movement, always with a suggestion of force and decision.

As a student, night-work was his habit. He sat commonly till two, when his lectures were in process of composition very often till four, in the morning. His lectures were contained in a large tin box. When he left home his parting remark often was, "Well, if the house takes fire, whatever you do save my green box."

As a speaker, his great strength lay in debate, or in the exposition of principles which were capable of being debated. He was a master in the art of stating a question, and not only stating it, but enforcing the statement, so that the nature and conditions of the

argument became self-evident. He knew well that much more than half the battle depends on this part of the work being thoroughly done. Hence, in speaking on intricate or arduous topics, his speeches sometimes came to be merely a clearing up of the different questions involved, and their relation to one another. He had no great fear, commonly, about the result of the argument on the details of fact and evidence, if only he could fasten on the mind a right impression of the true question to be settled, and the conditions under which the detailed evidence must be applied to it. His style, which was copious, had also the merit of unfailing clearness and concentration of the meaning on the decisive sentences; and he had great power of forcibly characterising the positions and processes of the hostile argument,—not usually on the picturesque side, but on the intellectual and moral,—so as to nail and rivet each important link of his own. To the reader of his reported speeches, his style may lack grace and effective cadence. But any estimate of his power as a debater and expositor of principles, formed from the mere perusal of his speeches, must fall far short of the reality. The report may represent his dialectic powers; but like all very successful speakers, he added to all that print preserves, an extraordinary power of propelling his convictions into the minds of others. The hearer received a vivid impression of the light in which the question appeared to the speaker, the importance he attached to its several elements, the hold which each part of the argument had upon him, and the obligations, logical and moral, with which it constrained him. You were yourself working at the question for the time, not with your own faculties, but with Cunningham's, and were possessed by the same intense moral perceptions. This effect was due to the personality of the man, put into his speech, to his intensity and his vehemence. The perspective of the argument became for the moment as bold and obvious to the audience, as it was to Cunningham's own mind, and therefore it was well-nigh irresistible. The absence of all rhetoric, except that which sparkled red-hot from the forge at which the workman was labouring, contributed to the same effect. To the same result, conduced, and that very powerfully, his mani-

fest scorn of foul play, and the manliness and fairness of his battle. Whether or not you agreed in his view of a hostile argument, you were never in doubt that he was dealing with it with conscious fairness and sincerity; intensely resolute to overthrow it, yet not more resolved to overthrow it than to overthrow it honestly. One may hear every day clever speakers to whom it would be unjust to ascribe deliberate dishonesty, who yet lay hold without scruple of the nearest plausible point, and if they cannot answer what was said, coolly answer what was not said. In Cunningham's case it was the moral earnestness and the manifest honesty which gave such prodigious momentum to his intellectual power, and his intellectual mastery of the methods of debate. When he had ruined the hostile argument, he had a way of holding it up, at arm's length, as it were, for the admiration of mankind, and for his own, which, without any of the rhetoric of ridicule, produced the effect of it most completely. It may be added, perhaps, that an addition to his strength, and yet a limit to it, might be recognised in a certain want of ready sympathy for an opponent's mode of view, such as might lead to appreciation of the temptations which drew him to it. Undistracted by any diversion from this quarter, Cunningham pursued all the more securely the mere merits of the argument; but he was not so skilful in some of the other methods of approaching men's minds, and disentangling them from their delusions.

His sense of what was due to every debated question, joined to his intellectual energy and wide reading, raised him also above the mere commonplaces of debate. Constantly his speeches impress the reader with their wider view of the principles to which the decision must in the last resort be referred, and by their thorough command of materials, often the most recondite. These last, however, were so far from being paraded that they are more commonly concealed. It is often only in the occasional allusion, or in some wary limiting clause qualifying a wide assertion, that one is reminded of the range which Cunningham was keeping in view as he guided himself through the mazes of argument and assertion.

So much may be offered in illustration of the power he wielded

in debate,—power which he evinced at every period of his life, but which he put forth in the most splendid manner in the exciting days which preceded the Disruption. The late Mr Murray Dunlop, who, as member for Greenock, did so much good service to his country, had ample opportunities of hearing the best speakers of his day. A friend has recorded that, in conversing with him a few years ago, he said to him, "You have now been a good many years in Parliament, and heard a great many debates. How do they impress you as compared with the Assembly debates before the Disruption?" Mr Dunlop at once replied with great emphasis, "I never heard anything like those Assembly debates. We have no men in Parliament like these men." And after a rapid comparative estimate, he added, "There is no man in the House that approaches to Cunningham."

So far, however, only the weapons which he wielded have been dwelt upon. The cause in which he wielded them, and the way in which he ascertained for himself the merits of the cause, and its claims upon his advocacy, is a still more important matter. There are men, the process of whose minds in search of truth or duty is in a marked degree different from that by which they unfold or advocate it when they think they have ascertained it. It was not so with Dr Cunningham. His mental processes were from first to last remarkably homogeneous in their style and method. The force of his debating, indeed, as we have seen, depended much on the degree in which men felt that they saw the steps by which his own mind made progress to its conclusions.

Just as his speaking turned on the *status quæstionis,* so did his thinking when he was engaged in resolving the difficulties which beset any subject that occupied his mind. To disentangle the different questions really entering into the problem; to settle what these were, so that each might stand clear of the other; to adjust them in their proper order in which they lead up to the ultimate question actually at the time calling for decision; to note which of them, if any, seemed for the present insoluble, or beset with conflicting evidence, not admitting as yet of confident decision; to mark the materials available to settle the questions admitting of solution;

and to come to his result along a line of positions thus carefully sifted and defined, was the habit of his understanding. It was best seen, perhaps, in his dealing with complex practical questions. On such questions he was far from being precipitate, and was ever anxious to make sure his ground at every step he took. The Education question is, perhaps, as good an instance as any that can be cited, for it is one on which he confessed that he experienced great difficulty, and it is one on which we possess repeated utterances. The same example may illustrate another quality of his. He often said strong things. But he was very far from being disposed to take up extreme positions. He had a strong, sagacious judgment, and saw clearly the practical consequences which given principles would imply, and the practical penalties which might have to be paid in maintaining them. While he was not the man to shrink from a principle, through fear of consequences, he did very fully admit the influence of consequences, in moving him to sift well the principle on which he was to take his stand. On the other hand, extreme and thoughtless ways of stating and construing principles which he defended, and the disposition to burden them with conclusions contrary to common sense, always moved his resentment in a degree that was even amusing. Well meaning men came in at times unexpectedly for severe and sudden blows, and found themselves overwhelmed with charges of "sad blundering and confusion."

In order to explain his special tendencies as a theologian, it is well to advert to the connection between those tendencies and his own inmost spiritual convictions. We happen to know what the kind of views were in connection with which he became conscious of a new interest in the gospel, and felt called and enabled to yield himself up henceforth to his Saviour. The sermon by Dr Gordon, referred to in an early chapter (p. 27), sheds an interesting light on this subject. It is entitled, "The means of Regeneration," and is upon the text, "Being born again by the word of God," 1 Peter i. 23. It dwells first on the greatness of the change, a change which the Holy Ghost alone can effect; then on the vague and unreal impressions of many professing Christians on the subject. This vagueness

brings it to pass that men live as if the change in question were something that cannot be certainly determined. But the Scripture does dot leave it so. "It does not tell us *how* the influence of the Spirit operates, but it tells us that the method of his dealing with us is very distinct and intelligible." Here follows a most impressive exhibition of the work of the Spirit in dealing with men by the truths of Scripture,—"communications which he has addressed to us, consisting of truths of the most momentous importance." Wherever those truths are clearly understood and cordially embraced, *there* it will be found that the spiritual transformation has taken place. More and more, therefore, as the discourse proceeds, the momentous claims of the truth come out—the truth which it is the office of the Spirit to open our eyes to see, and our hearts to love—the truth, in the receiving of which, in this manner, we *are* born again. A singularly wise delineation of the relation in which the natural heart stands to these verities, is followed by a delineation of the change of sentiment and state which their real reception implies. Those men, in whom this changed relation to the truth is wanting, are dealt with in the way of warning ; their excuses and apologies are discussed and set aside. Finally, referring to the fact that self-deceiving pleas *are* very often urged and relied upon, as those remember well who have since felt their vanity, the sermon closes :—

"But it cannot be so with the man who sees in the gospel the repeal of that sentence which had consigned him to eternal death, and has felt the constraining power of the love of Him who died as his substitute and lives as his surety. He knows that it is by the influence of the Spirit of God that his eyes have been opened to see, and his heart to love, the truth as it is in Jesus ; and it is to the same divine influence that he looks for more enlarged discoveries of the character and perfections of God. But he knows that this divine teaching is something else than an inexplicable impulse, conveying impressions which he does not understand, or awakening hopes the foundation of which he does not perceive. He feels that his comfort, and peace, and joy do not rise from thinking that he has been regenerated, but from the precious truth by the instrumentality of

which his regeneration has been effected. That truth it is essential to his comfort, as well as to his progress in holiness, that he habitually remember: he is conscious that he could not relinquish it without relinquishing everything that is valuable to him as an immortal creature; he must be frequently turning to the contemplation of it as the charter of all his privileges, the strength and nourishment of all his hopes; and it will not fail to appear, as often as his true character is brought into view, that through this truth there has been conveyed to him the impress of the divine image,—that 'he has been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.'"

The whole discourse leads up to this closing paragraph, and it thus presses a view admirably adapted to lay hold of a mind constituted like Cunningham's. The echoes of it, I think, may be heard through all Cunningham's teaching. That Christianity is most essentially an administration of truths, which, being opened and applied by the regenerating Spirit, are both the seed and the mould of the divine life, determine, nourish, and sustain it; that it is when these dwell in the mind with governing power that the ends of Christianity are attained; and that the business of men is to know them, make sure of them, believe them, be pervaded by them,—always with earnest prayer to God for His blessing, and with earnest confession of perverseness, unfruitfulness, blindness;—these are the key-notes of Cunningham's religious life, and of his whole theological activity.

It became, from this time, the main interest of his life to make sure for himself those revealed truths which at once claim so high an authority and serve so important a purpose with reference to the everlasting destinies of man. To ascertain what they are, and appreciate their relation to one another and to the whole body of Scripture material, was in Dr Cunningham's view of things a primary element in the process of dealing fairly with the Scriptures; and it was clearly indispensable on the part of all those who were to exercise influence as intelligent Christians, much more on the part of those who were to teach others. His theological

life was thus a direct result of his deepest personal convictions as an awakened man.

The Scriptures, of course, are not merely and only a fountain of principles. They are also a source of manifold influence, some forms of which may be as hard to define in theory, as they are real and effectual in experience. The felicitous application of Scripture materials, for the purpose of making these various influences vivid to the minds of men, he did not regard as the work for which he was mainly qualified, and to which he was mainly called. He rejoiced in the work being done, and listened with the utmost sympathy and with characteristic humility and admiration to any successful efforts in that direction. But to justify the importance of his own line of labour it was enough to maintain that in all its modes of operating on the minds of men and dealing with them, the Scriptures embody directly or indirectly the assertion of truths. By the nature of the case these are guiding and regulative. Nay, they are the first and fundamental influence which revelation, as such, brings to bear. Without some understanding of them the objects of faith remain unknown; in the degree in which they are misunderstood, all Scripture inflences are liable to be perverted from their proper and designed operation in the minds of men, and some are intercepted and practically lost.

The fact that Dr Cunningham's theological career was conceived and regulated from the point of view referred to, explains several of the peculiarities of his theological writings. Hence, for instance, it came, that according to his mode of conceiving and exhibiting it, theology fell into great masses, disposed about a series of important points or topics—a series of "controversies." This, no doubt, might be regarded as an accidental form of presentation, suggested or dictated merely by the nature of the chair which he happened to fill. I am persuaded, however, that the work of his chair, in this and other respects, corresponded accurately to the work of his own inner man. And what is to be noticed is, that his work was that which *precedes* strict and proper systematising.

He had a great love and value for the systematic divines. He regarded their office as of high importance, and indeed indispensable

in order to the due illustration of the connection and mutual bearings of revealed truths. He drew largely from their armouries, and strongly recommended some of the chief of them to be continually read and meditated. And yet his own mode of presenting matters, was a little different from theirs, distinctly so, perhaps not consciously. The systematic divine is a servant to the truth; he strives to present it in its strength, and order, and unity, so that it may rise like a great temple, manifold yet one, a dwelling-place both for God and man. It is his business to educe the rational and spiritual coherence, which is the attribute of truth, to elucidate which is a service due to truth. At the same time he is also a servant to the scientific interest, to the delight which the mind takes in reducing all particulars to the unity of thought, and summing up all in first principles from which the whole system shall unfold itself with an ideal rigour and completeness. He is and must be a servant to both; and in the second lies his temptation and his danger. The truly great systematists of the Reformed Church, have been most unjustly accused of selecting a few principles for which they thought they could produce Scripture proof, and evolving all the rest by mere logic from those selected principles. It must be ignorance which makes this accusation, since we must not impute wilful misrepresentation. It is true, however, that the business of the systematic divine is to do justice to every real connection perceptible between the truths of Scripture, that may illustrate the harmony and unity of the scheme. And his temptation is to overdo his work. For all human systems, even when founded on Scripture, are provisional and imperfect; not by reason of uncertainty in the revealed verities which enter into them, but by reason of that which remains unrevealed. To true knowledge there belongs some just appreciation of what we do not know, and cannot know as yet. And the temptation of minds assiduously exercised in systematic theology, and living under its prevailing influence, is to presume a completeness in the system which it does not possess; to give too little place to the admission of imperfect knowledge, and of ignorance; and to treat the great incalculables as if they had been measured and adjusted. A systematic divine

is truly great very much in proportion as he combines the systematic faculty and impulse with the just recognition of his limits, and the due expression of that recognition.

The systematic faculty Dr Cunningham had in a very high degree. But the systematic impulse was controlled by the primary aim, which continued to be the permanent aim, of his theologising. For the question was, How much truth, and what truths, has God been pleased to reveal for the obedience of faith, and for the salvation of men? The scientific interest, the mere delight in the manipulation of revealed thought, sank before this great question. To make sure of the verities themselves was the essential thing. These being ascertained, it is well to elucidate the truth and promote its influence by exquisite systematic exhibition of it; just as it is also well to develop great Scripture thoughts which shed light on whole domains and departments of surrounding truth; or to evolve the fitness of the Scripture teaching to glorify God and to meet the wants of man; or to appeal, as Scripture does, to the imagination, the heart, the conscience, in order to make vivid and apparent to men the great spiritual realities; or to trace and unfold the Scripture history, which the truth underlies throughout, that men may gain new points of view, may be stirred by example, may feel that they are dealing, not with cold abstractions, but with a great history of redemption, instinct with living forces, and hastening to its results. All this is well. But the first thing is to consider what truth, and how much, is ascertained from Scripture; and the first and most needful application of the truth ascertained, is to give effect to it as truth believed, to defer to it in the thoughts, and to be guided by it in the life.

