

THE
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN SCOTLAND

ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY

1680—1876

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BY THE
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS volume may claim attention as supplying an essential link in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland. It is the history of that body of men who adhered to the civil part of the Second Reformation, according to which Presbytery was established and recognised by the State between 1638 and 1649. Acts of Parliament had been passed in that period, by which the king held his crown on certain express conditions. When Charles II. violated these conditions, both in regard to the civil liberties of the nation and the spiritual independence of the Church, multitudes, especially in the South of Scotland, were disposed to offer strenuous resistance to his assertion of arbitrary power. The more resolute and discerning among the Presbyterians came at length to feel that a change of dynasty was necessary, if freedom and order were to be secured, and hence the celebrated Queensferry Paper and the Sanquhar Declaration. More formidable still to the reigning despotism was the remarkable organization of the Societies, as they were called, designed to secure the enjoyment of religious ordinances, as well as to assert the liberties of the nation. They were the *first* to urge that the dynasty should be changed, and their contention was ratified by the nation at the Revolution. The terms, however, upon which a settlement was effected were not accepted as sufficient by a considerable body of Presbyterians. The Church of which this volume is a history took its rise in its distinctive character at this period, and on the ground that it could not, while acknowledging the relief from oppression which the Revolution afforded, acquiesce in the arrangements made by the State for the recognition of the Church and the due

exercise of its authority within its own spiritual domain. They were jealous in regard to the terms on which an alliance was proposed between Church and State. They were equally jealous in regard to the character of the ally with which the Church was invited to connect itself. They had felt the evils of prelatic despotism too long to view without forebodings the continuance of the system in England and the influence it might still exert on Scottish interests.

Apart, however, from their testimony in regard to this evil and danger, resulting from a Civil Government in which Prelacy was continued as an essential element, those who dissented from the Revolution Settlement, and from whom the Reformed Presbyterian Church arose, were animated with an earnest zeal for the maintenance of religious ordinances. They strove to exist as a Church, and how far they succeeded, and what difficulties they had to surmount in the attempt, is the interesting story recorded in this volume.

The author has devoted himself with special care to the examination of original sources of information. He writes in a generous spirit, remote from and above the sectarian animosities of past generations. He has the candour to dissent from positions and views natural at the time, from the circumstances in which the Church whose history he narrates was placed, but he brings out with sufficient distinctness and force of evidence, the attachment of Reformed Presbyterians to the great scriptural principle which has on the whole given an elevation and dignity and generous catholicity to their aims and procedure, in spite of the narrow views of some, and even the occasional errors and failings into which as a Church they may have fallen. Their anxiety to avoid complicity with the evils of the British Constitution, if, in any instance and for any time, it led them to an extreme position, was due to a pious regard for the principle embodied in the old watchword of the Church in days of trial and persecution—"The Crown Rights and Royal Prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ."

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HISTORY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—1560–1660.

Section First.

IT may be affirmed with a large measure of truth, that the history of the Scottish Church from the Reformation to the Revolution is the history of the Scottish nation. All through this long period we find that, on the one hand, the Church through its Assemblies and its ministers took an active interest in the conduct of public affairs, and on the other, that the State was constantly interfering with the policy of the Church. The consequence was, that the two were so closely connected together, the movements and the condition of things in the one department were so vitally affected by those in the other, that it is impossible to read aright the history of the State without taking into account what at the same time was transpiring within the domain of the Church. This state of things arose very much from the circumstances in which the reformation of religion began in Scotland, and the character which it bore from its commencement. It may be said generally, that in England the Reformation started into being under the direct influence of the Crown; but in Scotland, the cause was taken up and carried forward by the nobles and

the people in direct opposition to the will of the Sovereign. Doubtless, when Henry the Eighth severed England from the domination of Rome, he was sustained by men far nobler than himself, who were animated by high religious principle, and he had the sympathy and support of a large portion of his subjects. But the Scottish Reformation, though lacking this element of royal patronage and support, yet had a firmer basis in the convictions of the people, was altogether broader and deeper in its nature, and more popular in its character, than was the corresponding movement in the southern kingdom. From the first, the Scottish Church laid claim to a larger measure of freedom and independence of action than was ever dreamed of by the founders of the English Church. The latter was fettered by the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown, which was imposed upon it at the beginning of its career, was submitted to by generation after generation, and often gloried in as the very palladium of security. The acceptance of this unscriptural claim tended to sustain the doctrine of passive obedience to the mere will of the Sovereign, to make the Church the creature and servant of the State, and a great buttress of religious exclusiveness and political tyranny. But in Scotland, the Church from the first asserted for itself an exclusive jurisdiction within the sphere of spiritual things, claimed the right to carry out its spiritual functions independent of the prerogatives of the Crown or the interference of Parliament, and only sought from the State the legal recognition of its jurisdiction, and support and security in the enjoyment of its rights. In this way the Scottish Church fostered the love of freedom among the people, and became, what the Church of England never was, the chief defence of the rights of the people against the encroachments of civil tyranny. While stating thus broadly this general conclusion, it is not meant to assert that, in the course of a struggle stretching over more than a century, and carried on amid varying complications, the Church never acted unwisely. It is freely granted that at times it was too closely entangled

with civil affairs, and meddled with matters which did not directly lie within its proper sphere ; and that its claims may sometimes have been presented in a doubtful form, or even pushed to a dangerous extreme. But it still remains true, that, on the whole, the influence of the Scottish Church was favourable to liberty and the rights of the people both civil and ecclesiastical. The form of church government which was adopted has never found much favour with those who believe in the divine right of kings ; it is too democratic to co-exist harmoniously with a system of civil tyranny ; and the claim of spiritual independence is about the last thing that arbitrary rulers are disposed to recognize.

Though we are to concern ourselves in the sequel with the history of only a small section of the Scottish Church, which emerged into separate existence as an ecclesiastical body near the close of the period referred to, when the struggle had risen to supreme intensity ; yet it seems not out of place in itself, and will conduce to a clearer understanding of the position occupied by that section, if we introduce the more limited subject by a brief sketch of the Church between 1560 and 1660, —a period, with whose ecclesiastical leaders and the principles they maintained, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has always claimed to stand in closest affinity. No attempt will be made in this brief survey of a whole eventful century, to enter into a minute detail of facts. Our main purpose is to ascertain as clearly as possible the lines upon which the Scottish Protestant Church was originally constituted, to trace the fortunes of its fundamental principles during the struggle that followed, to mark the progressive advancement to higher attainments at successive epochs, and to realize what was the actual position of the Church, with respect to its claims and distinctive principles, at the close of the first century of its existence. We shall thus be prepared to understand the circumstances which resulted in the formation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church as a separate religious community, having henceforth a history of its own.

During the thirty-five years that preceded 1560, the doctrines of the Reformation had made great progress in Scotland. Despite all the repressive measures that were employed, converts were multiplied among all ranks, and notably among the higher classes. The dangers with which they were surrounded induced the leaders of the Protestants to enter into those leagues for mutual support, and for defence of religion and liberty, which are known as "Bands" or "Covenants." In 1558 civil war broke out between the Queen Regent as the head of the Popish party, and the "Lords of the Congregation" as representing the Protestants. When, through the intervention of England on behalf of the Reforming party, the war was brought to a close, the government of the country was left practically in the hands of the Protestants. John Knox had meantime returned to his native land, and he threw all his energy into the great work of advancing the cause of truth and liberty. The time had come when the Reformation in Scotland should assume a regular organized form; and the year 1560 is memorable in Scottish history for two meetings which had a most important bearing on the future of the Church. The first of these was the meeting of the Scottish Parliament in August of that year. "The Confession of Faith as Professed and Believed by the Protestants within the realm of Scotland," was presented to the Estates, and was by them ratified and approved as the embodiment of what was henceforth to be regarded as the national religion of Scotland. It was drawn up by Knox and his colleagues, and is an able and vigorous statement of evangelical doctrine; it continued to be the only standard of orthodoxy adopted by the Scottish Church, till it was superseded by the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. Two other Acts were passed, by one of which the Papal jurisdiction was abolished, and by the other the celebration of the Mass was forbidden under severe penalties. Thus so far as the Legislature could accomplish it, the old religion was set aside and the new was put in its place; while as yet there

was no organized Protestant Church. The next step therefore was to bring this church into regular form ; and this required action on the part of another body than the Parliament of the Kingdom.

Accordingly, the First General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh on the 10th of December, 1560. It was not marked by any of the pomp and pageantry that characterized the conclaves where the dignitaries of Rome were gathered ; there was something far better than these. The members were few in number ; but they were the representatives of the new life that was beginning to throb in the heart of the Scottish people,—the vanguard of a great and glorious army which through coming times of trial would bravely fight the battle of liberty and religion. This Assembly was not summoned by royal authority—no decree of Parliament called it together ; but in the exercise of its own intrinsic right the Church convened for the furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ within the realm. No representative of royalty or of the state presided over its deliberations ; nor indeed were any such present during the first fourteen Assemblies that were held. It was manifest that the Reformers were not disposed to make the validity of their ecclesiastical acts dependent on the presence or sanction of the civil power ; but they claimed for the Church the right to meet in General Assembly, and to discuss and decide in all spiritual matters by its own authority. When the question respecting the queen's sanction was introduced at the second meeting by Secretary Maitland, it was answered, "If the liberty of the Kirk should depend on the queen's allowance or disallowance, we are assured we shall be deprived not only of Assemblies but of the public preaching of the gospel." "No such thing," said Maitland. "Well, time will try," replied Knox ; "but I will add, take from us the freedom of Assemblies and take from us the evangel ; for without Assemblies how shall good order and unity of doctrine be kept ?" One step towards the organization of the Church had been taken in the preparation

of a doctrinal confession ; but this, however important in itself, did not go far towards the attainment of the desired end. The machinery necessary for maintaining and diffusing the gospel throughout the land must be put in operation ; and in this more than in legal enactments lay the grand security against the restoration of Popery. Accordingly, the first Book of Discipline was prepared ; it was adopted and acted upon by the Assembly, but though it was approved by many members of the Council, it never received legislative sanction. This venerable document bears the unmistakeable stamp of the vigorous, comprehensive and practical mind of John Knox, and is an enduring monument of his statesman-like breadth of view, and of his noble Christian aims. It is referred to here simply as presenting an outline of the ecclesiastical polity of the Reformed Church of Scotland, as that was conceived by Knox and his associates ; and the system therein developed, and the principles set forth were those which the Church through all the subsequent struggles endeavoured to maintain and to perfect. What these were, a few sentences will suffice to show. The form of government was undoubtedly Presbyterian,—the arrangements regarding superintendents and readers being only temporary and designed to meet the urgent necessities of the times, and were dictated more by a supreme desire to promote the spread of evangelical religion, than by any considerations connected with a rigid form of church polity. The rights of the people were distinctly asserted,—“It appertaineth to the people and to every several congregation to elect their minister” ; any deviation from this general rule was only allowed in the special circumstances of the infant state of the Church. The rights of the Church in the admission of ministers were maintained, and none were to be permitted to exercise the office of the ministry, unless duly elected, approved by the Church after due examination, and regularly admitted to the charge. From the first the Headship of Christ over the Church and its direct subjection to His authority was recognized and acted upon. It belonged to the

Church under the guidance of Christ speaking in his Word, to decide as to doctrine, worship, discipline and government; who are to be ministers and how admitted; and who ought to enjoy the privileges of the Church. As a spiritual community having jurisdiction within the sphere of spiritual things, the Church claimed to be free and independent of civil control, owning no authority but that of Jesus Christ. As to the relation between Church and State, according to this document, the early Reformers held that civil rulers had duties to discharge towards religion and the Church, such as involved the subjection of civil authorities to the law of Christ; and while refusing to recognize the interference of the State *in sacris*, they were prepared to allow to it a considerable sphere *circa sacra*. Holding fast the principles of evangelical doctrine and Presbyterian government, maintaining the Headship of Jesus Christ, and its own spiritual freedom and independence under Christ as King, and full of zeal in the service of its Lord, the Reformed Church of Scotland began its eventful career in 1560.

During the first seven years of its history the Church was neither established nor endowed; yet during that short period great progress had been made; the blessed message of the gospel was carried far and wide through the land, and its agencies vastly increased. In 1560 there were only about 85 Christian labourers in all, ministers and laymen; but in 1567 there were 257 ordained ministers, 455 readers, 151 exhorters, and 5 superintendents; altogether 868 agents engaged in Christian work. Civil Establishment and partial endowment came in 1567; and with this union between Church and State began a struggle on the part of the latter to fetter the liberties of the Church which continued for more than a century. The struggle began about the time of John Knox's death, in 1572, and was initiated by the greed of the nobles, who sought, by the institution of a sort of bastard Episcopate, to secure for themselves a large share of the wealth of the Popish Church. It was afterwards maintained and intensified by the king's

love of arbitrary power, and his special dislike for the freedom of the Presbyterian Church; and there were parties within the Church willing to be the tools of the Court in bringing it into bondage. From 1572 to 1592 bishops and archbishops nominated by the State existed in Scotland, but the office was little more than nominal. Those who held it exercised no proper episcopal functions; the General Assembly steadily refused to recognize them as superior to their brethren, and held them to be subject to its authority even though they occupied a seat in Parliament. By and by the office was declared to be unscriptural, and those who had accepted it were required to lay it aside under pain of excommunication. In the case of Montgomery, the Assembly proceeded to this extreme sentence, notwithstanding the threats of the king. The Episcopate of this period was entirely a political creation; it had no real influence on the procedure of the Church, and may be said indeed to have existed practically outside the Church.

During this epoch and beyond it the celebrated Andrew Melville was the leading spirit in the Presbyterian Church. He was a worthy successor of John Knox, a man of equal ability and greater learning, and of a more fervid temperament; as fearless in the assertion of the rights and liberties of the Church, and less fastidious in the mode of doing so. His experience on the Continent, his ripe scholarship, and his position as Principal and Professor, first at Glasgow and then at St. Andrews, gave him great influence in the Councils of the Church. It was largely owing to his efforts that the Second Book of Discipline was drawn up, and after full deliberation, adopted by the Assembly. Identical in point of principle with the earlier work, it develops its teaching on some subjects that had been less fully and clearly treated. It reasserts the Headship of Christ and the spiritual independence of the Church; the system of Presbyterian government is more fully stated, and an attempt is made to define the respective jurisdictions of the Church and the State. Lay

patronage is more strongly condemned as inconsistent with the popular election of ministers, which is held to have been practiced in the primitive church. It is a valuable and authoritative restatement of the ecclesiastical polity of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

Alarmed by rumours of Popish plots, which menaced alike the religious and civil liberties of the land, the famous National Covenant, called also the King's Confession, was in 1580 drawn up by command of the king, and was largely subscribed by all ranks. It consisted of a solemn renunciation of the errors of Popery, an engagement to uphold the Reformed faith, and a pledge to defend the person and authority of the king at all risks in the maintenance of the gospel and of liberty. This memorable event, while it doubtless tended to deepen the attachment of the people to the Protestant faith, did nothing in the way of settling the controversy between the Church and the civil power. The principles so emphatically asserted in the Second Book of Discipline were extremely distasteful to the councillors and the king, and they set themselves to complete the overthrow of the ecclesiastical constitution. What may be regarded as the royal counterblast to the manifesto of the Church is found in the "Black Acts," which were passed by the Parliament of 1584. By these Acts the General Assembly was forbidden to meet without the royal sanction; all adverse criticism of the proceedings of the king and Council was condemned; it was declared to be treason to decline the jurisdiction of the king or the civil courts in any matter civil or ecclesiastical; and all ministers were commanded to own the superiority of the bishops. Nothing could be more clearly at variance with the leading principles of the Church as declared in its standards; the Headship of Christ was ignored; the spiritual independence of the Church was condemned; Presbyterian government was set aside; and the liberties of the subject were menaced. But there were faithful men in Scotland who could not allow their convictions to be overridden by Acts of Parliament; and although Melville was

in exile, other ministers fearlessly condemned these Acts from the pulpit, and publicly protested against them in the name of the Church of Scotland, when they were proclaimed at the cross of Edinburgh.

These Acts continued in force for eight years, but in 1592 a strong reaction had set in. In that year a memorable Act was passed, by which Presbytery as developed in the Second Book of Discipline received the sanction of the Legislature. The constitution which the Church had framed for itself was thus recognized and approved by the State as the basis of the Establishment. It is true, that this Act can scarcely be regarded as acknowledging all that the Church had claimed; but it certainly went a long way in that direction. Lay patronage was modified but not abolished; while the right of the Assembly to meet of its own accord was not fully conceded. It was declared to be lawful for the Assembly to meet twice a year or oftener *pro re nata*; but if the King or his Commissioner was present it devolved on him to fix the next meeting, and only in his absence could the Assembly do so. The phraseology employed with reference to the rights and liberties of the Church is, to say the least, unfortunate. It ratifies and approves all "liberties, privileges, immunities and freedoms which were *given* and *granted* by his Highness to the true and holy Kirk presently established." But the Church of Scotland had never owned that any spiritual rights were derived from the State; and only when *given* and *granted* are taken in a non-natural sense as equivalent to *recognized as belonging to* the Church, can this clause be regarded as free from an implied claim to interfere in spiritual matters. At the same time, the Act does recognize the privileges that God has given to the spiritual office-bearers in the Kirk, concerning heads of religion, matters of heresy, collation or deprivation of ministers, etc. Notwithstanding the defects, which at various points it is possible to find in it as the legal guarantee of the rights of the Church, this Act of 1592 was welcomed as a great boon; and considering the amount of freedom which it did secure—

its emphatic recognition of the power and jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, and the relief which it gave from perplexities and troubles—we cannot wonder that it was so heartily received. If it had continued to be observed as it was for a few years after it passed, the people of Scotland would have been saved a vast amount of suffering. Whether we may now set much value on these legal guarantees, or whether we may doubt the expediency of them, as almost necessarily involving more or less a right on the part of the State to interfere in Church matters, is not the question. In those days it was deemed right and necessary to have them; there behoved to be a national establishment of religion, for no one dreamt of a church existing and doing effective work without State recognition and support. This Act of 1592 has been regarded as the Magna Charta of the Scottish ecclesiastical establishment; it was revived at the Revolution, and continues in force to the present day.

It seemed that now at last the Church of Scotland was settled on a firm constitutional basis; what it had claimed and struggled for during thirty years was now recognized and sanctioned by the law of the land. But whatever hopes were entertained of continued rest and prosperity were destined only too soon to be disappointed. Meanwhile, the zealous ministers devoted themselves diligently to the work of the gospel. A great mistake would be made, as we look back to these times, if it be thought that the energies of the Church were all but exclusively concentrated on public matters, that the one thing that occupied the attention of the Church Courts was, how to secure the recognition of the claim to independent jurisdiction—the status and provision of an Established Church. These things were esteemed of great value in themselves, and worth contending for, inasmuch as they touched the honour of Christ as the only Head of the Church; and the noble men who strove to obtain them realized that they were intimately related to the spiritual interests of the people and the progress of true religion. These latter were the objects that lay nearest

to their hearts ; and to the furtherance of them they laboured diligently in their several spheres. The men who took the most prominent part in the public affairs of the Church were not only men of ability and learning but of earnest piety ; zealous not only for the public interests of the Church, but intensely devoted to the spiritual work of the ministry. None were more devout and God-fearing, none whose lives more commended the gospel of Christ, none were more thoroughly consecrated to the duties of the pastorate, than those who fearlessly defended the scriptural freedom and rights of the Church against the arbitrary encroachments of the State. Not to speak of the Melvilles, such were Bruce of Kinnaird, Davidson of Prestonpans, Welch of Ayr, and many others who both laboured and suffered in the cause of Christ.

Section Second.

Notwithstanding the legal guarantees of the Act of 1592, securing the rights and privileges of the Church, the old controversy was speedily revived. It was with reluctance that the king had consented to it, and in a very few years he began to destroy that which he had so unwillingly conceded. There is little reason to suppose that, even though the phraseology of the Act recognizing the liberties of the Church had been faultless, it would have prevented the subsequent encroachments of the king. The love of arbitrary power, and the *penchant* for interfering in church affairs, were too strong in James VI. to be restrained by even the most exact definitions or regulations of any statute. Scarcely had the Assembly of 1596 come to a close—an Assembly memorable for the renewal of the National Covenant and for the intense religious feeling which pervaded it, and which spread widely among the people—an Assembly which Calderwood characterizes as the last of the sincere Assemblies of the Church of Scotland,—ere the king began to undermine the church's liberties. How he induced the Assembly to appoint Commissioners to advise with him

regarding the interests of the Church, persuaded Parliament to declare the representatives of the Church to be the Third Estate of the realm, and the Church to consent to these being called bishops; how he called, prorogued and discharged Assemblies by his own authority, bribed and intimidated the members and packed the meetings with those prepared to fall in with his plans; how he constrained these illegal Assemblies to allow bishops to be constant Moderators in Presbyteries and Synods; established a High Commission Court to exercise a summary authority over those opposed to the new order of things; procured by most unscrupulous means the adoption of the Articles of Perth and their subsequent sanction by Parliament;—into all this crafty and tyrannous procedure it is not necessary to enter. Suffice it to say, that before the death of James, the whole ecclesiastical system of Scotland was changed, and the Act of 1592 trampled under foot. Presbytery had given place to Episcopacy, the spiritual freedom and independence of the Church had vanished, and it lay prostrate and helpless at the feet of the king; the Headship of Christ was ignored, and the ecclesiastical supremacy of the king was established; and the General Assembly, which had of old proved so powerful an opponent to the arbitrary measures of the Crown, had altogether ceased to meet. Yet all this was not attained without strenuous opposition on the part of the more zealous and faithful ministers. When through the unfaithfulness and timidity of the majority and the unscrupulous dealings of the king, the corrupt Assemblies yielded up the freedom of the Church, acknowledged the king's supremacy and bowed to the yoke of prelacy, yet the protest against these evils was continued till Assemblies ceased to meet. The Melvilles, Black, Davidson, and Bruce, and the faithful few who met in Assembly at Aberdeen and refused to dissolve without appointing another meeting; the protesting minority in the packed Assemblies called by the king, others who in subordinate courts resisted the measures of the Crown, and those who through those dismal years suffered loss, imprison-

ment or banishment rather than bow to the yoke,—all these were more or less fully and decidedly witnesses for the true principles of the Scottish Church. By speech, by vote, by public protestation or by suffering, they testified for the freedom of the Church and the prerogatives of Christ. It was by such men mainly that the spiritual life of the people was sustained; their ministry had the seal of God, and here and there throughout the land times of refreshing were enjoyed.

It is well to remember that although Presbytery was overthrown and Episcopacy established, though the king exercised an ecclesiastical supremacy utterly at variance with the Headship of Christ, the Church had never in any free regular Assembly endorsed these proceedings. It was put under coercion, to which it is not to its credit that it yielded, even though sullenly and unwillingly. The action of the corrupt Assemblies of this period can in no true sense be held as expressing the unfettered judgment of the Church on such matters. As soon as opportunity was given freely to deal with them, a very different result was seen. But the patience of the Church and people of Scotland had yet to be more severely tried, and a nobler race of men prepared through the grace of God for the work, ere the day of deliverance came. That time was hastened by the infatuated obstinacy and blind bigotry of Charles First. Every one even slightly acquainted with the history of the period knows, that discontent and anxiety were produced by his conduct in civil affairs; and this, combined with grave fears awakened regarding the interests of religion, boded ill for future years. His great aim, under the guidance of Laud, was to assimilate the Scottish more completely to the English Church. To obliterate the small remnants of Presbytery that lingered in Scotland, a Book of Canons was prepared; and to regulate worship, a new Liturgy was drawn up and imposed by royal authority. The attempt to enforce the use of the Liturgy produced great excitement and indignation throughout the land. It was not that there was any objection to the reading of public prayers,

for Knox's Liturgy had continued in use more or less up to this time, though it was not obligatory, nor was it used by the ministers, but only by the readers. But this new book was offensive in itself, on account of its nearer approximation to the Popish Mass-book, and awakened afresh the dread of a restored Popery; and the manner in which it was imposed added to the offence. Many serious innovations had already been introduced, vitally affecting the constitution, government, and discipline of the church; but hitherto no attempt had been made to alter its form of worship. This was a matter with which the people were more directly concerned, it came home to their personal religious life; and however quietly they had borne what preceded, and might have continued to bear, to this new encroachment they were not prepared to submit. There appears also to have been a wide-spread spiritual awakening, and over all the country, south of the Grampians especially, a wave of deep religious enthusiasm passed. In the Providence of God, moreover, a band of noble men had arisen, full of zeal alike for religion and civil freedom, both of which were manifestly threatened by the course pursued by the Government. The prevailing excitement found expression and stimulus in the renewal of the National Covenant in March, 1638. To the original document of 1580 a new bond was added, in which the subscribers bound themselves to "adhere to and defend the true religion, and forbearing the practice of all innovations already introduced into the worship of God, and to labour by all means lawful to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel, as it was professed and established before the aforesaid innovations." This was a great religious and constitutional deed, by which the people freely pledged themselves to the cause of religion and liberty; it took place at a critical time; it awakened the slumbering memories of the past, intensified the popular enthusiasm, and nerved for the struggles of the future. The object of the Covenanters indicated in the bond, was significant of the drift of opinion; and in the Assembly of 1638 this avowed

purpose was largely realized. This famous Assembly marks an important epoch in the history of the Church of Scotland. Not for twenty years had any Assembly met, and we must go twenty years further back ere we reach such as were free and legally constituted. This meeting bore ample evidence of the reawakened spiritual life of Scotland and of a fresh stirring of the old national spirit of liberty. It were pleasant to dwell upon the scene as ministers and elders gathered within the High Church in Glasgow, and to recall the person, character and work of the more prominent members whose names and memories abide fresh among us;—of Henderson and Dickson, of Loudon, Argyll and Warriston, and many others of Scotland's noblest and best by birth and worth. The Assembly had been called by royal authority; but when, early in the proceedings, the royal Commissioner attempted to dissolve it, he was answered with a distinct refusal by the Moderator. When he withdrew, the following Protestation was presented in behalf of the Assembly by the Earl of Rothes; "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head and Monarch of His Church, from a consciousness of our duty to God and His truth, the king and his honour, the kingdom and her peace, this Assembly and her freedom, and the safety of ourselves and our posterity in our persons and estates, we profess with sorrowful and heavy but loyal hearts, we cannot dissolve this Assembly." Thus fearlessly and decidedly was the ground of the Scottish Church taken up anew; thus clearly did the Assembly send forth the old watchword,—subjection to Christ the only Head, and freedom from the domination of the State in all spiritual matters. In the face of the tyrant the Church stood forth to claim and to exercise that spiritual independence which is its birthright, the liberty wherewith Christ has made it free. In the short space of a month, the whole ecclesiastical fabric, towards the erection of which all the resources of force and kingcraft had been devoted for forty years, was swept away. Episcopacy was abolished and Presbytery restored as it was in 1592, the Canons,

Liturgy and Articles of Perth were set aside, and all the Assemblies from 1606 to 1618 were declared null and unlawful. When this memorable Assembly closed, the Church of Scotland was once more Presbyterian and free, and that by its own proper action. After forty years of trial and bondage, of sad declension, and culpable acquiescence in the will of the sovereign, the old principles were more emphatically reasserted than ever, and in due time they received anew the sanction of the Legislature. Henceforth the Assembly continued to meet and discuss all matters within its sphere without waiting for the summons of the king. Thus was the Second Reformation (by which Prelacy was abjured) inaugurated; and by all who realize how deeply the interests of spiritual religion were affected by this movement, how closely it was connected with the vigour and prosperity of the Church as a divine institution, how intimately it was bound up with the progress of both civil and religious liberty, and how noble and inspiring were the aims of its chief promoters, it will be acknowledged to be worthy of this designation.

During all the troubles of subsequent years the Scottish Church held fast its position, and consolidated and advanced its work. Common dangers, and to no small extent, common religious sympathies drew together the Covenanters of Scotland and the friends of liberty and Reformation in England. This community of interest found expression first of all in the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms, entered into in 1643. This famous document, which was not properly speaking a church deed, was drawn up by Alexander Henderson, was sworn to by the Assembly and Parliament of Scotland, and was also adopted by the Westminster Assembly and the English Parliament. That it exercised a very important influence on the course of public events for a few years, uniting as it did all the friends of liberty in one common bond, cannot be called in question. It was entered into with great enthusiasm by all classes, and was made the test of loyalty to the cause of religion and liberty. It is in itself a noble document,

inspired by devotion to the honour of Christ, the interest of religion, and the well-being of society. In its form and substance it was quite characteristic of the time when, and the men by whom, it was drawn up. In its substance it was partly civil and partly religious, and was thus appropriate to an age and condition of things in society, in which religious and civil interests, the affairs of the Church and those of the State, were united and commingled in a way and to an extent that scarce any other age has seen. It was like the age in not being quite free from the spirit of intolerance, which, notwithstanding all efforts to explain it away as referring to principles and practices rather than persons, and to moral means rather than coercion, cannot be wholly exorcised from one of its articles. It was ordained to be taken by all ranks under severe penalties, and though it is true that this never entailed any serious hardship, yet the mere passing of such a law was itself of a coercive nature,—and it is certain, from their avowed sentiments, that those who supported the Covenant were favourable to the employment of strong measures against those who differed from them. Yet are we bound to take into consideration the critical circumstances of the times, and the fact that for the most part those who were the enemies of the Covenant were the foes of religion and liberty, and that it was therefore a reasonable and justifiable mode of securing the privileges of the Church and nation against those who were prepared to use any means whatever to destroy them. The Solemn League was eminently worthy of the men and of the time, in its assertion of the essential principles of constitutional government, in the noble spirit of liberty which it breathes, in its homage to the supremacy of Christ, to the truths of God's word, and the interests of religion and personal godliness, and not less worthy of regard for its far-reaching aims regarding the spread of religion and the unity of the Kingdom of Christ; in its original purpose it was above all a bond of union. In Scotland especially the Covenant gathered round it the

intensest devotion ; and when days of darkness and persecution came, the memories of the past with which this venerable deed was identified, sustained an enthusiastic attachment to the principles it embodies, as well as to the document itself ; for these many were willing to die. Christ and His Church, the king and the commonwealth, law and liberty, morality and religion, and God supreme in every sphere ; these were its leading ideas, and gave it life and power.

The community of feeling and interest between the Covenanters and the Puritans found further expression in the presence of Scottish Commissioners in the Westminster Assembly. With this great convocation we have no further concern in this place than to notice, how the documents it issued gave fresh emphasis to the principles for which the Scottish Church had contended from the beginning of its history. The Westminster Standards were carefully considered and cordially accepted by the General Assembly as the confession of the Church's faith, and in this respect superseded the earlier document of 1560. In so accepting them the Church anew bore testimony to the exclusive Headship of Christ, to the freedom and spiritual independence of the Church, and the rights of the Christian people. It declared its belief that the civil power owes allegiance to Christ, is bound to frame its laws in accordance with the Word of God, and that magistrates have important duties to discharge towards religion and the Church. On one point in connection with this latter subject, the Assembly introduced a caveat, and on other points it has come to be generally recognized that the doctrine of the Confession is too strongly stated. Regarding these great matters above-mentioned, along with Presbyterian Church government, the Westminster Standards are in full harmony with the ecclesiastical polity of the Church of Scotland from the Reformation downwards. It had always condemned patronage, but had never quite got rid of it ; in 1649, however, that grievance was altogether removed by an Act of Parliament, and by this Act the Second Reformation was completed.

Its stability was very soon put to the test. It was soon discovered that it was no easy matter, amid the perplexities of those troublous times and the fierce conflict of parties, to secure steadfast and harmonious action in carrying out the obligations of the Covenant. The frequency with which the Assembly passed Acts and issued Declarations and Warnings anent Covenant Subscription and the treatment of those who refused, seems to mark a waning zeal among the people. What with the lukewarmness of friends, the open opposition of the adherents of arbitrary government at home, and the rapid growth of Independency in England, the difficulties of the Church increased from year to year. For some time Parliament and Assembly went cordially together: the former readily endorsing the decrees of the latter, while the Assembly freely gave its advice or passed its judgment on political actions, so far at least as they seemed to affect the interests of religion. It condemned and declared unlawful and sinful the Act of the Parliament of 1648, approving Hamilton's movement for the rescue of Charles First. On the other hand, it approved the Act of Classes of 1649, whereby all who were not of the stricter portion of the Covenanters, all who had in any degree supported Hamilton's expedition, and all who were guilty of immorality, of Sabbath profanation, of neglecting divine worship, etc., were declared unfit to be in the army, or on the bench, or to occupy any office under government. All belonging to the classes specified in the Act were, because of their defections, political or moral, put under ecclesiastical discipline, and arrangements were made for removing all such, until the Church saw good reason to free them from its censures. This extreme measure, though it may possibly be explained and vindicated by the peculiar circumstances of the times, could not fail to awaken feelings of indignation and a sense of injustice in those who were thus excluded. It practically made the Church the judge as to who should be the rulers of the land, and to that extent made it a political body. It embodied doubtless the conception entertained by

its authors as to what should be the character and qualifications of civil rulers in a Christian State ; and was designed to be a safeguard of what was held to be most precious—religion and liberty ; yet it could hardly fail to act as a sort of premium on hypocrisy, and to bring Church discipline itself into contempt. It contemplated a high ideal when it insisted that a soldier was only to be permitted to serve in the army, on much the same conditions as would warrant a church in admitting him to the Lord's Table. Theoretically a very desirable state of things was aimed at, thorough Christian character in every sphere of life ; but the method adopted for realizing this aim seems dangerously near the Popish idea of making the Church dominate over the State.

The position of the Church in relation to this Act became very unfortunate when the young king, to whom, not without much misgiving, it had pledged allegiance, reduced to great straits by Cromwell, sought the advice of the Church Courts as to its relaxation and afterwards as to its repeal. The Commission and General Assembly passed resolutions practically granting what the royalists desired. This was done in the face of a strong minority, and thereby was kindled, within the bosom of the Church, the lamentable controversy between the Resolutioners and the Protestors, which continued to be waged with great keenness till the Restoration. The former party had among them men of high character and worth, some of whom afterwards regretted the position they had taken in this controversy. They were more tolerant in the application of their principles ; among them the Second Charles found afterwards many of his willing tools, and they constituted the bulk of those who accepted the Indulgences and Toleration. The Protestors held firmly to the principle of the Act of Classes—no association with malignants, was one of the watchwords of the party then, and continued to be so to those that followed them. They included many of the most learned, earnest, and faithful ministers, and furnished the larger proportion of the sufferers

and martyrs of later years. The General Assembly, disliking the Republicanism, and still more the Independency of Cromwell, was by him summarily dismissed and forbidden to meet; but otherwise the great Protector left the Church free to do its work, and the time of his rule seems to have been a season of much earnest and fruitful labour.

Looking back over the period now sketched, and considering the action of the Church, whenever it was in a position to choose and to act, free from the constraint of the civil power, there is no room for doubt as to its principles and aims. As to government, it had always decided in favour of Presbytery. Equally certain is it that there was claimed for it an independent spiritual jurisdiction, with which the State had no right to interfere. Within that sphere, which included doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, the Church owned no Head but the Lord Jesus Christ, and no rule but His Word. It maintained the right of the people to choose their own pastors, and the right of the Church to meet in Assembly without the sanction of the Sovereign. It entered into the testimony of the Church, that Christ is King of nations, that rulers in a Christian land are bound to regulate their official procedure according to His will, that they have a duty to discharge towards religion and the Church, and this being so, that they should be possessed of such moral qualifications as Scripture sets forth. As to the particular form of action on the part of the State towards religion and the Church, it is certain that no department of the Church in our times, while approving of the general principle, commits itself wholly to the position or action of our Reformers either in the earlier or later stages of the Reformation. Our forefathers, placed in perilous circumstances, which in modern criticism of their conduct are often but little understood or appreciated, had a very difficult task to perform. And while we are not called on to endorse all they said or did, it is well to consider the noble ideal of a Christian Church and Christian State which they contemplated, but failed to realize; to

admire the lofty spirit by which they were animated ; and to recognize the great principles which they held and to which they sought to give effect in all their contendings.

CHAPTER II.

ITS ORIGIN—1660–1680.

Section First.

AT the Restoration of Charles II. to the throne of Britain in 1660, the position of the Scottish Church was exactly the same as at the close of the Second Reformation in 1649. It was an evangelical, free, covenanted, Presbyterian Church. Its spiritual jurisdiction was recognized by the State, its government and doctrinal standards were approved and sanctioned by legal enactments, and the yoke of patronage was abolished. During the Protectorate, no attempt was made to set aside any of the civil guarantees of the constitution and privileges of the Church. Cromwell did, indeed, for political reasons, prohibit the meetings of the General Assembly; but otherwise he did not interfere with Church affairs. Presbyteries and Synods continued to meet and discharge their proper ecclesiastical functions; and in these Courts many a keen conflict took place between the Resolutioners and Protestors. It is our duty now to indicate, as briefly as possible, how the constitution of the Church was set aside; how its privileges were rudely taken away, and it was again brought into bondage; and how divisions arose among the Presbyterians. In doing this, it will not be necessary to recall at length the oft-told story of the dismal years from 1660 to 1680. It is a story that will never lose its interest so long as religion exists in its life and power, and the love of righteousness and liberty survives among the children of men;

and there are times when it is very necessary both to recall the facts, and to impress the lessons which they teach. At present, it is only needful to deal with the facts, so far as they help us distinctly to understand what was peculiar in the position of that party among the persecuted Presbyterians, of which the Reformed Presbyterian Church has always claimed to be the legitimate ecclesiastical successor.

Knowing, as they had too good reason to know, the worthless character of the king, and distrusting the party that was mainly instrumental in effecting his restoration, the best men in the Scottish Church—those most deeply interested, not only in the preservation of its rights and privileges, but in the progress of spiritual religion—could hardly fail to have serious misgivings as to the immediate future. This was especially the case with the party of Protestors, and all too soon were their forebodings verified; for upon them first, and most heavily, fell the rod of the oppressor. Within little more than a year after the Restoration, their two most prominent and influential leaders, the Marquis of Argyle and the Rev. James Guthrie, were led to the scaffold. The real crime in both cases was not any violation of law, but zeal in the cause of reformation and liberty. It was very soon discovered that whatever trust the Presbyterians may have been disposed to place in a covenanted king, was doomed to disappointment; and that Acts of Parliament were a very insecure guarantee of religion and liberty, when the spirit of freedom languishes among the people, and the government is in the hands of selfish and unscrupulous men. The character of the men who were at this time entrusted with the management of Scottish affairs, boded ill for the interests alike of Church and State, of civil and religious liberty. With Middleton at the head of the executive; and Sharp, the emissary of the Church, basely plotting its overthrow, and seeking place and power for himself,—the outlook for Scottish Presbyterianism was dark indeed. Men such as these formed the majority of the base

subservient Parliament, by whose instrumentality the king carried out his purpose of overthrowing the Church which he had sworn to maintain. The first step was to deprive the Church of all the legal guarantees of its constitution and government, and in one short session every obstacle of this nature was removed. The king was declared to be supreme in all matters civil and ecclesiastical; an oath of allegiance was adopted affirming this, and making the denial of it treasonable; the Covenants were pronounced to be unlawful oaths, and no longer binding on any; all meetings for either civil or ecclesiastical purposes, and all rising in arms without the king's authority, were declared to be treason; and it was affirmed, that it belonged to the Crown by inherent right to decide all questions affecting the discipline and government of the Church. And then, to clear the whole ground at one sweep, instead of repealing a great number of separate Acts, this miserable Parliament passed the Act Recissory, by which all the Parliaments of the Second Reformation period were declared to have been seditious meetings, and all their legislative Acts were annulled. The result of this infamous Act was that neither the Covenant nor the government and doctrinal standards of the Church had any civil sanction, and matters were virtually brought back to the *status quo* of 1638, before the meeting of the General Assembly of that year. Every attempt at protest, remonstrance or petition, against these reckless high-handed proceedings, was summarily put down by the strong hand of the government.

Following upon this came the intimation from the king that he regarded Presbyterian government as inconsistent with monarchy, and that it was his intention to interpose his royal authority for "the Restoration of the Church of Scotland to its right government by bishops, as it was before the late troubles." Parliament at once proceeded to put the royal will into legislative Acts; it abolished Presbytery and restored Episcopacy, forbade the meeting of the Church Courts, and decreed that imprisonment was to be the reward of all who

dared to speak or write against the new order of things. Thus Episcopacy rose with a rapidity equal to its former fall; only, in the latter case, the change was accomplished by the Church itself in the exercise of its rightful authority, while in the present instance, it was carried out by Parliament in obedience to the mere will of the king, and the Church was never consulted at all. James VI. did his utmost to secure the consent of the Church to his innovations, and failed to do so in any true sense; but Charles II., stronger and more reckless of consequences, exercised his supremacy to the full, and utterly ignored any rights on the part of the Church. Thus easily did Presbytery fall; not because it was distasteful to the great body of the people, not because of their preference for Episcopacy, as the dismal history of the years that followed indubitably shows; but as the result of internal divisions and animosities, of the treacherous dealings of some and the indifference of others, of the audacity of the Government in boldly carrying out its intentions, together with other influences connected with the diminished vigour of religion and the increase of immorality among the people, which marked the epoch of the Restoration.

Bishops having been appointed to the several sees, it behoved that due honour should be given to them by the attendance of the ministers at their courts; and to secure this the civil power had to interpose its authority. The law of patronage being again in operation, it was decreed that all ministers who had been ordained since 1649 should receive a presentation from the patron and collation from the bishop. As great numbers showed no disposition thus easily to renounce their Presbyterianism at the bidding of the State, a monstrous decree was issued by the Scottish Council, by which it was ordained that all those who did not submit before the 1st of November, 1662, should leave their churches and manses, lose the portion of stipend then due, and remove beyond the bounds of their Presbyteries. It was characteristic of men such as those who then ruled Scotland, to scoff at the idea of men

giving up all they had for conscience' sake. Great therefore was their chagrin and amazement, when on that day 350 ministers chose rather to suffer than obey this iniquitous law. It was a noble testimony to the rights of conscience and the power of religion, similar to that borne by the two thousand, who a few months before had been driven from the English Church by the Act of Uniformity. The blow fell mainly on the younger, more vigorous and popular portion of the ministers, located for the most part in the West and South of Scotland; and the self-denial demanded was great. Winter was close at hand, no time was allowed to make any provision for the support of themselves and families, yet, at the call of duty, they never hesitated to make the sacrifice. In so acting, they bore emphatic testimony to the time-honoured principles of the Scottish Church, to the royal prerogatives of Christ, the freedom and independence of the Church and the rights of the people. They declared their approbation of Presbytery and rejected Episcopacy, and with it the yoke of patronage and the impious ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown. No nobler act is recorded in the heroic pages of Scottish history, and no more memorable Sabbath had dawned since the Reformation, than that on which these faithful pastors took farewell of their flocks. It needed no more than this act of self-denial to rouse the people from the lethargy into which they had largely sunk, and to secure for the outed ministers a higher place than ever in their hearts. The ancient spirit was not dead; and however quietly the legislative undoing of the work of reformation had been borne, now that the practical results of that course came home to the people in such a form as this, touching their spiritual interests and hallowed associations, they were no longer apathetic. All that was best and truest in the religious life of Scotland rallied round the outed ministers, and, at vast risk and loss, sustained them in their protest and sufferings through long and gloomy years. We wonder less at this when we find among the ejected, men of such high character, distinguished ability, devoted piety and evangelistic

fervour, as Welch and Blackadder, Cargill and Peden, Semple and Wellwood.

This was the first stage of that active persecution, which with varying degrees of intensity continued during the next twenty-six years. If after this tyrannical act was accomplished the civil authorities had been content to let matters alone,—if the bishops had been satisfied to rule the Church now moulded to their mind, and to leave the outed ministers to exercise their office if they felt called on to do so,—if the people had been permitted freely to choose between the curates and their old pastors, it would have prevented incalculable wrong and suffering. But anything so reasonable as this was not in harmony with the spirit of the age, least of all was it in keeping with the character and spirit of the ruling powers. Uniformity was the dream of all parties in those days; the Solemn League and Covenant bound its adherents to strive for it; the Covenanters in their day of power vigorously endeavoured to realize it, and now the civil power attempted to enforce it in a more summary way. We may not approve of all the steps taken by the Covenanters to realize their ideal, but all now unite in condemnation of the means employed by the government of Charles II. to impose the yoke of civil and religious bondage on the people of Scotland.

Having thus overthrown the constitution and destroyed the liberty of the Church, the authorities went on to more coercive measures. After a time, many of the ejected ministers felt constrained to resume their work, at first privately and then more openly. There was a craving among the people for the gospel which they had been wont to hear from their former pastors, and which they did not get from the curates who had been installed in the vacant parishes. Hence originated the field conventicles which began in 1663, and were sometimes attended by vast numbers. This roused the bishops and the Council to more active efforts to compel the people to attend the ministrations of the curates, and to put an end to the field preaching of the Presbyterian ministers.

To preach without the sanction of the bishop was declared to be sedition ; and to hear any unlicensed preacher was visited with fines, imprisonment, and other forms of oppression. But all was in vain ; and equally ineffective was the erection of a High Commission Court, whose tyrannical procedure and unjust and cruel sentences, extending even to banishment and slavery, so shocked public feeling as to bring about its abolition in two years. It is unnecessary to repeat the story of the arbitrary decrees, the military cruelties, plunderings and oppressions which led up to what is called the "Pentland Rising," in 1666, the aim of which was to obtain redress of the terrible grievances under which the country groaned, for the removal of which all ordinary constitutional means were denied them. It was an unpremeditated, unwise and unfortunate movement, condemned by the great body of the Presbyterians ; but it was a symptom of the extremities to which the people were being driven by the tyranny of the government. Its failure only aggravated the sufferings of the persecuted ; the dragoons under Dalziel swept through the western counties, despoiling, fining, scourging, torturing, killing, without any distinction of age or sex. Great numbers were executed ; and many more, driven from their homes, wandered cold and hungry among the hills and moors. By and by relief came, the standing army was reduced, the people were, to some extent, freed from the unlicensed cruelties of the soldiers, and the existing laws were not enforced with the same remorseless barbarity.

A change had come in the administration of Scottish affairs, and it would seem that the government had begun to realize that the oppressive measures of past years had not done much to bring the people into sympathy with the Prelatic Church. Another mode of accomplishing the same end was resorted to, which, though plausible and apparently moderate, yet had the effect in the end of greatly aggravating the sufferings of the faithful Covenanters. In 1669, the first Indulgence, as it was called, was published. By this royal decree, authority

was given to the Scottish Council to admit such of the ejected ministers as they thought proper to the vacant parishes, under certain restrictions both as to the exercise of their ministry and as to the means of temporal support; the privileges of those who accepted being increased in proportion to the extent to which they were prepared to commit themselves to the established system. Another Indulgence of similar nature was published later. The temptation thus held out by an apparently friendly hand, proved too strong for many of the poor outed ministers. For nearly seven years many of them had led a very hard life, and had refrained from the exercise of their office; but now a door was opened whereby, even without submitting to Episcopal ordination, or giving attendance at the bishop's court, they might at least preach to the people of the parish, and receive a share of the emoluments; and not a few accepted this as a boon. At the same time it is evident, that in resuming their work under such conditions, they were acting in contradiction to the undoubted principles of the Church of Scotland in its best days. They accepted from the civil power that which, according to the authoritative Standards of the Church, that power could neither give nor take away; they submitted to the usurped supremacy of the Crown, and laid themselves open to continual interference on the part of the State with the discharge of their official duties. Their conduct in this matter could not fail, if it was not also intended by the authors of the scheme, to produce a serious breach in the Presbyterian ranks; the more faithful part would stand aloof more or less from the Indulged, and bitterness of feeling would be intensified as controversy arose between them. On the other hand, this Indulgence could only be the occasion of more severe trials to those who refused to accept it. Thus the Presbyterians were divided into two parties, the Indulged and the Non-Indulged, and a painful strife with unfaithful brethren was added to the trials which the more zealous had to endure at the hand of their enemies.

After all, this method failed to put an end to field preaching or to secure for Prelacy the sympathy and support of the people; and with the return of Sharp to power, the former oppressions and cruelties were resorted to in an increased degree. Conventicles were branded as rendezvous of rebellion to be put down by any means; the soldiers were once more let loose on a peaceful people, and iniquitous and ensnaring bonds were exacted from landlords and magistrates, masters and heads of families, making these responsible for all who were under them. Then began that system of intercommuning particular individuals, which continued till the Revolution, and which in its shocking inhumanity exceeds all the cruelties of this cruel time. For by these edicts every one was forbidden under severe penalties to “reset, supply or hold any intercourse with the intercommuned person, be he father or husband, brother or son,—to furnish them with meat, drink, shelter or clothing, or to have intelligence with them by word, writ or message or any other manner of way.” Who can estimate the misery and suffering that were caused by such barbarous edicts? Is it to be wondered at that, assailed in their dearest rights, interrupted in the peaceable worship of God in the fields and desolate places of the land, driven from their families, cut off from all the amenities of life, and exposed on every hand to the hazard of their lives, the people, who had courage thus to meet, should sometimes carry arms for their own defence against wanton wrong? So it was under the pressure of extreme persecution that the armed conventicle came into existence. It can easily be understood how it should be regarded as a menace, a foreshadow of active rebellion, by such a government as then ruled Scotland. It was at least a very significant form of protest on the part of men who valued truth, conscience, and liberty more than life, against the whole spirit and procedure of the rulers, and it might grow to be a source of serious danger. To crush if possible the spirit of the people, a host of savage Highlanders was sent into the western counties. For months they plundered

and destroyed at their will ; and the memory of that terrible visitation lingered long in that district of the country. Yet despite all efforts to destroy it, the armed conventicle continued.

Irritated by repeated failure, Sharp proposed another measure more severe than any yet tried, in the hope of finally crushing the hated thing and fully establishing both tyranny and Episcopacy. He was about to proceed to London to obtain the king's sanction to his proposal, when he was assassinated near St. Andrews. This was the act of a few extreme misguided men driven almost mad by persecution ; but it pleased the government to regard the whole party as implicated ; and it afforded an excuse for increasing the already almost intolerable bitterness of the persecution. The rulers professed to be terribly scandalized by the violent death of one man, an Archbishop ; but it was nothing to them that this same man had been largely responsible for the death of hundreds of men, guiltless of any crime but that of seeking to serve God according to conscience and to live quiet and godly lives. Ere long the last proposal of Sharp for stamping out Conventicles received the royal assent. The sum of this measure was, that any man who was found in arms going to or returning from a Conventicle, or who might be supposed to be doing so, should be shot on the spot without form of trial, and that by the meanest officer in the army. The furnace was speedily heated seven times ; a new tax was imposed, called the cess, for the avowed purpose of supporting the troops engaged in the persecution ; and the army was increased and placed under the command of Graham of Claverhouse, who implemented his instructions with interest.

Evidence of the state of feeling that prevailed among some of the Non-indulged Presbyterians, and of an altered attitude towards the existing government, was afforded by the publication of a Declaration at Rutherglen in May, 1679. On that occasion, the various Acts that had been passed since 1660 for the overthrow of the Second Reformation and the establishment of Episcopacy, were publicly burnt at the Cross. The Decla-

ration itself is a protest against the tyranny and oppression of the Government, and is the first of a long series that will come under our notice as we proceed. From the exasperation produced by long and severe persecution and the greater keenness with which it was carried on, it was hardly possible that collision between the soldiers and the armed peasantry who frequented the Conventicles could be avoided. Serious consequences resulted from a skirmish between about two hundred armed Covenanters and a party of dragoons under Claverhouse, at Drumclog, on 1st June, 1679. The Covenanters were victorious; and feeling that they were now seriously compromised, they resolved to keep together at all risks, and make one more effort to secure redress of grievances, and in behalf of civil and religious freedom. Adherents rapidly joined them, and when a few weeks later they encamped on Bothwell Moor, they numbered about 6000 men. They were under the command of Robert Hamilton of Preston, a young man of good family, of high character and of ardent piety, who had by his zeal in the cause acquired considerable influence among the Non-indulged Presbyterians; but he does not seem to have possessed any special qualifications for such a post at so critical a time. While the army lay at Bothwell, serious dissensions broke out among the Covenanters. The occasion of these was the proposal to issue a Declaration setting forth the reasons that had constrained them to take up arms, and the objects they sought to attain. This was a very proper and necessary thing to do; the great difficulty was as to what ought to be put into it, and what, meanwhile at least, ought to be left out; or as they would have put it, as to the best way of stating the quarrel between themselves and the Government. To do this was found to be a less easy matter than it was thirteen years before, on the occasion of the Pentland Rising. Since that time, events had occurred that were the occasion of serious differences among the Covenanters, and these became painfully manifest at this critical moment. In the first place, no Indulgence had been published in 1666, but now

there were two; and these, though extremely odious to all zealous upholders of the ancient constitution of the Church, had been taken advantage of by many of their brethren. And now came the question: Should any reference be made in a public Declaration of a very important character to those who had done so, and who by their conduct had proved unfaithful to the cause of Christ, and brought aggravated hardship on brethren who would rather suffer than surrender the rights of conscience? Welch and others pleaded against any reference, direct or indirect, to the Indulged clergy; they held that these should first of all be dealt with by the proper church judicatories, and that aid should be welcomed from any quarter in behalf of the common cause. Those who pleaded thus had not availed themselves of the proffered boon, nor did they at all approve of those who had done so. Hamilton and his friends urged that, as the Indulgence was grossly Erastian, and utterly at variance with the principles of the Church, it was their duty to testify against those who had accepted it; and besides, all that was proposed was an indirect and not an explicit reference. On this point the parties could come to no agreement. The second point of difference was one of even more serious import, and involved issues of a very weighty character. Those who took part in the Pentland Rising freely acknowledged the civil authority of the king, while they protested against his ecclesiastical supremacy. But now, after thirteen years of tyrannical government and terrible sufferings for conscience' sake, there were many among the persecuted who were beginning to have serious doubts as to their duty in this matter. The moderate party proposed that in their Declaration they should simply take up the ground of former witnesses, recognize the authority of the king in civil affairs, and confine their testimony to matters that concerned religion and the Church. The more advanced party urged that they should deal with this matter as was done in the Rutherglen Declaration, in which the king's authority was neither expressly owned nor

disowned ; all they wanted was that the proposed Declaration should be of the same neutral character. The one party was anxious, now that they were in arms, to avow their allegiance to the king as head of the State ; but the other refused to be committed further by any fresh Declaration on that point. To these points were added differences regarding the payment of cess and the Causes of fasting. And so for days, that should have been employed in preparing to meet the royal troops that were fast approaching, little was heard throughout the camp but eager and heated discussions on the points mentioned, among ministers, officers and soldiers. The result was that the moderate party left the camp, and published a Declaration at Hamilton which was afterwards disowned by the other party.

We need give no account of the battle that followed, and in which the Covenanters were completely routed ; nor need we enter into any details regarding the miserable fate of those who were taken prisoners. Nor yet shall we dwell on the sufferings of the people after the defeat at Bothwell, through the cruelty of Claverhouse and his dragoons. In the fields and on the highway, men were shot on the merest suspicion and without any form of trial. It was enough if they could not or would not answer ensnaring questions about the murder of Sharp or the Bothwell Rising. The whole south and west of the country, where the Covenanting interest was strongest, was given up to the domination of a brutal soldiery, whose barbarous and inhuman treatment of the peasantry exceeded everything that had hitherto been experienced. The rage of the Government was specially directed against those who had joined the Covenanting army, and they were excluded from the benefit of a third Indulgence which was issued this year. Many ministers from this date ceased to take any part in the field preaching ; but there were still a faithful few whom no terrors and suffering could daunt, and who still dared to bear aloft the old banner for Christ and Church, for conscience and liberty. It is to the course

pursued by these, and the position which they took up, that our attention must now for the most part be confined.

Section Second.

In the early part of 1680, it seemed as if the tyrant had all but succeeded in his purpose, and that the people were worn out by the long continued and remorseless persecution. There were few Conventicles, and there were fewer ministers to take part in them ; but the cause which these few represented had a much larger support among the people than among the non-conforming ministers. There were but two, Donald Cargill and Richard Cameron, who had the faith and courage to preach the gospel in the fields, and they found great numbers ready to hear them. Gradually the attitude of this party towards the government that had stripped them of their rights as freemen, trampled under foot the claims of God and conscience, and pursued them with unrelenting hate, underwent a change. In all the personal testimonies of the martyrs by dying speech or otherwise, from the Marquis of Argyle in 1661, to the Rev. John King in 1679, we find express recognition of the authority of the king in civil matters. They avow their allegiance, they refuse to be called rebels, even when they rose in arms to obtain redress of clamant grievances, being debarred from every other means of doing so. At the same time they protest against tyranny in civil affairs, by which the constitution was overturned and the rights of the people taken away. More fully they bore witness against the ecclesiastical supremacy claimed and exercised by the Crown, and against all the unrighteous and cruel procedure that had flowed therefrom. We find one of those who were taken prisoners at Bothwell, the Rev. John King, in his dying testimony thus defining his attitude towards the civil government, and doing so in a calm Christian spirit, which, in the circumstances, makes the statement more emphatic. "As for those things for which sentence of death was passed

against me, I bless the Lord my heart doth not condemn me. Rebellious I have not been, nor do I judge it to be rebellion for me to have endeavoured in my capacity what possibly I could for the ruined and borne-down interest of our Lord and Master, and for the relief of my poor brethren, afflicted and persecuted, not only in their liberties, privileges and persons, but also in their lives; therefore it was that I joined that poor handful. The Lord knows, who is the Searcher of hearts, that neither my design nor practice was against his Majesty's power and just government, but I always intended to be loyal to lawful authority in the Lord. I thank my God, my heart doth not condemn me of any disloyalty. I have been loyal, and do recommend it to all to be obedient to the higher powers in the Lord." True, it was a limited allegiance that they tendered; but so is it ever where the spirit of freedom exists,—allegiance within the limits of the constitution to which the sovereign is bound, with freedom to act when these bounds are transgressed,—allegiance limited by the higher claims of duty to God and fidelity to conscience. This is all that any power has right to demand, all that any man who values liberty and righteousness will give. But it was not all that was demanded of our noble suffering ancestors by the tyrants of their day; hence those who asserted their rights as Christians and freemen were stigmatized as rebels and hunted to the death. Through all these weary years till 1680, the persecuted Presbyterians owned the royal authority in things civil, while protesting against the arbitrary and tyrannical courses that had been pursued. And all through this period they rejected and disowned the authority usurped by the king over conscience and the Church, and were content to suffer incredible hardships and die a martyr's death rather than be false to God and His truth, to Christ and His honour, to religion, conscience and liberty.

But the year 1680 marked the epoch when a section of the persecuted Covenanters took up a position towards the Government, that had the effect of separating them from

many godly men who had hitherto been their fellow-witnesses and fellow-sufferers. We have seen that in the discussions that took place at Bothwell, one point upon which difference of opinion was found to exist, was this: Should they insert in their Declaration an acknowledgment of the royal authority in civil matters, or make no mention of it? Plainly, Hamilton and his adherents were not clear as to their duty in this matter, but the tendency of their convictions was evident. Thus far they went immediately after Bothwell, that they repudiated the Declaration published by the other party, just because the royal authority was distinctly owned in it, or, in the language of the period, because it took in the tyrant's interest. Within less than a year thereafter they had come to a clear conclusion as to the position which they felt bound to assume towards the existing civil government, and they were neither ashamed nor afraid to avow it. The question that agitated the minds of these devoted men was just this: Can we any longer as Christians and freemen own the authority, even in civil things, of a king who has violated so flagrantly his coronation oath, who has overturned the constitution of the realm, stript us of our dearest rights, treated us as traitors when we only follow the dictates of conscience, put forth all his power to exterminate the faithful witnesses for God, authorized the most barbarous cruelties towards his peaceable subjects, and dealt with all who refused to submit to his tyrannical authority and impious supremacy as outcasts and pests of society whom no true subject should aid? Has he not, by such a course of conduct, pursued for twenty years, really forfeited all claim upon our allegiance, and by his reckless violation of the essential conditions of the social compact, set us free? Things had come to a terrible condition when patriots, earnest high-principled Christian men, were forced to look such a question in the face. They have borne long and patiently, all constitutional means of obtaining redress have been denied to them, and now they feel that thorough consistency, fidelity to God and to country, to truth and conscience;

impose a very solemn duty upon them. They know that the step they are about to take will intensify the wrath of the enemy and increase their own sufferings ; they clearly recognize that at the same time it will deprive them of the sympathy of many friends whom they highly esteem for their character and labours : yet conscience demands this of them, and they must obey its behests, and disown all allegiance to the Government that regards and treats them as rebels.

The first intimation that was given of this advanced position was in what is called the "Queensferry Paper." This document was found on the person of Hall of Haughhead when he fell mortally wounded in a scuffle with some soldiers at Queensferry on 3rd June 1680. Cargill, who was with him, was also wounded, but escaped. It was evidently only a rude draft of a Declaration that was being prepared for publication by the parties above-named, or more probably by Cargill. But it was unsubscribed, and had not been adopted by the party in whose name it speaks. It is a very interesting, able and thorough-going document. Though it was never formally approved, yet as it is highly significant of the state of feeling of those by whom it was drawn up, and strongly expresses the convictions they held and the position which they felt constrained to assume, we may give a brief outline of its contents. Its avowed design is to give a clear statement of the objects contemplated by its framers, and certainly its terms leave no room for doubt as to what these are. It first of all takes all who accept it bound to adhere to the system of evangelical truth set forth in the Westminster Standards, to endeavour to secure the establishment of that system throughout the whole realm, to maintain intact the Presbyterian form of church government, and in fulfilment of Covenant obligations to seek the overthrow of whatever is opposed to these things. Then there follows a statement of the unconstitutional, tyrannical and cruel conduct of the Government both in Church and State. After this review the inquiry is started,—Can they any longer be justly held bound to submit to this state of

things, out of consideration either for the deed and obligation of their ancestors as embodied in the constitutional laws of the realm, or on account of the Covenants, or from any reasonable hope of a change on the part of the rulers? Being satisfied that there is nothing in any of these so to oblige them, and being persuaded that the true ends of government are utterly frustrated by the past and present conduct of the rulers, they come to the conclusion, that they reckon themselves free from all obligation to existing authorities in the State, and accordingly these are solemnly disowned and rejected. Having thus asserted their liberty, this is what they propose to do: "We do declare that we shall set up over ourselves and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the Word of God . . . That we shall no more commit the government of ourselves and the making of laws over us to any one single person or lineal successor . . . That those men whom we shall set over us shall be engaged to govern us principally by that civil and judicial law . . . given by God to His people Israel." Thus far as concerns civil matters,—then, after defining their attitude towards the unfaithful ministers of the church, the authors proceed in this strain: "We bind and oblige ourselves to defend ourselves and one another in our worshipping of God, and in our natural, civil and divine rights and liberties, till we shall overcome or send them down under debate to the posterity, that they may begin where we end."¹

It is not to be wondered at that the Government of Charles II. was startled by the discovery of such a document as this, in which it is so calmly and convincingly condemned and rejected; a document which, notwithstanding some extreme positions maintained in it, yet embodies the essential principles which lie at the foundation of true liberty, and breathes the indomitable spirit of those who in all lands have fought and won the battle for civil and religious freedom, and who amid weakness and reverses have full confidence in the

¹ Appendix No. I.

ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness. It is the bold outspoken protest of earnest Christians, driven to their last resort by intolerable wrong, in behalf of their rights and privileges as Christians and freemen. This singular Paper requires no further consideration here, inasmuch as no party ever formally adopted it, though in after years the owning or disowning of it was one of the ensnaring questions which the persecutors put to their prisoners. It is different with that which was published within three weeks after the seizure of the "Queensferry Paper."

On the 22nd of June, 1680, a party of about twenty horsemen, led by Cameron, rode into the ancient burgh of Sanquhar, in Upper Nithsdale. Doubtless the inhabitants regarded them with no little interest, ignorant as they were of the object of this unexpected incursion. It was manifest that this little troop did not belong to the military forces of the country, with whose visits in those troublous times the towns and villages, especially in the South and West of Scotland, were only too painfully familiar. The men were armed, but otherwise they had all the appearance of simple countrymen. Their aspect was grave and resolute, as that of men bent on the discharge of some weighty but hazardous duty. They advanced slowly into the town, till they reached the market-cross, round which they formed a circle. One of their number dismounted and engaged in prayer; after which another read a document, of which the following is the essential part. "Therefore, although we be for government and governors such as the word of God and our Covenants allow, yet we, for ourselves and all that will adhere to us, the representatives of the true Presbyterian Church and Covenanted nation of Scotland, considering the great hazard of lying under sin any longer,—do by these presents disown Charles Stuart who hath been reigning these years bygone (or rather we may say tyrannizing) on the throne of Britain, as having any right, title to or interest in the said crown or government of Scotland, as forfeited several

years since by his perjury and breach of Covenant with God and His Church, and usurpation of His crown and royal prerogative, and many other breaches in matters ecclesiastic, and his tyranny and many breaches of the very *leges regnandi* in matters civil. For which reason we declare that several years since he should have been denuded of being king, ruler or magistrate:—As also, we do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper and all the men of his practices;—and against all such as have strengthened him, sided with or any way acknowledged him in his tyranny civil or ecclesiastic.” Having affixed a copy of the document to the burgh-cross, the horsemen quietly left the town, and soon disappeared among the surrounding hills. The document was the famous Sanquhar Declaration.

As we read the statements just quoted, we cease to wonder at the grave determined aspect of the men by whom they were set forth. They had performed a strange and daring act, which would speedily be known and talked of through the length and breadth of the land,—being nothing less than the open renunciation of allegiance to the reigning sovereign; and a declaration of war against him. Looking back upon it from our own quiet times, through the long vista of two hundred years, some may say, as was said at the time, that it was perilous, extreme and fanatical. Of the peril incurred there could be no question; but the men who performed it were prepared to bear the disastrous consequences that it would certainly entail. As to its being extreme and unwarranted, opinions will widely differ. It will be so characterized by those who have little or no sympathy with the principles which the Declaration embodied and the motives that animated the men who took so decided a step, as well as by the more timorous class who judge only by the probabilities of success resulting from any such notable acts. Often in the history of the past has such a judgment been pronounced by the hostile and the timid against the pioneers of freedom, and the men who published the Sanquhar Declaration are entitled to be ranked

among these. Very different will be the judgment of all who set proper value on civil and religious liberty, and who realize the indebtedness of later ages to the heroic struggles of those who, in the face of all danger, had the courage to act upon their convictions and fearlessly assert their rights as Christians and freemen. In this instance any immediate success was not anticipated, but duty must be discharged: and the righteousness of the cause vindicated the act performed as worthy of the terrible risks incurred. That the authors of this Declaration were not wild enthusiasts, but the true representatives in their day of constitutional government, was shown by the fact that they by this bold act only anticipated the judgment of the nation by eight-and-a-half years. In 1688 the Scottish Convention of Estates declared that James VII. had, by his tyranny, his violation of the rights of Parliament and of the constitution of the kingdom, forfeited the crown of Scotland. It cannot be doubted that the protest and struggle of these humble persecuted Covenanters contributed not a little to bring about the Revolution. To them, at all events, belongs the honour of unfurling the banner of freedom on the hills of Scotland, and thus doing something to encourage William of Orange in his memorable enterprise. While the nation lay prostrate under the rod of the oppressor, they had the courage to sound that battle-blast which never ceased to re-echo through the land, and grew louder and louder as the years rolled on, till the tyrant was ignominiously hurled from the throne.

In scope and intention the Queensferry Paper and the Sanquhar Declaration are identical; the former is longer and much more elaborate than the latter, and includes several matters that find no place in the other. Cargill ably reasons out his position; Cameron comes rapidly to his point, and rings out in clear decisive tones the resolution to which he has come. Both are based upon those principles of constitutional government that were coeval with the Reformation in Scotland, that had been boldly enunciated by John Knox

and powerfully defended by Samuel Rutherford, and are now all but universally accepted. Manifestly, the decision announced in the Sanquhar Declaration was essentially of a civil or political character, and the grounds upon which the decision is based are distinctly stated. They are threefold—perjury, usurpation and tyranny. Perjury, inasmuch as the king had proved false to the oath which he had taken at his coronation with reference to the church; usurpation, inasmuch as he had claimed and exercised a supremacy in ecclesiastical matters which belonged only to Christ as Head of the Church; and tyranny, in overthrowing the civil constitution of the realm and depriving the people of their just rights. The grounds upon which the Covenanters based their act were thus partly civil and partly religious; but the act itself was essentially civil or political.

A fresh separation among the Covenanters was signaled by the publication of this Declaration. Hitherto they were spoken of as Indulged and Non-indulged Presbyterians, but now there was a breach among the latter, many of whom disowned this Declaration and separated from those who owned it; or we ought rather to say, that those adhering to it refused fellowship with those who did not. The position of the latter is set forth in the Declaration issued at Hamilton immediately before the battle at Bothwell. Speaking of the objects for which they have taken arms, this is given as one of them: "The preserving and defending the King's Majesty's person and authority in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom, that the world may bear witness, with our conscience, of our loyalty, and that we have no thought or intention to diminish his just power and greatness." They protest against the wrongs and oppressions which they endure, and desire the calling of a free Parliament and a free Assembly, for the redress of grievances, but declare their loyalty to the king in civil matters. Such, they held, was the position maintained by their predecessors in former conflicts; but it appeared to Cameron

and his associates that the time had come when an advance on that position was demanded alike in the interests of religion and liberty. If they would be faithful to the claims of Christ, to the rights of the Church and of conscience, they must no longer temporize. The Government treated them as rebels and outcasts, cut them off from all civil rights, and as far as possible shut them out from all the humanities of life. By this Declaration they virtually say—We accept the situation ; your own acts have dissolved the compact between rulers and ruled ; we disown all allegiance, and will take the consequences. Not in passionate excitement was this done, nor under the influence of personal hatred or revenge, but after serious deliberation, and from a firm conviction that thus only could they discharge their duty to conscience, to country, and to God. It was bravely, nobly done, and Scotland may well be proud of that act of heroic courage and Christian patriotism performed by Richard Cameron and his associates at the cross of Sanquhar two hundred years ago.

The position assumed by these noble men was undoubtedly a new thing in the history of the Church of Scotland, but the principles upon which it was based were not new. They were in truth the old principles, for which, as we have seen, the Church had contended from the first, and which had been fully developed during the Second Reformation. A protest in behalf of Presbytery, of the headship of Christ, of the freedom and independence of the Church, and of the duty of the State to honour Christ in its constitutions and enactments, is involved in the first two reasons given for renouncing allegiance. Episcopacy, Erastianism, and the royal supremacy, were anew rejected. But that which gave to this Declaration its specialty, was the deliberate act of severing themselves from all subjection to the existing Government. In order to give consistency and force to their protest, they disowned the king, and elected to live outside the State as then constituted and governed, as they were already outside the Church which that State had established. In Richard

Cameron and his associates we see the founders of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Sanquhar Declaration was the first public announcement of its separate position. Without binding itself to every form of expression or detail, that Church has ever regarded this document as embodying principles that are of high importance in themselves, of enduring value, and world-wide application. Amid the manifold changes of the intervening centuries, it has endeavoured consistently to maintain essentially the same testimony against every Church that is unfaithful to Christ's honour and its own rights, and against the State that disregards Christ's claims, and intrudes within the spiritual sphere, that was given forth in 1680 by the representatives of the poor persecuted remnant of the "true Presbyterian Church and covenanted nation of Scotland." Through what experience and by what steps the regular organization of a Church rose out of the scattered company of faithful witnesses for God's truth in troublous times, will be set forth in the narrative that follows. Meantime, it is only needful to say, that it was born amid the gloom and storms of the darkest, saddest epoch in Scottish Church history ; that it was the outcome of a long and terrible persecution, during which the constitution in Church and State was recklessly destroyed, and the most disgraceful cruelties inflicted on the best and noblest of the people ; and as a Church it long continued to bear in one form or another the marks of the fearful struggle that characterized its earliest days.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE FURNACE—1680—1688.

Section First.

THE decisive step had now been taken ; there was a party in Scotland, comparatively small in numbers, possessing little material strength and no worldly influence, yet strong in the consciousness of right and in devotion to the cause of religion and liberty, that not only refused all fellowship with the Church as then established, but was in avowed antagonism to the authorities in the State, and owned allegiance to no earthly power. Of course, the Government speedily became aware of the Sanquhar Declaration, and it awakened the keenest resentment. Tyrants, as if conscious that their power has no secure basis, are easily alarmed by any movement among the people, and are apt to resort to measures of repression beyond what the actual strength of the movement demands ; there being more or less uncertainty as to how far it may have the sympathy of the body of the people. It was so with the Government of Charles II. at this crisis. It could not be known at first to what extent the persecuted Presbyterians approved of the action of Cameron and his friends, or by what further measures it might be followed up. Whatever of fear mingled with their indignation, the Sanquhar Declaration gave some apparent ground for the charge of rebellion, and an excuse for more severe measures. The Government sought to involve the whole body of the Presbyterians in responsibility for that which, after all, was the act of only some of them ; and those

who repudiated it did not thereby escape the cruel hands of the persecutors. It did not satisfy the authorities that the latter had not gone so far in opposition as some of their brethren, so long as they did not countenance and support the existing order of things. From 1680, very few of the non-indulged ministers ventured to hold any religious meetings except in private; those only dared to go abroad, and on hill and moorland and secluded glen preach the gospel of Christ, who had taken up the position proclaimed in the Sanquhar Declaration. We by no means withhold our tribute of profound respect for the memory of the former class, who had suffered much for their zeal and faithfulness in those perilous times, even though we feel constrained to give to the latter the palm for a courage which no terrors could daunt, and a zeal which no trials or tribulations could quench.

It is not necessary for our purpose to enlarge on the sufferings of this faithful remnant, nor to detail at length those special instances that are memorable for the youth or sex of the victims, or the aggravated brutality of their treatment. Familiar to most readers, and therefore needing no rehearsal here, are cases such as those of Hackston of Rathillet, Brown of Priesthill, the Wigtown Martyrs, and many others similarly dealt with, which reveal on the one hand the cold-blooded inhumanity and contempt of the commonest principles of justice, on the part of the persecutors; and on the other, the unflinching courage, the heroic endurance, the calm triumphant faith, and holy joy of the sufferers. During the period now under review the persecution reached a degree of intensity beyond all that had preceded; this was especially true during 1684 and 1685, years which, because of the vengeful recklessness with which the diabolical work was carried on, and the numbers who suffered death in the fields and on the scaffold, were known as the *killing times*. There was no rest for the poor broken remnant of faithful witnesses. Misrepresented and calumniated by former friends and open foes, cut off from all the amenities of common life, driven into the most remote and inaccessible

parts of the Lowlands, wandering cold, wet and hungry through the misty moorlands, hiding in dens and caves of the earth, a price set upon their heads, beset by infamous spies, tracked to their secret hiding-places by bloodhounds, pursued by dragoons and shot down whenever they were found,—hard indeed was their lot. Yet while many former witnesses, wearied with the ceaseless strife and suffering, cowered before the storm, this feeble remnant held fast to their position with a persistency which many have described as sullen obstinacy, but which to us appears the sublime of heroic self-sacrifice for God's truth and human rights. Upon them, during these eight years, the tempest expended its utmost force, but it swept them not away; for them the furnace was heated seven times, yet they were not consumed. Through the din and the darkness of that weary struggle they bore aloft the banner of liberty, and the nation was not allowed to forget either the wrong-doing of the oppressor, or the claims of God, or the rights of man.

