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THE

CLOUD OF WITNESSES;

OR

SCOTCH MARTYROLOGY.

BY

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GLASGOW:

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MDCCCLIII.

PREFATORY NOTICE,

BY THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO CARRY INTO EXECUTION THE RESOLUTION TO
RE-ERECT CAPTAIN PATON'S MONUMENT.

the village of Fenwick which was burnt down in 1646. It is the site of the old church of St. Andrew's, which was destroyed by the same fire. It is the site of the old church of St. Andrew's, which was destroyed by the same fire.

✓ THE parish of Fenwick, Ayrshire, acted a prominent part in the struggles of the days of the Covenant. Many of its inhabitants were deprived of their liberty and property; and some of them sealed their testimony with their blood. Distinguished among those noble sufferers was Captain John Paton of Meadowhead, who having been trained in his youth to arms was summoned by the minister of the Parish, the Rev. William Guthrie, to take his place at the head of the Parish Militia for the defence of the country against the insurrection of Montrose. He shared in the defeat of the Presbyterians at the battle of Kilsyth; but gained for himself a great name by his deeds of valour on that occasion; and afterwards heavily avenged on the enemy the discomfiture which he and his fellow-soldiers had sustained. After the overthrow of Montrose and his party, Mr. Guthrie and he returned to their homes at Fenwick, where they enjoyed for a time respite from disturbance and suffering.

The next time we discover him in arms is in the year 1646, when near the village of Mauchline he put to rout a company of the malignants who had come to disperse a congregation assembled on the moor for the observance of the Lord's Supper. Shortly after this, he did the same, at the head of his Fenwick men, to a company who made their appearance at Lochgoin.

In the year 1650 when the tyranny had waxed violent, he regarded insurrection a sacred duty, and joined that party who were similarly minded. He performed many feats of valour in various encounters; and in a personal conflict with Dalziel had nearly attained to the honour of ridding his country and the world of that ferocious persecutor. After a twelvemonth's contending, however, he returned home, almost despairing of the success of the cause. He now applied himself diligently to his farming operations, married Janet Lindsay, a woman of great excellence, was elected an Elder of Mr. Guthrie's Church, and became as distinguished for his activity in peaceful well-doing as for his prowess in battle.

Such a man, however, was too much an object of fear to the persecutor to be allowed to live long in peace; and he was obliged to leave his home and family, and retire to the bogs and fens of Fenwick moor; visiting then and other friends occasionally, and as by stealth.—He shared the victory of Drumclog, but also the defeat at Bothwell Bridge.—A price was now set on his head, and the pursuit was hot.—After a course of the severest privations and hardships he was at last apprehended by five soldiers, in the house of Robert Howie of ^{or Howie of} Mearns, ^{or Howie of} and conveyed to Edinburgh, where he was tried and condemned as a rebel.—It is very remarkable, that even Dalziel was moved by the worth of the christian, and the gallantry of his old opponent in arms, so as to become a zealous intercessor on his behalf; and, which is still more remarkable, so as to be successful with the Court in obtaining the veteran's reprieve: but Bishop Paterson withheld the document till the execution was accomplished! And yet, there are men who boast of their lineal ecclesiastical descent from the cowardly murderer. As well might they boast of the lineage of Caiaphas.

Captain Paton's dying testimony is of a noble order—for its theology, and its spirituality, worthy of an elder of William Guthrie; and for its faith and boldness in the hour of death, worthy of his heroism

*We shall not be the same
 And for truth's cause our life lay down,
 Shall get the victory o'er their foes
 And gain life's everlasting crown.*

PREFATORY NOTICE.

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as a christian soldier. He was executed in the Grass Market, Edinburgh, May 9th, 1685, and buried in the Greyfriars' Church Yard. Having bid farewell to his endeared bible he handed it down from the scaffold to a friend; and it is still preserved with his sword among other covenanting relics in the house of the Howies of Lochgoin. *In his will, & from a 2^d Fenwick tro. Index 10.*

A short time after his martyrdom a rude stone had been erected in the church yard at Fenwick commemorating his worth: But thirty years ago this was superseded by a larger stone with a more extended epitaph, together with sculptured representations of the Captain's Sword and Bible, and of the flag and drum of the Fenwick troop of volunteers. Last winter the fastenings by which this stone was attached to the wall of the church gave way, and the stone was broken to pieces in the fall. That monument of Captain Paton together with Guthrie's Pulpit formed the great pride of our village; and at a public meeting of the inhabitants it was resolved that the Monument should be renewed. A subscription, aided by friends in Kilmarnock and the neighbourhood, and a few in Glasgow, amounted to about £12. But it was also agreed that the Rev. William Anderson, LL.D. of Glasgow, should be requested to come up and preach for a collection, from William Guthrie's pulpit, or, should the day be favourable, from a tent in the church yard. We obtained his consent; and on the first Sabbath of May about 3000 persons assembled. The scene was peculiarly solemn, as the preacher discoursed to the multitude standing on the grave stones of some of the heroes whom he eulogized. The collection amounted to £25. 13s. 10d. which we regard as being very respectable for our Fenwick moors.—A wish was very widely expressed for the publication of the Discourse. The Committee were again successful in their application, and obtained the manuscript to be published on their own account. Thus two great objects are gained—the dissemination of a vindication of our fathers' piety and

honour; and also, we trust, a considerable addition to our funds arising from the sale of the Discourse.