It may corroborate this statement as to the tendency of Dr Cunningham's thinking, to notice that he shews no great disposition to make extensive use of those central theological ideas, or modes of view, which, in the hands of great systematists, often shed interesting light over the connections of the system, and serve as the thread on which whole systems are strung. Those ideas have often been unduly pressed by theologians of the second rank, and relied

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on as sources of proof and of inference in a dangerous degree; but it is certain that Dr Cunningham regarded the application of this method, within reasonable bounds, as an extremely interesting and scriptural way of throwing light on theological subjects. Yet he must also have regarded it as subsequent in order to the previous work to which his theological life and his special faculties were devoted. No very extensive references for instance to the peculiarities of the developed federal theology appear in his writings. So, also, in discussing the principles of the Free Church, he is distinguished from most of those who laboured in the same cause, by making somewhat less use of the *theologoumenon* of our Lord's Headship, and taking the issue, for the most part, more directly on the Scripture proof of the functions allotted to the Church and her office-bearers.

Still more manifestly may the influence of Dr Cunningham's aim in theology be traced in the use which he makes, and does not make, of historical materials. I shall be forgiven, I hope, for saying a little on this subject; for it is the point, perhaps, on which there is most danger that he may be misunderstood—perhaps, also, that his attainments may be undervalued.

Looking at the Word of God as delivered to the Church to be understood and applied, he fixed, as I have said, with special earnestness on those great topics with respect to which the just sense of the Scriptures had become matter of controversy; and in that connection he had the deepest sense of the importance of a full acquaintance with the whole range of past discussion, especially, of course, such discussion as had been able and earnest.

"It is, indeed," he wrote on one occasion, "very important to ascertain, as far as possible, the doctrinal views which have prevailed in every country where theology has been studied, and in each successive generation since the canon of Scripture was completed; and it is a gratifying feature in the condition of the Church that so much attention has been given in modern times, especially on the Continent, to the full and scientific treatment of the history of doctrines. The history of opinion can always be turned by competent persons to good account in the investigation of truth. It is important also to ascertain fully the views held even by individuals who have exerted an important influence on their own and subsequent ages—epoch-making men, as they have been called—

such as Origen, Augustine, Abelard, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Arminius, and Socinus. . . . . It is an imperative obligation attaching to every man, according to his means and opportunities, to acquire as accurate and complete a knowledge of the contents of divine revelation as he can; and next to the diligent and prayerful study of the Word of God itself, in the unwearied and impartial application of all legitimate apparatus and auxiliaries, a comprehensive and discriminating investigation of past discussions, conducted by competent parties, affords the best means of discharging this duty and securing this result. Wherever men of ability, learning, and integrity have brought their minds to bear upon the investigation of divine truth, and especially when, by the collision of men of this stamp, the sifting analytic process of controversial discussion has been brought to bear upon the subjects examined, materials are provided, which, by men who have not themselves been involved in the controversies, may be turned to the best account, in forming an accurate estimate, first, of the truth, and then, secondly and separately, of the importance, of the points involved."

Immense reading, therefore, which was his delight, was justified as bearing on his proper work.

But then the object in view, the result to be brought out, was not a survey, however interesting, of the way in which human nature bears and behaves itself under the revelation of God. It was not a survey of the various points of view and modes of approach by which different distinguished men have dealt with the great topics of revelation, considered as throwing light on the varieties of human character, and the physiology, so to say, of opinion and of belief. The object in view was to fix the legitimate process of the human mind on the point controverted, and the result to which such legitimate process will conduct.

Hence everything not bearing on this main object was resolutely set aside and suppressed.

There were aspects of history which Dr Cunningham, though he did not deny their importance, might not have felt himself specially qualified to illustrate and enforce. He passed them by, however, not because he disregarded them, but because they contributed nothing to the one object which he had deliberately selected; and in proof of this, it is relevant to remark, that he also sacrificed to that object strong tendencies of his own mind. The theological detail of history, simply for its own sake, interested him strongly; and he was full of it, beyond

any man in Scotland. Nothing delighted him more than to enlarge on it in answer to questions, and to pour out information as to men, books, views, idiosyncracies, disputes, arguments, and confutations,—all referred to leading principles, and, in fact, marshalled and embattled under the strictest discipline. To one who knows how much this was in him, it is almost pathetic to see so *bare* a book as the "Historical Theology" surviving as his chief monument. The simple account of it is, that he would allow nothing to interfere with the one object in view. Yet long before, his day-dream had been to do quite otherwise. Writing to Brown Patterson in 1826, he had said, speaking of a book of Edmund Law's :—

"I like very much the number of references he makes to authors who have treated of these subjects. It is a kind of knowledge of which I am very fond. I think, if ever I write a book, I will, at the risk of being charged with vanity and affectation, garnish its margin with references as well as my learning may enable me, in the hope of its being read by some persons of the same turn of mind as myself, and affording to them the same sort of pleasure as I have derived from such books as Law's."

After all, I cannot doubt, that if he had lived to bring out the 'Historical Theology," it would have been "garnished" a good deal more amply than it is. As the case stands, the writings of his which most clearly display his reading are the re-published articles in "The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation." They were generally written pretty nearly as rapidly, and at as high a pressure, as his lectures. But bearing reference as they often did to literary controversies, and to contrary allegations regarding matters of fact, he was naturally called upon to adduce evidence, and to enter into the details of literary history. Among these, perhaps the article on Assurance may be named for its remarkable combination of the finest theological judgment, with wide and discriminating reading.

It is in the light of his true object, and the method which it dictated, that his somewhat unceremonious treatment of the Fathers is to be understood. He had read largely in the Fathers in his earlier years, and his deliberate judgment was, that for the

purposes for which they are commonly adduced, *i. e.*, to throw light on questions of Christian doctrine, they have been most absurdly overrated, even by Protestants. He regarded many of the Fathers with great interest and affection, as holy and useful men. He felt, of course, the importance of their writings as the sources of the history of the Church, and as representing its state and experience for several hundred years. And, with reference to theology, he acknowledged the abiding value of their teaching in such momentous points as the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ; though even as regards these, he firmly maintained that the controversy was better stated and handled, on its proper and permanent grounds, by later writers. Beyond this, and for his special purpose, he felt interest in the Fathers simply in so far as he was concerned to prove that they were altogether unfit to be authoritative guides of the faith of men. On all theological topics beyond those mentioned, he believed their works to be, with few exceptions, inconsistent and confused, as regards the just statement and due application of proof in its bearing on questions admitting of debate; and he very deliberately maintained that the perpetual citation of them, contradictory as they are, in order to support particular views on theological subjects is mere "learned lumber." Hence the somewhat rapid dismissal in the early pages of the "Historical Theology," of many topics which the reader might expect to find more ceremoniously treated.

Approaching the problem set for him on the assumptions, first, of the unconditional authority of Scripture, and secondly, that Scripture has definite truths to teach, Dr Cunningham took up the ground of the Reformed Theology; *i. e.*, the Reformed in the stricter sense, as contrasted with the Lutheran as well as the Romish, and also as contrasted with the Arminian deviation which arose from within itself. Had he not been brought to the attitude of unconditional submission, a mind so independent as his would no doubt have built for itself some other house. Readers who belong to a different type of theology may refuse to find it a natural thing, that being brought to that attitude, he reached the result specified. They may regard it as indicating rather that he

acquiesced in a foregone conclusion, and took up the defence of a ready-made position, than that he really and fairly faced and decided for himself the great theological alternatives. Without discussing the question, I shall simply say, that there is nothing in the result to create a presumption against an independent process of Dr Cunningham's own mind as the road to it. That marvellous theology of the Reformed still stands alone, if not as the only coherent theology—a position which might be defended—yet certainly as the only coherent theology developed and formed *upon the assumptions* above referred to. Those assumptions exclude Romanism of course, and they also exclude all the later German systems of the mediating school. But it may be also shewn that both the Lutheran and the Arminian theologies are controlled and biassed by influences not thoroughly consistent with the fundamental assumption here presupposed; and in the case of the Arminian Theology, at least, that may be certainly and clearly established. Be all this as it may, the fact that the theology of the Reformed has proved attractive to so large a mass of extremely able men, proceeding (though under various previous influences) on the same assumptions which we have ascribed to Dr Cunningham, and that they have agreed so largely in the understanding and exposition of what belongs to it, is anything but a presumption against another able mind arriving at the same result by its own independent processes.

The version or presentation of the Reformed Theology which Dr Cunningham took up, was not characterised by any singularities; but it was characterised by great discrimination, and by moderation combined with accuracy and decision. As has been said, it was contemplated as the series of revealed truths, capable of being fairly established as such on grounds of Scripture. Those truths, *considered as truths to be made sure of by human minds from Scripture,* fell into groups which had proved to be connected with one another, and separated in some degree from neighbouring groups, by the experience of controversy. His theology was simply the line of illustration and defence of those main positions which he had become satisfied were the teaching of Scripture, in the

order in which a student of the long debate may naturally make up his mind about them. Hence it was a theology specially exhibiting and asserting the main points, marked to be such by the clearness and evidence of Scripture, or by the manifest momentousness of the alternatives involved. Minor points were temperately stated; not less clearly, but with a marking of their relative place in Scripture teaching, and their subsidiary place in the argument. Such points were tenaciously insisted on only when they were regarded by him as *key* positions—positions, that is, in the assertion or denial of which the controversial fortune of whole realms of truth may prove, and sometimes has proved, to be involved. I may instance his treatment of the doctrine of Universal Atonement.

Speaking of theology in the stricter sense, as distinguished from matters ecclesiastical, there were three principal groups of topics which stood out above others in Dr Cunningham's mind, and have the same prominence in his writings. The construction of Christian doctrine presented by Rome, by the Socinians, by the Arminians, offer the most formidable alternatives in point of plausibility, or the most serious as regards the momentous nature of the issues, with which the Reformed Theology has to contend. To these, therefore, he devoted great attention; the services which he performed as a theologian surveying the course and results of controversy are connected chiefly with them.

As regards the first, the great controversy with Rome, I shall not enter into theological details; of which, indeed, if a beginning were made, there might be no end. It may be remarked, however, that one topic connected with it has no representation in his published works proportioned to the place it occupied in his thinking. I refer to the subject of the Rule of Faith. He passed it by in his historical course, believing, I suppose, that the treatment of that topic by the occupant of another Chair, rendered it advisable for him to devote his strength to the remaining departments of the controversy. He had, however, thoroughly reviewed the question regarding the Rule of Faith, and his views as to the way in which the merits of that question ought to be extricated were as well

considered and mature as they were on any of the topics treated in his published writings.

For the system of theology advocated by Rome, he had the respect due to the proved power of the system, and the splendid array of its defenders. For Anglicanism, *i.e.*, for the High Church system, he had, I think, no respect at all. He never betrayed a disposition to stint his admiration of great divines of the English Church, nor did he fail to acknowledge cordially their services to the common theology of the Reformation. But Anglicanism, in so far as it gives itself out as a distinct system, he certainly looked on as, theologically, a poor affair. On the other hand, he had a deep conviction that to underrate the strength and subtlety of Romish theology was a great mistake; and he was much inclined to ascribe to ignorance the tone of contempt sometimes assumed in this department. He had devoted to the investigation of the question between the two alternatives—that offered by Rome, and that presented by the Reformed Churches—many years of thought and reading. He did not regard the time thus bestowed as misspent. Not that the merits of the question between the two were at all doubtful; but that the skill employed by Rome in making the worse appear the better reason, and the adaptation of her teaching to the infirmities of human nature, had created for her a system of various and complicated defence, not to be mastered nor to be thoroughly exposed without patient toil. Some may have had a more exquisite mastery of special branches and departments of the controversy. Probably no man, in our time, knew it better as a whole.

Looking at Romanism as the pre-eminent instance of plausible corruption of Christianity in a form and method which simulates the truth, and which appeals with great success to various classes and conditions of men, he never hesitated to characterise it as the masterpiece of Satan. He did not mean by this to deny that the Church of Rome retained some great fundamental truths, or to imply a doubt of the existence of true believers within her pale. But he meant to indicate that other false systems, by the very nature of the falsehood they embody, may be indeed more uniformly

fatal; but that Romanism as a marvellous corruption of truth, achieves her triumphs and perpetrates her mischief in a field where other systems would be powerless. He meant also to indicate his sense of the demoralising influence of the system, especially as manifested in those who represent and defend it; and he felt it proper to denounce with unceremonious directness the unscrupulous perfidy which commonly attaches to the statements of fact and argument by Romish divines; which has debased the splendid talents of Bossuet, and which runs like a hereditary taint through the whole race of their lesser controversialists. Of all the vast array of Romish writers, it may be doubted whether any but their historians, and of these the French, drew out in his mind a feeling of *sympathising* appreciation. I might add the Jansenists; but in their case it was a qualified and compassionate sympathy, regard being had to the incurable inconsistency of their position. Yet, I think, I can recall a kind of gleam of appreciative goodwill towards Petavius, that heavy-handed and hard-hitting Jesuit, with his wonderful learning and resource, his comparatively open eye for history, and his vigorous fighting qualities.*

As regards the group of questions commonly associated with the name of Socinus, the Atonement principally drew out Dr Cunningham's strength; for the still more fundamental doctrine of our Lord's divinity might be regarded as less susceptible of formal assault in our day from any persons professing to acknowledge the authority of Scripture. His survey of the controversy regarding the Atonement will be acknowledged by all competent readers to be singularly fitted to produce a clear conception of the relations of the whole argument on this subject. If I may instance in a matter, not of the first importance, I would point to the way in which the topic of the necessity of the Atonement is handled, and the degree of weight given to it. Those who differ from Dr Cunningham on the Calvinistic points, will naturally differ from him also in regard to his assertion of the necessity of admitting Calvinistic principles in order to a full and unencumbered maintenance of the Catholic

* Of him it used to be said, that he treated a heretic as a Knight of Malta treats a Turk.

doctrine of the Atonement. Yet even they will probably admit that his illustration of the point is a most instructive exhibition of the conditions of the argument.

The real and thorough discussion of this subject began, in Dr Cunningham's opinion, with Socinus; and he believed that very little had yet been produced against the Catholic doctrine, as developed by the Reformed theologians, which was not contained substantially in the reasonings of Socinus and his immediate followers. Like most thorough students, he reverted continually to the fundamental and epoch-making books. One of the latest conversations which I held with him before his last illness, illustrated this habit. He laid down a folio as I entered the study. In the course of conversation some theological topic was referred to, on which I wanted him to write. He smiled, took up the folio, and handed it over to me. It proved to be one of the volumes of Socinus. "I am thinking," he said, "of doing something more to the subject of the Atonement: I gave a half promise to that effect at the Assembly of 1860, when they asked me to publish my sermon: I have been resolving to set about it, so I have been going over the 'De Servatore' again. It all begins there."

The third group of those specified involved the whole range of controversy on the special doctrines of Calvinism. Here Dr Cunningham was careful to mark the place which these doctrines occupy, as compared with those on which there has been a more general agreement among Christians. For the truths in which the Reformed agree with the Orthodox Lutherans and the Evangelical Arminians are more fundamental, of more intrinsic importance, and entitled to occupy a more prominent place in the ordinary course of public instruction, than those on which they differ. But yet he maintained, first, that the doctrines of Calvinism are clearly established by evidence of Scripture, and, secondly, that the admission of them is necessary to the full appreciation, and the unencumbered defence and application, even of those other truths. Hence he attached great importance, not only to the successful defence of Calvinism, but to the full and intelligent reception of the doctrines so designated. He felt that it is only as completed

and united in the Calvinistic system that the consistency of Scripture teaching becomes fully apparent; he felt that it is when so completed and united, that the body of truth can effectually claim its proper influence over the human mind. Socinianism refers the salvation of man to man himself. Arminianism, in its various forms, distributes the work, in various degrees, between God and man. "Calvinism is really nothing but the distinct and definite expression of these great principles, that the salvation of sinners is to be ascribed to the sovereign mercy of God; that man can do nothing effectual, in the exercise of his natural powers, for escaping from his natural condition of guilt and depravity, and that he must be indebted for this wholly to the free grace of God, the vicarious work of Christ, and the efficacious agency of the Spirit. All men, of all schools, who have furnished satisfactory evidence of genuine piety, have professed and believed this. Calvinism is just the consistent and distinct embodiment of it."