Only two of the non-indulged ministers who had taken part in maintaining the field-conventicles, openly identified themselves with the party that threw off allegiance to the existing Government, and continued to hold these meetings in defiance of its authority. One of these was Richard Cameron, from whom came one of the names by which the community of Reformed Presbyterians was popularly known. His father was a merchant in the old Fifeshire town of Falkland, and gave his son an academical education, doubtless with a view to the ministry of the Episcopal Church, to which his parents belonged. But in his early manhood he was led to attend the ministrations of the indulged clergy of the district, and by and by began to frequent the field-meetings of the non-indulged. He became firmly convinced that the position of the latter party was the only one in harmony with the ancient principles of the Scottish Church. About the year 1677, while acting as a tutor in Roxburghshire, he was brought into contact with John Welch of Irongray, one of the most popular field-preachers,

who urged him to accept license and join the band of faithful witnesses. After some hesitation Cameron consented, and was licensed by Welch and Sempill. In the confusion of the times, as the indulged ministers held meetings that were called Presbyteries, so did the non-indulged unite to exercise Presbyterial functions, and in the circumstances they were right in doing so. Cameron was now fairly launched on his brief but memorable career, which, though it extended over little more than three years, yet sufficed to send down his name to succeeding generations as one of Scotland's noblest sons. For some time he laboured in fellowship with other worthies at the peril of his life, through Annandale, Nithsdale, and Galloway ; distinguishing himself by the stern fidelity with which he condemned those who had accepted the royal Indulgence. Constrained by timid friends, who dreaded the effects of his zeal, to refrain for a time from preaching, Cameron retired to Holland, where he won the high respect of the exiled ministers, Brown and M'Ward. So deeply were they convinced of his fitness for the work to be done in Scotland, that they urged him to accept ordination and return to labour with the persecuted party. To this he agreed ; and it is recorded that after the act of ordination, M'Ward kept his hand on Cameron's head and uttered these prophetic words : "Behold, all ye spectators, here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of Jesus Christ, who shall lose the same for his Master's interest, and it shall be set up before sun and moon in the view of the world,"—so well did the speaker understand the zealous character of the man, and the perilous nature of the work in which he was about to be engaged.

Before Cameron returned to Scotland the disaster at Bothwell had occurred, and the cause of religion and liberty was in a more deplorable condition than ever. In vain he appealed to those who had formerly done noble service to the truth to stand forth in this dark and perilous hour ; all save one—Cargill—shrank before the pitiless storm that raged around. But his courage and resolution were not to be shaken by the

dark prospect around him, and he threw his whole energies into the work before him. Far and wide over mountain and moor he travelled, everywhere preaching and baptizing. It was toilsome and dangerous work, but he was in the prime of manhood, and no fear of man could scare him from the path of duty. And there were thousands throughout the South and West who were hungering after the Word, and ready to brave the fury of the oppressor that their souls might be fed. It is altogether a mistake to represent the field preachers as ranting enthusiasts or fierce fanatics, whose chief aim was to rouse the passions of the people or to stir up opposition to the Government. They had, all of them, too lofty a conception of the ministerial office, and too solemn a sense of the responsibility it involves to indulge in such a style of address. It is true that they did speak to their own times, they did expose the vices of the people, the unfaithfulness of the ministers, and the oppression and cruelty of the Government. They would not have been faithful to the Master or to the truth if they had not done so; they would not have been preachers of righteousness, such as the times demanded, if they had avoided every word that might have been thought offensive by the tyrannical rulers. But these things did not constitute the burden of their discourses, as must be evident to every one who examines even the imperfect reports of them that the loving reverence of their hearers has preserved to us. Sin and repentance, faith and obedience, the supreme claims of the Lord Jesus, were the themes they pressed home on the consciences of their hearers with all the urgency which they could command, and wondrously free and full was the salvation they offered in their Master's name. The circumstances in which the conventicles were held, on the bleak moorland or amid the solitude of the everlasting hills, often in the gloom of night and under the wintry storm, must have had a solemnizing effect on both preachers and hearers. And it is certain that God did honour His own gospel, preached as it was under the ban of the tyrant; many were brought to the knowledge of

Christ, and rivers of spiritual blessings were made to flow in the wilderness to refresh the weary souls.

Pre-eminent among these pastors of the desert was Richard Cameron. He had received such training in classics and philosophy as Scottish Universities then afforded, but he did not draw much upon these to adorn and commend his utterances. He had an unwavering faith in the message which he delivered, and a supreme conviction, born of experience, of the blessedness of those who accepted it. He possessed, moreover, a gift of unadorned popular eloquence that told mightily on his hearers; he knew how to reach the heart, and could sway his vast audiences as the wind the trees of the forest. He was a born preacher, and during his short career secured the affection and confidence of the witnessing remnant. For a few weeks after the publication of the Sanquhar Declaration he moved about with a bodyguard of sixty horsemen prepared to defend him. His last sermon was preached three days before his death; and while he and his wearied followers rested at Airmoss, they were surprised by a troop of dragoons, and in the conflict that followed, Cameron along with his brother Michael fell mortally wounded. In keeping with the barbarous practice of the age, the head and hands of the martyr were cut off and carried to Edinburgh, to be fixed above the city gates as a warning to others. It is recorded that the person by whom they were delivered up added these words, "These are the head and hands of a man who lived praying and preaching and died praying and fighting"; on which John Howie remarks: "And wherever the faithful contendings of the Covenanted Church of Scotland are made mention of, this to his honour will be recorded of him." Thus died one of Scotland's noblest sons, a man of pure and earnest piety, of fervent zeal and unwavering steadfastness, a martyr for Christ's crown and covenant, who without ever dreaming of it, has secured for himself a name in history and a place in the memory and regard of his countrymen that will not soon be lost.

Only Donald Cargill now remained to uphold the hated field conventicle. He thoroughly sympathized with Cameron in the step that separated them from the other non-indulged Presbyterians. He was one of those ejected in 1662, having before that been minister of the Barony Church in Glasgow. For well-nigh twenty years he had been a labourer and sufferer in the cause of religion, and though now an old man of seventy, age had not quenched his ardour, though it had weakened his physical powers. He was wounded both at Bothwell and Queensferry, but escaped, and for more than a year after Cameron's death, at great peril, he ministered to the scattered remnant. He had not the same popular gifts as his martyred brother, but in mental power, in logical force and clearness of vision, as well as in zeal for truth and steadfastness in suffering, he was certainly not inferior. His zeal and courage were signally displayed two months after Cameron's death, when at Torwood, in Stirlingshire, he solemnly excommunicated Charles II., the Duke of York, and the principal actors in the persecution of the Covenanters. Whatever we may think of the wisdom or expediency of the act, or of any ecclesiastical right which he had to perform it, we do not question the purity of the motives under which he acted. These were not personal feelings of hatred, but regard to the glory of God and the honour of religion. Nor can we help admiring the fearless courage which he displayed in doing, for conscience sake, that which he knew could only enrage his enemies and aggravate his sufferings. From that day he was more than ever a marked man; outlawed, intercommuned, a price set on his head, it is amazing that for ten months he escaped the hands of the persecutor. He was at length apprehended, tried and condemned, and in July, 1681, sealed his testimony on the scaffold. Thus soon were both of the men who had taken the most prominent part in this new departure among the persecuted Presbyterians, removed from their labours and sufferings. Who was now to take their place as leader of this advanced party? Former labourers had in various ways

disappeared from the scene, and there was not one of the non-indulged ministers prepared openly to assert the position of Cameron, and associate with those who had disowned the civil government of the realm. One man there was who stood high in the esteem of the Covenanters, a man of a peculiar temperament, around whose name gathered many strange traditions, —Alexander Peden, the Prophet of the Covenant. He had been a wanderer and a sufferer since 1662, but now old and worn out, he did not often preach; according to his own quaint saying, it was “praying folk that would get through the storm.” But the followers of Cameron were not clear as to Peden’s soundness on the government question, and he never actually joined them. After twenty-three years of almost ceaseless hardship and faithful service, he died quietly at Auchincloich in the parish of Sorn, where he was born; and his body, after being interred, was removed by the soldiers from the burying-place at Auchinleck, and re-interred at the gallows-foot at Cumnock, and around that spot the dust of many generations has since gathered.

Section Second.

The condition of the party that adhered to the Sanquhar Declaration was now very deplorable. Not only were they the objects of a relentless persecution, their families scattered and impoverished, and themselves exposed to the extremities of cold and hunger in their wretched retreats in moss-hags and secret caves; but they were without a preacher to administer to them the consolations of the gospel, and their children must remain unbaptized; for to receive this ordinance from the hand of any minister who owned the existing Government was in their view to be unfaithful to the testimony. They keenly felt and mourned over their desolate state; but they did not despair of the cause which they firmly believed to be that of truth, righteousness and liberty, and resolved at all hazards to maintain their position. But how was this to be done? With-

out organization how were they to prevent a gradual process of decay and absorption? That question was answered by the formation of the "United Societies," at the close of 1681. As these "Societies" continued to exist for well nigh a century, and were the germ from which grew up the Reformed Presbyterian Church, it is proper at this point to give some account of their organization. We are enabled to do this, and also to form a tolerably clear idea of the proceedings, spirit and aims of the party, from the "Minutes" of the General Meeting as kept by Michael Shields from 1681 to 1689, that were published by John Howie of Lochgoin in 1780, under the title, "Faithful Contendings Displayed." In these Minutes, and in the correspondence carried on with parties outside of Scotland, which is given along with them, we have the inner life of the Societies unfolded to view in a very interesting and instructive form, and presented too with a singular clearness and force of expression.

From the earliest period in the history of the Scottish Church, the more pious and devoted people had been wont to associate in private fellowship-meetings for prayer and mutual helpfulness in divine things. Meetings of this sort had been maintained by the persecuted Presbyterians through past years of trial, and now in the crisis that had arisen, some of the more zealous of the party conceived the idea of bringing these scattered praying societies into one united organization for mutual consultation and encouragement, and by this means also enable the party to act together in public matters. The basis of the whole was the private fellowship-meetings that were scattered over the whole southern part of Scotland from Fife to Galloway. Those that were situated within the same county were united into district Societies, or Correspondences as they were called. If the county was large and had many Societies within it, it might be divided into two or more district Correspondences. Then these district Societies or Correspondences sent Commissioners, who constituted the General Meeting, which met once in three months. The

framework of the organization was thus somewhat after the model of Presbyterianism with its gradation of courts. Cases that arose in a particular Society were to be considered by the district or county Correspondence; but when the matter was important and concerned the whole body, it could only be settled at the General Meeting. A regular communication was kept up among all the Societies and Correspondences by means of circular letters, and the Conclusions of the General Meeting were regularly intimated to them; while points of difficulty were remitted for consideration to the district meetings, before they were finally disposed of by the General Meeting. In this way they came to know each others' mind regarding any matter on which difference of opinion existed; a firm bond of union was established, and much could be done to promote the cause to which they were devoted by mutual counsel and sympathy.

Each Society consisted of those who owned the Testimony as then stated; in other words, occupied the position taken up by Cameron—separation from all other Presbyterians who accepted the Indulgences, or in any way held communion with the Indulged or ceased to be open witnesses; and separation from the State, as expressed in the Sanquhar Declaration. Along with this, adhesion to the doctrinal Standards of the Church and to the whole attainments of the Second Reformation was required. At the beginning of every General Meeting, care was taken to ascertain that the members and the Societies were free from scandals and the defections of the times; and in order to restrain extreme men from putting their own construction on what was defection, a series of questions was drawn up for this purpose. These constituted their "Terms of Communion," and they were certainly very stringent. The sum of them is as follows: No one could be recognized as a member who took any of the bonds tendered by the Government; who paid cess, locality or militia-money to the civil authorities, or stipend to the curates or indulged clergy; made use of a government pass, voluntarily appeared before

any court of law, supplied any commodities to the enemy, allowed another to do any of these things in their name, or who in any form recognized the ministry of the indulged or silent Presbyterians.¹ Certainly this was strict communion; but it is plain, considering the circumstances in which they were placed, and the position assumed both towards Church and State, that no other course was open to them if they were to remain a united body. They always repudiated any claim to be regarded as exercising the functions either of civil or ecclesiastical courts, though unfortunately in the first Declaration issued by the Societies, expressions were employed that gave some colour to the charge of assuming civil functions; but that document was somewhat hurriedly adopted, and the expressions cavilled at were afterwards explained. The manner of procedure in dealing with cases of defection was this. When a member was accused of having paid cess or of having received ordinances from any minister not connected with the Societies, no judicial sentence was pronounced by the General Meeting. If the charge was proved and the individual refused to own it to be a fault, he simply ceased to be a member of the Societies; if he owned his error and promised to avoid it in future, he was continued as a member, but was taken bound to submit to the discipline of a regular church court when any such as they could own was constituted. In cases where no conclusion could be reached, as that of one who had been married by Peden, whose relation to the peculiar testimony of the Societies was not clear, the matter was in like manner reserved to an ecclesiastical tribunal. In short, the Societies acted just as any other voluntary association would, in securing that all the members observed the rules of the association. In the "Informatory Vindication" their position in its civil aspect is thus stated: "We look upon ourselves as by constant and habitual tyranny reduced to our native and radical liberty in this matter, and desiring faithfully to adhere unto the fundamental

¹ Appendix No. II.

laws and laudable constitutions of our Church and covenanted nation, with the rest of the purer and better part; and therefore though we cannot and do not assume to ourselves a power of magistracy, yet after we had considered what would be best and contribute most to the security of ourselves and religion, we judged it lawful, expedient and necessary, to join together into one meeting all the particular Societies who were of one judgment and practice in reference to the matter of our stated testimony by formal consent, for mutual help and correspondence." Judging from the words and acts of the Societies, the position they claimed was this: they reckoned themselves free from allegiance to the existing Government, yet they did not attempt to set up another over themselves, but simply waited on Providence to remove that which they had disowned, or otherwise open up their way. Meanwhile, acting on their natural rights, they took what means they could to protect themselves. As to the Church, they renounced all communion with it as presently enslaved and corrupted, but were not schismatics; and though destitute of Church organization, regarded themselves as representing the true Presbyterian Covenanted Church of Scotland. They regarded this position as merely temporary, and forced upon them by the broken and disordered state of things both in Church and State.

We may form some conception of the spirit and aims of the Societies by a brief reference to some of the matters that came before the General Meeting. About seventy or eighty delegates convene on some moorland waste near a friendly farmhouse or shepherd's dwelling, and often in the gloom of night. Many of them have travelled far, and at the peril of their lives,—from the wilds of Galloway, the pastoral glades of Ettrick or Teviotdale, or the fertile plains of the Merse, Lothian or Fife. Deep solemnity characterizes their proceedings from the "modelling" of the meeting till its close. A preses is chosen, and a committee to arrange and discuss the business. Perhaps the question is: Are pontages and other

dues exacted at markets, to be placed on the same footing as cess and militia-money, and so exclude those who pay them from the Societies? Some extreme men insist on this; but the meeting decides that these are not so to be regarded. Or the question relates to the payment of farm rents, part of which goes to support the curates, whether it was "a duty or a sin, and so a head to suffer on." The conclusion arrived at was, that only in cases where money was to be given as stipend in addition to the fixed rent, would it be sinful to pay it, fidelity to the cause required them in such cases rather to suffer than comply; and it was agreed that money thus withheld from the support of prelacy should not be appropriated by the tenant, but devoted to public purposes by the Societies. As to those who suffered loss for refusing to pay cess or other taxes, it was decided that this loss should be made up to them by the other members who had not so suffered. Thus they bore each others' burdens. When rumours of a possible massacre by Papists or of a rising against the Government were brought to the Meeting, how ought the Societies to act? Was it not their duty to defend themselves and join with others against the common enemy, so far as they could do so, without being guilty of a sinful association with malignants? And so instructions were given to provide arms, to attend to military training, and a place was fixed for the whole to meet armed when occasion demanded. It was at the same time resolved that, in the meantime, none of the Society people should appear in arms unless in necessary self-defence, some being too rash in this matter. Another matter of a very different nature often occupied the attention of the General Meeting. They were destitute of pastors; how were they to obtain a gospel ministry free from all taint of compliance with present defections? The only course that seemed open to them, was to send some of their own number to obtain theological training and ordination in Holland. At a meeting in Edinburgh in October, 1682, six young men offered themselves to this perilous work, ready to risk anything for the sake of

maintaining the cause of Christ in their native land. Of these four were chosen, the Societies undertaking to support them abroad. One of these was James Renwick, and he was the only one who realized the hopes of the Societies. Another was John Flint, to whom Sir Robert Hamilton makes frequent reference in his letters, and towards whom he cherished no friendly feelings. A few years later he returned to Scotland, but was disowned by the Societies. He became the indulged minister at Burghlee in the parish of Lasswade; after the Revolution he became minister of the parish, and was afterwards translated to Edinburgh. He appears to have been a man of considerable theological attainments; and Boston had correspondence with him regarding his theory on Hebrew accents. It was significant of the value set on learning that the General Meeting appointed a teacher of Latin for the youth who were looking forward to the ministry, at a salary of twenty-five pounds Scots per quarter. Money also was collected for the relief of the widows and children of the martyrs, for the poor, for those who had been banished to the plantations, and for the redemption of those who were sold into slavery. A long correspondence was carried on through the General Meeting with the students and Sir R. Hamilton, with the Dutch Church, and friends in Ireland and in England; and a large-hearted interest is revealed in the progress of religion and in the suffering Christians of other lands. Nor were they unmindful amid all their distractions and trials of the interests of spiritual religion among themselves; we find the General Meeting admonishing the Societies not to allow public questions to overshadow the claims of devotion and the study of Scripture; while at every meeting days of fasting and humiliation or of thanksgiving were appointed. Work of another kind was assigned to the Societies, congenial in itself, and which ultimately bore tangible fruit. "It was likewise concluded," so the Minute runs, "that every Society should do their utmost to gather up a list of the names, and an

account of the sufferings of those within their respective bounds, who suffered martyrdom and otherwise, and also of the enemies' barbarous dealings and cruelty there, and of any signal and remarkable judgments that had been inflicted upon any of these enemies,—that the whole being collected together might be for the good and comfort of the present and succeeding generations." There was thus work enough, and sometimes exciting work, to be done at the General Meeting; and the commissioners carried to the utmost bounds of the community the reports of its proceedings, so that all were kept aware of the condition of things among themselves, and prepared for united public action when that was required.

No one can examine these old records in an unprejudiced spirit, and with an intelligent apprehension of the times and circumstances of the Societies, without recognizing the high character, the devoted piety, the fervent zeal for the public interests of the truth, and the unwavering steadfastness of the great body of the members. Their great desire was to be faithful to God and to conscience, no matter what it might cost; they were not puffed up by any sense of personal excellency, they judged themselves as severely as they judged others, they mourned and fasted not only for the sins of the land, but for their own shortcomings, even for the heat that sometimes marked their debates. And even amid their deep distress they were moved to give thanks to God for protection from danger, and for the security which in a wonderful degree was enjoyed by those who attended the General Meeting. One is amazed, considering the circumstances in which they met, at the generally calm, sober and regular way in which the business was transacted, at the carefulness and thoroughness with which difficult questions of conscience and duty were discussed, and not least at the wisdom and moderation which on the whole characterized the conclusions arrived at. Among the leaders were men of great ability, capable of guiding through most troublous times the affairs of a widespread community, lying under the ban of Government, and including within itself some

men of a restless fiery spirit, whose rash action might have seriously compromised the whole body. We do not affirm that every decision is defensible, nor that they always expressed their convictions in the best form; but certainly, they were not fiery zealots nor ranting fanatics, but earnest, able, clear-sighted Christian men and patriots who maintained with singular consistency the cause of God and liberty against all the power of the tyrant. There is no doubt that the Societies owed very much during this trying epoch to the wisdom, firmness, tact and organizing power of one whose brief career we must soon refer to, James Renwick, the last Scottish martyr.

Some may imagine that the United Societies embraced only an insignificant number of individuals. Enemies did their best to create that impression at the time; and some historians have proceeded on the assumption of its truth. The facts of the case point to a different conclusion, though it is impossible to give exact numbers. This we know, on the authority of Gordon of Earlston, that in 1683 there were eighty Societies representing an aggregate of 7000 members, exclusive of women. That the numbers did not diminish during the next five years, notwithstanding the fierce persecution, seems evident from the fact, that at the Revolution they mustered 9000 strong on Douglas Moor; a regiment was raised among them in a few days, and another could easily have been obtained had it been wanted. As the Societies were confined to southern Scotland, it is manifest that they must have embraced no inconsiderable proportion of the population.¹

The General Meetings were held in different places, to suit the convenience of members and obtain the greatest security from disturbance. This necessitated their being held generally during the night, and in the wildest and most inaccessible spots, chiefly in the upland region stretching from Galloway to the borders of Lothian, though, occasionally, meetings were held in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Few places

¹ Dodds' "Fifty Years Struggle," pp. 297, 389-91.

are more bleak and uninviting than Blagannock, Wanlockhead, Priesthill, Hyndbottom, or Darmead; and it was just because these were all but unapproachable to the dragoons, and therefore comparatively safe, that they were selected. Members convened from Fife on the one hand to remotest Galloway on the other; and it is remarkable, that through the hottest period of the persecution, not only were the meetings held with wonderful regularity, but that they were never disturbed by the military; nor is it known that any fell into the hands of the enemy when going to or returning from the meetings,—a fact that is recognized with gratitude more than once in the Minutes of the Societies.

The first General Meeting was held at Logan House, in Lesmahagow parish, on 15th December, 1681; and a Protest was then adopted against the reception of the Popish Duke of York as Royal Commissioner to the Scottish Parliament. It was more than these sturdy Presbyterians could bear in silence, that such a position should be occupied by a member of a church which they regarded as the enemy of Scriptural Christianity and of human freedom; and their Protest, though objectionable in some points, did somewhat to keep alive the dread of Popery among the people. Not less emphatic was their Protest against the Test Act passed by this Parliament, which imposed an oath binding to support the Protestant religion, and yet obliging the swearer never to exercise his rights as a Protestant. It was so absurd and self-contradictory that many who had not scrupled about those that preceded, shrank from taking it without explanation. It was not to be expected that it would find any favour among the Covenanters; they alone had the courage and public spirit to speak of and deal with it as it deserved. In coming years it became an occasion of great suffering to the faithful, for it was pressed by a brutal soldiery on all ages and both sexes, and those who refused to take it were summarily put to death. Another occasion of great trouble to the Society people was the putting of ensnaring questions

to the simple peasantry suspected of disloyalty. They were asked if they would pray for the king; but as they knew that in the sense of the questioner this was meant to be a test of loyalty, and to assent to it thus would be an owning of his authority and a prayer for its continuance, they refused so to pray for him. While ready to pray for his salvation, they felt that it would be a mockery of God and a condemnation of their avowed principles to pray for the continuance of the power that persecuted them. Side by side with the actual facts of the case, the magniloquent denunciations of the martyrs as narrow and unchristian, appear worse than ridiculously absurd. Yet it was by such mean unmanly tricks that the persecutors sought some weak pretence for destroying many of the best in the land.

Section Third.

It can scarcely be questioned that the man who exercised the greatest influence among the Societies during this period was James Renwick. In him we find the true embodiment of their spirit and aim; and it is proper that some distinct notice should here be taken of his brief career and manifold labours. Born of poor but pious parents in the parish of Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, in 1662, he was early brought under the power of religion, and after a period of intense spiritual anxiety and doubt, fully realized peace and joy in believing. His amiable disposition and promising talents procured for him friends, by whose assistance he was enabled to prosecute his studies at the University of Edinburgh till 1681. Hitherto he had associated with the moderate Presbyterians and frequented their private meetings, but he became dissatisfied with their position and conduct. His gentle soul shuddered at the barbarities daily committed on God-fearing men and women under cover of law; while the boldness, fidelity, patience and self-denial of the sufferers won his admiration. He mingled with the throng that surrounded the scaffold on which Cargill

suffered, and the dying testimony of the martyr made an impression upon him that was never effaced. After careful examination he felt constrained by a sense of duty to cast in his lot with the followers of Cameron, and henceforth through good report and through bad report, through labours and sufferings manifold, he upheld the down-trodden cause. He was in his twentieth year when he took this important step. His wisdom and skill contributed largely to the successful organization of the Societies; and though after his ordination he was not a member of the General Meeting, he yet exercised a great and most beneficent influence on all their proceedings and decisions. Such was the high position which he speedily attained among them, that he was sent to Holland in 1682 to correct the false statements that had been circulated among the Scottish exiles and Dutch divines, regarding the principles and practices of this witnessing remnant. As we have already mentioned, he was one of those chosen to go abroad to complete his studies and obtain ordination. He went to Groningen, where he studied; and in May, 1683, after a thorough examination, he was ordained by the Classis of that town. Why did he go to Holland for this purpose? Simply because no ecclesiastical party in Scotland would ordain one who held the position which Renwick had taken up, and fidelity to the testimony would have prevented him from accepting it even if they had been willing to ordain him. The Dutch Church, though not free from corruption, had not back-slidden, and Renwick was not ordained on the formula of that Church, but on that of the Scottish Church in its purest times. How entirely his heart was in the work to which he had consecrated himself appears from the letters that he wrote while abroad. His heart bled for the woes of his brethren; the groans of the sufferers wafted over the deep stirred his inmost soul; "I cannot express," he says, "the case I am in, partly from our dear friends falling into the hands of our Lord's enemies, and partly from my being so long detained from my brethren. I cannot tell what may be before my

hand, but my longings to be in Scotland I cannot express." "O let us cry and wrestle with the Lord, that He would preserve a remnant from being swallowed up by this weighty cloud of wrath hanging over our heads, ready to break forth when we are ripening for the same." None knew better than he the dangerous character of the work; but he had counted the cost. He felt that the cause was worthy of the risk and the suffering, and he never hesitated; he entered on his brief career prepared to die in the good cause; he was already "ripening for the same."

In September, 1683, he landed in Scotland; and at Darmead, on 3rd Oct., he preached his first sermon to the Societies at the General Meeting, made a full statement of his principles, was called to minister among them, and accepted the invitation. For more than two years they had been without a pastor, but now they had one on whose ministrations they could conscientiously wait; and they set high value on his services. They tenderly watched over him; they loved him for his work's sake, and not less for his own amiable qualities; for he was gentle and affectionate, while courageous and firm; considerate of the feelings and opinions of others, while steadfast in adherence to his own personal convictions. And he did not spare himself in his endeavour to fulfil the work to which this despised remnant had called him. For them he braved alike the rage of the enemy and the fury of the winter storm; he was instant in season and out of season, ready to answer every call that was addressed to him. Through the wide region over which his adherents were scattered he travelled almost incessantly, preaching, catechising and visiting the Societies. In three months he baptized three hundred children, a fact which shows that the numbers owning his ministry were by no means inconsiderable.

But while he thus bound his friends to himself by closer ties, his courage and fidelity roused against him a host of enemies; he was loaded with opprobrium both by the openly profane and the conforming party. Calumnies of every sort

were uttered against him,—he was an upstart enthusiast, one who had no call to the ministry, and taught the wildest doctrines and abominable heresies to an ignorant and deluded rabble. On the other hand, the appearance of Renwick, and the revival of field-preaching, infuriated the Council and the Prelates. Numerous proclamations were issued against him and his followers, denouncing them as traitors and rebels; every one was forbidden, on pain of death, to harbour, succour, or hold any intercourse with them. Renwick himself was hunted from place to place, and could only find a brief repose from labour in the swampy moors or in the clefts of the rugged rocks. He travelled over wide districts, frequenting chiefly the wildest and most desolate parts of Galloway, Ayrshire, Dumfriesshire and Lanarkshire, though sometimes we find him in Fife and at Edinburgh, or in the neighbourhood of Glasgow and Paisley. On the bare hillside, or bleak moorland, or in secluded glen, by day and by night, in calm and storm, that melodious voice poured forth in gentle streams the rich treasures of the gospel, and the hearts of the weary wanderers were refreshed. The persecution went on with intensified violence; many died on the scaffold, and many more were shot in the fields. Against himself, as leader of the hated conventicles, the utmost efforts were put forth, and it is marvellous that he escaped so long. He owed his safety on more occasions than one to his own cool self-possession,—as when resting in an inn in Galloway, the soldiers in pursuit of him came to the same house and talked freely of their object, little dreaming that the youth sitting so quietly by the fire was the very man they were in quest of. On other occasions he was indebted to the devotion of his hearers, who willingly exchanged clothes with him so as to give a better chance of escape. He was naturally of a delicate constitution; his labours and hardships told seriously upon him, and his physical weakness called forth the deeper sympathy of his followers. He was sometimes so weak that he had to be lifted into the saddle, and supported by a man on each side.

For weeks his only shelter was found in moss hags, or under a projecting scaur on the banks of some mountain stream, or in the deserted shepherds' shielings on the hills. Comfortable, compared with these places, must have been the chamber prepared for him in the heart of the peat stack at Castle Maddie.

Do we ask what were the feelings of this devoted servant of Christ under his aggravated sufferings?—these we learn from his own lips. He spent a few days in the cottage of John Brown at Priesthill, not long before that worthy fell by the pistol of Claverhouse. Brown expressed a fear that he had not been received by his friends as he ought to have been, for there were discontented people in the Societies, and this was the substance of Renwick's answer: "Their reproach has not broken my heart, but the excessive travelling, night wanderings, unseasonable sleep, frequent preaching in all weathers, especially in the night, have so debilitated me that I am often unfit for my work. Some have declared that I will never be honoured of the Lord to do His poor remnant good, but one thing I know and may say, that the Lord has done me good. Enemies may think themselves satisfied that we are put to wander in mosses and in mountains, but even amid the storms of the last two nights I cannot express what sweet times I have had, when I had no covering but the dark curtains of night. Yea, in the silent watch, my mind was led out to admire the deep and inexpressible ocean of joy wherein the whole family in heaven swim." "Though the world," he writes in one of his letters, "thinks my case most miserable, yet I think it so happy that I know not a man this day on the face of the earth with whom I would exchange my lot. Oh, it is more sweet and pleasant to be swimming in the swellings of Jordan for Christ and with Christ, than to be wallowing in the pleasures of sin and the delights of the flesh." There was nothing of the wild fanatic in James Renwick, nothing of the fierce bigotry so oft attributed to his party. Neither the malice of enemies nor the coldness of friends could chafe that

noble, gentle spirit. Tribulation in its severest form only opened up to him more fully the highest consolations. It is no marvel that the hearts of the wanderers warmed towards the amiable youth, who, with all his gentleness, revealed such steadfastness and power of endurance, and mingled no scorn nor anger with his bitter trials. In all matters requiring tact, moderation and sound judgment, they confided in him ; and the great influence that he acquired among them was of vast advantage to the community and the cause they maintained.

That the Societies were not content merely to protest against wrong, but also to aid in the removal of it, is quite certain. In 1683 rumours reached them of a plot formed in England against the Government, and their aid was sought. A paper was drawn up in which was set forth the willingness of the Societies to take part in the overthrow of tyranny ; but even for so desirable an end, they could not enter into any association that was inconsistent with their avowed position and principles, they could not commit themselves to any enterprise that involved association with malignants. This paper was entrusted to Gordon of Earlston to be given to those engaged in the plot in London ; but Gordon was arrested at Newcastle, and the document fell into the hands of the Government, and stirred up a fiercer outbreak of persecution. To such terrible straits were the sufferers put at this time that in 1684 the Societies issued "The Apologetic Declaration and Admonitory Vindication," in which they warn all spies and informers of the danger they run, and of their resolution to defend themselves and deal with their enemies as they deserve. We grant that there are expressions in this document that we care not to vindicate ; but a just conception of its purpose, and of the deplorable straits of its authors, must greatly mitigate our censure. They do not threaten to kill all of a different religion, as enemies alleged, nor do they allow private individuals to take vengeance, nor in any case is punishment to be inflicted without clear proof of having continued to offend after this

warning. The main object was to deter the crew of base informers who swarmed in some districts, and to a large extent it served this end. The history of the times shows that these reputed zealots did not shed the blood of their enemies; no well authenticated case can be given of any one being cut off under the ban or by the sanction of the Societies, though they had many opportunities of destroying individual oppressors. This Declaration furnished fresh excuse for persecution, and it was at its extreme point when Charles II. died. That event could bring no relief to Renwick and the Society people, for his successor was a bigoted Papist, who had declared that there would be no rest till the whole South and West of Scotland was turned into a hunting-field. Nor were the Societies long in making known their attitude towards the new king. They refused to recognize him, disowned the Parliament that proclaimed him, declared anew their rejection of Popery, appealed to the Churches of England and Ireland to consider their defections and rouse themselves to meet this new danger, and then to all Protestant Churches for sympathy and help in their distressed condition. It is refreshing to turn from the servility of Parliaments and Prelates and listen to the manly voice of these despised Covenanters, which touched a chord in the heart of the nation that did not cease to vibrate till the tyrant was expelled. The Societies did good service to religion and liberty by their fearless protest; and it was noticed that it did not create fresh trouble; none suffered for it, and none were required to disown it,—a negative testimony to its righteousness and opportuneness.

The position which the Societies assumed towards Argyle's unfortunate expedition is quite intelligible and consistent, though it has been grossly misrepresented by some modern historians of note. It was only what was to be expected, that Argyle's friends should look for support from those who for five years had maintained so practical a protest against tyranny, and had suffered so much from it, as the Society people had done. When the matter was brought before the General

Meeting, in May, 1685 this was the issue of their deliberations : " But though they (desiring to adhere to the principles of the Church concerning sinful associations) had not freedom to join with such, nor could they espouse Argyle's Declaration as the state of their quarrel, because it was not concerted according to the ancient plea of the Scottish Covenanters, and because it opened a door for a sinful confederacy ; yet they were willing to do what lay in their power against the common enemy." The honesty and fidelity of these men are apparent. They longed for freedom as ardently as Argyle did, but conscience forbids them to enrol among his followers ; there was too little in common between them and many of his associates, and his grounds for action did not cover all that they reckoned right and necessary in the case. But if allowed liberty of action, unfettered by his Declaration, they will do their part for the overthrow of the tyrant, and thus open up a way for a satisfactory settlement. They were not hostile but favourable to the enterprise ; they were only anxious to keep free from homologating the faults and defections of others, and to maintain their testimony untarnished. The speedy collapse of the expedition rendered it unnecessary to take any further steps in the matter.

Hitherto the Societies had not been greatly troubled by internal dissensions, but they were now plunged into a painful and protracted controversy. Several Presbyterian ministers who had come from Holland with Argyle, were met by some of the Society people, and by them introduced to the General Meeting in July, 1685. In the conference that followed, proposals for the union of these ministers to the Societies were made ; this led to much heated debate, which Shields says, it is unpleasant to remember. No result flowed from these discussions, save the unhappy one, that the Societies became seriously divided among themselves ; some accepted the services of the returned ministers, while the most part refused to own them. It is unnecessary to enter into details regarding this dispute, further than to say, that

these ministers were willing to go on with the work along with Renwick, provided their past conduct was not called in question; but, as they were charged with having grossly misrepresented the Societies and calumniated their minister, Renwick's friends insisted that these aspersions must be withdrawn, ere anything like harmonious action was possible. Instead of doing this, they repeated them throughout the country, and endeavoured to create a prejudice against Renwick and mar his usefulness. The latter fully cleared himself from all the charges brought against him; and it says little for the impartiality of Wodrow, that he gives the accusations but takes no notice of the refutation they received.

This dispute was the occasion of the preparation of the most important of all the documents issued by the Societies during this epoch. It bears the following title, which clearly indicates its character. "An Informatory Vindication of a poor, wasted, misrepresented remnant of the Suffering, Anti-popish, Anti-prelatic, Anti-erastian, Anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, united together in a General Correspondence. By way of reply to various Accusations, in Letters, Informations, and Conferences, given forth against them." This tractate was undoubtedly in the main the work of James Renwick, and reveals the high qualities of head and heart that he possessed. It is a clear and able statement and defence of the position and principles of the Societies; and for a long time a higher degree of authority was ascribed to it than to any other of the numerous Declarations that were published. When we consider the circumstances in which it was drawn up, the long persecution, the keen controversy that had agitated the party, the youth, the manifold labours, the hardships and unsettled life of the writer, it must be pronounced a remarkable document. It is wonderfully moderate and conciliatory in tone, and free from that narrowness of view which their circumstances tended so much to engender; indeed, the uncommon breadth of view on some points is one of its most interesting features. While decided

and strong in its assertion of principles, it is generous towards those whom it censures for unfaithfulness, fully recognizing their personal worth and past service. When essential principles are not imperilled, it does not seek to bind all to approve of every thing in manner or form, or to endorse every phrase or every act; and it avoids an indiscriminate censure of those guilty of defection. Its candour is evinced by frank concessions, by retractation of some things in earlier Declarations, and by an avowed readiness to correct whatever is extreme, wrong or uncharitable. Again and again it laments that the tyranny and confusion of the times have compelled the party to assume a peculiar position from which they long to be relieved, and they yearn and pray for the time when, with a good conscience, they can renew their brotherly intercourse with fellow-Christians, and return to their place in a Christian State. Meanwhile, a due regard, on the one hand, to their rights and privileges as freemen and Christians, and on the other, to what was due to Christ as Head of the Church and King of nations, constrain them to stand apart from both the State and the Church. They have renounced allegiance to the king, they disown the Government, not because they think lightly of magistracy, "for it is a holy and divine institution, for the good of human society, the encouragement of virtue and piety," but because the present rulers have ceased to "act as the ministers of God, in a direct line of subordination to God, in defence of our covenanted Reformation and the subjects' liberties," and have become habitual tyrants, destroyed liberty and made void all contracts with the subjects. Though they be a minority, they claim the right to act as they have done; but they do not claim for themselves any magistratical authority, "they cannot act judicially in either civil or criminal courts; only in the interim, that they may lawfully do that which may most conduce to the securing of themselves, religion and liberty"; a position that is equally intelligible and constitutional. They in like manner refuse to have fellowship with the

Church as presently constituted, they have been driven out of its fellowship; and they are specially concerned to vindicate their refusal to associate with other Presbyterian ministers, "whom we love in the Lord and acknowledge to be ministers of this Church, with whom we sometimes had sweet fellowship while they were faithful in their Master's work, and with whom again we would desire to have communion in ordinances." Did this refusal proceed from any narrow conceptions as to the nature of Christian communion? If any one imagines that this is so, let him read the second section of Head Seventh, and he will be astonished to find a breadth and liberality of sentiment far beyond what might have been expected, and principles enunciated regarding communion as broad as those of the Evangelical Alliance. He will also find admirably-drawn distinctions with respect to the action proper to the members of a particular church, when it is considered as reformed and regularly constituted, or as only in the process of being reformed, or again when considered as falling back from former attainments, "and broken down by complete and habitual tyranny and epidemical apostasy." This last is the condition in which they find themselves; and under Head Fourth ample grounds are given why they are bound by regard to the principles of the Scottish Reformation, to refuse communion with those who were guilty more or less of the defections of the times. But does not this attitude of theirs make them chargeable with the sin of schism? They were charged with that, but were well able to repel the charge. They still regarded themselves as a part of the historic Church of Scotland, and were wont to speak of it as their poor, torn and bleeding mother. A careful distinction is drawn between a positive separation involving the erection of a new Church, different in doctrine, worship or government, and a negative separation which does not involve this. This negative separation is distinguished into active and passive; and it is only this negative-passive separation that is acknow-

ledged by the Societies. They claim that they have not left the Church; they are faithful to the covenanted Reformation, but the declining and corrupt part has left them; they are separate only as refusing to follow in this evil course, or to hold ecclesiastical fellowship with those who do so. They did not claim to be a Church, but only fellowship-societies of private Christians meeting together for mutual edification and strengthening, and having no idea of forming a separate Church. They longed for such a change as would render their present position of protest unnecessary. At the basis of all their contendings on these points lie the principles of constitutional freedom in civil things, and in ecclesiastical matters, the time-honoured principles of the Scottish Church—Presbyterian, and Free—in regard to the honour of Christ its only Head, and the Governor among the nations.

This interesting document was carefully considered by the Societies, and was approved in March, 1687, at a General Meeting held at Friarminion, a lonely farmhouse on the borders of Lanarkshire and Dumfriesshire, some six or seven miles north of Kirkconnell. It says much for the character and training of these Society people, that they were able to discuss the weighty themes, and follow the nice distinctions so carefully and lucidly stated in this able paper. Bearing in mind the conditions of their life, spent in the upland wilds, and beset on every hand by fierce enemies, it is marvellous to find these hunted men calmly discussing such matters as schism, natural rights, and the relations of rulers and subjects. No doubt a great many of the points considered in the "Informatory Vindication," referred only to existing circumstances; on some others, the position taken was extreme; but after all, it contained nothing quite new, and for its purpose it was masterly, clear, and satisfactory.

In the meantime, the sufferings of the persecuted remnant did not lessen. In 1686, the hands of Renwick were strengthened by the accession of other two preachers, Messrs Shields and Houston; but in the following year he was again left to

bear the burden alone, as the latter went over to Ireland, and the former was sent to Holland to superintend the printing of the "Informatory Vindication," and to carry forward the writing of his work in defence of the same cause, entitled "A Hind Let Loose." Amid growing difficulties, and under increasing weakness, Renwick continued his journeys and preaching. As at the beginning, so to the end, he was a gospel minister; Christ was ever the burden of his theme, and there in the wilderness God bare witness to His own truth. Many had reason to bless God for the message the faithful preacher proclaimed, and others who had stood aloof from the witnessing remnant were brought, through the felt power of religion, to identify themselves with their cause. It was thus that their numbers increased rather than diminished, despite all their sufferings, through the instrumentality of the field conventicles. There was much in the preacher himself to win the sympathy of his hearers; his voice was soft and musical; his manner was calm and dignified as became his solemn theme; his eloquence was mild and persuasive, rather than impassioned,—like the murmur of a gentle fertilizing stream, rather than the rush of a mountain torrent. He riveted the attention of his hearers on his subject more than on himself; and so great was his power over his audience, that the crowds that gathered around him were often melted to tears under his earnest and pathetic appeals. One of his hearers thus writes: "I went sixteen miles to hear Mr Renwick, a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, a young man endowed with great piety, freedom, and moderation. The meeting was held on a desolate moor. His method was clear, plain, and well-digested, suiting the substance and simplicity of the gospel. This was a great and sweet day of the gospel, for he handled and pressed the privileges of the covenant of grace with seraphic-like enlargement, to the great edification of his hearers."

The calls upon the services of this brave and noble servant of Christ were more than he could overtake; yet amid all his

toils and hardships he found time to write letters of consolation to fellow-sufferers at home and to Christian friends abroad, which not only reveal the gentle, loving and devoted spirit of the man, but discover also a mind capable of dealing with the loftiest themes. While according to the regulations of the United Societies, Renwick was not a member of the General Meeting, yet by his weight of character, his wisdom and moderation, combined with gentleness and firmness, he was enabled to exercise a wholesome influence on all the proceedings of the party. Faithful to his testimony against Popery and tyranny, among the last of his public acts was to give in to some of the ministers of Edinburgh a solemn protestation against the Toleration granted by the king, from the benefits of which he and his followers were excluded, and against those who availed themselves of it. His whole public life had been a protest against the assumption of such a power by the State, and he could not bear that Presbyterians should homologate the act of a Papist in presuming, of his own royal will and absolute authority, to tolerate the exercise of the true religion. The career of this noble witness for Christ and liberty was now nearly ended. His physical constitution, never robust, was utterly broken by his manifold labours and hardships; and singled out as he was as the special object for persecution, it was hardly possible that he could much longer escape the hands of his enemies. He preached his last sermon in Fife, on 29th Jan., 1688, and was arrested in Edinburgh on the 31st. At his trial he was charged with having cast off the fear of God, disowned the king, refused to pay cess, and carried arms at his meetings. He owned all these charges except the first,—“That,” he said, “I deny; for it is because I fear God and to violate His law that I am here standing ready to be condemned.” He was executed on the 17th of February, 1688, rejoicing in the immediate prospect of the crown of glory. Thus died, in the 26th year of his age, the last martyr for Scotland’s Covenanted Reformation, young in years, but ripe in Christian experience. His body was prepared for burial by

the loving hands of devoted friends, and lies interred in the Churchyard of the Greyfriars, where rest in hope the remains of many a Scottish worthy.

The death of Renwick was a great loss to the Societies ; but the organization which he had done so much to create and to guide remained intact, and their position was held as firm as ever. Little more, however, requires to be said regarding them in bringing this chapter to a close. Persecution continued during the first half of 1688, though in a somewhat mitigated form. The place of Renwick as preacher was supplied by the return of Shields from Holland, and also by Messrs Lining and Boyd, two young men who had been educated there at the expense of the Societies, and had obtained license ; of these three we shall have occasion to say more by and by. None watched with a keener interest than the Society people, the course of events that were transpiring in England and on the Continent, which foreboded an approaching change ; and none had greater reason to long for it. Rumours came of the negotiations of leading politicians with William of Orange, of the alienation of the Church of England from the king, and of the wide-spread anxiety and alarm which the policy of James had excited among the people. The Government began to realize that it had other work to do than to chase the godly peasantry of Scotland ; its very existence was threatened, and it bestirred itself too late to avert the impending doom. In Scotland proclamations rapidly followed each other, calling to arms for the defence of the throne, but they were received in sullen silence. While the king was compelled to listen to unpleasant truths from his English councillors, it makes one ashamed to read the servile addresses sent to him by his Scottish Council. Blind as the latter were to the actual state of feeling among the people, they were rudely awakened to a sense of their own utter weakness, and of the hopeless condition of the evil system which they had so vigorously sustained, when they learned that the Prince of Orange was in England, and that the king whom they had flat-

tered had ignominiously fled. All at once the dark cloud that had so long brooded over Scotland was lifted up; the storm that had for twenty-six miserable years swept over her was still. The persecution that had desolated many homes, that had forced so many of her best and noblest to become wanderers on the bleak moorlands and to die on field and scaffold as witnesses for God's truth and human freedom, came to an end when William of Orange landed at Torbay. A dark, sad chapter in the history of the faithful Presbyterians closes, and a new epoch opens; how they dealt with the new set of circumstances which they were immediately called to face, must be left to another chapter. Meanwhile we anew avow our sympathy with them in the long and weary struggle through which they had passed, our hearty approval of their principles and general course of procedure, our admiration of them as patriots and Christians, and of the fidelity, patience and courage with which they maintained the unequal strife.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE REVOLUTION—1688-1690.

Section First.

WE have now to trace the course pursued by the Societies during the two critical years when the Revolution Settlement in Church and State was being wrought out. In some respects it was for them a more trying ordeal than even the persecution through which they had passed. A transition period is ever a testing time; there is the danger, on the one hand, of adhering blindly or doggedly to the forms and traditions of the past amid an entirely new set of circumstances; and there is on the other, the risk of being carried away by the excitement that so frequently marks the beginning of a new and hopeful era. It was therefore no easy matter for the Societies, particularly after such an experience as they had passed through, and with so much uncertainty yet resting on the future, to adopt such a course as would attest their fidelity to the attainments of the past, and at the same time secure a wise and faithful application of their principles to the altered circumstances. The narrative we have now to give will show to what extent they were able to realize the new state of things around them, and to assume a position that would give worthy expression to what was essential and permanent in their testimony. In order to understand the actings of the Societies we must, of course, keep distinctly in view the changes that at the same time were taking place both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs.

The Revolution was the result of the tyranny and arbitrary government of the king, and of his manifest efforts to prepare the way for the restoration of Popery ; and it was brought about by a combination of parties that had during the preceding reign been violently opposed to each other. The interests of liberty and religion were at stake, and this for a time welded together Churchmen and Nonconformists. In no part of the realm had tyranny shown itself in a more repulsive form than in Scotland, and nowhere had its results been more keenly felt. There, too, the dread and dislike of Popery were even more intense than in England ; and the Scottish Parliament, hitherto so basely subservient to the arbitrary will of the sovereign, had already refused to comply with the king's request to annul the penal statutes against Popery ; while the popular feeling against that system was evinced in various ways before the Revolution was accomplished. The clergy of the Established Church in Scotland were, to a very large extent, out of sympathy with the sentiments and feelings of the people ; and even after their Episcopal brethren in England had lost confidence in the king, they continued to fawn upon and flatter the Popish despot. In Scotland, however, the protest against tyranny, civil and ecclesiastical, as well as against Popery, had been all along maintained in a very direct and emphatic form, and in circumstances well fitted to arrest the attention of such as carefully regarded the state of things in the land. For about twenty years it had been maintained by the ejected Presbyterian ministers and those who at all risks adhered to them,—by the conventicle preachers and the conventicle hearers, with all the witnesses and sufferers of those days. During eight weary years this protest had been maintained amid unparalleled hardships by the devoted Society people, who had renounced allegiance to Charles and refused to own James as king, and had preserved their freedom on the mountains and moors. In every Declaration that they issued, the protest was renewed, and every martyrdom sealed it afresh. Their testimony and their sufferings were ever before

the people, and helped to keep alive the flickering flame of freedom till it burst forth in its strength at the Revolution. The banner, upheld by feeble but resolute hands on the Scottish hills, was a clear indication to the patriots of England and to the Prince of Orange that the spirit of freedom had not been extinguished in the northern kingdom. They had good ground to believe, that those who at infinite hazard had not shrunk from the post of danger in the darkest hour, would not fail to give effective help when the time of deliverance came. Whatever peculiarities belonged to the position of the Societies, there was no shadow of doubt as to their sincere love of liberty and devotion to the interests of the Protestant religion, and of this fresh proof was given by their action during the period now to be considered.

Among the last acts of the Societies before the turmoil of the Revolution was upon them, was one that revealed their practical sympathy with those who were sufferers in the same cause, and who for their fidelity had been sold as slaves to the West Indies. Out of their deep poverty the scattered remnant collected 4300 merks Scots for the redemption of fourteen persons, including one woman, held in bondage in Barbadoes ; and these in due time were restored to liberty and returned to their native land.

During the summer and autumn of 1688, the country was kept in a state of excitement by rumours of the preparations that were being made in Holland, for the invasion of England and the overthrow of the existing Government. At the General Meeting, at Wanlockhead, on October 24th, this was the principal subject under consideration, and it was discussed in its various aspects with the calmness, fulness, and precision that were characteristic of the men. Interested as they, above all others, were in the success of such an enterprise, they were not carried away by the excitement of the time, so as to overlook what was due to the position and the principles, which at the cost of so much suffering they had maintained. The question they had to face was,—in the event of the

arrival of the Dutch army, what should they do who had stood forth as openly disowning the authority of James? This branched off into several distinct questions. In the Minutes of the General Meeting the matter is stated for discussion in this form :

“What ought to be done in case the Dutch and other confederate Protestants should make an expedition into this kingdom, providing their declaration and ends of the war were right? Next, it was divided into several branches for the better understanding thereof:—As, 1. Whether duty and safety did call for a rising in arms, or to sit still and hide? 2. If there should be a rising resolved, when this should be attempted? 3. Who should be admitted to concur? 4. Whether there should be an association with the Dutch, or continuing in a separate body? 5. Whether there should be any treating with them in such a separate appearance, or if any, how far might we proceed?” After full discussion a decision was come to on each of these questions to the following effect:—“Duty and safety seemed to require rising in a posture of defence . . . and declare whom they were for . . . for it would be a reproach, when now the quarrel would be stated for religion and liberty, if they who have borne arms hitherto for the defence thereof should now lay them by as indifferent, . . . that our appearance in that posture should not be sudden,—nor that it should be at all, if the expedition should only be in England,” unless “all the country were in a combustion, and they were generally pressed to declare themselves on what side they were.” The third point evidently caused a great deal of debate; were they to admit all who were willing to associate themselves with the Society men in arms? and they decided in substance thus:—“Publish a Declaration of the cause, occasion and ends of our appearing in arms; appoint a day of humiliation for defections and compliances, thus giving those guilty of these an opportunity of confessing their faults; renew the Covenants with adaptation to existing circumstances; then admit all who

accept the Declaration, confess compliances, engage to avoid them for the future, and subscribe the Covenant. But those guilty of very gross steps of defection might possibly be admitted as common soldiers, but not as officers ; while those who by their evil deeds had justly forfeited their lives were not to be received at all." As to the fourth question : "it was concluded unanimously that we could not have an association with the Dutch in one body, nor come formally under their conduct, being such a promiscuous conjunction of reformed Lutheran malignants and sectaries, to join with whom were repugnant to the testimony of the Church of Scotland." As to the fifth point, it was agreed that they might treat so far with the Dutch, "as to keep some correspondence with them, to co-operate together against the common enemy, to inform them of their motion, to take ammunition from them, and to admit some of them to come and teach the art of war, but not to take them for our officers, nor come under their conduct."

Such was the course marked out for the Societies by the General Meeting at this critical time ; we shall by and by see how far they were able to adhere to it. Meanwhile it is proper to notice, how exactly these decisions correspond with the position which they have maintained for eight years, and with the principles which they have avowed. They do not here act as a religious community or as a church party, but as a body of freemen, who by their own act stand apart from the great body of the people, and own no subjection to any civil authority. In the prospect of a possible change in the government of the country, which may or may not realize their ideal of what a Christian State should be, they are anxious not to commit themselves to any course that is inconsistent with their position and principles. They are manifestly prepared with all their strength to aid in overthrowing the tyranny that has oppressed them, but their action in this direction must not be controlled by those whose principles on religious questions materially differ from

theirs. That association with malignants, that mingling of the faithful with the unfaithful in the army and the Government, to which they traced the overthrow of the covenanted cause forty years earlier, they resolve to keep clear of—they will keep themselves apart, and not allow their unity to be broken up by an admixture of alien elements. All the more resolved are they in the meantime to retain their position, inasmuch as they have no certainty regarding the object and ends of this expected invasion; and they care not to pledge themselves to become identified too closely with it, till they are satisfied that it is in harmony with their ideas of religion and liberty. Leave them thus free, and they will not be the last to rise against tyranny. Some may deem that at such a crisis they were over-scrupulous, but they were certainly consistent. It is moreover to be remarked that as they were sane, intelligent Christian men, the attitude they assume, and the resolutions they adopt, imply that they knew their own strength; they were conscious that they could bring into the field a body of men, whose numbers might very easily turn the scale at any critical moment, and whose zeal and courage might be thoroughly depended on. Had it been otherwise, had they been only a small handful of fanatics, their resolutions would have appeared simply ridiculous, and the authorities would not have set so much value, as they certainly did, on their co-operation.

In the interval that elapsed before the next General Meeting was held, events of great moment took place elsewhere. On 4th November, 1688, William of Orange landed without opposition at Torbay; in a few weeks James was an exile in France, and William had assumed the direction of affairs, pending the meeting of the English Parliament. In Scotland, too, the change was rapid, thorough, and wonderfully peaceful. The nation was manifestly ripe for it; the power slipped out of the hands of the adherents of James, and arrangements were made for carrying on public business till the Convention of Estates met. The popular dislike of Popery showed itself

in the destruction of Holyrood Chapel by an Edinburgh mob; and in some country districts the people stripped the houses of the Papists of the images and other accompaniments of worship. In this kind of work we are not surprised to learn that the Society people were particularly zealous, but they disturbed nothing in the houses they visited except what pertained to Popish worship. Neither did they appropriate what they carried off either to private or public use, but, as with accursed things under the Mosaic law, they burned them in the public squares. The Society men were the first to appear under arms, ready to fight against the adherents of the exiled king; for when a rumour was spread abroad that Irish Papists had landed and burned Kirkeudbright, the "hillmen" gathered in large numbers, their zeal for liberty being stimulated by their hatred of Popery. The rumour was false, but the armed band kept together till the General Meeting on 4th January, 1689. They needed not now to skulk among the lonely glens or desolate moors, nor yet to meet under the dark wing of night; and they convened openly in the Kirk of Douglas. "Behold," writes Michael Shields, "on a sudden a very wonderful alteration. He who not long before claimed an absolute power and prerogative royal, which all were to obey without reserve, was made to flee, and could get few to obey him, yea, despised by many of those whom he exalted. The wicked were ensnared in the work of their own hands, and the counsel of the heathen brought to nought. Those who formerly were persecuted were now in quiet, and those who had been persecutors are in fear and glad to hide themselves. Those who formerly were a terror to many, are now feared for those whom they made afraid before. These are the doings of the Lord, and should be wondrous in our eyes." They fully appreciated the great change in their condition; and it was characteristic of the religious spirit that pervaded the party, that a day of thanksgiving to God for the deliverance He had wrought was appointed at this meeting. At the same time the Declaration of the cause of their rising in arms was adopted and published

at Douglas with due solemnity, in the presence of three hundred armed men. Some other matters were discussed at this meeting, to which reference will afterwards be made.

During the interval that elapsed between the fall of one Government and the establishment of another, the people, especially in the western counties, took the redress of some grievances into their own hands. The curates had been settled in their parishes without the consent of the people, and many of them had obtained an unenviable notoriety by their zeal against the Covenanters; and now, when the arm of the persecutor was broken, many of the offensive incumbents were summarily ejected by the parishioners. This of course was not strictly legal, and a great deal was made at the time by the prelatist party of the “rabbling of the curates”; yet after all, though there was a little rough handling in some places, it was trifling compared with the cruelties lately inflicted on the Presbyterians, with the approbation and often with the aid of those who whined and stormed over the lot of the curates. Many of them were doubtless driven from their parishes amid the contempt and scorn of the people, but without personal injury; and this shows that after twenty-six years’ experience, the people had not learned to love Episcopacy, and that the conduct and character of those expelled had not been such as to win respect. As might have been expected, the followers of Cameron were specially active in this treatment of the curates; so much so, that the General Meeting took steps to restrain their zeal, and to accomplish the desired end as quietly as possible. For this purpose a document was drawn up to be given to the obnoxious incumbents, to induce them to withdraw without any further trouble. The following is an extract from it,—“We, belonging to the parish of —, remembering the obligation of our solemn covenants to endeavour the extirpation of Prelacy, and being resolved to prosecute it by all approved means to the utmost as our Lord shall enable us, do, therefore, to prevent other tumults, warn you — to surcease and desist from preaching and all other ministerial

exercises in the kirk of —, and to depart from the care and benefice of the said kirk, and to deliver up the keys of the same, under certification that if you refuse, you shall be forced to do it." A warning of this sort, coming from such a quarter and in the troubled state of the country, was sufficient to induce many to forsake their charges and retire peaceably to Edinburgh. At the same time, it was found necessary to restrain some connected with the Societies from taking the redress of past wrongs into their own hands. During the persecution much property had been forcibly taken from them by individuals in the service of the Government, and they had been unable to recover just debts while they lay under the ban of the oppressor. The General Meeting now urged them to be patient and refrain from taking any rash steps, as there was now the hope of getting redress in a legal and orderly way. The spirit that generally prevailed in the Societies and regulated their actings, was shown to be not that of blind fanaticism and fierce revenge, as has often been asserted, but rather that of moderation and self-restraint, to an extent which, in the circumstances, was not a little remarkable.

Before the Prince of Orange had left the shores of Holland, it had been found comparatively easy for the United Societies, in discussing the attitude which they should assume in the event of his making an attempt to overturn the British Government, to arrive at a tolerably unanimous conclusion. They decided to be very cautious till they understood better the intentions of the Prince. But when the Revolution had been practically accomplished, and the reins of government were in his hands,—amid the keen excitement and strong feeling created in the community by so great an event, and the widespread fear of troubles from the adherents of James,—it was found much more difficult to maintain the same attitude of reserve and waiting. The whole country was stirred, and rumours of attempts to bring about a counter-revolution were current. The sympathies of the Societies were wholly opposed to the Jacobites, from whom they could

expect no redress; and they were nearly as decidedly in favour of William, from whom much that they had contended and suffered for might be obtained. But it very soon became evident, that this sympathy with the Revolution cause led many among them to more active steps for its defence, than were deemed by others consistent with the principles and position which they felt bound to maintain. The consequence was, that from the beginning of 1689, the Societies were distracted by heated disputes on almost every step that was taken by the General Meeting. Two parties existed; the one, disposed more actively to aid in the establishment and defence of the new Government, was under the leadership of the preachers of the community, Shields, Lining and Boyd; and the other, resolved to keep free from all complicity with it, found its representative in Sir Robert Hamilton, who soon after the Revolution returned from Holland. That the former party carried their proposals for the most part in the General Meetings seems evident from the printed Minutes, but at every step they were earnestly opposed by the other party, by whom nearly all their actings were afterwards regarded as steps of defection.

At the General Meeting in January, 1689, a strong desire was manifested to present an Address to the Prince, acknowledging him as God's instrument in freeing them from persécution, reminding him of what he owed to God for his great goodness, representing the cause for which they had suffered so much, and craving his aid in redressing their grievances. This was surely not an unreasonable step to take; but many looked upon it with suspicion and dislike, as committing them to the side of a ruler whose Declaration, while promising constitutional government and liberty of conscience, made no reference to the covenanted Reformation. The Address was adopted, but was never presented; delays occurred caused by more exciting matters; and in the meanwhile William was proclaimed King of England. When the time appointed for the meeting of the Convention of Estates

approached, rumours became current of plots among the Jacobites to prevent the meeting or frustrate its objects. Great numbers of the most ardent friends of liberty came armed to Edinburgh, and prominent among these was a large body of the "hillmen" from the West. It might be doubtful whether they would obtain from the Convention all that they reckoned necessary, but they were resolved not to allow the opposite party to prevent it from doing its allotted work. So these stern men, so recently the objects of relentless persecution, were the first in Scotland to take arms in the cause of liberty, and became a volunteer guard to the Legislature at this critical time. But this action of theirs, though not officially approved, being indeed that of individuals moved by a common aim and ardent love of liberty, was a sore point with many of their brethren in the Societies. Sworn friends of freedom as they were, it was to them a perplexing fact, that their companions in suffering had become the guardians of a Convention, many of whose members had been supporters of the tyrant and persecutors of the people of God. They could not see how this harmonized with the principles and position they had hitherto maintained; rather it seemed to them to compromise both. Yet it is not easy to see how the mere act of protecting the Legislature at this important crisis from the worst enemies of the people, could commit them to an approval of what the Convention afterwards did. At all events, they did good service to the country at this juncture; the adherents of tyranny were watching their opportunity to strike an effective blow for their master; but manifestly it was not in Edinburgh that they could hope to do this; they were restrained by the dread of the "hillmen," whom it had been their chief work in past years to hunt and murder. Claverhouse and his associates accordingly fled to the North, and took up arms on behalf of the exiled king. Besides this act of individuals in the Societies, another step was proposed by a Committee of the General Meeting appointed to watch the course of events. A memorial was drawn up for presentation

to the Convention, setting forth the reasons for disowning the late Government, and asking that the Prince of Orange should be chosen king upon such conditions and provisions as would secure religion and liberty. It was not presented, because some members of Convention stated that William would certainly be chosen king, while it was urged that some expressions it contained were likely to irritate some not too well affected to the cause, and produce discussion and division when unity of action was of so great importance.

Section Second.

The deep interest that the Societies felt in the success of the Revolution was shown in another and more practical form, but one that greatly intensified the discord within the community itself. This was a project to raise a regiment, composed entirely of members of the Societies, for the defence of the country, liberty and religion. This was too weighty a matter to be decided by the Committee in Edinburgh, and a General Meeting was summoned for its consideration. Before this meeting could be held, the Convention of Estates had adopted the historic "Claim of Right," in which it is declared that James VII. "hath forefaulted the right to the Crown and that the Throne of Scotland is become vacant." It must have been matter of not a little satisfaction to these persecuted Covenanters, who for eight years had been branded as traitors and rebels, to find in the decision of the Convention so ample a justification of their position as announced in the Sanquhar Declaration of 1680; it was now endorsed by the representatives of the nation itself. If the Claim of Right was justifiable, so was the Sanquhar Declaration. So they had their revenge, but in a form that secured blessings to the kingdom and called for devout thanksgiving to God. When the General Meeting convened at Douglas on April 29th, William and Mary had been proclaimed King and Queen of Scotland.

The discussion regarding the proposal to embody a regiment

of Cameronians (to use a convenient designation) was carried on with great keenness at this and the subsequent meeting, and at its close left much embittered feeling. All were agreed that it was right and dutiful for them to do something for the defence of the country and religion, at a time when dangers were so threatening; how to do this and yet be faithful to their principles was the difficult point. In what relation were the troops they raised to stand to the rest of the army? were they to be subject to the same regulations, to be officered in the same way, to receive pay from the Government, to mingle with others in encampments and in military manœuvres, and be treated like any other division of the army? It was decided by a majority that this would be a violation of their testimony, it would be a sinful association with those whose principles they repudiated and against whose conduct they had solemnly protested. They must keep themselves clear of all such complicity with evil. To avoid this, a paper of proposals was drawn up, embodying the conditions upon which the Cameronians might, without breach of testimony, take part in the war against the adherents of the exiled king, who were now in arms in the north under the leadership of one whom they knew too well, Graham of Claverhouse, now Viscount Dundee. A petition embodying the same stipulations with additions was afterwards presented by the men of the regiment, and also a Declaration to be subscribed by officers and men setting forth their objects in entering the service. Never perhaps were any similar documents drawn up as the conditions of military service: the Declaration indeed resembles in some of its paragraphs the ordination vows of Scottish Presbyterian ministers; and the desire of the proposers evidently was, that the authorities should make a special arrangement with them as with a semi-independent party, as the condition upon which their aid was to be obtained. When we look at the contents of these singular papers we will scarcely be surprised to find that, with the exception of a few smaller points, the military authorities refused to accept the

proposals. It was stipulated that the officers should be all steadfast adherents of the Covenanted Reformation; if they had formally fallen in with prevailing defections, they must make open acknowledgment of their faults and promise submission to the censures of the Church; that they should choose their own inferior officers, and a minister to conduct religious services; that the officers should be bound to help forward the Reformation in Church and State, and endeavour to purge the army of all criminals and persecutors; that rules should be made for punishing immoralities, such as uncleanness, lying, swearing, &c.; that the regiment be not mingled with the other detachments of the army either in military movements or encampments; and that when the danger was past, all who desired might return home, and their places be filled up with the approbation of the rest; as also, that opportunities should be given for public worship and fellowship meetings. The refusal of these conditions increased the opposition to this movement; but the spirit of military ardour was kindled among the Society people; the full strength of the proposed regiment was already in the field, and the Lieut.-Colonel, William Clelland, who had himself been a sufferer for the cause, took advantage of this by proposing a short statement explanatory of the motives that animated them in joining the army. This was drawn up by Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, and is to the following effect: "To declare that you engage in this service of purpose to resist Popery and Prelacy and arbitrary power, and to recover and establish the work of Reformation in Scotland in opposition to Popery, Prelacy and arbitrary power in all the branches and steps thereof, till the government in Church and State be brought to that lustre and integrity which it held in the best times." This was read to each company, and very soon afterwards they were marched off to join the army that was to oppose Dundee in the north. This was the origin of the Cameronian Regiment, afterwards so famous in the annals of British warfare. It was composed of men animated by strong religious convictions and by an intense

hatred of tyranny, who had passed through the furnace, and were ready to risk their lives in defence of truth, which to them was dearer than life. They speedily obtained immortal renown by their gallant defence of Dunkeld against a vastly superior force ; an exploit which practically put an end to the rebellion against King William, so far as concerned Scotland. And surely it was not unfitting, that those who had borne the heaviest load of oppression should thus give the final blow to the hopes of the oppressor.

In these singular transactions to which we have now referred, two characteristic features stand forth as influencing the action of the Societies. There was the strong desire to do something to prevent the restoration of the tyranny from which they had suffered so much, and to secure the establishment of constitutional liberty, without which there could be no hope of seeing what they so earnestly longed for, the revival of the glory of Scotland's Covenanted Reformation. At the same time, they were filled with anxiety, lest in rendering aid they should compromise their position, or do anything in support of principles and practices inconsistent with their testimony. They had their own ideal of what ought to take the place of the tyranny and usurpation of the late Government ; and in the step they had taken they believed that they were doing something towards its realization. But to many members of the Societies this action appeared utterly wrong and inconsistent. The Declaration was much too vague to satisfy them ; they saw in it none of the good and safe conditions on which they had insisted, but rather a sinful association with the enemies of the cause. So they protested against it, and ever regarded it as a serious defection. Avowedly the regiment went to the war to assist in the destruction of Popery, Prelacy and arbitrary power ; while in reality they were fighting for a king who was not a Covenanter, but Head of the Prelatic Church of England—on the side of a Government many of whose members had taken part with the tyrant and persecutor, and deserved punishment rather than

place and power—and in association with sectaries and malignants, under a general of whose principles they knew nothing. So the help given to the Revolution cause brought strife and division into the Societies.

It was evident that the Cameronians were able to raise more than one regiment; in their zeal for the cause they offered, if the Government would consent, to raise another. This offer was, however, declined, partly for want of money; but not less, perhaps, from the fear of opposition which it might provoke in the Convention, many of whose members had no kindly feelings towards those earnest men, who were continually recalling the misdeeds of the past; they had enough of men who were so sternly conscientious, so entirely devoted to the cause of liberty, morality and religion. It is plain from this offer that the Cameronians were not so small and contemptible a body of people as has sometimes been said; a party that could so easily raise forty companies of soldiers, numbering together about 4000 men, was not to be despised in so critical a time. Had the Society people been animated by those wild and revengeful feelings which have been attributed to them, and with such a body of determined men at their command, they might in the confusion of the times have inflicted summary punishment on those who had cruelly wronged them. They did, indeed, desire justice, the righting of past wrongs; they were prepared to impeach those who had been the murderers of their brethren,—that they should be permitted to do so was, indeed, one of the proposals made in the offer of service,—but the new Government dared not encourage any such proceedings, and the Societies had sufficient self-restraint to abstain from acts of personal revenge.

The action of the party in raising troops to assist the Government of William, doubtless, involved an approval of it in some measure; it was a recognition of the royal authority of an uncovenanted king. In the same direction was the proposal to present an address to the king, recognizing him as

such, representing their grievances and craving redress. This also was agreed to, and four commissioners were appointed to go to London and present it to his Majesty. Two of these could not go, and the other two refused to go, holding that it was inconsistent with their testimony to own such a king. Sir Robert Hamilton, who was one of them, was willing to deal with him as Prince of Orange, but not as king of Scotland. So the matter dropped; but all this widened the breach already manifest in the Societies, which subsequent movements in another department soon brought to a crisis.

In the Claim of Right, the Scottish Convention had declared that Prelacy had always been an insupportable grievance, and contrary to the general inclination of the people. In its first session, Parliament passed an Act abolishing Episcopacy and annulling the statutes by which it had been sanctioned, and at the same time declaring its purpose to establish that form of church government which was most agreeable to the people. Further action was postponed till another session. It thus happened that when the General Meeting convened in September, 1689, the Church was in an utterly disorganized state; but Church matters were the principal topics that engaged its attention; and these excited as keen debates as those with which they had recently been occupied. By the action of the General Meeting, the attitude hitherto maintained by the Societies towards the civil Government was changed. They had disowned Charles and James, but they owned the authority of William and fought in his defence. And now the weighty question had to be faced; what ought to be their attitude towards the Church? There was little doubt that when Parliament dealt with the matter, Presbytery would again be established. In view of that event, the ministers of the Societies pressed the delegates at the General Meeting to consider what they ought to do; would they be willing to join a re-constituted Presbyterian Church? There had been conferences already on the subject of union between other Presbyterian ministers and those of the Societies, and

the plan suggested by the former, in order to save the consistency of the Society people in the event of joining the Church, was this: "At your first meeting with them you may draw up and enter a Protestation against anything you think sinful in that Society, which shall be registered in the books of Assembly—and after ye are united ye shall have liberty to debate, remonstrate and protest against anything sinful." The meeting refused to entertain this proposal, and declared that nothing short of a formal condemnation and confession of defections, would clear their way to unite with those who had grievously failed in the day of trial. Failing in this, the ministers suggested a modified view of the matter, which virtually amounted to this: If we join under a protest, will you continue to adhere to our ministry? But the delegates would not commit themselves; nor would they go further at a subsequent meeting than suggest, that their ministers and elders should go to the Church Courts and plead with the brethren to confess and condemn defections. This was very unpalatable to Lining and his brethren, who urged its unreasonableness, and that a different course of action should be followed now when persecution was over and a course of reformation begun. To which it was answered, that the temptation to defection had left these ministers before they had forsaken it, and they defended what they had done,—that it would be soon enough to speak of joining when the Church was re-constituted, and the ministers showed some disposition to carry forward reformation. Debates followed, "wherein were too much heat and passion on both sides." Despite the urgent pleading of the ministers, the Meeting resolved to wait and see what sort of a Church took the place of that which was now disestablished; a very judicious and reasonable course.

At a subsequent meeting it was resolved to bring their grievances before Parliament by petition. This was prepared by Mr Shields, approved in March, 1690, by the whole of the General Meeting except two or three, and subscribed by the representatives of a large number of Societies. It is an able

and interesting document, worthy of the men and of the cause, and presents in a dignified, earnest and respectful way, the case of the Societies, and their expectations and desires so far as these lay within the sphere of Parliament. It opens in these terms: "None in the three nations can be more obliged to make thankful acknowledgment of the late Revolution and change of Government than we, who had the largest share of the miseries of that bondage, these nations are thereby delivered from. We had never, indeed, great interests in the world to lose, and we never thought anything too dear to be expended for adherence to the least point of truth or duty bound upon our conscience by the Word of God, or any part of the Church's established Reformation in doctrine, worship, discipline or government. But what have been our oppressions, persecutions and sufferings—the representation of our grievances which we have in readiness to give, will in some measure manifest." It then refers to the privilege of presenting their case by petition, to the hopes awakened by the King's Declaration and the Claim of Right, and to the disappointing delays that had intervened. It proceeds to set forth in an earnest and vigorous way, the desires of the Societies regarding the re-establishment of Presbytery, removal of curates, abolition of sinful oaths, vindication of the Covenants, deliverance of sufferers from slavery, reversal of forfeitures, removal from places of power and trust of all enemies of religion and liberty; &c. ; and thus the petition concludes:—"May it please your Honours to consider the premisses and to take such measures in satisfying these, our humble desires, backed by the importunate cries of many thousands of the best subjects of the nation, that God may be glorified, religion encouraged, the peace and prosperity of the Church promoted, their Majesties' throne established in righteousness, the people be happy under his government, and the Lord delight to dwell among us."