Our exchequer promises so well that our ambition has considerably enlarged its aim. Besides restoring Captain Paton's Monument, we design to erect a tablet within the church for perpetuating the memory of William Guthrie, who, though not a martyr himself in the sense of being called to lay down his life for the truth, was famous as a trainer of martyrs. And yet, he was a martyr too, all the length of being not only driven away from his beloved parishioners, but interdicted from all public preaching of his beloved Gospel, besides being subjected to a life of privation, insult and danger. And when there may be some who do not sympathize with us in celebrating the memory of Captain Paton's minister—we shall have the universal sympathy of Scottish piety in celebrating that of the author of "A Christian's trial of a Saving Interest in Christ."

Besides, the Committee design to repair the family tomb stone of the Howies of Lochgoin, who acted their part so nobly in these trying times; and also the stones erected to the memories of Peter Gemmel, John Fergushill, George Woodburn, and James White, who all suffered Martyrdom, or rather won its crown, within our once sanctified parish.

We embrace this opportunity of thanking friends for past favours, and intimating that we shall depend on them for what additional help may yet be requisite—being persuaded that we are engaged in a work, pleasing to the Lord, when we honour the memory of his saints, and also profitable to the cause of piety, when thereby the attention of all, but especially of a rising generation, is summoned to the study and imitation of these illustrious examples of faith and fortitude.

In name of the Committee,

WILLIAM ORR, Convener.

FENWICK, June, 1853.

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

HEBREWS xii. 1, 2.

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

HAVING selected these words, brethren, as the subject of present discourse, I invite your attention first of all to the character which they give of a Christian; it is that of the Runner of a Race.

The image is derived from the Olympian Games of ancient Greece, in which two or more competed for the prize, which consisted of a garland crown of olive, or other plant. To have gained this crown was accounted one of the highest honours to which a mortal could attain. Princes would descend from their thrones and enter the lists of competition for it: and it ennobled not only the victor himself but all his kindred, and even the city which could boast of being his birth-place. The greatest efforts, consequently, to which human strength is adequate, were put forth in the contest. Nowhere else could man's prowess be seen to such advantage: and never, since

these games were discontinued, has his animal nature had such an opportunity of displaying its excellence.—The Apostle Paul had probably witnessed the exciting scene and been deeply impressed by it; for he adopts the race-running as a favourite source of illustration of the nature of the spiritual life.

As is the case with all figures, however, the analogy does not hold good at all points. The characteristic and prominent feature of the Olympic race was *competition*; there was but one prize, and violent was the striving between the racers who should gain it. Now, the idea of competition is by no means excluded from the Christian race. For, although all who enter the lists and run *lawfully*, or with any degree of faithfulness, are sure of being crowned; yet is there great variety in the degrees of the glory of the different crowns. There are administrations of five cities, and administrations of ten. And it is a legitimate emulation that we compete with one another for the crown of the most exalted honour. Ah! that there were more of such ambition in the Church. Perverted ambition is one of the most malignant of evil passions; but sanctified ambition is one of the most venerable and salutary of the graces. Accuse it not of pride; it requires a holy heart to be ambitious after this fashion. There are many eaten up of the lust of power who would rather be bound hands and feet and cast into a dungeon, than be condemned to the wearing of a crown in the kingdom of God, by the side of Christ, in a throne nearest to His.

Nevertheless, competition is not a prominent characteristic of the Christian race; and the principal idea which the Apostle designs to illustrate is the great, unremitting, onward exertion. Competition with a fellow-Christian

may never enter into the runner's thoughts: but, under the influence of other motives, his running, for the energy of its exercise, resembles that of the Olympic racer. What, then, are these other motives? They are especially two: the *first*, that he may escape from impending misery. He flees for his life, as when Lot fled from Sodom—as when Pilgrim fled from the City of Destruction—as when the man-slayer fled from the avenger of blood. This, however, is more especially characteristic of the convert in the first stage of his career: and the Apostle, writing to Christians somewhat advanced, refers especially to the *second* motive, viz. the gaining of the happiness and glory of the heavenly crown; and it is particularly under this view that I shall consider the race.

But at our very starting we meet with a doctrinal difficulty which must be removed out of the way. Understanding generally that the Christian race consists of a life of piety and well-doing, how can it be said, that, by means of this good working of his own, a man gains the heavenly crown, consistently with our great standard testimony, that all the merit of our Salvation is found in the work of Christ on our behalf? The apparent discrepancy is easily harmonised. Christ purchased the Crown; His merits alone won it; all the *deserving* is in Him: but besides this there are *qualifications* necessary on the part of His people for *wearing* it: an ungodly character could not endure it for its holiness; nor would it have been righteous government to arrange a scheme of salvation by which he could be made a partaker of its honour and happiness.* Here then is the object of the Christian's

* See Discourses—the Doctrine of Good Works; and Penance—the Doctrine of Justification—for extended illustrations of this subject.

race—or rather, that of which his race consists—the acquisition of a fitness or meetness of character for wearing the crown which his Lord has purchased for him. Yonder it shines; held out to be bestowed on him when he has finished the race, in the course of which the character is acquired; and, lest he should die before the race is finished, he runs with all his might.