The most important features of Dr Cunningham's review of this very arduous series of questions and discussions, are perhaps these two:—First, his statement of what Calvinism is, including his explanation of the points, some more and some less important, on which Calvinists have differed; and, secondly, his discrimination of the points which Calvinists are bound to prove, from those which they may be content to leave as simply not disproved,—as involving nothing inconsistent with any known truth. On a class of questions directly involving difficulties which are so formidable, the application of this distinction along the whole line of the debate is of great importance.

In addition to the lectures on this subject in the "Historical Theology," the important series of articles in the "Reformers and Theology of the Reformation" deserves particular attention. Beginning with that on Calvin, they occupy half the volume, and the previous essay on Melancthon is occupied, to a large extent, with the same class of topics. Among them all, perhaps, that on "Calvinism and Arminianism" is the most remarkable, for its vigorous clearing up of the confusions of able and learned men regarding the true question and the true alternatives. That upon

Calvinism and the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity has a special interest, as it exhibits the way in which Cunningham treated the topics which lie on the border-land between Theology and Philosophy. Incidentally it illustrates also the method he applied to questions in which the apparent teaching of Scripture is confronted by difficulties alleged on the ground of natural reason, or instinctive judgments of the mind. His mode of view on this subject cannot be explained without wholly transgressing reasonable limits. Another illustrative instance will be found in the first volume of the "Historical Theology," pp. 597–612.

Standing somewhat visibly apart, by reason of the nature of the subject, but closely conformed to the discussions already touched upon, as regards the principles assumed and the mode of treatment adopted, are the writings left by Dr Cunningham on various branches of the great subject of the Church and the Sacraments. His fullest treatment of the sacraments will be found in the article on Zuingle. It must suffice to say of all these writings, that they proceed upon a resolute regress to the simplicity of Scripture, and a resolute claim for submission to the positive teaching of Scripture, when fully ascertained. More fully perhaps than in some of his other writings is the principle brought out, on which Cunningham laid great stress, that honest dealing with the Scriptures requires us to take pains to bring out the full sense and effect of its teaching, and not rest contented with that which lies on the surface only. Large as was the share of Cunningham's strength expended on this field, our limits forbid further review. Let it be noticed only, how Cunningham maintained that on this class of subjects the principles of Presbyterianism are not narrow and minute, but great, even the greatest of which the subject itself admits.

In connection with these theological views, it is easy to understand the value which Dr Cunningham set on the labours, first, of Calvin, and, secondly, of the greater theologians of Calvin's school, who, during the seventeenth century, wrought out in detailed application the principles of their master. He valued Calvin far beyond any theologian,—for his actual achievements in the exposition and defence of truth, and for the steadiness of aim and the

comprehensiveness of view which he manifested in the course of those labours. He loved the man, and guarded his honour jealously. Yet after all, he commemorates him oftenest as the "instrument" of bestowing on the Church so much additional clearness of view as to the truth revealed in the Scriptures. He conceded some defects on minor points; and here he found him supplemented by such divines as Turretine, Heidegger, Witsius, and Mastricht. "Their works are based wholly on the theology of the Reformation, but they carry it out to its completion." He did not always find in their works the comprehensive view, the wise proportioning of details, which he recognised in Calvin. There he placed them beneath their master. Yet he maintained their works to be really, after all, "the corner and copestone of theological science, viewed as an accurate, comprehensive, and systematic exposition and defence of the doctrines revealed in the Word of God." Newer theories, produced since their time, he regarded as capable of being disproved; and he believed the discussion on all important points, so far as it has yet gone, to be substantially anticipated by their writings. It was a rather remarkable thing to observe the independence and sense of mastery with which he weighed and appreciated their positions and arguments on particular points, unhesitatingly sifting out what he found unsatisfactory, along with the almost unqualified adherence to their theology as a whole. It satisfied his judgment, and since it did so, he utterly put away the idea of claiming originality for himself. Rather, before an age that is vain of its progress and its initiative, he delighted to defend the position that the earlier masters had "settled and set by" every important question yet raised, and that the moderns had merely fallen into blundering and confusion, where they professed to discard and despise their teaching.

And yet there is a real originality in his exposition of the tenor of Reformed Theology; but it lies more perhaps in what he leaves out as compared with his predecessors of the same school, than in what he puts in. Conceive the theology of the Reformation and of the Reformed Confessions expounded, developed, defended by successive generations of theologians thoroughly at one in general

spirit and tendency. Conceive this work with all the positions and the arguments it embodies, reviewed and criticised by some such shrewd and competent mind, jealous of exaggerations, hostile to needless differences and divisions, as Le Blanc. Le Blanc, indeed, deals only with parts and aspects; but the course of controversy and of later retrospect has discharged, in a more dispersed and in a less circumspect manner, for the whole field, the same office which Le Blanc performed so compactly and thoroughly for the parts he dealt with. Then conceive Cunningham—more in sympathy with the first class of labourers than with the second, yet well aware how much may be gained from criticism, whether of the cautious or of the hostile order—conceive him scrutinising the process, and weighing its results. He judges the Reformed Theology to be unshaken, but he benefits by the process to which it has been subjected; and in the end he sets down that which, after all, in his opinion, ought resolutely to be adhered to, as the essential line of position and argument. This, or something like this, is the service which Cunningham performed. His work was to disentangle the essential argument of the Reformed Theology from the mass of disquisition, of contemplation, of speculation, of sentiment, of moral and spiritual principle, and of biblical illustration and amplification, into which it has effloresced. Nor is it too much to say that that theology must face the age, must be tried (and must itself in turn try what offers) on some such exposition of its argumentative merits as that which Cunningham has supplied.

Much as he admired the theologians of this school, there was a class of those who sometimes shelter under their wing for whom he had no such admiration. "There are those who refuse to practise any independent thinking, who slavishly submit to mere human authority, who never venture to entertain the idea of deviating from the beaten track, and denounce, as a matter of course, all who do so, who can see only one side of a subject, or perhaps only one corner of one side of it, who are incapable of forming a reasonable estimate of the comparative importance of different truths and different errors, who contend for all truths and denounce all errors with equal vehemence, who never modify or retract their opinions,

who have no difficulties themselves and no sympathy with the difficulties of others. We meet occasionally with bigots of this sort, and they are very despicable and very mischievous."* Passages like this his students remember well, and the peculiar energy with which they were delivered. Indeed, one of the hardest things he ever said of the "men of latitude" was, that the "general run of them have, upon the whole, been as ignorant, as narrow-minded, and as self-conceited as the bigots."

To say, as Dr Cunningham often said, that on all important theological questions the argument, so far as it has yet gone, was substantially anticipated and exhausted by the writers of the seventeenth century, will seem to many an utterly unreasonable statement. The vindication of it, however, is not far to seek. There is a strong tendency in the present age to vary from the old assertions; nay, to find the old questions superseded by new ones; but that tendency is not connected with much fresh argument bearing on the proper merits of the several theological questions. The fluctuations on particular doctrines arise generally from a disposition to throw doubt on the sources, or on the fundamental conditions, of all theological argument. Grant that there is a revealed theology, really revealed, and you will understand Cunningham's assertion, even if you think that he makes it in too unqualified terms. But the doubts of this age affect that previous concession; and it is by this process that the argument on detailed doctrines is influenced. It may be proper, before concluding, to say a word or two on the relation in which Cunningham stood to these tendencies.

The position which Cunningham maintained, and which the tendencies in question assail, is this, that there is a body of truth delivered in the Scriptures capable of being fixed by proper investigation and discussion; which, being ascertained, is to be had regard to and relied upon in our whole thinking and acting. There are of course other elements in the Scriptures besides the dogmatic, but they are to be added to the latter and wedded to it—they are not to supersede or expel it.

Opposed to this are several assumptions, which it would be more

* Reformers, &c., p. 47.

easy to deal with if they were always declared. One is, that religion at its highest, whether as it existed in Jesus and his apostles or as it exists in their followers, is no more than an intuition of what is in human nature at all times, what is given in the human spirit. The views reached by such intuitions may be, it is admitted, most important and useful; but they must be amenable ultimately to criticism, or philosophy proceeding on the principles of human nature, as to their proper judge. With this theory the position is naturally connected, that the Scriptures are not properly, at least not directly, a source of truths, but rather of moral and religious impulse; that they simply embody the manifestations of a high religious life, whether that life is or is not supposed to owe something of its peculiarity to supernatural influences. All this Cunningham regarded simply as substantial infidelity. He met it with the proof that Jesus and his apostles clearly claim to teach in God's name, and with the proof that they had a right to be listened to as authentic messengers from God. And he regarded it as a most unwise betrayal of great interests to deal with these doubts in any other form than as doubts on the fundamental question of the character and claims of the Scriptures, and of their divinely-accredited authors.

Closely connected with what has now been mentioned is the view that theology can be no more and no other than the speculative theory or philosophy of religion. Religion here denotes our conscious relation to the unseen, or else the mode of life which comes into experience in virtue of that relation. It may be supposed to be fixed for us, either by natural consciousness or by the influence of the Scriptures. Either way the view specified was equally foreign to Dr Cunningham's whole convictions. Theology for him was not a theory, a speculation, a philosophy, whether of things natural or of supernatural. It was with him the series of *revealed truths ordered,* ordered according to what their own nature and mutual relations require. That they may be understood and ordered they must be ascertained. For wise reasons they have been so revealed, that investigation and considerate study prove necessary to gather them fully from the Scriptures. Until investigation has taken

place, men's views may remain tolerably vague even on important points. But investigation first of all reduces all thinking men to distinct alternatives; and secondly, duly used, it results in the ascertainment of what the Scripture means to teach us. Appeal is always competent to the Scriptures themselves; fresh investigation is always open. And yet upon the great leading points investigation may, in point of fact, exhaust the evidence and substantially settle the question. *And it has done so.*

Dr Cunningham, as we have seen, attached the greatest importance to thorough exegetical training and constant study of the Scriptures. In his own pulpit work he was a constant, exact, and most effective expositor. He believed that exegetical methods were capable of continual improvement, and that improved methods must yield valuable results in various respects. At the same time he decidedly disbelieved that any very important discoveries, fitted to revolutionise theology, remained to be made in this department; and he believed it to be neither reasonable in itself, nor comporting well with the ends designed in Scripture, to expect it. However, as a Protestant, he was always prepared to defer to truth,—willing to meet any discovery involving the introduction of something new or the banishment of something old, and to consider it on the merits. But he was by no means disposed to submit patiently to the mere assertion that improved exegetical methods had spirited away the being and foundations of the old theology, and left us with a new conception of the whole realm of Christian truth. He regarded assertions of this kind as mere contrivances to throw all things indefinitely loose. He treated them, therefore, without any ceremony, as unprincipled efforts to steal an advantage. It was quite different with any fair attempt to prove in detail, that the Scripture evidence relied upon in behalf of the Reformed theology was insufficient, or that Scripture favoured a distinctly different alternative. That was to be met as a fair foe, vigorously indeed, but with a full acknowledgment of its right to be heard.

Perhaps an assumption more fitted than those already mentioned to make way with religious persons is, that religious truth is not capable of being embodied in dogmatic forms, not at least in any

that are unconditionally and permanently valid. Religious truth involves so much that is emotional, so much that is moral, so much that belongs to a lofty region where distinct thought fails us, that it is perverted by the process of being reduced to positive and definite propositions. Scripture, therefore, was not designed to furnish these; it ought not to be used as if it were designed to furnish them. Hence arises a general doubt as to the validity of positive dogmatic findings. And this, perhaps, is one of the most plausible forms in which the principle that Christianity is "not a doctrine but a life" operates on the public mind. Dr Cunningham met this with the assertion, that those who say so little know what they undertake. They must meet the whole detail of proof, in connection with every doctrine one by one, that Scripture on each point *has* a specific doctrine to deliver. "It is a task," he once said, "which they will probably find to be a little beyond their knowledge and abilities."

Indeed, he held the position criticised to be, under a guise of modesty, one of the most insolent of sweeping assumptions. He regarded it as not the less so, in view of the fact that those who announce it have both dogma and system of their own—usually a vague semi-Pelagianism—and seem to object to doctrine very much in order that, relieved of strict doctrinal responsibilities, they may hold a discretionary system of their own. At all events he held it to be absurd to assume that a revelation which presents objects to faith, should be held unlikely to present certain and definite verities by which these objects are defined, and according to which they should be dealt with by the mind. This presumption against dogma is sometimes grounded on the allegation that religious belief must depend on a spiritual perception of spiritual realities, and on a taste to which divine things are congenial,—qualities which cannot be produced or secured by any form of dogma. With all the Reformers, Cunningham held in the strongest way the necessity of spiritual quickening in order to right dealing with divine truth, and he held that direct divine interposition was necessary to produce that quickening. But he maintained, not the less, that truth is delivered in terms intelligible to the human mind; is established by testimony of Scripture; and proves to be

both conducive as a means to the spiritual quickening, and to be in turn verified by it when it has been imparted.

With respect, therefore, to the modern disclaimer of Logic in Theology, Cunningham treated it very deliberately as gross nonsense. It may be admitted that he had some considerable interest in declining to be drawn into that disclaimer; for it would have been, for him, equivalent to theological suicide, or nearly so. But it has yet to be made apparent how theology, any more than other departments of ordered and sifted truth, can dispense with the services of that discipline of regulated thought; or how, indeed, any one who thinks—a process, apparently, which Scripture encourages—can do otherwise than either think logically or think illogically. Till that appears, men need not be very solicitous on the score of their right to be logical. To avert misunderstanding, however, it is important to observe that what Cunningham pleaded for was no special or narrow method. He pleaded for application of evidence, by due steps of progression; applying it in the way, and with the limitations, which its own nature demanded, and with a due regard to the nature of the case under discussion, and the various alternatives of which it fairly admitted. He had no difficulty in weighing the possibility that modes of reasoning admissible and conclusive in one case, might be more precarious in another. But that was to be made out specifically on grounds, not assumed vaguely and generally as a means of bringing darkness over the whole field of revealed truth.

If the modern hesitation on dogmatic can be separated from the general assumptions and allegations already noticed, then it must be conceived as grounded on a doubt with respect to the subjective human faculty concerned in carrying on the dogmatic process. That is to say, a doubt is cherished how far the human mind can apply with safety and certainty its ordinary processes to the discussion of truths so great, and touching so much on mystery,—to the work of defining and combining ideas so transcendent,—as those which the Scripture presents. If the competency of doing this is not in general denied, yet the possibility of carrying it very far with safety is doubted: and this doubt finds its corroboration in the im-

pression that, in various instances, theologies have manifestly erred by over-confidence. To be more particular: Protestant dogmatic, in so far as it goes beyond mere allegation of Scripture statements, proceeds very much by the assumption of alternatives, given, as is alleged, by the nature of the case: "It must be thus, or thus," "Scripture must mean this, or this," and the alternatives being sifted, you get the result by a disjunctive syllogism. It is doubted, then, whether on many of these topics we are competent to state completely and exhaustively the alternatives which are open; and if not, the conclusion must manifestly be insecure. This is probably the form in which the tendency to reduce the *quantum* of dogmatic certainty operates now-a-days in the minds of men who adhere to the authority of Scripture, and desire to receive unconditionally the teaching it delivers. The critical philosophy, and all that has followed it, very manifestly tends to produce such a reserve in the modern mind.