Such was the work which the Society people desired the Scottish Parliament to undertake; it was wholly in the line

of their past contendings, and contemplated the restoration of Church and State after the model of the Second Reformation period. But when we consider the critical state of the country and the composition of the Assembly to which the Petition was addressed, its failure will not be matter of great surprise. It was never, indeed, laid before the Legislature; as the committee, including some who were most favourably disposed to its demands, refused to transmit it to the House, dreading the strife and opposition which it was certain to produce. Parliament did, indeed, remedy some of the grievances complained of: it annulled many obnoxious Acts, reversed forfeitures, re-established Presbyterianism according to the Act of 1592, sanctioned the Confession of Faith, restored those of the ejected ministers who survived, recognized them as the nucleus of the restored Church, and appointed a meeting of the General Assembly; but all this came far short of the prayer of the Petition. In acting as they did in this matter, it is evident that the majority in the Societies, as represented in the General Meeting, was not disposed rigidly to maintain the same attitude towards the new Government as towards that which had preceded it; they owned the Government of the king and the authority of Parliament. Less difficulty, too, was found in carrying through this Petition than had been experienced, both before and after, in dealing with matters pertaining to the Church.

In view of the meeting of the General Assembly, after an interval of nearly forty years, the Societies were forced to consider what attitude they should assume towards the re-constituted Presbyterian Church. Indications had already been given of the direction in which the preachers were disposed to move; and at a General Meeting, on 4th June, 1690, the following resolution was adopted, though not without strenuous opposition; Sir Robert Hamilton protested against it, refused to have anything to do with the movement, and withdrew. "It was resolved that a Paper should be written, subscribed and given in to the ministers, containing

a representation of our grievances, wherein we might be free, showing the ground of our former withdrawing from them, with our earnest desire of union at the time upon good terms, also to contain a Protestation against defections." This Paper was to be drawn up by Mr Alexander Shields, to whom the Societies were to communicate their opinions regarding the present condition of the Church, the conduct of ministers and the defects of the Acts establishing the Church. All this was done, and the representation finally adopted, subscribed by a large number of commissioners, and arrangements made for its presentation to the Assembly. Even to the last there was hesitation and opposition on the part of many, who were still haunted by the fear of compromising their principles and position, or of dealing unfaithfully with the truth of God and the honour of the Head of the Church. Some reasoned that they could not petition this Assembly, seeing that many would be members who were guilty of those things whereof complaint was made, and would thus be judges in their own case. Others maintained "that the constitution of the Assembly was right, and the members no way prelimited, and when so, we might present our grievances to them, desiring that they would acknowledge and condemn defections; and though many of them were guilty of those things we complained of, yet all were not. But, if we should not give in this Paper to them, what way can we keep up a testimony against defections?" It was at the same time agreed, and it was in the circumstances somewhat significant of the tendency of opinion, that nothing should be inserted in the Petition to the effect, that if defections were not confessed and condemned there could be no union, leaving them free to act in the issue as they might see fit.

Of this important document, which must be held to be expressive of the mind of the Societies generally, though some parties were opposed to its presentation, the following is a brief outline. It is entitled: "The complaint and humble petition of many Presbyterian people living in certain shires

of Scotland," and is addressed, "To the Moderator and remanent members of this reverend General Assembly." It opens with expression of devout thanksgiving to God for granting the long-wished for privilege of a free General Assembly, which they may approach for redress of grievances. It bewails the lack of pure gospel ordinances in past years, and vindicates the conduct of the Societies in withdrawing from unfaithful ministers. It proceeds to specify the many defections with which so many are chargeable,—submitting to the royal supremacy and to Prelacy, taking sinful oaths and bonds, accepting Indulgences and Toleration from the king, refraining from the exercise of their ministry when there was urgent call to prosecute it, inveighing against those who maintained their liberty amid greatest peril, and continuing to defend the misdeeds of the past; and it calls on the Assembly formally to condemn all such defections. It then proceeds to mention some things which the Assembly ought to rectify: the Covenants are ignored, enemies of religion occupy places of power and trust, the attainments of the Second Reformation lie under the Act Recissory, the church is not purged of corrupt and scandalous pastors, nor is discipline exercised on elders who were zealous persecutors. Let conscientious difficulties be removed, past errors condemned and forsaken, then most gladly would the petitioners return. The closing paragraph is couched in the following fervent and pathetic terms: "To conclude, Right Reverend, we expect and entreat that ye will not be offended at our freedom in what we here represent; but our meaning and end being to have differences satisfyingly removed, will move you to put a favourable construction thereupon,—But though we should be condemned and censured with the greatest severity, we must seek, we must cry for the removing of these stumbling-blocks, and condemning these courses that have done our Lord Jesus so much wrong, and His children so much hurt, in their standing in the way of their comfortable communion with the Church: Let the famishing, starving case of our souls, thro' the want of the blessed

gospel, and our hungering to hear it preached by you, prevail with you to consider our complaints, and let the wounds of our bleeding mother, panting to be healed by the hand of the tender physician, have weight with you not to slight or despise our desires: But if ye shall shut your eyes and ears at them, then we know no other remedy left us, but to complain and to protest unto judicatories, and cry and sigh and groan to the Father of mercies, who is tender of all His little ones, and is the Hearer of prayer, that He may see to it and heal our backslidings and breaches in His own time and way, and not lay it to our charge that ye have had so little regard to the stumbling and saddening of so many of His poor broken, bruised and scattered sheep, and that ye have not had greater care to strengthen the diseased, and to heal that which was sick, and to bind up that which was broken, and to bring again that which was driven away, and to seek that which was lost."

It is altogether an able, vigorous production, respectful in tone, fearless in its exposures of errors and defects, firm in its allegiance to truth, and anxious above all for its vindication. It is a fervent appeal for the honour of the Church and of the Church's Head; yet pervaded by a pathetic and almost hopeless sadness. It is the cry of earnest Christian men who deeply feel the isolated position to which they have been driven, and are full of longing for fellowship with brethren in the gospel. There was little ground to hope for the acceptance of such a plain-spoken testimony by such an Assembly, the larger portion of whose members were the parties against whom complaint was made. And that slight hope must have all but vanished when it became known how the Representation of Messrs Shields, Lining and Boyd had been characterized and dealt with, and it did not materially differ from that of the Societies: and on what terms they had been admitted into the Church. This Petition was never given in to the Assembly; the Committee on Bills and Overtures refused to pass it on much the same grounds as that of the ministers had been refused. The

Committee on Bills appointed Mr Gabriel Semple, Mr James Fraser and an elder to confer with the Commissioners of the Societies; and after a good deal of intercourse between the parties, the final result was communicated to the Commissioners in the following terms: "Loving Friends,—The Papers you gave in to the Assembly were first given in to the Committee of Overtures, and we were appointed by them to confer with you; And after conference with you, we moved in the Committee, that the Assembly would order the papers to be given in to those who were to draw up the Monitory Letter and Causes of the Fast, that they might make their own use thereof in drawing up the same, which at the first next Session of the Assembly, on Saturday last the first of November, was accordingly done in open Assembly, and we are by the Assembly allowed to report the same to you, which accordingly we do. And we hope this will satisfy you and others who did commissionate you. And that the Lord will incline your hearts to peace, and to guard against any further rent in the Church of God,—and in this hope we subscribe ourselves," etc.

Such an issue to a movement, which had caused the Societies so much trouble and strife, and upon which the hopes of many were based as a means of a peaceful reunion with the Church, "created," as Shields writes, "scruples and jealousies, and not a little retarded union." Its meaning was simply this: there is no hope of obtaining what you ask from the Assembly, your only course is to follow the example of your ministers, fall quietly in with the Church as now constituted, and make the best of it. Especially was the Assembly's refusal to receive and read the Petition felt to be perplexing and discouraging; had that been done it might have relieved the consciences of many, who, while holding fast their convictions regarding the past, were desirous of returning to the fellowship of the Church. When the next General Meeting convened at Douglas, on 3rd December, 1690, the one matter of interest was the fate of the Petition, and what should

follow upon it. The commissioners to the Assembly gave an account of what they had done, and how their Petition had been dealt with. Messrs Shields and Lining gave an account of their conduct in submitting to the Assembly and the reasons for it. This did not remove the difficulties which many felt regarding union. They examined the Causes of the Fast issued by the Assembly, but found little satisfaction there; "it was thought lame, and many things wanting in it which were causes of wrath," that is, it made no mention of many of the grievances which the Societies sought to have removed. The ministers urged them to hear those ministers that were most free and faithful, and to have a care of running upon extremes on the right hand, keeping outside the Church and depriving themselves of gospel ordinances. As a last shift it was proposed, in order to ease the conscience of those who still scrupled about joining, that a Protestation should be drawn up, which might be given in to the Session of the congregation, or to the Presbytery of the bounds. In this Paper, the party presenting it, while professing submission to the Church, protested against the defections of the past which the Assembly had refused to condemn, and particularly against those of the minister whom they intended to hear; and declared "that our present joining may not be interpreted as approving any of these sins, nor a condemning of or receding from our former or present testimony against the same, and humbly plead that this, our own testimony and protestation, may be registered in the books of Session (or Presbytery)." But neither did this satisfy. Thus the Minutes close: "The Meeting were of different sentiments about it, some on one account, some on another, and some were for it, thinking it better to join with such a testimony than without any at all. Not coming to any agreement, it was left to people's liberty and freedom to give it or not as they thought fit. However, the ministers insisted for it. It was proposed to the Meeting:—'That in regard debates did not much good but rather hurt, it was fittest to leave off and

part,'—which (after appointing a meeting at Douglas, and prayer) they did. Some staid and took copies of the paper, which they gave in to ministers before they joined." This closed the unhappy discussions which had agitated the Societies for about two years,—and one immediate result was the suspension of the system of General Correspondence which had been maintained since the close of 1681. The Revolution had proved a very severe ordeal to the Society people; and in opening our next chapter, we shall endeavour to state clearly the position of parties as resulting from this painful controversy.

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CHAPTER V.

THE SOCIETIES AND SIR ROBERT HAMILTON—1690-1706.

Section First.

THE narrative that we have given in the preceding chapter shows, that, while a majority of the members of the General Meetings sympathized more or less with the course so persistently urged upon them by their preachers, yet the Societies were never directly committed to that course. The minutes of the last meeting disclose a large measure of dissatisfaction with the position of matters, and of hesitation as to what should be done. It refused to recommend union with the re-established Church, declined even to sanction the form of Protestation to be used by those who were disposed to unite; and the effect of its indecisive action was practically to leave the members of the Societies to judge for themselves as to the course they should take. There is no reason to question the fact, that many of them did decide to connect themselves once more with the Church; but it is impossible now to say what proportion of them did so. It is not greatly to be wondered at, that many of those who had suffered so much during the dark years of persecution, rather than own the despot's claim to rule the conscience, should now be disposed to accept the privileges secured to them by the Revolution, even though these fell far short of what they could have wished. The Society people had been long trained to discuss the most serious matters of truth and duty, and to decide in the light of reason and the Word

of God. It so happens that documents have come down to us that show the spirit and manner in which humble, unlearned, godly Scottish peasants dealt with the question,—whether fidelity to God and His cause required them to unite with the Church, or to stand aloof from it. We have “Experiences” and “Passages” from the lives of those who felt constrained to decide that question differently; and in these we have proof sufficient that these much-reviled Covenanters were not wild, ignorant fanatics, but men who could look the most serious problems broadly in the face, and work their way to conclusions clear to themselves, and for which they were able to render a reason. It was to be expected that some among the Society people would attach more importance to some parts of the Testimony than to others,—that some would be content if permitted to hold their own opinions regarding the Covenanted Reformation, even though the Church refused to homologate these,—while others would be satisfied with nothing short of a formal condemnation and confession of past defections, and an acceptance of the Testimony in all its parts. The former class would, with more or less heartiness, fall in with the new order of things; while the latter must continue in the state of separation and protest. Before dealing with the position and procedure of the Societies during this period, a brief reference may be given to the preachers who joined the Revolution Church.

Two of these, Messrs Lining and Boyd, had been educated in Holland at the expense of the Societies; there, also, the former was ordained, and after his return to Scotland in 1688, he was called by the Societies to be their minister. After the Revolution they were both settled as parish ministers, the former at Lesmahagow, and the latter at Dalry in Galloway; and it appears that they showed on some occasions rather the bitter hostility of apostates than anything like sympathy with their former brethren. Their conduct during 1689-90 had earned for them the strong dislike of the protesting minority, who in after years charged them with misleading

the Societies and damaging their cause; and it was not the least of their grievances, that these two men had been permitted to take a prominent part in the General Meetings of that period, and along with Shields, to draw up most of the public papers. The career of the third, Mr Alexander Shields, was somewhat chequered and sad. Educated in Edinburgh, where he passed M.A. in 1675, he spent some time in Holland, and then came to London and acted as amanuensis to Dr John Owen. He was licensed and ordained by the Presbyterians in London, and for a short time ministered to a congregation that met in Embroiderer's Hall. In 1685 he was cast into prison, and seems to have come under an obligation to the Government, that was a grievance and obstacle when he sought to join the Societies. He was sent down to Edinburgh, and lay for some months in the Tolbooth, from which, however, he managed to escape in woman's clothing. In 1686 he joined Renwick, and laboured along with him among the scattered remnant. He soon gained a high place in the esteem and confidence of the people, and was regarded with strong affection by his amiable and devoted colleague. They were associated in the drawing up of the "Informatory Vindication," which was printed in Holland under the superintendence of Shields, no London printer being willing to undertake the risk. While in Holland he wrote the well-known book, "A Hind Let Loose," a lengthy and vigorous vindication of the position of the Societies and of the whole Covenanted Reformation. It must have been written with extraordinary rapidity, and reveals a mind of no common power; and although its statements may sometimes be extreme and its arguments strained, yet it satisfactorily fulfils its avowed purpose. While thus firmly maintaining the position of the Societies in opposition to the tyranny and usurpation of the Government, Shields was not, any more than Renwick, a man of narrow sympathies, but the reverse. His letters and the printed papers that came from his pen disclose his generous Christian feelings, and his intense desire for union among the people of God. He was

chaplain to the Cameronian Regiment, and after his reception into the Church, he went with it to the Continent. After the peace of Ryswick he returned to Scotland, and became minister of the second charge at St. Andrews. In 1699 he was appointed to accompany the unfortunate Darien expedition as senior minister ; and it is interesting to notice that, while the first work of the ministers was to be among the colonists, the Commission, among other counsels, gave this as a charge, "particularly that you labour among the natives for their instruction and conversion, as you have access." He had not much comfort in this work ; but as his colleague says, "he had been heart-weary and broken with this company of men, among whom he had laboured and conversed with so little success." He soon left them, intending to return home, but died in Jamaica, on June 14th, 1700. His "Life of Renwick," and his account of his own examinations before the Council in London and Edinburgh, were not published for some years after his death ; and in "An Enquiry into Church Communion," published by Lining from Shields' manuscript "without any material alteration," he vindicates his conduct in entering the Revolution Church against the objections of his former friends. His brother Michael accompanied the expedition, and he also died abroad.

As we have already said, the General Meeting of December, 1690, closed the first epoch in the history of the Societies ; another meeting was appointed for the April following, but it was not held. The separate Societies continued to meet in several districts, but the members were no longer united in the same Testimony and the same practice. Many of them had fallen in to the Established Church, others were perplexed as to the path of duty, while many more were convinced that they ought to maintain the old position of protest against the Constitution both in Church and State. This was a condition of things that could not be regarded as at all satisfactory by the latter section, who had protested against the procedure of the Societies during the years 1689-90. A process of sifting

was necessary, in order to remove the unfaithful and form a homogeneous body, united in judgment alike as to past doings and present duty. The means of carrying out this process was found in the "Tinwald Paper," a document drawn up by Sir Robert Hamilton and others, and approved by the Society of Tinwald in Dumfriesshire. In this Paper the procedure in Church and State since the Revolution is contrasted with that of purer times; and the departure of the Societies in various particulars from their former testimony and position, involving a sinful association with, and support of the enemies of liberty and religion, is fully narrated and bewailed. It was communicated to other Societies, and constituted the basis upon which the General Correspondence was re-organized. Henceforth the Societies were to recognize as members only those who accepted the view of past events thus set forth, were resolved to keep entirely separate from the Church, to refuse all recognition of the Government and Constitution, and avoid every act that might seem in any measure fitted to countenance, encourage or sustain the existing civil authorities of the kingdom. In this way the Societies were purged, and they committed themselves to a position of isolation which, through much reproach and misrepresentation, they continued to maintain.

If it be asked, on what grounds or for what reasons the Societies resolved to maintain the position assumed under the preceding reigns, with respect both to Church and State, we shall find these stated in "Declarations," issued in 1692, 1695, and 1703. These documents were prepared and deliberately considered and adopted by the Societies and General Meeting; and though somewhat involved in style, are yet sufficiently clear as to the ground taken and the reasons for it. As to the Church. There were of course great and manifest differences between the Church in 1680 and in 1690. Episcopacy had been disestablished, and Presbyterianism had taken its place; but this was done simply and solely by the Legislature, and the Church was never consulted in the

matter at all. In John Knox's time, and in 1638, the Church adopted its own form of government, and the State afterwards sanctioned it; at the Revolution the restoration of Presbytery was a State act altogether. Besides this, the avowed reason for the preference of Presbytery was regarded as too low and insufficient. It was adopted not on the ground of its *jus divinum*, but because it was more agreeable to the inclinations of the people. It is not easy to see how the king, latitudinarian as he was, and already the Head of the Prelatic Church of England, could recognize any other ground for preferring Presbytery in Scotland than the general consent of the people. Not the less was it a ground of offence to the Societies and to many others, that the divine right was not owned by legislative act. Still further, Parliament decreed that the basis upon which the Church as established was to rest, was the statute of 1592; by this, its jurisdiction and the measure of liberty it was to enjoy were defined. All the higher attainments held to have been reached during the Second Reformation, were left under the ban of the Act Recissory. No doubt, by this procedure many troublesome questions likely to produce strife and animosity were avoided. Had this Act been annulled, it would have revived the operation of many laws and regulations, to which it is certain that neither William nor his ministers would have submitted. The defects that characterized the Act of 1592 were perpetuated at the Revolution. Among other things, it did not fully recognize the right of the Church to meet in Assembly independent of royal authority; and the king made it very evident that he did not intend to own any such right.

It was not enough that the Parliament should by its sole authority decree the restoration of a Presbyterian Establishment; it went further, and settled who were to constitute its judicatories. It recognized the survivors of the ejected Presbyterians of 1662, and those whom they should admit according to the instructions given to them, as the members of the General Assembly that was summoned by Parliament.

The State thus decreed who were to form the Church Courts of the new Establishment, and the Church raised no protest against it. Instructions came from high quarters as to the terms on which the curates were to be received into the Church, and these were duly attended to, with results greatly to the detriment of vital religion and the peace of the Church. In all this the Societies saw nothing but gross Erastianism on the part of the State, and grievous unfaithfulness on the part of the Church that submitted to it. They protested, moreover, not only against this action of Parliament, but against the men themselves, who were thus constituted the nucleus of the new organization. There were many worthy men, who had suffered much for the truth, in the General Assembly of 1690, but they were all more or less chargeable with unfaithfulness during the time of trial. Some of them had simply ceased to bear open witness for the truth, while others had taken one or other of the sinful oaths or bonds imposed by the late tyrannical Government, or had accepted the Indulgence offered by Charles, and the Toleration proclaimed by James; while of the elders, some had sustained the late persecuting Government, and the hands of others were stained with the blood of the saints. That such men should be recognized as the representatives of the true Covenanted Church of Scotland, was what the Society people could not assent to; and when it was seen that the Assembly was averse to the reviving of the Covenanted Reformation in its integrity, would not listen to those who pleaded for it, and manifested a slavish readiness to carry out the wishes of an earthly king, to the dishonour of the Church's one glorious Head, they felt that they could not in any way countenance or recognize it. That was not all. At the Revolution, not only did Parliament re-establish Presbyterianism simply by its own authority, but it in the same way ordained the doctrinal creed of the Church. It is true, that this creed was the Westminster Confession of Faith; the objection was not to the creed, but to the manner of its imposition by civil

authority alone, some months before the Church met in General Assembly. It was, moreover, in a mutilated form that it was adopted, without the Scripture proofs, without the Catechisms, and without the modifications attached to its approval in 1647. To all this lordly interference of the civil power in matters which, by the principles of the Scottish Church, lay quite beyond the sphere of the Legislature, the Church of the Revolution tamely submitted; and when the Assembly was dissolved, adjourned or prorogued, simply by the will of the Sovereign, scarcely the slightest protest was uttered. When the Society people contrasted the high ideal of a national covenanted Church which they cherished, and which had to so large an extent been realized during the Second Reformation, with the Church of the Revolution, we scarcely wonder that they refused to enter it. What they reckoned some of the highest attainments of that period were quite ignored; a less perfect constitution was decreed for the Church; the civil power fixed the doctrinal standards; interfered with the freedom and independence of Assemblies; prescribed terms for the admission of ministers; and Covenant obligation was entirely overlooked. In all this, the rights for which the Church had contended were sacrificed, and dishonour was done to Christ its Living Head. The Erastianism against which so vigorous a protest had been made, was only too certainly present in the constitution of the Revolution Church; of this fact the history of the one hundred and fifty years that followed is evidence enough. Fidelity to the testimony they had maintained through long years of suffering, to the ancient principles of the Scottish Church, and to the truth as given in God's Word, constrained the Societies to keep altogether aloof. In assuming that position they were justified. It might not be possible in a new age exactly to reproduce the past, nor even desirable; it may be that too much value was attached to some details of the Testimony, the essential principles of which were of permanent importance; but the Revolution Church was marked by so many defects,

and embodied so much that was wrong and dangerous, that they did well who declined communion with it. They felt it very hard to be compelled to occupy this position, and submit to the deprivations which it involved. It was taken up in no perverse spirit, nor from indifference to the evils of disunion; but they shrank from being partners in a compromise that was dishonouring to Christ and injurious to the interests of His cause in the land.

Section Second.

What then as to the attitude of the Societies towards the civil Government as settled at the Revolution? We have seen what position was assumed in the Sanquhar Declaration, that of entire separation and open antagonism. We have also seen that during 1689-90 a disposition to resile from that position was manifested. The new order of things might not be all that they desired; it might not be "modelled according to the ancient plea" of the earlier Covenanters; but then it left the people free to act on their convictions of duty in matters of religion, and free to strive by constitutional means for a more desirable state of things. So in several ways the Societies felt at liberty to give important aid in the more critical stages of the Revolution movement, and to own William and Mary as King and Queen of Scotland. But all this was done in the face of a vigorous protest by many in the Societies, prominent among whom was Sir Robert Hamilton. The position of this zealous Covenanter is evident from what he said in refusing to present an Address to the Sovereigns. "And moreover, as to him they were to go to, he could not address or own him as king, but only as Prince of Orange; but was willing to hazard himself in representing our grievances to him as such, with an offer of our allegiance to him, upon right terms, acknowledging that we had been too hasty in acknowledging him before." What were the terms upon which Sir Robert and those whom he represented were willing to accept the Prince as king, may

be learned with sufficient clearness from the documents issued during the next twelve years. In these we find stated at large the objections urged against the Revolution Settlement in its civil aspect, and the reasons why they refused to recognize or homologate it. From these documents we present a few extracts.

In the Declaration published at Sanquhar in 1692, in which they describe themselves as “a poor, wasted, misrepresented remnant of the suffering, anti-popish, anti-prelatic, anti-erastian, anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Scotland,” we find the following:—“We disown—the publishing of that Declaration called the ‘Declaration of his Highness William, Prince of Orange,’ and espousing it as the state of the Church and Kingdom of Scotland’s quarrel, while he was and yet is surrounded in council and army by many of the old inveterate enemies of Christ’s cause and people.” They protest against “their being set up by the suffrages of these men of blood here in Scotland” as King and Queen, notwithstanding that they had sworn to support Prelacy in England, seeing that, “he labours to put shame and contempt upon most of the contentings of this Church, and to bury many of the material parts of her Testimony,” “rending and overbearing that desirable uniformity formerly in religion attained unto with England.” “We declare the refusal of our concurrence with the course now on foot, it being no way concerted according to the ancient plea of the Scottish Covenanters for the Covenanted Reformation in England, Scotland, and Ireland—but instead thereof a joining and concurring with the promoters of Papacy, Prelacy, Malignancy, etc., in their designs,—whereby the enemies of Christ are brought into places of greatest power and trust, instead of bringing the wheel of justice over them.” They signify their displeasure therewith, “refuse to concur in anything that we know will strengthen to encourage the same, such as taking the oath of allegiance, rendezvousing at their command, paying any subsidies imposed for that end.” They testify against all who have concurred in setting up the Prince and Princess of

Orange as "King and Queen over these covenanted lands, while acting directly contrary to the Covenants, being without Covenant qualifications, being not of one perfect religion with ourselves, neither in Covenant, nor admitted Covenant ways."

In the Declaration of 1695, they speak of the "pretended representatives of both Church and State whom they will not own, but are behoved to disown and testify against them, and all the acts, determinations and conjunctions flowing from them, with all their courts and judicatories." So anxious were the Societies to be free from all complicity in supporting the existing Government, that they protest against others paying taxes in their name. "Considering that some, by reason of the acts of your pretended parliaments, have to the grief of our hearts most sinfully and shamefully paid and design to pay the pole-money in our name, unjustly and impiously imposed—whereby many of our names are inserted in the public collectors' book as tacit payers, compliers and connivers with defection, importing and owning any of their imposers as our lawgivers, who have burned and buried the Covenant." In a Protestation published after the accession of Queen Anne, equally emphatic language is employed. "We declare to the world that we cannot own Princess Anne as our lawful, chosen, covenanted Princess;—nor can have no Princess but a covenanted one; and such as will not accept of the qualifications of a covenanted subject of God, shall never (through grace) be chosen, owned or subjected to as prince by us,—in regard she has sworn to maintain prelacy in our neighbouring covenanted nation, and also given encouragement to the same in Scotland—and in regard to her indicting and dissolving Assemblies at her pleasure. Therefore we refuse to concur in anything we know will strengthen and encourage, as in paying teinds, taxes, or impositions in their places and stations." They protested against all who do these things, and especially against the ministers of the Church who submitted to this sinful state of things.

It is very manifest from these Declarations that the one

thing that in the view of the Societies dominated all others, was the Covenant and the legislation with which it was connected. What they sought was the restoration of that state of things, when the Covenant was the test of loyalty to religion and liberty, and the oath of office for all who were in authority ; and when all who refused it were rigidly excluded from all places of power and trust. As they looked back through the dismal intervening years of darkness and suffering, the period of the Second Reformation seemed to shine with a glorious light, and was regarded, if not as the best possible condition of both Church and State, yet certainly the nearest to perfection that had been attained to in modern times. They were Constitutionalists in the best sense ; they held that there must be a covenant of some sort between rulers and people, expressive of their reciprocal obligations ; and they held that the old National Covenants gave better expression to these, than did the Government oaths against which they protested. The idea of a covenanted nation under a Presbyterian covenanted king had taken firm possession of their minds ; and it produced a feeling of revulsion when, at the Revolution, no effort was made to bring back the vanished glory and reinstate the Covenant in its former supremacy. Instead of this, they found that the new constituted order was flagrantly at variance with the former and better ; they could not acknowledge and submit to the one without rejecting the other ; and so they resolved to maintain the same attitude towards the Government of William as they had held towards that of the two preceding rulers. They would not own him as king, nor recognize his courts, nor pay the taxes imposed. Their earnest desire certainly was to avoid everything that would directly or indirectly involve them in any responsibility for what they condemned, and they were persuaded that the only way open to them to do this, was to place themselves as far as possible beyond the jurisdiction of existing authorities, and to live, if they were permitted to do so, outside the constituted order of things. They elected to

remain a community separated from the great body of the people, living in the kingdom, yet disowning the king,—owning, in fact, no ruler on earth.

Let us by all means do justice to these worthy men, even though we may be persuaded that they took a somewhat narrow view of matters, assumed an extreme position, and were mastered by a somewhat extravagant conception of the literal obligation of a deed, which, though it served a good purpose in its day, was after all but an expedient to meet a particular emergency. They were thoroughly honest and conscientious in the convictions they cherished; they had nothing to gain and might lose much by the position they took up; and they laid themselves open to serious misconstruction on the part of others. But never were men more sincere and self-sacrificing than they; more thoroughly penetrated and governed by a sense of the authority of God's Word; more resolute in applying its principles to every relation, to Church and State alike; and more earnestly desirous to see Christ honoured in all things. They were not anarchists,—they were not anti-government men; they had in truth a very high idea of what should be the character and aim of a Christian Government; they were not disturbers of the peace and never were, but godly men, anxious to live peaceably and in the fear of God. And if we fully realize the experience through which they had passed, and the circumstances in which they found themselves when the Revolution was accomplished, we shall, perhaps, not so greatly marvel at the attitude which they assumed towards the State. We are bound to keep in view the fact of the long proscription of the faithful Covenanters, and the fierce persecution they had endured in maintaining the cause of liberty and religion against tyranny and unrighteousness, and to allow something for the effect which this could not fail to exercise on their views and feelings. It almost necessarily concentrated their thoughts on their own experience in the peculiar position they were constrained to occupy, tended to limit their view of

principles mainly to one set of circumstances, and these the most trying, and so far to render it more difficult for them to deal with others greatly different. The general principles that had ruled and fixed their attitude in the darkness and storm, were burned into them by terrible sufferings, and produced a sort of rigidity of aspect, a narrowness of outlook, not the most favourable to a wise and generous consideration of altered times. Peculiar circumstances had justified them in taking up an unusual attitude towards the existing Government, and it was not so easy for these down-trodden men to see that, these circumstances having passed away under a new rule, they were warranted to reconsider and perhaps to modify their former position. And it was the less easy for them to do this, when there was only a partial undoing of the evils which they bewailed, and when many of the very men who had actively supported tyranny and persecution were high in place under the new sovereign. The contrast, moreover, between their experience and the palmy days of the Covenant, while it tended to surround the latter with an ideal worth and glory, could not fail unconsciously to influence the estimate they formed of what was the actual result of the Revolution.

In endeavouring to account for the action of the Societies, we are bound to recognize what has already been referred to, their sense of solemn obligation lying upon them, and upon the Church and nation from the oath of the Covenant. To them it was the one legal and legitimate term of office, and no one who held this conviction could own or support a Government that was not seeking to attain the ends of the Covenant, but the reverse. They held that the oath required by the existing authorities contradicted the oath of the Covenant, it bound the swearer to uphold the king, who was head of a prelatie church; and a thorough-going Covenanter could not do that. They seemed to have understood in a very rigid sense the allegiance promised to the sovereign, as if it necessarily implied an obligation to approve all that the Coronation Oath bound to. After the Union, when even more

offensive oaths were imposed, this idea was strongly held, and many besides the Society people refused to take them; but from the first, the oaths of office were regarded by these strict Covenanters as a direct recognition of the Government, and inconsistent with a full testimony for the truth. Another consideration may be mentioned in this connection. Like almost all other parties in those days, the Societies were prepared to allow to the civil magistrate a much greater power in connection with morality, religion, and the Church, both in the way of repressing error and immorality, and in supporting religion, than is now deemed either safe or right. They appealed largely to the Mosaic legislation, and sought to apply it to Christian times; not only as showing the proper qualifications of civil rulers, but also as defining their sphere of action both in civil and ecclesiastical things. They held up the action of Hebrew rulers as an example to Christian governors, alike as to what should be encouraged and what should not even be tolerated but suppressed. With such conceptions of magistral powers, we can easily see that the Revolution Settlement would appear to be deserving only of condemnation. The Solemn League bound to destroy what the Revolution Settlement set up; and as in view of the Society folk, the former stood in much the same relation to Scotland as did the Sinaitic Covenant to the Hebrew people, that virtually settled the controversy and decided their position. They could hardly be expected to realize as we can do now, that the progress and security of religion depend vastly more on the sympathy and support of the people, than on any number of legislative enactments.

While dealing with the position of the Societies at this time, we are bound to look at it in another important aspect, and to give to our forefathers the honour that is due. It is easy for critics to single out and hold up to ridicule, peculiarities of thought and expression, or certain extreme acts of these devoted witnesses, and on the strength of these to set them down as hair-brained fanatics. It is much more

reasonable for us, while acknowledging these peculiarities, to recognize and give prominence to the fact, that underneath forms of speech and action which their times and experience account for, there were principles of vast importance, and of world-wide application, that constituted the real essence of their testimony. Their refusal to join the Revolution Church was an emphatic testimony against its defections and in favour of purity of doctrine and discipline, the divine right of Presbytery, the freedom and independence of the Church, and the sole Headship of Christ over His own House. They believed in the union of Church and State, but they protested against that which was formed at the Revolution, because the State did not possess the character which alone could make it safe or right for the Church to enter into such an alliance; and that is a truth which churches of the present time have need to lay to heart. They protested against the constitution and action of the State, and refused to own it; and this they supported not only by appeal to preceding Covenant obligations, but by Scripture. They brought many charges against the king and constituted authorities; but all these ultimately rested on the teachings of Scripture regarding the homage which nations possessing the Word of God are bound to show to the law of Christ, and regarding the character of the rulers to whom a Christian nation should entrust the reins of government. To these truths great prominence was given, though, it must be said, in forms and connections that often tended to obscure them, or even to create a prejudice against them. They are worthy of the place that was given to them, worthy of being insisted on still by all lovers of religion, liberty, and righteousness. The spiritual independence of the Church, the Headship of Christ over the Church and His Dominion over the nations, were the principal permanent elements in the testimony of the Societies at the Revolution; and succeeding generations owe to them a debt of gratitude for the fidelity with which, according to their light, they adhered to it, that has not yet been fully paid.

We do not feel called upon to give any judgment as to whether this attitude of the Society people in disowning the Revolution Government as they did, was wholly justifiable ; or whether it was necessary to proceed to the extent they did, in order to keep free from all responsibility for a constitution and administration which they so strongly disapproved of. We are content to leave these points to be considered by those who choose, in the light of the statements already made. There is, however, another point to which we may refer ere we pass on. It concerns the action of the Societies considered as a religious body. There is no question that they made the disowning of the Government a necessary condition of membership in the community. They had done so when under tyranny and persecution, and it is not easy to see how at that time they could have acted otherwise. But they continued to do so in times of liberty and peace, when the authorities did not interfere with their religious beliefs and meetings. Was this right ? was it not an overstraining of Church power to prescribe for the civil or political action of the members ? It is right for a church to bear witness to the Headship of Christ over the nations, to the obligation of His law both on rulers and people, and to the importance of having rightly qualified rulers, and also to protest against evils in Church and State alike. But is it right to make every article in a testimony a condition of Church fellowship ? or to make a certain civil or political attitude towards Government, even though that be assumed on religious grounds, an essential pre-requisite to communion ? If it is, where would it end ? would it not degrade the Church into a political organization ? With all our sympathy with and our reverence for our forefathers in their trying position, notwithstanding our sincere approbation of what was essential and permanent in their testimony, we cannot but regret that this was put in the foreground, and thus, we believe, unintentionally limited the power and effect of the great truths for which they suffered and testified. Had they been satisfied to remain outside the Revolution Church, which they had

sufficient grounds for doing, and left the matter of civil allegiance to the individual conscience, the history of subsequent years might have been different from what it is. They would have formed a nucleus of witnesses for the purity and independence of the Church, around which godly men vexed with the state of things within the Established Church (and there were many such), might have gathered, and formed a strong evangelical counterpoise to the growth of Moderatism. But by binding up their testimony with a peculiar political attitude, they put themselves beyond the sympathy of many who would otherwise have been their steadfast friends. While we write thus, we honour their steadfastness, conscientiousness and self-denial, and willingly own that the Testimony in the form in which they felt constrained to present it, was emphatic enough, and had its own special value.

Section Third.

We must now pass on to notice the proceedings of the Societies during the fifteen years that followed the Revolution. After they were purged from the presence of unfaithful members by means of the "Tinwald Paper," and the General Correspondence was restored, the first public Testimony after the Revolution was published at Sanquhar in 1692. Several members of the Societies were imprisoned for their share in that act, and among these was Sir Robert Hamilton. They were, however, soon set at liberty; and this was the last occasion on which the Society people were thus dealt with by the civil power on account of this public testimony-bearing; the authorities being henceforth willing to allow the protest of conscientious men who had no intention to trouble the Government. Our information regarding the condition and proceedings of the Societies during this period is somewhat meagre. It is almost entirely confined to the "Conclusions," as they are called, of the General Meetings. Four manuscript copies of

these are in existence, extending almost continuously from 8th February, 1693, to 3rd April, 1743, a period of fifty years. These records are very brief, and in many respects unsatisfactory: allusions are frequently made to matters that might be well enough known to the community at the time, but which are now all but unintelligible. Disputes, conferences, injunctions are referred to, without any explanation of the circumstances or the points involved. Such as they are, we must make the best we can of them.

The records do not present us with any complete list of the Societies or Correspondences; but from the names that are found scattered throughout the documents, we infer that they extended over much the same region as in the earlier epoch. They existed in Ayr, Renfrew, Clydesdale, Glasgow, Dumbar-ton, Stirling, Fife, the Lothians, the Merse, Tweeddale, Ettrick, Eskdale, Annandale, Nithsdale, and Galloway. The General Meetings continued for the most part to be held in the open air, and in some central place, chiefly in the upper parts of Clydesdale, Dumfries, and Ayr; the four spots most frequently chosen are, Crawfordjohn, Cairntable, Leadhills, and Friarminion,—the last being a lonely shepherd's house not far from Hyndbottom, Lanarkshire, where Cameron preached one of his famous sermons. Thus they lingered in the region most frequented by the persecuted, where every mountain, moor, and glen was hallowed by the sacred associations of the martyr days, and where the memories of the past would stimulate them to a firm adherence to the testimony of their brethren, whose graves were all around. One sentence from the "Conclusions" of 8th February, 1693, indicates the solemn intensity of the emotions with which they had been wont to part, in times when death by violence might be their lot, ere they could reach their homes and hiding-places. It is the closing sentence, and runs thus: "Lastly Prayer, and thereafter embraced one another most desirably, and parted to travel through the wild mountains and moors."

One of the most painful features in the condition of the

Societies at this time was this: Here was a community of many hundreds, it may be thousands of families of honest, earnest, God-fearing people, who felt constrained by conscience to reject the services of the Established Presbyterian Church, but who had no one to preach to them the Gospel that they loved, or to administer the Sacraments. For sixteen years they never listened to the voice of a minister of Christ, never sat down at the Lord's Table, and their children grew up unbaptized. Nothing but the strongest conviction of the truth and importance of the testimony that they held, could have induced men, like the Society people, to submit to such deprivations. They did their best to supply the want of ordinances, by their private fellowship-meetings for devotional exercises and converse on the Scriptures; in these, too, they discussed cases of conscience and the interests of the public cause. There were among them some men of education, and there were many others thoroughly acquainted with the Word, men of clear intelligence, strong faith, and profound religious experience. But cut off as they were from the fellowship and sympathy of others in spiritual things, regarded by many of the godly in the land as extreme, fanatical, and impracticable, spoken of by others with contempt and positive dislike as the "wild folk," it is to be feared that they acquired, during this period of isolation and deprivation, a greater degree of exclusiveness and rigour, a tendency to a harsh judgment of others, and an attitude of intensified hostility towards all opponents, which left but little room for the gentler charities of the Gospel.

It is very evident that the protest which the Societies had published was not intended to be a dead letter; on the contrary, they put in practice the convictions which they held, and by their conduct sought to make plain the reality of their separation both from a corrupt Church and an anti-christian State. This is manifest from the "Conclusions" that have been recorded. Their attitude towards the Church is indicated by such decisions as the following:—

August 9th, 1693: "Concluded unlawful to contribute for building of Kirks or Manses for the present ministers." October 25th, 1693: "Concluded that when any minister is to be installed, that at the public Edict for the same, our Declaration published at Sanquhar, August 10th, 1692, be presented as a Protestation against them." June 26th, 1695: "That the practice of any member in Society, ploughing the glebe or the like to the present ministers be condemned, and the guilty persons defending the same be suspended." June 21st, 1699: "Ratified as an explanation against any member in Society going to any Bridals or Bridal feasts or Baptismal feasts of any that make use of the present ministers for their Ordinances or Sacraments, etc., and whoever trespasses in these, allowed to be suspended." To be hearers of the ministers of the Established Church, or to employ them in the ordinance of marriage, were of course held inconsistent with the position and principles of the Societies; and equally so was it to pay teinds or locality, or appear before any ecclesiastical courts. How those were dealt with who transgressed the rules of the Societies in these and other points, is indicated by the "Conclusion" in a case recorded May 21st, 1693: "Anent Gavin Witherspoon, his paying of Fines and Locality, and owning of Head Courts, being all sins of public scandal and grounds of separation found in the person of G. W., either explicitly or by consequence, with several other offences, cannot be justified, neither can it be expected that he can be united with us until he give private satisfaction unto those he is embarked with, and engage to satisfy publicly a lawful judicatory when established, and also suffer public distress according to our Covenant engagements in all time coming, as a confirmation of both the former, whereby the consciences of those he has stumbled may be satisfied and the Lord glorified." In this mode of dealing, the Societies followed the original plan devised in the days of Renwick.

The protest that was made against the Civil Constitution and Administration was also embodied in acts by which the

Societies were prepared to stand. The two following Conclusions are found under date, August 9th, 1693 : "Concluded unlawful to serve the Dragoons or other soldiers in anything, although we cannot hinder them to take a share of what we provide for our own families, but not particularly for them." "Concluded unlawful to assign debts or sell pleas to be pursued by the present Judicatories, which we cannot pursue ourselves out of conscience." Under date, April 21st, 1697, the following occurs : "Concluded, as an old Conclusion, that no tradesman or others join in family worship with those that have been known guilty of being Assizers, Witnesses against, or guarders of the Martyrs or faithful Sufferers to prisons or scaffolds," etc. According to other Conclusions, no one could use a Government license for trade, or receive the stamp on home-manufactured cloth, and remain a member of the Societies ; and it was quite consistent with the position assumed, to escape taxation, even on necessary articles, by having recourse to contraband trade. We have already seen that they not only refused to pay taxes, but protested against their names being on the collectors' books, and against others paying the taxes in their names. That was not all. If taxes were not paid, the civil authorities seized and sold the goods of the non-payers ; but to that the Society people were not disposed to tamely submit. Accordingly, we find the following Conclusion, August 9th, 1693 : "Concluded a duty to recover by force poynds taken for supplies, or other taxation when in a capacity." And that this was not a mere formal decision is manifest from other Conclusions, not only reaffirming the duty of seeking reparation for such wrongs, as they were deemed, but by more definite resolutions. Thus, October 17th, 1694 : "Concluded that we stand to and for one another's defence, according to our Covenant engagements, against all unjust violence, whether apprehending to be soldiers, poinding," etc. Where any of these things happened, the parties were authorized to call in the aid of the neighbouring Correspondences in securing

reparation ; and if any one refused to respond to such a call, he was liable to be dealt with as unfaithful to the cause, and to be suspended till he had confessed his fault. We have no wish to deal hardly with our forefathers in regard to such matters ; we recognize in these rigid rules an honest self-denying effort to be consistent, the struggling of conscientious men to maintain their position intact in theory and practice alike.

Matters did not always go smoothly in the Societies themselves, nor in the General Meetings. It was almost inevitable, that, in the circumstances in which they were placed, some members would insist on interpreting the position and principles of the community in a more rigid and extreme form than the general body could accept. For a long time the Community was more or less troubled with these ; and we frequently meet with references to Protestations against the Declarations that were issued, and to Conferences with Societies, Correspondences and individuals, for the removing of difficulties and objections as to the way of carrying out the principles of the body. Cases were also constantly arising out of the violation of some of the strict regulations regarding taxes and similar things, and in connection with the marriage of the members of the Societies. They could not engage the services of a minister of the Established Church, nor could they find any minister in the three kingdoms free from some measure of complicity in the defections of the times, whom they might call upon to perform the ceremony. It appears that many members had gone over to Ireland to be married by Mr Houston, a former fellow-worker with Renwick ; but the General Meeting forbade this, and issued a protestation against Houston as unfaithful to the testimony. Nor could the members of the Societies have recourse to the aid of any civil official ; for even though they had reckoned marriage thus solemnized to be valid and scriptural, it would have involved a direct recognition of the Government. It would seem as if there was no possibility of marrying or giving in marriage in a scriptural way in those

days. Yet it was carried through, sometimes, in a simple off-hand way, even at the risk of being met by a solemn protestation before the General Meeting. In August, 1702, while a committee was engaged in conference with the Correspondence of Jedforest, being in the house of Ninian Oliphant, "they were surprised with the said Ninian Oliphant, and Mary Hall, their standing up and taking each other by the right hand, and the said Ninian Oliphant saying: I take this woman to be my married wife, whereof ye are witnesses." Immediately a verbal protest was made against this disorderly proceeding, followed afterwards by a formal written protestation laid before the General Meeting and entered in the Records. It does not appear whether any further dealing followed upon this; certain it is, that to get married in a clean way was a very difficult matter for these Society folk.

There are other matters, of a more pleasant character, referred to in the "Conclusions," to which attention may be called as we pass on. From the first, the sympathy which the members felt for each other, and their mutual helpfulness in times of trouble, were always conspicuous. The case of those imprisoned in connection with the publication of the Declaration of 1692, and the needs of the poor connected with the Societies, were provided for by collections at the fellowship-meetings and on fast-days; and help was in the same way obtained for those who had suffered worldly loss rather than be unfaithful to the testimony. A collector was appointed through whose hands all moneys were disbursed, whether for the above purposes, or for the printing of documents, or the maintenance of students abroad.

Watchful as the Societies were to avoid public scandal by breach of testimony, they were not neglectful of the interests of spiritual religion. Regular attendance on the private fellowship-meetings was urgently insisted on, and anxiety was shown to have these conducted in the most profitable manner. Examination of the members was enjoined, and money was collected for printing devotional and other books that might

be useful to the people; while family worship was diligently attended to. Efforts were made to obtain a regular ministry, though in the meantime without success. They would have been warranted in the circumstances, in choosing some from among themselves to the office of the ministry; and there were those in the Societies who by piety, education, and ability, were qualified for it. But such a deviation from the ordinary course could not be thought of by those who were the strenuous advocates of pure Presbytery. Some itinerant preachers offered their services, but they could not be accepted. Conferences were held with the view of coming to an arrangement with Mr Hepburn of Urr, who had been cast out of the Established Church because of his zeal for Reformation principles; but these came to nothing,—the great barrier to union being the attitude towards the civil Government maintained by the Societies, and which the other party would not adopt. Efforts were also made to obtain the ordination of students from the Church of Holland, but these were thwarted; for the Dutch Church was now in close sympathy with the Established Church of Scotland, and Mr Lining did what he could to prevent any encouragement or aid being given to the Societies. Mr James Kid, one of the students, was enabled by the money sent by the Societies to get the Declaration of 1692 printed at Utrecht, and for this he suffered imprisonment for a considerable time there. Another student, Mr Robert Smith, whose name frequently occurs in the “Conclusions,” was sent to know of Kid’s affairs; and he, to escape a like fate, went to Groningen, where he passed Master of Arts. After his liberation Mr Kid left the Societies; but Smith, failing to obtain license abroad, returned home; and though much pressed to join the Church, he adhered to the Societies till his death. “I sojourned,” he says in his Dying Testimony, “among the meetings for their encouragement and strengthening, and indeed, it was easy for me, as long as that great man Sir Robert Hamilton lived and was able to travel among the party; for he, laying his worldly honour in the dust, out of true love to his royal

and princely Master's honour, was a father to us all, and while he lived things went well with us." Other students, for whom license could not be obtained, did similar service. It would thus appear that though the Societies had no regular ministry, yet there was something like a class of exhorters, unlicensed preachers, though they would not have called them so, recognized among them,—men of talent, zeal and piety, who went about among the praying Societies, and whose labours were doubtless profitable in stimulating spiritual life.

It is of special interest to mark the steps that were taken about this time, to commemorate the martyrs who had suffered during the persecution that had ceased only a few years before. Previous to this, indeed, during the time of trial, a volume had been compiled containing a historical record of the "Wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the Kingdom of Christ," together with the dying testimonies of the martyrs between 1660 and 1666. This is the well-known book called "Naphtali," which had the distinction, accorded to "Lex Rex" and some other works by the opponents of tyranny, of being publicly burned by the common hangman. Near the close of the persecution, an attempt had been made to gather particulars regarding the later sufferers; and now in the time of peace, and while the memory of the facts was still fresh, the faithful remnant resumed the sacred task, of rescuing from oblivion the names and sufferings of their brethren who had fallen under the fierce wrath of the enemy. Their efforts in this direction were prefaced in a curious way by the following "Conclusion," of date 21st April, 1697,—"That a true and exact account of the persecutors within the several quarters, their remarkable judgments and deaths, or what hath befallen to their families or estates, be taken up and brought to the next General Meeting." In April, 1699, an injunction was issued, "That all the respective Societies send an Index of all the late martyrs' testimonies that are not in 'Naphtali' to the next General Meeting." In October, 1701, a fuller deliverance was given to the effect that "all the Correspondences provide

and make stones as signs of honour to be set on the graves of our late martyrs as soon as possible, and also that the names of the foresaid martyrs with their speeches and testimonies, and by whom they were martyred or killed, in houses or fields, country or city, as far as possible, to be brought to the next General Meeting, in order for the epitaphs, and also an account of these martyrs' carriage and behaviour in the time of their martyrdom." This must have been to these devoted men a labour of love. With devout reverence they sought to identify the resting-places of the martyrs, and to embalm the memory of the noble self-denial, the fearless courage, the heroic sufferings, and triumphant faith of humble men and women who hazarded their lives for the cause of Christ. They regarded this work as a fitting tribute to the goodness and grace of God who had so strengthened His servants for arduous duty, and through times of darkness and distress had preserved a seed to serve Him. It must have been with mingled feelings that this sacred task was prosecuted. Thankful they must have been that in the good providence of God they now enjoyed rest and peace, that they could meet openly and unmolested in town or field, and could revisit the scenes of former trials, to do honour to the memory of martyred companions who slept beneath the mossy sod. But with this there could scarcely fail to be associated more or less of sadness. The cause for which their brethren suffered was still openly contemned, and its adherents regarded as enthusiasts or fanatics; the truth they wrestled for was rejected by the great body of the nation; the Covenant for which they died was ignored; and the crown of the Redeemer placed on the head of a mortal. Yet to the praise of God and to the honour of His cause, the Societies sought to record the doings of the past as an incitement to fidelity in the present, and in the hope that God would speedily restore His desolate inheritance, and return in power to revive His work in the land. The result of these efforts of the Societies falls to be noticed by and by.

Section Fourth.

On the 21st of October, 1701, Sir Robert Hamilton died at Bo'ness after a lingering illness. There can be no doubt that from the time that he returned from Holland till his death, this gentleman exercised a potent influence in guiding the action of the Societies on all public questions, but whether wholly to the advantage of the cause may be matter of opinion. He belonged to a family of honourable position—the Hamiltons of Preston—and received an education befitting his rank. If we may judge from a slight reference to his elder brother in one of Renwick's Letters, we may infer that he did not take the same advanced position as Robert. He appears to have supported the expedition of Argyle in 1685; and the letter which was addressed to Robert says: "As to your brother, Sir William, he was lieutenant to Runbold (one of Argyle's officers), he is yet alive with some of his friends. I resolve to speer him out and inform him I have seen J. N., who saith, he is with us in all things, and that he came with Argyle only for passage, being under no engagement and taking no place from them." In his early manhood Robert Hamilton embraced the cause of the persecuted Covenanters, and was closely associated with Cameron in his crusade against the Indulgences and those who accepted them. He was leader of the band that, in 1679, published the Declaration and burnt certain Acts of Parliament at Rutherglen. He commanded the Covenanters in their successful skirmish with the dragoons at Drumclog, and continued to occupy the same position till the disaster at Bothwell. His conduct on both these occasions has been severely criticised, alike in connection with the disputes that distracted the party, his management of the army, and also with respect to some actions of his own. Some years afterwards he was called upon to give explanations on several of these points. He confessed that, amid the excitement and confusion that prevailed at Bothwell, he had, under misapprehension, signed the Hamilton Declaration and

the petition to Monmouth, but that he had immediately sought to correct his mistake. He does not deny that he killed with his own hand a soldier who had been taken prisoner at Drumclog, and vindicates his conduct on the ground that no quarter was to be given; and appeals in justification to the summary way in which Samuel dealt with Agag,—a defence of harsh and cruel conduct that will not bear examination.¹ After the defeat at Bothwell, Hamilton escaped to Holland, where he remained till after the Revolution; but he was outlawed in his absence, his property confiscated and himself condemned to death. He was not quite safe abroad, as the English Government made serious efforts to obtain possession of his person. For about ten years he lived a wandering and uncertain life, being sometimes quite dependent on the charity of strangers. The tenacity with which he held to his own convictions of truth and duty, and his sensitiveness lest he should compromise himself, were as pronounced abroad as at home. He refused to enter into any employment that involved association with or subjection to those who held views at variance with his own; he would ask no favour nor even accept help in his destitution from the Prince of Friesland, because he favoured the Cocceian heresy; nor would he negotiate for the license of Scottish students with any Dutch divines who sympathized with that erroneous system. For many years he acted as Commissioner for the Societies, and this involved much anxiety and toil; but he grudged no labour and shrank from no difficulty in his devotion to the cause. He was unflagging in his efforts to convey to friends abroad a true representation of the cause of the persecuted in Scotland, and to vindicate them from the unjust charges made against them. Through his zeal and energy the ordination of James Renwick was carried through, and pecuniary help was obtained for the sufferers. His correspondence reveals not only his diligence and fidelity in all public matters, but his fervent piety, his devout recognition of divine

¹ Faithful Contendings, pp. 201, 2.

guidance, his varied spiritual experience and the strong faith that sustained him under failure and depression. Dear to him above all else was the honour of his Divine Master, and next to that was his love for the "pleasant remnant," the lonely wanderers among the Scottish hills and moors. He had his enemies and detractors in his own day, men to whom his very zeal was an offence, and whose intense dislike was roused by his unsparing condemnation of their defections; but his Christian character stood the test of every assault, and remained unblemished to the last. We are not concerned to deny, that along with his excellences, there was something of the narrowness, the harshness of judgment, the lack of forbearance and charity towards opponents, which intensity of conviction in circumstances of isolation and continued wrong tends to produce in some minds. But we must remember that it was not a time for bandying compliments with those whose conduct was regarded as striking at the root of liberty, and utterly at variance with the claims of divine truth. Hamilton felt that he was engaged in a life and death struggle in which principles of highest moment were at stake, and it was not to be expected that a man, hunted and calumniated as he was, should weigh his words with the nicety befitting a time of peace, or utter his sentiments in the flaccid speech of half-hearted advocates. He spoke and acted with the strength and decision that seemed to adversaries to be harsh and extreme, but which, at least, left no doubt as to his position.

It is not without value to consider the estimate which those who knew Hamilton most intimately formed of his character. On the one hand, we reckon that it was something to his credit that he formed so high and true an estimate of the character and talents of James Renwick; and it is of no less moment to notice, on the other, in what terms the martyr was wont to speak of Hamilton. Knowing as we do the sound judgment, the wise moderation and piety of Renwick, we may well believe that the man was something better than a harsh bigot, and possessed high excellences of mind and heart, regarding

whom the martyr could write in these terms : "For under the Lord Himself I have none that I can expect such counsel from as from you ; therefore you must still be giving me your advice." Referring to the reproaches to which his friend was exposed, he writes : "But let the world say what they will, I must say this, and I say it without vanity or flattery, that a little of Robert Hamilton's spirit in such a day as this is very much worth." Speaking in the same letter of a purpose to enlarge his testimony, written some years before, he says : "Moreover, I know not a man under whose name or patrociny I would commend it to the following generations, but to despised yet much honoured Robert Hamilton." Again, in his last letter written on the day of his execution, this sentence occurs : "If I had lived and been qualified for writing a book, and if it had been dedicated to any man, you would have been the man. For I have loved you, and have peace before God in that ; and I bless His name that I have been acquainted with you." To have won the love, reverence, and confidence of Renwick to such a degree as this, was itself no mean testimony to the sterling excellence of Robert Hamilton.

We have seen what position he took up in the public cause on his return to Scotland in 1689. We may judge it to be in some respects extreme and unfortunate, but we cannot for a moment question his thorough honesty. It did demand no small measure of self-sacrifice. Had he seen his way to fall in with the Revolution Settlement he might have secured a good position in society ; but he choose to suffer poverty and reproach rather than be unfaithful to conscience. His brother died about that time, but he profited little by the change ; for though he was spoken of afterwards as Sir Robert, he refused to take the necessary legal steps to obtain possession of the property, inasmuch as in doing so he could not avoid recognizing the existing Government and the courts of law. His steadfastness was tested otherwise. He had a principal share in the publication of the Declaration of 1692, in which the king and his Government were disowned. On this account Hamilton

and some others were arrested and imprisoned. We can understand how the new Government, not yet too securely established, and suspicious of any thing that had the appearance of opposition, were a little startled at such a plain-spoken, thorough-going manifesto from such a quarter, and did not well know what to make of it or in what light to regard it. So the authorities, fearing possibly the effect it might have on other discontented parties, were at first disposed to deal hardly with the Protestors. Sir Robert was brought before the Justiciary Court, and his conduct there left no doubt as to the strength of his convictions. He refused to own the jurisdiction of the Court or to plead before it; no bantering or threatening could make him swerve from his position, and he was sent back to prison. After some months the authorities, persuaded that they had nothing to fear from such men, ordered his release. But so jealous was Hamilton of his own consistency, that he would not leave prison without giving forth a formal protestation that he came out free of any compromise and under no engagement whatever.

During the remaining years of his life he devoted himself wholly to the interests of the Societies; he travelled widely, as long as he was able, over the south and west, organizing, exhorting and encouraging the scattered remnant. He was held in very high esteem by the Societies, from whom he received something like a public funeral, at all events they seem to have paid all expenses. He left a written testimony to the cause for which he had laboured and suffered, urging his brethren to unwavering steadfastness and watchfulness against defections. In this deed, we find for the first time that we have noticed, the combination of the words that afterwards became the designation of the church, "I die a true Protestant, and to my knowledge a Reformed Presbyterian." His closing words to his brethren are these:—"O labour to be in Christ, for Him, like Him. Be much in reading of the Holy Scriptures, much in prayer and holy unity among yourselves. Be zealous and tender in keeping up your private fellowship for prayer

and Christian Conference, as also your public correspondence and general meetings. Go to them and come from them as those interested, really concerned and weighted with Christ's precious controverted truths in Scotland, and labour still to take Christ along with you in all your meetings, and to behave yourselves as under His holy all-seeing eye when at them, that you may always return with a blessing from His rich hand. Now, farewell, my dear Christian friends; the Lord send us a joyful meeting at His own right hand after time, which shall be the earnest desire in time of your dying friend." In such sentiments as these we find the true inner spirit, the real sustaining power of these faithful men. Religion was to them after all much more than a public testifying for the truth; it was a living and walking by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the joy of this holy fellowship upheld them in all their sorrows and trials. "In Christ, for Him, like Him," that was the sum of their testimony, that was their aim and their glory. Thus lived and died a faithful servant of Christ, whose aim was simply to do the work, as he apprehended it, which his Master called him to do, with all fidelity and cheerful self-denial, anxious ever to have a conscience void of offence, and to leave no stain on his character as a witness for Christ. His faults and failings were largely those of the age in which he lived and of the circumstances in which he was placed; and of these it becomes us, so differently situated, to speak with all charity. Sir Robert died in the prime of life; he was never married, and the baronetcy remained dormant till it was claimed and adjudged to the late eminent Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, Sir William Hamilton, who was descended from a collateral branch of the family.

There is little more of interest in the records of this period till the name of Mr M'Millan comes before the Societies; and of their dealings with him we must treat more fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOCIETIES AND THE REV. JOHN M'MILLAN—1706–1743.

Section First.

JOHN M'MILLAN was born in the parish of Penningham, Kirkcudbrightshire, in 1669. His parents seem to have belonged to the Established Church, and it was only when he entered on his Arts' course in the University of Edinburgh that he became connected with the Societies. At its close he left them; and having taken his degree of M.A., he studied Divinity at the Theological Classes in the University, was licensed as a Probationer by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright in 1700, and in the following year he was ordained minister of the parish of Balmaghie. His predecessor in that charge—a clergyman of the same name, but not a relation—had been a confirmed invalid; and if we may judge from the records of session, the spiritual condition of the people must have been very low, and the ecclesiastical affairs of the parish in a very disorderly state. The new minister set himself vigorously to work in the instruction of the people and the faithful exercise of discipline, dealing not only with those who openly violated the moral law, but with such as did not observe the appointed fast-days. It is manifest that he speedily won the esteem and confidence of his parishioners, and they stood faithfully by him during the long period of controversy and trouble through which he passed. The extent to which they carried their devotion to their pastor (according to a contemporary MS. giving an account of the affairs of the parish at this epoch,

extracts from which were published some time ago), shows that they had more regard for him than for the law and its representatives.

Mr M'Millan soon got into trouble with his Presbytery. When the Synod of Galloway, in 1702, enjoined the ministers within the bounds to explain to the people the National Covenant, his covenanting sympathies would not allow him to overlook the Solemn League, of which the Church took no official recognition. So Mr M'Millan, with the consent of the Kirk Session, explained both Covenants, and at a congregational fast, he and his people renewed them by way of adherence. This might have passed unnoticed, but the imposition of the Oath on the accession of Queen Anne led to more decided action. There was a division of opinion in the Presbytery regarding this Oath, some approving and others condemning it, and it was agreed to make the taking or refusing it an open question. M'Millan was not prepared to adopt this course; and in the following year, supported by two of his brethren, Tod of Buittle and Reid of Carsphairn, he presented to the Presbytery a Petition containing a list of Grievances, and craved the Court to take steps to have them removed. These Grievances constitute a heavy indictment of the Church as constituted by the Revolution Settlement, quite in the line of the Protest of the Societies. The constitution of the Church on the basis of the Act of 1592, passing by all the attainments of the Second Reformation,—the ignoring of the Solemn League and Covenant, and neglecting to assert the *jus divinum* of Presbytery,—submission to the interference of the State with the constitution and freedom of the Church,—and the imposition of political oaths on the ministry,—these were some of the points to which attention was called. But the Presbytery refused to endorse the prayer of the petition or to take any steps adequate to the importance of the matter. A formal answer to M'Millan's paper was prepared by authority of the Court, in which an attempt was made to meet his statements and vindicate the

Church; but on all the most weighty points the defence altogether fails. Every effort was made to induce the petitioners to carry the matter no further; with two of them this succeeded, but M'Millan could not be persuaded to be silent on questions that appeared to him to be of so great moment.

In May, 1703, Mr M'Millan felt himself so much out of sympathy with his brethren, that he resolved to cease from attending the meetings of Presbytery. This led to further dealings with him, which issued in his coming under some sort of obligation to return to his place in the Church Courts, and pursue a quieter course. His conscience, however, was ill at ease; and he very soon publicly retracted his promise, and at the same time uttered some plain truths to the people regarding the state of the Church. This gave to the Presbytery the opportunity, of which it was prompt to avail itself, of taking more decisive steps to bring him to submission. He was appointed to preach at a visitation at Balmaghie, in December, 1703; but before that time arrived a libel was drawn up and served upon him. This document, which is extant in a printed form, is a sorry affair; it brings no charge against M'Millan's life or doctrine; it enumerates a great many trifling things that had emerged in the course of his controversy with his brethren; it lays chief stress upon his withdrawal of his promise, and refusal to cease from agitating troublesome questions; and it leaves on the mind the distinct impression, that the root of the whole dispute was a strong aversion on the part of the Presbytery to this movement for reform, which the minister of Balmaghie seemed resolved to prosecute. Before the Court met on the day appointed, he read the libel from the pulpit, showed its groundlessness, and called upon any of the people to produce whatever they had to allege against his doctrine or practice. Thereafter, the Presbytery took up the libel and attempted a proof, but offered to drop it altogether if M'Millan would promise submission. Amid a good deal of wrangling, a petition from the people against the Presbytery's

procedure was given in, and before the Court broke up for the night, M'Millan declined its authority, and appealed to the first free and lawfully constituted General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This was pretty decided action, and was understood by many members of Presbytery to be, not an ordinary appeal to the Supreme Court as then constituted, but to an Assembly more in accordance with his views. Next day the Presbytery met in Crossmichael Church. The meeting was small, many of the members having gone home; M'Millan, though summoned, did not appear; the libel was found proven, and he was unanimously deposed from the office of the ministry. This may justly be regarded as a summary procedure on the part of the Presbytery, when viewed in the light of the comparatively frivolous charges upon which it was based. But he fared in this respect as others did both before and after him, who showed any zeal in the cause of Reformation, at the hands of a Church which manifestly did not care to be reminded of its present bondage and declension, as contrasted with its former freedom and fidelity.

There were members of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright from whom something else might have been expected than acquiescence in this severe treatment of M'Millan. One of these was the Rev. Alexander Cameron, brother of Richard who fell at Airmoss. He was one of the young men sent to Holland by the Societies; he came over with Argyle, and did his utmost, but without success, to induce Renwick and the Society people to join that expedition. Having escaped to the Continent, he returned with William of Orange, joined the Revolution Church, and was ordained minister of Kirkcudbright. He seems to have taken an active part in the proceedings against M'Millan, and is believed to be the author of a pamphlet in answer to Mr M'Millan's Narrative of his case, and in defence of the Presbytery's procedure. It is sad to find him thus so zealous in opposing the principles for which his nobler brother laid down his life. The other was the Rev. W. Boyd, minister of Dalry, to whom reference has

already been made; and he, too, evinced in several ways, an active dislike to the party with which he was formerly associated. We are not called on to vindicate every act of M'Millan in the prosecution of his object; his position was a difficult and trying one, and though he sometimes hesitated as to the course to be pursued, and his action showed some signs of vacillation, yet as to the truth and gravity of the charges which he urged against the Revolution Church, he never wavered. There appears, on the whole, to be ample ground for the statement by M'Millan's son, appended to Thornburn's "*Vindiciae Magistratus*," "that the irregular and disorderly courses with which he was charged, were only his faithful witnessing, in his preaching and before the Presbytery, against the backslidings of the Church and the sins of the times, and his avowed adherence to the Covenanted work of Reformation attained to between 1638 and 1649."

However little sympathy and support Mr M'Millan found among his clerical brethren, it is manifest that the parishioners of Balmaghie almost unanimously adhered to him. They refused access to the church to the ministers appointed to announce the sentence of the Presbytery; and their pastor continued to occupy his own pulpit. They appeared in large numbers along with their minister at a subsequent meeting of the court, to enquire whether the decision was unanimous and final. To this no answer was given; but the Moderator charged M'Millan with leading the people into schism, and there and then summoned him to compare before the next General Assembly. As was to be expected, he paid no regard to this, and the Assembly ordered him to be cited before the Commission which was to meet in June. To this summons he did respond, and was prevailed upon by promises of being speedily reponed, to acknowledge his error in not submitting to the authority of the Presbytery, in the following terms:—

"At Edinburgh, 9th of June, 1704. The Commission having interrogate Mr John M'Millan concerning his judgment

with respect to the obedience and submission due to Church Courts, and also with respect to his contravention of the sentence of deposition past against him by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright. He declared that it was his judgment that the sentence of a Church Judicatory ought to be submitted to though unjust, and redress to be craved and expected from superior judicatories, according to the comely order of this Church; and as for his own practice, he acknowledged his fault through mistake, in contravening the above mentioned sentence, which sentence he earnestly desires may be taken off, and he reponed to the exercise of his ministry at Balmaghie; and, lastly, he hereby declares his sincere resolution to maintain unity and concord according to the Word of God and Presbyterian principles, and particularly the obligations he came under at his ordination. Sic subscribitur, J. Mack Millan." A month later he subscribed the following statement:—"I, John M'Millan, hereby acknowledge my great sin in deserting the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, as also my great sin in declining the said Presbytery, these things being contrary to my ordination engagements, and I do sincerely profess my hearty sorrow for these sins and for any other thing in my way that hath given offence; and seeing I do hereby promise and engage (in the strength of God) to live more orderly and in subjection to the judicatories of the Church, and to use my utmost endeavours to maintain unity, concord and peace therein; I earnestly desire the reverend Commission may take my case to consideration, and repone me to the exercise of my ministry at Balmaghie. In witness whereof I have subscribed these presents with my hand, at Edinburgh, this eleventh day of July, 1704 years. Sic subscribitur, J. Mack Millan." He promised also to refrain from preaching.

The substance of these statements is plain enough: he confesses that his action has been rash, that he should have submitted to the sentence of the Presbytery and carried his case by appeal to the higher courts. It is easy to see how

on the one hand, under the irritation produced by his dealings with the Presbytery, and moved by the sympathy and encouragement of the people, he had defied the sentence; and on the other, how after reflection and under the influence of some vague promises of fair treatment and speedy restoration, and not having fully made up his mind to leave the Church, he was constrained to subscribe the statements already quoted, in which he retracts none of the charges which he had laid before the Presbytery. His confession only concerns the form of procedure. As the Commission, however, took no further procedure in the case, and perhaps could not as matters stood, he appealed by letter to the Presbytery to revoke the sentence and vindicate him from the aspersions which had been cast upon him, and declaring that he would then submit to its authority as the Word of God warrants. To the Commission which met in December, 1704, he sent a "Protest and Appeal," craving an investigation of the whole case from the beginning, and declaring that he was ready to follow out the "Grievances" which he had tabled in the Presbytery. At the same time he retracts the obligation under which he had come six months before, protests against the unfaithfulness of the Commission, renews his former appeal to the first free, faithful and rightly constituted General Assembly, and asserts his right to continue the free and peaceable exercise of his ministry. To the Assembly which met in April, 1705, he addressed an Appeal of a somewhat similar import, declaring the sentence against him to be unscriptural and not to be submitted to, and announcing his resolution to resume his ministerial work. All this is somewhat perplexing, but it at least indicates that he has lost hope of any relief from the Church Courts, and has resolved to maintain his position. We shall find immediately that he was looking outside the Church for the sympathy which he found not within it.

M'Millan resumed his ministerial work in circumstances that are narrated in the manuscript already referred to. After his submission to the Commission, the Presbytery

obtained access to the church at Balmaghie, and supplied the pulpit while the minister remained silent. On one occasion the officiating clergyman, as was customary, intimated the preacher for the following Sabbath, and urged a better attendance on ordinances. M'Millan, who was present, then rose and said that he himself intended to preach next Sabbath. "What," says the clergyman from the pulpit; "will you, a deposed man, go and preach?" Turning to the people he said, "Go home and mourn for it, that a deposed man is going to preach; I wish he may get few hearers." On the following Sabbath the "deposed man" did preach to a great concourse of people from the surrounding districts. The minister appointed by the Presbytery came by boat to fulfil his appointment, but the people would not permit him to land, and drove his boat to the opposite bank of the Dee. So Mr M'Millan and his friends kept possession of the church. In order to compel them to give it up, the civil authority was not long after called on to interpose, and Mr M'Millan and about twenty of his supporters were summoned to appear before the Privy Council in Edinburgh; but these orders were disregarded by all the parties except one elder, who changed sides, and became so unpopular that he had to leave the district. Following upon this a letter was sent by the Moderator of the Commission in April, 1706; it was addressed to the heritors and elders of Balmaghie, and ran in these terms:—"Much honoured and beloved; the Agent for the Church informed the Commission of the General Assembly, that he hath prosecuted Council Letters against Mr M'Millan and his adherents for intruding into the Kirk of Balmaghie, and got Mr M'Millan and them declaired fugitives by the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council, so that further diligence may be done therefrom; but the Commission was so far tender of you and others concerned, that they ordered me to signify to you, that if you shall obtain that Mr M'Millan and his hearers shall peaceably deliver up the keys of that vacant Kirk to the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, that they may have access to

supply as they ought to have according to the acts of this Church, and law of the nation, then I shall deal with the Agent to desist from exposing Mr M'Millan's adherents to damage, and apprehending and incarcerating those persons concerned, and liable to those punishments, which I hope you will prevent by your timeous endeavours in your several capacities to promote peace and good order. This, in name and by appointment of the said Commission, is signified to you by your real friend and servant in the Lord. Wm. Urquhart, Modr."

This was a somewhat serious state of matters; the heritors did interpose, but they could not persuade Mr M'Millan and his adherents to give up the keys, even under the threat of having a party of dragoons sent among them. And when they offered to pay up some arrears of stipend if he would go away, he refused to comply. One cannot say much for the legality of this conduct; it shows how little respect was paid to authority in those days, and manifests a very strong feeling among the people as to what they regarded as the harsh treatment of their minister, and their purpose to support him in spite of both Church and State. Three years after the Presbytery had deposed him, Mr M'Millan was in possession of manse and glebe, and occupied the church whenever he was at home. For some time he had been in correspondence with other parties besides the Presbytery and Commission, to the course and issue of which we must now turn.

Section Second.

The experience of M'Millan since his case came before the Church Courts was of such a nature as to make it plain, that he could not be faithful to his convictions, and continue in connection with the Established Church; and we can sympathize with his perplexity when forced to contemplate the possibility of separation. He might have followed the example of Hepburn of Urr, who was deposed in 1696 for

his troublesome zeal in the cause of Reformation, and had suffered a long imprisonment because he would not cease to preach and agitate. He still continued to labour diligently in the south of Scotland, and being an earnest Gospel preacher, he gathered around him a considerable body of adherents. These he formed into Societies and Correspondences after the model of the Cameronians (to use a convenient name), and we find that in after years these praying Societies became the nuclei of several Secession congregations. Hepburn and his party did not separate from the Church, and did not disown the existing civil Government; and whether this had any influence upon Boston in his more favourable judgment regarding this party, compared with his severe condemnation of the Society people, we do not say. It appears from a minute of the General Meeting in 1705, that M'Millan has been in conference or correspondence with Hepburn; if it was with a view to some common action, it altogether failed, though for what reason we know not. His conduct, his Grievances, and his treatment by the Presbytery must have been well known to the Society people; and his name occurs for the first time in the "Conclusions," on 5th April, 1704, only four months after his deposition, when a letter was read from him desiring a conference. The request was granted, and delegates appointed, but nothing is recorded either of the conference or its results. M'Millan was present at a General Meeting, on 31st January, 1705, and, on request, submitted to the Meeting the libel and other papers in the case, for consideration. His submission to the Commission was pronounced "to be very grievous and lamentable"; and this judgment being intimated to him, "he declared his resentment,"—his regret for having so acted. The minute proceeds thus,—“He was questioned if he had a desire to join this party. After a little waiving of us, putting back the question concerning joining with him, he showed his willingness to join with us.” That, however, required unity of judgment; so they reasoned upon points on which differences might exist, and Mr M'Millan read a

declaration of his principles. On October 24th, a Committee was appointed to hold a formal conference with him ; a report which was given on 10th April, 1706, was found not to be very satisfactory,—his acceptance of the Testimony of the Societies was somewhat guarded ; and as he had some difficulty anent the civil magistrate, that point was reserved for further consideration. The General Meeting was unyielding, and concludes thus,—“That, having received no satisfactory answer from Mr John M'Millan, we adhere to our Testimony as stated ; therefore, we remain as we were.”