This doctrinal explanation having been made, observe now more particularly, in the **FIRST PLACE**, how great is the self-delusion of those who entertain hope, howsoever vague, that the crown shall be conferred on them, while yet, not to speak of their friends observing nothing in their conduct, they are not themselves conscious of making the least exertion to qualify themselves for the wearing of it; and, if put on the trial, could not tell you of any one thing which they ever either think or say or do which has even the appearance of something done for that end, unless it be a little formal observance of the ordinances of the church on Sabbath, or possibly a pretence of orthodoxy in criticising the preacher's discourse. The delusion, however, in this case is so gross, that it seldom takes the positive shape of a hope that they shall obtain the heavenly crown, but only the negative shape, that they shall not be condemned to the misery of Hell. Common sense forbids their hope of glory: when yet they have a vague expectation that they may escape misery, because they are not flagrantly wicked. Ah, the self-deception! There are only two destinations for the soul of man: the one or the other is the alternative of each of us. To be excluded from glory necessarily implies consignment to woe. And when you feel that it

would be fantastical, a mockery, for you an unholy, unspiritually, uncharitably exercised man to indulge any hope of the glory, in the same proportion should you fear that the woe will be your portion.

But I have less to do at present with this miserable class, and turn to another who are more nearly concerned in our text. Observe, therefore, in the SECOND PLACE how it convicts many of the most shameful inconsistency, though in the exercise of charity we may not pronounce them unbelieving and reprobate. They are such as take religion easily; who according to their own account are not like some of their neighbours "righteous over-much;" who think a little, and speak a little, and do a little, by fits and starts, *nows and thens*. And that's what you call your running of the race? Why, it is not even *walking*; it is scarcely entitled to the name of *limping*. Think of the Olympic racers for a contrast: see how they clear the ground *on* to the winning-post where hangs the crown! You will say there is a difference. There is: Paul admits it—"they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." Theirs was a garland of leaves which soon withered: even the honour of it soon died out of the memories of men; but our crown is one which flourishes with undecaying beauty: it is a branch of the Tree of Life; and its honour is everlasting throughout the kingdom of God. If the Olympic racer, then, pressed onward in his course with such undeviating purpose when the crown which shone in his eye was comparatively so paltry; how much more ought not the christian's course to be characterised by unremitted exertion, when the crown displayed for exciting his ardour shines with such surpassing glory?

Some, however, will persist in objecting, that the Olympic racer, for the short time he ran his course had nothing else to do or think of; whereas the christian has a great many other duties which demand a part of his attention. Other duties, I ask, than what? Has he any other duty in this world than that of preparing and qualifying himself for the heavenly crown? I deny that he has. Whatever forms a *duty* falls into the line of the christian race. So that when the pious ploughman is according to the divine commandment "diligent in business," in every furrow he draws he is making progress in the christian race. Whatever is done in the fear of God—because He has prescribed it, and at the time He has prescribed, and in the manner and measure He has prescribed, and for the ends which He has prescribed, *that* is christian race-running for the heavenly crown.

There is another mode of illustrating the unintermitting constancy with which the right and true hearted christian pursues his heavenward race. Moralists are accustomed to speak of the Master or Ruling Passion, which, with its imperious sway, subordinates every other passion to itself. Do not all of us know some men (for they abound) of whose minds Avarice has so engrossed the dominion, that we are persuaded there can never be five minutes at a time of their waking existence, when that money does not occupy their thoughts;—who are ever on the alert to catch the penny, and will sacrifice everything else, health, character, the education, comfort and respectability of their own children, in the base pursuit? If other interests can be served and other passions gratified consistently with the claims of the domineering lust, they may obtain a little attention; but whenever

anything else comes into competition with it, it tosses it aside or tramples it under foot. And yet, these are the very men who are loudest in their censure, or most scornful in their contempt, of a faithful ministry of the gospel, as being extravagant and demanding impossibilities, when it makes a claim for an unreserved consecration of self to the cause of religion. They should reflect that different minds have different tastes; and when their taste is such, that a little gold and silver and copper is the object which fascinates them so as to control their whole being, they might make allowance, I think, in their charity, for those whom the heavenly crown fascinates with its beauty and splendour. Ah, brethren, instead of its being surprising that there are some men whom the prospect of that crown inflames with ardour, does not all the wonder lie in there being so few whom it excites; and that there are so many who expend the energies of their immortal nature on the acquisition of objects so trifling, oftentimes so vile, in despite of that blood-purchased crown with the display of which a pleading Redeemer would win them to the pursuit of an inheritance of never-ending glory?