I do not know that any passage can be referred to in which Cunningham dealt with this precise phase of sentiment. Yet there can be little doubt how he would have dealt with it, or how he dealt in fact with the considerations upon which it relies. He admitted the possibility of over-confident inference, of over-bold ratiocination in divine things, and he regarded it as a great evil. But he would have maintained that the only remedy and safeguard is to keep the danger in view, and to be cautious and wary, in each particular case, in not passing those bounds which Scripture itself seems to indicate, which the nature of the case dictates. It resolves into a conscientious and careful application of the general rules for the good conduct of the understanding. Scripture offers us truths of which it plainly calls us to take intellectual possession, with a view to apply them, and to live in them. That cannot take place without the perception, within a certain range more or less extensive, of the results of those truths, what they bear upon, what comes of them, what they affirm, what they deny. Neither can objects of thought be considered without alternatives arising, between which the mind must elect. There may be much to suggest caution: due caution may heretofore have been, by many, too much neglected.

Let all legitimate heed be given to it now. But all this merely amounts, at best, to a stricter application of the rules of reasoning and evidence, combined with a more strict advertence to the possibilities of error. The somewhat broad handling of theology by Cunningham in his published works, the anxiety to avoid resting wide conclusions on narrow arguments, the circumspection with which he formed his positions, his explicitness up to the point to which he saw his way, and then his resolute halt rather than enter cloud-land,—these were *his* tribute to the difficulties suggested. Whether he has paid *due* tribute to them, is a question on which men will differ. But this was the *kind* of tribute, and the only kind, which he would have consented to pay. For, on the other hand, he had no confidence in some methods of seeking security which the moderns affect. It has been thought that the limits of safe procedure may be assigned by means of a philosophical criticism of the implement, the human intelligence. The distinction between the reason and the understanding, of which so much has been made, supplies an instance. Cunningham believed that Scripture, speaking to the human intelligence as it exists in fact, is to be dealt with by that intelligence according to the best notions it can form of honest, cautious, and thorough dealing with truth. But he believed that philosophical criticism of the faculty for the purposes indicated, first, leads to no certainty, but only to new debate; and, secondly, becomes usually the means of introducing fresh sources of fallacy; indeed, of introducing unawares a new judge and criterion of truth. Such criticism may be a useful and honourable philosophical enterprise; but it has not furnished, and is not likely to furnish, any evident and certain canon, additional to the ordinary rules for the conduct of the mind, to guide it in its dealings with divine truth. As to the distinction between the reason and the understanding, and other distinctions of the same general description, and intended to serve the same purposes, he neither affirmed nor denied them, as philosophical distinctions; but he looked on the applications of them to control theological determinations as for the most part no better than a juggle for the pur-

pose of intercepting the just influence of Scripture statement on human belief.

It is this general doubt, in one or other of its forms, rather than any new evidence, that has operated on the dogmatic complexion of our time, in so far as it varies decidedly from that of a former period. The considerations pleaded of old from the declarations of Scripture and the "analogy of faith" have had less weight accorded to them of late by many, and have not been accepted as decisive. In consequence of this, the mere likelihoods suggested by natural reason, or by the tendencies of current philosophy, have proportionally weighed more heavily in the scale. Hence the tendency to a mixture of Pelagian, Socinian, and Mystic elements; for these are the systems which come forward when Scripture retires from a decisive place of authority, and our natural impressions are relied on in its room. Naturally, also, Rome stands ready to catch men on the recoil from the uncertainties of all those systems.

These various assumptions, therefore, however intended, seemed to Dr Cunningham only to have the effect of obscuring or intercepting the office of the Scriptures as a revelation of truth to men, and of throwing men so much the more upon the conjectures of their own minds, and upon the impressions suggested by the combined influences under which they happen to be living. He regarded them all as circuitous ways of getting rid of the control of Scripture: all the more abhorrent to his mind because they brought in error by the process of introducing interminable vagueness and confusion. Hence, just as his theology, *i.e.* his summing up of Scripture teaching, resulted in the ascription of the undivided glory of salvation to God; so the views on which he proceeded as to the source and condition of all theologising, summed themselves up in the assertion of a direct communication of truth to the human mind by a divine informant; which truth supersedes the uncertain conjectures of natural reason; has absolute right to form the thoughts and direct the life; is alone, and in contrast to all else, the guide to the feet and the light to the path, in so far as man is called to deal with questions that concern his spiritual relations and his eternal destiny.

From these remarks, the relation of Dr Cunningham to the prevailing tendencies of the German schools will be understood. He was not a German scholar, his training having fallen a little before the general prevalence of that acquirement. His acquaintance with their writings, therefore, extended only to those which have been translated, and (in the case of the older Rationalists, for instance) those which were written in Latin. Perhaps if he had been conversant with the whole range of German authorship in the original, it would have made no great difference as to the work of his peculiar field. To a very large part his simple reply would have been,—was, in fact,—that unless the work could be done on more secure principles, unless some more certain and authoritative standard of appeal could be resorted to, it was not worth doing at all. That remark applies to the speculative and critical theological constructions. For their labours in the field of Church history, he felt the respect which every competent judge must feel. And with respect to their most remarkable application of labour and ingenuity to all subjects connected with the Scriptures, feeling that much was most valuable, and much also pernicious, he was deeply persuaded of the importance of their work being mastered and thoroughly discussed. It was not his department, but it was work to be done. In various conversations he expressed his conviction, in connection with the setting up of the Exegetical Professorship in 1857, that a thorough examination of the whole results of German investigation, in its bearing on the canon, executed in a calm and judicial spirit, was one of the most important services required at that period.

But it is more than time that these remarks should close. They have been partly directed to the object of indicating the kind of service which Dr Cunningham's writings are fitted to perform. The Memoir, as a whole, has greatly failed of its end, if it has not left some impression of the kind of service he rendered, and the kind of influence he exerted while he lived among us. It depended on what he was—his sincerity, courage, clearness, and force of understanding, combined with unpretending devotedness to his Master; and on what he did—which was, in the main, to promote to the utmost of his power clear, resolute, and consistent thinking on all matters

involving questions of principle. From him his fellows sought the light which the precedents of the past can throw on present controversy and present duty. Against his strong and furnished mind, they tested the impressions which they found it needful to sift and review. They found in his being with them on any question a vindication of their position, as at all events an honest and a manly one, deserving the respect due to such a position, and always due to his. They looked to him authoritatively to put aside confusion, exaggeration, and half knowledge. They triumphed in the force with which he bore conviction into minds on the torrent of his argument, when principles were to be vindicated or prejudices dispelled. In all these forms of service he upheld our Free Church principles, our Scottish Calvinism and Presbyterianism, our common Christianity. And we still sorely feel the blank which was made when he was taken away.

# APPENDIX.

## APPENDIX A (P. 114).

*Original Notes of Speech on Patronage*, 1837.

"Subject of Patronage is eminently a question of principle, and should be argued as such. Propose to shew that there are certain great truths and principles that should regulate the appointment of ministers, which are violated by the present law, which we are bound to assert and strive to carry into effect.

"Our object is usually called the abolition of Patronage, and to prevent cavilling, explain. Patronage means right of man, not member of the church, and merely upon ground of civil and secular qualifications, to regulate appointment of ministers. This is an unsound principle, which should be opposed, and we oppose the present law, and ask its abolition, because it proceeds upon this principle. Use this to expose folly of referring to Cadder and Rutherglen and Lord Moncrieff on 2d Book of Discipline and 1649, pp. 173–179.

"Present law proceeds upon unsound and erroneous principle, viz., the lawfulness of allowing men to appoint ministers merely on the ground of property, without any other test whatever, and who are, or may be, known as enemies. This is principle of present law, and must be defended by its supporters. Call upon them to face it, and stand by it.—Dr M'Crie, pp. 7 and 8.

"But although present system cannot be defended, and men admit Patronage to be a grievance, yet they are unwilling to say so publicly, and act accordingly. Must therefore go on expounding principles till they find their way to men's understandings, and influence conduct. Appointment of ministers so important that it should be carefully investigated, and so far as possible, rightly settled. Might expect to find something on this subject in Scripture, if not in direct precept, at least in general principle. And do not hesitate to assert that patronage is inconsistent with Scriptural views of the spirituality, freedom, and independence of Christ's kingdom,—of the authority which He exercises over it, and the rights which He has conferred upon it.

"Need not prove in a Presbyterian Church general Scripture truth with regard to spirituality, freedom, and independence of Christ's Church. Anti-Erastianism of forefathers at Westminster Assembly. Take this for granted, and shew, that when rightly understood and fairly applied, it involves a condemnation of patronage, and proves that it should not operate in affairs of Church.

"Common sense dictates that it is essential to the freedom of any society to have its own office-bearers. The want of this is slavery, which Church may submit to, but should never homologate or approve.

"Independence of Church implies that there be no foreign interference in spiritual matters. Election of ministers is so. 'My kingdom, not of this world,' implies it. The truth upon this point is beautiful medium between Erastianism and Voluntaryism. *In sacris* and *circa sacra*. Scriptural mode leaves it to apostles and people. Substantially what we hold, that none should have anything to do with the matter but the presbytery, session, and people.

"Patronage then interferes with Christ's authority over His Church, and the rights He has conferred upon them."

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## APPENDIX B (P. 205).

Dr Cunningham's oral statement to the Committee appointed to meet him had been so reported, that he seemed to pledge the Free Church positively to renounce State endowments henceforward. He wrote, therefore, to the *New York Observer* to correct this misunderstanding, and offered the following as his deliberate statement :—

"1. That, with the views we entertained, we could not say that we never could in any circumstances enter into alliance with the State, and receive State assistance.

"2. That we never would receive such assistance on any terms, expressed or understood, which were in the least inconsistent with the free and full exercise of all our rights and liberties as a Church of Christ.

"3. That we could scarcely conceive anything more improbable than that the rulers of Great Britain, or of any of the kingdoms of this world, would be willing to give assistance and support to a Church on terms and conditions with which it would be lawful for a Church of Christ to comply, and that this improbability was so great as practically to amount, in our judgment, to an impossibility.

"4. That even if the State were to make to us proposals which, viewed in themselves, involved nothing that was, in our apprehension, inconsistent with the full recognition of all our rights and liberties as a Church of Christ, we would attach very great weight in deciding upon them, to the consideration of the way and manner in which our acceptance or refusal would bear on our relation to the other Churches of Christ—as there is good reason to believe that the maintenance of a strict relation between the Churches of Christ in a community would have a far more important bearing upon the interests of religion and the welfare of Christ's people than anything the civil power could do.

"The question of National Establishments is, with the views and in the circumstances of the Free Church, a purely theoretical one ; and of this I feel confident, that before the period come, if it ever come, when the rulers of Great Britain shall make to the Free Church proposals which she could for a moment entertain, the Churches of Christ in that country will have attained to such a unity of sentiment, and such a cordiality of affection for each other, as to secure united and harmonious

action in regard to all important matters that may bear upon the welfare of each and all of them."

The following extracts from American newspapers will illustrate the mode of view and feeling prevailing among those who received him, and to which Dr Cunningham's explanations were addressed. The Resolutions first quoted followed his oral explanations; the others were subsequent to his published statement.

From the *New York Observer*, January 13. 1844. Resolutions of Committee of Synod of New York and New Jersey :—

"1. [Expresses satisfaction with Dr Cunningham's statements generally.]

"2. We are led to believe, with great rational conviction, that the present position of the Scottish Church is final and permanent, as divided from the domination of the British Crown, and rendered irreversible. The only reasonable prospect is not retrogradation, but progress. In no juxtaposition of events or things is the consequence to be apprehended as at all probable that the present Free Church of Scotland will ever recur to her former league of union with the magistracy of the nation. We trust that the 'Son hath made them free indeed,' and we confide in God to prosper and protect them for ever."

From the *Philadelphian Presbyterian*, January 27. 1844. Report of Resolutions of meeting at Easton, addressed by Dr Cunningham :—

"1. [Expresses sympathy and admiration for Free Church sacrifices.]

"2. Resolved that the Voluntary system of Church support, as established by the Apostles, united with equal and ample protection to every religious creed, is an attribute of a free Christian state, and the birthright of a free Christian people."

Then follow Resolutions bearing on practical measures for affording aid to the Free Church and her congregations.

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## APPENDIX C (P. 233).

"Let me remind you of what is the direct and primary object of a theological seminary, and a theological curriculum. It is to secure that those who pass through it shall possess in a respectable measure the mental qualifications which are thought necessary on entering the office of the ministry. This is the great primary object for which theological seminaries are established, by a regard to which their arrangements ought to be regulated, and for the accomplishment of which they may fairly be held responsible. God forbid that I should undervalue the importance of spiritual qualifications for the office of the ministry. I have repeatedly endeavoured to enforce as plainly as I could the sinfulness of men entering the ministry unless they are animated by genuine piety and devotedness, and influenced by love to Jesus Christ and a desire to save souls; and I have endeavoured also to enforce the sinfulness of the Church committing the ministry of reconciliation to any but those who, so far as man can judge, are, at least, believing men, and apt to teach. But there is nothing inconsistent with this in the position, that the implanting of genuine piety in man's heart is not the direct primary object for which theological seminaries were established, and for the accom-

plishment of which they are responsible. That object, as I have said, is to secure to all the students under their care a respectable measure of those mental qualifications which may be thought necessary in the particular age and country in which they are established. There are, indeed, collateral objects of no small importance, which may, and which should be promoted, by the arrangements of a theological curriculum, and especially by the general spirit pervading all these arrangements ; and the first and most important of the collateral objects—collateral, I mean, in this particular aspect with reference to the direct primary object of a theological seminary, though in itself and with reference to a wider standard of judgment transcendently important—is that of originating and fostering personal piety in the hearts of the students. To this object it is all the more important to have special and constant regard, because it seems to have been no uncommon thing amongst us in times past for young men to be first awakened to a deep and real sense of divine and eternal things, while they were engaged in the prosecution of their theological studies. Again, a theological curriculum may be so arranged and conducted as—while effecting fully its proper primary object—to call forth such aptitude and love for professional studies as will effect that some of them, who may be favoured by a combination of the necessary abilities and the benefit of external propitious circumstances, should reach distinguished eminence, and make valuable additions to professional literature. And, finally, with reference to these collateral objects, the exercises of a theological seminary may be conducted in such a way as to foster in the students a manly, honourable, elevated, and generous tone of sentiment and feeling, and an enlarged sympathy with everything that is excellent, lovely, and of good report, the want of which has tended sometimes to bring discredit even upon what there is good reason to regard as genuine piety. All these collateral objects may be promoted and fostered in a theological seminary, and I trust they will not be overlooked in this one ; but I must repeat, that the direct primary object of a theological seminary and a theological curriculum—that by a regard to which its arrangements ought to be regulated, and for the accomplishment of which it may be held responsible—is that the students should all acquire a respectable measure of those qualifications for the ministry which may be tested and ascertained by examination.