Matters did not look very hopeful ; but at the next meeting, on 19th June, the way began to open up. Mr M'Millan intimated that he was now clear as to the duty of disowning the existing Government, and presented a Paper called “Steps of Defection,” which he had been requested to draw up, in which he enumerates thirty-six evils in Church and State against which a just protest may be taken. At the next meeting he seemed to be growing impatient of this prolonged negotiation, and brought the matter to a point by the question : “I desire to know the Meeting's satisfaction with what is past ?” The answer given was,—“The Meeting, as one man, is satisfied as to what is past betwixt him and them.” This it might well be, for he had now, and not altogether for the first time, fully accepted the position of the Societies ; and he made ample submission for his past defections, as the following documents fully show. The first is entitled “Mr John M'Millan's Submission,” and is in the following terms :—“I, Mr John M'Millan, minister at Balmaghie, having displeased the Godly Remnant and greatly offended them before I entered the ministry, and that in my leaving them when then joined with them, and also since, in tampering with the ministers after I had declined them, which I desire to lament, do oblige myself, for Truth's vindication, and the Godly Remnant's satisfaction, to stand to the determination of any faithful, lawfully constituted Church Judicatory of Christ within this land when it shall happen to be, which both they and I can own, submit to

and concur with according to the comely order of the Church in her best times, in whatever has been sinful or offensive in my walk, way or carriage, ever since I left them to this very day. As witness my hand, at Crawfordjohn, this 14th day of August, 1706. Sic subscr. J. M'Millan." We are to remember that the obligation here given is not peculiar to this case, but was the mode in which the Societies, not claiming to be a Church, had from the first dealt with defaulters from the Testimony. The second document, entitled "Mr John M'Millan's Approbation of our Testimony," is briefer. "I, John M'Millan, minister at Balmaghie, heartily approve of, assent to and comply with all the Testimonies that have been carried on with respect to the Covenanted Reformation, and that in the by-past and present times by the honest godly and faithful Remnant against both Church and State, as they were and are agreeable to the Word of God and the Covenanted work of Reformation, as witness my hand, at Crawfordjohn, this 15th day of August, 1706. J. M'Millan."

Every obstacle being now removed, it was unanimously resolved to give a joint Call to Mr M'Millan; the Commissioners were enjoined to consult their Correspondences in the matter and report at next meeting. On October 24th, it was reported that they were "unanimously agreed to go on jointly with the Call." A formal invitation to Mr M'Millan to become their minister was drawn up, and signed by thirty-two individuals representing the "United Societies and General Correspondences of the suffering Remnant of the true Presbyterian Church in Scotland." Among those who subscribed the Call were some who had been sufferers during the persecution, had listened to the voice of Renwick, and had remained faithful to the cause for which he suffered; and to these it must have been a special joy to have once more among them a faithful minister of the Gospel. The following note, found in one copy of the "Conclusions," describes the close of the long negotiation, and the feelings which it awakened:—

"After receiving our Call, day and place abovesaid, though

the General Meeting was very urgent and desirous that he would go forth and take up the Standard of the Gospel among us through the country as our former faithful ministers had done, yet he, upon weighty and grave considerations and reasons, declined the same until he had taken some more time to lay it out before the Lord for his counsel, countenance and direction therein. So that till about the end of December that year we had no preaching. At which time, according as it had been concluded at the preceding General Meeting, by being left to his own determination, and accordingly as he got light therein, he imparted the same to the two next adjacent Correspondences, viz., Nithsdale and Galloway, who according to their general allowance, did intimate the same with all possible diligence to their brethren through the rest of the Correspondences to come to the place appointed, which was done by a great many, so that we had a numerous congregation from all airths, and a pleasant day of the Gospel; and on the Monday also, preaching, with baptizing of sundry children; after which, upon the clamant call of the people, both east, west, north and south, he went through, preached and baptized, exercising all the other parts of his ministerial function where he came as need required; many signs and tokens of his Master's presence being with him, to the great comfort and satisfaction of the Remnant who had been so long deprived of the sweet Gospel and ordinances of God's house."

There can be no question that the accession of Mr McMillan was regarded as a great blessing by the vast majority of the Society people. They had been destitute of the Gospel ministry for full sixteen years, and had mourned over the disadvantages which that involved. Yet it was unmistakeably manifest, that they were resolved not to purchase the boon they so ardently desired by any lowering of their testimony against a corrupt Church and an anti-Christian State. Nor do we doubt that it was entirely from a conviction of the truth and importance of the principles of the Societies, that

Mr M'Millan cast in his lot with them. He did not come hurriedly to a conclusion on the subject; he had difficulties and perplexities; and had not conscience constrained him to the course he took, he could very easily have made his peace with the Church. There was nothing tempting in a temporal point of view; for he renounced the comfortable security of a parochial stipend, and cast himself on the generosity of a comparatively poor community. There was nothing specially attractive in the sphere or kind of work to which he devoted himself, when he exchanged the limited sphere and well defined duties of a parish minister, for the unsettled and laborious life of an itinerant preacher. There was much that was the reverse of attractive in the position which he chose to occupy, seeing that it involved to so large an extent isolation from society, and cut him off from the fellowship and sympathy of brethren in the ministry. All the more credit is due to him when, for conscience sake, he responded to the Call of the scattered Remnant, to whose service, as faithful witnesses for the royal prerogatives of Jesus Christ, he cheerfully consecrated the labours of his life.

For the long period of forty-seven years he traversed the whole South of Scotland in the discharge of his ministry, exposed to all varieties of weather, and in an age when travelling was so much more tedious and toilsome than it now is. He visited and catechised the Societies scattered over this extensive region, in many parts so wild and rugged, and preached on Sabbath and other days in houses and barns, and more frequently in the fields and moors. So closely was he identified with the Societies, that throughout the wide sphere of his labours, his adherents were as well known as M'Millanites, as Cameronians or Old Dissenters, which they were often designated. In work appropriate to an ordained minister he stood alone for nearly thirty-seven years; but in the work of preaching, visiting and catechising, he was assisted for about thirty years by Mr John M'Neil, a licentiate of the Established Church. Mr M'Neil's name does not appear in the "Conclusions" till

6th August, 1707, when he is one of a committee appointed to draw up a Protest against the Union with England. In the same year attention is called by the Commission of the Assembly to the disorderly and schismatical courses pursued by him, and this, doubtless, refers to his association with M'Millan in preaching to the Societies. For this he was summoned to appear before the Presbytery of Dumfries, and failing to appear, he was pronounced contumacious. He appears to have been an earnest and faithful evangelical preacher; and though never ordained, he rendered valuable assistance to M'Millan. Aid in visiting and examining was also given by Mr Robert Smith, Mr Charles Umpherston, and other students; but the chief burden lay for thirty-seven years on Mr M'Millan himself.

Before passing on to other matters, we may notice the further proceedings of the Assembly in the case of both of these men. In 1708 the Assembly remitted both cases, with full power, to the Commission. Libels were prepared against both, and they were cited to appear before the Commission on the last Wednesday of September. Neither of them obeyed the summons, but a paper signed by both M'Millan and M'Neil was laid on the table. It was their "Protestation, Declinature, and Appeal." It was read and considered, but procedure was delayed till next meeting. On October 1st, sentence was pronounced,—M'Neil's license is declared null and void, and he and M'Millan, who was already deposed, are cast out of the Communion of the Church, and are warned that unless they turn from their disorderly courses, the Church will inflict its highest censures on them. And what was the gravamen of the charge against them? Reference is made in the Libel to disobedience and contempt of the Church and its Courts, and to the serious charges they had brought against the Church and its ministers, which are described as unchristian defamation, lies and falsehoods. But special prominence is given in the Libel to the seditious and disloyal principles avowed in the "Protestation,"—the denial that it is

duty to pay cess to the present civil powers, the assertion that the taking of the Oath of Allegiance is one of the steps of defection, and, what are called, expressions of contempt for the civil authority and for her Majesty's person and Government. That is, the chief grounds of the sentence were the principles all along maintained by the Societies as being those of the Church of Scotland in its purest times, and it was now declared that they were not to be tolerated in the Established Church. The "Protestation," which was dated from Balma-ghie Manse, is a clear and vigorous statement of the case of the Societies against both Church and State, and recapitulates the reasons for standing aloof—the most recent step of defection being the "unhallowed" Union. On one point the Protestors seek to set themselves right. They are charged in the Libel with "swearing persons not to pay cess,"—and this is declared to be an "odious calumny." In explanation of their opinion on this point, it is added: "As to our judgment anent the cess,—we reckon it duty in the people of God to deny and withhold all support, succour, aid or assistance that may contribute to the upholding or strengthening of the Man of Sin or any of the adversaries of the truth,"—an opinion not so very extreme, and which has been held in various forms and acted on by many even in the enlightened nineteenth century. The closing words of the "Protestation" are in harmony with the avowed relation of the Society people to the Church of Scotland. They never owned a positive and active separation, but only that which Renwick calls a "negative separation, passively considered,"—a standing apart from a declining and corrupt portion, ready to associate again when corruptions are confessed and removed. The Protestors of 1708 maintained the same attitude; the closing sentence runs thus: "Finally, that we may not be judged by any as persons of an infallible spirit, and our actions above the cognizance of the judicatories of Christ's appointment, we appeal to the first free, faithful and rightly constituted Assembly in this Church, to whose decision and sentence in

the things libelled against us, we willingly refer ourselves, and crave liberty to extend and enlarge this our Protestation, Declinature, and Appeal, as need requires."

More than once Mr M'Millan in later years sought access to the Presbytery of Kirkeudbright, but was refused. The following extract from their Minutes is confirmatory of the statements we give below, and indicates the attitude of the Presbytery towards him:—"5th April, 1715, Mr M'Kie (M'Millan's successor) representing that the disorders in Balmaghie still continue, and that Mr M'Millan still exerciseth all the parts of the ministerial work there, as if he was not deposed from that sacred office, and that hitherto nothing had been done effectually to suppress and redress such disorders and insolencies, though application hath been made again and again to the Lords of the Justiciary," &c. Complaint is made that a warrant for the apprehension of parties who had been engaged in a riot, was not put in execution, and the Presbytery orders a letter to be sent to the Steward Depute "desiring him to put the said order in execution; certifying him that if he fail so to do, the Presbytery will reckon themselves obliged to represent him to the Justiciary for his neglect." We confess that it may be a question whether the Presbytery meant to call in the aid of the civil power to prevent Mr M'Millan from exercising his ministerial functions at all, or whether they only desired to have him ejected from the church, manse and glebe of Balmaghie, and to have the parties dealt with according to law, who forcibly prevented Mr M'Kie from obtaining possession of these.

So ended Mr M'Millan's dealings with the ecclesiastical Courts; yet it was many years before he ceased to have some connection with the Church in other matters, as we find from the manuscript narrative of the events that transpired in Balmaghie, all of which sprang out of his treatment by the Church. It describes a course of disorderly and illegal proceedings continued for years, such as shows how different is the

state of society now from what it was in the early part of last century, and in what slight respect law and order were held even by men who reckoned themselves the defenders of religion. After Mr M'Millan acceded to the Societies in 1706, the people of Balmaghie adhered to him as firmly as before. With the assistance of the Whigs or Society people of the district, they prevented the Presbytery from taking possession of the church. In 1708, application was made by the Presbytery and heritors to the Lords in Council at Dumfries, "craving the benefit of law to put Mr M'Millan out of his hot nest"; and though the Depute of the Stewartry went to Balmaghie with a body of 100 mounted gentlemen, the adherents of the deposed minister gathered in such numbers, determined to resist, that, not wishing to use violence, he was constrained to retire, protesting that he had been stayed in his duty. In 1710, the Presbytery ordained Mr M'Kie to the vacant charge, in the church of Kirkcudbright; only nine parishioners concurred in the call, while eighty-four heads of families, besides young men, protested against it. Two years afterwards the new minister obtained possession of the church for a time, during Mr M'Millan's absence on his preaching tour among the Societies. When Mr M'Kie's friends attempted to plough the glebe, a regular skirmish took place between them and the opposite party, and the former were driven off. By and by an agreement was come to, that during M'Millan's absence the other party should have the use of the church, the former retaining the manse and glebe. "And so," this narrative continues, "one heritor with Mr M'Kie and his party concluded and builded a meeting-house which was called 'The House of Rimmon,' and there they worshipped, and troubled the Kirk no more,—Mr M'Kie taking a wife, and a certain gentleman's own dwelling-house and grounds, which was enclosed with a park, lying hard by the House of Rimmon, and there he rested, never expecting the Kirk and Manse." There was a cessation of the turmoil for many years; but it appears that in the end Mr M'Kie obtained a

decree from the Court of Session against M'Millan for the rent of the glebe for seventeen years at 100 merks per annum. The latter was constrained to leave the place ; and as indirect confirmation of the fact, we find from the "Conclusions" that in 1729, the General Meeting agreed to provide him with a house elsewhere, at an expense of 1000 merks. That this was a disappointment to the people of Balmaghie is evident from the concluding sentence of the narrative we have followed : "Yet, notwithstanding, the people offered to come between Mr M'Millan and Mr M'Kie for it (the rent) and stay with them ; and it became a very great grievance with those which had been his adherents all along, to leave the Kirk of his own accord, when both Kirk and State had quite given over, seeing Providence had defended him and them through their conflicts which he and they had for about the space of twenty-four years, of which this is but a part." It is due to the United Societies to say that they had no responsibility for these proceedings, though individual members may have abetted them. The parishioners of Balmaghie may have been moved to act as they did under the belief that the parish church was their own, and that they had a right to admit or exclude whomsoever they pleased. Such an idea was entertained in much later times, of which we have an instance in the "Lives of the Haldanes." During Mr Haldane's evangelizing tour in Shetland, the people, believing they had a right to do so, forced their way into the parish church, which had been closed against the evangelist ; he, however, declined to enter, and preached from the threshold to the congregation inside the building.

So far as we are aware, this is the only instance in the South of Scotland in which a parish minister was kept out of church, manse, and glebe by the people, and compelled to worship in a meeting-house built by friends. In those unsettled times such a thing was not unknown in the north, where the Episcopalians, sustained by the lairds, kept possession of the churches, and the Presbyterian pastor and his people

had to provide for themselves elsewhere. No mention is made of the matters we have now referred to, in the records of the General Meeting. Considerable interest was shown regarding Mr M'Millan's connection with the elders of Balmaghie parish, with whom he still held fellowship, though it does not appear that they had joined the Societies ; but no notice is taken of the fact, that their minister continued to enjoy part of the fruits of a benefice to which he had no legal claim. A community that openly disowned the authorities both in Church and State, that refused to acknowledge the obligation of the laws passed by these authorities, or to recognize or support them in any way, might not regard it as a serious fault to retain possession of property which, in their view, belonged to the party that truly represented the Church of Scotland in its purest times, and that was what the United Societies claimed to be.

Section Third.

As faithful witnesses for the Covenanted Reformation in Church and State, the Societies were observant of every public event that seemed to be a fresh defection, or to throw a new obstacle in the way of the realizing of the ends of the Covenants. Of this nature was the incorporating Union between England and Scotland, accomplished in 1707. Every one acquainted with the history of the period knows with what intense dislike the proposal was regarded by the great body of the Scottish people. With some the opposition was mainly political,—it would destroy the independence and commercial interests of the kingdom ; with others it was religious,—it would endanger the Presbyterianism of the country ; but with the greater portion, both elements were combined. To the last class the Societies belonged ; and they gave special prominence to their conviction, that it would render more difficult the establishment of Presbytery in England, to which the Solemn League bound them. After mature deliberation, a

Protest was published at Sanquhar, on 2nd October, 1707, under the title: "A Protestation and Testimony of the United Societies of the witnessing Remnant of the Anti-popish, Anti-prelatick, Anti-erastian, Anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, against the sinful incorporating Union with England and the British Parliament." Happily, the fears then entertained for the most part proved groundless; the Union has been a great boon to Scotland; and if England still continues Episcopalian, it is not because the Union has prevented efforts for her conversion. It was, moreover, held by many besides the Society people, that the Union implicated Scotland in the support of Episcopacy and the royal supremacy in England. This was brought home more directly by the oaths of office that were imposed after the Union. These were to be taken not only by civil functionaries but by all ministers of the Gospel; and as many in the Established Church refused to do so, a controversy arose between the *jurants* and *non-jurants*. The main reason for refusing to swear was, that as the Oath of Allegiance was regarded as reduplicating on the Coronation Oath, it directly bound the swearer to uphold the Prelatic Church and the Sovereign as its Head. This is the ground taken in a pamphlet by a member of the Established Church¹; and in support of his contention he points out that, when the House of Lords passed a measure which, by the change of a word in the preamble of the Oath, would have relieved the Presbyterians from their perplexity, the House of Commons refused to adopt the change on the express ground, that the Oath so changed would afford no security to the Church of England. These offensive Oaths, together with the restoration of patronage in 1712, and the Test and Corporation Acts, fortified the position of the Societies, and gave fresh reasons for their protest against the Erastianism of the State, and the guilty supineness of the Church in submitting to these encroachments.

There is another matter connected in part with the Union to

¹The Oath of Abjuration Displayed, 1712, pp. 12, 13.

which reference may be made. Amid the excitement which preceded and followed that event, there was much secret plotting among the enemies of the Government. The Jacobites were anxious to take advantage of the state of public feeling for their own ends, and it has been stated by some recent historians, that the Cameronians concurred in these plots, and were ready to join hands with the Jacobites to bring about another revolution. This charge rests solely on the authority of Ker of Kersland, whose "Memoirs of His Life" were published in 1727. This author asserts that he and Cunningham of Eeket had ingratiated themselves with the Cameronians, and had engaged them to raise 5000 men, who were to march from Sanquhar to meet the Duke of Athole, by whom the Jacobites in the north were to be raised. Ker, who avows that he was a spy in the pay of the Government, at the proper time revealed the plot to his masters, and had next to prove his skill by persuading the Cameronians not to persist in their attempt. Again, when in 1708 a French invasion was talked of, Ker informed the French envoy that 5000 Cameronians and 7000 Presbyterians were ready to join the invaders; he then went to London and told the Government there, that these same parties were ardent in their desire to fight in its defence. He cannot surely be regarded as a very trustworthy authority. The account which Ker gives of the people with whom he claims to have been so thoroughly acquainted is very curious. It is to the following effect:—"They are strictly religious, and ever act on that principle, making war a part of their religion, and converting State policy into points of conscience. They fight as they pray and pray as they fight, making every battle a new exercise of their faith, and believe that in such a case they are as it were under the banner of Christ. If they fall in battle they die in their calling, as martyrs in the good cause, and believe that in thus shedding their blood they finish the work of their salvation. From such articles and maxims of faith, the Cameronians may be slain, never conquered. Great numbers of them have lost

their lives, but few or none yielded. On the contrary, wherever they believe their duty or their religion calls for it, they are always unanimous and ready, with undaunted spirits and great vivacity of mind, to encounter hardships, attempt great enterprises, despise dangers, and bravely rush on to death or victory.”¹

If this be a true account of the Cameronians, then we have never met with them ; with the change of a few words it might stand for a tolerable description of the followers of Mohammed. One would imagine that the writer is speaking of some war-like independent tribe, oft engaged in fierce conflict ; whereas we know that from the time they became a separate party, the Cameronians never fought a battle, except at Airmoss ; for it is not of the Cameronian Regiment that he writes, but of the Society people in the West and South of Scotland, and they assuredly had lived peaceably for more than forty years before these “Memoirs” were published. It is beyond measure absurd to speak of “war as a part of their religion,” and of dying in battle as “finishing their salvation.” When not positively untrue, what this writer says of the party, of which he is credited by some historians with being a leader, is grossly extravagant. As to his leadership, it exists so far as we have found only in his own book. And this is not the only mistake as to leaders made by the historians referred to. One of them² speaks of Hepburn as the clerical leader of the Cameronians, and first encouraging them to rebel and then informing the Government of it. The undoubted fact is, that so far from being a leader, Hepburn never was a Cameronian at all, and the Societies with which he was connected were quite distinct from those that we have been dealing with since 1681. As to Ker, he was not a member of the Societies, he was never present at the General Meeting ;³ and his name never occurs in the “Conclusions” except on 7th August, 1727, when a

¹ Pictorial History of Scotland, Vol. 2, p. 8:7.

² Pictorial History, Vol. 2, p. 823.

³ Reformation Principles Re-exhibited, 1787, pp. 418-22.

Committee was appointed by the General Meeting to vindicate the Societies from the aspersions cast upon them in his book. It is ridiculous to suppose that this party could at any moment raise five or seven thousand men ready for war; for while in the "Conclusions" there were for a considerable time frequent references to arms and rendezvousing, yet the warning given in Aug., 1715, against appearing in small numbers and thus revealing their weakness, points to something very different from the conscious strength which Ker ascribes to them. We may quite freely own that they had not quite overcome the fear that they might yet be called upon to defend their rights and liberties; they lived in troublous times when there was much discontent at home, and they knew not what sudden emergencies might arise. And then the cool audacity of the assertion that those who bewailed the formation of the Cameronian Regiment as a sad defection, and condemned in the strongest manner all association with malignants, should propose to join hands with Jacobites, Papists and Prelatists, is very astonishing. They disowned the existing Government, they detested the Union, but they were too fastidious of their company to associate with such. It is evident from the "Conclusions" of August and October, 1715, that the Societies were resolved to occupy a neutral position with reference to the rebellion of that year, and to make that known by a formal Declaration. It is strange to find any one attaching historical value to statements which have no other foundation than the assertion of an avowed spy and deceiver, and are contrary to all the probabilities of the case. Burton has evidently some misgivings as to the worth of Ker's statements, and does not think that the Cameronians were such fools as to be deceived in the way that Kersland represents.¹

The next important event in the history of the Societies was the renovation of the Covenants at Auchinsauigh in 1712. The matter had been under consideration for some time; the

¹ Burton's History of Scotland, Vol. 8, pp. 160-4: 201-2.

difficulties which some felt about the expediency of the act were removed; an "Acknowledgement of Sins," and an "Engagement to Duties," adapted to existing circumstances, were drawn up, and in August, 1712, the service was carried through. It was feared at first that the authorities might interfere with them in the work, but no hindrance was thrown in their way. The spot chosen was in the parish of Crawfordjohn, in the moorland region of Upper Clydesdale; it was far enough removed from any great centre of population, but was convenient for the scattered Societies. A very great concourse of people assembled; many were doubtless drawn by mere curiosity, but to the genuine Covenanter it was a scene of engrossing interest. The services occupied two days, and very long they must have been. Besides devotional exercises, there were on the first day, a sermon by Mr M'Neil, exhortations by Mr M'Millan, followed by the reading of the "Acknowledgement of Sins," which in its printed form extends to 41 quarto pages of small type; and on the second day, a sermon by M'Millan, the reading of the "Engagement to Duties" (a much shorter paper), personal confessions of sins against the Covenant, the swearing of the Covenant, article by article, followed by further exhortations. The account of the entire services was afterwards published in a pamphlet of 64 closely printed pages, in which opportunity is taken to correct some mis-statements, and answer some unfriendly criticism respecting the solemn act. The Covenants, as renewed at Auchinsaugh, had certain marginal corrections introduced, so as to conserve the position of the Societies in refusing to own the British Government. Thus in all places where, in the original document, mention is made of the king, on the margin it is corrected by such words as these,—"The lawful supreme magistrate," "The lawful supreme magistrate when obtained." These changes were afterwards characterized by Adam Gib as swearing prophetically, or giving a prophetic meaning to the words, and he strongly doubts the propriety of men calling God to witness their fidelity to a magistrate

that had no being in the world. The "Acknowledgement" is a long detail of public defections and prevailing sins; and if we may take this document as reflecting with a measure of accuracy the state of public morals at the period, and in this respect it is too sadly corroborated from other sources, it is evident that the condition of society must have been lamentable indeed. Much as there is still around us at the present day that is fitted to awaken grief and shame, yet have we reason to be thankful that in many things there is a vast improvement. The "Engagement to Duties" contains some strong expressions regarding the relation of the Cameronians to the Government, which a century later occasioned some controversy. Speaking of the civil power, it is declared that we "shall not corroborate their unjust authority by paying them cess and supply for upholding their corrupt courts and armies employed in an unjust and Anti-christian quarrel, or by compearing before their judicatories either to defend or pursue lawsuits, or upon any other account." This is sweeping enough certainly, but does not greatly differ from similar statements in preceding Testimonies.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated on the Sabbath following the Renovation of the Covenants, and this was the first occasion on which the ordinance had been observed since the Cameronians became a separate Community. The persecutions of the earlier part of this period, and the want of an ordained ministry for sixteen years after the Revolution, account for this so far; while the excessive amount of travelling and preaching that had devolved on Mr M'Millan, together with the extremely scattered condition of the Society people, had prevented any observance since he joined them. Yet we are not sure that the circumstances of their history, the state of the Church and society around, the flagrant violation of the ordinance by the admission of openly scandalous persons, and the imposition of the Sacramental Test for civil offices, may not have produced in these highly conscientious men such a sense of the solemnity of the

ordinance, and of the qualifications for its proper observance, as bordered on superstitious scrupulosity, and led them to regard it as a sacred privilege rarely to be ventured on, and even then rather with trembling and awe than with joy. At all events, though the subject is frequently referred to in the "Conclusions," the ordinance was not enjoyed again for more than thirty years.

The Auchinsauth Renovation was long regarded by the Cameronians as a memorable event; approbation of it was required of all who joined the Societies; and the Covenants as then renewed continued to be a Term of Communion till 1822. While thus looked upon by those most deeply interested, it is amusing to see the absurd way in which Burton in his History alludes to the event. There is blundering and exaggeration in much that he writes regarding the party all through, and scant sympathy is shown with what is highest and best in their Testimony; but his account of M'Millan and Auchinsauth is simply grotesque where not positively offensive and untrue. Passing by his statements regarding this "compact, jealous, organized body," "led by a divine impulse," marked by strong military enthusiasm, "fiercest of all sects," it is noticeable how he speaks of Cameronians within the Established Church, and defines the difference between these and those outside to be this,—the former are "content to be Covenanters themselves, and to require all Scotland to conform to their rule," while the latter are those who could join "no church organization which did not carry the Covenant in triumph over the three Kingdoms."¹ We do find many Covenanters within the Church, and afterwards among the Seceders, but neither of these adopted what was distinctive of the Cameronians—separation from the State. Mr Burton writes thus regarding M'Millan and the Auchinsauth Renovation: "M'Millan, like Hepburn, was besieged by a battery of ecclesiastical prosecutions, which he treated with contempt; . . . It appears that in 1711 the local church courts had deprived him of his

¹ History, Vol. 8, pp. 379, 380.

ministerial connection, but as his parishioners were devoted to him, a successor could not be installed, though he found it extremely difficult to obtain payment of his stipend. But such captious contests dwindled away before the days of glory at Auchinsaugh, which, to M'Millan, were something like what the day of the inauguration of the Supreme Being was to Robespierre . . . Thus was organized the first Secession from the Church of Scotland."¹ While not careful to defend every expression employed at Auchinsaugh, yet the allusion to Robespierre in connection with this Covenant Renovation, must shock all who know anything of the character of the men, and shows how incapable this historian is of realizing the true aims and spirit of the party that he holds up to ridicule. Apart from this, is it not the fact that M'Millan was deposed in 1703 and cast out of the Church in 1708, and his successor ordained in 1710? Is it not matter of history that the party that met at Auchinsaugh had never been within the Revolution Church, and consequently, the action there could not be the first Secession or any Secession at all? We trust that Mr Burton's statements on other subjects are more accurate and trustworthy than those respecting the Cameronians.

It is very plain even from the scanty records of the "Conclusions" of the General Meeting, that there was not a little discord within the Societies during this period. Some of these arose from the conduct of members who violated in one way or other the rules of the Societies. Taxpaying, obtaining trade licences, appearing in civil courts, had all been declared to be inconsistent with the Testimony and position of the Community; but it was found to be very difficult to prevent members from yielding under sore pressure on one point or other. It was hard for individuals to maintain a sort of chronic antagonism to the executive authorities; and the system of reparation enjoined by the General Meeting was a dangerous, and at best a very unsatisfactory form of relief.

¹ History, Vol. 8, pp. 239-242.

The duty of taking reparation from those who had unjustly dealt with any of the brethren, was urged as late as 1720, and in connection therewith the following minute occurs: "The General Meeting did allow the Correspondence of Galloway to write a letter to a certain gentleman who detains and thereby thinks to defraud one of our friends of a certain sum of money, desiring fair counting with him." This course was the only method available for obtaining justice, seeing that the parties wronged refused to have recourse to the ordinary courts of law. The restrictions laid upon the members as to their relations to civil authority continued to be the cause of ever-recurring irritation and dispute. Another occasion of trouble was, that in the dearth of faithful gospel preaching, many connected with the Societies were fain to wait occasionally on the ministry of such as were known to be earnest and evangelical. We are not sure that any of these were parish ministers; but it is certain that some who were in conflict with the Established Church and were driven out of it, were listened to by some of the Society people. We find frequent complaints of this, and warnings were issued by the General Meeting to those who heard Hepburn or Taylor, Gilchrist or Adamson, all of whom condemned the Church for neglect of Reformation principles and submission to Erastian encroachments, but did not adopt the full Testimony of the Societies: those who continued the practice were threatened with suspension. The same course was followed with respect to those who went to hear the preaching of the early Seceders. The feeling against "occasional hearing" lingered long, not only among the Cameronians, but among some sections of the Secession.

It seems certain that the conduct of Mr M'Millan himself gave rise to not a little discussion and keen feeling. Some had never been quite satisfied with him, but there were two points on which his conduct was distinctly called in question, and discussed at length in the Correspondences and General Meeting. One of these was his marriage by a

minister of the Established Church, which was certainly contrary to some former "Conclusions." Those present at the ceremony were taken to task, but Mr M'Millan himself would not submit. He refused to own that it was a sin, offered to submit the case to a competent Judicatory when that was obtained; and when the General Meeting declined to accede to this, he offered to return their call; but that could not be listened to. By and by the matter dropped out of view, and with it all further trouble to the Societies on that point. Another ground of offence that Mr M'Millan gave to some, was connected with the baptism of children of non-members or adherents. It is thus referred to, 31st Oct., 1720: "It being given from several Correspondences as a grievance, our minister, his admitting of persons to that sealing ordinance of baptism who are not of our communion, but free of public scandal that can be laid to their charge, save that of paying the cess, and who have no clearness to hear others or go along with them, the meeting judged that none are to have that privilege but such as are of our communion. Mr M'Millan not agreeing therewith, offers to send in his scruples for not concurring therewith to the next General Meeting." We have no doubt that there were many in the position of those here referred to; they were dissatisfied with the state of things in the Church, attended the private fellowship meetings, and enjoyed the preaching of Mr M'Millan. They practically adopted the Cameronian Testimony as against the Church, but did not accept the attitude assumed towards the civil power. The matter was agitated for some time. It is manifest that Mr M'Millan had considerable sympathy with the parties referred to; he dissented from the condemnation of his conduct, and, though the point is not quite clear, we are disposed to think that he still continued his former practice; at all events, it was long afterwards urged against him as a fault by the "non-hearers."¹

There can be no doubt that the greater part of the

¹ Appendix No. III.

annoyances that Mr M'Millan had to endure arose from his desire to give a more liberal interpretation to, and application of, the principles of the Testimony, and to infuse a more charitable feeling towards others around. His practice and his influence were directed towards the lessening of that extreme severity and rigidity which had grown upon the Societies during the preceding period, and hence the virulence with which he was spoken of by many of the more fanatical adherents of the Testimony. His position was somewhat peculiar, as the condition of the Community among whom he laboured was anomalous. As the only ordained minister he exercised all the proper functions of that office, and was associated with a body of elders. The Societies and Correspondences continued to meet as formerly, and the General Meeting still exercised a superintendence over the affairs of the Community; it discussed and decided all questions that came before it, whether relating to public action, or to the conduct of the minister or the members. The preachers were not members of the General Meeting, though they were generally present; they might give their opinion on debated points, but the decision of the Meeting was held to be the law of the Community. The management of public affairs was for the most part in the hands of the more zealous and active members, who exercised considerable influence over the others. It is easy to see how this state of things might tend to develop in some individuals a love of pre-eminence, an over critical spirit, and a jealous watchfulness with respect to the conduct of the minister, and to show this in a way that would not add to the comfort of the latter. Yet though he had his own share of troubles and vexations, we have every reason to believe, that on the whole, the widely scattered people to whom he ministered cherished towards him profound reverence, treated him with great respect and kindness, and set full value on his laborious self-denying services. Amid all contentions, the confidence of the General Meeting in him was unshaken. Questions are referred to him for his opinion;

documents are committed to him for correction or judgment; sometimes he is called upon to preside; keen sympathy is evoked by his severe illness; and as years advance there is a growing anxiety to find means of lightening his labours; altogether a deference is shown to "our reverend minister" which it is pleasing to observe. He was not a man to be tyrannized over by the fathers of the congregation; he was able, firmly and wisely, to hold his own; he carried on his work very much in his own way, so much so that some discontented persons accused the General Meeting of agreeing to certain things in order to please Mr M'Millan.

There was some difficulty in maintaining the fellowship meetings in full vigour; again and again there were urgent calls by the General Meeting to attend upon them; visitors were sent to examine and exhort, and all diligence was enjoined as to the admission of members. Even the General Meeting was sometimes thinly attended; nor is this to be wondered at when we consider the great distances to be travelled, and the extreme severity of wintry weather. Strict rules were laid down for the Meeting. It convened at seven in the morning, and those who came late were excluded for the whole of the day. A kindly brotherly feeling largely prevailed; and the "Conclusions" show how the whole body was interested not only in public questions, but in the support of the ministry, in sustaining young men at college, and in the care of the poor, even of particular individuals. On 4th Nov., 1719, we read, "Upon a petition given in by a poor infirm man in Galloway, the Meeting thought fit to make a collection for him, and to recommend his necessitous case to others in fellowship.

Though the Societies could not unite with Hepburn's party, nor with Taylor and Gilchrist, who were also contending for Reformation principles within the Church, yet they were moved with indignation when extreme measures were adopted against these ministers. When the Presbytery of Dumfries was about to excommunicate Gilchrist of Dunscore, the

General Meeting prepared a strongly worded protest against this procedure, but as it was addressed to "The pretended Presbytery," it could not be laid before the Court. Nor were they disposed to allow private individuals who insulted the memory of the martyrs to pass unnoticed. An old enemy of the Covenanted Cause had shown his continued hatred by destroying a monumental stone over a martyr's grave. This indignity called forth the following emphatic warning, which he would most probably feel constrained to give heed to ; it was addressed by the General Meeting to John Kirkpatrick, in Burnburghead, in Closeburn. "Mr Kirkpatrick. We, having received information from our friends in Nithsdale how you, retaining y^r old malignity and enmity ag^t y^e people of God, have in pursuance y^rof adventured to run y^e risque of meddling w^t y^e monument of y^e dead, demolishing and breaking y^e grave-stone of a sufferer for y^e cause of Christ, q^c is highly criminal in y^e eyes of y^e law, and is more qⁿ y^r neck is worth, and deserves just severity as bringing to remembrance yo^r old hatred and y^e hand you had in his sufferings, and now y^e seem to be longing for a visit for yo^r old murdering actions, q^c if y^e would evite, we straitly charge and command you upon yo^r peril to repair y^e stone, by laying one upon y^e grave, fully as good as ye former, w^t y^e same precise motto as well engraven, and y^t you perform y^e work w^t all expedition, and if it be not done ag^t May day first q^c is a sufficient time, we promise to pay you a visit, perhaps to your cost, and if you oblige us y^rto, assure y^rself y^t yo^r old deeds will be remembered to purpose, q^c to assure you of, we have ordered this to be written in presence of our Correspondence at Crawfordjohn, March 1, 1714, and subscribed in our name by Hu. Clark," etc.

Section Fourth.

With the more public utterances of the party during this time it is not needful to occupy much space. Besides the

Protest against the Union and the Testimony at Auchinsburgh, on the accession of George I., a "Representation of Grievances" was drawn up to be presented to the King by the Duke of Montrose. It went over the old dismal tale of sufferings and defections in Church and State, and besought the Prince to remedy them as the condition upon which allegiance would be given. Closely adhering to the old position, it is not addressed to the King as such, but to "The High and Mighty Prince, George Lewis Augustus, Elector of Brunswick . . . now proclaimed King of Britain and Ireland." This document caused great discord in the Societies, which continued for a long time; and considerable numbers withdrew altogether. The issue of the dispute was, that the General Meeting was afterwards constrained to disown it, and appoint a day of fasting and humiliation on account of it, and the divisions it had caused. It was not till 1718 that these agitations were so far quieted, as to admit of the publication of a Declaration in which the attitude of the Societies towards the Government, the Jacobites, etc., is fully set forth. Before this, however, in 1714, a most interesting book was published by the Societies. We have seen that for a long time they had been actively engaged, not only in erecting grave-stones, but in collecting the dying testimonies and other memorials of the martyrs, and now the result was issued. It is the "Cloud of Witnesses," which from the first received a very hearty welcome from the Scottish people, as a worthy embalming of the memory of men to whose fidelity and sufferings succeeding generations owe so much. It has passed through a great many editions, and is still being reprinted; and so long as it continues to be a household book among our Scottish people, the principles for which our ancestors suffered will not be forgotten, nor the liberty for which they struggled tamely surrendered.¹

A full summary of the Reasons for continued separation from the Established Church was issued in 1731; but passing that, reference should be made to a fresh statement of the

¹ Appendix No. IV.

position of the Societies which was given to the world in 1741. This was eight years after the rise of the Secession Church, and the Associate Presbytery had already published their Judicial Testimony. In that document, the fathers of the Secession claimed to be the representatives of the historical Presbyterian Church of Scotland; and the survey that it contained of the progress of the Reformation up to 1649, and of the decline from that date, as well as of the defects of the Revolution, so closely coincided in spirit and method with the view taken by the Societies, that it was felt to be necessary for the latter to re-state their position, and bring out the points wherein the Seceders came short of a full testimony for Reformation principles. The principal point of difference related to the attitude assumed by the Societies towards the British Government, which the Seceders did not adopt. The preparation of this Declaration was not laid upon Mr M'Millan, but upon two men often named in the "Conclusions," Alexander Marshall and Charles Umpherston. They were both men of education, and thoroughly qualified for the task committed to them. After receiving the sanction of the Correspondences and General Meeting, it was published on 7th May, 1741. It is known as the "Mount Herrick Declaration," and including the Preface, it extends to forty pages.

It maintains substantially the same testimony against Church and State, but presents it in a considerably modified form. It differs somewhat in tone from some earlier Declarations, and has less of that uncharitable judgment, of that harsh and intolerant spirit only too easily discernible in former utterances. It testifies against the way and manner of the investiture of civil rulers, without regard to Scripture qualifications or covenant engagements; but we have no repetition of the strong terms in which, for instance, Queen Anne was disowned. It condemns much of the more recent procedure of the Legislature; but it does not speak of "pretended Parliaments," whose Acts are null and void, nor of "pretended Courts" of justice; nor does it condemn all

taxpaying in the sweeping terms of the Auchinsaugh deed. Fresh acts of defection, on the part both of Church and State, are marked with condemnation. Among these, it is sad to find so emphatic a protest against the Act for repeal of the laws against witchcraft, which were a disgrace to the Statute Book, and also against the Toleration Act. The growth of the spirit of toleration has been very slow; and while it may be granted that much of the opposition arose from the form and manner in which it was given, yet we are constrained to believe that the high doctrine of the early Cameronians regarding civil magistracy and the moral law, would, if fully carried out, have involved as real persecution as that which their fathers had suffered. The Seceders protested in a similar way against both Acts. A considerable portion of this Declaration is occupied with a discussion of the doctrine of the Secession as stated in the "Judicial Act," regarding civil magistracy and their relation to the British Government. On these points the two parties were distinctly at variance; and while heartily acknowledging the great services of the Secession to evangelical religion, and the large measure of agreement in matters of testimony, their teaching on these subjects is emphatically repudiated. On these differences something more will require to be said by and by. There is in the Preface a rather curious protest against the Seceders for having built several considerable meeting-houses—the Cameronians as yet had none. Whether this was regarded as indicating a purpose of continued and positive separation, such as the Societies still repudiated, or whether it was condemned because involving a recognition of Government officials in the matter of titles and stamps, it is impossible to say. The general spirit of the Declaration may be gathered from these few sentences which occur near its close and are in full harmony with the spirit of the "Informatory Vindication,"—"To conclude, we declare our esteem of and love for all the godly in these lands, who have the root of the matter in them, and love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, who are studying

godliness and have sad hearts for the tokens of God's displeasure, and the sins and abominations procuring the same, notwithstanding of their not being of the same sentiments and mind with us as to some parts of our Testimony and practice thereanent, and to all such as feel a paining want and longing in their souls for the Lord's return to the hearts and souls of His people in His manifested Presence with Light and Life as in times past when He had His dwelling in this Zion hill."

The circumstances that led to the secession of the four brethren from the Established Church, and the erection of the Associate Presbytery in 1733, are well known. This event, which was the result, not of one particular act on the part of that church, but of a long course of defection, had a powerful influence on the religious life of Scotland, and was regarded with great interest by the United Societies. It cheered them to find other witnesses arising to bear testimony for principles so dear to them, and who were manifestly animated by the spirit of the Second Reformation. Even before the actual secession took place, a committee was appointed by the General Meeting on 15th February, 1733, to meet with Messrs Erskine and Wilson "to represent to them the equity and justice of the cause in maintaining a Testimony for the Covenanted Work of Reformation, and to desire of them earnestly to lay the same to heart, and that they were most willing to embrace them in the same cause—and to perpetuate the honest testimony of former contenders for the faith delivered to the saints." This was practically an invitation to these ministers to join the Societies; and it seemed to these honest faithful men, as if it required nothing more than a true representation of the case to secure this end. Not till March, 1734, was the report of this committee given in, and it was evident that no progress had been made; nevertheless, Mr Umpherston was requested to meet Messrs Erskine and Moncrieff, "for further converse with them and to show our sympathy and concern with them." Before the next General

Meeting in May, the Associate Presbytery had published the First or Extra-judicial Testimony, and a committee was appointed to meet with the Secession ministers at Stirling, with instructions to "peruse their Testimony, and make all their remarks as to their defects with reference to the Church—and also to lay out the state of our Testimony concerning the State—and prepare themselves to defend our principles." A set discussion was anticipated and doubtless took place, though friendly enough; and the result is given, though in a somewhat confused and obscure form, in the following "Conclusion," 5th August, 1734:—"They met with three of the said brethren, and conferred at length both anent their and our Testimony in which many things accord; but they and we could not agree, in regard they seem to be against certain parts of our Stated Testimony, such as to join with . . . and other compliers who approve their Testimony, and to own anti-covenanted or any that providentially are in the place of magistrates." Despite the blank in the record, and the not very clear mode of expression, there can be no doubt as to the meaning; the Secession brethren would not accept the doctrine of the Societies regarding the civil magistrate and the duty of disowning the existing Government. These were looked upon as vital parts of the Testimony, and this refusal interposed an insuperable bar to any immediate union, and so far as the records show, there were no more conferences, though in 1737 correspondence had not altogether ceased. The points in dispute became afterwards matters of keen and protracted controversy. The respect which the Society people cherished for the Secession fathers is shown by the fact that, after all conference between the parties had ceased, the General Meeting on 26th May, 1735, repudiated a letter addressed to Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, which contained "some very virulent and unbecoming expressions," and wrote to that gentleman asking him "to recognize no such letters unless signed by the General Meeting or their Commissioner."

The General Meeting repeatedly censured the conduct of

those members and adherents who waited on the preaching of the Seceders, denounced this practice as a violation of good order, offensive to many, inconsistent with fidelity to the Testimony, and declared that those who went to hear other ministers, by so doing excluded themselves from the Societies. It was long before the Cameronians could get over their prejudice against "occasional hearing," as it was called, and some branches of the Secession were almost as rigid on this point. It seems strange to us, how the mere fact of forming one of a general congregation, listening to the proclamation of a free Gospel, should be regarded as so heinous an offence as to entail exclusion from the fellowship of the Church; yet good men spoke and wrote in vindication of this procedure, as necessary to the welfare of the denomination and to a consistent adherence to it. Perhaps in these later times we are in danger of going to an opposite extreme, and regard too lightly the claims of denominational attachment. Besides condemning the practice, the General Meeting adopted measures for instructing the people more fully in the knowledge of their distinctive principles, and appointed deputies to visit and examine the Societies.

There is scarcely room for question, that the rise and progress of the Secession must have reduced the strength of the Societies very considerably. Hitherto they had enjoyed the sympathy of many who never joined them. Many of the more earnest Christian people, who relished the doctrines of grace, and in too many instances did not find these proclaimed from the pulpits of the Establishment, had waited on the ministry of Mr M'Millan when opportunity offered. To men of this class the position and preaching of the Associate brethren were admirably suited. They could enjoy the faithful preaching of the Gospel, free from all entangling questions about magistracy; and we cannot doubt that the bulk of this class of hearers would, in course of time, connect themselves with the Secession. There were many, too, within the Societies, whose chief reason for joining them was more closely

connected with the Testimony against the defections of the Church, than with the protest against the unscriptural constitution and administration of the State. These would not be indisposed to countenance the Seceders, and to actively sympathize with them in their struggle for purity of doctrine and the spiritual freedom of the Church. In this way the Societies would be weakened: but this at least may be said, that, while it was no small trial to the venerable M'Millan, the Societies had done an important work for the Gospel cause, in preserving and preparing a people in some districts to welcome the Secession when it arose.

In other matters, besides maintaining intact the testimony they had received, the General Meeting evinced a lively interest. It watchfully observed the course of things in the Church, its submission to patronage and the sad results that followed, the growth of Moderatism and of a cold, unevangelical style of preaching, its conduct of trials for false doctrine, and its treatment of the Marrow-men, and in these found fresh reasons for continued separation. The prevalence of evils and immoralities in society around called for consideration; and warnings were given against the excesses which accompanied marriage feasts and fairs, against the growing popularity of play-going, and other diversions held to be demoralising, and against profanity and the desecration of the Sabbath. It is painful to have to record the fact that, like their brethren of the Secession, the Societies issued a warning against encouraging that "vagrant prelatie priest," Mr Whitfield, and an equally strong condemnation of the Cambuslang revivals. Of the reasons given for this we need say nothing; but it is matter of regret that such declarations were given forth by Christian communities against a work which, though connected with some things not to be commended, is all but universally acknowledged to have been a genuine spiritual awakening. A wider experience has taught the Church the unwisdom of laying down hard and fast lines within which such unusual movements must operate; and a wider charity constrains to

recognize a genuine work of the Spirit, despite the presence of features that are fitted to startle and perplex some devout souls, who, it may be, have never known anything of the intense agony of spiritual awakening, such as has often been the experience of others.

Frequently in these old records we find a strong desire expressed for a more abundant supply of Gospel ordinances. It was impossible for the two preachers to minister in an adequate manner to so widely-scattered a people, and as Mr M'Neil was only a probationer, the removal of Mr M'Millan would leave the Societies again without a pastor, and it was felt to be most desirable, if possible, to prevent such a calamity. And thus it came to pass, that this strictest of all Presbyterian sects was driven to entertain projects for meeting their peculiar circumstances, that could hardly have been anticipated. According to Presbyterian theory, ordination is the act of the Presbytery alone; but in 1714 the General Meeting proposed that Mr M'Millan and his elders should proceed to ordain additional ministers,—in this closely approaching Episcopacy, in which ordination is the act of the Bishop. This proposal was carefully considered by the separate Societies and Correspondences; written pleas in favour of it and against it, with answers to objections, were drawn up; it was agreed to by the General Meeting and a majority of the Correspondences, but was laid aside at that time because of the want of entire unanimity. On the ground stated, that extraordinary circumstances warrant extraordinary measures, this proposal might be justified. Somewhat later it was revived. Among the Societies were several young men who had received a collegiate training with a view to the ministry, and mention is made in the "Conclusions" of a call to two of these along with Mr M'Neil; but again without result, through hesitation on their part as to this ordination by one man. Alarmed by a serious illness of Mr M'Millan, other methods were suggested for meeting the emergency, which savour a little of growing laxity on this point. There were

some ministers in the Established Church of known fidelity and devotion to Gospel truth, and who were in their own spheres contending for Reformation principles; could not one or other of these be induced to join M'Millan in the act of ordination? Several names are mentioned in this connection at different times—Taylor and Gilchrist, Fork of Killiallan, and Simpson of Morebattle—a friend of Thomas Boston; but no reference is made to Boston himself, his well-known hostility to the Societies sufficiently accounting for this. Later still, reference is made to Mr Archibald of Guthrie, who in 1726, in the Presbytery of Arbroath, bore open testimony to Mr M'Millan as a faithful Gospel minister, and declared his conviction, that all the ministers in Scotland should contend as zealously as he had done for Reformation principles. Individuals were appointed to confer with these parties, but with no result so far as concerned the object in view.

In the last "Conclusion" respecting conference with the Associate Presbytery, reference is again made to this subject. The Committee appointed to prepare a paper for this conference is instructed as follows:—"That the said Committee, in that same paper, shall lay out our necessitous case for Gospel ministers before them, that in case they shall not come the length of the espousing the whole of our Testimony for themselves, to see if they will give us their assistance for licensing and ordaining some of our number, that we may be supplied with Gospel ordinances, and that in consistency with our attained-to and sworn Reformation principles, as also in agreeableness to the practice of the Rev. Mr James Renwick and the Remnant in that period." It is curious here to notice, that while no member of the Societies could listen to the Gospel as preached by the Seceders without risk of being excluded, yet the General Meeting was willing that their minister should be associated with these same ministers in the solemn act of ordination, though, no doubt, under a protest of some sort or other. There was little hope of union, but clearly no bitterness of feeling had yet been engendered

between the parties. The Seceders were, however, too rigid Presbyterians to listen to such a proposal, if ever it was laid before them; and so this appeal *ad misericordiam* did not issue in any result such as was so ardently desired.

Mr M·Neil died in 1734, and Mr M·Millan was now about seventy years of age; and the Societies becoming more anxious than ever as to their prospects, were stirred to fresh efforts to obtain the much-needed aid to their venerable pastor. There is something pathetic in the last reference to the matter that occurs in the "Conclusions," of date 30th May, 1737. It reads like a final and almost despairing effort, and is to the following effect:—"The General Meeting again taking under their serious consideration that important affair of the succession of a Gospel ministry, means used hitherto proving ineffectual, our destitute and extraordinary case still continuing, and not knowing how soon we may be wholly deprived of the light we yet enjoy, give it as their unanimous mind, that our revered pastor call forth to the office of the holy ministry, Mr Charles Umpherston and Mr Alexander Marshall, whom we judge the most fit and qualified persons among us, being allowed teaching, and of known integrity in the cause of Christ." Both of these individuals were prominent and active members of the Societies, and were both employed in drawing up public papers of importance, especially the "Mount Herrick Declaration" of 1741. Mr Umpherston belonged to a family which, since the days of Renwick, had firmly adhered to the Covenanted Cause. His mother was that Helen Alexander of Pentland, who, in an account of some "Passages" in her life, relates the following:—"And when Mr Renwick was execute, I went and saw him in prison; and I said to him, 'Ye will get the white robes,' and he said, 'And palms in my hands.' And when he was execute, I went in to the Greyfriars' Yard, and I took him in my arms, till his cloathes were taken off, and I helped to wind him before he was put in the coffin." He was one of those students whom in 1699 the Societies designed to send

to Holland to obtain license and ordination from the Dutch Church, but in this they were disappointed. He afterwards settled as a surgeon in Pentland, and was closely identified with the work of the Societies for more than fifty years. His descendants continued in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, till well on in this present century. Mr Marshall was, as we shall find, the first licentiate of the Reformed Presbytery. Nothing, however, came of this final appeal of the General Meeting, and the matter is never again referred to. And so for a few years longer Mr M'Millan continued to labour on alone, to the utmost of his ability, among the scattered Remnant, till in the Providence of God, help came from an unexpected quarter. The circumstances which brought this long-desired relief will appropriately introduce our next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY—1743-1761.

Section First.

IN 1737, the Rev. Thomas Nairn, minister of the parish of Abbotshall, to which he had been ordained in 1710, acceded to the Associate Presbytery, and continued in that connection for five years. By that time it was manifest that he had adopted the principles of the "Old Dissenters," a designation frequently given at that time and afterwards to the community of which Mr M'Millan was minister. When the Presbytery, in preparing for the renovation of the Covenants, drew up an Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties, it was proposed to insert in the former the following paragraph:—"We desire to be humbled for the dangerous extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present civil authority over these nations, and subjection thereto in lawful commands, on account of the want of those qualifications which magistrates ought to have, according to the Word of God and our Covenants . . . and that some few carry their zeal against the defections and evils of the times, to the dangerous extreme of espousing principles in favour of propagating religion by offensive arms." This was directed both against the adherents of Mr M'Millan, and the small party of Active Testimony-Bearers who disowned him. Mr Nairn dissented from the proposal to adopt the above paragraph, and in December, 1742, tabled his "Reasons of Dissent." In this document he defends the Old Dissenters from the aspersions

cast upon them, and declares that they have never in any of their Declarations asserted “any principle sanguinary, dangerous, or destructive to government or the peace of human society.” He fully adopts their position with respect to the disowning of the existing Government, and condemns the manner in which the Associate Presbytery proposed to renew the Covenants, by leaving out all the sections in the Solemn League that referred to civil affairs. The Seceders vindicated themselves by pleading that, since the civil power was not a consenting party to this renovation, it did not behove the Church to meddle with civil affairs, and by taking the Covenant in its original form virtually make it an oath of allegiance. Mr Nairn held that this course was really setting aside the Covenants, and that they ought to follow the example given in the renewal at Auchinsaugh in 1712.

In February, 1743, the Associate Presbytery renewed its approval of the offensive paragraph, and required Mr Nairn to withdraw his “Reasons of Dissent;” this he refused to do unless the Presbytery would retract its charges against the Old Dissenters, and proceed to renew the Covenants after the Auchinsaugh model. When threatened with censure, he responded by tabling his “Protest and Appeal,” in which he says:—“I do further appeal from them (the Presbytery) to the first free and faithful judicatory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I hereby secede from the Presbytery;” and immediately left the court. Further proceedings against him will be noticed afterwards; meanwhile, a Committee was appointed to answer his “Reasons;” and this document, drawn up, we believe, by Adam Gib, the future leader of the Anti-burghers, is a very trenchant criticism of Mr Nairn’s statements, and ranks among the authoritative documents of the early Secession. A few months had brought this affair to an issue, and it is easy to foresee, now that he is free, in what direction Mr Nairn’s thoughts must turn.

The name of Mr Nairn is found only once in the “Conclusions” to which we have so often referred. It occurs in the

last of the regular series which we have followed for fifty years, and is dated 4th April, 1743. Notice is first taken of the reception into the Societies of some people in Edinburgh, who had protested and withdrawn from the Associate Presbytery and Mr Gib. It then introduces Mr Nairn in these terms:—“Having read the Rev. Mr Thomas Nairn, minister of the Gospel at Linktown, his paper entitled ‘An account of his secession from the Associate Presbytery and grounds thereof,’ and finding that our Testimony is followed therein and boldly asserted, with respect to the difference between the Associate Presbytery and us, which the meeting was greatly satisfied with, and thereupon resolved to give the said Rev. Mr Nairn a call as our pastor, which they did.” There can be little doubt that there had been some private communication between Mr Nairn and some parties in the Societies and Mr M’Millan himself, before such a step was resolved on, and the published statements of the former rendered any formal negotiations unnecessary. That being so, the General Meeting was not disposed to delay procedure, though feeling deeply the importance of the step proposed. This is manifest from the remainder of the minute, which is as follows:—“After which, it being moved by several of the Correspondents, if, now when we have two ministers of the Gospel—viz., the Rev. Mr M’Millan and Mr Nairn—they might, with elders, constitute themselves into a Presbytery for ordination and other acts of Church government and discipline, it was carried unanimously: but on account of the greatness of the work and difficulty to be apprehended to be therein, was taken into further consideration till the next General Meeting; that the whole of the elders attend the next meeting in regard of the last minute to give their judgment thereanent, and secrecy in the matter is strictly recommended to the whole community.” It is curious to observe this ever-recurring injunction of secrecy with respect to all sorts of business; it almost seems as if the Societies had not yet realized how entirely free they were from all interference and all hazard, in matters that concerned the Church and religion;

no one would dream of disturbing them in carrying through such purposes as that which they had now in hand. We have no record of the next meeting, but from another source we are made acquainted with the fact and the date of the formation of the Presbytery. In the preface to a sermon preached at the ordination of Rev. A. Marshall on 15th November, 1744, Mr Nairn says:—"The Rev. Mr John M'Millan and I, in conjunction with certain elders, upon the 1st of August, 1743, did erect ourselves into a Presbytery under the name of 'The Reformed Presbytery.'" This event took place at Braehead, in the parish of Dalserf, where M'Millan resided and where afterwards the Presbytery frequently met. It was not in any boastful spirit that this designation was adopted, but because it set forth the distinctive claim of the body in the simplest and briefest form. They were thorough Presbyterians in principle, and strongly held that this form of Church government was alone of Divine institution. The term "Reformed" was prefixed, to indicate that they claimed to stand in a specially close connection with the Presbyterianism of the Second Reformation, holding fast to all its attainments both in Church and State. Other designations were frequently given to them; henceforth, we shall only employ that which was formally adopted at the formation of the Presbytery.

This event marked a stage in advance of anything contemplated at the organization of the United Societies in 1681. The original purpose was, to stand apart for the time from the corrupt part of the Church of which they still claimed to form a constituent portion, and to wait till in the Providence of God, the way should be opened up by the removal of corruptions, for a coalescing of the partially-sundered sections. They did not dream of forming a separate and independent Church; they could not entertain the notion of more than one organized Church in the land,—that would have seemed to them destructive of the unity of the Church and liable to the charge of schism. On that subject the leading writers of the Scottish Church held very strong opinions, and regarded

separation on almost any grounds as a rending of the body of Christ. During the varied experience of the first 150 years of its history, controversies were carried on in the Church Courts against defections, but to split the Church into distinct denominations with independent jurisdiction was not thought of. And Renwick was careful, as we have seen, to define the position of the Societies as one of negative and passive, rather than positive and active separation. Doubtless the prolonged separation from the Established Church, with no apparent hope of a better state of things therein, together with the trying experience of the Societies in the interval, had gradually weakened the strength of this old conception of the Church. Then came the Secession and the formation of another ecclesiastical body alongside of the Established Church; and ten years later the Reformed Presbytery⁷ was erected. It was felt that in order to maintain and transmit a Testimony for vital truths, and uphold the regular and comely order of God's House, they were bound to take this step. What they regarded as all-important truths could not be consistently and fully maintained within the Church as established, and to do so efficiently outside—to do the work which the Head of the Church called them to do—they must take up a more decided position of separation, and stand before the world as a regularly organized ecclesiastical body.

The erection of a Presbytery marks an epoch in the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Not since 1650 had there been a General Assembly, and not since the Restoration had there been a Presbytery, which the Societies could own as a free and faithful judicatory. But now they possessed a superior Court which they could honestly and consistently submit to. Their anxiety for a succession of pastors might now be laid aside, for, though both the ministers were advanced in years, they were in a position to admit others into office. In the dwellings of the long-tried Covenanters, and in the separate praying Societies, devout thanks were doubtless rendered to the Head of the Church for the privilege now

enjoyed, and the brighter prospects now opened up. To the venerable M·Millan it must have been an occasion of profound interest and joy. For thirty-seven years he had stood all but alone in preaching, and wholly alone as the ordained minister of the Societies, and now help had come, and he was a member of a regular Church Court, through which the work of Christ could be more efficiently carried on.

The system of General Correspondences and General Meetings had served its purpose admirably well during the preceding sixty years, but it could not have stood the strain of the times that were approaching. It would have broken down amid the excitement of new controversies and the rise of new denominations, and under a process of slow disintegration the Societies would have become extinct. Under a regular Church organization there was free scope for all Christian energies, and a greater power of adaptation to the wants of the age, than could exist under the old system, which after all was designed only to meet the exigencies of a peculiar time. One would naturally expect that, after the erection of the Presbytery, the functions of the General Meeting would have come to an end; yet for a considerable time the meetings continued to be held. The associations of the past, and possibly the opportunities afforded for the free discussion of public matters, made many unwilling altogether to abolish them. Only a very few of the later Minutes are in existence. It is curious, however, to find such matters brought up for consideration, as are referred to in a Minute dated "Crawfordjohn, 3rd Monday of October, 1750." "After long reasoning about y^e administration of civil government q^{ther} it be in the hand of Christ as Mediator, yea or not; some were for the affirmative, others for the negative; the matter was recommended to y^e several Corrs to be under their consideration, and to give in their minds to next G.M. It was proposed whether tenants could pay cess in consistency w^t the Testimony, and be continued and taken into our community, it was unanimously voted they could not." Yet it is immediately

added, "some excused and defended the paying of it." We would have supposed that the first point referred to, which so largely involves the whole controversy with the Secession, could scarcely have come up for discussion at a General Meeting, or have caused any division of sentiment. The latest Minute we have seen is dated August, 1759; it records a desire for the consideration of the duty of Covenant Renovation, which was to be intimated to the Presbytery. It is uncertain at what date the General Meetings ceased; but the district fellowship meetings long continued to exist; fifty years after the time we have reached there were as many as twenty-four such praying Societies in connection with the congregation of Sandhills, near Glasgow.

The Minutes of Presbytery from 1743 to 1758 are lost, and all our information regarding this period is derived from other sources, and it is scant enough. In 1745 the Covenants were again renewed, after the same manner, we presume, as at Auchinsaugh. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was also observed at the same time. Many of the "tokens" that were used on this occasion are still in existence. They bear on the one side the date "1745;" and on the other, the letters "G.M.," which, to many people, are enigmatical, but doubtless stand for "General Meeting." In 1744 the Presbytery sent Messrs Nairn and Marshall to visit the Societies that had all along existed in Ireland, and with whom, hitherto, intercourse had been maintained by letter and deputies. They were now taken under the charge of the Scottish Court. Between 1744 and 1751 five young men were licensed and ordained to the ministry, one of whom, Mr Cuthbertson, went to America. As the Societies were not yet separated into distinct congregations, these ministers were all colleagues; but in all likelihood there was some arrangement as to spheres of labour. They were, in fact, ministers at large—ministers of the Societies of the Old Dissenters, under the care of the Reformed Presbytery. Neither had they any churches; religious services were generally held in the open air, at least in summer, in some

central spot; and that was often, after the fashion of other times, a remote and desolate place. On other occasions accommodation was found in barns or farm kitchens.

Before proceeding to notice the unhappy controversy which rent the Reformed Presbytery in 1753, we may refer to the further procedure of the Seceders against Mr Nairn. It gives a curious glimpse of the state of feeling that existed in those days of keen ecclesiastical controversy, and illustrates a mode of exercising Church power never dreamt of in modern times. When Mr Nairn joined Mr M-Millan in 1743, he was not only suspended by the Associate Presbytery, but was warned that unless he withdrew his "Reasons of Dissent," and retracted the opinions therein set forth, heavier censure would certainly follow. For several years nothing was done, the brethren of the Secession being then distracted by the Burgess Oath controversy; but in 1747 Mr Nairn's case was taken up by the Anti-burgher Synod. That body, under the leadership of the famous Adam Gib, having pretty strong notions as to the extent of Church power entrusted to it, was too conscientious to refrain from exercising it, however painful and unpleasant it might be. For two years a process had been carried on stage by stage against their brethren of the Burgher Synod; they had been suspended, then deposed and placed under the Lesser Excommunication, and now the solemn sentence of the Higher Excommunication was to be launched against them. At this point there is presented to view a singular instance of the intense earnestness of the men, unparalleled in later Church history,—the administration of what are called *privy censures* on the members of the Anti-burgher Synod itself. They have been guilty of faults and failings during the controversy, and they rise and make confession of these. Some confess to offensive heat of temper and unadvised language, others that they had at first supported the separating brethren, and others still to hesitations and shortcomings, and each party receives appropriate rebuke from the Moderator. Seven others who had been recently ordained are exhorted to steadfastness. The

scene closes with a diet of confession and prayer, after which they proceed to deal with the impenitent Burghers.

While engaged in this judicial process, Mr Nairn's case was taken in hand; had not he been for four years in rebellion against the Synod? So in November, 1747, a libel, containing two charges, was put into his hands. The first was that he denied and impugned the present Civil Authority and subjection thereto in lawful commands: the second was his "groundless and unwarrantable secession from the Associate Presbytery (now the Associate Synod), a lawful and rightly constitute Court of Christ, which is a heinous sin and scandal." Nairn appeared before the Synod in January, 1748, but not to confess and retract; on the contrary, he vindicated his conduct and declined the authority of the Synod, as Gib says, "in very absolute, audacious, and contemptuous terms." This was not to be borne; and as he disregarded the summons of the Court, he was next day deposed and placed under the Lesser Excommunication, with a warning of higher censure to follow if he continued refractory. There the matter rested till February, 1750,—these Anti-burghers had some patience with the impenitent and rebellious.

But there was more work to be done in the way of discipline on these refractory Cameronians. When Mr Nairn tabled his Protest and withdrew from the Synod, several of his friends were present, and they in a "tumultuary manner" declared their adherence, and one "indecently and audaciously" insulted the Court. More than that and worse: the officer of the Reformed Presbytery tabled copies of a libel by that Court against the Associate Synod, and summoned the latter to appear and answer it. No doubt it seemed to Adam Gib and his friends to be the height of audacity, thus to be defied in their own Synod by the representatives of this "pretended" Presbytery; but they were equal to the occasion, and took prompt measures to vindicate their rights. Ministers and elders of the Presbytery were summoned: and failing to appear, they were deposed for the opinions they avowed, and

for presuming to frame such a libel, which was a most audacious insult to the authority of a Court of Christ. This assumption of authority, on the part of both Synod and Presbytery, over those who were notoriously beyond their ecclesiastical jurisdiction, is in one aspect somewhat amusing; but otherwise the whole procedure and the spirit revealed on both sides, are very sad and humiliating, and doubtless greatly embittered the feelings of both parties. Long afterwards, Mr Gib, in his "Display," could condescend to vindicate the action of his Synod, by a very strange interpretation of Scripture.¹ Nothing further was done with those referred to above, but Mr Nairn's case was brought to an issue in February, 1750. Already the Synod had pronounced final sentence on three of their former brethren, and on this occasion they are to deal in a similar manner with other nine. One more is a matter of little consequence to these unflinching disciplinarians; and so Mr Nairn, who has shown no signs of penitence, is visited along with these others with the sentence of the Greater Excommunication. What that sentence imports, some may not distinctly understand; it declares that those who are thus excommunicated are cast out of the communion of the Church of Christ, are to be regarded as of those whom the Lord Jesus commandeth to be holden by all and every one of the faithful as heathens and publicans, and who are delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. We wonder how, with all their strong convictions of the truth of their opinions regarding the Burgess Oath, these worthy Anti-burghers could pronounce such terrible words respecting such men as Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, or even Thomas Nairn. They could not but know, that the sentence would be altogether disregarded by all except the adherents of the Synod, and doubtless also even by some of them.

¹ Gib's Display, etc., Vol. II., p. 111-118.

Section Second.

There are only two other matters that seem to claim any notice within the period now under consideration. One of these is the controversy respecting the Atonement, which produced a Disruption of the Reformed Presbytery in 1753. The Minutes, as we have already mentioned, have disappeared, but the published statements of both sides are extant, and these give sufficient information for the purpose of this narrative. The controversy was occasioned by the publication in 1749, of a posthumous work by the Rev. James Fraser of Brea. It was prepared for the press by the Rev. Thomas Mair, minister of the Associate Congregation at Orwell; and although some doubts were entertained by the Seceders regarding its authorship, it is generally accepted as the genuine work of Fraser. Its publication produced considerable commotion, not only in the Reformed Presbytery, but in the Associate Synod, for Mr Mair adopted many of the opinions it contained, and was on that account deposed. The author, who was closely related to the house of Lovat, was held in high repute by the evangelical party in the Scottish Church. He had suffered much for his faithfulness during the persecution, and was the author of a work condemnatory of those who waited on the ministry of the curates or Indulged Presbyterians, which was republished in 1744. After the Revolution he became minister of the parish of Culross, and died in 1698. He was a man of deep personal piety, and an earnest preacher. Thomas Boston, who, while a tutor in the neighbourhood, came into contact with him, refers to him in his Memoirs in terms of high appreciation. He possessed considerable mental ability, and had passed through a peculiar spiritual experience, of which he has given an account in a work which has been republished in our own day. In some respects he was so singularly constituted that, holding extreme Calvinistic views on other points, he labours in the work first referred to, and

which is entitled "A Treatise on Justifying Faith," to establish a theory of Universal Atonement. It is essentially the old Arminianism, but it is presented by Fraser in a new form, and with some startling additions. We take a brief summary of it as given by a very competent hand, the Rev. Dr Walker, in his "Theology and Theologians of Scotland," p. 48-9:—"He asserts 'that Christ obeyed and died in the room of all as the head and representative of fallen man;' that 'men are all fundamentally justified in Him and through Him.' 'That Christ died for all.' But, then, are all men saved? No; God did not mean to save any but His chosen. What, then, was the effect of that one indivisible sacrifice for all which God's Son offered on the cross? Well, first of all, to lay a real foundation for the Gospel offer. For every man was satisfaction rendered, and every man might appropriate it as something subjectively real. Is it simply the old story of a conditional salvation? Not at all. Fraser scorns the notion of conditional redemption and salvation. Men take, he says, low and insufficient views of the Saviour's work when they think it had respect to human happiness alone. The manifestation of God's justice and grace is its last and highest end. And this, according to him, is the glory of His scheme. It lays a basis for a Gospel in which reprobates as well as the elect can be asked to believe, while they are not, as the elect, brought under a divine appointment unto life; and hence, too, it follows that, in their free rejection of what is simple verity, they become liable, not to law, but to Gospel wrath and vengeance; and the same blood which magnifies God's grace exceedingly, magnifies essentially His justice. It comes to this, in short, Fraser plainly states it, that Christ dies for reprobates that they may come under a more tremendous doom; as, on the other hand, he dies for the elect that theirs may be an all-transcendent blessedness."

It seems certain that the party who seceded from the Reformed Presbytery did not accept Fraser's scheme in all its parts; but that they did accept the doctrine of a universal

satisfaction is beyond question. From the pamphlets that were published by both parties, we are enabled to mark with some measure of accuracy the difference that existed between them. Both held the reality and the infinite value and sufficiency of the satisfaction of Christ, that this satisfaction infallibly secured the salvation of the elect, that the Gospel was to be offered freely to all men, and that the efficacious, irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit was necessary to persuade and enable men to embrace this offer. Both denied that Christ had obtained for all men sufficient subjective grace whereby they can believe unto salvation, and both accepted the statement of Boston and the Marrow-Men regarding Christ as the official Saviour of the world, and as given of God by deed of gift or grant to mankind sinners. But along with these there were well-marked differences. Those who left the Presbytery maintained with respect to the satisfaction of Christ, that it was "clothed with a two-fold divine appointment, the one general, the other special. In the former sense Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind, so that His satisfaction may be sustained as the legal ground and meritorious cause for which mankind should be admitted into a state of probation, declared capable of receiving an offer of life and of salvation, and upon which they should be authorised to rest and plead for their deliverance from their guilt and misery. On the other hand, the satisfaction of Christ as clothed with a special appointment, is the legal ground and meritorious cause for which a chosen number of mankind shall certainly be saved." The Presbytery denied any such two-fold appointment of the satisfaction of Christ, and held that it was offered exclusively for the sins of the elect and secures their salvation. The seceding party held that the ground and reason upon which faith is founded is the general appointment of Christ's satisfaction as made for the sins of mankind; while the Presbytery held that it is the command of God to believe in Christ as able to save; the former based the universal offer on the universality of the satisfaction, though in this view it

secured nothing, while the latter rested it on the infinite sufficiency of the satisfaction and the gracious invitation and command of God to receive it. On another related point long controverted they also differed; for the seceding party held that common benefits, enjoyed by reprobates as well as by the elect, were the purchase of Christ by his death. This was denied by the Presbytery, by whom it was maintained that these benefits as enjoyed by the non-elect, "are rather to be accounted consequents following upon Christ's Purchase than proper Effects thereof as to them;" while Durham is quoted with approbation when he asserts, that in the case of Christ's own people, these outward favours are not only consequents but properly purchased Fruits of Christ's Death. The leader of the Anti-burghers put this matter perhaps more strongly than the Presbytery would have approved. He would not speak of common material benefits enjoyed by wicked men as consequents of Christ's death, but as proceeding from God as the great Creator and Preserver of men; and he is said to have uttered these emphatic words from his own pulpit—"Here stand I, Adam Gib, who was never indebted to the blood of Christ for a cup of cold water." Such is a general view of the main points in this dispute; and it can hardly escape notice how closely the opinions held by the less orthodox part of the Presbytery, resembled those that were the cause of keen discussion about fifty years ago in the United Secession Church, in which something like a two-fold satisfaction, under the form of the general and special reference of the Atonement, had a very prominent place. In earlier Reformation discussions it was called Amyraldism, and seems largely to have its root in anxiety to present, as was thought, a more satisfactory basis for the general Gospel call.