The foregoing illustration of the manner in which the celestial crown should form the object of the Ruling passion of us all, was introduced by an observation on the inconsistency of those professors, to whom, in the judgment of charity, we may not refuse the christian name; but whom, on account of the slackness of their conduct, and the manner in which, by mere fits and starts, their piety is exhibited, it would be incongruous to represent as being runners of a race. What, then, they may ask, is your opinion of us precisely? I answer *first*, that your

case is *suspicious*: it is only in the judgment of charity, observe, that we refrain from pronouncing you reprobate: we have no confidence in you; were you to die in your present state we would be afflicted with doubts about your eternal welfare, and feel difficulty in expressing ourselves when called to say prayers at your funeral. This is enough of evil surely; but there is worse. Not only are *we* suspicious of you, *yourselves* also must be suspicious; never enjoying any clear sunshine of hope; but living continually in a state of restless dissatisfaction—questioning if these fits and starts of devotion be not a mere delusion and hypocrisy, since they want that demonstration of genuineness which constancy alone can furnish.

But *secondly*, whatever may be said of the preceding reflections, this at least is obvious, that it can be a crown of only inferior glory to which you can at this limping rate of progress attain. The honour of Administration! Will it not be singular mercy if you are admitted to be an inhabitant of the kingdom at all? But since it is all mercy together for whatever party, suppose you should be admitted to the administration of Five cities, how feel you in the prospect of being placed below some of those who will be elevated to the administration of Ten? I have already stated that competition, in respect of who shall be greatest in the kingdom, is but slightly characteristic of the christian race; but to be *least*—who can patiently bear the thought of it? especially to be excelled and outshone by those whom you at present undervalue and despise, and with whom you would not condescend to exchange courtesies on the street—you, master, to be excelled by that prayerful servant whose hire notwith-

standing all his faithfulness to your interests you grudge, saying less might serve the like of him, when yet you spend so prodigally on the feasting of your acquaintance and pampering the vanity of your ill-trained family?—and you, idle-young lady, with your airs of gentility, O, unless you mend your manners, to be outshone so far by that poor seamstress, who after her long hours of toil during the week is discovered labouring so affectionately and earnestly in the instruction of her Sabbath class of otherwise neglected children?—I do not ask, how you will endure her exaltation so high above you in that day; for if you are admitted into the kingdom you will be the first to acknowledge the righteousness of the arrangement, when your views of what is great and worthy have been rectified by the light of Eternity. But I ask, how with your present perverted and world-sophisticated notions you bear the *prospect* of it, when the first shall be made last and the last first? Mend your manners, I say: otherwise your humiliation is certain. Set to work: imitate and emulate your seamstress sister in doing some good; if not in her particular mode of well-doing, in some other as profitable. Look out for two or three aged widows whom you may visit to share your pin-money with them, and enliven them with your conversation. Though you should want confidence in yourself as qualified to speak correctly on the subject of religion, yet if you tell them the news of the day with the benevolent design of relieving the dreariness of their lot, it will be good christian race-running. It would be better, however, if by means of reading christian biography, instead of trashy novels (I do not mean that all novels are such), you qualified yourself for telling an anecdote for their

spiritual profiting. Off then in your race—the path is before you.

Observe now, in the THIRD PLACE, what is the view which our text gives of the present world in its relation to the christian: when he is a Racer, it must be the Race-course. A Race-course! O, Sir, is that a place in which a man may seek to establish a home for himself in which he may sit down satisfied? Shame on thee to be so easily pleased as to choose a race-course for thine inheritance!—Most certainly, brethren, let us take the very best of this world we can find, consistently with duty. And when Providence may conduct us through green meadows and by a flowery path, let us take the pleasure thankfully and enjoy it heartily. The Lord loves a cheerful receiver nearly as much as a cheerful giver. But let us take care that we regard it only as wayside pleasure, and never say of any circumstances, howsoever happy and prosperous, “this is our rest:” let the crown and home beyond ever have the best of our affections.—When the idea of the present scene being a Race-course contains a strong rebuke of worldliness, it is equally a thought of great consolation for the afflicted. What but toil is to be expected of a Race-course? and if pleasure occur in the way it is something over and above the promise. That promise is the crown after the toil of the race. Take courage, then, thou afflicted one: this is no proper specimen of thy Lord’s bounty and of the inheritance which He has provided for thee: it is racing time: and a race soon comes to an end; when having gained the crown, and looking back on the sorrows of the way, thou shalt say and sing it was “light affliction and but for a moment.”

Having illustrated the general idea of the Christian Race, that I may have an opportunity to speak somewhat at large of The Cloud of Witnesses I must dismiss the intervening clauses of the text with a few brief expository notices.—*The weights* which we must lay aside, that we may run lightly and unencumbered, are all perverted or inordinate worldly passions, desires, cares and habits which hinder the exercise of the christian graces: and this brethren you will find a sure and easily applied rule: Deny yourself either by entire or partial mortification to whatever *hinders prayer*: whatever hinders *that*, whether it be a love or a hatred, or a study or a care, hinders every other holy and charitable exercise.—*The sin that doth so easily beset us*, may denote either sin in general, or that particular sin to which each of us by natural temperament, or age, or education, or habit, or employment, or companionship and alliance, is specially addicted or exposed. Alas! that there should be so many who cannot determine what is in this respect their besetting sin, since they are beset, yea possessed by a legion of them—lust, avarice, envy, falsehood, pride, hatred of God's people, all equally and all in great strength. I incline, however, to that interpretation which, in consistency with the context, explains the besetting sin as signifying that *unbelief*, or want of confidence in the divine promise, which is the besetting sin of human nature, and that which more than anything else paralyses a man and incapacitates him for running the Christian race; whereas, when the heart is sound *in believing*, all the other graces are easily exercised.—Finally, the *Patience* inculcated signifies not only an unmurmuring resignation to God's will under afflictions, but a universal, enduring *persever-*

ance; which time will not relax, which adversity will not dishearten, which danger will not daunt, which frowns will not terrify, which mockery will not shame, and which smiles will not seduce.