"Under this general head, the more specific objects to which the arrangements of a theological curriculum may be directed may be said to be these three : first, and more generally, the communication of that amount of professional knowledge which would make it becoming and safe to sanction a young man entering on the work of the ministry, the want of which would be discreditable and injurious to his professional respectability ; more particularly, in the second place, the initiating the students into critical and accurate investigation of the meaning of the sacred Scriptures in the original languages, upon sound principles, and conducting them in this way over some considerable portion of the inspired volume ; and, thirdly, instructing them in the general scheme and leading features of scriptural doctrine or revealed truth, in accordance, of course, with the symbolical books of the particular Church with which the seminary is connected."

A great part of this address dwells with special emphasis on the absolute necessity

of a large place being given to the principles and practice of Biblical interpretation in the arrangements of a theological college. After expounding most forcibly the various grounds on which this necessity rests, he added :—

"The right and only adequate provision for securing the object would be : first, that students should possess a competent knowledge of the Hebrew as well as of the Greek language, before being allowed to enter the Divinity Hall ; secondly, that a well-digested and orderly consecutive course of instruction in the literature a exegesis of the Old and New Testament should be carried through the whole four years of the theological curriculum running parallel to the four years of instruction in systematic theology formerly described. To do this fully,—in accordance with the general principle of providing for all students suitable instruction adapted to the stage of their progress in each of the four years of the curriculum,—we would require two Professors of Exegetical as well as of Systematic Theology. I am well aware that there are great practical difficulties in the way. These difficulties resolve ultimately into this, that the circumstances of most of our students prevent them from being able to devote their time for three or four years principally to theological study ; and yet this seems to be almost indispensable to a complete theological education adapted to the necessities and demands of the present day. Indeed, if I were asked to describe generally a scheme of theological education, I would say that it was a provision or system of arrangements whereby young men, after suitable preliminary preparation, devoted their time for three or four years principally to theological study, upon a well-digested plan, under intelligent guidance and superintendence, with full access to books, and in circumstances and with accompaniments suited to stimulate and encourage and test them."

## APPENDIX D (P. 241).

The following statement was made by Dr Cunningham in the General Assembly, May 24. 1845 :—

"It will be recollected that last year the House passed an interim Act regarding the Formula, which was transmitted to Presbyteries, that they might carefully examine it, and transmit their opinions to the present Assembly. I believe that a good many have considered it—some approving of it, and others making suggestions with a view to some amendment. These reports should now be subjected to a most careful and deliberate examination. There are one or two points bearing on this subject worthy of the most serious consideration. The House is aware that we have had negotiations with other bodies—with the Presbyterian Seceders—regarding our adherence to the Westminster Confession. It is not yet time to bring these negotiations before the Assembly ; but I may state that some of these bodies require a fuller statement than we have yet given as to some points of the Westminster Confession, to which they attach much importance. The principal of these, I may state, is what is called the Second Reformation. We should, therefore, I think, draw out something fuller than has yet been given, expressive of our views

on this point.* A certain degree of jealousy, I need scarcely add, is entertained by some bodies who do not agree with the Churches to which I have alluded, respecting some of the principles in the Westminster Confession. These have reference chiefly to the power, the authority, and the functions vested in the civil magistrate. We have been accustomed to maintain and adhere to the whole Westminster Confession ; and we are confident, that when it is calmly investigated—by the light of history and a knowledge of the controversies then in progress—that it does not countenance, on the part of the civil magistrate, an Erastian control over the Church which he favours, nor does it countenance the persecution of the Church of which he does not approve. At the same time, the statements on this subject are expressed in strong language. They may be liable to misconstruction, and therefore, as I have said, it requires a full knowledge of the state of the times, and of the controversies which agitated men's minds, to arrive at the true meaning. Other Churches have taken offence at our adherence to the language of the Westminster Confession. We do not, and cannot, make any change in that adherence ; but, at the same time, some statement might be prepared for the satisfaction of other Churches which have not considered the matter so deeply as we have done, or at least ought to have done, shewing that we do not hold Erastian principles nor intolerance,—shewing, in fact, that we countenance Erastianism as little on the one hand, as we countenance the principles of persecution on the other. Some such explanation as this is due to those Churches which have regarded that language as strong, and due also to men who are not so well informed on the subject as we are. It would require much elaboration to embrace all the subject ; but I think we might embody, in a sentence or two, the meaning which we attach to these passages, instead of being required to enter into a lengthened exposition, as we now do, or to detail old histories, or the controversies of former times. I propose this Committee with a view to see whether some preamble might not be prefixed to the Formula—not, certainly, to make any change in the language of the Formula itself—and enable other Churches to give, as we are prepared to do, an unqualified adherence to the existing Presbyterian Standards."

Afterwards he said—

"With regard to these two points (viz. the imputation that the Confession teaches Erastianism and persecution), they would adhere strenuously to the statement made by the venerable Dr M'Crie, which was to this effect—that they could have no possible objection to an explanation of the true import and meaning of parts of the Confession of Faith, provided, first, they did not imply that the construction of those parts, when fairly interpreted, really implied persecution and Erastianism ; and provided, in the second place, that any explanation given did not explain away the great national duty of rulers to maintain and support the true religion."

* This was attempted in a Testimony at next Assembly, which was, however, withdrawn. Notice of it occurs in page 257.

## APPENDIX E (P. 342).

In justice to Dr Cunningham, I may add, that his conduct is not to be judged upon the assumption that the improvements which he recommended in 1848 embodied all that he regarded as desirable or attainable in the matter of the curriculum. If that were so, it might be argued, that although the Free Church now possesses three Divinity Halls, the arrangements then recommended have been carried out, and that this affords proof that there was no incompatibility between the two objects, such as was asserted by Dr Cunningham. Dr Cunningham, it is known, was not satisfied that the curriculum as enacted was, or could be, efficiently carried out in all the Halls with the existing teaching strength. Therefore he would not have admitted that the unimpaired curriculum had been combined with the multiplication of Divinity Halls. But, besides that, he would not have admitted that the curriculum, as planned in 1848, exhausted all that the Church should do. His plan would have been to watch, in one institution, the working of the system, and to improve or remodel, as points emerged on which a decided opinion could be formed ; and this process he regarded as rendered practically impossible, as soon as several Halls had been set up. Arrangements for securing that Hebrew should be acquired by students before entering the Hall, so that the Professor of Hebrew might be, in fact, a Professor of Old Testament Interpretation, was one of the *desiderata*. No one who knew Dr Cunningham can doubt, moreover, that after other amendments were secured, he would have fixed his own attention and that of the Church on the length of the summer vacation, and endeavoured to plan methods for utilising some portion of that time, which in many cases is altogether wasted. So also he would, no doubt, have strongly drawn the attention of the Church to a great want, which, if funds for the purpose were disposable, would be of the first importance. He drew attention to it in 1848. Afterwards it dropped comparatively out of sight, probably because he thought it vain to speak of it. His words were these: –

"There is also another thing, and that is, some provision for affording to young men from the Highlands an opportunity for securing a classical and mathematical education, of the means of which they are at present to a large extent destitute. We know well that there are many parts of the Highlands in a state of extreme destitution as regards a gospel ministry ; and we must lay our account with providing these districts with ministers from among themselves. But we must superintend the process ; we must overlook the work. And we find that when young men are brought under serious impressions, and indicate natural capacities such as may seem to hold out a good prospect of their being useful in the Church, the first great difficulty is the want of an opportunity for getting a classical and mathematical education. That is a grand difficulty ; and I believe it prevents many a young man of Christian principle and mental vigour from coming forward, who, but for this difficulty, would come forward to supply the destitution of the means of grace which exists. The Church, if it could afford it, should provide for these things."

This practical want has recently been pressed again upon the Church by Mr M'Phail, of Pilrig Church; and a scheme of his for supplying it has begun to operate in a hopeful manner.

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## APPENDIX F (P. 350).

The incident mentioned in the text illustrated very well the different points of view from which the question was regarded, and hence the different impressions as to what it was possible or reasonable for one side to concede to the other,—differences which explain many of the collisions in this unhappy business. To Dr Gibson and his friends, to whom it seemed the natural presumption that the Church should have Divinity Halls at the University seats,—who regarded the Church as having at the outset favoured and encouraged the idea of having them,—who regarded the existing imperfect arrangements at Aberdeen and Glasgow as due partly to the temporary want of means, but in a large measure also to the unreasonable exigency of Edinburgh for full equipment and full security,—it seemed obvious—too obvious to require argument—that the *status quo*, at least, must be preserved, and that no party could decently take advantage of the mere translation of a Professor, in order to attempt improving Aberdeen off the face of the earth. And men of these views might be the more disposed to expect Dr Cunningham to agree with them so far, because in the Assembly of 1848, speaking of the provision made at Aberdeen as a thing which he disapproved of as unnecessary and inexpedient, he had added—"I have never held the view that the Church, on the thought of that being an erroneous arrangement, has the power to sweep it away. I have no desire whatever to meddle with it. I think, when such an arrangement is made, some regard should be paid to the fact that it is made,—that certain expectations have been cherished,—that certain views have been entertained,—and that certain arrangements have been made on the faith of it; and that these are not lightly to be interfered with." It seemed, therefore, that a regard to the peace of the Church and the whole nature of the case would impose on Dr Cunningham and his friends an obligation not to propose an alteration of the *status quo* in this respect, unless some new matter emerged much more important than the removal of the Professor who happened to occupy the Aberdeen Chair. This view of the case was entertained by many who were less ardent Extensionists than Dr Gibson. But Dr Cunningham regarded the question from a totally different point of view. The idea of the claims of localities he totally disregarded. Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, St Andrews, were in his eyes absolutely indifferent, and, indeed, had nothing whatever to do with the question. To him it seemed that the plain primary duty of the Church was to have one efficient theological school, and not to risk its efficiency or security; that more than this could only afford moderate and measured advantage. He did not care where it was placed; but wherever placed, he considered that the Church ought not to risk the great objects connected with it in deference to vague schemes of extension. He regarded the provision made (in

deference, as it seemed to him, to a mere local feeling illogically admitted into the matter) as injurious to the interests of thorough education, tending to relax both the convictions and the practice of the Church, and he looked on it as opening the door to further steps in the same direction. He conceived, therefore, that if by any circumstance the provision which had this character came to an end by the removal or death of the Professor, neither he nor the Church could be precluded from considering, on its merits, the question whether the arrangement should be renewed. In considering, when the case should arise, whether he ought to exercise this right, he did not deny that the views formed, and the expectations created, under the existing system should have some weight. But he could not regard any of these considerations as positively forbidding the exercise of his right; and some of them he valued at a much lower rate than his opponents could understand or sympathise with.

At all events, this incident produced on the minds of the northern brethren a much stronger impression than previously existed to the effect, that they had to deal not only with a resolution to resist College Extension being carried further, but also, probably, with a resolution to call upon the Church to reverse its previous policy, and suppress the provision at Aberdeen, whenever such a circumstance as the proposed removal of Professor Maclaggan should open an opportunity for it.

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## APPENDIX G (P. 356).

Number 3 is not referred to in the above account of the relation in which the deliverance stood to that of 1850. It was regarded with some alarm at the time; and at a later period was referred to in debate, by Dr Cunningham and by others, as one of the injurious and indefensible elements in the case. The intention of it cannot be very clearly gathered from the wording. According to the best judgment I can form of it, it was mere surplusage. As explained by those who may be supposed to have had a main hand in recommending the deliverance, it only expressed the commonplace that the Church could not be tied up to its existing institutions so as to refuse to look at the question, whether theological education could not be more permanently and efficiently provided for, by accepting some munificent endowment offered elsewhere. It implied, therefore, that the Church must always have at least one thoroughly equipped theological institute; and it did not imply that she should neglect existing engagements, or take any step inconsistent with the maintenance of the curriculum. But then the language was vague, and in its general tendency fitted to produce the impression of some scheme or other, hatching or to be hatched, adverse to Edinburgh. To those who regarded the interests of theological education as bound up with the efficiency of the Edinburgh institution it had a minatory air; and taking their view to be the orthodoxy of the matter, they might naturally regard number 3 as a proposition (to use the language of the Vatican), *suspectam, temerariam, hæresim sapientem,*

*piarum aurium offensivam.* I do not see that it ever came to be operative, or served any purpose on either side. It ought to be noticed that Mr Dunlop, Dr James Buchanan, and a few other members of the House, objected to the finding, and gave in reasons of dissent. These reasons are based partly on the undesirableness of encouraging endowments for objects of inferior importance, when others of greater moment deserved the whole attention of the Church. But they objected principally to this proposition, number 3, which they said was manifestly inconsistent with the declaration made in 1850, that the Church would accept endowments for theological institutions elsewhere than at Edinburgh, only so far as these can be applied in consistency with the maintenance of one thoroughly equipped theological college. Sheriff Monteith again, who adhered to Dr Cunningham throughout this controversy, availed himself of the forms of the House to record a reply to these reasons, in which he maintained a view of the proposition in question substantially the same as that indicated above. He was joined in doing so by Sir Henry Moncreiff.

I have been thus minute, tediously so it may be feared, because the real history and character of these proceedings of 1851 became an important element in the discussion when the question revived again in 1853. I am unable myself to see any very tangible difference between the position laid down in 1850 and that laid down in 1851. At the same time the moral tendency of the whole proceedings, and the moral effect of the attitude in which the Church was now placed, was in some respects different. The deliverance of the Assembly of 1850, *viewed in connection with the whole history of its proceedings*, might be said to be of this kind, that while all parties in the Church conceded college extension as an object that might be kept in view, the Church spoke of it in a manner fitted rather to discourage and dissuade from any immediate steps. No steps were to be taken but upon certain conditions. The emphasis laid upon those conditions, combined with the vagueness as to what should be counted a due compliance with them, might be held to indicate an unwillingness on the part of the Church to be pressed on the subject in the mean time. In this view the decision might be held as contributing to produce an interval of quiet; it seemed to justify the expectation that the discussion as to the particular arrangements under which extension might be consistent with other interests would be adjourned for a few years. Such an adjournment Dr Cunningham very greatly desired, and the apparent tendency of the finding of 1850 to promote it could not fail to be a reason with him for consenting to it. It was somewhat different when, in response to renewed and resolute representations from the friends of Aberdeen, and after a debate which awakened apprehension, and was adjourned in consequence, the Assembly agreed to the explanatory finding of 1851. The explanation might be consistent with the finding of 1850. In my opinion it was. Yet the very fact of giving it, and of dwelling while doing so on the kind of proposals which the Assembly might warrantably entertain, placed the Church in a somewhat altered attitude. The finding of 1850 tended, on the whole, to lay a certain responsibility on those who should next move the question. The finding of 1851 might seem rather to invite those who might be disposed to do something towards the objects which the Church so carefully explained her readiness to entertain. I make these remarks to indicate how Dr Cunningham might at first feel

unable to object to the finding of 1851 as inconsistent with that of 1850, and might even defend their consistency ; while yet he might be aware, and might afterwards become more fully aware, that the whole aspect of the case (viewed from his stand-point) had altered for the worse, and that the motives which induced him to agree to the compromise of 1850 had been greatly weakened by the proceedings of 1851.

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## APPENDIX H (P. 446).

*Speech of Principal Cunningham on the Cardross Case, delivered at a public meeting in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, 14th January* 1861.