It is not necessary to enter into full details regarding the controversy within the Reformed Presbytery. As early as 1749, shortly after the publication of Fraser's book, the Presbytery agreed to four propositions in opposition to errors contained in it. One of these was, "That the Lord Jesus

Christ represented and died upon the cross only in the room and stead of a select number of mankind." The most prominent part in the agitation within the Reformed Presbytery was taken by the Rev. James Hall, who was licensed in 1750. Even before that time he had been suspected of holding the new opinions, and he was afterwards very zealous in propagating them. This was a great grief to the venerable M'Millan, now over eighty years of age; and being unable to be regularly present in the Presbytery, he communicated his fears and anxieties to his brethren by letter. It would seem that some of the younger members treated him with scant respect, and made himself and his zeal for the old views the subjects of banter and ridicule, even as after his death they endeavoured to cast upon him the responsibility of the discord and division, and charged him with trying to force his own opinions upon his brethren. Matters grew worse during the next two years, and in November, 1752, it was agreed to take up the whole subject formally at next meeting. When the Presbytery met in Edinburgh on 7th April, 1753, only four ministers and five elders were present; Mr Nairn had fallen under scandal, and had left the Church. Mr Marshall was ill, and Mr Cuthbertson had gone to America.

After a discussion on the opinions of Fraser and the doctrine of a universal satisfaction, which lasted till late on the following evening, it was agreed that the state of the question upon which the decisive vote was to be taken, should be the following:—"Whether Mr. Fraser's maintaining that the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind, so that His satisfaction may be competent to be proposed to them in the Gospel, and pleaded by them for their justification; and that this satisfaction is the Ground and Formal Reason upon which faith is founded, be a dangerous doctrine?" By a majority of five to three it was declared to be dangerous; the two M'Millans and three elders voted on the one side, and Mr Hall and two elders on the other; Mr Innes was Moderator, but went with the minority. Failing next day to obtain a

reversal of the decision, Mr Hall gave in a paper in his own name and in the name of his adherents, in which he protested that the decision was null and void because of the absence of two members, and because it overturned an important article of the Christian faith, and proceeded thus:—"Therefore the Rev. Messrs Hall and Innes, Moderator, and Messrs Reid and Cameron, Clerk, being the essential parts of the Presbytery, do protest that the passing of the above vote is null and cannot be a judicial decision." Their action with respect to a petition craving the suspension and censure of the majority, and the avowal of Mr Hall that the minority looked upon themselves as the Presbytery, startled the others, who never anticipated such outrageous procedure, and were anxious to sist all further action till next meeting. This arrogant assumption was followed by a piece of sharp practice. In the temporary absence of some members of the majority, the Protestors hurriedly closed the meeting, and in spite of a prompt protest, immediately left the place, carrying with them all the Presbytery records, which have never been recovered.

It is hardly necessary to characterize the conduct of the minority. They assumed the name of the Reformed Presbytery of Edinburgh, and published a pamphlet entitled "A True State of the Difference, etc.," in which an attempt is made to vindicate their procedure and their doctrine. Of this Presbytery Adam Gib says "That it was wholly constituted on the ground of universal redemption, and that its absurd constitution was good enough for their cause." Of the narrative part of the pamphlet the same writer says, that it affords strong presumption that truth could not follow in the doctrinal part, the narrative being chiefly made up of self-evident and atrocious calumnies abundantly poured out upon old Mr M'Millan. And as to the doctrine, it is taught with a high degree of sophistical ignorance and presumption.¹ An "Examination" of the pamphlet was published in 1754, in which Mr M'Millan, sen., is vindicated from the odious calumnies heaped upon him,

¹ Gib's Display, Vol. II., p. 134-136.

and the doctrine in dispute is fully discussed. It was prepared by a member of Presbytery, and in the Minute prefixed to it Presbyterian sanction is given to it in these terms:—"Likeas the Presbytery hereby do approve of the said Draught, as a vindication of their Conduct and Principles on the Ground of Difference; and appoint the same to be published." Nothing is said of the writer of this "Serious Examination;" but on various grounds we are disposed to look upon it as the work of the younger M'Millan. At the time it was prepared there was no other clerical member of Presbytery in a position to do this; (and a pamphlet on the other side ascribes it to a clerical author;)—Mr Marshall was in ill health, and the elder M'Millan was dead before its publication. Besides this, the intimate acquaintance which the writer displays with the opinions, feelings, and letters of the latter, and with all the details of the discussions and debates, together with the suppression of his own name on several occasions when he is undoubtedly referred to, strongly support the belief that the younger M'Millan was the writer; and certainly it is no discredit to him, either as to the tone that pervades it, or his knowledge of the subject, or ability to deal with it. Hall has also been charged with controverting another of the propositions adopted by the Presbytery in 1749, "that Dominion is not founded on Grace;" but this is only slightly referred to in the "Examination," and he is not directly charged with rejecting it. But in a protest by the "Active Testimony-Bearers," Hall and his friends are charged with doing this, and are condemned by this extreme section of the Old Dissenters. The controversy continued for some time after the separation, but ere long died away.

We do not know very much regarding the history of the party that left the Reformed Presbytery. There is nothing to show that the heresy had obtained any very serious hold on the Community. A Presbytery was formed and a few preachers were licensed, one of whom was located in Glasgow and another in Fife; but the cause evidently did not prosper. Ere long

dissensions broke out among themselves; some adherents had from the first rejected a part of the Westminster Confession, and the Second Head of the Informatory Vindication; and now further differences emerged on the subject of Church Communion and on other points. An agreement was patched up for a time, but matters went from bad to worse, till a principal leader among them professedly deserted all testimony-bearing for a covenanted reformation. The party got split up into fragments; and as showing the downward tendency of error, there is some ground for believing that some of this party resiled so far from their original position, as to become associated with the first Unitarian congregation formed in Edinburgh. The sphere of Mr Hall's labours appears to have been mainly in Edinburgh, where he died in 1798. He had no successor; and the church in which he preached was purchased in 1809 for the congregation of the Rev. W. Goold, father of the Rev. W. H. Goold, D.D. Mr Innes seems to have laboured in Fife, and died in 1765. The Presbytery formed by these Seceders continued to exist, as extant minutes show, till 1817, but seems soon after to have become extinct.

Shortly after this disruption which so much reduced the strength of the Presbytery, and while the painful controversy still distracted the minds of the people, the venerable John M'Millan passed away to his rest. He died at his residence at Braehead, in the parish of Dalserf, on the 20th of November, 1753, O.S., at the age of eighty-four; a handsome monument marks the spot where he lies interred in the churchyard of that parish. He was an able, earnest, and faithful preacher of the Gospel, a man of unblemished character, and of devoted zeal in the cause of truth. For the long period of forty-seven years he had consecrated all his time and energy to the ministry of the Word, and to the maintenance of a public testimony in behalf of the principles of the covenanted Reformation, in connection with the United Societies; and reckoning from his ordination at Balmaghie, his ministry extended over fifty-two years. His life had been one of arduous toil and exposure,

necessitated by the scattered condition of the Community to which he ministered. He travelled at all seasons and in all weathers, from the remote parts of Galloway to the Merse, the Lothians, and Fife; he preached and administered the ordinances as need was in the fields and moors, in houses and barns,—now in the pastoral glades of Ettrick, and again in the bleak uplands of Lanark, Ayr, or Dumfries. As a faithful witness for Reformation principles, he had often to bear open testimony against the defections of the times, both in Church and State, and to vindicate the position of the Societies towards both; and because he did so without fear of man, he was regarded by some ministers, of whom better things might have been expected, as an unwelcome visitor in their parishes. Yet withal, the great burden of his preaching was the everlasting Gospel in its freeness and fulness, even as Boston preached it,—though the latter had little but hard words to say of the Cameronian preacher. Notwithstanding the isolation of his position, and all the hardships which his work involved, he never regretted the step that he took when, for conscience's sake, he left the comforts of the Establishment, and cast himself on the liberality of the “poor Remnant.” He had a good deal to bear, not only at the hands of those who opposed his principles, but also from factious parties within the Societies, and from those extreme men who left his ministry on account of alleged unfaithfulness to the cause. Must we not say, that the Reformed Presbyterian Church owed a debt of gratitude to Mr M-Millan for what was called his unfaithfulness? There is good ground for believing that it was through his influence, quietly exerted, that the first steps were taken to free the Community from some of those intolerable restrictions which, in the preceding epoch, had been laid upon the Society people, and which, had they remained in full force, would seriously have interfered with the interests and progress of the Church, and have given strength to the opposition to the principles which it held. Amid all his labours and troubles, he ever found great consolation and encouragement in the

esteem and confidence with which the Society people, as a whole, regarded him. So thoroughly, indeed, were his adherents identified with the minister himself, that in many districts they were better known as M·Millanites than as Cameronians or Old Dissenters, and the people so revered him that they counted that name no reproach. He had the special joy of being associated with his own son as his colleague in the ministry, and as a zealous defender of the truths of the Gospel. A painful controversy with brethren regarding vital truths troubled his closing years, and filled him with anxiety for his beloved people; but when all was past, he could look back without misgiving upon the position he had occupied, and the work he had done for the vindication of precious principles, fully satisfied that he could not conscientiously have done otherwise. In his last hours he found a sure solace in the blessed Gospel he had preached, and in the hope of an eternal rest, he could meet death undismayed. These words, feebly whispered with his dying breath, clearly indicated the source of his perfect peace, "My Lord, my God, my Redeemer, yea, mine own God is He."

Section Third.

During the sixty-three years that elapsed between the publication of the Sanquhar Declaration and the constitution of the Reformed Presbytery, the United Societies had issued many Declarations and Protestations as circumstances seemed to require; but after 1743 it was felt to be very necessary, that a more full and formal statement of the position and principles of the Church should be prepared. The duty of drawing up this new Testimony was in the first instance laid upon Mr Nairn; but delays intervened, and ere it could be accomplished his conduct brought him under the censures of the Church. The task was next assigned to another member of Presbytery, Mr Hall, we believe; but his secession in 1753 prevented the carrying out of the work. After the interval of a few

years, the work was anew undertaken and successfully carried through. This must have been about 1757, as the earliest extant minute, of date February, 1758, speaks of a Committee already in existence, to whom the preparation of the proposed Act had been entrusted, but no names are given. Indeed, during the three years and a half that followed, while the work is often referred to in its different stages, and indications are given of the carefulness with which it was gone about, still no names are mentioned. We only learn in an indirect way from the minutes, that it was in the hands of the ministers, that different portions were assigned to particular individuals, that each carefully revised the work of the others, and that the task of writing out a fair copy of the whole was laid upon the Clerk of Presbytery, Mr Thorburn, then a probationer. It received the final sanction of the Presbytery on 6th June, 1761, and was issued under the title, "Act, Declaration, and Testimony for the whole of our Covenanted Reformation." It is the largest of all the documents hitherto published by the party, extending to 206 pages; and as it continued to be the authoritative statement of the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for more than seventy-five years, it is proper to look at it with some little attention.

The work consists of two, or perhaps more properly, three parts, historical, controversial, and doctrinal. The first two are believed to have been written by the Rev. John Courtass, and the last has been ascribed to the Rev. John Thorburn. As Mr Thorburn was only a student during the earlier stages of the preparation of the Act, and at the time when it was adopted was only a probationer,—without at all questioning either his ability or his theological knowledge, of which, indeed, we have otherwise ample proof,—it may be reasonably doubted whether the Presbytery was likely to entrust so important a work to one in such a position. There is nothing in the minutes to show that he did more than write out a fair copy of the work when it was completed. It is not in the style of his published work; and it may with greater pro-

bability be ascribed to the Rev. John M'Millan, afterwards of Sandhills and Glasgow.

The strictly historical portion contains a sketch of the contendings of the Scottish Church from the Reformation till 1649, a review of the various steps of defection from that date till the Revolution, and a lengthened re-statement of the grounds upon which the Societies refused to homologate the Settlement either in Church or State then made; together with an enumeration of the many acts in the administration of both after the Revolution, that were derogatory to the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, purity of doctrine and discipline, the royal prerogatives of Christ, and the freedom and independence of the Church. The controversial portion is devoted to an elaborate criticism of the principles of the Seceders, with respect to the ordinance of civil magistracy and relation to the existing Government, and a vindication of the position and principles of the Reformed Presbytery on these points. The doctrinal part, which is comprised within the modest limits of thirty pages, is a clear and compact summary of evangelical truth on the lines of the Confession of Faith. On two points it is more emphatic than the Confession,—it gives a fuller and very admirable statement regarding the freeness of the Gospel call and the grounds upon which it rests, and a more extended exhibition of the doctrine of the Redeemer's Headship over the Church and the nations, and the bearing of this on the position of the Presbytery. In all these separate parts of the Act, the subject of magistracy and the attitude of the Church towards the British Constitution and Government, occupy a very prominent place. In the Preface, the reader is warned against mistaking the aim and intention of the Presbytery in the whole or any part of the work, as if they were concerned with little else than magistracy, or that the right establishment of civil government was the sum of the religion they contended for. The avowed purpose was nothing less "than the right stating of the Testimony for the Covenanted interest of Christ in these

lands, and judicial vindication of all the heads thereof." As, however, the Seceders had in their Testimony claimed to be the only true representatives of the Church of the Second Reformation, and the legitimate successors of the persecuted Covenanters, it was incumbent on the Reformed Presbytery to meet this claim and establish their own position.

On a great many points the judgment of the two churches almost entirely harmonised. They agreed in regarding the period between 1638 and 1649 as the high-water mark of the Scottish Reformation both in Church and State, and both approved of the Covenants and held them to be binding on posterity. They were of one mind in approving the Testimonies of the martyrs under the persecution, and in vindicating their conduct even when they went the length of rejecting allegiance to the constituted authorities. They held very similar views as to the defects of the Revolution Settlement and the evils that had flowed therefrom. They protested against the subsequent encroachments of the State on the rights and liberties of the Church, the law of patronage and the oaths of office imposed by Government; and they condemned the unfaithfulness of the Established Church in matters of doctrine and discipline, as well as for its tyranny in administration, and its sinful subserviency to the unjust claims of the civil power. The Seceders even went so far as to give a general adherence to the Testimonies emitted and published after 1688, against the steps of declension by the Church from the Covenanted Reformation, but without approving the manner of testifying by separation from the Revolution Church. The two parties did not agree as to the proper manner of renewing the Covenants, nor were they altogether at one as to the grounds upon which the rejection of civil allegiance by the Societies before the Revolution was to be vindicated. Withal, there was a very large extent of common ground occupied by the two churches; and the Reformed Presbytery freely recognized the value of the Secession Testimony in behalf of Reformation

principles, and in vindication of precious Gospel truth. Its complaint was that this Testimony did not go far enough, that it was too exclusively limited to matters that concerned the Church, and did not fully contend for Reformation attainments in the State, even while it condemned manifest defects. The great difference between the parties concerned the doctrine of civil magistracy, and the attitude that should be maintained towards the existing civil authorities. Without entering into details or reasonings, all that seems to be necessary in order to understand the points of difference may be given in brief compass.

By both parties magistracy was held to be a divine ordinance; but the Seceders find its basis in the light of nature, while the Reformed Presbytery maintains that God "hath authorised and instituted in His Word the office and ordinance of civil government and governors," that it hath "its foundation in the moral-preceptive law of God." As to the end of magistracy, the Secession Testimony puts it thus:—"The public good of outward and common order in all reasonable society, unto the glory of God, is the great and only end which those invested with magistracy can propose in a sole respect unto that office:" and the Presbytery states it in this form;—it is "for the preservation of external peace and concord, administration of justice and encouragement of such as are and do good, and punishment of evil-doers who transgress either table of the law." Both held that the civil authorities in Christian states are bound to have respect to the Word of God and the interest of the Kingdom of Christ in all their laws and administration, and that God had laid down in His Word certain qualifications that magistrates ruling over a Christian people should possess; but they differed as to the place to be assigned to these qualifications. Seceders maintained that a "due measure of those qualifications was essential not to the being and validity of the magistratical office, but to its well-being and usefulness;" while the Presbytery maintained that these qualifications were

essential to the being of a lawful Christian magistracy. It was held by the Seceders, that whatever magistracy existed in the Providence of God, and ruled with the consent of the people, was to be acknowledged and submitted to in all commands that were in harmony with the divine law; but the Presbytery maintained, that only such governors were to be voluntarily owned as possessed the qualifications required by the preceptive will of God. Accordingly, Seceders, while they condemned many things in the British constitution and administration, acknowledged it as God's ordinance; while the Presbytery refused to own it as God's moral ordinance, and felt bound to avoid every act which could justly be held as indicating approbation, or as a test of allegiance. And so the former refused to admit those who disowned the existing government, while the latter as decidedly refused to receive those who owned it. These points are discussed with great force on the side of the Secession in the "Answers to Mr Nairn's Reasons of Dissent," to which the Reformed Presbytery gave an able, elaborate, and satisfactory reply in the "Act" of 1761. A great many subsidiary points came up for examination, to which there is no call to refer. The controversy continued for a long time, and at a later date it became in a large measure a discussion as to the extent of the Mediatorial Dominion of Christ; and especially as to whether civil government was among the "all things" put under Christ, whether as Mediator He is King of nations, or only of the Church, which is His proper kingdom, while as God He rules the nations in subservience to the interests of the Church. Each party gave to the doctrine of the other unsavoury names; the principles of the Secession were designated anarchical, and those of the Reformed Presbytery, anti-government and disloyal. Both charged the opinions of their opponents with consequences which were repudiated, and both carried into the discussion too much keenness and uncharitableness, which long embittered the relations between them.

Whatever were the merits of the controversy with the

Secession, the Reformed Presbytery adhered to the position maintained since 1680. In the Act of 1761 we find the same clear and fearless assertion of the constitutional rights of the people. At page 190 there occurs this distinct statement regarding the relation between rulers and people: "They further assert and maintain that the constituting of the relation betwixt rulers and ruled is voluntary and mutual; and that the lawful constitution of civil magistrates is by the mutual election of the people (in whom is the radical right or intermediate voice of God of choosing and appointing such as are to sway the sceptre of government over them), and consent of those that are elected or chosen for the exercise of that office, with certain stipulations according to Scripture and right reason, obliging each other unto the duty of their different stations and relations." The liberty and independence of the Church is held as strongly as ever: "They reject and condemn that gross Erastian principle that the civil magistrate is supreme head over all persons, and in all causes ecclesiastical:" and not less strongly do they reprobate the opinion, "that the whole or any part of the power, mission, qualifications, or administration of ecclesiastical officers or ministers of the Church of Christ, depends upon the authority and dictation of the civil magistrate;" while the office, authority, and constitution of lawful Christian magistrates belong solely to professing Christians in a Christian land.

The old principles are thus reasserted; what do we find in this Act regarding the mode of applying these to the conduct and relations of civil life? Is there any indication of a relaxing of the hard and fast rules by which the members of the Societies had been bound? Is there any larger measure of liberty allowed? We find that while, on the one hand, offering prayer for the success and preservation of the government, swearing oaths of allegiance, taking office under it, and enlisting as soldiers, are distinctly condemned as inconsistent with the principles of the Presbytery; on the other hand, such acts as tax-paying, sitting as jurors, compearing:

before the civil courts, etc., are referred to in a more general way. "They reject whatever . . . does justly and in its own nature, imply a voluntary and real acknowledgment of the lawfulness and title and authority of an anti-scriptural, anti-covenanted, and Erastian government. . . : They testify against a direct and active, free and voluntary paying of tribute and other dues unto such, and that for conscience' sake, as unto the ordinance of God, according to His precept; and particularly when these dues are required as a tessera of loyalty unto such; or when required as an evidence of a person's active contributing to the accomplishment of some wicked action, especially declared to be the immediate end of the imposition; . . . against all law processes in a way of direct counteracting any part of reformation attainments, or express homologating the authority of an unlawful judge. And, in fine, against all voluntary subjection, for conscience' sake, unto such powers as are not the ordinance of God, according to His revealed preceptive will." The scope of all this is tolerably plain. Their judgment regarding the character of the British Constitution is unaltered; they will not own its lawfulness, for it is contrary to Scripture requirements, and they will not voluntarily do anything that would indicate a deliberate approval of it. But there are things which, as living under this government, they cannot avoid doing; and, the character of the government being what it is, they are willing to do these under a protest, for wrath's sake, if not for conscience' sake. "While they are to take care to do nothing that justly implies their consent to the continued opposition made unto the covenanted reformation, yet ought to observe a proper difference betwixt such actions and things as are necessary and in themselves just and lawful, by a moral obligation, and those that are not so; as also betwixt that which cannot be had, nor the value or equivalent of it, unless the person actually gave it, and that which may be obtained, whether he actually contributed to it or not." The general and more sweeping terms of the older documents are superseded, and the practical results of all this

defining and explaining was, that the adherents of the Reformed Presbytery gradually came to act in matters of tax-paying, etc., as those around them did; and because they did so, they laid themselves open to the condemnation of the extreme party outside their fellowship, known as Active Testimony Bearers and Non-hearers.

It is curious to notice, when the Presbytery contrasts the past with the present, in what light they consider themselves in relation to the general community. In the *Informatory Vindication* the position of the Societies is put in this form: "We look upon ourselves as by constant and habitual tyranny reduced to our native and radical liberty in this matter;" and for mutual help and correspondence, the general meetings were originated under a government which treated them as outside the body politic, and entitled to no benefit of law. In 1761 the government left the adherents of the Reformed Presbytery free from all coercion on religious matters, and dealt with them under the common law of the land. But this, it was held, had wrought no substantial change in their condition. It "cannot be regarded as that of a free people, enjoying their ancient privileges and liberties, but as that of an oppressed people, brought under the power of a conqueror, and no better than captives in their own land, in passive subjection to a conquering power." This seems a somewhat grudging and insufficient recognition of the difference between a condition of fierce persecution under a tyrannical government in former times, and that of security and peace under the existing rule, though the latter possessed features which they felt called on emphatically to condemn. As to the representation of their condition as given above, it seems plain that, if the rejection of the views of any party regarding religion and civil rule be sufficient to make it an oppressed party, if the lack of power to carry out their own views reduce them to the position of captives in their own land, it is to be feared that the world will scarcely ever be free from such oppression, or from a party in such a state of captivity. The Presbytery had a

high ideal of a thoroughly Christian civil government; the installation of such a one as they could approve might be a blessing to the community, but it is to be feared that it could only be obtained by subjecting some other portion to an oppression and captivity perhaps harder to bear than that which they themselves endured at this time. It is certain that, while acknowledging the great benefits which the Revolution had brought, the traditions of the past continued long to colour the views that these worthy and faithful men took of their present surroundings. They resolutely held fast to the vital parts of their testimony, but they did not close their eyes against the light which came through the movements of Providence, respecting details in the application of these; and they felt free not to insist on points which had once been insisted on, without imperilling essential principles. Successive separations from the Established Church, and the controversies that arose regarding the character and ends of magistracy, inaugurated movements of thought that led to further change, the issues of which have not yet been fully realized. They led, for instance, to a fuller consideration of the questions of Church Establishments, and of the relation of the State to religion and the Church, which are now awaiting solution.

In closing this chapter, reference may be briefly made to what are called "Terms of Communion," the conditions upon which individuals were admitted to membership in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We have already noticed what was required of those who were received into the Societies in the time of Renwick. The martyr himself afterwards drew up a series of questions and Articles of Society, which were to be approved by all who joined. Frequent reference is made to these in the "Conclusions;" and with some alterations necessitated by the cessation of persecution, they continued in force for a long time. Afterwards a briefer statement from the "Informatory Vindication" was employed for a similar purpose, and after the renovation of the Covenants at Auchinsaugh in 1712, approval of that

act was required of all who joined the Societies. When the "Act, Declaration, and Testimony" was issued in 1761, it was deemed desirable to have a new and shorter formula for the admission of members drawn up. This was accordingly done, and the following statement was adopted to supersede what had hitherto been in use:—"I. The acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice. II. The acknowledgment of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God. III. The owning of the Divine right and original of Presbyterian Church Government. IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, and in consistence with this, acknowledging the renovation of these Covenants at Auchinsburgh, 1712, to be agreeable to the Word of God. V. The owning of all the scriptural testimonies and earnest contentings of Christ's faithful witnesses, whether martyrs under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them in maintaining the same cause, and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery. VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour by walking in all His commandments and ordinances blamelessly." With the exception of a change on the last part of Article IV., which was made in 1822 and will be afterwards referred to, this formula continued in force till 1876.

These Articles are a very comprehensive summary of the principles of the Church, and certainly, for anyone to give an intelligent acceptance of them, involved a very large amount of reading in church history and theology. But in that age, when there were neither newspapers nor magazines, the reading of our ancestors was very much limited to these two departments, in which the controversies of the times constrained them to take a special interest. To a much larger extent than in later times, when general literature had become more abundant and accessible, these Terms of Communion were well under-

stood and intelligently accepted by the great body of the people. They were designed for the general membership of the Church and not for office-bearers only; for the latter, a fuller formula was used. As to the wisdom or propriety of requiring from common people, the acceptance of Articles which supposed acquaintance with so large a body of literature, and the mastery of not a few intricate questions, it is not necessary to say anything here. The Reformed Presbytery was not alone in adopting the practice which has now almost entirely disappeared. It may, perhaps, be said that less would not have sufficed in those days of keen ecclesiastical conflict, to bind the members of each denomination into a firm homogeneous body, in which each member felt that he had his own share in maintaining the testimony of his Church intact. In too many instances, it is feared, the interests of the denomination were more strongly recognized than the claims of Christian sympathy, charity, and brotherhood; and that the points wherein they differed from each other, were more distinctly emphasized than were the broader, deeper, and more vital matters on which they were thoroughly at one. In the Terms of Communion no express mention is made of the main point which differentiated the Reformed Presbytery from the Secession Church; while in the formula of the latter there was inserted, after Mr Nairn's secession, a distinct repudiation of the tenets of the former regarding Magistracy and disowning of the British Government. The distinctive position and principles were, however, very fully set forth in the "Act, Declaration, and Testimony," and they became sufficiently well known through the controversy they occasioned. Several editions of the Act were published during the next seventy-six years, and various alterations were made upon it, but these were of a minor character and did not affect its substance.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS—1761-1810.

Section First.

TILL the beginning of the period that is now to engage our attention, the whole body of people under the inspection of the Reformed Presbytery was regarded as one great congregation, made up of the members of the Fellowship Societies. That arrangement had some serious disadvantages, and proposals were now made to divide them into several distinct charges. It was at first proposed to divide the whole into three congregations, but this created so much dissatisfaction that it had to be abandoned. In 1762 the Community was divided into a Northern and a Southern Congregation. Each of these extended across the entire breadth of southern Scotland; the Northern including the Societies in Fife, the Lothians, the lower ward of Lanarkshire, Stirling, Dumbarton, Renfrew, and Ayr; and the Southern including all that lay south of these to the English Border, from the Merse to the extreme end of Galloway. Even this very modest amount of separation was not carried out without considerable heart-burning, so tenaciously did many cling to the idea of the *United Societies*. So much keen feeling was evoked by what was done, and it may be by the dread of what was coming, that the Presbytery appointed a day of "private humiliation and prayer to be observed by all the ministers and people of their concern, for Divine light and direction from the Lord, anent the confusion wherein they are presently involved anent the

disjunctions." From 1763 each of these congregations was under the charge of two pastors; over the Northern the Rev. Messrs M'Millan and Thorburn were placed, and over the Southern Rev. Messrs Courtass and Fairley presided. The labour devolving on these devoted men was very great; they itinerated through wide districts, larger than many an Episcopal See, visited and examined the Societies, and preached on Sabbaths and week-days in a great number of different places. This involved long and toilsome journeys on horse-back, under summer heat and winter storm, often along rough moorland tracks, and exposed to hardships and perils of which, with our improved facilities for travel, we can form but faint conception. But they endured all cheerfully, for they loved the work for the Master's sake, and felt amply rewarded after a wearisome ride, by the cordial welcome which they received from the people, whose opportunities of listening to the Gospel were rare, and therefore the more highly valued. The services were, as in the past, for the most part held in the open air, or, at best, in farm kitchens or barns. The first place of worship erected under the Reformed Presbytery was at Pentland, a small village a few miles distant from Edinburgh. The humble building in which the Cameronians of last century were wont to worship still stands, though long since transformed into dwelling-houses; and the two small windows in the gable, between which, doubtless, the pulpit stood, yet remain. The date of its erection is uncertain, but it cannot be much later than the beginning of this period. The next that was built was some time after Mr Fairley's settlement in 1763, when he took up his residence at Douglas-water, but it has long since disappeared. From the fact that the Christian name of these worthies was the same, they were spoken of and long remembered throughout the body as the "Four Johns." From their devotion to their work, the savour of their preaching, and their Christian character, they were held in high esteem, not only by their own people, but by many beyond the denominational pale. For nearly fifteen years the entire ministerial work lay

upon them ; and the great services that they rendered to the Church in their own days may make the following brief sketches not uninteresting to the reader :—

JOHN THORBURN was born near Ecclefechan, but the date of his birth is uncertain. His father belonged to the Old Dissenters, and was in a position to give his son an academical education. Nothing further is known respecting him, till we find him officiating as clerk to the Reformed Presbytery in 1758. During the years that followed, a large amount of work devolved on him in connection with the preparation of the “Judicial Act,” so large that he had to be freed for some time from his work as a preacher. Mr Thorburn was licensed at Crawfordjohn on 1st February, 1759, and immediately began to itinerate among the Societies, both in Scotland and Ireland. On the urgent call of the General Meeting, he was ordained at the same place on 6th May, 1762, one of the ministers of the Old Dissenters, and colleague to Rev. J. M'Millan, in the Northern congregation. The place of ordination was in those days no indication either of the residence or sphere of labour of the minister. Mr Thorburn's place of abode after a few years was at Pentland, from which Mr M'Millan had removed to Sandhills, a small estate which he had purchased near Glasgow. In that pleasant rural spot he had his home till the end of his days. Thither he returned after his long journeys to the scattered preaching stations, to communion services, and meetings of Presbytery. There, too, in a low, plain thatched building, he ministered to the congregation drawn from Edinburgh, Loanhead, and surrounding district. From our knowledge of his style of thought and writing, we can imagine that his preaching was not of a popular caste ; but to hearers accustomed to solid theological reading, his sermons would be instructive and edifying, being full of weighty thought and of the rich treasures of Gospel truth. His manner was quiet and unimpressive, but his whole heart was in his work ; and the eagerness of his mind while working out his exposition and defence of truth, showed itself

in his habit of twisting and untwisting his handkerchief while he spoke. He was a man of deep piety and great weight of character, esteemed alike by rich and poor. Alike in his intercourse with the Clerks of Penicuik, where he not seldom was a welcome visitor, and with the humblest of his flock, in the society of his brethren, and in the privacy of home life, he was ever the Christian gentleman and the Christian minister. He was a man of studious habits, and his "*Vindiciæ Magistratus*," in defence of the principles of his Church against the attacks of the Secession, though lacking the popular style of the writings of some of his brethren, was not inferior to any of them in thorough grasp of the truth, and power of argument. Lord Kames characterized it as the "best defence of Whig principles;" and the late Rev. Dr A. McLeod, of New York, himself a man of distinguished ability, declared that he was more indebted to Mr Thorburn, of Pentland, than to any other man living or dead.

Living so near Edinburgh, his house was much frequented by students attending the University, who found in him a wise counsellor and helpful friend. Though his income was never large—it is said that he never received more than £20 a year from the people—yet having some private means, he was able, as he was ever willing, to dispense his beneficence with a liberal hand. He took into his house and educated a number of orphan boys; and it is told how two of these, long after their benefactor's death, and when both had attained a good position in the medical profession, the one in India and the other in Inverness, met incidentally as strangers, and ere long discovered that they had both been brought up in the hospitable dwelling of the humble Cameronian minister of Pentland.

Mr Thorburn, though not a popular preacher, was the theologian of his Church; and in 1785 he was unanimously appointed to be Tutor in Divinity to the students of the Church; but he was not spared to enter on that work. He had laboured as a minister for a period of twenty-six years, when, returning from a communion in August, 1788, he felt indis-

posed on reaching home. He preached with difficulty on the following Sabbath from the words, "Here we have no continuing city," and intimated his intention of considering the next clause on the succeeding Sabbath. He never preached again; and ere two Sabbaths had passed he had entered that city of God, and knew more about it than he could have told his people. At the invitation of a friend he had gone to Portobello; but, growing rapidly worse, he was brought to Edinburgh, and on 14th August quietly breathed his last. It was a notable mark both of the high character and attainments, and of the loveable nature of the man, that friends outside his own Church were prompt in the expression of sympathy. Dr John Erskine, the recognized leader of the evangelical party in the Established Church, having heard of his illness, hastened to his lodgings, only to find that he was too late. Standing by the body of his deceased friend, this was what he said: "And he is gone! one of our greatest divines if he had had more freedom of expression." Another eminent minister, Rev. Dr Colquhoun of Leith, not only sent a letter expressive of sympathy, but indicated a kindly concern as to the circumstances in which the bereaved family was left. Mr Thorburn was three times married, his first wife being the widowed daughter of the Rev. John M'Millan of Balmaghie. His youngest daughter became the wife of the late Rev. John Milwain of Douglas-water.

Regarding JOHN COURTASS very little information has been transmitted to us. We know not when nor where he was born; all that we can learn respecting him is to be gleaned from the records of Presbytery, and it is scant enough. He was ordained in 1755; and, as the records show, he took his full share in the work of the Presbytery. As we have already seen, he was largely engaged in the preparation of the "Judicial Act." For seven years the whole ministerial charge of the Societies rested upon Mr Courtass and Mr M'Millan, and in 1763 Mr Fairley was associated with the former as colleague over the Southern congregation. His place of

residence was at Quarrelwood, in the parish of Kirkmahoe, a few miles from Dumfries, where a meeting-house was also erected; and from that centre, many a weary journey he must have had, far west amid the wilds of Galloway, up the beautiful valley of the Nith, and eastward over hill and dale, even to the Merse. Amid these varied scenes and in all weathers, he laboured for other fifteen years, and tradition tells of the great communion seasons amid the solemn quietude of Nature, when the "Four Johns" ministered to the mighty crowds that gathered from far and near. After this his sphere of labour was gradually narrowed by settlements both on the east and on the west, but to the last his special charge extended from the Water of Urr to the eastern border of Annandale. The memory of his devoted service, and of the excellent men who were his faithful helpers, lingered long in the district where his dwelling was; but no characteristics either of the man or his preaching have been transmitted. He died in 1795, having faithfully served the Church for the long period of forty years. A son of the same name is mentioned a little later, as an elder in the congregation at Quarrelwood, and is the author of a pamphlet, called forth by some agitation throughout the body, on the subject of the more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper.

JOHN FAIRLEY of Douglas was a man very different in some respects from his colleagues, and his personality seems to have left a more vivid impression in the districts where he was best known, than any of the others had done. He belonged to the humbler ranks of life, and spent some of his earlier years in farm labour. He early developed a great love of books, and by dint of persevering effort prepared himself for the University, and while there supported himself by teaching. Greatly against the wish of his family, he felt constrained in conscience to cast in his lot with the Old Dissenters; and after passing the necessary trials, he was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery in 1762. He received three calls within little more than a year, one from America, another from

Ireland, and a third from the Southern congregation, to be colleague to Mr Courtass. He accepted the last mentioned, and on 13th December, 1763, he was ordained at Leadmines (Leadhills). His residence was at first at Thirton House, near Douglas, and afterwards a few miles further down the Douglas-water, near the Riggside and Ponfeigh Collieries, and there a small church was built for him. For well-nigh forty-three years he laboured diligently in the Gospel, and for the defence of the principles of the Church which he had conscientiously adopted. His work took him a great deal from home; his annual tour of the wide district under his charge often occupied fifteen or sixteen weeks. During these excursions he not only preached at many different places, but, according to the custom of the times, held diets of examination both of the old and the young. Some frequented these meetings for the purpose of showing off their knowledge, and others tried to annoy the minister by asking puzzling questions. Few dared to trifle with Mr Fairley on these occasions, for none knew better than he how to take the conceit out of the vain, and silence the frivolous and impertinent; for he was somewhat quick and irritable in temper, and had a power of sarcasm which those who provoked him did not speedily forget. He was very zealous and outspoken in his maintenance of Church principles, and unsparing in his condemnation and exposure of the shortcomings of other denominations. This caused him to be both feared and disliked by many outside of his own communion; yet by the ministers who were nearest his residence, and who came most frequently in contact with him, he was greatly esteemed. He was fearless of consequences in the discharge of his duties. On one occasion, when in Ireland, his scathing exposure of Popery so irritated the Catholics, that three of them resolved to disturb his next meeting by musical instruments. They came prepared to do this, but were so overcome by the grave dignity of the man, and by the truth he spoke, that they could do nothing but quietly listen. Two of them, it is said, became earnest Protestants. On another occasion he denounced "unpreaching

bishops," and declared that his Lordship of Bangor was worse than Balaam's ass, which spoke once at least, and rebuked the madness of the prophet. Some were so highly offended that they resolved to waylay and stone the preacher. Mr Fairley was aware of this, but refused to change his route. As he approached the ambuscade, a dispute arose as to his identity; some held that it was the object of their hate, others said, "No, never a bit of him; who ever saw a mountain minister ride such a good horse?" and while they disputed he got beyond their reach. One who knew him writes thus: "I had some knowledge of the elder Fairley; he fearlessly attacked the reigning follies of his age, and preached the Gospel in a familiar but forcible style of eloquence. In his great field-days, and when contending for the Testimony of the Martyrs, he was unsparing in the use of arrows, oft broke a lance with the Pope, and drove rusty nails into our venerable Establishment, and lashed the Secession and Relief for their declensions." So pointed was his dealing with the sins of the times, that many left his meetings when he came to the application of his discourse. They could listen to the doctrine, but liked to avoid the "flyting," as they called it. He took part in the controversy with the Seceders, and published a pamphlet in reply to Goodlet, the Anti-burgher minister of Sanquhar, in which he gives a scathing exposure of the weakness and inconsistency of his opponent, and directs against him all his resources of humour and sarcasm, as well as the weightier weapons of solid argument.

But it was in proclaiming the riches of the glorious Gospel to vast audiences under the open canopy of heaven, that the power of John Fairley was fully disclosed. He was undoubtedly *the* preacher among the "Four Johns." He had a commanding presence, a well-furnished mind, and a fluent and forcible utterance; and when he warmed to his grand theme, his words moved the hearts of the crowds that had gathered around him, and many owned him as their spiritual father. It was his evangelical fervour more than his denominational

keenness, that secured those fragrant memories that so long lingered in the scenes of his labours. He had a wonderful gift in prayer, sometimes most touchingly pathetic, and again rousing the heart by sublime utterances. Requests for prayer came from many besides his own people; of such he sometimes said:—"Many seek our prayers in trouble who think little of them in health; they can live, but cannot die without us." Some hearers, more superstitious than devout, attached more value to Mr Fairley's prayers regarding the weather, than to those of any other minister. He possessed a voice of singular power, which enabled him to address great audiences in the open air. It was proved by actual experiment that it could be heard at a distance of two miles, though the words could not be distinguished. In 1796 the Rev. Thomas Rowatt was ordained at Scarbridge, Penpont, as his colleague, and he was thus relieved of that portion of his charge. Mr Fairley showed his generous spirit in connection with this ordination. He had never more than thirty pounds of stipend; and when the people expressed doubts as to being able to support two ministers, he offered to give up a part of his own small income to make up that of his colleague. One of his sons was colleague to Mr M'Millan of Glasgow, and a great-grandson of that son is a respected minister of the Free Church. Mr Fairley died in 1806.

JOHN M'MILLAN was the first and the last of this venerable quartette. He was born in 1724, before his father had left the manse of Balmaghie; and after completing the usual course of study he was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery in 1750. During the early years of his ministry, he took an active part in the Atonement controversy, that ended in the disruption of the Presbytery in 1753; and to his pen we are indebted for the defence of the Presbytery that was afterwards published. It is impossible to say with certainty what share Mr M'Millan had in the preparation of the "Judicial Act;" only it seems very improbable, that the senior member of Presbytery should have no part in it, when there were so few to do the work;

and, as already hinted, we are disposed to ascribe to him that portion with which Mr Thorburn has been traditionally credited. In the first division of the Community he was settled over the Northern congregation, with Mr Thorburn as his colleague. He married a daughter of Mr Charles Umpherston of Pentland, and by and by removed to Sandhills, where a church was built, and there he resided till his death. He took his full share in the work of the Presbytery, and, like his brethren, travelled over a wide sphere in the discharge of his ministerial duties. Gradually, as successive disjunctions took place, the sphere was narrowed till it was confined to Glasgow and the district immediately adjacent. Situated so near to that populous and growing city, this congregation was always the largest and most influential in the denomination, and before the close of the eighteenth century it had become almost entirely a city charge, and worshipped in a church in Calton. An admirable and interesting account of the congregation has recently been published by Mr Thomas Binnie, Glasgow.¹

After forty-four years of continuous labour, Mr John Fairley, jun., became co-pastor with Mr M'Millan in the Glasgow charge in 1794. He was an excellent man and a good preacher, but was evidently not so popular in the congregation as the senior pastor was. Some years later a complaint was lodged with the Presbytery to the effect, that some of the people went a long distance to hear Mr M'Millan, when Mr Fairley was preaching much nearer to them; and for this conduct they were censured by the Court. After a few years, Mr Fairley became unfit for public work by reason of the failure of his voice, and the pastoral tie was dissolved in 1807. Mr M'Millan was now quite laid aside through age and infirmity, and died at Sandhills on 11th February, 1808, in the 84th year of his age and the 57th of his ministry. There are few instances in the history of the Scottish Church, in which the ministry of father and son extended to the long period of nearly 107 years,

¹ Sketch of the History of the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, etc. By Thomas Binnie. J. & R. Parlane, Paisley, 1888.

as it was in the case of the two M·Millans—a ministry which, for both of them, involved an unusual amount of toil. Mr M·Millan had seen great changes in the Community whom he had served so long and so faithfully. He entered on his work when it was one great aggregate of societies; he saw it gradually develop and consolidate into a regularly-organized Presbyterian Church, soon to be constituted into a Synod; he had seen all his early associates in the ministry and many of a later date pass away; and he had the comfort of seeing his own son installed as Professor of Theology. The Church he loved so well had risen out of its obscurity, and was now recognized and respected by sister Churches in the land; painful controversy had long since ceased, and he left the Church of his fathers in unity and peace.

Mr M·Millan was a man of noble presence and dignified manner, yet withal most amiable and kind, beloved and trusted by his brethren, and esteemed by all who knew him. His appearance in the pulpit was solemn and impressive, and such was the whole service as conducted by him. He was in the habit of preaching long sermons, and when some suggested that for his own sake they might be shortened, his reply was, “*Waes me! that I should weary myself and ither folk wi’ my preaching.*” The only specimen of his preaching we have seen, is an excellent sermon preached at the ordination of his son at Stirling, and certainly it does not err on the side of brevity. Hitherto the obituary notices entered on the Minutes of Presbytery are very brief, but in the case of Mr M·Millan the minute is a little fuller. It is as follows:—
“The Rev. John M·Millan, who had been a member of this Court from the day of his ordination at Bothwell, 20th September, 1750, was, in the Holy Providence of God, removed by death on the 11th February, 1808. During a period of near 60 years he had served the Community with great labour, faithfulness, and acceptance. He was the last of the four old members who long composed the Presbytery, and who were all found in their generation to be faithful to the

cause of God and truth. Being the first in office, he had to bear the burden and heat of the day ; extending his labours over the Community at large, amidst a scene of trying hardships of which we in our times have little acquaintance, and now he rests from his labours and his works do follow him." Such were the men who for fifteen years upheld the old Covenanted cause amid manifold discouragements, yet with unflagging zeal and fidelity, throughout southern Scotland. To them the Reformed Presbyterian Church owed much, and it seemed only fitting, ere proceeding to notice the period of their labours in detail, to give these few personal notes as a small tribute to the honoured memory of the "Four Johns."

Section Second.

The division into two congregations continued till 1775; but after that date the process of disjunction, unpalatable as it was to some, went on apace. For some time these disjoined portions bore the name of the counties within which the Societies composing them were situated. The Minutes often speak of the congregations of Merse and Teviotdale, of Renfrew and Ayr, or of Galloway; by and by these were known by the names of the places where the church was erected. The churches were usually built in a central place for the accommodation of a wide district. Thus Newton-Stewart was the centre of the Galloway congregation; Quarrelwood in Kirkmahoe, near Dumfries, was the seat of a congregation that spread over the wide district from the water of Urr to the borders of Annandale; such also was Crookedholm, near Kilmarnock, for Ayrshire; Kilmalcolm for Renfrewshire, Douglas-water for Upper, and Sandhills, near Glasgow, for Lower Lanarkshire. Within the bounds of these several congregations, preaching was maintained with less or more regularity in a great many places; a very long list of such stations could easily be drawn up from the record of the

appointments assigned by the Presbytery to the licentiates, and doubtless in all of these there were more or fewer adherents of the Church.

One result of the paucity of ministers, especially during the earlier part of this period, was the infrequent observance of the Lord's Supper. Burdened with their manifold labours in preaching and other pastoral work, it was not possible for them to meet often for this special service, for the efficient discharge of which, according to the custom of the times, a large supply of ministerial assistance was required. It is curious to read in the Minutes, of the serious consideration given by the Presbytery to the numerous petitions for the dispensation of the ordinance, and of the solemn conclusion arrived at, that the Lord's Supper should be celebrated "this season in y^e Kingdom of Scotland," or "in y^e Kingdom of Ireland." Such observances occurred at first once in two years, then annually, and gradually with greater frequency. On such occasions the services were not designed only for the people of the particular district where they were held; it was the Communion season for the whole body of the people under the inspection of the Presbytery, and convenient centres were fixed on, with now and then a visit to the outskirts of the wide field. Accordingly, we find that the great festival was held, not only at Pentland, or Sandhills, or Stirling, Douglas or Quarrelwood, but also in remote Galloway, at Grief's Castle in Renfrewshire, and once, at least, as far out of the way as Bucklyvie. In those times, when the ordinance was rare, people were wont to gather from all districts of the country and remain over the whole services; the claims of business were not then so urgent. It must have been no easy matter to provide sleeping accommodation for such numbers as assembled; but as the meetings were usually held in summer, the difficulty was more easily met; and besides, the farmers in the neighbourhood, though not belonging to the Church, were generally ready to extend hospitality to the strangers, and for a few nights their barns and lofts were well tenanted.

The habit of travelling great distances to be present at Communion lingered long among the Cameronians; the writer has met with aged persons who remembered how devoted adherents journeyed on foot, all the way from Stranraer to New Cumnock, to attend the ordinance. The services on such occasions were very protracted. Two long sermons on the Fast-day, one on Friday evening, and two on Saturday, were judged necessary as due preparation for the Sabbath. On that day the services not seldom lasted for twelve hours, from ten in the morning till ten at night, with only a brief interval. All this was followed up by two long discourses on Monday. As to the numbers who attended on such occasions, we have recorded instances. The "Four Johns" were present at the first Communion of the Cameronians in Galloway, at a place a few miles from Castle-Douglas, and so vast was the concourse in the evening that two tents had to be erected, as it was impossible for one speaker to make his voice heard by the whole multitude. At the first Communion at Sandhills, the numbers present were computed by a military officer at from ten to fifteen thousand at different periods of the day. No doubt such great and promiscuous gatherings had their own dangers; they were grossly abused by the thoughtless and godless, and came to be associated with much that was hurtful and evil. But by the godly people of the Societies they were greatly appreciated; in days when the Word of God was precious, they were seasons of true spiritual feasting. To the devout mind there was also not a little in the external surroundings—the stillness of the moorland, the grandeur of the hills, or the fresh beauty of the quiet vale—that would enhance the solemn impressiveness of the service. To the ministers themselves these were seasons of great stimulus and refreshment; they met with their devoted people in glad and solemn fellowship in sacred rites, all the more precious because it was so rare, and they had opportunities of brotherly intercourse with each other such as they could but seldom enjoy. It is one indication of the value

attached to such communion seasons, and of the profit derived from them, that again and again we find in the records of the Presbytery, which frequently met when the services were over, such an entry as the following, dated August, 1763:—"In consequence of Divine favour and countenance shewed at y^e two Sacramental occasions, y^e Presb. app^t y^e first Tuesday of Nov^r N.S. to be observed as a Day of Thanksgiving by all y^e people of y^e concern."

One serious difficulty which the Presbytery had to contend with was the small number of candidates for the ministry. During the whole period now under review not more than thirty received license, including some from Ireland and America; while of the whole, eight at least settled either in the sister kingdom or in the western continent. There was certainly not much in the external circumstances of the Church fitted to attract young men, while the work assigned to its probationers was as trying and toilsome as that of the ministers. The remuneration which they received for their labours was very small; and a settlement over a congregation could at best secure only a bare maintenance, in some cases scarcely even that. There was, therefore, little to induce any to enter on the work, except such as were firmly convinced of the truth of the principles of the Church, and were earnestly desirous of serving Christ in the ministry of the Word. Only once do we remember to have met, in the Minutes of Presbytery, with any reference to the remuneration of probationers. On 4th January, 1775, it was moved—"That it is expedient that some part of the daily collections should be used for behoof of the probationers going through and preaching among the people, the Presbytery agree that, if public intimation be properly made, part thereof may warrantably be made (use of) for that purpose." If the amount so given was at all in proportion to the stipend of the ministers, it must have been a mere pittance; but the preacher had his board in addition in some family connected with the Church, and also provision for his horse, which in those days was as indispensable to the

probationer as to the settled pastor. It will give some idea of the amount of toil and travel imposed upon the preachers, if we give one or two extracts of their appointments. In November, 1762, Mr Fairley's appointments for four months were as follow:—"To preach the first Sabbath at Forth; 2, Douglas; 3 and 4 Sabbaths at Shotts; 5, at Haughhead; 6, Redburn; 7, Cumbernauld; 8 and 9 at Monteith; 10, Carluke; 11, Cambeltree Miln; 12, Pentland; 13, Merse; 14, Forest; 15, Peebles; 16, Carswall; 17, Montherick." Or take those of Mr Steven in April, 1777. His starting point is Linlithgow, thence in succession to Greenock, Kilbirnie, Stewarton, Crookedholm, Scarwater, Mortonmiln, Moffat, and Peebles. At a later date Mr W. Grieve had this round assigned to him:—The Forest, Eskdale, Bucklyvie, thence to Perth, next to Low Annandale, and finally to Galloway. Sometimes the Presbytery considerably granted a few Sabbaths of rest, or gave liberty to preach "at pleasure," or at or near home. This paucity of preachers was a great hindrance to the progress of the Church during this period. Societies in the more remote districts received only a very scant and irregular supply of ordinances; and as years went on, it was found to be more difficult to maintain their ground or retain their members by means of private fellowship meetings. The consequence was, that in many districts Societies, once vigorous, languished and became extinct. There was no lack of effort on the part of the labourers who were in the field, but no expenditure of toil by them could altogether prevent the consequences of a deficiency in their number.

During the latter half of the century, the attention of the Presbytery was frequently occupied with the affairs of those branches of the Church that were planted in Ireland and America. We reserve to a subsequent stage a fuller statement of the history of these branches, and meanwhile content ourselves with a few brief notes. Reference has already been made to the existence from an early period of Societies in

Ireland, and to the first visit paid to them by Messrs Nairn and Marshall in 1744. In 1757, Mr William Martin was ordained as the first minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church there. After some time a Presbytery was formed in Ireland, but in a few years the emigration of some of the ministers and many of the people to North America caused its dissolution. By and by serious contentions arose out of the conduct of a Mr Young, who had left the Anti-burghers and joined the Reformed Presbytery in 1775. This state of things caused the intervention of the Scottish Presbytery; but the troubles were not ended till Mr Young was expelled in 1790, and two years later the Irish Presbytery was reconstituted. Henceforth the Church in Ireland has a history of its own, and only once afterwards was the Scottish Court called to deal with its affairs, in circumstances that fall to be noticed in another connection.¹

At an early period, Fellowship Societies of Covenanters had been formed in the British North American colonies, but it was not till after the emigration of Rev. Mr Cuthbertson in 1752, that the Scottish Church became directly interested in them. There is complaint in the Minutes that Mr Cuthbertson did not maintain regular intercourse with his brethren, and doubts were entertained as to his position and procedure. After the emigration from Ireland already referred to, information was received that these brethren "had constituted themselves into a Presbyterial capacity upon the footing of the Reformation cause and Testimony, under the designation of the Reformed Presbytery of America." Communications on various subjects came from the western continent—among others, was an appeal in 1784 from some dissatisfied parties, asking the Presbytery to give their judgment regarding a union that had been formed between the American Presbytery and two other bodies, representing both branches of the Secession. No judicial finding is recorded; but the judgment of the Scottish Church was sufficiently indicated by the fact that it held no

¹ Appendix No. V.

intercourse with the united body, and by and by recognized the dissenting minority as the true representatives of the Covenanted Church of Scotland. It was to them that the Rev. James Reid from Galloway preached and administered ordinances, during his visit to America in 1789; and from the Societies which he organized he received a call in 1790, which, however, he declined. In the course of the next few years, several ministers went from Scotland and Ireland to America; and in 1798 the Presbytery there was reconstituted, and the American Reformed Presbyterian Church has since continued its independent course, with varying experience, as the representative of the Covenanted Church, in fraternal relations with those of Ireland and Scotland. In thus endeavouring to supply ordinances to the members who, for various reasons, sought a home in the New World, the Reformed Presbytery acted just as did the other Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. It almost necessarily involved the transference of some denominational peculiarities which might seem more out of place in the new country than in the old; but at the same time, it secured a testimony to vital principles affecting both Church and State applicable to all lands, and contributed to the building up of the vigorous Presbyterianism and earnest evangelicalism of the Great Western Continent.¹ •

Apart altogether from work that thus came from outside the kingdom, the Presbytery was kept fully occupied with matters that lay properly within its own bounds. It was no easy matter to exercise a proper superintendence over so scattered a body of people, and to meet the many calls for supply of ordinances. Painful cases of discipline, and sometimes keen disputes in congregations, frequently engrossed a large amount of time and labour. Such work is common to all Churches, and requires no further reference. It is of greater interest to mark how, during this period, the Presbytery endeavoured to exhibit and maintain the principles and position of the denomination. We find in the Minutes that cases came up

¹ Appendix No. VI.

from Sessions, in which individuals were charged with having acted at variance with the avowed principles or traditionary practice of the Church. In 1783, the Session of Kelso referred to the Presbytery the case of Alexander Hume, who had entered a lawsuit before the ordinary civil court. The decision given was:—"That ordinary law processes are contrary to the principles of the Old Dissenters;" and the offender was only relieved from censure, when he expressed sorrow for having by his conduct dishonoured God and offended his brethren, and promised to avoid anything of the kind in future. On another occasion, while renewing its condemnation of such acts, the Presbytery recommended arbitration as a reasonable way of settling differences. It is also recorded that a member of the congregation of Stirling was dealt with, not for paying the cess, but simply for accepting the situation of collector of the tax; and another was censured by the Presbytery for having taken the Burgess Oath, which the Presbytery declared to be at variance with the Testimony. Still another case was brought up from the same congregation. One of the members, who resided in Crieff and was engaged in a tanwork, was required once a quarter to take an oath of verity before the Supervisor of Excise, respecting the number of hides that had been dressed within that period, in order that the amount of duty might be ascertained. For this he was suspended and not allowed to present his child for baptism. The decision of the Presbytery was to the following effect:—"That the practice of making oaths of verity in the above and like cases was inconsistent with the principles and Testimony of the Church, while sympathy is expressed for members who are placed in an embarrassed position." Two years earlier, in 1791, the Presbytery had distinctly indicated the acts that were reckoned to be violations of the Testimony, and a practical approval of the evils that were embedded in the British Constitution. These are as follows:—"1. All swearing of oaths of allegiance to the present Government. 2. All enlisting in their service and holding office under them.

3. Praying for God's blessing upon them in their present constitution and courses. 4. Swearing oaths before them as the administrators of these oaths. 5. Brethren by their Christian profession going to law with one another before them." These were held to be offensive and censurable actions, and the decision in the cases mentioned above was in harmony with these resolutions. At the same time some relaxation of old rules was given. Former Conclusions of the General Meeting condemned taking out a licence for a lawful trade, and making use of Government stamps; but the Presbytery now declared that to do the first of these, and to hold property on the footing of stamped deeds, were both consistent with the principles of the Old Dissenters.

It had always been found to be a difficult thing to bring men to realize that, in such common and in themselves simple acts as those referred to, there was anything that could be brought home to the conscience, as a violation of the homage due to Christ. It was hard to make them feel that such acts should be placed on the same footing, as regards Church privilege, as transgressions of the moral law. Despite all regulations to the contrary, the conviction grew throughout the Community, that the Church was exacting more than it had a right to do as a condition of fellowship, and in due time practices that had formerly inferred severe censure, were allowed to pass without rebuke. Towards the close of the century, it became increasingly difficult to keep the people rigidly within the old lines. New movements began to stir among the masses of the nation, and it could hardly fail that some Reformed Presbyterians should be influenced by these. During the troublous years that followed the French Revolution, large sections of the population were stirred as they had not been for at least a century before, by questions relating to the rights and liberties of the people, and societies were formed for the consideration and furtherance of these objects. It was brought under the notice of the Presbytery, that some of the people under their inspection had become connected

with one of the societies of the "Friends of the People." Action was at once taken, and the conduct of these parties was condemned, not certainly from any aversion to the progress of popular freedom—their past testifying and sufferings had ever been in behalf of constitutional liberty,—but for reasons arising out of the attitude of the Church towards the civil government. Connection with these societies on the part of adherents of the Presbytery, was condemned in November, 1793, on the following grounds:—"1. The Church's cause of dissension is not the same as that for which the societies exist, and although their end were gained, it would bring the Church no nearer the object of her Testimony. 2. It brings them into connection with people who are very corrupt both in their principles and in their practice. 3. These societies have fixed no moral standard for their conduct. 4. These societies have declared their approval of the present Erastian constitution. 5. It leads Dissenters into the support of measures giving offence to brethren." These furnish sufficient vindication of the action of the Presbytery, in instructing sessions to deal with those who continued in connection with these societies, and that the instruction was carried out we do not doubt. The Rev. James Reid, one of the ministers, is known to have rebuked a man before the congregation simply for being present at a political meeting.

Somewhat modified action was taken in 1807, regarding those members who had joined what were called "Militia Societies." The object of these was to secure, by contributions to a common fund, substitutes for such members of each society as were balloted for service in the Militia. No member of the Church could consistently enter this service; but the Presbytery decided that money might legitimately be paid to obtain a substitute, yet no member could take any part in the management of these societies.

Another instance of a somewhat different kind, in which the Presbytery was required to take action in connection with the practical application of the Testimony, may be

here mentioned. It arose out of the conduct of some of the ministers and people connected with the Irish branch of the Church. It is a well-known fact, that some of the Covenanters in the North of Ireland were involved in the rebellion there near the close of last century, and not a few sought safety by flight to America. But the agitation to which we now refer occurred in connection with the legislative Union of Ireland with Great Britain in 1801. Ministers, office-bearers, and people had taken a somewhat active part in opposition to the Union, and great disorder had arisen in the Irish Reformed Presbytery. Appeal was made to the brethren in Scotland for advice and aid in allaying the ferment and restoring harmony, and Commissioners were appointed by the Presbytery to be associated with the Irish brethren in seeking to attain these results. After investigation, it was found that the conduct of some of the ministers, office-bearers, and people, justly exposed them to censure, as being utterly inconsistent with the principles and practice of the Church. What this censurable conduct was, we may gather from the confessions of the Rev. Mr Staveley, when he appeared before the Presbytery and Commissioners, as reported to the Scottish Presbytery on 18th November, 1802. The substance of his statement is thus given:—"That after various solicitations, he had been prevailed upon to take a solemn declaration to co-operate with virtuous Irishmen of every description to obtain a redress of grievances; that he had administered said declaration to several persons; that he had sat in a private meeting with said persons, and had along with them contributed a little money, but for what purpose applied he knew not; that he also sat in a Baronial Committee in virtue of having taken foresaid declaration; and that he had in an unthinking manner spoken something of lifting up arms from Loyalists." The meaning of this is not hard to understand. Mr Staveley and others of his brethren, with many of their office-bearers and people, had associated themselves with secret societies, with the

object of resisting the measures of the Government, even to the extent of taking up arms. It may be that the less favourable circumstances of the Irish people at that period, tended to preserve among the Covenanters a measure of sympathy with the more extreme position of the early Societies, long after it had been abjured by the Scottish section. Whatever faults the latter still charged against the British Constitution, it had no sympathy with sedition or popular disturbance.

Section Third.

While thus anxious to guide the action of the Church and its members in a reasonable and moderate way, the Reformed Presbytery was equally zealous in maintaining and defending the principles of the Church. During the period now under consideration, the controversy with the Secession in both its branches continued to be waged with much keenness on both sides. We do not feel called upon to enter minutely into the discussion, or to consider the merits of the many publications which it called forth. It centred as before round the doctrine of the Presbytery regarding Magistracy, and its attitude towards the civil government; and in connection with these, a great many subordinate points were brought under discussion. On the Secession side, the principal writers were the Rev. Messrs Gibb, Goodlet, Thomson, and Fletcher; and these were answered in behalf of the Reformed Presbytery by Rev. John Thorburn in his "*Vindiciæ Magistratus*," sustained in a vigorous and effective way, by the more popular pamphlets of the Rev. Messrs Fairley of Douglas, M'Millan of Stirling, Steven of Crookedholm, and Reid of Lauriston. Even the laity entered into the fray, and it was the trenchant tract of Mr Andrew Newton, merchant in Duns, that called forth Fletcher on the one side and Steven and Reid on the other. Of the work of the last-named author, entitled "*Truth no*

Enemy to Peace," the late Professor William Symington of Glasgow was wont to say, that it was the best statement extant of the position and principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Nowhere else, indeed, do we find so clear and compact a statement of the state of the question as between the Presbytery and the Secession as in its pages. Having quoted the statements on Magistracy from the Testimony of both Churches, and having drawn out the doctrine of each in a series of antitheses, he eliminates five points about which there is no controversy. The fourth and fifth of these are the following:—"Neither doth it any more properly concern this controversy to show what sort of government might have been borne with in a less perfect and less enlightened state of the nation, but what is requisite now. Nor, lastly, is the inquiry about the propriety of demeaning ourselves peaceably and inoffensively, groaning beneath oppressive burdens which we cannot avoid, so long as no ensnaring question is put home to the conscience, and while we have it not in our power to make matters better. This Dissenters have uniformly endeavoured to do since ever they were a people."¹ Coming to the real point at issue, he puts it thus: "Let the dispute then be fairly stated. We have long enjoyed the Bible as the complete rule of our faith and practice in every department of life. We have reached high attainments in State reformation. These attainments have been incorporated into the fundamental laws of the kingdom. All ranks in general have solemnly sworn adherence unto them. Dissenters still feel on their own conscience the weight of that obligation. After mature deliberation and diligently using every means in their power, they have no clearness to relinquish the former laudable and fundamental conditions of bearing rule in the kingdom of Scotland. The question, therefore, is precisely this: Whether in such circumstances it be really their duty, and they should still feel obliged to acquiesce in the public deeds of the nation, while forming a new society, advancing

¹ Truth no Enemy to Peace, p. 38.

their rulers on conditions not only opposite unto but destructive of the former, and while manifesting their loyalty by such actions as necessarily involve an approbation of the constitution and recognize the justness of the ruler's title? Or whether they should not rather be allowed to dissent and manage their Testimony under a public protestation against these deeds, as they have actually done, first in the persons of their forefathers, and now in their own persons, especially so long as they still endeavour, notwithstanding their dissent, to live peaceably with all men, whether high or low, rich or poor."¹ To this we may add a sentence from Steven's Second Letter to Fletcher. The latter had said in his "Scripture Loyalist" that he meant to defend the following thesis:—"That obedience is due to the present civil British Government in its lawful commands," and added that the Reformed Presbytery taught that obedience is not due to said Government in such commands. On this Steven says:² "It proceeds upon a gross mistake, or then it is a sophistical misrepresentation of the whole matter. Obedience, restricted and limited to the authority of the present civil British Government in its lawful commands, neither was nor is the matter either of testimony or controversy with the Reformed Presbytery either in their Testimony or its vindicators." He then goes on to re-state the objections to the Revolution and Union Settlements as subversive of reformation attainments, and condemns the giving suffrage unto, recognizing, homologating, or approving of these Settlements, or doing whatever in the nature of the thing implies this. Such was the position claimed for the Reformed Presbytery, and certainly there was in it nothing new—nothing startling or unreasonable. And it makes plain that the one thing to be avoided in civil or political actings was, approbation of what they were convinced was contrary to the Scriptures and the honour of Christ.

¹ Truth no Enemy to Peace, p. 39.

² Second Letter, pp. 93-4.

At the risk of slightly wearying our readers, we give a few extracts from authoritative documents which, while confirming the above, will also show that the fathers of last century possessed a greater breadth of view than has generally been ascribed to them. During the closing decade of last century, we find frequent reference in the Minutes of Presbytery to petitions and representations regarding the terms of Communion, and sometimes calling attention to the 4th section of the 23rd chapter of the Confession of Faith. Evidently there was some measure of restlessness in the Community, but there is nothing in the Minutes to indicate precisely the points that caused it. Alteration of some sort was wanted, but to this the Presbytery would not agree. This, however, it did: at two different times it appointed Committees to draw up documents explanatory of the principles and position of the Church. These were in due time published; the one entitled, "A Short Account of the Old Presbyterian Dissenters," etc., was issued in 1806, and the other, an "Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion," etc., was issued in 1801. Both of these were prepared by the Rev. John Reid of Lauriston. Manifestly the Presbytery had great confidence in the ability, the judiciousness, moderation, and fitness of Mr Reid to be the exponent of the principles of the Church. In the "Explanation and Defence," after referring to some things in the Auchinsoagh Renovation, that were by some reckoned extreme, the following statement occurs:—"In the leading and general principle, then, that it is inconsistent for Dissenters to submit unto any such things as, strictly speaking, imply an approbation of the present constitution or a proper recognizing of the constituted authorities, they and we are perfectly agreed. But as it is difficult to draw the exact line of distinction between those things which in the very nature of them, abstracting from any question for conscience' sake, properly imply the recognizing of the existing power under which they are done, and those things which do not.

we need not be surprised though there be some diversity both in opinion and practice concerning the yielding or not yielding to some particular national burden.”¹ There is no shifting from the old ground of principle, but there is a recognition of the difficulty of drawing any hard and fast line adapted to all times, and, consequently, that the Church must judge from time to time as to what acts are or are not at variance with the general principle.

On one or two points it is proper to do justice here to these old Covenanters. They were often taunted with holding intolerant opinions, and we are not prepared to vindicate the language they sometimes employed, nor altogether to endorse their view. They, along with the Seceders, condemned the Toleration Act, but it is right to notice how this condemnation is qualified in the “Short Account.” “While Dissenters testify against toleration, they are not to be understood as meaning a merely passive toleration, implying nothing more than simply permitting men to exist unmolested, and to hold their different opinions, without using external violence to make them change these, or to exterminate them from the face of the earth if they do not. Forbearance of this kind, after every other scriptural and rational means has been used without effect, cannot be condemned. But what they have in view is that authoritative toleration, in which the rulers of a kingdom, assuming the character of judges in these matters, by their proclamations or other public deeds, declare what different opinions or systems they will allow to be taught and propagated, and to what modes of worship they will give countenance and protection, while they exclude others from that supposed privilege. This is unquestionably to usurp the prerogatives of *Jehóvah*.”² Here we have a distinction not without a difference, and the whole statement has a decidedly modern flavour, though written by a Cameronian nearly a hundred years ago.

¹ Explanation, etc., p. 47.

² Short Account, ed. 1806, p. 30.

Reformed Presbyterians have been held up as the very embodiment of the spirit of narrow bigotry and exclusiveness, bound with utmost rigidity to the very letter of the Standards; yet we find that a considerable degree of liberty is actually allowed on several points. They delighted to extol the Second Reformation, yet thus they qualify their approval: "But in making this avowal, it is very remote from their intention to say that even the Reformation Constitutions were absolutely perfect and incapable of further improvements."¹ They qualify their acceptance of the Confession and Catechisms: "We do not view our general and sincere approbation of even the whole doctrine contained in them, as necessarily involving the idea that every word is the best chosen, or every expression so properly guarded as it might have been, had the authors been aware what objections were to be raised against them."² They refuse to believe that certain expressions that have been objected to, do imply unwarrantable coercion, and add: "We reckon it still our duty, and expect it of all who wish to hold communion with us, to approve and adhere to them substantially as they stand."³ And with respect to the acceptance of the Terms of Communion themselves, we find the following significant statement: "In proposing the above Terms of Communion, we wish a difference to be made between persons holding, proclaiming, and propagating sentiments of religion opposite to those which are recognized in our Terms, and persons who may be comparatively ignorant, or have private views of their own, but are willing to be further instructed. The former must be positively debarred from such fellowship, whereas milder treatment is due to the latter."⁴

All this makes it evident, in a general way, on what subjects some concession or alteration had been sought from the Presbytery. These were doubtless connected with the Confessional teaching regarding magistracy, the restrictions

¹ Short Account, p. 27.

² Explanation, etc., p. 19. ³ *Id.*, p. 38. ⁴ *Id.*, p. 50.

as to civil acts under which Reformed Presbyterians lay, the extent to which they were bound to the deeds of the past, and possibly the vast amount of history and doctrine involved in the acceptance of the Testimony. The Presbytery declares that it has done its best in the circumstances. "Notwithstanding, for the information of those who have repeatedly desired some further information, we have exhibited the above 'Explanation and Defence.' It is humbly apprehended, that no greater concessions or allowances than those which we have made, can be reasonably expected of men professing as we do to adhere unto the whole of our Covenanted Reformation."¹

So far, then, as we can judge from the acts and decisions of the Presbytery during this period, there was no falling back from the high ground of Scripture principles regarding Church and State which had been hitherto maintained. All the same, they claimed the right to deal with the application of principles according to the changing conditions of society around; they were open to whatever light came to them from the movements of Divine Providence, and the progressive development of civil and religious liberty, as well as from a clearer apprehension of Divine teaching on controverted points. They felt and acted on the conviction, that genuine fidelity to great principles demands this adjustment to the changing circumstances of the time. Their mode of action did expose them to the carping criticism of some who, wedded to the literal forms of the past, saw nothing but inconsistency and unfaithfulness in any change, however wisely adapted to the new times. If it be justly reckoned a consistency to be ashamed of rather than gloried in, when a man declares, that on the weightiest matters of religion and life, he has learned nothing during fifty years of contact with men and things, that his opinions and views have undergone no modification and obtained no wider expansion; so were it for a Church to boast of rigidly

¹ Explanation, etc., p. 51.

cleaving to the forms of the dead past, of simply standing still when all else around is moving, learning nothing amid the growing fulness of knowledge, or under the teachings of a manifold Providence in the movements of society. Growth is the essential feature of a true consistency either in a Church or an individual, such growth as can only exist where there is life, and manifests itself by a healthy natural development under the varied influences around. The Reformed Presbyterian Church at the close of last century was a small but a living Church, and clearly recognized its responsibilities to know what the times demanded. And so if we find that some relics of the past, some practices that sprang out of a state of things that had vanished, were quietly dropped—and this was but slowly done—this was not due to any indifference to principles long held, and hallowed by sacred associations, but it was due to the more active working of the inner life in harmony with the external influences of the time, to a broader view of the nature and proper application of their principles, and a clearer apprehension of the sphere within which Church authority should be exercised, and of the liberty due to the individual conscience.

Section Fourth.

While thus showing all proper anxiety to maintain and defend the principles and position of the Church, it would be a mistake to suppose that this was the only or the main thing with which the Presbytery was concerned. Reading the records of its proceedings, all too brief as they are, we recognize how constantly it was occupied with matters relating to the supply of ordinances, and the promotion of religion and morality among the people. With this in view, as careful attention as was possible in the circumstances, was given to the training of candidates for the ministry. Never too abundantly supplied with these, yet the Church ever insisted on having an educated ministry. A complete course in Arts, as well as

a thorough knowledge of Theology, were required of all candidates. We are not precisely told how or where Divinity was studied, but advantage was doubtless taken of the prelections of University Professors who were known to be orthodox, in addition to the private supervision of ministers. All candidates, before license, had to pass the usual course of trials required in all Presbyterian Churches, including some knowledge of Hebrew, and ability to read the Greek New Testament, *ad aperturum libri*. Although there was often very urgent need of preachers, that did not prevent the Presbytery from repeatedly refusing to sustain trial discourses that were unsatisfactory, and advising young men, who evidently had no fitness for ministerial work, to turn their attention to some other avocation. There is a singular frankness in the reasons given by the Presbytery, in 1782, for declining to sustain a discourse of a student named Robinson. His faults and failings were summed up "in a great defect of natural and Christian prudence, together with an assuming boldness and arrogance, pride, self-conceitedness, and an affectation of singularity." Chagrined at his treatment by the Presbytery, Robinson joined the Relief Church. The interest which the members of the Church took in the students was shown pretty early by a legacy left by a Mr Turnbull, to form the nucleus of a fund to aid them in preparing for the ministry.

It was not till 1785 that the first proposal was made for the appointment of a theological tutor; and the Rev. John Thorburn of Pentland was unanimously chosen to that office. His ability and theological attainments were of a high order, and we have already cited the testimony borne to these by an able and unbiassed judge, the Rev. Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh. Mr Thorburn died before he had time to enter on the duties of his office. Nothing more was done in this matter till 1799, when the subject was revived; and in 1802 the Rev. John McMillan of Stirling, the third of that honoured name, was unanimously elected to be Professor of Divinity. A small

salary of £30 was attached to the office, and this remained unchanged during the next fifty years. The Divinity Hall met at Stirling, but details as to the time and the work are wanting. About the same time, a theological library for the use of students was established by a legacy of £20 left for that purpose, and ever after the Church continued to cherish a deep interest in the Professors and students. The fund for the maintenance of the Hall was the first to which all the congregations were called upon to contribute.