For securing this faithful running of our Race we are addressed with the imperativeness of commandment, the persuasiveness of exhortation, and the encouragement of promise. But besides these, there is what is always so advantageous for animating conduct, a great body of *example*, when the precept is visibly displayed in action, so that its practicability is demonstrated, its beauty unfolded, and the particular manner in which its performance is to be gone about illustrated, besides the excitement which in some instances is promoted, of a spirit of emulation.

At the head of these examples appears that of our Lord Himself: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*. Now, brethren, it is not only a true doctrine, but it is the principal doctrine of our religion, that from first to last and throughout all things Christ is the Saviour of men; and that it is by looking to Him with a *faith of reliance* we are individually made partakers of his salvation. But widely and emphatically though this is taught elsewhere, it does not appear to be the lesson of our present text. You will observe that in the expression "*our faith*," *our* is printed in italics, indicating that there is no corresponding word in the original. Even with this exclusion, however, the meaning is not correctly conveyed by our translation: *the leader and perfecter of faith*, is the literal rendering—the leader in the race of faith, and its perfecter, as furnishing a complete model of faith in his

own conduct, when with his Father's promise in his heart, and the crown of joy at the end of the race in his eye, He pursued his way undauntedly even though the cross stood in that way with all its shame and woe. This is a very beautiful and striking representation—that Christ Himself furnishes an example of believing, and that it was in the power of Faith that He too persevered and won the crown.*

This example of Christ must ever be our principal guidance in running our race. But when we are so ready to make apologies for our shortcomings, by saying that His divine example is inimitable by us to the full extent, we are additionally referred to The Cloud of Witnesses, consisting of men and women, whose case was in all respects like our own; and for coming short of the standard of whose excellence we can make no excuse. What then is distinctly the meaning of that Cloud? First, What is its *substance*? I answer, not certainly the spirits of the departed saints, leaving their heavenly repose and felicity and visiting this earth to surround and survey us as we run. It is astonishing that such a superstition should still have such a prevalence among us: it is not only unscriptural and absurd, but very pernicious. It is the root of Rome's idolatrous prayers. The Cloud of Witnesses to which the Apostle refers is displayed in the pages of the

* The text contains M'Lean's view. I will not, however, dispute the case warmly with any one who may adopt Macknight's. He translates "the Captain and Perfecter of the Faith:" and thus explains:—"The Apostle compares Jesus to the Judge of the games, whose office it was to determine who were the conquerors, and to make them perfect as combatants by bestowing on them the prizes for which they had contended." This is a consistent enough meaning, but I prefer M'Lean's as more in harmony with the context.

Bible ; and consists of the recorded examples of the old Testament worthies, which have been so beautifully gathered together,—focally condensed as it were—in the preceding chapter. That chapter is the bright cloud. As an exercise of imagination you may suppose, if you will, that the eyes of Abel and Abraham gaze on you ; and you might employ your imaginations to far worse purpose ; but still it would be only a “devout imagination.” The only reality consists in their recorded example ; and through that record they are all represented as being Witnesses, as when it is said of one of them, Abel, that by his sacrifice “he being dead yet speaketh.” But again ; What signifies the Witnessing ? I answer, not that they are *observers*, watching how we conduct ourselves, and condemning and applauding as they see us run ill or run well. That again is a profitable imagination—in thought to place ourselves under their inspection, and bethink ourselves of the judgment which they will pronounce us. But that is not the meaning of the text. The term of the original (*martyr*) is never used in the sense of a witness either *for* you, or *against* you, but *to* you, or *before* you, on behalf of some other person or object. Such was, and such is, the Witness-bearing of the saints referred to. To the men of their own generation they gave certain *assurances* by their sayings and conduct ; and they continue to give the same assurances to us through the record of their lives.

What, then, are these assurances ? Take the case of Abraham for illustration : *First* he bears witness for God—that God is true, and faithful to His promise. When any of us may grow weary and faint in heart, so as to be in danger of giving up the struggle, and turning back

through doubtfulness and distrust, forth comes the Patriarch's voice from the cloud in tones at once of rebuke and encouragement: "*I* was not disheartened amid severer trials and greater disappointments than yours: against all natural hope I yet believed, accounting Him faithful who had promised, nor did His promise fail"—and the whole Cloud of Witnesses lift up their loud Amen, bearing testimony that God is true.—*Secondly*, Abraham bears witness for Faith, as the great inspiring principle of contentment, dignity, fortitude, and every amiable and holy virtue: and also, as that which in a special manner pleases God and secures his friendship and favour. Wouldst thou be great—Wouldst thou be happy? Abraham's voice again comes forth from the midst of the Cloud, saying "Behold me: whatever you see venerable in my character and rich in the blessing which God has conferred on me, I owe it all to Faith"—And again the whole Cloud of Witnesses exhibiting themselves clothed with their honours bear their united testimony to Faith as the great secret of all their glory.