"Principal Cunningham, who was received with loud and renewed cheering, said,—My Lord Provost, ladies, and gentlemen, it is not altogether without some hesitation and reluctance that I have been induced to take part in the proceedings of this meeting. I rather regret the necessity, in present circumstances, of discussing this question in this form. It would have been in some respects better had we been able to have continued to discuss this matter as a legal question in the legal courts until it came to a full and final termination there, and then that we had been called on calmly and deliberately to consider what was our duty as a Church, because of what the civil courts had done. But I believe the necessity has arisen of our dealing with the matter in another form, and just in the way in which we are now dealing with it. I believe that necessity has arisen, and that necessity we must submit to, even though it may be attended with some awkwardness and some disadvantages,—the necessity has arisen of our taking such means as these of explaining and defending our position, which has been very much misconceived and misrepresented ; and I believe the necessity has also arisen even already, in what may be called an early stage of this question in its legal form, for concentrating the attention of the whole Christian community on what is likely to turn out—I do not say certainly will turn out—to be a very serious and important crisis in a matter, affecting not merely the Free Church, but all non-Established Churches in this country. We cannot help being exposed to misconception and misrepresentation, for everything now-a-days is discussed in all forms and shapes by parties competent and incompetent. The proceedings of the General Assembly are discussed ; the procedure of the Court of Session is discussed ; the speeches of men in the General Assembly, and the speeches of Judges, are reported and discussed, and men who are misconceived or misrepresented, must just take the trouble and inconvenience of appealing to the community, and expounding and defending their case. We believe that the proceedings of the Free Church in this matter have been much misunderstood and misrepresented, and we think we can defend them thoroughly from the charges which have been adduced against them, and that we are now called upon to attempt. The misrepresentations that have been put forth of the proceedings of the Free Church, may be classed very much, I think, under two general heads. It has been alleged in some quarters that we claim too much power for the Church and her judicatories ; and it has been

alleged that we concede too little power to the civil courts. These things having been widely alleged, the charges against us are resolved very much into one or other of these two heads, and I think that on both these points we can establish a full and conclusive defence. With respect to the first of these charges,—that of claiming too much power for the Church and her judicatories,—the sum and substance of what we have to say is just this, that we really claim nothing whatever in this case but what we have always claimed, and what we have always claimed and maintained upon Scriptural grounds. We claim nothing whatever but what every evangelical non-Established Church in the world claims, and must claim. There is nothing in the views we entertain, or in the position we have assumed, that is at all peculiar, at all transcendental, at all extravagant, or at all alarming. We simply claim for the Church the right of executing the functions which Christ has conferred upon it, of discharging the duties which He has imposed upon it, and of doing all those things in subjection to His authority, and in accordance with His revealed will. That is the sum and substance of all that we claim. All non-Established Churches believe and maintain—and no Established Church ventures openly and explicitly to deny it—that the Church, and every branch, or section, or portion of it, is bound to regard and acknowledge Christ as its only Head and Master, and his Word as its only constitution, rule, and standard; and that every society, calling itself a Church of Christ, is bound to profess these principles, and apply them to itself, for the regulation of its own conduct. Every Church has its work to do, and its duties to discharge; and the question is, What is this work, what are these duties, and according to what standard is the Church bound to discharge them? All the duties and functions of the Church, as we all know and believe, are usually ranked under these great heads,—the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline, taking discipline in a wide and comprehensive sense, as not merely implying censure, or what is penal in its character, but Church polity as a whole, and the external regulation of the affairs of the Church; and we all believe that, under this head especially, is comprehended the whole subject of the admission of men to ordinances, and the admission of men to office. These are the two main things comprehended here—the adjustment and settlement of all questions bearing upon the admission of individuals to ordinances, and the admission of men to offices in the Church; their admission there—their continuance there—and their exclusion from office or from ordinances. That is the proper work and business of the Church; and all these things are not only powers which the Church possesses, which Christ has conferred, and which she is bound to exercise, but they are duties which He has imposed. The Church must do them, and it must do them as Christ has directed. In the whole of these matters,—in all that the Church is called upon to do in these departments of work,—she has really no option, no discretion. These things must be done wherever there is a Church. They must be done under a sense of direct responsibility to Christ, and they must be done in accordance with His revealed will. The Church cannot avoid doing these things. It is her proper business, and she cannot recognise any authority but Christ's, or any standard but His Word, in doing it. The truth is, that the exercise, the actual exercise, of every power which the Church claims, is really the discharge of a duty; and it is this

which invests the Church's proceedings with the sacredness and imperativeness that attach to the obligations of conscience.

"Now, my Lord, all these principles are too plain to require proof—too simple to require exposition. There is no difficulty or mystery about them. They may be said to be universally acknowledged. They are clearly revealed in Scripture, plainly sanctioned by the Word of God, and every Church acknowledges her obligation to receive them. They may be said to be held and maintained by the universal Church. It is quite true that they are held and maintained by the Church of Rome, which has always retained some right and Scriptural sense of the proper distinctness and independence of the Church of Christ; but they are not held by the Church of Rome alone. They were held by the whole body of the Reformers, and therefore they are not Popish in any obnoxious sense. The principle of the independence of the Church of all civil control, and her obligation to resist all civil interference, is no more a Popish doctrine than the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour. It was held by all the Reformers—it was held by all the English Puritans, and by all the Scottish Covenanters; and it is held by every evangelical non-Established Church on the face of the earth. I almost feel, after the long discussion to which these things were subjected a few years ago in this country—after these discussions, in which there were some peculiar involvements in the way in which the question was put, and in the position which we occupied, but in which these principles were really at the bottom of the whole—I almost feel that, to talk much of these principles now, is really something like boasting or blustering, something like a work of supererogation. Really, they are so clear and so certain in themselves—they are so universally held by the Christian Churches in this country; the Free Church, more especially, is so clearly and conclusively committed to the maintenance of them by all her past contendings, and by her present public professions—that the idea of her abandoning, or neglecting, or disregarding them, is an entire and utter absurdity. Now, the practical result of all this is just that the Church is not only not bound, but is not at liberty, to be guided in doing any part of her proper work as a Church by the laws and decisions of the civil authorities. She can acknowledge no authority but Christ, and what He has sanctioned; and no standard but His Word. To do so would be an act of unfaithfulness and disobedience to Him. It is commonly alleged that this is something like putting forth a claim to infallibility on our part, as if, by putting forth this statement, we were virtually identifying ourselves with Christ, and putting ourselves on the same footing with Christ in this matter. This we believe to be an entire misconception. We put forth no claim to infallibility; we put forth a claim merely to the right of adhering to our own deliberate and conscientious convictions as to what the mind and will of Christ in this matter is. That is our claim—our whole claim. We conscientiously believe that this was an act of duty, and we must adhere to it. God alone is Lord of the conscience; Christ alone is King and Head of the Church. Our conscience, therefore, cannot be reached, unless men profess to give us the authority of God. We cannot admit any competent authority for regulating the way and manner in which we are to speak and act as a Church, unless men adduce the authority of Christ. We are quite willing to listen to any argument; but we cannot in this matter acknowledge any authority.

Suppose—and that is in substance what is here involved now, in this new aspect of the case—suppose, for example, a Church has deliberately deposed a man from the office of the ministry. It is to be assumed that she has done so because she honestly believed that it was the mind and will of Christ that that man should no longer continue to hold the pastoral office and execute ministerial functions. In doing so, then, she had, as she thought, ascertained the mind and will of Christ in this matter, and was bound to act upon it. Well, then, if any civil authority whatever, however high, comes forward and says—'You have illegally and wrongously turned out this man, and we insist that you cancel that sentence and bring back the man'—how is that case to be dealt with? What is to be done in such a case? Why, we simply say, 'We are very willing to listen to any argument by which any man, addressing our understanding and conscience, might try to shew us that we had done wrong, and that we had mistaken the mind and will of Christ in this matter. We do not shut our ears, as if we were infallible; we do not even stand on our own dignity; we are quite willing to listen to any fair and reasonable argument to shew that we had done wrong; and if satisfied of that we will, of course, retrace our steps; but we cannot listen to mere authority in the matter, because there is no competent authority; we cannot listen to any rule or standard that may be brought to bear upon it except the Word of God.' If men come here and say, 'Why, we have an act of Parliament to settle this question,' we say, 'We don't care one straw for your act of Parliament in this matter; it has nothing to do here; it is good enough in its own place, and for its own purposes, and is entitled to implicit submission in civil cases.' If they say, 'Why, this is the decision of the Court of Session,' we have just to say again, 'that it does not touch our conscience; it is no competent authority;' and we put it aside as utterly unworthy of notice here, as entitled to no place and no influence in this question, whether that man should have been suspended and deposed, and whether he should be restored to his office. If, again, they say, 'Why, you may expose yourselves to civil pains and penalties, to fines and imprisonments; there may be actions of damages,' we still say, 'That is nothing to the purpose; these are mere temptations to induce us to swerve from the path of duty. We must adhere to our own conscientious convictions. We take our stand there, and neither authority, nor the influence of any secular consideration whatever, can we admit to be of the least weight or value.' We just simply put all that aside as utterly incompetent and irrelevant, and entitled to no weight or respect. We are not only entitled, but we are bound, to repudiate all interference of any other authority than Christ's,—the obligation of any other standard than his Word,—and the influence of any worldly and secular motive,—of any motive, in short, except the authority of Christ, and our own conscientious conviction as to what our duty is. Men may say, 'We think otherwise, and we are as well entitled to judge as you are.' We say, 'It may be so; but we cannot help it. We are responsible to God, and are under obligation to do this; we did it because we believed it to be our duty; and we will continue to assert and maintain that it was our duty, until our understandings are reached and our conscience convinced to the contrary.' Now, all these things, of course, are quite clear and plain. There is no ground for dispute about them among men who hold right Scriptural views of what

a Church of Christ is, and what are the principles by which it should be regulated. And, then, as to the application of these principles to this Cardross case,—the application here is quite clear and plain, and there is no room for doubt or difficulty. The application of them to this case just implies this—We have suspended and deposed that man from the ministry. We believe that in doing so we were discharging a duty which we owed to the Head of the Church; and we never can cancel or reverse that sentence; we never can and never will repone that man to the office of the ministry. We never will say or do anything that implies, or may appear to imply, that we do regard, or ever will regard, that man in any other light than as a validly suspended and validly deposed man. That is the sum and substance of what we are shut up to, as a matter of plain duty, in the obvious application of these principles to the matter on hand. We take our stand there. On these points we are firm and immovable. Nothing will change that position, except the authority of Christ is brought to bear upon it. Nothing will change that position on our part, except the conviction, lodged in our understandings on competent grounds, and brought home to our consciences, that we did wrong in suspending and deposing that man. If any man convinces us that we have mistaken the mind and will of Christ in this matter, and that we did wrong, then we will of course confess our error, and endeavour to repair the wrong; but short of that—upon no ground but that—can we change our conduct. We are bound to maintain the entire freedom of the Church from all civil control on this question. It is a question of suspension or deposition, of which the Church is the only competent judge, the only real authority; we must maintain her entire freedom from all authoritative civil control, and we are resolved to continue to adhere to that course. We must continue to adhere to this course, not only in this Cardross case, but in all other similar cases. These are principles of unchangeable truth. We believe them on the authority of God's Word. We have acted upon them in time past, and we will act upon them in time to come. We do not mean to abdicate our functions as a Church, but to continue to execute these functions. We mean to continue to execute them on the same ground, and by the same standard, and to apply to them the very same principles. We are resolved to do that, and we proclaim it to all the world. All that is so clear and certain that I almost shrink from saying it, as if it were something like blustering. No human being doubts that the Free Church holds these principles—that we have acted upon them, and that we will act upon them; and that nothing in the way of authority, or in the way of temptation, will ever induce the Free Church to cancel or reverse that sentence of suspension, or repone that man to the office of the ministry. We are bound to take the standard of God's Word as our only standard. It is quite true that in many cases that come before us there are questions of fact involved that must be ascertained or decided in the ordinary way, by the application of the common rules of evidence, and by the fair exercise of common sense and discretion; but still, notwithstanding that, every Church court, in taking up a matter of this sort, is bound to see that, in the ultimate result of the decision to which she comes, she is able to say that, in her honest conviction and to the best of her judgment, she has ascertained the mind and will of Christ in this matter, and accordingly has acted upon them. Being obliged to say that, being called upon to take that ground, she

has no alternative, no option, no discretion. I believe that when the Free Church suspended and deposed that man, she was acting in accordance with the mind and will of Christ. In all things done by men there is room for defect and imperfection in regard to motives which may have been in operation, and with regard to minor matters, as to the mode of carrying them out; but the Church is bound to see that, in the main, she has ascertained what is right and duty here; and we believe that she has ascertained what was right and duty here, and has done it. She suspended that man from the office of the ministry because she conscientiously believed that she had good grounds for maintaining that it was not the mind and will of Christ that that man, convicted of drunkenness and indecency, should any longer continue to hold the pastoral office and execute the functions of the ministry. She did so because she believed that; we still believe it to be true, and therefore we are under an imperative obligation to act upon it. I see some people, in discussing this matter, have been disposed to talk about what they call an excess of jurisdiction,' as being involved in what the Church has done. I suspect these persons do not know what 'excess of jurisdiction' means. They think they have got hold of a fine and well-sounding phrase to parade. The idea of an 'excess of jurisdiction' here, in anything applicable to this case, is sheer absurdity. What possible ground for charging excess of jurisdiction could there be? Mr M'Millan was certainly subject to our control. He had voluntarily joined our body; he had come under a solemn obligation of obedience to our courts; there could be do doubt of our right to deal with him in accordance with our law. The charges brought against him were relevant charges; the charges of immorality were relevant, as bearing on the question whether or not he was to continue a minister. They were carefully and deliberately examined; and then, as the appropriate result of the whole, there was a sentence of suspension and deposition. That, surely, was within our province. Sentences of deposition and suspension belong to the Church's province; and they belong to no other body's province. The Church can pronounce them, and nobody else can pronounce them. To talk of an 'excess of jurisdiction,' in these circumstances, is plainly absurd.