While thus providing for the training of an educated ministry, the Presbytery was by no means unmindful of the spiritual wellbeing of the people in other ways than by the direct preaching of the Word. All through its past history, this Church had largely depended for its continuance and vigour on the private fellowship meetings of the members. By these the lack of ordinances had been partially supplied in times of destitution, brotherly communion had been fostered, and unity and zeal in the public cause maintained. There was a danger, when ordinances were more regularly enjoyed, that these meetings would be neglected. Complaints of this nature were laid before the Presbytery, and in 1772 a Directory for the conduct of these fellowship meetings was published. It contained full instructions as to their formation and regulation, laid down the terms upon which members were to be admitted, and enjoined all diligence in maintaining them in full vigour. These rules were very stringent; the full acceptance of the Testimony in all its parts was required from all entrants, as well as a thoroughly upright Christian character, and diligent attention to all religious duties. Nor need we wonder at the strictness with which admission to these private meetings was guarded, when we remember that it really meant admission to the full privileges of the Church. It was only through the Societies that members were received. This was a relic of a bygone age, but it was quite out of place in a regular Presbyterian Church. This practice was not altered till 1792, when the Presbytery ordained that "the Session is

the only proper door of admission to all Church privileges; and in ordinary cases, where access to Sessions could be obtained before Societies took persons to be full members with them, they should be regularly admitted by the Session into the full Communion of the Church." Individuals had thus to become members of the Church before they could be members of a fellowship Society. These private religious meetings seem to have been kept up with singular diligence in some places, even when ordinances were by no means lacking. The rule was, that when there was no preaching in the district, the meetings should be held on the Sabbath as well as during the week. In the Glasgow congregation, as we have already noticed, they seem to have flourished extensively; in the beginning of this century there were no fewer than twenty-four such meetings within its bounds. They were spread over a wide district, fifteen miles by thirteen; and the commissioners from these fellowship Societies constituted the congregational meetings for transacting business. "No wonder," says Mr Binnie, "that the congregation prospered, and that among the office-bearers there were found not a few men of eminent piety, the savour of whose memory is still held dear in many a godly home."¹

The financial affairs of the congregations were in the hands of managers, usually elected annually; an arrangement that was generally practised in the Secession Churches. The Reformed Presbytery was not opposed to the Diaconate as a distinct order of office-bearers in the Church. A petition was, in 1785, presented from Chirnside asking the recognition and establishment of the office; but the Presbytery, while indicating approval of the object, contented itself with recommending it to the congregations. Except in one or two cases this recommendation was not acted upon.

Besides labouring to foster genuine religion among its own people by the preaching of the Word, by the fellowship meeting, and by pastoral letters bearing on personal and

¹ Sketch of the First R.P. Congregation of Glasgow, p. 84.

family religion, the Presbytery was not indifferent to the general interests of truth and morality throughout the land. The movement for the abolition of Catholic disabilities led to the issue of a "Warning against Popery;" certain tendencies towards false doctrine called forth a "Warning against Socinianism;" while the state of morals in the general community induced the Presbytery to publish a "Warning against Prevailing Immoralities." The last suggests a picture of the state of society a hundred years ago, with which, allowing for the great increase of population and vast changes in other respects, the present condition of things will compare not unfavourably. Protesting as this Church did against the anti-Christian Constitution, it was not indifferent to the material welfare of the nation and the general interests of humanity. When the Peace of Amiens in 1801 brought about a brief cessation of the wars following the French Revolution, the Presbytery ordained that the "Sessions should appoint a day of public thanksgiving to the Lord, for the favourable dispensations of Providence in sending plenty in the land for the support of man and beast at a reasonable rate, after two years' sore judgments and sufferings by the scarcity and dearth of the necessaries of life; and in putting a stop to the shedding of human blood, and of the cruelties of nations towards each other, and in the restoration of national peace (which the Lord can as easily overrule for the bringing down of His enemies as war), and thereby seasonably delivering many members of the Church from peculiar dangers and snares in which they were likely to be involved, and particularly in continuing with us the enjoyment of sanctuary ordinances, notwithstanding all our provocations."

The subject of Foreign Missions had begun to engage the attention of the Scottish Churches before the close of last century, and the Glasgow Missionary Society had been formed. It would scarcely be anticipated that the Covenanting Church, which had testified so strongly to the royal

supremacy of Christ, and had manifested, even in days of suffering, so tender concern for other Churches and for the spread of the Gospel, would in days of peace be unfriendly to the cause of Foreign Missions, yet such is the construction that is put, in the "*Lives of the Haldanes*," on a deed of the Presbytery in 1796. A brief notice of the circumstances will show that the charge is unwarranted and unfair. In August, 1796, a reference from the Session of Glasgow and Sandhills was brought before the Presbytery. It related to "a complaint against some of the members of Session and congregation for attending a sermon preached by a minister of the Established Church, at a meeting of the Missionary Society of Glasgow." The Presbytery agreed that this was "sinful and offensive, and enjoined the Session to call the offenders in their congregation on that head before them, and to deal with them, to bring them to a sense of the sinfulness and offensiveness thereof, and to censure them accordingly." This was attempted, but apparently without effect; for in November the matter was again before the Court, and after full discussion the following decision was adopted:—"That the Presbytery were unanimous in an approbation of the object of the Society, that they meant to state no opposition to the Society itself, but that there were weighty reasons which prevented them from taking any active part in the business thereof, either in attending their private or public meetings, or in joining with them in prayer or preaching or in any other exercise in which they act officially. The Presbytery also adhere to their former sentence, and require the persons concerned to take the matter, and what they have now heard, under their serious consideration." The result was, that six of the persons implicated gave in a formal declinature of the authority of the Presbytery on account of this decision; and it is specially noted in the Minutes that "in their paper they keep out the principal part of the Presbytery's deed, and insert one article as a reason of their declining them which the Presbytery did not judicially determine."

These parties afterwards published a pamphlet in their own vindication, and on that the mis-statement in the "Lives of the Haldanes" is manifestly based. Yet it is perfectly clear on the face of the Presbytery's decision, that there was no unfriendliness to Foreign Missions; on the contrary, it declares their approbation of the object and no opposition to the Society itself. And the "weighty reasons" which prevented any active co-operation, though not stated, can be very easily supplied by those acquainted with the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The same anxiety to keep free from everything that seemed to compromise their protest against the civil constitution, constrained them to exercise equal care against whatever might be regarded as inconsistent with their protest against the constitution of the Established Church. It was this that prevented them from associating, even in a cause which they heartily approved, with those against whose position and actings otherwise, conscience constrained them to protest. The prejudice against Occasional Hearing was still strong; to listen to a missionary sermon by a minister of the Established Church was an act of that kind; and the worthy object of the sermon could not, in the view of the Presbytery, give it a different character. We are not to be held as regarding the "weighty reasons" to be sufficient; the decision was unfortunate, and fitted to prejudice outsiders against the Presbytery. It sprang from a zealous fidelity to the position of the Church,—call it, if you please, an unwise and narrow view of that position; but let not the calumny be repeated in the face of express disclaimers, that the Reformed Presbytery was unfriendly to the great cause of Foreign Missions. As years passed on, the Church came into closer touch with the religious life of the community at large, and took a livelier and more direct interest in public religious schemes. Indication of this was given in 1806, by a recommendation to support the British and Foreign Bible Society, an enterprise wholly undenominational, and with which it was held that the strictest Covenanter might be

connected, without in the least compromising his principles.

In those days it was hard enough to maintain the Gospel at home. The Reformed Presbyterian Church never included many of the rich in this world's goods, though there was within it a considerable number of farmers in comfortable circumstances, with here and there a representative of the landed class. The great body of the people belonged to the humbler ranks, and were not in a position to do much for the support of ordinances. During the period that preceded 1763, the arrangements for the sustenance of the ministry were in the hands of the General Meeting, but from that date onward we find the Presbytery interesting itself in the subject. It came up in connection with the successive disjunctions, these being granted when that Court was satisfied that the disjoined parties were each able to support a minister. When we learn what were the stipends given, we may be disposed to think that the Presbytery was much too easily satisfied. Regarding the earlier ministers we have no information; but in subsequent settlements we find the amount fixed, and generally the remark is added that the Presbytery was satisfied "for the present." Mr Grieve was settled at Inverkeithing on £35 a year. Mr Steven at Crookedholm on £40, Mr Reid in Galloway on £37, Mr M'Millan at Stirling on £52, Mr Mason at Wishaw on £40, and when a co-pastorate was formed at Glasgow, each minister was to receive £60. A little later, the Presbytery refused to grant a moderation in a call unless £50 and a manse were offered; and in 1808 the minimum was raised to £80 and a manse; but this was not always maintained. In other Churches the same low rate prevailed. It is, however, to be borne in mind that, small as the sums are, they were worth perhaps twice or thrice as much as the same nominal amount at the present day, and then, besides what was given in money, it was customary to send liberal gifts in kind, and especially at Communion times, when the hospitality of the manse was largely drawn upon;

and altogether the ministers were usually as comfortable as those of other Dissenting Churches. Not seldom, too, liberal gifts came from parties outside the Church; for it was still the case, as in former periods, that many such waited on the ministry of the Reformed Presbytery, especially in districts where there were few or no Secession Churches, or a cold Moderatism prevailed in the Established Church. In some cases these adherents or occasional hearers largely outnumbered the members of the congregation. During a protracted dispute regarding a call by the congregation of Edinburgh and Loanhead, a petition in support of the call was presented to the Presbytery, signed by 240 inhabitants of the Loanhead district alone who were not members, a number greatly more than ever was the membership of the church in that village, which had by this time become the seat of the former Pentland congregation. And thus was it less or more elsewhere; many outside the denomination who loved the old Gospel, valued the ministry of such men as Fairley of Douglas, Steven of Crookedholm, Reid of Galloway, and Mason of Wishaw, by whom it was fully and faithfully preached. Thus the influence of this comparatively small Church extended far beyond its own proper limits; and the necessity laid upon the ministers of occupying several stations within the bounds of their scattered charges, made them more widely known and appreciated by the general community. They were in every respect, as men and Christian ministers, eminently worthy of the esteem with which they were regarded both within and beyond the Church to which they belonged.

In these modern days, when we hear so much about Welfare of Youth schemes, and so much anxiety is felt as to the best means of securing the adhesion of the youth of the Church, it is not a little singular to find that a proposal, closely bearing on these points, was actually brought up and discussed by the Reformed Presbytery so long ago as the year 1809. The following is the statement regarding it in the Minutes

of 26th April of that year:—"It was motioned in the Court that something more formal and particular should be done as to the parental instruction of young members under their inspection, that baptismal vows at a certain age should be solemnly and formally transferred on them, and that afterwards they should be considered and dealt with as members on the footing of their own responsibility. The Presbytery consider the motion as important, and recommend to members and Sessions to take it into consideration betwixt now and the time of next meeting." In March, 1810, the matter again came up, and "after some conversation on this subject they appointed the Revs. John Cowan and Andrew Symington each to draw up a plan of conduct to be pursued by Sessions and parents in this, and to lay it before them at next full meeting." The final deliverance on this question goes a little beyond the period we are dealing with, but it is proper to complete the statement at this stage. At the first meeting of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, a plan was presented and dealt with in this way: "The Court proceed to inquire respecting an appointment laid upon two members at the last general meeting of the Presbytery at Douglas, to prepare some Memorial concerning the Church's duty in seeing that baptismal obligations be laid upon children, and young people brought forward to a regular standing in the Church. A Memorial was produced and read. After observations from members, the Synod appoint that copies of said Memorial be transmitted and circulated among the Presbyteries and Sessions to report their sentiments at next meeting." As this had not been done by all the Sessions when the Synod met next year, the appointment was continued. How the subject was finally disposed of we learn from a Minute of Synod, 5th May, 1813:—"After considering the appointment about the Memorial respecting youth, it was agreed that the Memorial be now finally remanded to the different Sessions, requesting them to furnish themselves with copies of it, and to apply its prin-

ciples in that extent and manner which they shall judge most for edification." So the matter ends so far as official information goes. The object contemplated, as we may gather it from the Minutes, was to bring the baptized youth by a formal act, at a particular age, into closer personal relation to the Church, and that this was to be done by a solemn transference to them of baptismal obligations. This certainly looks somewhat like the ceremony of Confirmation as observed in Episcopal Churches; yet the Reformed Presbytery was not alarmed at the proposal, but for four years calmly discussed the matter, and came to a deliberate finding on it. It is unfortunate that all copies of the Memorial referred to seem to have disappeared, but it is evident that it was approved by the Synod, so far at least as concerned its principles, and we may assume that, coming under the hand of Professor Andrew Symington, these were thoroughly scriptural. Imperfect as our knowledge of the matter is, enough remains to show that these old Cameronians, deeply concerned as they were to preserve intact the ancient public Testimony, in their lively interest for the progress of spiritual religion among young as well as old, anticipated some weighty modern questions, and were not afraid to canvas the difficult problems connected therewith.

It was not till 1807 that the first proposal was made to divide the Presbytery, and constitute a Synod. There was an evident call for such a step. It had become increasingly difficult for the one Court to overtake thoroughly all the business that fell to it. Its jurisdiction extended over the whole southern portion of Scotland, and included congregations as far apart as Edinburgh on the one side and Stranraer on the other. It was impossible for the ministers to give proper attendance at the meetings of Presbytery, often necessarily held at a great distance from their homes. In consequence of this it had for some time been found necessary to devolve some portion of Presbyterial work on committees, or to authorize the ministers assisting at a Communion, say

at Stirling or at Quarrelwood, to constitute a *pro re nata* meeting, and deal with any urgent business that had arisen in these districts. The project of dividing the Presbytery was discussed for two or three years, and was harmoniously carried into effect in 1810. It was agreed that the division should be into three Presbyteries, to be called Eastern, Northern, and Southern, and the first meeting of the Synod was fixed to be held in Glasgow on the 1st of May, 1811. A similar step was taken about the same time by the sister Presbyteries in Ireland and America.

In examining the list of congregations at this time, we find that the Church has scarcely passed beyond the bounds covered by the Societies and Correspondences of the first half of the eighteenth century. Congregations existed in Perth and Dundee. Efforts had been made to establish the cause in the West Highlands, which resulted in the formation of a congregation of Lorn, which, though always small, continued to exist till the Union in 1876. An attempt had been made to establish a station in Cumberland, regarding which movement it was seriously inquired, whether a Presbyterian would be permitted to preach there without the consent of the bishop of the diocese. Consolidation at home, and aid in establishing sister Churches in Ireland and America, were the characteristics of the period. The one united congregation had now been divided into eighteen charges, besides preaching stations, with thirteen ministers; and, having a Theological Hall of its own, the Church was placed on an equal footing with the other denominations in the land. Active controversy with the Churches around had for the most part ceased, and, from the increased number and high character of its ministers, the Reformed Presbyterian Church began to occupy a more prominent place in the public view.

From the circumstances of the case, and the amount of pastoral work devolving on them, it was impossible for the ministers to make many contributions to the religious literature of the time. Yet even in this sphere of labour they have left

some memorials of their ability and learning, of which the Church has no reason to be ashamed. The weighty Treatise of Mr Thorburn has been referred to already. The Rev. James Reid, though he had for a long time the charge of nearly the whole of Galloway, found time to compile a valuable "History of the Westminster Assembly Divines," a work of considerable research, and which, though now almost forgotten, has been largely drawn upon by later writers on the same subject. The Rev. James Thomson of Quarrelwood published two volumes of "Theological Discourses," which show that he was thoroughly at home on the subjects discussed, and able effectively to expound and to defend the truth; but they are altogether too long and too weighty to suit modern taste in the matter of sermons. And besides these, there were many controversial pamphlets that are not without a certain historical interest, and, as expositions and defences of the principles and position of the Church, are highly creditable to the zeal and ability of their authors.

Of a different character and more interesting to a wider circle of readers, are the writings of one whose name cannot be passed over in silence in this history—John Howie of Lochgoin. The Howies are descended from Albigenian refugees who fled from persecution, and settled in Scotland near the close of the twelfth century. From that time to the present day thirty-eight generations have succeeded each other in the moorland farm, which their representative of the same name still occupies. The family adhered to the Societies during the Stuart persecution, and suffered severely for their steadfastness, being often forced to seek shelter in the bleak mosses around. From its seclusion and difficulty of access, Lochgoin was a great resort of the sufferers of that time. Twelve times was the house harried by the soldiery; once the whole cattle on the farm were driven away, but restored through the kind offices of Sir William Mure of Rowallan. John Howie was born at Lochgoin in 1735. It could scarcely fail that as he grew up,

he should be greatly interested in the facts and traditions of the Covenanting epoch, and in the lives of the men who so nobly braved all the fury of the persecutor rather than be false to God and His truth. The farmhouse itself was a sort of storehouse of relics of the men and the times, each of which had its story of suffering or of noble daring, and recalled memories and traditions of a dark but glorious past; and such a youth as John Howie was must have deeply felt the influence of these. As he grew up into manhood, and realized in his own experience the power of godliness, his sympathy with the sufferers and devotion to the cause they upheld assumed a tangible form, and he resolved to do something to preserve the fragrant memories of the past. He had received only an ordinary education, but he had acquired studious habits, and found more pleasure in literary work than in the labours of a moorland farmer. His first work was to compile some memorials of the lives of the most distinguished witnesses for the cause of Christ in Scotland, from the Reformation to the Revolution. His own library contained a large number of books bearing on that period, while the long connection of his family with the Covenanted cause, and his residence in a place round which many traditions of the later sufferers must have lingered, gave him advantages that largely counterbalanced his distance from public libraries. The result was the publication in 1775 of the first edition of the "Scots Worthies," under the title of "*Biographia Scoticana*." It must have cost the author a vast amount of labour and research, and it at once obtained a decided popularity. It has well maintained its position, and has done more than perhaps any other work to make the names, character, and sufferings of the "Worthies" of the past, familiar to later generations of Scotsmen. It is an admirable work, written in a simple, easily-intelligible style, not overburdened with details, but presenting in a concise, direct way all that, for the most part, the reader will care to know. It has since passed through a great number of editions; may it long retain its popularity,

and embalm for generations yet to come the memories, the sufferings, and the principles of the "Scots Worthies" of days now long past. It is not necessary to specify all the works that were prepared by John Howie, but among them are a few worthy of mention. He published, with introductions, some volumes containing reprints of the most important documents of the times of the Covenant and persecution, including the "Informatory Vindication," and a large volume of sermons belonging to the same period, transcribed from the note-books of devoted hearers, among which are the only specimens we have of the preaching of Cameron, Peden, and other conventicle preachers. Perhaps the most interesting of all is a volume entitled "Faithful Contendings Displayed," from which we have drawn largely for the materials of Chapters III. and IV. It is a record of the proceedings of the General Meeting from 1681 till December, 1690, from the notes of the clerk, Michael Shields. In an appendix are given the substance of the Tinwald Paper and some sermons. Some "passages" in the religious experiences of John Howie were published after his death, which took place in 1793, when he was only fifty-eight years of age.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SYNOD—1810-1839.

Section First.

THE Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland held its first meeting in Glasgow, in May, 1811, and continued to meet regularly once a year, and occasionally twice a year, either in Glasgow or in Edinburgh, during the next sixty-five years. The first sederunt consisted of thirteen ministers and ten elders; two of the former, Rev. Messrs Griève and Fairley, were without charges. It was thus small when compared even with the other Dissenting Churches that were now rising into influence in Scotland, and were doing noble service to the cause of evangelical religion. The largest of these denominations were the two main branches of the Secession, popularly known as Burghers and Anti-burghers. Time had done a great deal to soften the asperities produced by the keen controversies of an earlier generation; the very occasion of the rupture had passed away by the abolition of the Burgess Oath, and there seemed no valid reason why they should not again be reunited in ecclesiastical fellowship. This union was accomplished in 1820 with almost entire unanimity, and, as the United Secession Church, it started on a fresh career of usefulness both at home and abroad. Besides these two larger denominations, there existed at this time two smaller sections of the Secession, which had originated in a division in each of the larger, and were commonly recognized as the Old

Light Burghers and the Old Light Anti-burghers. To the latter of these belonged the elder Dr Thomas M'Crie, the able and accomplished biographer of Knox and Melville. To this body was united, in 1827, the small Presbytery consisting of those who had refused to consent to the Union of 1820, and thus was formed the Synod of United Original Seceders, which, though greatly reduced by a division in 1852, still retains its distinct organization. The Old Light Burgher Synod, on the other hand, almost unanimously joined the Established Church in 1839. Still further, there existed in 1811 what was known as the Synod of Relief. This body originated in the deposition of Mr Gillespie of Carnock, in 1752, for refusing to aid in carrying out the high-handed measures of the dominant party in the Established Church in the settlement of ministers, and it had now grown into a Church containing about one hundred ministers. Differences on points of greater or less importance, but on which much value was set in those days, separated these six religious communities that were outside of the Established Church; but all of them stood unmistakeably before the public as the earnest upholders of evangelical religion, faithfully proclaiming the old Gospel of the grace of God. In the Established Church itself, the power of Moderatism, which for a century had been supreme, was on the wane; the evangelical party was increasing in strength, and, ere long, under the powerful leadership of Thomson and Chalmers and other like-minded men, made its influence more distinctly felt in the councils of the Church. As the spirit of evangelicism spread more widely throughout the land, a deeper interest was manifested in the progress of religion, and greater efforts were made to meet the wants of the growing population. On the other hand, this evangelical revival began to make many earnest men more distinctly conscious of the restraints imposed upon the Church by its connection with the State, in the efforts that were made to promote the interests of godliness. Altogether, when the Reformed

Presbyterian Synod was erected, the state of religion in Scotland was more hopeful than it had been for a century and a half; and notwithstanding all drawbacks, the results up to the present time have not belied these hopes. During the next two generations, whatever influence was exercised by this comparatively small Christian community continued to be on the old lines,—for the honour of Christ as King in Zion, for the freedom and independence of the Church, and for the promotion of genuine religion.

In glancing over the period now under review, it is not out of place to notice several points in regard to which, it seems to us, that the Reformed Presbyterian Synod anticipated some of the questions and movements that in more recent times have come to the front in all the Churches. To one of these reference has already been made in the preceding chapter—that of the relation of the youth to the Church, and the best means of carrying them onward by successive stages into full fellowship. It is a very important question, and, in these modern days, is beset with not a few difficulties; but it is not needful to refer further to it at present. Of late, most Churches in Scotland deal with the subject of religion and morals, and have Committees whose duty it is to investigate, to collect information, and to suggest what action may seem to be called for. It is not without interest surely to find that seventy years ago this matter was taken in hand by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod. In 1821 a Resolution was passed enjoining “each minister to present annually to the Presbytery to which he belongs a report of the state of religion in his congregation, particularly in the matter of family worship and private social worship; and that each Presbytery shall henceforth annually present to the Synod a written report of their proceedings, and of the state of religion in their districts.” It thus appears that, while careful to maintain a public testimony against national sins and Church defections, to act the part of a Church witnessing for the neglected attainments of the past, the Reformed Presbyterian

Synod was equally anxious to fulfil, so far as means and opportunity offered, the responsibilities of a living Church of the present in the furtherance of practical godliness. The means adopted in this case were simple enough, but sufficient to show that this Church was not content to stand looking back upon the past, but willing to put its hand to the work which the times urgently demanded. Another matter closely related to this may be simply mentioned. Some of the larger Churches are now establishing a scheme for the regular presbyterial visitation of congregations; but in the Reformed Presbyterian Church such a plan had been in operation for a long period before the Union in 1876, and it required a triennial visitation.

On another matter of perennial interest in the present state of the Churches, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod took action pretty early. We refer to the subject of Union. How the matter was brought up, and how the Synod dealt with it, the following extracts from the Minutes will make sufficiently clear:—

“Glasgow, May 2, 1821.—A petition was received from the congregation of Chirnside, urging the attention of the Synod to the devising of means to promote the unity of the Church in general on the basis of the Word of God. The members of the Court having spoken at considerable length on the object of the petition, it was moved, seconded, and agreed, that a Committee be appointed to inquire and report what will be some of the best means to be used by the ministers and members of the Church for promoting the scriptural unity of the Church of Christ.” At the next sederunt this was carried out. “The Synod proceed to appoint a Committee in terms of their resolution at the end of last sederunt, and appoints the Rev. Mr Anderson and Mr John Wilson from the Eastern Presbytery; the Rev. Mr Osborne and Mr John Nelson from the Southern Presbytery; and the Rev. Mr Brown and Mr William M’Leod from the Western Presbytery a Committee—the Rev. Mr Brown to

be convener—to meet and take the subject of the promotion of the scriptural unity of the Church under consideration, and report against next meeting of Synod. It is also appointed that the members of the Committee shall commune with their respective Presbyteries on the subject.”

The terms of the Resolution, which was adopted unanimously, and the instructions given to the Committee are worthy of notice. The Resolution has a wide aim, not union with those denominations that were nearest in point of doctrinal agreement and sympathy, but the unity of the Church in general, the scriptural unity of the Church of Christ. The instructions to the Committee pointed to practical action in the matter, the devising of “the best means” for attaining the desired object. And it surely indicates the importance which the Synod attached to the subject, when it added the very unusual instruction that “the members of the Committee shall commune with their respective Presbyteries on the subject.” Clearly the Synod meant that this movement should be regarded as a very serious and weighty one, and as such the Committee dealt with it.

Accordingly, at the meeting of Synod in May, 1822, the Committee submitted its report. When we consider the time, and the parties by whom it was drawn up, it is, we think, an interesting and remarkable document. It is too long for insertion here, but will be found in the Appendix.¹ Its scope may be given in a few sentences. The Committee recognize the difficulties that surround the subject, and desire to handle it with caution and prudence. Having noticed some favourable circumstances of the times, and stated the central point of the testimony of the Church, “The supreme headship of Jesus over the Church, and over the nations and governments of the world, or over all things for her,” which must still be maintained, it proceeds to give a series of resolutions which may be briefly thus summed up: A cordial reprobation of the divided state of the Church; an approval

¹ Appendix No. VII.

of common action for Christian objects; the suggestion of friendly conference on points of difference by delegates from the different Churches; a proposal to form a basis of Union by drawing up a very short summary of those doctrines about which there is cordial agreement; that the matter of Union should be kept prominently before the people in public ordinances; and, if possible, that devotional meetings of a public nature should be held to implore the Divine blessing in removing these divisions.

In view of events that occurred fifty years later, and to which attention will in due time be called, this is a very interesting document. In its general tone, alike in speaking of matters of difference between the Churches, and of points regarding which there is agreement, and in its cordial approval of the operations of Bible Societies and of Missionary Societies which "hold out union in a more practicable, interesting, and desirable light, by uniting the energies of the people of God in exertions in behalf of the most glorious cause," we see evidence of the broad, generous, Christian view which the Fathers of that day took of the position and responsibilities of the Church. Its suggestions as to the manner and spirit in which differences and prejudices should be dealt with are eminently wise and generous; while it will be seen that some of its proposals go beyond anything of the like nature in more recent times—as that of extra-judicial conferences by delegation from the Presbyteries of different Churches, and that relating to a short summary of doctrine as a basis of union. Equally noticeable, as revealing anxiety not to throw any obstacle in the way of union, is the following:—"In the meantime, it might be advisable not to do anything in framing a Testimony or in holding up our tenets, that would prevent our making attempts to obtain a scriptural union with Christian brethren at any future time." And most worthy of notice in another aspect, is the form in which it presents the essential principle of the Church, defining it as "not merely this abstract doctrine of Christ's supremacy

over all things to the Church, but also its practical application to the constitution and administration of civil government, for which we and our fathers have earnestly contended." Evidently the Committee that prepared this Report were not afraid to face the whole question of Union, and did not reckon distinctive principles a bar to active negotiations. They were somewhat ahead of their time, and, we may well believe, of the great body of their own Church. Yet the Synod gave no sign of being startled at the sweeping character of the suggestions; did not brand the Report as unfaithful or latitudinarian; on the contrary, these are the terms in which the deliverance of the Court on this subject are expressed:—"The Synod approve much of the general spirit of the Report, and agree that the Committee are entitled to thanks for their diligence in this matter, having exhibited their views with the caution and prudence which the subject required. They recommend the consideration of the Report unto the members, and agree that the object of it shall not be entirely dropped, but remain for reconsideration as Providence may appear to call." No further action was taken at the time. It did not seem to our Fathers that any definite practical step could then be taken; but it says much for the broad catholic spirit that animated them, that they put on record their feelings and judgment on such a subject in this form. It was quite in the spirit of the best and noblest of the martyrs and witnesses of earlier times, who in touching ways gave expression to their longings for union among the followers of Christ. It may also be supposed that the recent Union between the two main branches of the Secession, had some influence in drawing attention to the subject. During the next thirty years, the interest of the Synod in Union was shown by the frequent friendly communication and negotiations with the Original Secession Church, though these issued in no direct result.

For some time before the subject of Union came up, a controversy had been carried on within the Church itself,

which, though it never attained great dimensions, yet caused not a little irritation and uneasiness. It concerned the Covenants, to which no direct reference is made in the Report on Union; and specially related to the fourth term of Communion, which required approbation of the Act of Renovation at Auchinsburgh in 1712. Many felt that this bound them too rigidly to that Deed, especially as there were some expressions in it that had frequently been objected to as too sweeping. The chief ground of offence was the strong language in which the payment of taxes and appearing in courts of law were condemned; but as by the decision of the Reformed Presbytery, these acts were not now regarded as disqualifying for membership in the Church, it seemed unreasonable to exact so specific a pledge to the Auchinsburgh Deed as this fourth term implied. For a considerable time the matter had been kept before the Supreme Court by petitions; but as it was felt to be a serious matter to tamper with the established conditions of membership, any decisive action had been postponed. The question, however, had to be faced and settled; and in 1818 several alternative plans of relief were submitted in overture to Sessions, and in the meantime Sessions are left free to read or to omit the clause, as might be judged best for edification. It was the custom then and long afterwards to read and explain the Terms of Communion on every sacramental occasion, before the distribution of tokens. For three or four years more the agitation continued; petitions and memorials for and against a change were laid before Synod, and discussions on the subject occupied a considerable part of several meetings of the Court. At length, in 1822, a decision was come to, and it was unanimously agreed that the following should be substituted in place of the fourth term as adjusted in 1762:—"The acknowledgement of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League; and in consistency with this, the duty of a minority adhering to these vows when the nation has cast them off; and, under

the impression of solemn covenant obligations, following their worthy ancestors in endeavouring faithfully to maintain and diffuse the principles of the Reformation." By this form the Church was freed from responsibility as to the form and terms of the preceding acts of Covenant Renovation, and was only bound to a recognition of the perpetual obligation of the original Deeds. It was another forward step in the way of freeing the Church from the entanglements that arose out of the terms of antiquated documents, and giving greater liberty to the conscience of its members. To some it may appear that the step was but a small one, yet it was in the circumstances considerable, and gave a much-needed relief.

Looking back over a period of seventy years, it is not easy to understand the keenness with which a dispute on such a point was waged; but on this, as on like questions in all Churches, there was the plea of conscience urged against any change, and the charge of backsliding when the change was made. In different parts of the Church there were some who, on the ground of this small change, practically withdrew from the membership, and allowed themselves to fall out of Church fellowship altogether. These were, however, few in number, and only one minister ceased to hold ecclesiastical communion with the Synod. This was the Rev. James Reid of Newton-Stewart. Ordained in 1787, he for a considerable time was the only minister of the Reformed Presbytery in Galloway, where he did a noble work, not only for the Church which he faithfully served, but for the cause of evangelical religion, at a time when Moderatism was rampant throughout that region, upon which the Secession had only a very slight hold. He was zealous in maintaining the old discipline, and had been known publicly to rebuke an individual for frequenting political clubs and associating with those who were enemies of the cause. Gradually his sphere of labour had been curtailed by settlements at Stranraer and Castle-Douglas, and was confined to the district around Newton-Stewart. He enjoyed the high esteem alike of his brethren in the

ministry, and of the community among whom he laboured. Distance and infirm health frequently prevented him from being present in Synod, and when the change above referred to was adopted he was absent. He felt conscientiously bound to adhere to the old form, and never again associated with his brethren in Presbytery or Synod. On their part his brethren exercised towards him a large measure of Christian forbearance; they endeavoured to remove his scruples, but, failing in this, they allowed him to continue in his place unmolested. After a few years, when growing infirmities incapacitated him for work, he removed to Glasgow, where he died in 1837. His congregation at Newton-Stewart returned to its connection with the Synod.

About the same time considerable dissatisfaction was expressed by petitions to Synod, regarding the large amount of ancient literature, of which the members of the Church were required to express approval, including documents that many had no means of procuring, and many more had no leisure to peruse. There was too much ground for this complaint, and it did not seem reasonable to require all and sundry to homologate all documents which had the *imprimatur* of the Church, but with which they had no intelligent acquaintance. It was rather a good omen, when the people manifested anxiety to be committed only to what they were in a position to understand by personal study, even though along with this, there was a loosening of traditional attachment to venerated relics of the past. The answer of the Synod in the first instance was to the following effect:—
“That all that is required of the members of the Church in regard to those writings is an approbation of those scriptural truths which are exhibited in the Testimony, and have been extracted therefrom, showing them to have been embraced by our reformers, together with an approbation of their zeal and fidelity, without any acknowledgment of the propriety of every sentiment or expression there contained, or in general the acknowledgment of any doctrine or duty not

approved in the Testimony itself." The amount of this is, that members were no farther bound to these old documents than the Testimony distinctly sanctions; practically they were only bound to the Testimony. This was so far well, and it led on to other results that will, in due course, come under our notice.

In the midst of the agitation regarding the Auchinsaugh Deed, Professor M'Millan of Stirling, the third and last of that honoured name in the ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, passed away. Ordained in 1778, he occupied for many years a very wide field of labour, extending from Bucklyvie and Crieff to Linlithgow, and devoted himself with great zeal to the discharge of his pastoral duties. His high theological attainments commended him to his brethren as the first occupant of the office of Professor of Divinity, which he filled for sixteen years to the satisfaction of his brethren and the benefit of the Church. He is known as an author only by a pamphlet in connection with the controversy with the Secession. It was called forth by some unfavourable strictures on the Presbytery, contained in a re-issue of their Testimony by the Burgher Synod, and is in the form of a "Letter" to the four ministers under whose care it was issued. It is a well-written production, courteous in tone, but cogent in argument, and amply vindicating the principles of the Church. A number of very able and useful ministers were trained under Mr M'Millan. Chief among these were two who contributed more than any others to bring the Church more prominently before the public, and for more than half a century, exercised a great and wholesome influence on its policy. These were the two Symingtons, both of whom occupied in succession the professorial chair. Andrew was ordained in 1809 in his native town of Paisley, where, by high Christian character and able ministrations, he gathered around him an affectionate people, and won for himself a very high place in the esteem of the community. The estimate which his brethren formed of his great natural abilities and

theological attainments, was shown by his unanimous election in 1820 to fill the office of Professor of Divinity, the duties of which he discharged with characteristic devotion and conspicuous success for the long period of thirty-three years. In 1819 his brother William was ordained at Stranraer, and from that centre, by his eminent pulpit gifts, and rich and powerful evangelical preaching, exercised throughout the whole of Galloway, an influence which it is perhaps impossible in these later days for any one minister to attain. Such preaching as that of William Symington, was then rare and precious in that part of the country, and during his twenty years of labour there he did a noble work for the cause of the Gospel.

A few years after Mr Symington's appointment, some unpleasantness arose in connection with Irish probationers. There being no Divinity Hall in Ireland, the students from the Church there studied under the Scottish professor. Two licentiates of the Irish Synod had been settled over Scottish congregations, the late Revs. W. Anderson, Loanhead, and Dr. Bates, Glasgow; but when an attempt was made in 1823 to have the late Professor Dick settled in Stirling as successor to Mr M'Millan, a minority of the Presbytery opposed the sustaining of the call, and carried the matter by appeal to the Synod. The ground of opposition was simply this—the Scottish Synod required students to attend the Divinity Hall for four sessions before receiving license, whereas the Irish Church had no fixed term, and licensed students after three, and sometimes two, years' attendance. This was a manifest injustice to the Scottish students, and the Synod sustained the appeal, and declared Mr Dick to be ineligible to a call in Scotland, on the general ground that he was under an entirely separate and independent judicatory, and had not been regularly transferred; and on the special ground that the Church in Ireland did not exact from its students the same amount of study as did the Scottish Church, and to put both on the same level would be unfair to their own probationers. In 1826 delegates from the Irish Synod were

present. Satisfactory explanations were given, and the following arrangement accepted:—"It is agreed that the licentiates at present itinerating on either side of the channel shall be upon a perfect equality, and eligible to office wherever they may be regularly called, and that a plan of study shall be mutually formed by both Synods, to be prosecuted for the future by all students in both countries." Such a plan was drawn up and approved by the Scottish Synod in 1829, and transmitted to Ireland for consideration and report. So far as we have been able to ascertain, this plan never received the formal sanction of the Irish Synod, and was not acted upon by it. The matter gave trouble afterwards, that would have been obviated had the plan been cordially adopted. The students, however, continued to attend the Hall at Paisley till the death of Professor A. Symington.

Section Second.

There is little occasion to dwell on the Synod's action on the public questions that agitated society during this period. One of these was Catholic Emancipation, of which measure the Synod, in a series of Resolutions, expressed its strong disapproval, as injurious to the interests of religion, dishonouring to Christ as King of nations, and perilous to the well-being of the nation itself. The matter was viewed less as a question of civil rights as between fellow-subjects of the same sovereign, than in the light of the unscriptural and tyrannical character of the Papal system. In this protest the Synod was sustained by very many in the other Churches. When the system of National Education (designed to be available to Catholics and Protestants alike) was established in Ireland, the Synod protested against it for excluding the reading of the Scriptures from the schools, and emphatically declared in favour of religious education. The Government grant to Maynooth College for the training of Popish priests, called forth from the Synod, as it did from other Churches,

and from great numbers throughout the land, very strong condemnation, as a deliberate support of Popery, and at variance with the Protestant character of the constitution and government. This grant continued to be an occasion of irritation and protest among a large section of the people, till it was brought to an end by the Irish Church Bill of 1869. When the temperance question began to be agitated, many of the Reformed Presbyterian ministers heartily threw themselves into the movement, and the wide prevalence of the sin of drunkenness moved the Synod again and again to issue warnings against it, and it strongly recommended the members of the Church to abstain from the business of retailing spirituous liquors. Similarly the Church revealed its interest in the cause of Sabbath observance, and made its voice heard in the Apocrypha controversy in defence of the circulation by Bible Societies of the canonical Scriptures alone. Approving as it did the position taken up by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, which from the first refused to receive slaveholders into its communion, the Synod heartily supported the movement for the abolition of Slavery, and rejoiced in that noble Act by which emancipation was carried out in all the dominions under the British Crown in 1834. On such points as these the Synod was in accord with the general feelings of the religious public of Scotland and with the action of the Churches, and its position on these subjects helped to bring the Reformed Presbyterian Church into line with other denominations, to widen the sympathies of the Church itself, and break down the prejudices with which outsiders had been wont to regard it.

The subject of Occasional Hearing has repeatedly been referred to. It lay at the root of the unfortunate decision respecting the Missionary Society of Glasgow, in 1796; and it came before Synod for the last time in 1831. Petitions and complaints from Stranraer were laid before the Court. Some members of that congregation had attended an evening sermon in behalf of missions by a minister of the Established

Church. This was offensive to some members of Session, who desired that these parties should be dealt with; but the minister, supported by the majority of the Session, refused to inflict censure for hearing a Gospel sermon. The minority complained to Synod, asking that the old practice be enforced, and the Session, recognizing a diversity both in opinion and practice, requested the Court to relieve them from their perplexity. The decision of the Synod is as follows:—
“After a long and calm consideration of the petitions, it is unanimously agreed, that the Court recommend to all the members of the Church full manifestation of steadfast adherence to the principles of the Reformation; and by no means to give their countenance to anything opposed to them; but the Court decidedly refuse the prayer of the petition urging the Synod to enjoin the Session to institute judicial procedure in the case specified, because the Court think such a course inexpedient.” Thirty-five years had elapsed since the last decision, which recognized Occasional Hearing as a censurable offence, and now it is declared to involve no censure; and so another of those small and irritating points, which had by many been regarded as matters of principle rather than of opinion, was settled according to the dictates of common sense and Christian charity. It showed the tenacity with which some minds cling to the traditional opinions of the past, that nothing but a formal decision of the Supreme Court could finally settle a point like this.

On the subject of Covenanting frequent discussions took place during this period, as had been the case for a considerable time previously. Petitions, asking the renewal of the ancient deeds, were frequently presented; conferences and special meetings were held on the subject; bonds of adhesion were drawn up and carefully considered, and communications were opened in connection therewith, with the sister Churches in Ireland and America, but nothing came of it all; the Covenants were never again renewed by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The times were

regarded by many as unseasonable for such a service; and besides, there was silently growing up in the community—and especially among the ministers—a conviction which found articulate expression in due time, that there was something almost absurd in the idea of a small Church renewing what was held to be the deed of the nation as such. New times brought new work, and new ways of looking at the past in its bearing on the present; and, as years passed on, these venerable deeds came to be looked upon less through the halo of pious sentiment and traditionary feeling, and more directly contemplated as indications of a noble aim only partially realized; as symbols of union rather than causes of division; as in essential principle true and enduring, while the form was that of an age gone by. It is at least very evident, that the Fathers of the Church during this period found great difficulty in taking any decisive step regarding the covenants, and did not commit themselves to any procedure that would have the appearance of making these venerable relics of a troublous time the outstanding characteristic of a living Church of the nineteenth century.

Hitherto all the energies of the Church had been directed to the maintenance of Gospel ordinances at home, and to the interests of sister Churches in Ireland and America holding the same Testimony. The financial resources of the Church had not been drawn upon for any object beyond what was strictly denominational, with the slight exception of aid to Bible circulation given by individuals. There was, up to 1830, only one Church fund, to which all the congregations were expected to contribute. This was the Synod fund, from which was paid the salary of the Professor and the ordinary expenses of the Supreme Court—the theological library, which occupied attention pretty often, being, for the most part, maintained by private subscriptions. In addition to these, aid was also given in maintaining ordinances in what were called “destitute corners of the Church.” This was virtually Home Mission work, and concerned mainly

small outlying stations, such as Lorn and Lochgilphead in the West Highlands, and Wick and Thurso in Caithness. Some slight efforts were also made to send Gaelic-speaking preachers to evangelize in the Highlands, and to distribute the Scriptures in the language of the people.

But the missionary spirit was now fully awakened in Scotland; the Church in all its sections was roused to a livelier sense of the duty which it owed to Christ, its Living Head. To diffuse abroad the glad tidings of salvation various mission schemes were set on foot, some under the auspices of particular denominations, and others by general societies. The honour of first moving the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the direction of Foreign Missions belongs undoubtedly to the Rev. Stewart Bates, then of Kelso, and afterwards for nearly twenty years minister of West Campbell Street Church, Glasgow. In both of these spheres he proved himself to be a laborious and faithful servant of Christ in the Gospel, revered and beloved by all with whom he came into contact. He was a man of generous mind and catholic sympathies, yet steadfast in his adherence to the Church which he served. He took an active interest in all public movements tending to further the interests of religion and morality, and the general well-being of society. Causes such as temperance, Sabbath observance, and the Evangelical Alliance, called forth his warmest sympathies and his most earnest endeavours. Eminently wise, judicious, and conciliatory, few men exercised greater weight in the councils of the Church than did Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Bates. In 1830 an Overture which he had prepared on the subject of Foreign Missions and the duty of the Church thereanent, was transmitted by his own Presbytery to the Synod. It consisted of a series of Resolutions setting forth the duty and the call to mission work, and suggesting what steps should be taken at once—such as preaching on the subject, forming missionary societies, collecting subscriptions both from individuals and congregations, and the appointment of a

Committee to correspond, inquire, and report to next meeting of Synod. After full discussion of the subject, the Synod unanimously approved of the spirit and object of the Resolutions, adopted them, and enjoined all the members to use every exertion to carry them into effect. The first missionary Committee was appointed, with Professor Symington as convener; and the Resolutions (with a preface) were published and widely circulated. It was thus that the Reformed Presbyterian Church was first interested in mission work.

Looking back over the period of sixty intervening years, we recognize in this movement, originating in the warm Christian heart of one earnest man, an important epoch in the history of this Church, of deeper interest in itself, and with wider issues, than any stir about Covenant Renovation could ever supply. It was in the truest sense the carrying out of one of the aims of these old deeds, in a way fitted to benefit the Church at home, and to honour Messiah the Prince by the extension of His spiritual kingdom on the earth. Without at all under-estimating the service which it had rendered to Christ and His truth as a witnessing Church, we yet recognize, in the work to which the Synod was now committed, the highest and most practical form of witness-bearing, a true act of homage to the exalted Redeemer, whose last command was: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." When we consider the amount raised by the Church at that date for objects other than congregational, we recognize the spirit of faith that moved to this effort. The whole amount of contributions to the only fund in existence at the meeting when the Resolutions were adopted was little over £71. Yet Mr Bates and his brethren felt well assured that the Church could do very much more, and that what was wanted was an object that appealed to the highest Christian feelings and convictions—that would touch the heart of all who loved Christ and His Kingdom. Let that be presented and duly enforced, and Christian liberality would certainly be evoked. Nor were they mistaken in this.

The first year, before a field was selected or a missionary appointed, produced over £114; and during the year following £182 was collected, which, together with £66 for the Synod Fund, made the amount for that year £248, against £70 two years before. It was but a day of small things; but it augured well. In the meantime, till the Synod fixed on a sphere of labour, some aid was given to a mission to New Brunswick, which had been started by the Synod in Ireland.

Ultimately, the Committee of Synod resolved to establish a mission in Canada, and the first agent was sent out in 1834. This was the Rev. James Maclachlan, interesting reports of whose labours were from time to time sent home. He found abundant scope for all his energies among the scattered townships in the very thinly-peopled region of Upper Canada, where great numbers were living practically without ordinances, and in danger of sinking into a state of semi-heathenism. During the next twelve years other three ordained ministers were sent out. One of these died, and another did not long continue in connection with the mission; in course of years the remaining two were brought into closer connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of the United States, and in 1851 all relations between them and the Church at home ceased. It may indeed be doubted whether this colonial mission, good and necessary in those days even more than now, ever evoked much interest or enthusiasm in the Church at home. We do not believe that it was labour thrown away; but its results were not of a very palpable or striking character. Yet along with the greater work done for Canada by the other home Churches, it contributed to the building up of the vigorous Presbyterian Church now working so effectively in the great Western Dominion.

Of discussions on matters of internal policy that agitated the Church and occupied the attention of the Synod it is not needful to say much. Disputes in congregations have always

an unpleasant flavour, and evoke much keen personal feeling, and it would serve no good purpose to revive the memory of those that disturbed the general harmony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and ruffled the calm of Synodical discussion fifty or sixty years ago. They can have little interest to the present generation, and in no way affected the standing or history of the Church. To one only of these little ecclesiastical tempests brief reference may be made. Before the year 1837, there had been no instance of translation from one ministerial charge to another. The question as to the expediency of this had been brought up once or twice in the beginning of the century; but there existed a very strong feeling against the introduction of the system. The formation of a second congregation in Glasgow in 1836, and the death of the minister of the first charge in 1838, were the occasions of keen debates on the translation of ministers. The results were the settlement in Glasgow of two ministers, each of whom in his own sphere did much for the interests of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dr Bates, by his wise counsel and efficient help in all social and religious movements, and Dr Wm. Symington, by his high pulpit gifts and his literary and theological attainments, combined to secure for that Church a larger measure of public recognition in the busy western metropolis than it had ever before received. Thirty years had now nearly elapsed since the Synod was constituted; nearly all its first ministerial members had passed away—Mason, Rowatt, Fairley, Henderson—men faithful and approved as preachers of the glorious Gospel, were no more; and a new generation, worthy of the old, and equally well fitted for the work of their times, had risen in their stead, and upheld the traditions of the Cameronian pulpit.

The Synod was placed in a somewhat delicate and difficult position by a rupture which took place in the sister Church in America in 1833. Regarding the cause of the rupture we need say little. It may suffice to record the fact, that from

its beginning the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States had condemned the civil constitution of that country, because of its recognition of slavery, its failure to give due honour to Christ as King of nations, and its opening up places of power and trust to persons of any religion and of no religion, and had prohibited the members of the Church from every act that seemed directly to homologate or approve of the evils and defects of the constitution and administration. Gradually many had come to modify their views on these points, and were apparently prepared to take up a position of less pronounced antagonism towards the existing constitution. Controversy on this point led to the separation of the Church into two rival Synods. Both parties sent communications to the Scottish Synod, and a Committee of the latter reported fully on the matter. In this report distinct approbation is given to the statements in the American Testimony on the points in dispute; unmistakable sympathy is shown towards the party opposed to any change; but in defect of full information regarding the position of the New Light party, the Synod is recommended to abstain from any formal conclusion. Accordingly, correspondence more or less regular was maintained for forty years with both American Synods, the general impression being that the New Light party had not gone so manifestly astray from the old paths as to warrant their being cast off. A similar course was followed when a rupture took place in the Irish Synod in 1840; both parties were officially recognized, and ministers from both received by the Synod.

Section Third.

In proceeding to notice what facts bearing on the principles and peculiar position of the denomination require consideration during this period, we are, for the first time, brought face to face with a subject which for thirty years, more or less, disturbed the peace of the Church, and in the end caused a

disruption. We have seen how careful the Church had been all along to guard its position as protesting against a voluntary incorporation with the State, and avoiding everything that necessarily implied an approbation of the evils in the constitution and administration of the Government. We have also noticed the numerous common actions which were forbidden to the members of the Societies, because these were held to involve such an approval. We have at various times pointed out that, while holding fast to essential scriptural principles, many of these forbidden acts had come to be viewed in another light, and were either authoritatively or tacitly allowed. Gradually the Church fell back on general principles as the basis of ecclesiastical fellowship, and became less rigid and exacting with respect to particular or minute applications—the sphere of ecclesiastical action was narrowed, and that of the individual conscience more fully recognized. And thus it happened that in the year 1832, it would have been hard to point out any material difference in social and civil actions and relations, between members of the Reformed Presbyterian and those of any other Church. They paid taxes without protest, took out licences, employed lawyers, used Government stamps, appeared in civil courts, sat on juries, and petitioned Parliament; yet every one of these acts had been at one time or other forbidden. Even still there were individuals not clear about the consistency of those who acted as jurors and signed petitions to Parliament; but the Synod disregarded these scruples, and even distinctly declared the latter quite warrantable. In all this we do not regard the Church as having been unfaithful to principle, but rather as having acted wisely under the discipline of Providence in the changed circumstances of the times, and as having thereby given more distinct prominence to what was scriptural and permanent in its Testimony.

But a new stage in this gradual process was reached, when, in 1833, the exercise of the Elective Franchise was for the first time brought distinctly before the Church Courts. The

occasion of this was the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, by which the franchise was very largely extended. Before that time, the right of electing representatives to the Imperial Parliament had been confined to a very small number of individuals both in burghs and counties. Among this select number, we question if there was one member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. But many of them, such as tenants of farms and owners of house property, were within the scope of the new Act, and might be put upon the register as entitled to vote. It appears that some of them did exercise their right, and this speedily brought up the whole question before the Supreme Court. It was practically a new question; for though the Church had from the first protested against taking the oath of allegiance, there had not hitherto arisen any call to deal with the franchise; and on that subject it was thought necessary that some decision should be given. Accordingly, in 1833, the question was brought up by the North-Eastern Presbytery by the following extract from its Minutes:—"Some ministers stated that there were some persons in their congregations who had voted for members of Parliament, and requested the advice of the Presbytery respecting the course which ought to be adopted regarding the matter now, and in all time coming. It was agreed to ask the advice of the Synod on this matter, and request Synod to take the whole subject into consideration." Thus appealed to, the Court could not avoid saying something to relieve those in perplexity; and after discussion the following deliverance was unanimously adopted:—"That as the British Constitution is in many important particulars inconsistent with the Word of God, and has been declared to be so in the Testimony of this Church, all recognition of it is at variance with a faithful adherence to this Testimony. That the late Reform Act, while it confers an important political right, has not removed the principal evils of the Constitution, and of course has not materially affected the grounds on which this Church has exhibited a Testimony against them. That the exercise of

the elective franchise conferred by this Act is a direct recognition* of the Constitution, in virtue of the political identity subsisting between the representative and his constituents, and is therefore inconsistent with the enjoyment of the privileges of this Church."

This was the Synod's answer to the request made, and certainly it was clear and decisive enough in its terms. From the time that this Resolution was adopted, it was held by many, that every Reformed Presbyterian who voted was liable to be deprived of Church privileges, because by so doing he voluntarily recognized the Constitution, and thus surrendered the position and principles of the Church. The decision put the matter very strongly; "all recognition" of it is at variance with fidelity to principle; surely recognition is involved in supporting existing authorities, in doing Government work and being paid for it, and in assisting to carry on the practical business of Government in its courts. But the Synod of 1833 virtually declared,—all these are trivial and unimportant, compared with the simple act of declaring at the polling booth which of two men one would prefer as a member of the legislature, *that is*, a giving up of everything distinctive in the Testimony. For the Resolution declares that all the mischief of this simple act lies in the occult meaning of it, the political identity between the voter and the representative, which is of such a peculiar nature, that when the latter swears the oath of allegiance, it amounts to the same as if the former took it; and then the relation between this oath and the coronation oath is such, that he who takes the former is bound to all that the Sovereign swears to. The whole gist of the matter, and the only defence of the Synod's position, lies in the certainty of these two points—the re-duplication of the oaths one upon the other, and this political identity between voter and representative. It may seem rash to say so, but where religious privileges are made to depend on the truth of such points as these, it might have been well for the Synod to have taken more time for the consideration of the matter, though

we can so far sympathize with its anxiety to keep the people free from the entanglements of political strife, and to maintain its position of protest against acknowledged evils. That protest was now practically narrowed down to the one point—you must not vote for a member of Parliament. It has, moreover, to be said that this Resolution decided a new question, and gave that decision the effect of a principle; and the Synod did so without any consultation with the Presbyteries and Sessions, to whom it was never remitted. At a later stage the whole subject was fully discussed, meanwhile the law of the Church was clearly announced.

It is certain that though this decision expressed the conviction of the members of Synod, it did not meet with the same unanimous acceptance among the membership of the Church. At the next meeting of the Synod, a memorial was presented by an elder from Kelso, praying “the Synod to review their Overture of last meeting anent the exercise of the elective franchise, and either delete or alter the Overture.” To this the answer was given, “that the Synod felt themselves bound to adhere to the Declaratory Act passed by this Court last year respecting voting for members of Parliament.” In 1835, a petition was presented from the congregation of Edinburgh, craving that “members of our Church may be allowed to avail themselves of the privilege conferred by the late Reform Act.” But the Court was inexorable; and after discussion it was unanimously agreed “that on the most careful examination of the arguments contained in the Petition, as well as of those urged by the Commissioners, the Court can see no sufficient reason for altering the decision formerly given on that subject; but on the contrary, feel themselves imperatively bound, by the authority of God and their solemn engagements, to adhere decidedly to the recognized principles of the Church on that point as a matter of essential importance to the distinctive standing and Testimony of this Church.” At the same time, the Synod recognized the novelty of the present state of things, and appointed a small Committee,

consisting of Professor Symington and Rev. Thomas Neilson, to prepare a statement for the instruction of the members of the Church, and in vindication of the decision of the Synod.

But there was some difficulty and uncertainty with respect to the discipline which was to be inflicted on those who violated this new law. What form should it take, and to what extent should it be carried, or what kind of dealing should Sessions have with delinquents? Were they to be dealt with as those are who are chargeable with scandalous violations of the moral law? It was easy to see that some Sessions might be disposed to a more lenient treatment in the former case than in the latter, just because of the difficulty of bringing home to the conscience the sense of moral guilt in the one case compared with the other. This same year an Overture was presented from the Presbytery of Glasgow, asking the Synod to give such advice as would secure "uniformity of discipline, sameness of practice in the treatment of offences that are only of recent occurrence in the Church." This, however, the Synod declined to do, deeming it impossible to give such explicit directions as were sought, and expressing "confidence in Sessions that they will combine tenderness with fidelity in administering the discipline of the Church." Thus the matter was left, and the practical result was that while Sessions were expected to deal, and did deal, with offenders when brought before them, each dealt with them very much according to the prevailing sentiment on the subject that existed among the members, and discipline was not uniform.

Only once again, and in quite another connection, was this matter before the Synod during this period; and before passing to other matters we may notice the result of the Synod's resolution to publish a defence of its position for the instruction of the people. At the meeting in 1836, the Committee entrusted with the task reported that they had been unable to do anything in the way of carrying it out, and requested to be relieved of the appointment. This

was agreed to, and the Rev. W. Anderson was appointed to prepare the statement. No reason is assigned for the former Committee's resignation, and it may be going too far to suppose that they had no particular liking for the special service laid upon them; but in so far as Mr Anderson was concerned, the subject was one with which he was thoroughly conversant, on which his mind was firmly made up, and to which he attached supreme importance, as will in due time become manifest, and he entered heartily upon the work assigned to him. The draft of it was ready by next year, was read, generally approved, and re-committed. In 1838 it was again read, approved as to its scope and spirit, but it was thought to be too long, and that objections were not adequately met. It was read again at two meetings in 1840, and ordered to be printed in Overture for careful revision. In May, 1842, ministers and elders are enjoined carefully to consider it, so that the Synod may be prepared at next meeting to say how far they would approve of it as an exposition and vindication of the recognized principles of this Church on the subject to which it refers. In November, 1842, the final decision was given in the following terms:—"It is moved and unanimously agreed, that the members of the Court express their acknowledgments to the writer for his attention to the subject, and their concurrence in the general views and principles contained in it; and without pledging themselves to every statement or particular, they recommend that it be published, as containing ample and convincing evidence of the soundness of the principles of the Church, which it was written to illustrate and defend."

It is somewhat singular that, considering the limited scope and purpose of this Paper, it should have required so long consideration—that its course should have been so often impeded by re-committal, postponements, and discussions. The new Testimony was discussed and adopted in both its parts in much shorter time; and, after all, the approval was given in general and guarded terms. The Synod was already

committed to the condemnation of the use of the franchise, and to the difficult question of the identity between voter and representative, and therefore could not do otherwise than concur in the general views and principles. But in glancing over the production and marking the exceedingly strong terms employed, the sweeping assertions made, the legal authorities quoted, and the singular way in which some objections are answered, we can easily imagine that some members of Synod shrank from being held responsible for anything more than the general principles. It impresses the reader with a sense of the strength of the writer's convictions on the question; yet, with all respect to the memory of the able and worthy author, it may be doubted whether the manner in which the question was discussed by him was likely to win any converts to the cause he so zealously defended. It passed out of Court in the way we have mentioned, and was shortly afterwards published as a pamphlet of 130 pages, under the title, "Claims of the Divine Government, applied to the British Constitution and the use of the Elective Franchise."

The most important fact that remains to be noticed at this stage, is the preparation and publication of the New Testimony in 1837 and 1839. Twenty years earlier expression had been given to a desire for a re-exhibition of the Testimony, and in 1818 a Committee, consisting of the Rev. Messrs Fairley, A. Symington, and Armstrong, were appointed to prepare it. This was done, the draft was generally approved, and ordered to be printed as an Overture for Presbyteries and Sessions. In 1824 this was dropped, and a number of years elapsed before any further step was taken; but in 1834 the work was entrusted to Professor Symington and the Rev. S. Bates. The Doctrinal part was prepared by the former, and, after careful and minute consideration, was finally passed by the Synod in the following Minute:—"Glasgow, May 15th, 1837.—The Overture formerly prepared and submitted to Sessions, and returned with their approbation, is, after full

and deliberate consideration, unanimously adopted as the doctrinal part of the Church's Testimony." In like manner, in May, 1839, the second division was approved:—"It is moved and unanimously agreed that this work, previously transmitted to Sessions, and carefully reviewed in Synod, be adopted as the historical part of the Testimony of the Church." The cordial thanks of the Court were given to Professor Symington and Mr Bates for their persevering and successful labours. No other members of the Synod were so admirably qualified as they were for the work entrusted to them—Dr Symington by his weight of character, his genuine ability, his thorough grasp of the doctrines of Holy Scripture, and familiarity with the principles and position of the Church; and Mr Bates by the fulness of his knowledge, his sympathy with the struggles of the past, his sound judgment, his power of clear and balanced statement, and genuine Christian charity.

The Judicial Act and Testimony of 1761 was superseded by this new work. It had passed through a number of editions, and some alterations had at different times been made, though not on matters of great importance. Great changes had in the meantime passed over the face of society. Changes, too, of a weighty character had occurred in the Government of the country, and not least among the Scottish Churches. It was fitting that if there was to be a Testimony of any practical value, it must bear directly on the actual condition of things in Church and State, and must bring out the position of the Church and the application of its principles to existing circumstances. This was now accomplished, and in a way entirely satisfactory to the Church. In form and method the new Testimony was a great improvement on the old, but in all matters of principle the two are quite in harmony. The Doctrinal part, extending to 140 pages, is an admirable statement of Christian truth, arranged in seventeen chapters, with Scripture proofs and references to corresponding passages in the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms. In comparing it with the Overture of

1821, we are struck with the resemblance between the two documents. There are exactly the same divisions, and the one is for the most part simply a transcript of the other. One chapter is transposed to a different place, words and phrases are altered here and there, sentences and short paragraphs are introduced, but as a whole, the two documents are substantially identical. The explanation doubtless is that Professor Symington fell back on the earlier labours of the Committee of which he was a member, and which in a revised and amended form received the *imprimatur* of the Synod. Fitting but not undue prominence is given to the scriptural principles that had all along constituted the essence of the Church's Testimony. Emphatic statements are made regarding the Headship of Christ over the Church, and His Dominion over the nations, and the obligation lying on communities favoured with the Word of God to submit to its authority, to frame their constitution, enact their laws, appoint their governors, and regulate their obedience by this infallible standard. In cases where that is not done, such constitutions and authorities, being opposed to Christ's will, cannot be innocently recognized as God's moral ordinance. It is held that the Christian civil ruler should recognize the creed and government of the Church, and protect and support it; but it is acknowledged that "in certain states of the Church and of the world, it may be difficult to point out the manner and extent in which he will lawfully and constitutionally be authorized to exercise his power for the visible interests of religion." When the constitution is not in harmony with the Word of God, when magistrates do not possess the requisite scriptural qualifications, Christians are bound to avoid whatever would so incorporate them with the national society, as to involve them in the guilt that may attach to its constitution or administration. Refusing incorporation, yet living in peace, furthering the ends of civil government and good order, and contributing their share of the common taxation, they may claim protection for their lives, property,

and liberty, such at least as belong to strangers within the gates. The position of such individuals is not regarded so dolefully as in the Judicial Act, where they describe themselves, as an oppressed people in subjection to a conquering power, no better than captives in their own land. The one thing about which they are concerned is, to avoid anything that necessarily implies homologation or approbation of what is immoral or anti-Christian in constitution or administration ; and the one thing specified in this connection as involving such approval is swearing allegiance. There is no mention of the franchise. With regard to the central principle of the Testimony—Christ's Headship over the nations—it is acknowledged that it is by many now conceded and ably pled, and it is desired that it were faithfully applied to the existing British Constitution. Substantially the old principles are set forth in this document ; but we are conscious of a more moderate tone and a more generous catholic spirit pervading it. The changes in Church and State, while not removing the substantial grounds of protest, could not fail to exercise some modifying influence on the mode of statement. Altogether, the position and principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are presented with a fidelity, wisdom, and moderation, better fitted to commend them to candid minds than were many earlier statements on these points.

The Historical part of the Testimony takes a very wide survey of the past. It is a condensed sketch of the history of witness-bearing for truth and righteousness, from the beginning of the world to the nineteenth century. It deals, however, mainly with the Historical Testimony for the principles of the Scottish Church. It briefly sketches the history of the Reformation from Popery and from Prelacy, and the persecution under the later Stuarts. The general aims and actings of the witnesses and martyrs are approved, and the conduct of the Societies in standing apart from the Settlement in Church and State at the Revolution is vindicated ; and it is held that the Reformed Presbyterian Church maintains sub-

stantially the same position, and on essentially the same grounds, and that it is the true representative of the historical Church of Scotland. Hence it re-states the reasons for remaining separate from the Established Church, while it cordially recognizes the symptoms of improvement in that Church, in the growing power of evangelicalism, the efforts for Church extension, the struggle for spiritual independence, and for relief from the yoke of patronage. At the same time it is not concealed that one great change is demanded—the severance of the connection of the Church with the State, till at least the State is itself reformed, and brought into harmony with Scripture requirements. As to the Secession, the difference is held to be greater than it was in earlier times. The Voluntary controversy had led to extreme positions and extreme utterances, which seemed to the Synod to have widened the breach between the Churches; and strong condemnation of these positions is expressed, as unscriptural, derogatory to the honour of Christ, and injurious to the interests of religion and morality. How far these impressions were modified by a calmer consideration of the whole subject will by and by be noticed. At the same time ungrudging testimony is borne to the great services rendered by both the Secession and Relief Churches to evangelical religion at home, and to their zealous efforts for Bible circulation, and the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom abroad. As yet there was no call for the Church to relinquish its separate standing and incorporate with any other. None of these maintained in their integrity the principles of the historical Covenanted Church of Scotland.

Some space was devoted to a statement and vindication of the position of the Church towards the civil institutions of the country. It still maintains the old position of dissent from and protest against these, which was assumed by the Fathers of the Church at the Revolution. In doing so, every unkind and unpatriotic feeling is repudiated, and frank acknowledgments made of the privileges enjoyed in Britain more than

in any other land. Still, withal, the essential grounds of Protest remain, in the disregard to Scripture requirements as to constitution and administration, and as to the moral qualification of civil rulers, in the ignoring of Christ's Lordship over the nations, in the ecclesiastical supremacy claimed and exercised by the Crown, and in the fact that, to so large an extent, the support given by the State to the Church has been to the injury of religion. And this Protest requires them to avoid those forms of prayer for the Government which seem to express approbation of institutions that are believed to be essentially defective and dishonouring to Christ; and it further requires them to avoid being incorporated with the State, so as to become accomplices in, or morally responsible for, its iniquitous public policy. Reformed Presbyterians cannot, therefore, it is held, sit as members of the legislature, nor take the oaths to Government, nor vote for members of Parliament, nor hold any civil or military office under the Crown, "which might require them to co-operate in carrying into practice any branch of an unscriptural code of law." Yet are they prepared as individuals to do what is in their power, "for strengthening those wholesome laws which are necessary for the security of life and property, or for promoting the administration of justice, when permitted to do so without being identified with a corrupt Constitution."¹ Whether this position was quite consistent all through—whether recognition in some sense was not involved in acts that were now allowed as truly as in those that were still forbidden—and whether the opinion about incorporation, oaths, and voting were correct or not, we need not inquire. This is the latest form in which the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church towards the Civil Government was expressed; it is quite intelligible, and essentially in harmony with all by-past Testimonies.

Before closing this chapter it is proper to indicate the attitude of the Church towards the two great controversies,

¹ Historical Testimony, pp. 210-22.

that near the end of this period agitated the Scottish Churches. One of these is what is known as the "Voluntary Controversy." In this dispute the Reformed Presbyterian Church occupied a middle position. Its sympathies were with the Voluntaries in the emphatic condemnation of the corruptions and evil tendencies of the existing civil establishments of religion, and in the enforcement of the duty lying upon Christians and Christian Churches to support and extend the Kingdom of Christ; but it was opposed to them in rejecting the principle of a union between Church and State, and in asserting that the civil magistrate has no concern with religion, can and ought to do nothing for its support, and that it must depend solely on the free-will offerings of the people. On the other hand, it agreed with the anti-Voluntaries in maintaining the legitimacy of a union between Church and State, the theory or principle of an Established Church, and the duty of the State to recognize and countenance the Church, and to support it by public funds, though much prominence was never given to the mere money aspect of such a union. But it was opposed to them in supporting the present Establishment, because it was Erastian in character, and was in union with an unreformed, corrupt State. The Reformed Presbyterian, standing by his Testimony, said to the Voluntary—I believe in the obligation of Christians to support religion, but I believe also in the union of a Reformed Church with a Reformed State, in which the true interests of both would be conserved, the honour of Christ secured, and morality and religion promoted.* Turning to the defenders of the existing Establishment, he could in like manner say—Your Church is deeply tainted with corruption, the terms of your compact with the State are unscriptural, and the State with which you are in union is lacking in those qualifications which alone would warrant a faithful Christian Church in seeking fellowship with it, and the union ought to be dissolved. Thus it was that this Church could not stand by either the one party or the other.

This controversy was very keen and protracted, and was connected with not a little that was painful in tone and extreme in utterance; yet its remoter issues have been rather beneficial than otherwise. It tended to bring home to the consciences of the Christian people a deeper sense of the obligations lying upon them to promote, by individual efforts, the extension of the Kingdom of Christ; and it has helped to develop to an astonishing degree the grace of liberality. This has been felt not only in dissenting communities, but within the Established Church itself, for it is by voluntary effort that its modern activity is sustained. Besides this, we feel persuaded that this controversy has tended not a little to promote clearer views as to the relation of the civil magistrate to religion and the Church; and, in combination with other influences and events, has led many to have more confidence in the Church, quickened to a sense of duty and freely devoting its resources to God's service, than in aught that Government can do in the interests of religion. The victory was, in truth, with neither party, but the fruits remain to be gathered by succeeding generations; and the movements of Providence and the progress of religion will by and by settle the point in dispute in its practical form.

Alongside of this keen controversy there was another movement within the Established Church itself, that was destined to produce speedy and abiding results. The history of the "Ten Years' Conflict" has been written by other hands; we only note the attitude of the Reformed Presbyterian Church during the Non-Intrusion struggle up to this date. Standing as it did outside the arena of conflict, it viewed with keen interest the successive phases of the movement. It sympathized profoundly with the revived evangelical spirit with which the movement within the Established Church was so closely connected, out of which, indeed, it may be said to have sprung. It regarded it as a hopeful sign, that that Church was beginning in some measure to feel the reality of its bondage to the State, and

cordially wished success to the efforts that were made to obtain a larger measure of freedom. But it was not surprised when the State interposed and pronounced the Veto law to be illegal and void, and afterwards prohibited the Church from receiving ministers of *quoad sacra* Churches as members of Presbyteries. At the time writers and speakers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were perhaps not thanked for their pains, when they warned the Non-Intrusionists that they were basing their cause on an insecure foundation, when they pleaded the arrangements of the Revolution Settlement as sufficient to vindicate their position and sustain their claim, that not the modification but the abolition of the law of patronage must be sought, and that if they hoped to realize true spiritual independence and vindicate for themselves the claim to be the representatives of the historic Church of Scotland, they must break away from the Revolution Settlement, and revert to the higher and surer ground of Second Reformation attainments. That party was slow to recognize the truth of these warnings, but subsequent events forced them to own that they were not given without cause, and were given by those who had something like a right to speak and to be heard on the subject. As the conflict proceeded, and higher issues and more vital principles were more distinctly recognized than in its earlier stages, it was with awakened hopes that Reformed Presbyterians heard more and more about their old and cherished doctrines regarding the exclusive Headship of Christ over His Church, and His moral dominion over the nations, and the rights of the Christian people, and the spiritual independence of the Church. It was not to be wondered at, if they indulged the hope that more and more fully the import and bearing of these great truths would be owned and acted upon, and that the noble men who gave utterance to them might be led, under the discipline of Providence, to give full practical testimony to their value. In this hope they were not wholly disappointed, as we shall by and by see.

It was in the midst of these ecclesiastical contendings, agitating the various Churches and stirring the whole community, that the Reformed Presbyterian Church gave fresh utterance to its old principles, and stated anew its old position,—clear of extreme Voluntaryism on the one hand, and on the other, from the Erastianism that was anew asserting itself in the action of the law courts—the Testimony of a Church that sought to be true to the historical traditions of the past, and at the same time to be faithful to the growing necessities and urgent claims of the present.

CHAPTER X.

DIVISION—1840-1863.

Section First.

WE have already had occasion to mention the fact, that during the progress of the Non-Intrusion conflict within the Established Church, the Revolution Settlement and the Second Reformation were frequently referred to, and that the former of these was appealed to as justifying the claim put forth by the advocates of popular rights and spiritual independence. On the other hand, it was held by Reformed Presbyterians, that the evils, against which the more faithful part of the Church was struggling, were the native fruits of that unhappy settlement of ecclesiastical matters. In order to show what were the essential principles of the Second Reformation, and what was the true character and tendency of the Settlement of 1690, it was deemed advisable to arrange a series of public lectures on these and kindred subjects. A service of no small value might thus be rendered to the truth, the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church would be set forth afresh, and some light might be thrown on the true issue of the great controversy which was rapidly approaching a crisis. These lectures were delivered and published in the spring of 1842, and they attracted some interest in the country as the utterance of an old historic Church on questions that were being keenly discussed. They dealt with such subjects as these, The Principles of the Second Reformation, The Headship of Christ over the

Church and over the nations, The Revolution Settlement, and Patronage. These subjects, in the hands of men like Professor A. Symington, Dr W. Symington, Dr Bates, Mr Graham, and Mr W. H. Goold, were treated in a most admirable and effective way, worthy of the men themselves, of the Church they represented, and of the great cause which they thus sought to advance. They were followed up by the adoption of a series of Resolutions by the Synod in 1842, in which the views of the Church on the great questions that agitated the community, and the course that ought to be pursued by those who sought true spiritual independence and the honour of Christ, were formally and clearly set forth.

The year 1843 was the Bi-centenary of the meeting of the Westminster Assembly of Divines; it was also the Centenary of the Reformed Presbytery; and it was deemed proper that both of these events should be commemorated. A special meeting of Synod was convened for that end in July of that year, at which addresses of a stirring and hopeful character bearing upon these events were delivered, and an account of the whole service was afterwards published. In one of these addresses, devoted to a historical sketch of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, we find the fullest account we have hitherto met with of the organization and work of the Societies, as constituting an important link in the history of the Church. It is by the Rev. W. H. Goold, of Edinburgh, and may be reckoned the first of the many public services by which, in after years, he laid the Church under weighty obligations to his learning, ability, and zeal. To his diligent efforts we are very largely indebted for the recovery of the Records of the General Meeting from 1693 till 1743, and of the Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery from 1758 and onwards.