Such is a specimen of the manner in which Paul's Cloud of Witnesses bear their testimony to the Faithfulness of God and the power of Faith. But since the Apostle's time the Cloud has been greatly enlarged; and in not a few instances by the addition of characters whose example is even more instructive and animating than that of some whom he has placed in the constellation. When I say so, I refer not only to the Apostle himself and other New Testament saints, but to many whose memorial is preserved in the pages of authentic, though uninspired history. You will perceive that Paul found some of his

worthies in the uninspired books of the Maccabees : and the man who could sit and hear approvingly a sermon preached on the life and character of Samson, for instance, or Jephtha, but censure one delivered on the character and life of Dr. Chalmers or Dr. Heugh, as being a desecration of Sabbath ordinances, would show himself to be "far behind with his lessons." The lives of the saints form a principal part of the treasure of the church ; and she sustains great loss by their being so seldom displayed to view, whether for the establishing and animating of her own faith, or the winning of converts to her cause.

The whole of the saints are the property of the whole of the church ; but certain saints are more immediately the property of certain sections of the church, for the use made of whose lives these sections are respectively in a special manner responsible. The Saxon churches are more responsible than we are for the improvement of the example of Luther, when we are more responsible than they are for the improvement of the example of Knox.—The way is now open for a consideration of that subject on account of which we are more especially convened at this time.

Brethren, I would speak, and have you to think, with discretion. Comparisons are often odious, and superlatives are usually absurd. He who might say that the Martyrology of Scotland is beyond question the most famous in the modern history of the church, would betray much ignorance of what the Spirit of God has accomplished in other lands. Besides, let such a one be warned, that this magnifying of his native country is not a little perilous ; it increases the individual's own responsibility

for peculiar eminence in the faith. In the spirit therefore of the catholic brotherhood of the church, let us rejoice that other countries have contributed their proportion to the noble army of Martyrs; and be satisfied with maintaining that the troop which Scotland has sent equals any other to be seen in the magnificent and beautiful array; or rather, to preserve the figure of our text, that of that Cloud of Witnesses which the Sun of Righteousness has exhaled from the earth, the wing which has risen from the mountains and meadows of Scotland, and rests over it for a light and glory, equals that of any other land in the splendour of its holiness.

To give anything like a circumstantial narrative of the lives and doings of the heroes of the covenant, is no part of my present design. I must refer you to others who have detailed their history.* Let these few observations, therefore, suffice for the time.

✧ In no other country of Europe—we can safely use the superlative here—did the Reformation accomplish its work with such swift and effectual execution as it did in Scotland. There was verified in a remarkable manner the saying of a “nation being born in a day.” With the exception of the barbarism of some of the northern clans and islanders of the west, it was with singular unanimity that the Temple of Protestant Faith was erected. The

* When there was honour to be conferred, and a task to be competently executed, that day’s position and work at Fenwick, should have been assigned to George Gilfillan; on the consecration of whose remarkable powers to the upholding of the memory of the covenanters we have all so much reason to felicitate ourselves. After I had rashly committed myself to the task I beseeched him to relieve me of it, but was unsuccessful in my supplication.

hostility by which it was afterwards well nigh overthrown was properly all an aggression from without the kingdom. Traitors, indeed, too many there were found whom the bribe of the enemy seduced; but the dissatisfaction did not originate within.—The sunshine of prosperity was of short duration; but under the faithful reading of the Bible, and a faithful Ministry of the Gospel, the truth struck its roots deep into the soul of the nation.—The boar from the south broke in upon the fair vineyard: first a silly tyrant, then a proud one, then a profligate one, then one silly, proud, and profligate all at once—all the four prerogatives high for falsehood, treacherous, perjured, and cruel exceedingly, with most blasphemous pretensions of their being Anointed of the Lord for the government of his church, through the bribery of the unprincipled, and by the coercion of the sword, endeavoured to impose on the saints of this land an abhorred, popery-inclined prelacy; and when they followed their own beloved ejected pastors to the heaths and glens hounded them to death by such demon-dogs as Claverhouse and Dalziel. Would *you* not have rebelled? Would not *you* have renounced all allegiance to the tyrant, and united in his excommunication from church and throne and the society of men? Would *you* have hesitated to draw the sword of self-defence? Wife, would not *you* have encouraged your husband forth to the battle? Sister, would not *you* have encouraged your brother, as he would prove himself a man? Maiden, would not *you* have pled with your wooer, as he would shew he loved *you*, that he should be off to the leaguer of the good and the brave? *You* would, but for one or other of these three things, want of piety, or want of

courage, or want of common sense. And say not, that, howsoever good their cause, they lacked *prudence*, and should have waited their time when all Scotland was ready to rise as one man and crush the oppressor. How easy it is for you to criticise and talk of imprudence after the enterprise failed. Their fault was, that they waited too long, and allowed the tyrant to gather strength, through listening with an easy credulity to his promises and oaths. And when at last they did rise, they had a right to calculate on the accession of their countrymen ; so that when they were proved to be mistaken, the blame is not imputable to those who did their duty, but those who remained at home in faithlessness, cowardice, and inglorious ease. Neither let it be said that their struggle was unavailing. The swords of Captain Paton and his brave and holy brethren won the liberties of these lands. They conquered when they fell. They preserved that fire alive without which Scotland at the Revolution would have been burdened with that Prelatic incubus under which the faith, the liberty, and prosperity of England labour and groan at the present hour.