"I have referred, my Lord, to the possibility of our listening to an argument, and to our being moved by argument to change our mind and adopt a different course. This is quite competent; we claim no infallibility; we will be quite willing to listen to any discussion of the question, whether or not we had fairly and fully ascertained the mind and will of Christ in the case. The allegation made on the other side is, that we fell into some acts of injustice and irregularity in the course of these proceedings. I cannot presume to occupy so much of your time as to enter into a full explanation of this. That is perhaps more a matter for our own Church courts than for the general community; but, at the same time, when so much is made of these accusations of injustice and irregularity, I should like if you will allow me briefly to refer to them. The mere allegation of injustice and irregularity is a very vague and uncertain kind of thing. There scarcely ever was a case of any length or complication in regard to which the same allegation of things done unjustly, unfairly, or irregularly, might not be set forth with some plausibility. We receive such allegations, therefore, with considerable suspicion. If they resolve into mere differences of opinion about technicalities of ecclesiastical law, as is the

case in regard to one of these allegations, that is manifestly an inadequate ground for civil interference in a religious and ecclesiastical matter. But if they resolve into gross and palpable violations of justice—if they resolve into violation, clear and palpable, of our own laws and regulations—why, then, we admit that this may be made competent ground for an allegation of malice. Mr M'Millan might contend that we had maliciously perverted ecclesiastical discipline for the purpose of injuring him. That we admit to be a perfectly competent allegation; he is perfectly entitled to allege that, and to adduce proof of that gross injustice and irregularity. If it could really be established that in the proceedings against him there had been acts of injustice, and plain violations of natural fairness and equity,—if it could be established that we had broken our own laws, and violated our own rules and arrangements for the purpose of damaging him,—that would be a perfectly fair allegation,—that would be sufficient to prove malice, and would be relevant to infer damages. We maintain, however, that nothing of the kind can be established here. Mr M'Millan's whole case rests upon two allegations,—one of injustice and one of irregularity. It is important to remember that he can never get a really available judgment in his behalf until he can establish these two positions. He never can get a judgment in his favour for any available purpose unless he get that length,—unless he make out, to the satisfaction of the judge and jury, these two propositions. This gives them a certain degree of importance, although it is somewhat premature to be saying much about them now. However, I may in a sentence or two advert to them. The first charge is, that the General Assembly was guilty of irregularity and violation of its own laws in holding that a certain branch of the charge was competently before the Assembly, although it had not been formally appealed from when disposed of by the Synod. Now, I believe this just resolves into a very small question about a technicality in ecclesiastical law, concerning which there is no distinct or definite standard either way, and which does not in the least affect the substantial justice of the case. My own conviction is,—I was not a member of the Assembly, and had nothing to do with it,—but my own conviction is, that the General Assembly acted rightly, and in full accordance with her own laws and regulations in this matter. It seems to be assumed that we have some law bearing on this point which the General Assembly broke in order to injure this man, and in order to have the case more fully before them. I say there is no law of the Church bearing on this point; there is no previous decision of the Church bearing upon it. It is one of those minute technicalities that are always rising up now and then, both in civil and ecclesiastical courts, about which there is no authority, no law, no precedent, and which, when they do occur, must just be decided by the fair application of the principles of ordinary justice and common sense in the matter. That is enough to expose the folly of the allegation, that we broke our own law and our own regulations in order to injure him. But I go farther. I believe that, in virtue of the general principles laid down, both in our ecclesiastical standards and in acts of Parliament bearing on these matters, the courts of the Church,—Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies,—do stand to each other in such a relation of subordination as to warrant the maintenance of this as a general principle of ecclesiastical law, and one which I have always held,

—namely, that when a case is fairly and fully tabled in the shape of a libel in the Presbytery, that case is then and there fairly and fully before the whole Church courts, and if it comes before the Synod or the General Assembly, in any competent form or shape, the Synod or General Assembly, in virtue of their general powers of superintendence, as set forth in the Second Book of Discipline, and in the act of Parliament of 1582, is perfectly entitled to place itself in every respect in the position of the radical court,—in the position of the Presbytery,—and to deal with it in all respects as the Presbytery might or should have done. I have always held that to be the principle of our ecclesiastical law. There is certainly no decision or law against it. I believe that is what is fairly involved as the natural sequel to the views which we hold and maintain as to the proper relation of our courts to one another. More than twenty years ago, I had an opportunity of explaining in the General Assembly some points of ecclesiastical law bearing on this matter of the relation of our courts to one another, which seem to me to imply, *a fortiori*, the perfect competency and perfect legality of that act of the General Assembly. It might have been that matters had come into a position in which there would have been some injustice in our dealing with it. Injustice might be done in dealing with a case, if, because there was no appeal from the Synod, the evidence had been dropped, if the evidence had not been produced in the General Assembly,—in that case there would be a serious difficulty; and the Assembly could not decide the case without injustice. Nay, more, if Mr M'Millan had made a stand on that point in the General Assembly, and had refused to plead on that branch of the case, even that might have been a difficulty, although it would not be so serious a one as the former, because the Assembly had the whole of the evidence before them, as it was before the Presbytery; and perhaps they might not hold Mr M'Millan's refusal to plead in these circumstances to be an insuperable difficulty; but even that difficulty does not arise here. It is notorious to all the world that Mr M'Millan pleaded at the bar of the General Assembly on the whole case, and on the whole evidence. The Assembly had the whole case before them; they had the whole evidence in their hands; and the accused party pleaded on the whole case and on the whole evidence. In these circumstances, it is utter folly to allege anything like a violation of the substantial rules of justice in regard to a mere technicality of ecclesiastical law on the point. There may be some differences of opinion among ourselves; there may be some ground for differences of opinion; but there is no law against it, and no decision against it. I and many others contend, and the large majority of the Church believe, that the perfect competency of what the Assembly did is sanctioned by all her recognised principles with reference to the relation of these courts of appeal one to another. The only other allegation of Mr M'Millan is, that there was an act of gross injustice in deposing him from the ministry without giving him an opportunity of being heard, on the ground of his having appealed to the civil courts. Now, my Lord, on this point I take leave to say that we have law enough for it; and that the existence of that clear law is a sufficient disproof of malice at least, and shews that we were not getting up a case to damage Mr M'Millan. The law of 1582 is a clear and recognised law of the Church. It was not like the case of bringing up some old obscure statute, which everybody had

forgotten, and which was appealed to unfairly and unseasonably, to do an act of injustice. It was a well-known recognised law,—a law recognised in 1638 in the trial of the bishops,—it was recognised and acted upon in the whole course of our contendings before the Disruption; and it was plainly acted on in the deposition of the Strathbogie ministers. We did not, indeed, go the full length of that law in dealing with them; but we appealed to it as proving that what they did was an ecclesiastical crime,—a crime of the highest magnitude in the eyes of the Church. But we did not deal with them in the summary way the law authorised, and for this manifest reason, that we saw well enough that matters were hastening to a crisis; we were warned fairly and fully by all our political friends that the crisis of our fate would depend on the way in which we dealt with the Strathbogie ministers; and, knowing that, we resolved to go about the matter with full deliberation and due solemnity, and with full regard to all ordinary forms; and therefore did not deal with them in the summary way. We libelled them, and proceeded in the usual way; but the act recognised all we did in the case of Mr M'Millan. We did not get it up for the purpose of injuring Mr M'Millan; and we have acted upon it in one case since the Disruption. No doubt, there is a certain appearance of harshness in the way in which the thing was gone about. It would have been as well, for the mere sake of appearance, and in order to avoid giving any handle to the adversary, to have gone about a thing of the kind somewhat more deliberately; but that is a mere matter of feeling, and a thing not in the least affecting the substantial merits of the case. The law was enough to prove that what had been done was a serious offence, and an offence to be dealt with summarily, and without admonition. It was not a thing got up in the heat of controversy between the old Assembly and King James,—it was a thing recognised in the ancient law of the Church, as far back as the fourth century. Whenever the Church came to be connected with the State,—whenever the civil courts were friendly and accessible, it would seem that, even in the fourth century, men began to make use of the civil courts for keeping their places, or getting back to their places, against ecclesiastical sentences. Even then the Church was obliged to make a law in the Council of Antioch of a very stringent character, and substantially the same in its leading features as the Act of 1582; and I refer to this simply as shewing that the Church has ever found it necessary, in the exercise of her ecclesiastical jurisprudence, to protect herself in some such way against the attempts of her unworthy members and office-bearers to seek to concuss her in the exercise of discipline by bringing her into the civil court.

"And this is the grand offence of which we complained in the recent proceedings, —a heinous offence, to the enormity of which every minister of the Free Church, knowing the law on the subject, must have been fully alive; so that there is no ground whatever for the allegation that there has been a violation of the substantial rules of justice, or a violation of our own law in the case; there is no ground for the allegation of malice. It is a mere trumpery case altogether this whole charge of injustice and irregularity,—merely got up to serve a plausible purpose, to stuff speeches and stuff summonses. We would not be at all afraid, if the way were open to us, without compromise of our principles, to discuss this whole

matter before any judge and before any jury, in the way of proving that we have done no real injustice, that we have not broken our own law, that we have adhered to our own regulations, and that there is no fair, tangible ground for the complaint of irregularity in the case. But we must maintain and act on our principles; fidelity to Christ requires this at our hands. We are called on to set them forth, and to press them on the attention of men, in the hope that men will receive and adopt them. We believe them to be a portion of God's truth which we are called to act on; and while it is our duty to diffuse these principles, our more precise and specific duty is just this, to insist that we shall be tolerated, and that we shall not be subjected to civil pains and penalties when we profess these principles and act upon them. This is the sum and substance of what we demand. We will profess them because we believe them to be true; and we will act upon them because we believe them to embody a duty which Christ has imposed upon us; and we will insist that, in professing these principles, and in acting upon them, we shall be tolerated, and shall not be subjected to civil pains and penalties. All churches profess to act on these principles, and there is really no toleration unless they are allowed to do so with impunity. This, accordingly, is the great object at which we are now bound to aim. We are bound to aim at securing that, as we are determined to profess these principles, and determined to act on them, we shall be allowed to do so with impunity, and shall be fully tolerated in so doing, and not subjected to civil pains and penalties. We thought we had secured this when we left the Established Church. We thought we had obtained ecclesiastical liberty, and the right of discharging these duties, and executing these functions, without let and hindrance, and without civil control. We were often told so at least—told it from the bench, told it from the bar, and told it in both Houses of Parliament; sometimes told it civilly and courteously, and sometimes told it rudely and insolently. We were taunted with this, that if we chose to put forth such claims as these we must just quit the Establishment; that we need not make such a disturbance, for all we had to do was just to go out. It was said hundreds of times—All that may be true as regards the Church of Christ, no doubt; but you are an Established Church, and you must not expect as an Established Church to enjoy all the rights and liberties of the Church of Christ in its ordinary and proper character. We were told that again and again, and we half-believed it—but not entirely. We saw some indications or grounds of pretences, by which, even as now, something of the kind might be tried and urged, but at the same time we had no serious doubt or difficulty about the matter, because we believed that there was strength and power enough—for we long believed there was in the Church strength enough and power enough to secure the regulation of her own affairs. I could quote many instances in which we were told that we had just to leave the Established Church to obtain that liberty which we claimed, but I will only quote one. And I quote it for this reason, that I think it is worthy of special notice, because it proceeded from him who now occupies the woolsack in the House of Lords,—the present Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. He, in pronouncing judgment in what we call the second Auchterarder case, made this statement:—'While the appellants remain members of the Establishment, they are, in addition to their sacred characters, public functionaries,

appointed and paid by the State, and they must perform the duties which the law of the land imposes on them. It is only a Voluntary body, such as the Relief or Burgher Church in Scotland, self-founded and self-supported, that can say they will be entirely governed by their own rules.' My Lord, the Burgher body and the Relief body can say this, and I would fain hope the Free Church may be able to say it too. I suppose that we (the Free Church) are self-founded and self-supported in Lord Campbell's sense, in the same sense as the Burgher and Relief Church—and, finding so much sound doctrine here, I think I may express a hope that his Lordship, though far advanced in life, will still be found on the woolsack when this Cardross case comes before the House of Lords. We wish nothing more than the plain and simple application of the sound principle and sound doctrine which are here enunciated. But, my Lord, we find there are some men who, while concurring with us to a large extent in these general principles, seem still disposed to think that we do not concede sufficient power in these matters to the civil court, and are disposed to say :—'It is all very well; you may do that in your own sphere ; but surely you are restricting too narrowly the powers of the civil courts in this matter.' They charge us with claiming something like a superiority over them. This is a very old allegation. I should just like to quote a sentence from Richard Baxter bearing upon this point, which, I think, brings out with admirable exactness, the sum and substance of what we claim, and repudiates the sum and substance of the charge brought against us. He is dealing with some of the Erastian cavils against the Puritans, and especially in regard to the administration of sacraments ; and in dealing with them he makes the statement :—'While we believe that we must answer ourselves for our own actions, and that we must baptize and give the Lord's body and blood in Christ's name, and not in the bishop's name,—while we believe that, we dare not obey man before God, nor renounce our own judgment in the matters of our own office and trust ; therefore it would satisfy us had we but freedom in our ministerial action not to go against our conscience.'

"This is an admirable and clear definition of the whole extent of what we claim. It would satisfy us had we but freedom in our ministerial action not to go against our conscience. We ask that, and we ask nothing more. He then goes on to say, —'However, blind malice would make the world believe that it is some papal empire, even over princes, that we desire.' There is nothing new, my Lord, under the sun. And this is just the common allegation made against us, that we desire some 'Papal empire' over the civil power. But we really give to the civil magistrate the whole of what he can justly claim. We don't give him, certainly, any control over conscience, or any control over the Church of Christ ; but we give him full control over our person and property, and under property we comprehend reputation. We won't give him more. We can't give him control over conscience ; we can't give him control over the Church of Christ, but we give him full control over person and property, including reputation. No doubt, civil and ecclesiastical matters may sometimes be combined in a somewhat perplexing way. There was a principle laid down by the old writers on this question, that there was no action that could be performed which was so purely ecclesiastical but that it might possibly be made, in some of its aspects, to involve civil consequences, and come under civil

cognisance ; and, on the other hand, that there was no action so purely civil, if done by a Church member or by a Church officer, but that, in some of its aspects or consequences, it might come under ecclesiastical cognisance. We believe that to be true, but believing that to be true, we still believe that there is a clear, definite line of demarcation between things civil and things ecclesiastical, and that there is no real or serious difficulty in riding the marches between them. There is no real or serious difficulty in extracting from an ecclesiastical case the civil elements, and dealing with them in the civil courts on civil grounds, and according to the ordinary principles of law. Ecclesiastical matters, of course, are just the performance of the whole ordinary necessary duties and business of Christ's visible Church. All the things which enter into the necessary business of a church, and must be done wherever a church of Christ is in full operation, are proper ecclesiastical matters ; and in them the civil authority has no proper jurisdiction, no right of control. There are two ways in which questions of civil interest might be raised in connection with such a case as this. There might be a demand for the continued use of the manse and church, or the continuance of his stipend notwithstanding the sentence ; or he might raise an action of damages on the ground of wrong done to certain patrimonial rights, involving his character and reputation. It is perfectly competent, we all admit, for M'Millan to claim the manse and glebe, and bring his case into the court of law. It is perfectly competent to him to claim his share in the Sustentation Fund ; and it is competent to him to allege that there has been a malicious perversion of ecclesiastical discipline for the purpose of damaging him, and, claiming damages on that ground, to adduce these alleged acts of injustice and irregularity as a fair and competent proof of malice. We have no doubt about this. All that we concede. If he claims the possession of the manse and the church, that is a civil question, and must be decided by an examination of the title-deeds. The question is, How was that property held ? No doubt the Church intended to secure the property in such a way that her sentences should turn him out of it, and should regulate the possession of it. But whether she has done that validly or not, is a question for the civil court, and they must decide it. Then, if he claims to be still allowed to enjoy his share of the Sustentation Fund, that is a civil question, to be decided by the civil court, upon the ground of a fair view of the whole relations of the parties to one another, and upon a fair view of the whole rules and regulations fairly applicable to this Fund, viewed in connection with the proceedings of the Church courts. All that they must decide. I am told that there is a principle of law—I hope there is—that it is a settled thing that no man can establish a valid claim to a share of a fund which is raised annually by voluntary donations and subscriptions ; and of course that may be fairly pleaded on the other side ; but whether or not, there is no incompetency to be alleged against a demand for a share in this Fund. All that we admit to be perfectly competent. Nay, more, we admit that, in order to decide these questions, the civil court may take our whole ecclesiastical proceedings under their consideration, and not only get them for information but for judgment, and may adjudicate upon them for certain purposes, *in hunc effectum*, in order to settle questions of property. They may do so,—they must do so. We know very well that, in regard to certain rights of property,—in regard to meeting-