At the same meeting, the interest felt by the Synod in the memorable Disruption, which had taken place in the May preceding, was manifested by the appointment of a deputation to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the

Free Church in October, and present the sympathy and congratulations of the oldest non-established Church in Scotland. This deputation, which included Revs. Professor Symington, Thomas Neilson, and John Graham, was heartily welcomed by the Assembly; the speeches delivered were worthy of the occasion—high-toned, faithful, yet intensely sympathetic and hopeful. A few sentences may indicate the view which the Fathers of that day took of the Disruption, and the spirit in which they spoke of the noble men who had taken so prominent a part in it. A congratulatory Address was presented in the name of the Synod, in which these sentences occur:—"It is unnecessary to say that we highly approve of the scriptural principles upon which your recent proceedings have been founded, when so successfully in our view, so far as scriptural argument is concerned, you made the glorious truth of the supremacy of Jesus Christ to bear against the invasion of the right of the Christian people, and against Erastian encroachments upon the independent jurisdiction of the Church of Christ. We congratulate you cordially on the position of Christian liberty which you now occupy, and we deeply sympathize with you in all the difficulty you have encountered in reaching it; and, from our own experience, we are prepared in some measure to sympathize with you in the sacrifice and trial to which you may yet be subjected in maintaining this position, and in prosecuting the hallowed objects for which it has been assumed. We rejoice in the reverential deference which has been paid to the authority of scriptural truth, and in the devout homage which has been rendered to the Lord Jesus Christ as King in Zion, Prince of the Kings of the Earth, in conducting your recent pleadings." In following up the presentation of the address, Professor Symington, referring to the principles which had been brought out in the past controversy, said that "the testimony which had lately been lifted up appeared to him to be a kind of seed, the germination of which was to fill the world with peace and righteousness. On the subject

of union he had nothing to say at present. So far, however, as his own opinion went—and he believed he spoke the sentiments of his brethren—when he saw the dangers which were coming, he thought that the time for union was coming too. Yes, the storm would melt the hearts of the saints; the yelp of the wolf would make the flock to run together.” Another member of the deputation, the Rev. John Graham, after speaking of the contendings of the Free Church, said: “It will be to us a source of unmingled satisfaction, and a ground of thanksgiving to the Lord, to see these principles fully and faithfully exemplified by the Free Protestant Presbyterian Church after she has passed her transition state—a consummation for which we devoutly pray, under the influence of hopes excited by much that has already been spoken and performed. . . . And it is our heart’s desire and prayer to God, that the Free Protestant Presbyterian Church may prove the living and glorious realization of the happy conception and lofty aim of the fathers of the Reformation. No paltry jealousies, no mortified pride, no sectarian prejudice would then, I am assured, prevent the followers of Cameron and Renwick from rallying with heart and hand around your uplifted standard.” This sufficiently indicates the spirit in which these worthies contemplated the great event of the Disruption, and the hopes which it awakened in their bosom.

A deputation from the General Assembly of the Free Church, including the Moderator, Dr Henry Grey, Rev. Messrs Burns of Kilsyth, Begg of Newington, and others, was received at the next meeting of Synod. In their addresses the deputies expressed their appreciation of the “sympathy that had been shown, and the sympathy that had been given to them by this Church in their difficulties, both before and after the Disruption—that the Reformed Presbyterian Church was endeared to them by the noble and successful struggle she had all along maintained in defence of evangelical principles, and the glorious doctrine of Christ’s Headship over the Church and the nations—that many of the

members of the Free Church were daily becoming more and more attached to the principles held by this Church, the obligation of the Covenants, and the necessity of placing the magistracy as well as the ministry on a scriptural basis for the good of the community—that they were very desirous to co-operate with this Church in every good work, earnestly hoping that by the proper use of all appointed means they might soon see eye to eye.” To these sentiments the Synod very heartily responded.

An Overture had been presented at the preceding Synod to the effect, that it is “dutiful and desirable that there should be union and co-operation among the professed friends of the Reformation, as far as that is practicable without prejudice to the truth or compromising any portion of the Church’s Testimony; and whereas the circumstances and prospects of the Church at the present time seem specially to require that all competent and lawful means should be adopted with a view to that object,” it is overtured that the Synod appoint a Committee to correspond with other similar Committees that may happen to be appointed by friendly Presbyterian bodies. The object of this Overture was unanimously approved, and a Committee appointed to mature a plan of correspondence, and report to next meeting. The Report given in next year intimated that it had not been deemed “necessary to devise any plan of correspondence in the meantime, inasmuch as they regret they cannot see anything in the position and public measures of the bodies to encourage the hope of a good result from immediate negotiations.” With the Original Secession Church they would be glad to hold correspondence, but meanwhile that Church was negotiating with another denomination. We need not inquire as to what were the discouraging circumstances referred to; only we note that the Synod continued to interest itself in the subject of union, awaiting a fit opportunity for following it out to practical issues. Negotiations were by and by resumed with the Original Secession Church, and con-

tinued for several years, but the barriers to union could not be removed. Unions were, however, being carried out. In 1839 the Original Burgher Synod joined the Established Church of Scotland; one congregation, however, preferred to join the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and was received in 1842. The United Secession and Relief Churches were united in 1847, and formed the large and influential denomination known as the United Presbyterian Church.

During this period the Church continued to take an active interest in movements of a public nature, which brought it into close contact with earnest Christians of all denominations. Temperance, Sabbath Schools, and Sabbath observance found among its ministers and members many devoted advocates and earnest workers, while the Evangelical Alliance, designed to embrace a wider circle than Presbyterianism, was cordially approved and sustained by many members of Synod. Home Mission work in like manner was entered upon by several congregations, and this, with the aid afforded by the Home Mission Committee, resulted in the revival of some old and the erection of some new congregations. Activity in this department of service was stimulated by the revival movement which spread from the North of Ireland, and in 1860 and 1861 stirred many districts in Scotland. The addresses of ministers and elders, as well as the Resolutions of Synod, while dealing cautiously with some features of the movement, yet distinctly recognized it as a work of God, and gave to it a cordial support.

In other forms the internal vitality of the Church clearly manifested itself. In 1844 a movement was inaugurated for the liquidation of debt on Church property, and this was carried out with such zeal and success, that in 1847 the Committee in charge of the scheme was able to report that, with the aid of a general fund (which amounted to nearly £1200) to stimulate congregational liberality, the debt on all Churches having a settled ministry was removed. Encouraged by the offer of £1000 from the Trustees of the Ferguson

Bequest, in 1859 an effort was made to clear off the debt on all the ecclesiastical property of the Churches. To meet this offer £2845 behoved to be raised within a limited period, and in 1861 it was reported that this was done, and that at that date the Church was free of debt. In this matter, if we do not mistake, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, comparatively small and poor as it was, took the lead among the Non-Established Churches of Scotland. In connection with these efforts, success was largely due to the zeal and tact of the Rev. Thomas Neilson of Rothesay, sustained as he was by the liberality of many public-spirited elders and members. With equal earnestness he threw himself into another scheme which was originated in 1846, and over which he presided with singular ability for nearly a quarter of a century. It was called the Ministerial Support Scheme, and was designed to secure a more adequate income to the ministers of the Church, by supplementing congregational stipends from a general fund, to which all congregations were expected to contribute. It started with the very modest aim of securing to all the ministers a stipend of at least £100 a year, with a manse. At the beginning there were only six congregations giving this minimum; in two years the number had increased to fourteen, and in 1863 it was reported that in almost every case the desired end had been more than attained, and it was suggested that £120 should next be aimed at. For the attainment of this end, the Church was to a very considerable extent indebted to the operation of the Ferguson Bequest. Apart altogether from that, it may suffice to show what progress had been made in this department, if we mention, that in 1847 the sum paid annually as stipend amounted to nearly £2800, while in 1863 it amounted to over £4600, an increase in seventeen years of over sixty-four per cent. Alongside of this it may be further stated that the amount raised by the Church for its various schemes was, in 1848, £811, while in 1863 it reached the sum of £1550, an increase of over ninety-one per cent. As the membership during the same

period had increased only by about twenty per cent. the above results indicate a very marked growth in Christian liberality. It may also be noted that during 1861, nearly £600 had been raised by the children of the Church, for the *John Williams'* Mission Ship Fund, and that, to provide a small schooner (the *John Knox*) for the New Hebrides Mission, the sum of £370 was raised in 1856. Altogether the variety of work in which the Church was now engaged, and the manner in which the schemes were supported, afford decisive proof of its vigour and vitality, and present a very gratifying and striking contrast to the state of things that existed fifty years earlier—a contrast which was doubtless as remarkable in the case of other denominations as of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Hitherto the missionary efforts of the Church had been confined to Canada. As we have already noticed, four missionaries were sent to labour in that field, and these were supported partly by the Church at home, and partly by the colonists among whom they laboured. There did not seem to be any great prospect of permanent success; and as the mission never awakened any very lively interest in the Church, and the missionaries could hold intercourse much more conveniently with the branch of the Church in America, they were in 1850 recommended by the Synod to connect themselves with it. Before that tie was broken, the Church had entered on another enterprise in a different region, regarding which brighter hopes were entertained. For some time the Synod Committee had contemplated the establishment of a mission among the heathen; and after careful consideration of several fields, it was resolved to commence work among the natives of New Zealand. In 1842, the Rev. James Duncan and his wife were sent to that colony, and were followed in 1844 by Rev. John Inglis and his wife. They settled on the Manawatu River, which flows into Cook's Straits, about seventy miles from Wellington. They devoted themselves with all diligence to the work for which they had been sent out, but

were ere long constrained to believe that somehow a mistake had been made. The Committee at home had sought to obtain all necessary information as to a proper sphere, and this district had been fixed upon as one likely to afford sufficient scope for the missionaries to evangelize the natives. But after their settlement they found this not to be the case; the natives were not very numerous, and the ground was practically preoccupied by the agents of the Church of England Missionary Society and the Wesleyans. The former, especially, had obtained a hold upon the people, refused to allow any place to the Presbyterian missionaries, and threw every obstacle in the way of a permanent settlement. The discouragement hence arising was aggravated by the unsettled state of the natives themselves, and by the rebellion which about this time broke out. This completely disorganized the work, and compelled the missionaries to retire for safety to Wellington. After a time, when matters had settled down, Mr Duncan returned to his former sphere; but Mr Inglis, firmly persuaded that to continue the work there would be a waste of time and means, declined to do so. He made his opinions known to the home Committee; and meanwhile, awaiting their judgment, he ministered for nearly two years to the Scotch colonists at Wellington. The state of matters in New Zealand caused a good deal of anxiety to the Committee and the Church at home. There existed a strong disinclination to abandon a mission so recently established, yet the decided opinion of so sagacious a man as Mr Inglis could not be lightly treated. In 1847, when the missionaries had been compelled for a time to withdraw from the Manawatu, communication had been entered into with the London Missionary Society respecting a field of labour in the South Seas, but without any definite result. Further information was received from the agent in Samoa, and from Mr Geddie, who had just settled on the New Hebrides; and as Mr Inglis was quite willing to go to the South Seas, it was at length resolved, in 1850, to authorize

him to proceed to Western Polynesia and find out a sphere of labour for himself. Accordingly, in 1851, he made a survey of several groups of islands, and sent home a very interesting account of his voyage. After full investigation, he decided to recommend the Synod to establish a mission on the New Hebrides. Mr Geddie, who had been sent out by the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces of British America, had settled there in 1848, and was the only Protestant missionary on the group. Acting on Mr Inglis's strong recommendation, the Committee "authorized him to proceed to the New Hebrides and commence missionary operations there, should it appear to himself in his own deliberate judgment to be his duty to do so." Evidently the Committee felt unprepared to give any decision for itself as to the wisdom of the proposed change of sphere, yet there was strong confidence in the sagacity and sound judgment of Mr Inglis. The decision, in the form in which it was given, laid a somewhat serious responsibility on the missionary, but he fully accepted it. He might easily have obtained a comfortable settlement among the colonists in New Zealand, but he chose to devote his energies to foreign mission work. Through the kindness of Dr Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand, Mr and Mrs Inglis obtained a free passage to their new sphere of labour, and on 1st July, 1852, they landed on Aneityum, the most southerly island in the New Hebrides group, and immediately began a work there, of the progress of which we shall have more to say in due time.

Mr Duncan continued for a few years longer to occupy his former station in New Zealand. For some time after his return to the Manawatu he could find no opportunity of preaching to the natives, and devoted himself with great diligence to the work of teaching, by which he deemed that he could perhaps do as good service to the Gospel cause as by preaching. Afterwards he was able to resume preaching, but still failed to obtain a sphere free from the influence of other Societies; the natives who attended his ministry still

regarded themselves as bound to the Church of England. The prospects of the work, however, grew worse; the greater portion of the natives left the district, and in 1854 Mr Duncan was constrained to admit that the mission must be abandoned. To a similar conclusion the Church at home was also driven, and Mr Duncan was invited to join Mr Inglis in the New Hebrides. To this proposal he did not see it to be his duty to consent; he resolved to settle in New Zealand and embrace what opportunities occurred of serving the cause of Christ, while devoting himself to other pursuits necessary for the maintenance of his family. In 1857 the committee announced to the Synod that this mission was at an end, and in doing so expressed the conviction, that besides the good that might result from the teachings of the missionary, another valuable purpose might be served by it through the connection established between the Church in New Zealand and the Mission in the New Hebrides, and which in later years has yielded important results.

During this period other mission schemes engaged the attention of the Church. Political upheavals on the Continent of Europe were overruled by Divine Providence for opening up several countries to the entrance of the Gospel and the Holy Scriptures. A scheme was started by Synod for a Continental Mission, which, though it never reached any great dimensions nor established any stations, yet rendered pecuniary aid for several years to some of the Evangelical Churches on the Continent, whose delegates more than once appeared on the floor of the Synod. Out of the excitement on the Popish question that arose in connection with what was called the "Papal Aggression,"—the establishment in 1851 of a Romish hierarchy with territorial titles in England,—there was originated and sustained by the Synod for a few years a Mission to Romanists in Glasgow. It does not seem to have awakened any great interest in the Church, and soon lapsed altogether. Greater hopes were entertained regarding another enterprise, which for fourteen years held a prominent

place among the schemes of the Church. For some considerable time a deeper sense of obligation to the seed of Abraham had been felt by the Christian Church, and in Scotland a lively interest in the subject of Jewish Missions had been awakened by the mission of inquiry which had been sent forth by the Established Church. In 1845 the subject was brought by Overture under the consideration of the Synod, and it was resolved to establish a Mission to the Jews. A thoroughly qualified agent was found in one of the Church's own licentiates, the Rev. John Cunningham, M.A. He was a man of distinguished ability and scholarship, and had acted for a time as assistant to the Professor of Natural Philosophy in Glasgow. In recognition of his eminent attainments, the Senate of the University of that city conferred on him the degree of LL.D. The sphere of labour selected for Dr Cunningham was in the eastern part of London, and he entered upon his work in October, 1846. For thirteen years he toiled on with unflagging zeal under the superintendence of the Synod; copious extracts from his journal were published in the *Scottish Presbyterian*, and the Church followed his labours with prayerful interest. Manifold were the insults heaped upon him by the fanatical and ignorant Jews; he was often treated with contumely and violence when argument failed. In teaching the youth, in conversation and discussions with the more mature, he sought to forward the cause of Christ. Year after year he patiently prosecuted his work, but without any apparent result. He diligently sowed the seed, but he reaped no harvest. Once and again a gleam of hope appeared, only to be followed by disappointment. His zeal and patience are worthy of all admiration, though some of the methods he pursued were of questionable wisdom. Still the Church loyally sustained him, till by his own act the bond of connection was broken. He was a man of very strong denominational convictions, and had written a book on "Covenanting;" and being dissatisfied with certain Resolutions on the franchise,

adopted by the Synod in 1858, he tendered his resignation as missionary in 1859, and withdrew from all connection with the Church. Till his death in 1872 he continued to labour in London, and to minister to a small company of like-minded Reformed Presbyterians. He was a man greatly beloved, and retained to the last the esteem of many who could not sympathize with the grounds of his separation. The Synod did not find a suitable successor, and the mission was abandoned. These several movements now referred to, though issuing in nothing tangible or permanent, were indications of the growing interest that the Church now took in current events, and its sympathy with every cause that contemplated the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. When the Jewish Mission came to an end, the work in the New Hebrides had assumed dimensions that would afford ample scope for all the energies of the Church, while it was accompanied with such a manifest blessing as to encourage to persevering efforts.

Section Second.

On the 22nd of September, 1853, the Reformed Presbyterian Church sustained a heavy loss by the somewhat unexpected death of the Rev. Andrew Symington, D.D., in the sixty-ninth year of his age and the forty-fourth of his ministry. He had spent his whole life in his native town of Paisley, and in his case certainly, the old proverb was not verified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. The public press at the time of his death bore strong testimony to the esteem in which he was held. "Among all the men," it was said, "who in any capacity have been wont to appear before the public of Paisley in our day, no one has commanded such universal respect or been regarded with such profound veneration and sincere affection as Dr Andrew Symington; and, therefore, it was not to be wondered at that, when intelligence of his death on Thursday evening circu-

lated in the community, the event was regarded as a great public calamity, and spoken of with emotion as if it involved the loss of a fondly-cherished personal friend." If this sad event was thus felt by the general community, among whom he had spent his days as a minister and as a citizen, it was more keenly realized by that wider circle to which he was bound by special ties of long standing. Well known and highly appreciated by almost every congregation of the Church which he served so long and so faithfully; venerated by all the ministers of that Church, about five-sixths of whom had sat at his feet as Professor, and cherished precious and fragrant memories of the months spent annually at Paisley during their student career; loved and trusted as a friend and counsellor,—he occupied a place of high influence in the Synod of which he had been a member since its constitution, and his removal created a blank which it would be in some respects impossible to fill. His demise rendered necessary a special meeting of Synod, and it is only due to his memory to give a few extracts from the testimony then borne to his character and services, drawn up by those who were in every respect qualified to speak of these.

Dr Symington had been convener of the Foreign Missions Committee, and at its first meeting, while recording with profound sorrow the deep sense of the loss it had sustained, the Committee called to mind "the warm interest which Dr Symington always evinced in the Foreign Missions of the Church, his wisdom in counsel, his conciliatory spirit, and his courtesy to all." The Hall Committee, in submitting their report, speak thus respecting the deceased Professor: "While satisfied that it would be extravagance to ascribe to him any pre-eminence of learning and talent above the men of learning and talent in his own day, they feel disposed to claim for him a true vein of original and native genius, and a combination of qualities which, if none of them singly attained to any peculiar greatness in degree, yet in their rare combination and uniform development, placed him abreast of

his most eminent contemporaries in any Church. It was in this view, that in reference to his natural endowments, his fitness for the theological chair was most conspicuous. The main duty of a professor may be to impart knowledge; but the main value of a professor is when, along with the communication of sound instruction, he can infuse into his students his own ardour in the pursuit of truth, his own love of truth for its own sake. In this aspect of his office our late father, as a Professor, has never been surpassed. His own buoyant enthusiasm spread in generous infection throughout the Hall." The closing sentence of this tribute is as follows: "In his eminent piety as a Christian, his shining example as a pastor, his conscientious attention to the business of the Church in all its courts and committees, his laborious services as a Professor, and in the lustre shed upon his denomination by the extent of his attainments, and the commanding dignity as well as genial influence of his personal character, . . . it is a simple fact, which needs neither proof nor comment, that since the Revolution, the grave has never closed over a man to whom our Church is under deeper obligations." In terms equally warm and emphatic the Synod, which met in January, 1854, bore testimony to the ability, zeal, and worth of the deceased Professor; but it is not needful to multiply extracts. The life of Dr Andrew Symington was too busy a one to admit of his doing much as an author; but the occasional sermons and lectures which he did publish were of so high a character as to cause regret that he had not been able to make more use of the press. A series of lectures, which he had delivered in Paisley to Sabbath School teachers, was published after his death, and with all the disadvantages arising from the lack of the author's own supervision, the work is worthy of his character and attainments. It reveals a mind of a very high order, presents fresh and powerful statements and illustrations of Divine truth, and contains passages of singular weight and great beauty.

The death of the Professor afforded the opportunity of carrying out some re-arrangements of the work of the Divinity Hall, demanded by the progress of critical investigation and historical research. With all his ability and devotion, there were departments of theological study to which it was absolutely impossible for Dr Symington to give the attention which they deserved, and as adequate provision as was possible had now to be made for these, in order that the ministry might be kept abreast of the learning and literature of the times. Synod, therefore, on the report of the Hall Committee, resolved to establish two Professorships, one of Systematic Theology, and the other of Biblical Literature and Church History. By a unanimous and hearty decision, Dr William Symington was chosen to fill the chair of Systematic Theology, and Dr W. H. Goold that of Biblical Literature and Church History. Both of these gentlemen were thoroughly qualified for the important offices which they were called to occupy. Dr Symington not only stood high as a popular preacher, but he had already, in his two works on the Atonement and the Mediatorial Dominion proved himself to be a competent theologian, and specially qualified by his power of clear statement and methodical arrangement, to present to the young men a full view of the system of revealed truth. Dr Goold had also given ample evidence of his high scholarly attainments, and of his fitness to guide wisely the studies of youth in view of the serious, critical questions that were coming rapidly into prominence; while no other man in the Church was so thoroughly at home in the wide field of ecclesiastical history, or so able to throw an interest and charm around its sometimes dry details. The theological course was to extend to five sessions, each session to continue eight weeks; while a course of inter-sessional study was arranged upon which all students were to be examined at the beginning of each session.

For eight sessions these two Professors laboured together in their interesting and important work, to the great benefit

of the students, and the entire satisfaction of the Church. The session was short, but it was full of profitable work; and the students of these years look back on the months spent each year at the Hall in Glasgow with feelings of profound gratitude. They set high value on the able and comprehensive lectures of Dr Symington, and were oft stirred by the eloquent expositions of Dr Goold, whose wide subjects opened up lines of study to which most of them were hitherto strangers; while a special interest attached to many of his notes on particular points in Church History, in which he poured forth a wealth of information which could not be found in any known manual. And there was the pleasant fellowship of like-minded youths, many of whom have now passed away, others are doing good work in their respective spheres, while some have risen to eminence in the service of the Church at home, and in the mission field abroad.

A great loss befell the Church when in January, 1862, the senior Professor was called to his rest. Well had he served his own generation, having laboured in the ministry since 1819, and as Professor since 1854. His popular gifts as a preacher and his published theological works had secured for him a high place, not only in the esteem of his own denomination, but in the community at large. Differing in many respects from his venerated brother, with perhaps less of originality but greater power of methodical and effective exposition, they were indeed *par nobile fratrum*, to whom the Reformed Presbyterian Church owed, and cheerfully owned, a deep debt of obligation. A successor to Dr W. Symington in the Professorship was found in one who had been trained up under his own ministry in Glasgow, and whose attainments and scholarly habits pointed him out as the man for the place. This was the Rev. (afterwards Dr) W. Binnie, of Stirling. He proved an acceptable and useful Professor, and remained in office till, in 1875, he was chosen to fill the Chair of Church History in the Free Church College of Aberdeen. He laboured there till he was suddenly removed by death in

1886. He left behind him, as evidence of his ability and scholarship, an instructive volume on "The Psalms," and a smaller work on "The Church," in Clark's Series of Handbooks.

The year 1860 was the Ter-centenary of the Scottish Reformation, and of the meeting of the first General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Scotland. Besides taking part in commemorative services of a more general character, it was deemed fitting that the Reformed Presbyterian Church should by itself recognize that memorable event. Accordingly in August, 1860, a special meeting of Synod was held for that purpose, and an appropriate series of Resolutions, supported and illustrated by very able addresses, were adopted. Mr Binnie, in his address, while recognizing that "the promulgation of salvation by grace, the assertion of the supremacy of Scripture, and the revival of spiritual life mark the Reformation everywhere," lays special emphasis on the features peculiar to the Scottish Reformation, which he held were the following three:—"The full recognition of Christ's sole Headship over the Church, the subsistence of a cordial alliance with the cause of civil liberty, and the strenuous assertion of the right and duty of the nations to serve Christ." The facts of history amply support this statement, which in another form virtually embodies the essential principles for which the Church to which he belonged had contended.

This meeting of Synod was interesting in other respects. It was fit that as a witnessing Church, God's dealings in the past should be gratefully recalled, and the obligations they entailed fully recognized, but at this meeting there was more than this. There were present representatives from the Church in America, and from both divisions of the Church in Ireland. The time of the Synod was largely occupied by conferences on the revivals in Ireland and Scotland; deep sympathy with the movement found expression in the speeches delivered, and in the resolutions and recommenda-

tions adopted. The stirring memories of the past were thus linked in perfect harmony with the activities of Christian life in the present, and not least with a quickened interest in the spread of the Gospel in the dark regions of the earth. Not only were there present these brethren from America and Ireland, but this Synod had the pleasure of welcoming its honoured missionary from the New Hebrides after an absence of sixteen years. He was accompanied by one of the first fruits of the mission, Williamu, an elder of the Church in Aneityum. That was a new and cheering sight in the Scottish Synod, and it calls us now briefly to narrate the story of this remarkable mission.

The New Hebrides is a group of about thirty islands, of which nearly twenty are inhabited, lying N.N.-W. and S.S.-E., between 21 degrees and 15 degrees S. lat., and 171 degrees and 166 degrees E. long. They are about 1000 miles nearly due north of New Zealand, about 400 miles west of Fiji, about 200 miles east of New Caledonia, and 1400 miles north-east of Sydney. They were first discovered by a Spanish navigator in 1606, but were otherwise unknown till they were visited by Captain Cook, who, in 1773, explored and surveyed the whole group, and gave it the name of the *New Hebrides* in place of *Great Cyclades*, which the first discoverer had called them. It was on one of the islands of this group, Erromanga, that John Williams was murdered in 1839, and in subsequent years it was the scene of other martyrdoms. The first Protestant missionaries visited Aneityum, which is the most southerly of the group, in 1841, and settled some Samoan and Raratongan teachers; but it was not till 1848 that a missionary was permanently settled there. This was the Rev. John Geddie, who was sent out by the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia. The natives were found in a most degraded condition; all the vices that characterize the lowest form of heathenism were rampant—lying, dishonesty, murder, cannibalism, infanticide, and the strangling of widows. Their religion was of the

lowest type; they had fashioned gods like unto themselves, which they worshipped under the form of rude, unshapely pieces of stone, varying in size from an egg to masses weighing half a ton. They were frequently at war among themselves; while their religious feasts too often ended in fierce quarrels. For four years Mr Geddie toiled on alone amid perils and discouragements; he built schools and churches in different localities, as the disposition of the natives gave opportunity, and began the work of translating the Scriptures. At the end of that period it was manifest that his persevering efforts had begun to bear fruit; he had secured the confidence of the natives, in considerable numbers they attended school and public worship, and the nucleus of a church had been formed. So when Mr Inglis and his wife landed on Aneityum on 1st July, 1852, they found that the way had been in a measure prepared for them, and Mr Inglis wrote home in a cheerful spirit. Aneityum was not a very large island, but it was regarded as a most suitable basis from which operations might be extended to other and more important islands of the group. It was quite a manageable field for two missionaries, and they at once arranged a plan, according to which the one side of the island was assigned to Mr Geddie and the other side to Mr Inglis, while they were near enough to assist each other on any special occasion. Both being men of sound judgment and great devotedness, they worked together in perfect harmony for more than twenty years.

It was indeed under very favourable auspices that Mr Inglis began his work in that remote and almost unknown island in the Southern Seas. He had to deal with a race even more degraded than the natives of New Zealand, sunk in the grossest barbarism, enslaved by cruel, superstitious customs, ignorant of the simplest elements of morality, and with no idea of a Supreme and Holy God. Quietly and steadily he set to work among them, and ere long, by his singular tact and wisdom, by kindness associated with firm-

ness, he secured their confidence. As soon as he had acquired the elements of the language, he devoted himself to the work of education. In whatever district he secured the consent of the chiefs and people there he planted a school, while he and Mr Geddie laboured hard to provide the scholars with books. In his youth he had learned the trade of a mason, and had afterwards been for years engaged in the work of teaching; and both occupations were now of inestimable advantage to the mission. He could put his hand to most kinds of manual labour, and could teach the natives some of the simpler arts of civilized life. He knew how to organize and to teach, and soon set himself to train native teachers, both for the schools in his own districts, and for settlement on other islands as opportunity offered. Withal, his great aim, as became an ambassador of the Cross, was to teach the natives the truths of Holy Scriptures, to tell them of the love of the Father and the grace of Christ, to awaken a sense of sin and need, to show them how these are met in the Gospel, and to instruct them in the elements of Christian living. He had the great joy of seeing, ere many years had passed, very cheering fruits from his manifold labours.

That part of Aneityum which was assigned to Mr Inglis was found, when a census was taken in 1854, to contain 1800 inhabitants, and almost all of these were, at his settlement, ignorant and degraded heathens. Singular it is and interesting, to note in his annual reports, how year by year the number of avowed heathens diminished, and the number of professed Christians increased. In March, 1854, the nucleus of a church was formed by the baptism of eleven natives. At the close of the second year of his work he reported that there were 300 more males than females on his side of the island; that there were 900 heathens and 900 professed Christians; that 700 were enrolled as scholars; and that the average attendance on public worship was 600. At this date, too, five marriages on Christian principles had been solemnized, and a large and substantial place of worship had

been erected. A beginning had been made in the opening up of new fields, by the settlement of two Aneityumese teachers on Futuna; while, by the generous aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 3000 copies of a translation of the Gospel of Mark had been printed. Take next the Fourth Annual Report, and there we find the following facts: The population is 1900. Of these 1700 profess Christianity (400 having done so during the preceding year). There are 200 heathens; church members, 44; schools, 29; enrolled scholars, 1400; average attendance, 1100; Christian marriages since 1852, 44. There were now two large churches, one at each of the principal stations, and at these, as well as at three out-stations, public worship was conducted every Sabbath. In 1857 the whole population is reported to be Christian and attending school, and that the schools number 31. The whole island, containing 3573 inhabitants, was reported in 1859 to be Christian, and covered with a network of 56 schools; and the church members numbered 297. At both stations, too, there had been formed a regular kirk-session and deacons' court.

It is an easy matter to record or to read these statistics; but it is not so easy to realize the amount of steady, patient, persevering labour involved in the production of such results in a comparatively short time. It was not in the nature of Mr Inglis to do things by fits and starts; but he quietly plodded on from day to day, and year to year, carrying out his own wisely-conceived plans of operation. It is only when we examine minutely the details of missionary life that we can understand how many things demand attention. The missionary and his wife must superintend everything in house, and school, and church, in garden and in field; and comfort and harmony largely depend upon the wise forethought and considerateness with which even small details are attended to. Nothing could exceed the careful, methodical way in which Mr Inglis went about the various departments of his work. His Sabbath services in two different places,

his Sabbath Schools visited regularly, his weekly prayer meeting, his daily teaching, his Teachers' Institution and regular school examination—everything was attended to in an orderly and thorough way. And, besides all this, there was much house, and church, and school building to be done; and, withal, a steady work of translation was being carried on. In her own sphere, in the industrial training and education of the young women, Mrs Inglis proved a true helpmate, and did vast service to the progress of the mission. On the other side of the island Mr and Mrs Geddie laboured with equal devotedness and equal success.

A very great deal was accomplished in a very few years. The missionary did not make any extravagant claim in behalf of those who had become Christians; he did not claim that they had all felt the spiritual and saving power of the Gospel; though he maintained that those who were admitted to the membership of the church gave credible grounds for believing that they did love and trust Christ, and the reality of a spiritual change was in not a few instances evidenced both by deeds and words. But to be able to say of all the inhabitants of this recently heathen island that they were professedly Christians, was to assert that a great and beneficent change had taken place. It implied that idol-worship had ceased; that the cruel and degrading superstitions that were connected with it were renounced; it implied that infanticide and the strangling of widows were no longer practised (in seven years sixty widows were saved from a cruel death); it meant that the moral tone was greatly raised; that all were being educated under Christian influence, and in the knowledge of the Bible, and that the Sabbath and family worship were attended to in a remarkable degree. It carried in it, moreover, the fact that the people were being trained in habits of industry and fore-thought, and that the position of women had been vastly improved. By a decision of the chiefs, the practice of selling women, really to be slaves to the traders who called at the islands, was strictly forbidden. Wars, too,

had ceased, and the rulers were being trained for the administration of justice in all civil concerns. Instead of the wild shouts of the combatants, the sound of the Sabbath bell was heard, and the voice of united praise was wafted over the hills and vales. Not only so, but the people were early trained in the habit of doing something themselves for the support of the Gospel, and they have continued to give freely of their labour and produce for this end.

It may be readily understood that the news conveyed by Mr Inglis's remarkably able, clear, and interesting letters and reports, awakened an active sympathy in the Church at home. Year by year the interest in this remarkable mission increased, and ample means for its support and extension were forthcoming. In answer to an appeal by Mr Inglis a small schooner, the *John Knox*, was provided and sent out in 1856, and by this means he could visit neighbouring islands, and extend the mission by settling native teachers. It is not to be denied that, when Mr Inglis resolved to leave New Zealand and begin work in the New Hebrides, there were misgivings as to the propriety of that step among some parties at home. These had been removed in part by the subsequent history of Mr Duncan's mission, and still more by the wonderful success of Mr Inglis in Aneityum. It was felt that it was only due to the missionary upon whom the responsibility had been laid, that the Synod should formally express its entire approval of what he had done, their full confidence in his wisdom and devotedness, and its thankfulness to God for having guided to this sphere of labour, and so richly blessed the means employed. Accordingly, in 1857 the following motion was unanimously adopted: "It appears to them that the time has come when, on a review of the past history of the mission, they should intimate their decided approval of the course pursued by our missionary in leaving New Zealand and selecting Aneityum as the scene of his future labours. So far as they can gather the principles on which he conducts the mission, from his various letters and

reports, and more especially from the evident success which, to judge from various sources of information, has attended his labours, these principles merit the full approbation of this court as scriptural and evangelical in their character, eminently calculated to promote the temporal welfare of the natives of Aneityum, but never sinking, in a regard for their temporal interests, the higher duty of labouring for their eternal salvation. As to the manner in which our missionary has endeavoured to carry these principles into practical operation, it is entitled to the highest praise as distinguished by consummate prudence, persevering energy, and eminent zeal. The court would record their devout feeling of gratitude to the Lord for the blessing with which He has been pleased to smile on the exertions of their missionary, and earnestly commend him to the renewed support and special prayers of the whole Church."

In the meantime the cry of the missionary was for more labourers to occupy other portions of the field which lay invitingly open. Native teachers were being located on neighbouring islands; but they could not do much unless under the guidance of trained and educated men. By and by help came both from America and Scotland. The Canadian Presbyterian Church became a partner in the mission, and sent the Rev. Mr Gordon and Mrs Gordon, who were settled on Erromanga in 1858; and the same year the Scottish Church sent two additional labourers, the Revs. J. G. Paton and Joseph Copeland, the former of whom is now so well known to the whole community through his autobiographic volumes, which narrate, with singular vividness and force, the story of his life and missionary perils and labours. About the same time the Nova Scotian Church sent the Rev. Mr Matheson and his wife, who, along with Mr and Mrs Paton, were settled on Tanna, a larger and more important island than Aneityum, in 1859. The interest of the southern colonies was being awakened in the great work, and substantial aid was sent from both New Zealand and

Australia; and the first missionary society in Australia was formed in 1859 through the efforts of the Rev. Mr Moore of Geelong, who was connected with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Messrs Geddie and Inglis having now completed the translation of the New Testament into the Aneityumese language, it was deemed expedient that the latter should return to Scotland in order to have it printed. The work had advanced so far, and the whole machinery of the mission was in such excellent order, that Mr Inglis felt that he could leave it under the care of Mr Copeland for a time. Accordingly for the purpose stated, accompanied by Mrs Inglis and Williamu, an elder of the Church of Aneityum, he returned to Scotland, and was present at the special meeting of Synod in August, 1860.

The return of Mr Inglis, after an absence of sixteen years, awakened not a little interest throughout the Church, and gave a great stimulus to the missionary cause. The meeting of Synod at which he appeared was, as we have said, a memorable one. It was summoned to commemorate God's wondrous doings in the far-distant past, and when met it was called to recognize with thanksgiving His gracious doings in the present, for there was among them a native of the South Seas who, a few years ago, was a poor, ignorant, degraded heathen, but now a Christian and an elder in the Christian Church. While Williamu was a living fruit of the mission, he was there not for parade, but in order to render help to Mr Inglis in the final revision of the translation of the New Testament. All the same his presence there, so modest and unassuming, and his little speeches in his native tongue, so simple and natural, created not a little interest. The speech of Mr Inglis on the occasion was every way worthy of himself; with no pretence to eloquent statement, but in simple weighty words he told the story of his missionary experience; with reverent thankfulness to God he described its success; he spoke hopefully of the future, and earnestly pleaded with the Church to increase its

efforts to occupy the wide field, while he fully recognized the important help he had received not only from Australia and New Zealand, but from Bishop Selwyn, whose kindness deserves special mention.

Mr Inglis remained at home for over two years, and during that interval severe trials befell the mission in the New Hebrides. In the early part of 1861 a terrible epidemic raged throughout the group; on Aneityum, Tanna, and Erromanga, where missionaries were at work, its ravages were fearful; on the first-named island about one-third of the population was carried off by it. This entailed additional labour on the missionaries, especially in the medical department of their work, and seriously disturbed every branch of it; the schools were broken up, hundreds of scholars, old and young, died, and sorrow and dismay fell upon almost every home. Following upon this dire visitation, there came a fearful hurricane by which the sufferings of the people were greatly aggravated. Not only were the mission premises desolated, but the crops upon which the natives depended were destroyed. A famine would have followed the pestilence, had it not been averted by the prompt and generous efforts of the friends of the mission both in Scotland and in the adjacent colonies. Nor did troubles end here. Death entered the missionary band, and Mr Johnstone, shortly after his settlement on Tanna, was suddenly cut off. On Erromanga and Tanna, which were not yet Christianized, the heathen attributed the epidemic which had wrought such havoc among them to the presence of the missionaries. Such was the excitement and hostility awakened, that on the former island, where thirty-two years before Williams and Harris had fallen, the Rev. G. N. Gordon and his wife were cruelly murdered. Shortly after Mr Paton's settlement on Tanna his wife and child died, and for more than a year afterwards he carried on his work amid great difficulties and discouragements. During 1862 his toils and dangers from the fierce hostility of the natives increased greatly, and near

the close of that year he, along with Mr and Mrs Matheson, who had succeeded Mr Johnstone, in order to save their lives, were compelled to leave the island, in circumstances which he has narrated so graphically in the first volume of his autobiography. These painful occurrences called forth deep sympathy in the colonies, and in the Churches directly interested in the mission, while at the same time they strengthened the resolution to prosecute the work with renewed energy. Indeed these disasters were wonderfully overruled for creating a wider interest in the New Hebrides mission, and stirring up the Churches in the Australian colonies to take a more active part in carrying forward the good work which lay so near to them. After his expulsion from Tanna, Mr Paton visited Australia, where the thrilling story of his perils and escape and his fervent appeals for help in the evangelization of the islands, produced a great impression. His call was for both men and money—men to give themselves to the work, and money to sustain them, and especially to procure a larger vessel than the *John Knox*, capable of visiting the more distant islands and carrying needful supplies. His appeal met with a prompt and generous response, and within a very few months, and chiefly through the instrumentality of the children of the Australian Churches, the sum of £3000 was raised. Such was the enthusiasm created that gold chains, pencils, and such like articles were given in aid of this noble object.

In the meantime Mr Inglis had completed the work for which he had come home. He had quickened the interest in the mission by visiting along with Williamu the various congregations of the Church, and he had carried through the press the translation of the New Testament. The British and Foreign Bible Society generously bore the expense of printing an edition of 3000 copies. This Mr Inglis carried with him when he returned to the sphere of his labours, the best gift he could bring to the people for whom he had already done so much, and one indispensable to the permanence and pro-

gress of the work. His return, owing to the state of Williamu's health, was a little earlier than was anticipated, and when in January, 1863, he and Mrs Inglis once more left their native shores for the Southern Seas, it may have been with some anxiety as to the condition of matters in the New Hebrides, but it was in the same spirit of quiet determination to do the work assigned to them, and of unwavering trust in the Master whom they served.

Section Third.

There can be no manner of doubt, that the quickened interest in the progress of the Kingdom of Christ among the heathen, and especially the remarkably successful mission carried on in the New Hebrides, was an inestimable blessing to the Church at home. It stimulated its spiritual life and widened its sympathies. It may indeed be regarded as a providential preparation for experiences of a different nature through which it was soon to pass, some of which were of a somewhat painful character. Leaving, then, the history of the mission at the point to which we have brought it, it falls to us now to trace, as clearly and succinctly as possible, the cause of the agitation within the Church which issued in the withdrawal of several ministers from its fellowship. We have already mentioned, that the question regarding the use of the Franchise first came before the Synod after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, by which, for the first time, many members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church became entitled to vote in the election of members of Parliament. We have seen that the Synod emphatically declared that the exercise of the Franchise was inconsistent with fidelity to the principles of the Church, and with the enjoyment of its privileges, but declined to give definite instructions so as to secure uniformity in the treatment of delinquents by sessions. We have also noted that when the question as to the con-

sistency of Reformed Presbyterians signing petitions to Parliament was brought up, Synod in 1848 decided, that to petition the House of Commons was not inconsistent with Church principles, but that it was wrong to petition the House of Lords, as that would involve the recognition of the Bishops as Lords Spiritual. This whole procedure seemed to rest mainly on the ground, that the great difficulty lay in the Oaths that were required by the civil government. On that subject a memorial was presented to Synod in 1850 from the congregation of Rothesay, "praying the Court to devise means for securing to the members of this Church, exemption from the Oaths usually required from persons who are vested with civil offices in this country;" and a Committee was appointed to consider the whole subject and report to next meeting of Synod.

In October, 1851, an elaborate report on the whole subject was read and afterwards published in the *Scottish Presbyterian*. It gives the Oaths required of the Sovereign, and those imposed on the subjects, which at that date were four, the Oaths of Allegiance, Assurance, Supremacy, and Abjuration, besides that required of Papists after the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. It gives some account of the history of these, and discusses the meaning of the Coronation Oath, and the extent of the legal and moral obligation involved in those required of subjects; and states that Reformed Presbyterians "have felt themselves precluded from swearing the Oaths personally, and they have also had some difficulty representatively." It suggests a movement for simplifying them, and even hints at the advisability of abolishing them altogether as useless and ensnaring. It recognizes no probability of the Government entertaining any proposal to relieve them entirely from the Oaths without some substitute. It then asks, "What substitute would satisfy them, or are we prepared to give? Would a pledge to live peaceably and promote the public good, or to respect and obey all just and scriptural laws and promote social order, satisfy them and

secure us?"¹ These are somewhat significant hints, especially the last; for have we not here virtually all that allegiance implies? Perhaps the worthy father who drew up the report, could not have anticipated the great changes on this subject that have occurred during the intervening forty years, not only in the way of simplification, but of abolition. The Synod thanked the Committee for their labours, ordered the report to lie on the table, and continued their appointment to make further investigation and report. They had nothing more to report next year, and were enjoined to take any practical steps that were expedient in the line of the suggestions made. The subject was discussed in one or two pamphlets, but for a few years nothing more was done by the Synod.

It is not possible to speak positively as to the measure of obedience that was given by the members of the Church to the decision of 1833 condemning the use of the Franchise, only it is certain that some did disregard it. Nor was there uniformity in the manner in which these were dealt with by sessions. In some places voting was done with impunity; in others more or less stringent methods were adopted against those who transgressed the law. In 1857 a petition was presented from Greenock congregation, praying that the subject of the Oaths should be brought under the notice of the Government, with the view of having the way opened up for members of the Church to exercise their political rights, in harmony with their Covenant engagements. Synod declined to take any action in that way. A petition on voting was presented from the Session of Airdrie, praying that the "Synod should use diligence in ascertaining what is the practice of the Church" in relation to this matter; and should it be found that certain reports which prevail are not without foundation, "that steps should be taken to bring into closer uniformity the Church's laws and the Church's practice." It was unanimously agreed to refer the petition to a Committee

¹ Scottish Presbyterian, Monthly Series, Vol. III. pp. 411-424.

“who shall consider it with a view to the solution of the practical difficulties brought up therein and report.” The Synod was thus again brought face to face with the question in a very practical form, and we have here the starting-point of the agitation which continued more or less actively for the next six years.

This Committee, which consisted almost wholly of the older members of Court, reported in 1858. A series of six Resolutions on the subject was proposed for adoption by the Synod; and, after considerable discussion, three of these were dropped, and the other three were unanimously passed. They are the following:—“1. That it is a recognized principle of this Church, and formally embodied in her Testimony, that ‘such as are in ecclesiastical fellowship with her cannot, without a breach of their Testimony, hold fellowship with the civil government by composing a part of the Legislature, or by taking those Oaths for the maintenance and defence of the complex constitution, which are required of members of Parliament and others filling public offices both in Church and State. And as members of our Church cannot sit in Parliament themselves, neither can they consistently sit there by their representatives, or commission others to do for them what it would be unwarrantable and immoral for them to do in their own persons.’ 2. That there is no valid reason why the position so deliberately assumed should be departed from. 3. That in case of contrariety being found in any instance to exist between the Testimony of the Church and the practices that are followed in this particular, this contrariety should be obviated, not by accommodating the Testimony to the practice, or by allowing the Testimony to fall into abeyance, but by an endeavour to bring the practice into agreement with the Testimony.”

The discussion that arose in connection with the proposed Resolutions brought out a very distinct difference among the members of the Court. This diversity did not relate to the essential principles of the Church, but only to the procedure

which ought to be taken with respect to those who violated the enactment of 1833, by voting for members of Parliament. Some maintained, that if these refused to own the sinfulness and inconsistency of their conduct, and to promise to abstain from it in the future, they ought to be cut off from membership; while others openly avowed that they had reached the position, that they could no longer recognize it as the duty of the Church to expel from its Communion those who exercised the Elective Franchise. In assuming this position it was not pleaded that the Testimony was wrong in declaring such an act to be an inconsistency; but that they were called to deal with men of tender conscience, who had looked at the matter earnestly and anxiously, and who yet felt that while exercising their political rights, they could still honestly maintain the great distinctive principles of the Church. Respecting such men the question arose—Have we any warrant in the Word of God for expelling from the fellowship of the Church on earth, men whose whole life gives evidence that they are conscientiously attached to these principles? And they had come to the conclusion that they had no such authority. Consequently, those who were in this position refused to become bound to any procedure which would necessarily lead to the expulsion from the Church of those who conscientiously believed, that the exercise of the Franchise was no real violation of its principles. They might not be convinced that voting was consistent with these principles; they might even try to dissuade from it, but they were convinced that this was a matter on which individuals ought to be left free to act according to their own convictions. Those who occupied this position accepted the above Resolutions on the understanding that they were not thereby committed to any definite action, and especially that they were not bound, after their open protest, to expel from the Church those who voted and yet held honestly the essential principles embodied in the Testimony.

It is necessary here to remember that six Resolutions on

the subject were originally submitted to the Synod in 1858. One of these insisted upon the exercise of discipline to the extent of expulsion, but against that proposal the opposition was so decided that it was withdrawn, and only the three given above were unanimously adopted. That was a concession by the more extreme party in the Synod, which justified others in believing that henceforth they were not bound to exercise discipline on those who used the Franchise. It might even be argued, despite the general terms of the third Resolution, that the withdrawal of the Resolution insisting upon a definite discipline in cases referred to, cut away the ground from the feet of those who afterwards pleaded for the continuance of this discipline. They consented to the cancelling of a definite proposal, after many had openly declared that they could not in conscience carry out that proposal, and it could not reasonably be argued that exactly the same procedure was required by the Resolutions adopted, as was proposed in that which was withdrawn. If it was, why was the latter brought forward at all? and if it was not, why did they consent to the withdrawal in face of the openly avowed opinions of fathers and brethren? Certain it is that the majority of the Synod did not agree to the third Resolution, because it was equivalent in meaning to that which was withdrawn; nor did they oppose the latter because it was superfluous, but because it imposed an obligation which they declined to accept. That being so, it could not reasonably be held that they were bound to do under the third Resolution the very thing which they had refused to do under the fourth, which was proposed but withdrawn. Nay, was not the whole Synod that consented to the withdrawal, really bound by that act to abstain from discipline in the form and to the extent that had been proposed? Accordingly, the Resolutions of 1858 were very widely regarded as practically modifying the enactment of 1833, which was the basis and starting-point of all ecclesiastical law on the subject.

It may be granted that these Resolutions were a sort of

compromise agreed to in the interests of peace, but not really settling the question on which so much difference had become apparent; and so also were the decisions adopted during the next two or three years. Opinion in the Church was in a transition state, and it required further discussion before the way was cleared for the final settlement of the matter. In the earlier stages of almost every movement for change, either in ecclesiastical or political things, while opinion is being gradually ripened on the points under discussion, such interim decisions, dealing only in a fragmentary or imperfect way with these matters, are very often resorted to, and in many cases are unavoidable. They may not be altogether in harmony with the convictions of the parties, nor absolutely consistent with the issue finally reached, but they prevent the disastrous consequences which might follow any attempt to accomplish a premature settlement. And so the Resolutions now under consideration, though passed unanimously, did not close discussion on the subject, while they afforded time for fuller consideration.

The immediate result of the decision of 1858 was the resignation of the Rev. Dr Cunningham, the Synod's missionary to the Jews. He was particularly dissatisfied with the third Resolution, as not being so clear and decided on the question of discipline as it ought to have been. Its effect, he says, will "be really and truly to surrender, first slowly and then rapidly, in practice, the chief and distinguishing badge of adherence to the Covenanted cause, namely, a practical protest against the British Constitution by refusing to vote and take the Oath of Allegiance." He felt that the terms of the third Resolution did not necessarily involve the continued exercise of discipline on voters, but rather countenanced a falling away in practice on that point. The opposite of this was maintained in the Synod in 1859, and by those who a year before consented to the withdrawal of the Resolution enjoining discipline. At that meeting Dr Cunningham was present, and formally separated himself from the fellowship

of the Church. The Synod simply re-affirmed the former Resolutions, and gave no deliverance on the subject of discipline upon voters.

It became very manifest from the discussions that took place during the next two years that the enactment of 1833, renewed in a general way in 1858 and 1859, was largely disregarded by many members of the Church, was treated as a dead letter by many Sessions, and that all this procedure was winked at by some Presbyteries. Not only did many vote at parliamentary elections, but some office-bearers had become town councillors, and the Synod could not be brought to a decision plainly condemnatory of such conduct and enforcing discipline on the offenders. In 1861 the matter was brought before the Synod in connection with an Overture from the Presbytery of Dumfries, as well as by a Protest against a decision of that Presbytery. After long debate, the following motion was adopted by a large majority:—“That the Overture from the Presbytery of Dumfries, and the diversity of opinion in this Church generally, make it manifest that a Committee ought to be appointed, to inquire into the soundness of the views hitherto prevalent among us, as to the political identity between a representative and his constituents, and as to what is implied in the Oath of Allegiance; and that in the meantime Sessions be not required to take disciplinary action where difficulties are felt in regard to these points, or where diversity of view obtains among those who are giving all evidence of enlightened and cordial attachment to the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; but at the same time members of the Church are earnestly recommended to abstain from voting at elections and otherwise.” This was certainly a forward step, but not an extreme or unreasonable one. It was not an inquiry as to the truth of any of the principles of the Church; it would have been absurd in the highest degree to have done that. It was simply a plan to obtain information as to the import of a political act, and as to the meaning of a political Oath in

both of which the general community as well as Reformed Presbyterians were interested. Or to put it in the strongest form, the inquiry was instituted for the purpose of enabling the Church to decide as to the legitimacy of one of the applications, that had for some time been made, of one of its distinctive principles. The Church was acknowledged to be bound to a condemnation of the evils of the British Constitution and to the avoidance of whatever involved an approbation of these. For nearly thirty years it had been the law of the Church, that to swear the Government Oaths or to vote at elections did involve such approbation; but doubts had arisen as to the truth of that contention, and the Synod decided to make inquiry on the points in question. Hitherto the legal authority rested upon was the opinion of Blackstone, a Tory lawyer and strong Erastian, whose sympathies were on the side of prerogative and the Church of England; and, in view of great changes in the political world, it seemed not unreasonable to seek information in other quarters on the points in dispute. And there appeared the less reason to quarrel with such a course when it is borne in mind, that the enactment of 1833 was a violation of the constitutional law of the Church. In the "Book of Discipline" adopted by the Synod in 1830 the following statement occurs:—"That no new regulations affecting the Church in general that may be discussed in the Synod, are to be finally adopted as the law of the Church at the first proposal; they must first be transmitted to the different Presbyteries and Sessions for their report and approval." That law was not observed in 1833, and, strictly speaking, the enactment was therefore unconstitutional and invalid; and inquiry was now to be made as to whether the averments it contained, and upon which the injunction of discipline on voters was based, were absolutely certain and well founded. Nor does it seem less reasonable, that while this inquiry was pending, the enforcement of discipline should be suspended. If the inquiry should prove that these averments regarding the Oath and political identity were

clearly justified, the position of the Church would be strengthened in dealing with delinquents; but if, on the contrary, they should be found to be false, strained, or even doubtful, the Church would have to face the question whether discipline should be exercised at all. The Committee was appointed, and the inquiry proceeded.

It was limited to the two points specified in the decision of 1861, and the course pursued was to submit several queries regarding them, along with an explanatory statement of the circumstances, to a number of legal gentlemen and members of Parliament of different religious persuasions, for their opinion. The result was embodied in a Report that was presented to the Synod of 1862. This Report was presented by the Rev. John M'Dermid of Glasgow, than whom no member of the Court was better qualified to deal with the subject in a wise, calm, fearless, and conscientious way. Loyal to the principles of the Church, yet able to take a broad and generous view of everything that affected its position, with a mind singularly open to the truth, and intensely anxious to bring the truth to bear practically on the life, with high conceptions of what was due to Christ both by individuals, the Church, and the nation, he was not a man likely to move rashly into any new course, nor to shrink from change when the interests of truth demanded it. The Report contained the statement and queries submitted to Counsel, the answers received, and the conclusion to which the Committee had come. They sum up the result arrived at by all the gentlemen consulted without exception in the following form:—"I. That the Oath of Allegiance does not reduplicate upon, and is not to be interpreted by the terms of the Coronation Oath. II. That the Oath of Allegiance is no more than an expression in words of the duty owing to her Majesty by every British-born subject, and leaves the party taking it at perfect liberty to seek the alteration, by constitutional means, of any part of the constitution which he may think to be wrong. III. That there is no such connection between

the representative and the constituency as to implicate the latter in the Oath which the former must take on entering office." The conclusion to which the Committee came, in view of past action, in connection with similar instances of alleged inconsistency between certain practices and the fundamental principles of the Church, of the opinion of highly qualified men as now given, and of the diversity of view in the Church itself, was that the Synod should now decide that the exercise of discipline upon those who voted or took the Oaths should cease. The Synod was not asked to abandon its attitude of dissenting from and witnessing against the evils in the British Constitution, nor to declare that exercising the Franchise and taking the Oaths were consistent with the principles of the Church; but simply to say that these acts were to be regarded in the same light as were others once as strongly condemned, but now acknowledged by all to involve no direct or express approbation of national evils, and as freely practised by those who protested against the use of the Franchise as by others.

In May, 1862, an Overture on the lines suggested by the Committee was after long discussion adopted by a very large majority, and ordered to be transmitted to Presbyteries and Sessions for their judgment. The opposing motion craved delay, and enjoined the continuance of discipline in accordance with the Act of 1833. The Overture re-asserted the doctrine of the Church regarding Christ's Headship over the nations, the duty of nations to Christ, and the qualifications of civil rulers—pointed out the shortcomings of the British Constitution and the duty of Church members to avoid whatever homologated these—indicated the view that had hitherto been taken of the Oath of Allegiance and the Franchise, and the grounds upon which that view was now questioned and denied. Then follows the proposed deliverance:—"That in these circumstances, having respect to this diversity of opinion, and to the apostolic injunction that no matters of doubtful disputation should be made a ground of Church

censure, the Synod, while they abstain from any judicial sanction of the opinions given above, recommend the members of the Church to abstain from the use of the Franchise and from taking the Oath of Allegiance, yet feel that they have no warrant from the Word of God to visit members taking the Oath in this sense, or exercising the Franchise, with the infliction of ecclesiastical penalties to the effect of suspension and expulsion from the privileges of the Church." There is an implied limitation in the application of this decision involved in the words "in this sense," which may be thus stated: If a man took the Oath or voted, believing that he by these acts gave his approbation to the evils in the Constitution, that man ought to be censured; but if any one said, I hold the principles of the Church, but I cannot see that these acts are inconsistent with these principles, then censure ought not to follow. Plainly, for a Reformed Presbyterian to believe and act as in the first supposed case could not be called less than immoral.

As was to be expected, the year that elapsed before the next meeting of the Supreme Court was held, was one of considerable anxiety and agitation throughout the Church. Some time before this an Association had been formed among those who were opposed to any change, which was called "The 'Reformation' Association in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland." Its object was to circulate literature in defence of their position, and to rouse the people by the cry that the principles of the Church were in danger. It never assumed very formidable dimensions, nor were its efforts crowned by any marked success. Matters, however, had now reached a critical stage, and it was evident that the Church was resolved to settle the question which had so long troubled it. The opposition to the movement in the direction of greater liberty became stronger while the Overture was before the inferior Courts. Persistent efforts were made to make it appear, that the fundamental principles of the Church were about to be given

up, that the dissent and protest against the evils in the British Constitution were to be abandoned, that the doctrine of the Mediatorial Headship was to be set aside, and brethren were denounced as unfaithful and dissatisfied with the principles of the Church. There was enough of declamation and assertion, but the real point of the controversy was for the most part ignored; the matter in dispute was assumed, and no real attempt was made to meet the statements and conclusions of the Committee's Report. It was not a dispute about the Headship of Christ, nor the duty of nations, nor the evils of the Constitution, nor the obligation to avoid giving approval of these: it was simply a question of discipline. Are those to be declared unfit to be in the membership of the Church who, heartily accepting its principles, yet do not see that in using the Franchise or taking the Oath they renounce their dissent from, and protest against, national evils? It was alleged, indeed, that even if there were no Oaths, incorporation with the body politic would be equally a violation of principle. But are not all British-born subjects so incorporated in virtue of their birth, and as such held to owe natural allegiance to the Sovereign, from which they can only be freed by an open renunciation? What does incorporation imply, especially in the case of those who openly protest against certain constitutional evils? Must they be held responsible for these, despite their protest? What voluntary acts may be held to involve an incorporation that does imply responsibility in such cases? Is it only by using the Franchise or taking the Oath, and not by paying taxes, sitting on juries, making use of civil courts, or acting as law agents, all of which were once so regarded? To a candid mind surely the latter acts must seem as directly chargeable with this as the former, and that in the circumstances none of them involved incorporation in any evil sense. At the highest the question was concerning the application of a principle; and that application, not quite thirty years old, had been imposed upon the Church without affording the

constitutional opportunities of examination and judgment. A change was now proposed, but it was more formal than real; for the regulation designed to be now set aside had been, as now appeared, for the most part disregarded. With all their zeal and fervid utterances, the minority of last Synod could have little hope of preventing the proposed change, and during the year threats of a possible rupture began to be heard if the Overture was passed. Painful as that prospect was, it did not prevent Sessions and Presbyteries from exercising their functions conscientiously. To very many it was hard to believe, that any party would proceed to such an extreme step on so narrow grounds. Throughout the Church, which had passed through similar crises once and again practically unscathed, there was considerable anxiety as to the issue of the present agitation.

In ordinary course the Supreme Court met in May, 1863. There was a preliminary discussion as to the adoption of the Answers to Reasons of Dissent given in by the minority at the previous meeting. Most of the routine business was amicably despatched. Numerous petitions for and against the proposed legislation were presented, and the greater part of two days was occupied with the debate anent the disposal of the Overture. It was intimated that it had been approved by all the Presbyteries and by a large majority of the Sessions; and the discussion proceeded on the following motion and amendment:—It was moved and seconded, “The Synod having read Reports from Presbyteries and Sessions on the Overture anent the taking of the Oath of Allegiance and exercising the Elective Franchise, find that all the Presbyteries and a majority of Sessions, confining themselves to a consideration of the exercise of discipline for the acts therein specified, have adopted said Overture only to this extent. The Synod, therefore, in accordance with these Reports, enacts that, while recommending the members of the Church to abstain from the use of the Franchise and from taking the Oath of Allegiance, discipline to the effect of suspension and expulsion from the

Church shall cease, and earnestly enjoin upon all under their charge to have respect to this decision, and to follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." It was also moved and seconded that "The Synod, on mature consideration, reject the Overture sent down from last meeting of Synod to Sessions and Presbyteries, and resolve to adhere to the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church clearly set forth in her Testimony, and faithfully to maintain the same both in doctrine and discipline."

The issue was perfectly clear. Both motion and amendment proceed on the continued acceptance of the principles of the Church, only the latter insists on putting abstinence from the use of the Franchise and from taking the Oath of Allegiance among the fundamental doctrines of the Church, whereas the motion regards these as only applications of the principles, (and one of them of very recent date) with which the Church is bound to deal as changing circumstances and fuller knowledge seem to demand. Looking on it as an essential point, the amendment says that those who act contrary to it must be expelled by the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline; regarding it simply as an application of a principle, the legitimacy of which has come to be generally doubted and by very many denied, the motion says we have no warrant to take action, and discipline must cease; we must leave individuals free to act in this matter as in conscience they feel bound. When the debate ended and the decisive vote was taken, the numbers were found to stand thus:—For the motion, 46; for the amendment, 11; no vote, 7.

When the result was announced, the Rev. W. Anderson rose and read a paper in which he protested against the decision, declined the jurisdiction of the Court, and claimed for himself and those who adhered to him all the rights and privileges of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Leaving the paper on the clerk's table, he withdrew, accompanied by two ministers and several elders. A few weeks

later they were joined by another minister who had abstained from voting. Such a step as had now been taken was regarded by the members of Synod with pain and sorrow. There was no question as to the thorough conscientiousness of the brethren who had withdrawn; whilst the attitude they had assumed was matter of lamentation. Their personal worth and ability were fully recognized, as well as the good work which they had formerly done for the Church of our fathers. They have all long since gone from the Church on earth, and we would not say one word that seemed to cast a slight on the memory of good men, who, according to their light, laboured so devotedly in the cause of the Redeemer.

The action of the Synod in this crisis stands in no need of apology. It maintained the old protest against acknowledged national evils; it was quite prepared to re-assert the old position, which was avowed in almost all the authoritative documents of the Church, from the Informatory Vindication downwards—that everything should be avoided that necessarily or in itself involved an approbation of these evils. But they felt that obligation was laid upon each generation to decide for itself what did or did not do this, and to do so for the sake of the great principles they held, so as to create no unnecessary prejudice against them, by binding them up or identifying them with doubtful restrictions on individual conduct. They were mindful of the fact that great changes had taken place in the State, not only by the modification of the Oaths, but by the abolition of the Test Act, in connection with which Sir Robert Peel pleaded for its abolition on the ground that, “though the Sovereign is bound to maintain the Church of England, and though that Church is an essential part of the Constitution, yet he did not think that Dissenters should be called on to acknowledge that principle.” Plainly in the opinion of that statesman, it was not the Oath of Allegiance, but the Test Act that involved an acknowledgment of the Sovereign’s ecclesiastical supremacy. It had been strongly asserted that the difficulty, so far as the

Church and its principles were concerned, would remain the same though there was no Oath; but the Synod did not allow that this had any foundation in the Testimony; while it gave due weight to the opinion of one of their number (then recently deceased) who held strong convictions against the Oath, to the effect that, if it merely pledged the swearer to adopt no unconstitutional means in introducing any necessary change, that "would remove the whole difficulty and forever settle the controversy." There was good ground for holding that this was its substantial meaning, and in cancelling the regulation of 1833, the Synod was acting quite in the same line with honoured fathers who had done thus with other vexatious restrictions. The Court would have been quite willing to allow that regulation to become obsolete, as some earlier ones had, but as some refused this, there was no resource but to formally decide the controversy, with the result which has been recorded.¹

¹ Appendix No. VIII.

CHAPTER XI.

UNION---1863-1876.

Section First.

THE withdrawal of four ministers with their congregations and a portion of several others, in consequence of the decision of Synod on the Franchise question could not fail to affect the Church to some extent. It so far reduced its numbers and lessened its resources, but in a short time the loss in these respects was fully made up. The various departments of work in which it was engaged were maintained in full efficiency and continued to expand; the interest in all movements at home that concerned the progress of religion and the public interests of the cause of Christ was as active as ever, while the gradual development of the New Hebrides Mission called forth continued sympathy and corresponding effort. Among the agents in the Foreign Mission field there was no division of sentiment on the subject that had agitated the Church, and they all adhered to the Synod. It was a great relief to be freed from the unpleasant irritations so largely connected with home controversies on such minor points, that so the thoughts and efforts of the Church might be directed to matters of higher character and more pressing urgency. So far as the Synod was concerned, the controversy ended with the secession of the minority in May, 1863, and it was prepared to enter with unanimity and heartiness into another and nobler movement which originated at the same time, that, namely, in favour of union among the

non-established Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. It marked a very significant change in the general attitude and state of feeling in the Churches, to find them prepared to consider how much they held in common rather than to emphasize points on which they differed. Little more than twenty years had elapsed since the close of the Voluntary Controversy, and now we find those who had taken part on both sides ready to negotiate with a view to union. It might be interesting to inquire what had contributed to bring about this state of things—what influences, internal and external, combined to produce this result. That, however, does not fall to be discussed here; what has now to be done is to trace the course and indicate the results of the general movement towards union, so far as the Reformed Presbyterian Church was concerned therewith.

In response to Overtures on the subject, presented in May, 1863, to the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church and to the General Assembly of the Free Church, influential Committees were unanimously appointed by both of these Courts. A strong and wide-spread feeling prevailed in both Churches in favour of the immediate consideration of the subject of union, and the Committees entered hopefully on their work. Before the next meeting of the Supreme Courts, some progress had been made in arranging the subjects that behoved to be considered, and in formulating results on some of the most important of these. It was deemed very desirable by the Synod and Assembly, that all the non-established Churches should take part in the negotiations; and, accordingly, invitations to that effect were addressed to the Original Secession, Reformed Presbyterian, and English Presbyterian Churches. Such a conception as this—the union of British Presbyterianism outside of the Established Church—was certainly a very noble one, and could scarcely fail to recall the magnificent aim of the Scottish Presbyterians more than two hundred years before, and the famous Covenant by which they sought to realize it; while it was certainly well

fitted to awaken the sympathies of those sections of the Scottish Church among whom that venerable deed had always occupied a prominent place. The invitation was declined by the Original Secession Synod, but it was accepted by both of the others. It will not be questioned that the Reformed Presbyterian Synod was in a better position for the consideration of this subject now, than it would have been had it been introduced a year or two earlier. It is doing no injustice to the memory of those who left the Synod on the narrow ground that Church discipline on those who used the Franchise was to cease, when we say that they would have opposed any such movement as that now inaugurated. The invitation from the other Churches was laid on the table of the Synod in May, 1864, and met with a very hearty response. After a full discussion of the subject the following motion was unanimously adopted:—"The Synod, recognizing, with gratitude to God, the large amount of attention which has recently been given to the subject of union among the non-established Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, cordially acknowledging the Christian courtesy of the Committee of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches in the communications now on the table, and prayerfully desirous to promote the glory of the Head of the Church by co-operation, in every way consistent with the principles of this Church, with those who are already seeking this desirable end, do appoint the following Ministers and Elders a Committee to confer with the said Committees, and to report to next meeting of Synod." The Committee so appointed consisted of the ablest and most trusted Ministers and Elders of the Church, and was under the Convenership of the Rev. Dr Goold of Edinburgh.

In following the course of these union negotiations, it will not be necessary to enter into details of the procedure from year to year; it will suffice for our purpose, while giving a general outline of the whole, to refer specially to what was done by the Reformed Presbyterian Committee, and the

action that was taken by the Synod, and to indicate the results attained in their bearing on the Testimony and position of the Church. The Committee of the two larger denominations had been in conference for a year before they were joined by that appointed by the Synod, and had drawn up a programme of subjects that appeared to require consideration. These were nine in number, of which the most important were—the province of the Civil Magistrate in relation to Religion and the Christian Church; any other matter of Doctrine about which explanations might seem called for; Theological Curriculum and related topics; election of Office-bearers; law and practice as to public worship; admission to Sealing Ordinances. Two other heads were added to the programme at the suggestion of the Reformed Presbyterian Committee—the bearing of the contemplated union on the working of the Foreign Missions of the various Churches, and the relation of the United Church, in its component parts, to the past ecclesiastical history of this country, particularly with reference to the duty and desirableness of effecting the union on a basis that would identify it with the Reformed Church of Scotland. All of the eleven heads embraced in the programme underwent a thorough investigation in the Joint-Committee, and the results were presented from year to year to the Supreme Courts of the several Churches concerned.

During the first year the subject of the relation of the Civil Magistrate to religion and the Christian Church had been under consideration, and an interim report thereon was presented to the Synod and General Assembly. It included a statement of points upon which the two Committees were agreed, and also a statement of distinctive principles about which they differed. The duty of the Civil Magistrate to acknowledge the creed and jurisdiction of the Church as being in accordance with the Word of God, and when necessary or expedient to employ the national resources in aid of the Church, were the points accepted by the Free Church

Committee and refused by the United Presbyterian Committee. When the Reformed Presbyterians joined in the negotiations it was not deemed expedient to re-open discussion on this subject at that time, but a document was prepared by them and submitted to the Joint-Committee, entitled "Statement of Principles by the Reformed Presbyterian Committee respecting the Relation of Nations and their Rulers to Religion and the Church."¹ Agreeing with the Free Church Committee as to the legitimacy of a friendly alliance between Church and State, it is here declared that such a union cannot in any given case be lawfully attempted or safely determined, "without taking into account the circumstances, character, and attainments of both, particularly the degree of unity which the Church has attained, and the extent to which the State has become Christian." The Church may accept aid from the national resources, but only on terms which "shall not involve the Church in the approbation of what may be evil in the constitution of the State, and be consistent with the preservation of its spiritual independence;" while the Church is bound "to testify against whatever is immoral in the civil constitution, or iniquitous in civil policy." Moreover, this document declares "That when the Civil Magistrate sets himself in habitual opposition to, and abuses his power for the overturning of, religion and national liberties, he thereby forfeits his right to conscientious allegiance, especially in countries where religion and liberty have been placed under the protection of a righteous Constitution." With such sentiments as these before them, we do not wonder that, when the first Report of its Union Committee was presented in 1865, the Synod should not only "approve of the diligence of the Committee in the important business entrusted to them, receive, with thankfulness to God, their Report respecting the Christian harmony that has prevailed, and the progress that has been made in the deliberations of the Joint-Committee," but that it should "specially approve of the document

¹ Appendix No. IX.

embodied in the Report as having been submitted to the Joint-Committee, as a statement of Reformed Presbyterian principles on the relation of nations and their rulers to religion and the Church." By the Joint-Committee this statement was "received as amply satisfactory at the present stage of the negotiations." It contained, indeed, a distinct re-assertion of the old scriptural principles of the Church respecting the moral dominion of Christ over the nations and His Headship over the Church; while it re-states the attitude in which the Reformed Presbyterian Church has stood towards the civil government on account of the evils embodied in the Constitution. As a statement of principles, so far as we know, its accuracy was never called in question.

In 1865 another statement was prepared and submitted to the Joint-Committee in regard to the National Covenants, as bearing upon the eleventh head of the programme, which related to the importance of so effecting union as to identify the United Church with the historic Reformed Church of Scotland. In this statement attention was directed to the fact, that in the earliest authoritative documents, stress was laid rather on the Covenanted Reformation than on the Covenants themselves, which are enumerated along with many others as illustrative documents rather than as constituting a special term of fellowship. They have ever been regarded by the Reformed Presbyterian Church as *national* and not *church deeds*; and being such, they "do not involve any point that would necessarily fall to be considered in preparing a basis of ecclesiastical union." Their chief value has ever been held to consist in the principle of the universal moral dominion of Christ which they embody, and, "as the last formal expression of this principle, the Covenants are of continued obligation in this sense and to this extent." If Union were consummated, the Committee, "in common with the Church which they represent, could not hold themselves personally released from the obligation to maintain the principles of these federal deeds and their obligation on the British nation, nor would

they feel themselves debarred from any legitimate mode of expressing their views to this effect." It was also suggested "whether or not, in some form, the United Church, to preserve its historical connection with the past, might not recognize and declare anew its recognition of these federal deeds, to the extent to which the Churches embraced in the Union stand already in their separate state committed to them." This suggestion was favourably received by the Joint-Committee, which agreed that at a later stage a document should be prepared, with the view of showing from the history and contendings of the several Churches, that the United Church was entitled "to take the position of a Church, identified in respect of principle and history with the Reformed Church of Scotland." When this statement was submitted to the Synod in 1866 it was unanimously approved; and when these two statements, prepared by the Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church respecting Magistracy and the Covenants, along with the Findings of the Joint-Committee on the several subjects of the programme, were sent down to Presbyteries for their suggestions, not one of these intimated any dissatisfaction, and two expressed very cordial approval.

Year after year the Synod re-appointed its Committee and approved of the Reports presented. Indeed, next to the Report on Foreign Missions, that on Union was looked forward to at every meeting with lively interest and expectation. The progress made by the Joint-Committee in their laborious work was regarded as very satisfactory and hopeful. Without dwelling on intermediate stages, we go forward to the meetings of the Supreme Courts in 1870. In that year the Joint-Committee had completed the consideration of all the subjects embraced in the programme, and was prepared to submit the results of their labours to the consideration of the several Churches. These "Completed Findings" of the Joint-Committee form a document of great interest and value. They are the result of six years of anxious and

painstaking work by the ablest men in all the Churches concerned, and bring out in a very striking way the essential unanimity of sentiment that prevailed in all the negotiating Churches on the important subjects that had been so long and so thoroughly discussed. Especial value is to be attached to the Findings under the first head, the relation of the Civil Magistrate to Religion and the Church—a subject which had been the cause of interminable discussions, and of all or nearly all the separations that had marked the history of the Scottish Church. In their final form they are presented in two sections, the first embracing the “Principles which the negotiating Churches held in common,”¹ and the second being a “Statement as to the application of the preceding principles and their bearing on the present duty of the negotiating Churches.” The Report was laid before the Synod, and after careful consideration, a motion approving of it, thankfully recognizing the value of the results attained, re-appointing the Committee, and resolving to send the completed Report down to Kirk-Sessions for their information, and to have it circulated among the members of the Church, was unanimously adopted. The main part of this motion is as follows :—“The Synod, on a careful review of the Findings of the Joint-Committee, especially on the subjects of Evangelical Doctrine and the duty of the Civil Magistrate, rejoice to find that on the former subject, all the negotiating Churches unreservedly hold the same Confession of Faith—a Confession with the adequacy of which this Synod is perfectly satisfied—and that on the latter subject, the Statement now given of Principles held in Common includes not only a recognition of Christ’s sole Headship over the Church, but of that moral dominion over the nations which has been given to Him of the Father—principles for which this Church has always contended, and which are very precious to her. In view of this ascertained agreement, the Synod

¹ Appendix No. X.

feel themselves shut up to the conclusion that the Findings of the Committee, should these be accepted by the respective Churches, disclose no such difference of principle as would justify this Court in refusing to go forward in this movement, with a view to the preparation in due time of a Basis of Union, and the termination of the separation existing among the non-established branches of the Scottish Reformed Church." A similar approval had been given in 1867, and the continued consideration of the subject had only confirmed the Synod's judgment in the matter.