I make no unqualified defence of the Covenanters' character and cause ; wherever they professed principles for coercing others, and exceeded those of self-defence, I unite with all the friends of religious liberty in lamenting and censuring it. But let us reflect for the mitigating of the censure, first, that not only were such compulsory principles those of the age, but that they were to some extent necessary as a matter of self-defence ; and secondly, that neither had the poor men an opportunity of putting them into practice, nor, although they had had it, would they have taken the advantage : all their conduct evinces that

their better nature and other better principles would have restrained the operation of what we complain of as obnoxious in their system. In the warfare of self-defence there was no other man's hand by the prowess of which so many of the enemy were prostrated as by that of the hand of Captain Paton: and yet in his dying testimony he declared that directly and indirectly he even hated bloodshed. The part he had acted at any time in the slaying of men was a sore necessity laid upon him in the dutiful defence of his own and his country's dearest and most precious rights. How different from that dog-like thirst for blood which infuriated him whom Scott and Aytoun have celebrated as the flower of chivalry! It is curious to observe what a dog-like taste some men have in making choice of the objects of their admiration.

Having made these explanations and defences, reflect now, brethren, *First*, on the testimony which these men gave for the preciousness and paramount authority of God's Word. What a Book the Bible was to them—how awful and joyous!—God's Book of royal statutes, and His Testamentary Book of promise to His children. Their reverence and love of it lay at the root, and was the secret of all their excellence. How they imbued and saturated their minds with it, so that it breathed forth from them in every word and deed! No people ever loved faithful ministers with more devoted attachment; but equally no people ever vindicated more nobly the prerogative of the self-priesthood of all the saints, in keeping the love of pastors subordinated to the superior claim of God's Word, interpreted in a manner satisfactory to their own private judgment. And when these pastors

were driven away from them, or they were driven away from their pastors, on the "dumb Sabbath" or in the far wilderness, the Book continued to furnish them plentifully and luxuriously with the wine of Eternal Life. "Farewell sweet Bible," they would say on the Scaffold of Martyrdom, as they kissed it and pressed it to their hearts, "Farewell, sweet, sweet Bible!" it needed all the power of the subjoined Welcome, to vanquish the sorrow of that Farewell, as they exclaimed "Welcome, Jesus!" and were by the gibbet lifted up into glory.

Reflect, *Secondly*, how *earnest* and *conscientious* they were—true in heart as the steel of their swords. Theirs was no pretence of religion—no mere dressing in Sunday clothes and going to church because there is nothing else to do—no mere recitation of a bundle of doctrines learned in a catechism (though the catechisms both Larger and Shorter they valued greatly)—no mere sentimentalism momentarily excited by the eloquence of an orator,—it was *profound principle*, the result of deep pondering thoughtfulness. And they were as conscientious as they were earnest. By slight compliances and small equivocations they might in many instances have saved their lives; but they defied the temptation and scorned the bribe. "They endured as seeing Him who is Invisible; and in the power of Faith wrought their great exploits."

Reflect, *Thirdly*, on their deep-toned *spirituality*. There is no mistake greater than when many imagine that these Covenanters were merely a species of political religionists, zealous in the defence of the outworks of the church; and that the Headship of Christ about which they clamoured consisted merely in the freedom of the General Assembly, uninterfered with and uncontrolled by the secular power;

and further, that the sermons of those pastors, whom they flocked to the hills to hear, consisted principally of seditious invectives against the government. What ignorance such a notion betrays! Do their dying testimonies warrant it? Was such the character of the preaching by which the faith of Captain Paton, for instance, was cherished within these walls from the pulpit of William Guthrie? * On the contrary, never was there more thorough, heart-searching dealing with the conscience of the sinner, and never was the Cross of the Redeemer laid deeper in it as a foundation of hope; and it was because of the manner in which Christ had been endeared to them individually by the exhibition of that Cross that they were so zealous in asserting the rights and honour of His Crown. Jesus and Charles, for kings! William Guthrie and a curate, for ministers! To what an agony of zeal the contrast was calculated to excite these holy men! —

Reflect, *Fourthly*, on their *patriotism*, both in respect of the church and their native country. O that Zion! how they loved her for the sake of Him whose bride she was! No Jew ever loved Jerusalem with warmer devotion. How jealous they were of her rights and honour! and as fellow-citizens within her sacred domain, how faithful they were to one another in their defence of her cause—dying for one another, rather than utter a syllable by which a friend's hiding place might be revealed, or his reputation tarnished!—And, then, that Church was the only thing they loved more than dear Scotland. Well they were entitled to despise bibleless, savage Ireland, and abhor

* The present discourse was preached from a tent placed within a few yards of Guthrie's Church, in which the original pulpit, made of beautifully carved oak, retains its ancient place and honours.

prelatic, persecuting England, and glory in Scotland as the land of the enlightened, the pure, and the brave. Thus they weeped for her sorrows as sons for the woes of a mother ; and as dutiful sons they rose to the avenging of her wrongs.