houses, for example,—the question came to be at one time discussed, and the Court laid down the rule that the meeting-houses must be given to the parties who represented the original body who had built the church and established that ecclesiastical section. They had to decide the question whether the New or the Old Lights were the genuine representatives of the Original Seceders. They had to decide that question to settle the question of property ; and various questions of a similar nature have occurred since. We do not object to their taking our proceedings into consideration, and forming a judgment upon them for their own purposes, and with a view to the execution of their own functions. This, surely, is power enough in regard to all civil things. Every question of property must be decided by them whatever amount of supervision of ecclesiastical matters may be involved in the necessity of deciding it. All that is right ; and every question of property may in that way be preserved and protected, and justice done. Then we have the question of an action of damages. There, too, we admit the general competency of the claim. We know no general principle that bars out universally a *prima facie* claim for damages. That claim may be entertained *prima facie*. It is quite a possible thing that they may very soon find out that there are difficulties in the way, and that they cannot proceed farther ; but a *prima facie* claim for damages is universally competent ; and there are many cases in which it is not only *prima facie* competent, but out-and-out competent, and may be carried on the whole length of it, until, in the ordinary way, it come to be settled by the verdict of a jury. It is not, of course, to be endured that a mere vague allegation of injustice or irregularity should be a sufficient ground even for an action of damages. It would never do, surely, that there should be an open door left for every man taking every sentence of our Church courts to the Court of Session, to be examined over again there. There must be some limits to such a right as this ; and the principle we contend for is just this, that the only way in which an action of damages can be competently raised, is by an allegation that there has been a malicious perversion of ecclesiastical discipline for the purpose of damaging an individual. That we believe to be perfectly competent ; and we believe it is quite competent to adduce allegations of injustice and irregularity for the purpose of establishing the malice. That might occur ; it is not unlikely to occur sometimes ; and it might be proved. Whenever alleged, it is a competent allegation ; and, if proof is adduced, it ought to be gone into, and gone on with. We fully concede that. If Mr M'Millan had come forward simply with an action of damages,—alleging that we had maliciously perverted discipline for the purpose of damaging him, and offered to prove that, by shewing that in the course of these proceedings we had been guilty of deliberate acts of injustice and unfairness, had broken our own laws, and disregarded our own rules, to damage him,—that would have been a perfectly competent allegation. We would not have denied its competency,—we would have set up no claim to exclusive jurisdiction as an answer to that. We would have joined issue upon the facts of the case as to that, and had the matter fairly submitted to a civil judge and a civil jury. Even those who contend most strongly for the rights of conscience, admit that the civil rulers are perfectly entitled to check and repress whatever, under pretence of conscience, interferes with the good order of society and the civil rights of men. And in like

manner, and upon the same principles, we admit that whatever, under pretence of ecclesiastical discipline, interferes with the good order of civil society and the ordinary rights of men, may be checked, punished, restrained, and repelled. We admit all that; and surely there is enough in all this to be a full and adequate protection to men's civil rights and interests. This comprehends a large sweep. Many things might be alleged as proof of malice, such as acts of injustice and irregularity. All that is perfectly competent. Mr M'Millan might have done and demanded all that; and if he had demanded all that, we would not have alleged incompetency. But he has not done so. He has demanded a full reduction of our ecclesiastical sentence. That is the position he occupies; and if anything had been needful to vindicate, *ex post facto*, the sentence of deposition pronounced against him, this would have been enough. If he had merely asked damages upon the ground of malice and perversion of ecclesiastical discipline, there might have been some doubts whether the terms of the Act of 1582 strictly applied to him. But now there can be no doubt of it. He has demanded the reduction of the sentence; that is what he asks. And the question is, How can that be met?

"I feel, my Lord, that I have occupied too much of your time, but we are now come to a position of things in which we are called upon to concentrate attention upon a matter likely to turn out a serious crisis. This is the first time when there has been introduced into the judge-made law of Scotland an attempt to reduce a sentence of a non-established Church. That is one great peculiar feature of this case deserving of special attention. There were some attempts in the course of last century to reduce sentences of the ecclesiastical courts of the Establishment,—and they were always repelled then by the civil courts,—they never succeeded in getting the sanction of the civil courts to the suspension or reduction of the judgments, even of the Established Church, until those cases which led to the Disruption. Then for the first time was the competency of the Court to reduce ecclesiastical sentences in matters of suspension and deposition sanctioned by the law of Scotland. It was brought in then for the first time, as previously it had been rejected and repudiated. Now, my Lord, it is the settled law of Scotland, that the Court of Session is entitled to exercise a general power of superintendence over the courts of the Established Church, to review their sentences, to suspend them and reduce them. That is now the settled law in Scotland. It was established for the first time in these cases, and no man now disputes it. I suppose the Established Church will take good care not to come under the lash of the law again. I suppose they will take good care not to go beyond the length of their tether; and I suppose the civil courts will lean rather to the side of not interfering rashly with them, and rather favour the idea of their having a large measure of power and independence. But there can be no question that that is now the settled law in Scotland in regard to the courts of the Established Church; and the main peculiarity of this case is, that there is now an attempt made for the first time to apply the same principle to the ecclesiastical judgments of a non-established Church. This is now the grand peculiarity; and we might have expected, when this was tried for the first time, to have seen something like an argument to justify it. There is nothing of the kind in the note of the Lord Ordinary. He tries to insinuate something like the idea of this reduction

being necessary as a preliminary step to getting at the civil elements of the case; but he does not boldly and openly lay down that as a position—he brings it in merely incidentally and parenthetically. We should like to see him boldly and openly avow that, and say that the reduction is merely a formal step in the way of getting at the civil element. If he would say that, this might mitigate the danger and diminish the mischief. But they do not say it—they won't say it; and yet they presume to reduce sentences of that kind, while no law is cited, no decision referred to, no dictum of a judge referred to, no practice or precedent referred to,—nothing but arbitrary assumption. For the first time, without argument, without proof, without evidence, without a law, without a case, without a vestige of argument, without a particle of proof, without a shadow of a precedent, the Lord Ordinary has embodied in the sentence of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Scotland a declaration of the competency of reducing the sentences of our ecclesiastical courts. That is what we have now to deal with. I would fain hope that the matter may be explained away, and may not turn out so serious as it threatens to be. But that is the present state of things, and it is fitted to call forth attention and excite anxiety. I think it is our duty to endeavour to concentrate the attention of the people of Scotland upon this strange innovation—upon this great leading peculiarity. Reducing our sentence naturally seems to imply the assumption of jurisdiction in the matter—the right to exercise jurisdiction in the subjects to which that sentence refers. It naturally and fairly seems to imply that; this is its obvious import. As to the idea of something like a reduction being needful to get at the civil elements of the case, we say that is a new idea in Scotch law, never thought of before, and not claimed by us; and we are the more anxious about this, because in the Auchterarder case we find this idea distinctly laid down in the marvellous speech of Lord Jeffrey—never answered, and that never can be answered; and in the speech of Lord Fullerton in the Culsalmond case, we find these things fully brought out—that the idea of reducing decisions in these matters—the idea of declaring them to be illegal, or *ultra vires*—implies the exercise of jurisdiction by the court so declaring in these matters themselves, and that the proper principle of law is just that, if any civil question be competently raised in the Court of Session, it must disregard the judgment of the ecclesiastical court, and go on to do its own business, and execute its own functions, but must not pretend to reduce or declare to be illegal the proceedings of any other body over which it has no control in these matters. If the Court of Session should simply ignore or disregard these sentences—if this were the true principle of law in regard to other courts recognised by civil statute—namely, just to go on and do their own work, disregarding the sentences—must it not hold *a fortiori* in regard to those who are no courts at all? We are said to be no courts and to have no jurisdiction; and their plain duty is not to reduce our sentences,—not to pretend to declare them illegal,—not to pretend to assume jurisdiction over us, but just to go on to deal with any civil question competently raised with the disposal of any right competently established. We don't pretend to say that our sentence standing unreduced is a bar to their dealing with any real civil element either as to a question of property or a question of damages. We claim nothing of the kind—we ask nothing of the sort; and the law, as hitherto known in Scotland, did not require anything of the kind.

The Court of Session is perfectly entitled to proceed, without reducing our sentence, to dispose of all civil questions, and even of actions of damages. But this only makes us regard this first attempt to reduce our ecclesiastical sentences with more anxiety and more alarm. We wish the attention of the country to be specially directed to this, not for immediate action—because the cloud may pass away—they may shrink from following it out to its natural consequences—they may explain it away—they may back out of it—the Judges may not sustain this;—but, in the meantime, we have here involved, in the interlocutor of a Judge, the claim for the first time of the competency of reducing ecclesiastical sentences, as if they were a superior ecclesiastical power—as if they had jurisdiction in the same province and in the same line. The idea of reducing evidently implies that of a superior court which has jurisdiction in the same sphere—power in the same province—but in a higher degree, and is entitled to reduce, suspend, or reverse. This is substantially the claim here. If they will back out of it by saying, "This is a sort of form to get at the civil element,"—they may say so,—I scarcely think they will; but this at least is certain, that anything like a claim to reduce the ecclesiastical sentence we never will acknowledge. We never will submit to anything like interference resulting from such a claim,—we never will regard, we will disobey it. And we never will be consenting parties to the assumption of such a claim as this. We believe the Establishment now consents to this claim. The sum and substance of our charge against it is, that they have consented to that claim. I would not have left the Establishment unless I had believed it to be sinful to stay there. The precise ground upon which I reckoned it sinful was, that by remaining longer, I must be held, in all fair construction, to be a consenting party to the denial of these truths, to the affirmation of these errors, and a professed willingness to submit to the law of the land, instead of the Word of God, as my rule and standard in reference to ecclesiastical procedure, and to the decisions of the Court of Session, as opposed to my own deliberate, conscientious convictions. We will never consent to any such interference,—we will resist it to the uttermost, and we will do all we can, in the use of all competent means, in order to secure, if possible, that in professing these principles, and acting upon them, we shall do it with full impunity,—with full toleration,—without being subjected to civil pains and penalties."

The meeting was described as one of the largest, most influential, and most intelligent, ever held in the city. It was attended by members of all the Evangelical non-Established Churches. Dr Cunningham's speech was enthusiastically received throughout.

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## APPENDIX I.

### *Dr Cunningham and Union with the United Presbyterian Church.*

My respected colleague, Dr Smeaton, has referred publicly to a conversation between Dr Cunningham and himself, which appears to him to be decisive on this point. I have been furnished, through Mrs Cunningham, with a somewhat fuller

statement by Dr Smeaton than that which he made in his Presbytery in the debate of November 1870. It is as follows :—

"*6th July 1869.*

"DEAR MRS CUNNINGHAM,—

"As you request me to furnish you with my recollections of Dr Cunningham's views on the subject of Union with the United Presbyterian Church, I have no hesitation in complying with your request. Though he passed away before any public movement began in that direction, he entertained the most decided opinion on the subject.

"During the last years of his life, we had many conversations on almost all the doctrinal, exegetical, and ecclesiastical questions that were discussed at the time. It happened that the editorship of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* passed into my hands when he resigned it. But he continued to write in the *Review*, and all the theological topics were often referred to in conversation. His mind reverted very often to the subject of creeds and confessions, on which he had reflected very fully, and, I need not say, profoundly. On the subject of union between the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church, I felt much interest, and at that time I entertained the idea that it was feasible without an abandonment of Free Church principles to bring it about. Several times the subject was introduced in our conversations. He said little at first, which was very much his manner when he had not fully considered a question, but he heard all I had to say in favour of it. The last time the subject was referred to, was a few months before his death, when he expressed his opinion with a decision which left me no room to introduce the subject again, as it was plainly unpleasant to him. His words, as I well remember, were uttered as he commonly spoke when he had fully made up his mind : 'I hope it will never be in my day.' On my remarking that it was surely possible to arrive at such a union, on a proper footing, duly conserving Free Church principles, he plainly intimated a different opinion, adding, 'Not that I think there are sufficient reasons in that case for keeping the churches permanently separate. But I shrink from the negotiations, my whole nature recoils from them.'

"These were, I think, the precise words he used, the result of mature and deliberate reflection. The subject was never mentioned again from that day. He was accustomed to view such matters historically, and from the hints he gave at that time, and also before, he had before his mind the consequences resulting from the negotiations on the question of the Interim in Melancthon's case, as well as the correspondence between Bossuet and Leibnitz as to a possible Irenicum, and the still more recent negotiations in Scotland between the Burgher and Anti-burgher sections of the Secession Church. His wish was to be no party to any negotiations on the subject, and he shrank from the prospect of them. I am, yours very sincerely,

GEORGE SMEATON."

For obvious reasons, I think it unfitting to make Dr Cunningham's biography the place for discussing the view he would have taken of movements which have occurred since his death. And I shall confine myself here to the remarks which seem necessary, in order to avert misunderstanding.

No one can doubt that Dr Cunningham believed the ultimate union of Churches, situated with reference to one another as the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church are, to be a proper object to keep in view. In his case, as in Dr Chalmers', the only thing that is disputable (though an important thing) is the method by which, and the terms on which, those departed worthies would have judged it legitimate to bring about that result. Now the statements adduced by Dr Smeaton shew that Dr Cunningham, in 1861, deprecated a movement for effecting union, and was resolute that nothing from him should be quoted in behalf of commencing such a movement. He refused to be drawn into deliverances on the questions likely to arise, and he did so in a way fitted to deliver him from any further pressure on the subject. So far, men of different views will agree as to the effect of the statements quoted ; and, so far, they do not bear on any questions debated between different parties in the Free Church. They bear only on a step which the Free Church took unanimously, viz., commencing negotiations.

It agrees with all my own impressions to believe, that Dr Cunningham might apprehend serious difficulty as likely to arise from more than one cause in the course of negotiations, and might apprehend a peculiar experience of anxiety and discomfort for himself. I believe, therefore, that Dr Cunningham would not be disposed lightly to give the weight of his authority to a movement tending to those results. I equally believe, however, that supposing negotiations to have begun, with or without his concurrence, he would have in due time applied his whole influence and authority, whatever might be the discomfort to himself personally, to secure that the Church should proceed on what he regarded as right principles in disposing of the questions that might arise. Those who think it proper to form an opinion as to the course he would have recommended must do so on their own responsibility from his public statements ; unless, indeed, the statement now quoted contains additional materials on the point. On this I only observe, that elsewhere Dr Smeaton has made it known that the union which he then regarded as fitted to conserve Free Church principles, was a union on a ground implying the lawfulness equally of the Established and the dis-Established condition. It is to be presumed that in discussing with Dr Cunningham the attainableness of a union conserving Free Church principles, he allowed his view on this important point to appear. Dr Cunningham, as it seems, did not think *such* a union attainable. For the rest, I leave Dr Smeaton's report to make its own impression. The historical allusions which occurred in the course of that conversation, or of similar conversations, suggest some remarks. But I am unwilling to prolong commentary of this kind.

Having said so much, however, I think it right to add, that neither Dr Bannerman nor myself ever had the least doubt as to the principles which Dr Cunningham would have applied to a proposal for union between the Churches, had such a proposal come before him in a way fitted to elicit from him a decision on the merits. Nor is there the least difficulty in explaining, in consistency with this, his dislike of the prospect of being involved in the negotiations. I am quite sure that he did greatly dislike it.

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