Reflect, *Fifthly*, on the excellence of the *women* of the covenant—spouses worthy of such husbands, daughters worthy of such fathers, sisters worthy of such brothers, maidens worthy of such wooers. Never did the female character make at once a more venerable and amiable display of womanly virtue. They made no French exhibitions, indeed, of warrioress intrepidity : but as counsellors, and comforters, and watchers at home, and especially as the cherishers of a gospel ministry, with what sagacity, constancy, self-denial, and braving of dangers they acted their woman's part in that day of Scotland's exigency. And when their unmanly persecutors (Scott and Aytoun's cavaliers) would take vengeance on them for their faithfulness, the intelligence and boldness of their testimony in some instances shamed the comparative feebleness of that of the sterner sex.—“Never since you murdered him,” was the answer of young Isabel Alison, to the question of the Council, when they interrogated her about the last time she had seen David Hackston. It is true they had roused her maiden virtue to the height of its indignation by the *naughtiness* of their queries and observations ; for these Royal and Noble patrons and episcopal Fathers of that church, which is the only church of Christ in Scotland,* were infected

* Of all the freaks which Prelacy has of late been playing in either England or Scotland, none has been so amusing as that lately exhibited at Edinburgh. It would seem that one Ramsay had been spouting

with a blackguardism which, like a moral *lues*, pervaded their whole constitution with the most noisome putrefaction. Before the frown of such foul demons the women of the covenant quailed not; but rather waxed bolder in their testimony, when they reflected both scornfully on the meanness and moral degradation of their judges, and self-complacently, on their own nobility as the daughters of God.

Inhabitants of Fenwick, I have spoken of the Cloud of Witnesses which overshadows Scotland: *you* dwell under its very *focus*. They speak of classic ground; yours is sacred. Not a stream but gave drink, not a green knoll among the heather but gave a resting place, not a *thrash* bush but gave footing through the moss to the martyrs of the covenant. You cannot move a foot-step from the door without treading where William Guthrie and Captain Paton and other holy heroes walked. Away from Fenwick all the profane! There is no place for you here: the whole ground is a protest against your

something to the effect, that salvation might possibly be found elsewhere than in that church, which can trace its Apostolic pedigree so clearly to the remote and venerable antiquity of the *Tulchan* Fathers. (See the Duke of Argyll's elucidation of the Genealogy.) Such latitudinarianism, violating the monopoly of the genuine Scottish Priesthood, could not be tolerated: and his Overseers have obtained from him the publication of the most ample recantation, in which he indignantly denies that the baptisms administered by the Established Church, or any other Presbyterian church, are possessed of the regenerating Hydrodynamics (water-power) of those which are administered by his own consecrated hand and tongue. One likes to see consistency. The Church of Rome has completely stultified itself by admitting the validity of the Baptism of heretics. Scottish Prelacy has corrected this folly of her mother.

presence. Christian brethren: you do well in proposing the re-erection of that monument—well in respect of its being a debt due to the memory of the righteous; but especially well in respect of setting up for yourselves and your children a remembrancer of their holy example. But oh! take care that it be not a stone of condemnation, witnessing against a race degenerated from the faith of their fathers; rather let it prove a Pillar of direction on the road to the heavenly city."

My Scotch fellow-countrymen, from whatever district, let us reflect with gratitude on the peculiar bounty with which God has ordered our lot. From St. Columba of the isles, along the line of Patrick Hamilton, Wisheart, Knox, Melville, Gillespie, Rutherford, Henderson, and a multitude of others who might be enumerated, down to James Renwick, what an august array it is of prophet-like men who were commissioned to Scotland! and with what reverence our fathers listened,—with what earnestness of faith, as convinced by God's Word, they believed,—and with what self-denial, endurance, and bravery they contended for the truth, and won for us that exemption from tyranny, and that liberty of worship of which we are so blissfully possessed! Let us meditate on our responsibility for the improvement of those privileges which they purchased for us with their blood, and attempt a faithful imitation of their noble example. That example needs but little purification of a few superstitions and a few misinterpretations of Scripture—not more than are to be found among ourselves—that it may be followed safely. The great features of their faith and conduct furnish a model for our accurate copying. We may never be called to exercise and manifest our faith precisely in the same

manner. Yet, who knows?—Look at the Continent of Europe submerged under a flood of papal despotism, the waves of which are beating on our island rock all around, while there is an extensive treachery both Roman and Anglican within the very bowels of our commonwealth, prepared to admit the enemy. And, besides these ominous signs of the times, the prophetic Word seems to give warning of a dreadful trial to which the saints should be subjected by the Antichristian Power, just before the Lord's interposition for its overthrow, and for the establishment of his promised kingdom. But, supposing that both these signs of the times and the prophetic testimony are misinterpreted when we draw from them such alarming conclusions—in proportion as we are exempted from such calamities as those of our fathers, is it not incumbent on us to use our prosperity with diligence in the *advancement* of that cause of Christ and his Church, which they suffered so much to *defend*? If they shed their blood, shall we fret at the call for a little of our wealth? “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord—not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”