In 1870 a further step was proposed by the Committee. Reference is made above to the preparation of a Basis of Union, but the proposal now was that the intended Union "ought to take place on the basis of the Standards common to them all, with the explanations or qualifications with which these Standards are now received in the respective Churches severally," which could finally be reduced to a formula in which all parties could acquiesce. This proposal was adopted by the Synod by an overwhelming majority over an amendment in favour of a federal Union, which had only four supporters. It was resolved to send down the Report on Union to the Presbyteries of the Church to consult and report as to the proposal it contained. In the Supreme Courts of the other Churches a similar motion was adopted and sent down to the inferior Courts. During the year that followed the whole subject was fully discussed in Presbyteries and Synods as well as in other ways. The precise form of the question considered was, whether there was any objection in principle to the formation of an incorporating Union among these Churches on the basis of the Westminster Confession of Faith as at present accepted by these Churches. The statement by the Joint-Committee regarding Evangelical Doctrine and the Civil Magistrate had been approved by the Supreme Courts of the other Churches, as it had been again and again by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church,

and was held as truly representing the doctrine of the negotiating Churches on these points.

There was good ground for anxiety in some quarters as to the result of this appeal to the inferior Courts; it was felt that a crisis was at hand, and the meetings of the higher Courts in 1871 were looked forward to with much interest. The first that met was the Reformed Presbyterian Synod. The Report of the Union Committee was necessarily brief, as no new step could be taken while the proposal was under consideration by the inferior Courts of the Church. The result of the appeal to the Presbyteries was embodied in the motion that was adopted, of which the following is the principal part:—"That the Synod receive and adopt the Report of the Union Committee; Find that, in answer to the remit of last year, all the Presbyteries of the Church have affirmed that there is no bar in principle to an incorporating union on the basis of the Confession of Faith as presently accepted by the negotiating Churches, and hereby declare that the judgment . . . must be held as expressive of the mind of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on the subject, so far as represented by the various Presbyteries." The motion further re-appoints the Committee, and affirms that a similar declaration by the other Churches would be a result worthy of past labours, and would lay serious responsibility on those who would obstruct further procedure. An amendment was proposed, asserting that on several points the Testimony of the Church would be compromised by a union on the basis of the Standards, but it found only three supporters. Well might the Convener of the Union Committee declare, "that no such harmony on any subject of this nature and importance, had been evinced in the Reformed Presbyterian Church since 1821 and 1822, when this same question of a general union of Presbyterians was under consideration."

When the subject came before the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, it was found that all the Presbyteries had declared that there was no bar in principle to union on

the proposed basis, and a motion re-appointing the Committee to take what further steps were practicable towards an incorporating union was adopted, as such motions had been from the first, by an overwhelming majority. In the General Assembly of the Free Church matters did not issue so hopefully. In that Church for some years previously—almost, indeed, from the beginning of the negotiations—a strenuous opposition had been made to the successive proposals of the Union Committee. This opposition was mainly directed against the Findings of the Committee on the first two Heads of the programme. They opposed the Statement regarding the duty of the Civil Magistrate to the Church, because it did not insist on the obligation to establish and endow the Church, but practically left that an open question; and with regard to Evangelical Doctrine, they declared that they were not satisfied of the soundness of the United Presbyterian Church, especially on the Atonement. This party was led by some popular and able men, who had done good service to the Church in other departments; and though year by year they found themselves in a minority in the Assembly of four or five to one, they manifested no disposition to yield. On the contrary, as the negotiations reached a critical stage, their hostility became more pronounced and determined than ever. They did their utmost by pamphlets and speeches to rouse opposition in the Church to the proposed union; they put forth every effort to secure a response from Presbyteries and Synods adverse to the union; and they followed up all by the threat of another disruption, and an appeal to the Courts of Law on the question of property. A decided majority of the Presbyteries had declared that there was no objection to the proposed union on principle; but, looking at the state of matters in the Free Church, it was felt that the Assembly could not take any further steps meanwhile towards an incorporating union; matters did not seem ripe; union was not to be purchased at the cost of disruption. So the motion carried in the Assembly

re-appointed the Committee, and instructed them to "direct their attention for the present to measures for friendly co-operation with the sister Churches."

This decision of the Free Assembly brought to an end all direct negotiations with a view to union, and confined the Committee to the consideration of measures fitted to draw the Churches into closer and more friendly relations to one another, to encourage and facilitate intercourse and co-operation, and thus to develop feelings of respect and kindness and sympathy, that would prepare for the more perfect union which had been in view from the first.

It does not seem needful to dwell on the proceedings of the next two years. The interest which this great movement had widely excited during eight years received a check; there was no hope of realizing, it might be for many years to come, that union towards which the Churches had laboured so earnestly. To those in all the Churches who had taken the most active part in the long negotiations, who had come to know most thoroughly the high character, the Christian devotedness, the earnest love of evangelical truth, the anxious concern for the honour of Christ and the progress of His cause, of the brethren belonging to other Churches, this result was an occasion of deep sorrow. Their sympathies with the cause of union were not lessened, their hopes were not extinguished, but their conscience was grieved because of the obstacles that prevented any speedy realization. It was not that they reckoned their past labours to be lost; their close fellowship with brethren had been a great pleasure and spiritual refreshing, and the published results of their labours would in due time contribute towards the great end which they were not permitted to see.

The practical outcome of the negotiations of the two following years was the adoption by all the three Churches, of what is known as the Mutual Eligibility Act. What it was intended to accomplish was simply this—that the ministers of each Church should be eligible to a call from

the congregations of the sister Churches, and could, on signing the Formula of the Church into which they were called, accept and be inducted. This was the existing relation between the Free Church and the English and Irish Presbyterian Churches and those of the Colonies, and it was now proposed that the United Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian Churches should be placed on the same footing. This was agreed to in 1873 by the Free Assembly; and in 1874 it was accepted by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, though opposed by the same parties who had for several years striven against the union movement; but it was with feelings of deep disappointment that this was, for the present, the only practical result of these protracted negotiations. In 1873, the leaders of the majority in the Free Church Assembly were constrained to abandon, for the present, all attempts to carry on the movement, and the manner in which such men as Dr. Candlish spoke revealed how deeply they were grieved and disappointed at the result. The two Synods re-appointed their Union Committees, but the Free Assembly did not; and so closed, for the time, this great movement that once gave promise of issuing in something grander and more memorable in itself, and more worthy of the labour and anxiety which had been expended upon it. Doubtless the time will come, and it may be soon, when the full fruits of these ten years of close fraternal intercourse will be gathered. It is not fitting that strong words should be written regarding those whose opposition caused the failure; it is not questioned that they acted conscientiously; but it is matter of lasting regret that they wrecked a movement which, by re-uniting the non-established Churches of Scotland, would have enabled the united Church more effectively to do its work both at home and abroad; and that they did this for the sake of a mere theoretical point, which there seems no likelihood of the Church in this land being called to face in any practical form.

The result of the union negotiations, so far as concerned the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, may be

summed up in a few sentences. The invitation to take part in these negotiations gave to her an opportunity of presenting afresh the essential matters of her Testimony, in circumstances more favourable to their dispassionate consideration, and more careful comparison with those of other Churches, than had been enjoyed during the long course of her history. It was just such an opportunity as was desired by the fathers of the Church in 1822. What they earnestly desired, but could not then obtain, was "friendly conference about the subjects of difference, and the way to have them amicably and scripturally adjusted; that explanations of those things which have produced divisions, and have increased the difficulties in the way of union, should be candidly sought and given; thus might a more affectionate acquaintance be formed, misapprehensions cleared, and fruitless contentions terminated; that prejudices of every kind should be guarded against, and . . . all attempts to colour, aggravate, or distort the views of others . . . be carefully avoided; that all the good things maintained or done by other parties, be as carefully exhibited as those things which we have condemned; that a very short summary of those doctrines about which there is a cordial agreement ought to be adopted; that those matters which appear, if not doubtful, at least of very difficult interpretation, need not be much insisted on." That was the spirit, these were the sentiments of the fathers of that day regarding union, which the Synod approved and thanked the Committee for "having exhibited with the caution and prudence which the subject required." Forty years later the opportunity for re-consideration came in the providence of God, and we feel as we write down the expressions quoted above as if we were recording the spirit, the sentiments, and the procedure of the Church during the negotiations for union which closed in 1873. That is a very emphatic testimony to the far-seeing wisdom, the Christian generosity, the wide outlook of the men who in that day guided the policy of the Church. The Synod and its Union

Committee pursued, from 1864 till 1873, the line thus marked out by their predecessors. The difficulties which the fathers felt were connected with the doctrine of the Church regarding "the supreme Headship of Christ over His Church, and over the nations and governments of the world, or over all things for her;" the result of the negotiations was to present in the "Common Principles" these doctrines in a clearer, more explicit and unambiguous form than they had ever been presented before, and to secure the acceptance of these by the Supreme Courts of all the negotiating Churches. That was an immense gain, and sufficiently conserved the essential principles of the Church, had the union been accomplished. It was not proposed to unite on the basis of a new summary of doctrine, but on the Confession of Faith, interpreted in the light of these "Common Principles." The position to be assigned to the Covenants and some other matters in the event of union, was in keeping with the suggestion of the Report of 1822, that matters of doubtful or difficult interpretation should not be much insisted on, but were to be subjects of Christian conference, and of forbearance till clearer light be obtained. So far from the Synod and its Committee being chargeable with the abandonment of principles, the issue was their clearer expression and wider acceptance. The proceedings all through, so far from reflecting upon the witnesses of the past, were simply and truly a carrying out of the noble aspirations of men, than whom the Reformed Presbyterian Church never had any, in its ministry or eldership, more thoroughly conversant with its principles or more sincerely devoted to their maintenance. It was with grief and disappointment that the Synod witnessed the suspension of the movement, but there mingled with these no feeling of shame for the part that it had taken in it, which had ever been straightforward and honourable, while confidence in and esteem for the brethren of other denominations had been greatly increased. The labours of the past would not be lost; and the scene closed with an assured hope

that the movement would ere long be revived and carried on to a more auspicious issue. The ground had been so far cleared on the subject of the universal Mediatorial Headship of Christ—a subject which from the earliest times, in one aspect or another, had been the occasion of grievous discord and division—and it may be, prepared the way for making that great doctrine, so long controverted and misunderstood, itself the bond of union among the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland.

Section Second.

Although during this period the attention of the Church was very largely engrossed by the negotiations for union, yet all other departments of ecclesiastical activity continued to be prosecuted with undiminished vigour. Manifestly a very healthy spirit pervaded the Church, and the meetings of Synod from year to year, revealed a deepening interest in every movement that affected the cause of religion. The reports of the various Committees gave unmistakeable evidence that the great ends for which the Christian Church existed were distinctly realized. While still maintaining a testimony for the attainments of former times, the Church had a more vivid sense of the urgent claims of the present, and the necessity of adapting modes of action to the exigencies of the times. Among ministers and people there was a widespread sympathy with the spiritual awakening, which was closely associated with the name of Mr Moody; greater attention was devoted to evangelistic work among the non-church-going, alike in larger towns and in country districts; on the floor of Synod open testimony was borne to the reviving of spiritual life in many congregations, while that Court, thankfully acknowledging the genuineness of the work, sought to give guidance and encouragement to those engaged in it. A fresh stimulus was thus give to Home Mission work and Church Extension, the fruits of which still

remain. Nothing disclosed more distinctly how thoroughly the Church was in touch with the times, than the Reports of the Committee on Public Questions, which were for many years presented by the late Rev. John Hamilton of Renton. They were marked by a singular breadth of view, and a thorough apprehension of the tendencies of modern thought; and did much to keep the Church alive to current speculations in philosophy and religion, and to those movements in Church and State, at home and abroad, which more or less directly touched the interests of Divine truth, and of the Kingdom of Christ in the world.

One effect of the revival movement, and of the evangelistic efforts that were connected with it, was to make the Church feel more strongly that it must find place in its fellowship for those who gave evidence of a saving change, but who, from the circumstances of their previous life, could not be expected to have any special interest in, or acquaintance with, the public history and contendings of former generations. We have already seen that at an earlier date the Reformed Presbytery had made some provision for such parties, in its approval of the "Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion;" and in a passage quoted in an earlier chapter, sought to meet the objection of those who thought that too much was asked from those who desired admission to the fellowship of the Church. But the difficulty was more strongly felt now, when numbers who had been living in ignorance and sin were awakened, and brought to know the love and the claims of Christ, and desired openly to own Him. This along with other influences, led to an effort to simplify the terms of admission to the fellowship of the Church, which issued in 1872 in the adoption of a series of Questions which might be used in the admission of members; while Sessions were at liberty to employ the old Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion if they saw meet. These Questions differed from the old Terms, mainly by omitting all reference to the Covenants, the contendings of past times, and the

Judicial Act of 1761, and by requiring a distinct profession of faith in Christ, a promise of submission to the Session, and of attendance on and support of ordinances. By this means a much-needed relief was afforded, and these Questions to a large extent superseded the old Terms. A revised Formula to be used in the ordination of ministers and elders was also adopted in 1870, in which, among other changes, the long enumeration of errors renounced is omitted. In such ways the Church showed anxiety to adapt itself to the requirements of present times, to regulate its conduct in such matters solely by the Word of God, and to deal tenderly and wisely with the conscience of members.

As has been already noticed, a Committee on Ministerial Support had existed since 1846, the object of which was to secure the better sustenance of the Christian ministry. Starting with the very modest aim of securing a minimum stipend of £100 a year and a manse, with communion and travelling expenses, it in course of years realized much more than that. Stationary for some time, it gradually raised the minimum, till just before the union in 1876 there was the prospect of reaching a stipend, from all sources, of £150 and a manse. The progress made in this department may be seen by contrasting the amount raised for stipend in 1851 and 1875, bearing in mind that the number of congregations having settled ministers had increased over one-fifth. In 1851 the amount of stipend paid was £3239, in 1875 it had risen to £7071—a very remarkable increase, considering, moreover, that the membership during the same period had increased by little more than one-fourth,—in 1851 it was 5839, in 1876 it was 7443. This growth in liberality extended to all departments. In 1851 the amount raised for all purposes was £3883; in 1871, £9445; and in 1875, £13,724. In 1876 the total income was still larger, and verged on an average of £2 per member. Now, while it is true that money is not everything in a Church, yet the preceding figures show a wide prevalence of the Christian grace of liberality, and

that must have for its basis no small degree of spiritual life. It testified, among other things, that this small Church, though old, was showing no signs of decrepitude; it maintained all home agencies in full vigour, and sustained a successful mission to the heathen; in evangelistic and home mission work it took active part; while its interest in the welfare of the young was seen in above 6000 scholars in Bible Classes and Sabbath Schools, connected with its comparatively small and widely-scattered congregations. Reference has been made already to an effort to remove the debt resting on churches having settled ministers, and the success that attended it. In 1874, another effort was made to clear off all burdens which had in the interval been incurred on the ecclesiastical property belonging to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and amounting to above £3200. In 1875 this was accomplished, and so far as debt on church or manse was concerned, this Church was free, and, if we mistake not, was the first of the non-established Churches in Scotland to reach that position.

Apart from the question of union, the subject that bulked most largely in the mind of the Church was the mission to the New Hebrides. We have already traced its history up to the end of 1862, and must now record its progress till 1876. The letters and reports of the missionaries kept the Church fully informed of all that was done in the mission field, and they were eagerly read as they appeared month by month in the pages of the *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*. After his escape from Tanna, Mr Paton spent a year in Australia, and did a great work there in arousing an interest in the mission among the Presbyterian Churches, which continues to bear fruit to the present time. Had the Reformed Presbyterian Church done nothing more than awaken the missionary spirit in these colonies, it would have done good service to the cause. These colonial Churches are young and vigorous; they have a great future before them; they are contiguous to the fields, white for the harvest, in these

southern seas ; and upon them in due time will devolve the charge of this and other missions. The immediate object of Mr Paton's visit, as has already been mentioned, was to raise money for the purchase of a larger mission ship, and to obtain additional missionaries. The *John Knox* had been very useful, but was too small to meet the requirements of a growing mission. The exciting narrative of his dangers and escape, and his stirring appeals produced a wonderful effect ; he speedily obtained £3000 for the ship, and though none offered themselves as missionaries, he collected £1600 for the outfit of labourers wherever he could find them. Having accomplished this, Mr Paton returned to Scotland, mainly for the purpose of securing some addition to the mission staff. He did not at the time achieve much in this direction, but his visit was greatly to the advantage of the mission in other ways. He returned to the scene of his labours in 1865, having on his way raised over £1300 in Australia for the maintenance of the mission ship ; and he was soon after located on the island of Aniwa. He was followed in 1865 by one missionary, and 1866 by three others from Scotland, and in the course of the next nine years three more, at intervals, joined the devoted band. Accessions likewise came from America, so that, in 1869, there were eleven missionaries labouring on the group.

The new mission ship, called the *Dayspring*, was sent out in 1864, and for about ten years proved of inestimable service to the mission. It cost upwards of £4200 ; and it was agreed that the cost of maintaining it should be borne by the several Churches interested in the mission. The amount to be contributed by the Reformed Presbyterian Church for this purpose was £250 a year, and a scheme was adopted whereby this sum was collected by the children of the Church, by means of mission boxes. The plan succeeded admirably, and supplied each year more than the amount required, the average being about £300. This was a considerable relief to the ordinary mission fund, while it enlisted

the sympathies of the young in the conversion of the heathen. The missionaries sent from Scotland, three of whom were Free Church students, were not all supported by the Church at home. Some were sustained by the Churches in Australia and New Zealand, who provided no men, but were willing to provide the needful funds; leaving three or four dependent on the home Church. Thus the New Hebrides mission presented the unwonted spectacle of six different Presbyterian Churches in different quarters of the globe, working harmoniously in the same field, an example of co-operation in foreign missions which reads its own important lesson, even when the Churches remain in a disunited state.

As fresh labourers arrived, the sphere of the mission was gradually extended. The first effort to settle a European missionary on Tanna, after Mr Paton's expulsion, was unsuccessful; but a second attempt succeeded, and two were located there, whose labours have been crowned with a Divine blessing. Erromanga, Aniwa, Fate, Futuna, N'guna, each had its devoted missionary with his band of native teachers, mostly from the Teachers' Institution on Aneityum, with some Raratongans. The results of their labours varied very much in degree in different islands, but in all there was much to cheer and encourage. The progress of the work on Aneityum has been already traced. After his return in 1863, Mr Inglis set himself with his wonted zeal and wisdom, to carry on and consolidate the work, and to promote in every way possible the welfare of the natives. He superintended the education of the whole community, for all above infancy were at school; giving prominence to religious instruction, while not overlooking the simpler branches of secular knowledge. He trained teachers not only for his own schools, but for neighbouring islands. He taught the simpler arts of civilized life, and trained also in the duty of supporting and extending the Gospel. In 1868, the natives at his station contributed in kind for the support of native teachers to the amount of £55, while they willingly aided in erecting and repairing

mission buildings, not only for themselves, but on neighbouring islands. He encouraged the cultivation of arrowroot, and out of the produce, they paid for the printed Scriptures in their own language. In one year they contributed in this form to the value of £100. These various forms of service produced manifest results in the moral and material condition of the people. It was not possible in so short a time to undo the effects of many centuries of ignorance, debasement, and savage cruelty, yet what he did see with respect to the moral tone of the people, their growth in knowledge, their regard to the ordinances, to the Sabbath and to family worship, and to the order and peace that prevailed, must have gladdened the heart of the devoted missionary and his equally devoted wife. When after twenty-five years of labour he retired from the field, he could not fail, as he contrasted Aneityum as he found it and as he left it, to give thanks to God that his labour had not been in vain. And as in this island, so was it in the others more or less; especially was it so with Aniwa, on which Mr and Mrs Paton were settled. There, too, after a few years of zealous work, the whole population became nominally Christian, idols were cast away, cruel customs and superstitions were abandoned, all submitted to Christian instruction.

There were indeed trials and discouragements enough. The climate is somewhat trying, and requires great care on the part of Europeans; some of the missionaries died, and among them the venerable Dr Geddie, the worthy pioneer of the devoted band; while others were compelled to withdraw for the sake of health. The multiplicity of languages spoken on the islands was another drawback, the differences being so great, that familiarity with the language of one island is of comparatively little value in introducing the Gospel to its nearest neighbour; each island thus requiring a new translation of the Scriptures for itself. In 1871 Erromanga maintained its unenviable notoriety as the martyr island of the group. Mr Gordon and his wife were murdered there in

1862; but undeterred by his sad fate, a brother of the former followed him into the field, and entered on his work; and he too fell a victim to the superstition and cruelty of the benighted natives. Another missionary from the same Church was soon afterwards settled on this island, around which so many sad associations have gathered, and his labours have borne good fruit. The gradual, and in some cases rapid, diminution of the population was another discouraging circumstance. During the twenty-four years, 1852 to 1876, the population on Mr Inglis's station had decreased from 1900 to 713; at the other station the diminution was not so great, but was depressing enough. Apart from the well-known fact, that savage races tend to diminish when brought into contact with civilization, there were special causes operating in this case. A succession of terrible epidemics cut down great numbers of the people; and the Labour Traffic, as it is called, had a material influence in reducing the native population, and otherwise proved very injurious to the mission cause. This Labour Traffic is carried on for the purpose of supplying labourers for some of the Australian colonies, especially Queensland, and for the Fiji Islands; and it was carried on, not only in the New Hebrides, but in other groups in these southern seas. The agents of the Labour vessels sought in various ways, to induce the natives to enter into arrangements to go to the colonies for a period of years, to work under certain regulations, with a promise, that at the end of the fixed time, they would be brought back to their native island. In most cases, the ignorant natives could not understand the conditions of the bargain to which they were induced to affix their mark; in many instances they were subjected to much cruelty during the voyage, and on the plantations where they laboured; the regulations were often disregarded; great numbers were never brought back; and of those who were returned, too many had added the vices of civilization to those of their heathen state. As it became more difficult to induce natives to volunteer for

this service, unscrupulous traders did not shrink from using force, and many were kidnapped and taken away against their will. This conduct roused the resentment of chiefs and people, and produced a feeling of jealousy among them regarding all intercourse with white men, and a readiness to wreak vengeance on those who came within their reach. Legitimate traders suffered from this unholy traffic, murders were committed on some islands, and a man-of-war had to be sent to teach the natives to respect the lives of British subjects. It is believed that the murder of Bishop Patteson, on one of the Solomon group, was owing to the evil feelings produced by this traffic; the innocent suffering for the guilty. Against the whole system the missionaries protested strongly from the first; to them it seemed nothing else than a system of slavery, a revival of the slave trade, and they denounced it as such. It was injurious to the material prosperity of the island, taking away as it did the young, the strong, and the healthy; and not less adverse to the interests of morality and religion. They appealed to the Colonial Governments to put a stop to it, and to punish those guilty of cruelty and man-stealing; but with little effect. To such a length did matters go that the attention of the Home Government was called to it, public opinion was roused against this new form of slavery, and in 1873 a Bill was passed by the British Legislature,—“The Polynesian Islanders Protection Bill,” designed to regulate but not to prohibit the traffic. Good no doubt has resulted from this Act, but where the cupidity of man is interested, it is impossible so to regulate such a traffic, as to prevent the infliction of wrong on the weak and the ignorant, especially when the scene of operation is so far removed from the surveillance of public opinion. So the evil continues, and in all its forms and effects, immediate and remote, is a serious hindrance to the civilization of these islands and to the success of missionary labours.

At the Union in 1876, when the New Hebrides mission

was transferred to the United Church, it was in a vigorous and healthy condition. The Reformed Presbyterian Church was at that date responsible for the maintenance of three missionaries. The Rev. John Inglis was on Aneityum, where he remained only till a successor was appointed, and then returned home after thirty-three years of missionary service: eight in New Zealand and twenty-five in the New Hebrides. His later years were spent in peaceful retirement, but not in indolence. The great cause to which he had devoted the energies of his life was dear as ever to his heart, and by his voice and his pen he continued to labour for its promotion. We know no better missionary letters than those which John Inglis sent from his island home, so admirable in style, so clear, full, and satisfactory in substance. The same qualities characterize the two handsome volumes which he has given to the world as a memorial of his labours; they are full of most interesting information, and are worthy of a larger measure of popularity than we fear they have received. He died full of years and honour in July, 1891, esteemed and venerated by all who knew him, and especially by the ministers and members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The other two missionaries were the Rev. Thomas Neilson and the Rev. William Watt, both of whom were labouring hopefully on Tanna, with no experience of the perils which at an earlier date had beset Mr. Paton.

The condition of the mission on Aneityum and the machinery in operation, may be gathered from an address by Mr Inglis in June, 1876, at the annual meeting of what was called the "New Hebrides Mission Synod,"—at which it was customary to discuss the prospects of the mission, modes of work, difficulties, and discouragements, and to make arrangements about the mission ship, and the settlement of teachers and missionaries. Public worship was maintained on Sabbaths and Wednesdays at the principal and three out-stations, with an attendance of about four hundred on Sabbath and two hundred on Wednesday. Native teachers

and office-bearers were employed in conducting these meetings in whole or in part. An institution for the training of teachers and for the better class of scholars was maintained for three months each year, and there were 28 schools scattered over the district. The New Testament had been for many years in the hands of the natives, and now the translation and correction of the Old Testament was completed by the missionaries, and ready for printing when Mr Inglis came to Scotland. To aid in printing and binding the Old Testament, and in binding additional copies of the New Testament, the natives contributed in three years arrowroot to the value of about £450. A dispensary was in operation, by means of which the missionary was able to give much relief to the sick. As to Church members, there were at this date 354, with 13 elders and 12 deacons. Since the commencement of the mission there had been 664 admissions, 1168 baptisms, and 475 marriages. With all this achieved and in operation, with very much that was fitted to awaken thankfulness and to encourage faith and effort, the missionary did not claim that there yet existed on Aneityum a vigorous, enlightened, and self-sustained Christianity. None could estimate as he could the vast change wrought in twenty-four years; but he knew that while there was true spiritual life widely diffused, yet its strength was small, and must not be overstrained, and would require the most watchful care, guidance, and support for many years to come. When this mission, which had been so diligently fostered by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and upon which the blessing of God had so manifestly rested, was transferred to the care of the Free Church, it was in a vigorous and hopeful condition; it was not burdened with liabilities; on the contrary, there was a very considerable sum handed over for its behoof; and there was the fullest confidence that it would continue to be sustained as effectively as in the past, that its influence would grow and its sphere widen till the whole group was Christianized.

It may be mentioned here that this Church took part in starting another and much greater missionary enterprise, shortly before its union with the Free Church. This was the now well-known Livingstonia Mission, which was begun in 1875. The Reformed Presbyterian Church was invited to join with the Free Church in founding this new and important mission, and cordially responded to the call; subscriptions to the guarantee fund to the amount of nearly £2000 were given by the members of that Church, and contributions to its maintenance were sent in by many of its congregations. The two Churches were thus brought together in common work for Christ, before they became actually one Church by an incorporating union. Nothing remains for us now in bringing this history to a close, but to place on record a succinct statement of the proceedings, which speedily issued in the happy and harmonious fusion of these two divisions of the old Presbyterian Church of Scotland, already united by so many ties of sympathy and principle. After the long negotiations and discussions of preceding years, the settlement of details could not be a matter of great difficulty.

Section Third.

As we have seen, the abandonment of the negotiations for the union of the non-established Presbyterian Churches was caused by the determined opposition of a minority in the Free Church, who had not confidence in the soundness in the faith of the United Presbyterian Church, and who maintained that the "Common Principles" did not sufficiently conserve the principles of the Church regarding national religion and Church Establishments. The Mutual Eligibility Act was passed by the Free Assembly, and its Union Committee was discharged. A dissent against the approval of the Report on Union and the passing of this Act, was signed by 132 members of Assembly; and a Declaratory statement signed

by 577 ministers and elders who were grieved at the suspension of negotiations, was inserted in the Records of the Assembly. The motion adopted by the United Presbyterian Synod in 1873, regrets the anticipated suspension of negotiations by the Free Church, re-appoints its Union Committee to superintend the carrying out of measures of co-operation, and "to confer with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, should that Church see its way to continued conference, as to incorporating union." In the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of 1873, the failure of the negotiations was spoken of with deep regret but with no feeling of despondency. The good that had been accomplished was thankfully recognized as worthy of the labour of past years, and approbation of the Mutual Eligibility Act was expressed when regarded, not as a substitute for, but as a step towards union. In the motion adopted, the Committee on Union in its present form is discharged, "but retaining unabated the conviction not merely of the desirableness but of the duty of union, re-appoint the Committee to watch over the interests of this important question, to confer with whatever Committee may be appointed by any or all the other Churches, and to embrace every opportunity which Providence may afford for attaining the union originally contemplated and already approved of by this Church, on the basis of the Common Standards, and in harmony with the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ to universal Headship, nowhere more clearly set forth than in the 'Common Principles,' drawn up by the Joint-Committee, and adopted by vast majorities in all the Churches." This motion was carried by an overwhelming majority against an amendment condemning the Mutual Eligibility Act.

The state of matters with respect to union as indicated by these decisions was not cheering. During the year that ensued nothing was done. The United Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian Committees, along with two members of the Committee of the English Presbyterian Church, met once in conference. It was found, however, that the in-

structions of the two latter were interpreted as limiting them to conference with a view to the union originally contemplated; consequently no definite step was taken. The position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church was somewhat peculiar and difficult. It was expressly committed to union on the basis of the Standards; it was the smallest of the three negotiating Scottish Churches, one of which was willing to confer with a view to incorporating union, while the other had in the meantime withdrawn. The question thus arose, Should the Church enter into conference for union with the United Presbyterian Church, or endeavour to open negotiations with the Free Church, or continue to maintain its separate standing? It was not wonderful that in the circumstances there should exist some diversity of opinion as to the course to be pursued. This was manifest in a private conference of ministers and elders called by the Union Committee in April, 1874, and largely attended, but which came to no decision. Hitherto, as the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met earlier in May than the Supreme Courts of the other Churches, it had fallen to it to take the lead in proposing resolutions on the question of union; but it was resolved on this occasion to delay coming to any decision till these other Courts had met. Accordingly the Synod of 1874 contented itself with giving final sanction to the Eligibility Act, re-affirming its conviction of the duty and desirableness of union, acknowledging "the kind and fraternal invitation of the United Presbyterian Synod, to continue negotiations with it in the hope ultimately of an incorporating union," agreeing "to postpone meanwhile the consideration of the question, till after the meeting of the other Supreme Courts, re-appointing the Committee to watch over the interests of union generally, to confer with any similar Committees in other Churches, and to take action, should opportunities occur, for directly and practically advancing the cause of love and unity among the Scottish Presbyterian Churches." A motion to this effect was carried by a majority

of 56 to 3 against an amendment proposing the dismissal and censure of the Union Committee. As something like this had been the amount of opposition all along, the result may be taken as a pretty sure indication of the state of opinion in the Church on this great question. Nor is there any ground to question the wisdom and propriety of the Resolution adopted by the Synod at this time; the action taken by the other Church Courts speedily put the subject in such a position as to admit of being fairly considered by Reformed Presbyterians.

In the United Presbyterian Synod, Dr Cairns spoke in the most kind and generous way of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and proposed the re-appointment of the Committee to confer, if they saw cause, on the matter of incorporating union with that Church. In the Free Church Assembly also the way was opened up for the renewal of negotiations. Overtures on the subject were laid on the table of the Assembly by several Presbyteries. One overture was in these terms: "That, considering the valuable testimony which the Reformed Presbyterian Church has been honoured to bear to the truth of Christ in Scotland, and the many services it has rendered to the cause of true and undefiled religion, as well as the absence of any sufficient cause of continued separation between that Church and the Free Church: It is humbly overtured, that the General Assembly should take such steps as it may deem expedient to promote an incorporating union between said Churches, for the glory of God and the building up of the walls of this Jerusalem." The subject was very cordially taken up by the Assembly. A motion was proposed by Dr Robert Buchanan, and the terms in which he spoke of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and of the prospect of union, were received with hearty approbation. "He believed it was possible, and he would say even easy, to deal with the question without embarrassing themselves at all, because his belief was that there was so common a feeling on the part of this Church as

to what they ought to do with regard to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the sentiment on the subject was so all but universal, that there was not the least likelihood of creating any difference among them." This anticipation was fully verified by the event, though the speaker, than whom none had done nobler service in the cause of union, was not spared to see it. In the motion proposed and unanimously adopted, the Assembly, disclaiming all desire to interfere between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the United Presbyterian Church, rightly understanding the import of the last finding of the Synod of the former, "thinks it due to the Reformed Presbyterian Church to declare, that any communication from them will at all times be received by this Church with the greatest possible consideration, and that a scriptural union with them could only be regarded by this Church as a prospect to be hailed with the greatest satisfaction." The Commission was empowered to receive any such communication, and to appoint a Committee for conference, but not to take any step that would commit the Church till the matter was brought before a future Assembly.

The spirit and manner in which this matter was dealt with by both of the larger Churches was altogether admirable. They heartily recognized the past services of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and clearly understood its present position in connection with union, while they fully acknowledged its right of independent action, and refrained from everything that might have even the semblance of pressure. And this Church fully appreciated the courtesy and delicate consideration that in this present stage, as throughout the preceding negotiations, marked all their intercourse with the larger denominations. The position of the Union Committee was a very serious one, and demanded the most careful consideration. There was a virtual offer on the part both of the United Presbyterian Church and of the Free Church, to renew negotiations with a view to union with the Reformed Presbyterian. It was very

strongly felt, that any step taken should be one that would commend itself as far as possible to the judgment of the whole Church, and secure common action; but it belonged to the Synod and not the Committee to decide what that step should be. With the view of obtaining all the information necessary to enable the Synod to come to a decision, the Committee resolved to ask the Commission of the Free Church to appoint a Committee for conference on union, in terms of the decision of the Assembly. This request was unanimously complied with. Three conferences were held, the result of which may be stated as given in the Report on Union by the Reformed Presbyterian Committee in May, 1875. "At the first, a statement was made by the Convener of your Committee to the effect, that the Synod was not to be understood as meanwhile committed, that what was asked was a union as Churches, and that the special points by which the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church was defined, were its views and beliefs in regard to the Second Reformation, the Revolution Settlement, and the Headship of Christ over the nations. It was further stated that, on the understanding that the Act of Assembly 1647 was in force, and that the Confession was subscribed in the spirit of the Act of the Free Assembly in 1846, the Formula of the Free Church could be accepted without alteration.¹ Great satisfaction was expressed by the Free Church brethren, and in accordance with their request, it was agreed that this Statement should be extended and submitted in print. At the second conference, on 20th January, 1875, this was done, and, after continued expressions of satisfaction with its substance, the Free Church brethren undertook to prepare a formal response to it.² This response was submitted in print to your Committee and formed the subject of the last conference, on 17th February. Having reached this point, it was found that, according to their instructions, neither Committee could take any further step. It was already known by the declaration of all the Churches

¹ Appendix No. XI.² Appendix No. XII.

in 1867, on what terms the United Presbyterian Church was prepared to receive the Reformed Presbyterian Church into union with them; and the time had now come when the Synod must decide between the two Churches. Such was the position of matters when the Synod met in May, 1875. The question which it had to decide was of momentous importance—such, indeed, as this Church had not been called upon to face during its history of nearly two hundred years. The subject of union had been before the Synod and the members of the Church for eleven years; the Statements of its historical position and distinctive principles, drawn up by the Union Committee, had been distinctly approved; the “Principles held in Common” by all the negotiating Churches on the subject of the Civil Magistrate, had been accepted with special satisfaction; and now there was good ground for believing that the Free Church was willing to enter into union with them as a Church, still retaining its historical position and principles. Were they prepared to go forward to complete this union, would such a course be doing justice to the history and contentings of the past, to the memory of the fathers, and, above all, would it do justice to those great principles regarding the Headship of Christ which had from the first been the very kernel of the Church’s testimony? Or would they be warranted in still retaining their separate position, in standing apart till other Churches adopt all the minutiae of past testifying, and in refusing to unite with a Church whose sympathies were so much akin to their own, and that held in substance and often in form the essentials of the Testimony? Would they not by so standing apart miss a great opportunity of witnessing for union, of carrying out the aim of the Covenants and fulfilling the longings of some of the earliest and some of the later fathers of the Church? The answer given by the Synod in 1875 was clear, unhesitating and nearly unanimous—as Presbyterians, as Covenanters, as witnesses for the Mediatorial Supremacy of Christ we ought to unite with the Free Church.

The Union Report was submitted by Rev. Dr Goold, and followed by a speech marked by all his wonted fervour, force, and eloquence. Thereafter a motion was submitted which, after referring to by-past resolutions and proceedings, and to the obligations lying upon them as Christians, Presbyterians, and Reformed Presbyterians, to endeavour after the nearest conjunction and uniformity, thus proceeds:—"This Synod now feels called upon, in the providence of God, to agree to union with the Free Church, in the event of its next General Assembly arriving at a similar conclusion; transmits this Resolution accordingly to the Presbyteries and Sessions under its care, and re-appoints its Committee on Union to receive their answers by the 1st March, 1876, and to take such steps by negotiations with the Free Church and otherwise, as may be needful to accomplish the object of the Overture with all convenient speed, and with due regard to the regulations of the Church, and all its interests, spiritual and temporal." An amendment was proposed to the effect "That this Synod, while willing to entertain a proposal for union with the Free Church which would conserve the historical position and distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, yet disapproves of the suggestion to adopt the Formulas of the Free Church as obviously fatal to conserving the distinctive principles of our Church." In the division that followed 56 voted for the motion, and 4 for the amendment; 5 declined to vote. So far, then, as the Synod was concerned, the opinion in favour of union was as decided in this critical stage as at any previous time, and there was a fair prospect of the movement being consummated with almost entire unanimity. The Union Committee was empowered to call a *pro re nata* meeting of Synod if it were deemed necessary, and it was also instructed to "take an opportunity of intimating to the Committee of the United Presbyterian Church, in the most courteous and fraternal spirit, what action this Court has felt it its duty to take in the matter of union, and of expressing the profound esteem cherished by the Synod for that Church,

and the sense entertained of the kind feeling manifested during all the past negotiations by its Committee on Union, and particularly its conveners, Dr Harper and Dr Cairns."

The Report of the Committee appointed by the Commission of the Free Church, including the Statements of both Committees already referred to, was in due course laid on the table of the Assembly. In proposing that the Assembly proceed to take steps to consummate the union, Dr Rainy, among other things, said: "The Church with which this step places us in relation is a small Church, and has always been numerically a small Church. It is a Church, however, which has had numbered among its members a remarkable number, proportionately, of eminent and useful men, combining with that staunchness, of which Dr Begg gave us examples, a very remarkable degree, at the same time, of considerateness, of thoughtfulness, and of circumspection, in their survey of difficult questions about which they and we did not agree. And I have often thought that in the earliest and wildest days, in some respects, of the Society men, when they were led to lay down some rather questionable and difficult views before they had a ministry at all, it was almost pathetic to see the earnest and thoughtful way in which they strove to bring the necessities of the position, as they understood it, into connection with sound views both of Church principles and of civil government. We have had, more recently, many honourable names connected with the history of that Church. But besides names they have had a highly honourable history in every aspect of their position. They have differed from us in regard to the view, especially, that ought to be taken of the Revolution Settlement; and in regard to what Mr M'Corkle has said, I believe it is not only consistent for them to reconsider, when necessary, the way in which their principles are to be applied to complex fact, but I believe that to be a sign of the possession of one of those things without which a Church lacks the energy of its proper vitality, all that real continuity of principle which alone is

valuable. I am convinced that men receive principles to hold them thoughtfully, and apply them spiritually and earnestly in the providence of God." The Report was unanimously approved and an Overture prepared and adopted by the Assembly for union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and ordered to be transmitted to Presbyteries. The enacting clause of the Overture is to the effect that an incorporation union may now be effected, "it being understood that the United Church may be declared to consist of the Free Church of Scotland as existing previously to the union, and of the Reformed Presbyterian Church as existing previously to the union, under the common designation of the Free Church of Scotland simply." The Union Committee was re-appointed for the adjustment of details; the entire proceedings of the Assembly in the case were characterized by great heartiness and unanimity.

During the interval that elapsed before the next meeting of Synod in March, 1876, the Overture on Union was under the consideration of the Presbyteries and Sessions. The Committees of both Churches were occupied at the same time in the discussion of a variety of important matters that required to be adjusted. These included such matters as the tenure of Church property; the support of the ministry, including the relation in which the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church would sustain to the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, and to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund of the Free Church; the future administration of the Foreign Mission of the Church; and the exact form in which the union might be practically consummated. Some of these matters required very careful consideration in the view of future contingencies, and in order to secure an arrangement satisfactory to all parties concerned.

The meeting of Synod in March, 1876, was looked forward to with great interest. As a matter of course the Union Question bulked largely in its deliberations, other matters of business falling to be considered in the light of the change

to be accomplished in a few months. The Report of the Union Committee showed that the Overture had been approved by all the Presbyteries, and by a very large majority of the Sessions;—only two disapproved, one disapproved by a majority, but acquiesced, and a few sent no return. According to the law and practice of the Church, the Overture for Union with the Free Church became the Resolution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. A formal motion to that effect, and re-appointing a Committee to adjust all remaining details preparatory to a meeting of Synod in May, was carried by a majority of 57 to 6, against an amendment that affirmed, on several grounds, that the Overture ought not in its present shape to be finally adopted, until it be altered so as to cover and conserve the historical position and distinctive principles of the Church. On matters of detail the Report of the Committee was very satisfactory. The Joint-Committee had come to an agreement respecting the carrying on of the New Hebrides Mission by the United Church, and as to the support of the ministry, and their relation to the Sustentation Fund and the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. As to the tenure of Church Property, the recommendation of the Committee, concurred in by the Free Church Committee, was to the effect that the simplest and surest method for providing for any contingency that might arise, was to preserve the identity of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for all civil purposes in connection with the Union—a plan that had been adopted in connection with similar unions in Ireland, Canada, and elsewhere. There was a difficulty in dealing with the Widows' and Orphans' Fund. By the Act of Parliament incorporating that Fund, every minister receiving out of the Sustentation Fund must contribute to it. As it manifestly would not be fair to the other parties interested, if the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church simply began to pay the annual sum required from the date of the union, it was proposed that a sum should

be given into the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, that would entitle the widows and orphans of ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to share equitably in the advantages of this fund with those of the Free Church. The amount required would be £3700, a large sum to be raised within a few months by a small and not very wealthy Church; but it says somewhat for the zeal and liberality of its members, and for the lively interest that was felt in the approaching union, that before that event was consummated the whole amount was subscribed. The arrangements on some of the points referred to were not yet completed, but, so far as definite proposals were made, they received the cordial approbation of the Court.

In the meantime, the Overture was being discussed by the Presbyteries of the Free Church, and the cordiality with which the prospect of union was welcomed, and the unanimity with which the proposal was adopted, gave ample evidence of the feelings that were entertained towards the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and of satisfaction that the negotiations of past years were not to be altogether fruitless. Throughout the latter Church, the approaching union was looked forward to with a growing interest mingled with feelings of a graver kind, arising from the hallowed memories of the past, and the close of a long and honourable history. The disappearance of a Church round which clustered so many sacred associations, that was linked with the martyr period, and had witnessed so many wonderful changes in the generations past, could hardly fail to awaken emotions of a somewhat varied kind; even though this disappearance was not caused by internal decay, but by its union with another Church of a like spirit and aim, holding substantially the same old principles, and claiming a similar historic position. But the call of duty was listened to, rather than the promptings of sentiment, and with a remarkable unanimity the Reformed Presbyterian Church prepared for the change. The Joint-Committee carried on and completed the arrangement of

details, and everything was in readiness to be submitted to the Supreme Courts of both Churches.

On the 22nd of May, 1876, the last of the long series of Synods of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met in Martyrs' Church, Edinburgh. The Rev. W. H. Goold, D.D., was chosen Moderator, an honour due to him on this special occasion, for the noble service he had done in the cause of union ever since the negotiations began. The Synod was occupied for a considerable time in winding up the business of its several Committees, and in considering the proposals for the disposal of the funds in its possession,—some of which were at once to be handed over to the United Church, others were to be retained meanwhile under the control of the Synod. The Report of the Union Committee was presented, and it was moved and agreed to that the Court proceed to consider the various matters brought up in it connected with the union. Against this motion there was one solitary dissentient, the Rev. Thomas Easton of Stranraer, who had all along opposed the union, and now declined to take part in it. The "Act of Union," with the preamble, was read and sanctioned as the uniting Act of the two Churches, and ordered to be engrossed in the Minutes of Synod.¹ Thereafter the arrangements proposed by the Joint-Committee respecting the support of the ministry, the *status* of Probationers, the relation of ministers to Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, and to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, and the disposal of certain funds, were considered and unanimously agreed to. The plan already referred to in connection with the tenure of Church property was approved, and is thus defined in the closing sentence of the "Act of Union:" "But reserving to the said Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland its separate name and existence, in so far as regards the civil rights and property now belonging, or which may hereafter accrue or belong, to it, or to any of its congregations, with full power to the Ministers and Elders of its

¹ Appendix No. XIII.

congregations, and to the successors of such Ministers and Elders for the time being, to meet hereafter as the Courts of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, with the necessary officers, as heretofore, but only in order to deal with the said civil rights and property now belonging, or which hereafter may accrue or belong, to that Church, as aforesaid, and with power to make all arrangements, and do and perform all acts and deeds proper and necessary to preserve and protect said civil rights and property." In harmony with this arrangement, the Synod was appointed to meet for the purposes specified, on the second Tuesday of March, 1877; and it has continued to meet regularly up to the present time. When thus all necessary business had been disposed of, the Moderator delivered a brief closing address worthy of the occasion and worthy of the speaker, in which he recalled the grand principles of the Church's Testimony, brought together the starting point and close of its long history, and linked the hallowed memories of the past with the bright hopes of the future, in a way befitting the last Moderator of the old Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

On the 25th of May, the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland took up the subject of union. It was reported that seventy-one out of seventy-two home Presbyteries had approved the Overture on Union, one made no return, and that two out of five Presbyteries abroad approved, the other three made no return. Good ground there was for the Convener to take notice as he did of this singular unanimity. He did not remember any Overture that had met with such universal approval as this, and he regarded it not merely as indicating present feelings, but as foreshadowing future unanimity, union, and strength. The Overture was passed into a standing law, the Union report and the arrangements already referred to were approved, and the "Act of Union" sanctioned by the Assembly without a dissentient voice, and everything was ready for the consummation of the Union

by a joint meeting of the two Courts. The principal Clerks of the Assembly were instructed to intimate to the Synod sitting in Martyrs' Church that the Assembly was ready to receive them in their Hall and to consummate the Union. When the deputation arrived, the Synod was engaged in devotional exercises. The intimation was made in due form and recorded; the Synod resolved to adjourn to the Free Assembly Hall, and the benediction was pronounced by the Moderator.

The members of Synod then marched two and two in procession from Martyrs' Church to the Free Assembly Hall, from the towers of which the old blue banner of the Covenant waved. As they entered the Hall the vast audience received them standing and in solemn silence, after which the formalities that consummated the Union were proceeded with. The "Act of Union" was read and signed by the Moderators and Clerks of the Assembly and Synod, and the Rev. Dr M'Lauchlan was chosen Moderator. After devotional exercises, the Moderator addressed the Reformed Presbyterian brethren in an appropriate and impressive speech. He was followed by Rev. Dr Goold, who, in an address of remarkable power and eloquence, dwelt on the normal condition of Presbyterianism as being that of unity, and on the doctrinal and historical bearings of the Union, in a strain which roused the intense enthusiasm of the vast audience.¹ Thus, in a form simple and severe, yet profoundly solemn, was the union between these two Churches completed without any breach of principle on either side, and with a singular degree of unanimity on the part of the Reformed Presbyterians. Only one minister declined to go into the Union, and only one congregation besides his own chose to retain a separate position. The congregation at Carnoustie returned to its former connection with the Original Secession Church, and the congregation at Liverpool had just been disjoined in order to take part in the approaching Union of Presbyterians in England. No doubt individuals here and

¹ Appendix No. XIV.

there throughout the country withdrew on account of the Union, but, with the exceptions noted, the Church entered into it heartily and as a compact body.

The General Assembly of the united Church met again in the evening, when addresses were delivered bearing on the great event of the day. There were representatives of all the Churches that had been recently in negotiation for union, and surely it was a foreshadow of what is coming. Rev. John M'Dermid of Glasgow spoke with all his wonted earnestness on the great theme of national religion; Mr Thomas Binnie and Rev. John Kay represented the Reformed Presbyterians; Rev. Drs Rainy, Begg, and Duff the Free Church; Revs. J. Rankine and Dr Cairns the United Presbyterian Church; and the English Presbyterians were admirably represented by Rev. Dr Dykes of London. Referring to the men of the early Covenanting struggle, the latter said: "When I would cast my mind back to what we have earned and reaped from these men, it strikes me, perhaps more than anything I have yet named, that we should thank them for the passionate quest of a glorious ideal. It is these ideals, though unattainable, which lift up the character of men and nations. I think that no worthy historian has yet been found to tell, as it ought to be told, how much Scotland owes to this splendid vision which these men sought—the vision of a consecrated land of saints, ruled by a covenanted King, loyal to Christ. It hovered before the rapt eyes of these saints of Scotland, until it well-nigh turned them into seers; it elevated them until it made them heroes, and though the picture seemed to fade before the eyes of the children, as though it had been painted by the morning light on the mists of their own moorland, still it has done its work, for it has contributed mightily to make the heart of Scotchmen. But has it so faded? Or is it not simply thrown forward, as the old Jew learned to throw his Messianic hopes forward from one anticipated Christ to another better and greater yet to come? When the King

comes, the true King of the Covenant, then we may look for the Kingdom, and then shall we have the Covenant in its essence, and the realm of the Bride and of the Lamb, and the glory of a Holy Church in a Holy Land.”

So passed this memorable 25th of May, 1876, a day not soon to be forgotten by any who were privileged to witness or take part in its proceedings. The Scottish Church has been more distinguished by disruptions than by unions; all the more interesting was the union of the oldest and the youngest of its non-established branches—a union carried through with such harmony and cordiality on both sides, as to give good augury for the future. The spirit disclosed in all the speeches is just such as must ere long lead to union on a larger scale, and to the removing of one great blot on our honoured Scottish Presbyterianism. The same high tone which pervaded the Assembly, revealed itself throughout the Presbyteries of the Church into which the Reformed Presbyterian ministers were received. In these, as on the floor of the Assembly, there was heard from Free Churchmen and Reformed Presbyterians alike, a fearless proclamation of the Redeemer's Mediatorial Supremacy over Church and State, such as might well satisfy any candid mind that this great doctrine was honoured and not disregarded in this auspicious union.

With the union of 25th May, 1876, our historical task closes. We have traced the story of the Reformed Presbyterian Church as a separate ecclesiastical body, for a period of about two hundred years; we have marked the varied experience through which it has passed,—when under the rod of the persecutor, when deprived of a ministry and existing simply as private fellowship societies, when it had only one minister, and when more regularly organized as a Presbytery and as a Synod. We have sought to make clear the peculiar position which it occupied among the different branches of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and to bring out the leading points of the testimony which it held,

as well as the changes in the application of its principles, which the political, social, and ecclesiastical circumstances of the times seemed to demand. And we have seen how, amid all these minor changes, the great principles of the testimony were brought into clearer prominence, and obtained a wider acceptance and a more emphatic expression in the later than in the earlier stages of its career. And now having received from one of the largest denominations in the land, a distinct assertion of these principles regarding the Headship of Christ and His moral dominion over the nations, and a declaration that that Church holds the attainments of the Second Reformation, this Church of the Old Dissenters was justified in merging itself in the Free Protestant Church of Scotland. Union was not a new motion embraced by the Reformed Presbyterians of the latter half of the nineteenth century. No one in any goodly measure acquainted with the documents which, during nearly two centuries, have been issued by the Church at different epochs, and in varied circumstances, can make any such mistake. In the *Informatory Vindication* the strong dislike of anything like an active and positive separation, and the intense desire on the part of the Societies for Communion with the Church, are clearly expressed. The heart of the youthful martyr Renwick yearned after union. How beautiful and pathetic is the appeal made by the Societies to the General Assembly of 1690, as quoted in an earlier chapter. And in other documents, though less strongly and plainly set forth, the same spirit, the same high estimate of the value and desirableness of Christian unity manifests itself. And we have already noticed the more direct steps that were taken in the direction of union in 1821 and in 1843. When, therefore, the Reformed Presbyterian Church responded to the invitation addressed to it in 1864, and took part in the subsequent negotiations till 1873, and when in the following year negotiations were resumed with the Free Church and carried out to so happy an issue in 1876, this Church was acting not only in harmony with the genius of Presbyterianism,

but in the spirit of honoured fathers of former generations, and was realizing the noble aim which they so ardently longed for. It cannot be charged with haste in the matter; it may rather be that there was blame for being so tardy to move. From first to last it had endeavoured to be faithful to the Testimony, and to the work which each succeeding age brought with it. Its career had been honourable and useful all through, and that honour was not tarnished, nor that usefulness impaired, when it became one with another witnessing and working Church. The Rev. John M'Millan and his co-worker, Mr M'Neil, when forced to separate from the Established Church, appealed to "the first free, faithful, and rightly-constituted Assembly" of the Church; and when the Reformed Presbyterian Synod became a constituent part of the General Assembly of the Free Church, they were in their proper place, their cause was vindicated, the broken fellowship in some measure restored, and a beginning was made in repairing the long-standing breaches in the Venerable, Free, Reformed, Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

APPENDIX

OF

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS.

NO. I. PAGE 41.

The Queensferry Paper.

THE Queensferry Paper has not been so frequently re-printed as the Sanquhar Declaration, and consequently is not so well known. It is not judged to be necessary to re-produce the latter document, but it may not be without interest to extract the most characteristic portion of the former. It is in the form of a bond, and begins thus: "We under subscribers, for ourselves, and all that shall adhere to us, or join with us, being put to it by God, our own conscience, and men, and following the example of God's people, registrate in His word, in such cases; we are resolved . . . to bind our souls with a solemn and sacred bond, lest upon the one hand we should be carried away with the stream of the defection of this time . . . and on the other, lest we should wander and vanish in vanity, and come to nothing . . . and as we resolve to covenant with and before God, so to declare before the world what are the designs we purpose to pursue, if God shall give us power and success." After a solemn declaration of attachment to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and of opposition to the tyranny of the times, the document proceeds: "Seriously considering that the hand of our kings, and rulers with them, hath been so long against the throne of the Lord; and that the Lord, upon this account, hath declared that He will have

war with them for ever, and hath commanded His people utterly to root them out ; and considering that the line and succession of our kings and rulers hath been against the power and purity of religion and godliness, and Christ's reigning over His Church, and her freedom, and so against God . . . seeing no more speedy way of relaxation from the wrath of God . . . but of rejecting them who have so manifestly rejected God . . . governed contrary to all right laws divine and human, exercised such tyranny and arbitrary power . . . enacting and commanding impieties, injuries, and robberies . . . have made butcheries and murders on the Lord's people. . . . But that we see if there be anything that may stand in our way, there are three things that seem to have any weight, that we know : 1. Whether a deed and obligation of our ancestors can bind us ? 2. Whether the Covenant doth absolutely bind us to this man or his posterity ? 3. Whether there yet be any hope of them and their posterity ? As to the

“1st. Our ancestors by their transactions and obligations, neither did nor could bind us ; they did not buy their liberty and conquest with our thralldom and slavery, nor could they ; liberty and freedom being a benefit next to life, if not in some regard above it, so that they could not give it away more than our lives ; neither is it in the power of parents to bind their posterity to anything that is so much to their prejudice and against their natural liberty ; 'tis otherwise indeed in things that are moral ; neither did they bind us to anything, but to a Government which they then esteemed the best for the commonwealth and subjects, and when this ceaseth then we are free, yea, free to chuse another, if we see it more conducible for that end, and more free of these inconveniences.

“2nd. The Covenant doth not ; for it only binds us to maintain our king in the maintenance of the true established and covenanted religion, and this we have not declined ; neither can they require homage upon the account of the Covenant, having renounced and disclaimed that Covenant ; and we being no otherwise bound, the Covenant being the coronation-compact, without the swearing and sealing of which, our fathers, or rather we ourselves, refused to receive him for king, or them for rulers ; and if they were free to refuse him for king upon the not subscribing that Covenant, we are much more free to reject him upon his renouncing of it ; this being the only way of receiving the crown of Scotland, and reign-

ing also not being an inheritance that passeth from father to son without consent of tenants, but an office (and the more men plead for this, the more we are concerned to look to it) which all say is given *ad culpam non ad vitam*. And for the

“3rd. Neither is there any hope of their returning from their courses, having so often showed their natures and enmities against God and all righteousness, and so often declared and renewed their purposes and promises of persevering in their courses: and suppose they should dissemble a repentance of these things and profess to return to better courses, being put to straits, and for their own ends (for upon no other account can we reasonably expect it), supposing also that there might be pardon for that which is done, which we cannot yet see can be without the violation of God’s law, and the laying on a great guiltiness upon the land for the omitting the execution of so great deserved and so necessary requisite a justice, from which guiltiness the land cannot be cleansed or made free, but by executing God’s righteous judgments upon them; but supposing that it might, they cannot now be believed after that they have violated all ties that human wisdom can devise to bind men. And besides, who sees not somewhat of folly to be in this, to think to bind the king who pretends to absoluteness?

“The way being thus cleared, and we being assured of God’s approbation, and men’s, whose hearts are not utterly byassed, and consciences altogether corrupted, and knowing assuredly, that the upholding of such is to uphold men to bear down Christ’s Kingdom, and to uphold Satan’s, and to deprive men of right government and good governors, to the ruining of religion, and undoing of human society; and seeing also the innumerable sins and snares that are in giving obedience to their acts on the one hand; and on the other hand, seeing the endless miseries that will follow, if we shall acknowledge that authority, though we should refuse obedience to their sinful commands:

“We then, upon these and the following grounds, do reject that king, and these that officiate with him in the government (as stated and declared enemies to Jesus Christ), from being our king and rulers; because standing in the way of our right, free, and peaceable serving of God, propagating His Kingdom and reformation, and overthrowing Satan’s Kingdom, according to our Covenants; and declare them henceforth to be no lawful rulers, as they have

declared us to be no lawful subjects (upon a ground far less warrantable, as men unbyass'd will see), and that after this we neither owe nor shall yield willing obedience to them, but shall rather suffer the utmost of their cruelties and injuries (until God shall plead our cause), being no more bound to them, they having altered and destroyed the Lord's established religion, overturned the fundamental and established laws of the kingdom, taken altogether away Christ's Church-government, and changed the civil government of this land, which was by a king and free Parliament, into a tyranny, wherein none are associate to be partakers of the government, but only these who will be found by justice to be guilty of crimes; and all others are excluded, who, even by the laws of the land and by birth, have a right to and a share in that government, and that only because they are not of the same guiltiness and mischievous purposes with themselves; and where also all free election of commissioners for Parliament, and officers for Government are made void, they making these the qualifications for admission to these places, which by the Word of God, and the laws of the land, was the cause of their exclusion before; so that none can say that we are now bound in allegiance to them, unless they will say we are bound in allegiance to devils, whose vicegerents they are, having neither authority from God, because it is by their sinfulness forfeited, nor yet judging and ruling after God.

“We then, being made free by God, and their own doings, He giving the law, and they giving the transgression of that law, which is the cause; and being now loosed from all obligations both divine and civil to them, knowing also that no society of men having corruption in them (which always is ready to beget disorders and to do injuries, unless restrained and punished by laws and government) can be without laws and government; and withal desiring to be governed in the best way that is least liable to inconveniences, and least apt to degenerate into tyranny; we do declare, That we shall set up over ourselves, and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the Word of God, and especially to that Word, *Exod. xviii. 21*; that we shall no more commit the government of ourselves, and the making of laws for us, to any one single person or lineal succession, we not being ty'd by God, as the Jews were, to one single family; and this kind of government, by a single person, being most liable to

inconveniences, and aptest to degenerate into tyranny, as sad and long experience hath taught us.

“Moreover we do declare, that these men whom we shall set over us, shall be engaged to govern us principally by that civil and judicial law (we think none will be so ignorant as to think that by the judicial law we mean that which is ceremonial and typical) given by God to His people of Israel ; no man we think doubting but it must be the best, in so far as it goes, being given by God, we having no body of laws of our own, but some few and imperfect Acts of Parliament, and following sometimes the canon, sometimes the civil, sometimes the feudal law, which occasions great contentions among the people, especially those that are naturally litigious, to the exhausting and enhancing of the substance of the kingdom to some few men and squeezing of its inhabitants. But especially,

“That we shall be governed by it in matters of life and death, and in all other things also, in so far as they reach, and are consistent with our Christian liberty, established in all Christendom (only violated by our tyrants and some others of late), excepting only that of divorce and polygamy, the one being not a law, but a permission granted upon the account of the hardness of their hearts, and the other being a sinful custom, contrary to the first institution of marriage, crept into the Church.”

NO. II. PAGE 58.

The Articles of the Societies.

IN his “Sketch of the History of the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, Glasgow,” Mr Binnie has given these “Articles” from a hitherto unpublished letter written by James Renwick, and now in the possession of James B. Dalzell, Esq., Portland Park, Hamilton. They set forth in full detail what was required of those who were admitted into the Societies, and show what extreme care was taken, that none were received except such as had proved their firm adherence to the principles and position of the Community. In substance they do not differ from the summary given in the text; and as the statement is somewhat lengthy, we must content ourselves here with quoting two of the Articles as revealing the spirit of the writer and of the party which he represented :—

“Ninthly. We, considering that the principal grounds whereupon we can expect the Lord’s blessing upon us, and His countenancing of our endeavours and fellowship unity, on the founding of our faith upon the true principles of truth, our careful closing with the way of redemption through Jesus Christ, our due honouring Him in all His three offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet, our ready yielding all obedience and subjection due to Him as our Saviour, Teacher, and Lawgiver, ever keeping close by His rule in all our walk and performance, and, as we ought, to the utmost of our power, in His strength, to endeavour the same, so do we resolve; and, in order thereunto, we do give ourselves unto Him to be ruled, judged, and governed by His Spirit, according to His Word, resolving carefully to endeavour the right reformation of our judgments in all matters of faith and duty; diligently to give up ourselves to the study and practice of virtue, and holiness, in all our walkings, performances, and actings, toward God and man, as that the enemies may have no just quarrel against us, nor time-seeking professors any occasion to calumniate, mock, and reproach; even so, likewise, that others of the faithful, through their beholding of our godly conversation, may be induced and encouraged to join with us, or to enter the like fellowship, that the Lord may be praised, His truth and ways highly honoured and greatly loved, enemies, mockers, and hypocrites, ashamed, confounded, and rendered the more contemptible.

“Tenthly. Since this is now a suffering time, and like to continue, so as we judge it our duty, so do we resolve, to entertain a fellow-feeling and Christian sympathy with our brethren in affliction, pouring out our spirits in groans and prayers in their behalf, and in the behalf of desolate Zion. So also do we declare and resolve that, if in the Providence of God, any of the members of our fellowships shall be called to suffering and imprisonment, that we shall not only endeavour their comfort and encouragement, but also, all and every one of us, according to our several abilities, shall cheerfully contribute part of our substance to their maintenance and encouragement, for the supplying their wants during the time of their imprisonment and suffering, that so the way of the Lord be not evil spoken of through our neglect.” Pages 170-172.

No. III. PAGE 169.

Active Testimony-Bearers and other Dissenters from the United Societies.

FROM the very nature of the organization, the United Societies were liable to be disturbed by the action of men who adopted extreme positions with regard to the Testimony, and the mode of carrying out its principles. There were such parties in the days of Renwick, men who did not think that the General Meeting went far enough in condemnation of the payment of imposts. In the "Conclusions" frequent reference is also made to discontented parties who withdrew from the Societies on various grounds, and always, so far as we can ascertain, in favour of a more extreme position than the general body was prepared to adopt. It would appear that almost from the beginning of Mr M'Millan's ministry in connection with the Societies, a party existed which refused to recognize him, and claimed to be the true representatives of the suffering remnant. It does not appear that this party was very numerous, but it was very zealous and active, and made up in bitterness what it lacked in numbers. It was a fault scarcely to be forgiven, that M'Millan had formerly deserted the Testimony, and his submission to the Commission after his appeal from the Presbytery, was characterized by one of the leaders as a "foul fall." They refused to wait on his ministry, and reckoned all who did so to be unfaithful and utterly to be disowned. They were ever ready to expose any deviation in word or practice from traditional forms, and to foment discord among the adherents of Mr M'Millan, and formed a sort of Cave of Adullam in which discontented parties might find refuge. The minister himself seems to have been the object of their strongest dislike, and such things as his marriage, his dealings with the elders of Balmaghie parish, his baptizing the children of mere adherents, etc., which caused trouble enough within the Societies, were exaggerated into unpardonable defections. So decided was their protest and so complete their separation, that they formed Societies and Correspondences of their own, and held General Meetings at which they adopted manifestoes expressive of their opinions. The earliest of these is entitled, "A Declaration, Protestation, and Testimony of a poor, wasted, desolate, misrepresented Remnant of the Suffering,

Anti-Popish, Anti-Prelatick, Anti-Erastian, Anti-Sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, united together in truth and duty ; Published against the Proclamation, Accession, and Establishment of George, D. of Hanover, to be King in these lands, and all his Abettors and Supporters, in Aprile, 1715." Its authors speak of themselves as "we who are so few, small, and despised, scattered as Sheep without a Shepherd, having no help of man at all, none to take care for our souls, to gather, feed, lead, or rule over us, but the Royal Prince, Jesus the chief Shepherd ;" and this shows clearly that they did not own Mr M'Millan. It extends to 28 quarto pages, and is as thorough-going a protest as one can conceive, couched in vigorous language, and sparing none from the king down to gaugers and pensioners, and declaring that they regard none of the Laws, Statutes, or Acts passed by the Legislature as binding upon them in any respect. It repudiates the "Representation to Hanover," adopted but afterwards condemned by the United Societies, as a foul step of defection. Other Declarations of a similar kind were issued in 1727, 1738, 1740, 1742, and affixed after the former fashion to several market crosses. In the "Mount Herrick Declaration," reference is made to that which was published at Linlithgow in 1740, and it is there distinctly repudiated. Besides these, there were pamphlets published by leaders of this party, chiefly by William Wilson, schoolmaster, Douglas, a life-long enemy of Mr M'Millan. Besides his "Testimony Deserted" and "Miscellany Questions," there is another entitled "Queries for Intrants into Reformed Presbyterian Societies," which bears to have been adopted by a General Meeting at Lamington on 29th May, 1745. Turning for a very little to this authorized Statement, we may find the reasons on account of which this party elected to stand apart from the general body of the Societies, at that date under the charge of the Reformed Presbytery, which was erected in 1743. At page 31 of the "Queries," we find that the objections to the Presbytery are, that its ministers still own the malignant interest of God's open enemies, and give sealing ordinances to those that own the present magistrates by paying taxes, appearing before pretended courts, etc. They renew the protest against appearing in court as pursuer, defender, witness on any account whatever, personally or by proxy, or paying any tax, acting as militia men, supplying horses or stores, or even carrying baggage freely or for hire ; against

making use of stamped paper, employing or paying pretended perjured clerks or notaries to write such deeds, and against engaging in any employment that obliges to pay taxes, such as tanning and selling leather, making and selling malt, candle, etc., or doing any of these things by proxy, or friend, or collusive bargain with the landlord. They still maintain it to be a duty to defend and succour friends who suffer for refusing to do such things, when this can be done without the manifest danger of more harm thereby; while they continue to testify against the unlawful entry of the pretended Government, and are ready, if it were possible to get it done, to hinder the same. As to the Established Church, they cannot hear or join in prayer with the ministers, cannot accept their services for marriages, nor even be present at any marriage or baptismal feast where they officiate. All this is sad and painful enough; yet it must be owned, that there are scarcely any of the above particulars, for which some sanction might not be found in the "Conclusions" of the General Meeting during the fifteen years that followed the Revolution, when the Societies were without a minister. And yet doubtless the men who adhered to this extreme position lived as quiet and peaceable lives as others around them did. Some adherents of this irreconcilable section, for there seems to have been different parties among them, wrote and acted in a much wilder and more extravagant way. The "Active Testimony," as it is called, contains some curious disclosures of the extraordinary actions and sentiments of this fanatical party. A copy of this "Testimony" is in the Library of the Free Church College, Edinburgh; and bound up with it are a number of Declarations of the same caste and of different dates. From these we learn that they rejected all the Declarations of the Society people, except the Queensferry Paper, Sauquhar Declaration, 1680, and Lanark Declaration, 1682. They claimed the right to set up magistrates over themselves, whose duty it would be to reinstate the Jewish civil and judicial law; declared war against the whole world, and testified against the invasion of Scotland in 1745-46 by Prince Charles Stuart and the Duke of Cumberland. In October, 1712, some of these fanatics burned the Abjuration Oath and Acts imposing it, at the cross of Edinburgh; and, holding the burning Acts at the point of a dagger, marched up the High Street proclaiming: "Let King Jesus reign, and let His enemies be scattered; no Abjuration Oath, no Oath but the Covenants.

Down with Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism, and up with true Presbytery and the Covenants." They gave forth many other Declarations, which were published at the cross, the High Church, and the Pier at Leith, and issued in regal style: "Given at the Capital on January 9th, 1740, by the lovers and friends of true liberty." Another document of the party is the "Dalserf Protestation," which was affixed to the church door of that parish on the occasion of the settlement of a minister in 1761. Later still, in a volume of tracts re-published at Dalry early in this century, a survivor of this party declares anew the degeneracy of the Reformed Presbytery, protests that there has been no faithful minister in Scotland since the days of Renwick, and no faithful Testimony, "if it be not in the Societies of the suffering remnant." This doubtless is the party to whom Burton refers as having come to the conclusion that there was no man "from whom they could fittingly receive ministerial services. They isolated themselves as 'non-hearers,' . . . gave themselves forth in abundant testimonies, which, however earnest they may have been, are far more curious than solemn." Among the last survivors of this class of Protestors was John Calderwood, who published a collection of the Dying Testimonies of the old Worthies. Such was his idea of the degeneracy of the present race of ministers, that though he desired to be married, there was not one faithful enough to be employed in that service, and he remained a bachelor till his death.

NO. IV. PAGE 173.

Some Early Editions of the "Cloud of Witnesses."

THE following notes on some of the early editions of the "Cloud of Witnesses" were sent by a friend, by whom they were drawn up during the controversy regarding the Martyrs of Wigtown, when the absence of reference to that special case in the first edition was regarded by some as throwing doubt on the fact of the drowning of the two women in Blednoch Bay. It will be seen that the case is not entirely overlooked, though not detailed in text of that edition.

The First Edition is a small quarto, printed in 1714 (but no place given). It has an engraved frontispiece in six compartments. Among other representations are those of "women hang'd, oy^{rs}

drowned in y^e sea"—a picture of two women suspended from a cross-beam, and two others tied to a stake in the sea. It consists of a Preface to the Reader, occupying 21 pages; an Index, occupying 2 pages; an Encomium on certain Martyrs, occupying 1 page; the rest of the book extends from page 1 to page 290 (fresh paging), including an Appendix, of which pages 285 to 290 contain a collection of Epitaphs.

The Second Edition is a 12mo or thereabouts, and was printed (no place being given) in 1720. It has an engraved frontispiece, differing from the one in the first edition, but the representation of the "women hang'd," etc., is repeated, though occupying a different compartment of the picture. The Preface occupies 27 pages, the Encomium, pages 28 and 29. The body of the work consists of 384 pages, including Appendix and Epitaphs. The Appendix begins at page 342, the Epitaphs at page 372; an Index follows on pages 385 and 386. (*Finis* is on page 384.)

The Fifth Edition is a small post octavo, printed at Glasgow, by John Robertson, Robert Smith, and Mrs M'Lean, and sold at their shops in the Salt-Mercat: 1751. There is an Introduction, etc., occupying 26 pages; the work itself extends from page 1 to page 328. Sixteen new Epitaphs or Notices are added to those contained in the first and second editions. The first of these at page 323 is the Epitaph "upon a stone in the churchyard of Wigtown, on the body of Margaret Wilson, who was drowned in the Water of Blednoch, upon the 11th of May, 1684, by the Laird of Lagg," etc. The last of these additional Epitaphs is that on the Rev. John Welwood, who died at Perth, April, 1679, and lies buried in the churchyard of Dron.

NO. V. PAGE 231.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

DURING the Protectorate of Cromwell, Presbyterianism had obtained a considerable hold on some parts of Ireland; especially was this the case in Ulster, where many Scottish colonists were settled. After the Restoration, the adherents of this system were subjected to trials similar to those that befel their brethren in the sister-kingdoms. Very little resistance was made to the restoration of Episcopacy. There were, in 1660, only sixty-eight ordained

Presbyterian ministers in the North of Ireland ; the majority of these were opposed to the position held by the Protestors in Scotland, and an Act was passed by them ordaining all ministers to refrain from all contentions about the differences in Scotland. When the bishops were restored to their sees, active steps were taken to expel the Presbyterian pastors ; Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in one day, declared thirty-six churches vacant, simply on the ground that the ministers, not having been ordained by bishops, were not ministers at all ; and a like course was followed in other dioceses. In 1661, the Irish Parliament issued a proclamation ordering the burning of the Solemn League and Covenant, and forbidding any one to preach who did not conform. Seven out of the sixty-eight Presbyterian ministers accepted episcopal ordination, and the others for some years endured not a little hardship. By and by nearly the whole of them submitted to the Government, "accepted thankfully a toleration which was extended to them in the exercise of the absolute supremacy of the Crown—and received as *Regium Donum*—a miserable and degrading pittance, which is thus described in the list of 'Pensions and Annuities' for the year 1672 : 'For secret service without account, £600.'" This annual gift, largely increased in amount, the Irish Presbyterian Church continued to receive till 1869.

While thus the vast majority of the ministers fell from their steadfastness, at least three of them and a large body of the people refused to follow in these backsliding courses. Persecuted in Ireland they fled to Scotland, where two of the ministers joined the party that rose in arms in 1666, and fell in the battle of Pentland. Of the third minister we have no information ; and for many years the faithful Presbyterians in the North of Ireland were destitute of public ordinances. They formed themselves into fellowship societies, and sometimes enjoyed the ministrations of some of the persecuted ministers from Scotland, among others the celebrated Alexander Peden, who, in his long wanderings, often visited the Irish Societies. They were by and by joined by Rev. David Houston. While still a licentiate connected with the conforming Presbyterians, he set himself to condemn their courses of defection, preached openly in the fields, and visited the scattered Societies. This brought down upon him the censure of his ecclesiastical superiors, and as they were backed by the civil authorities in the attempt to silence him, he was compelled to

leave the country. After some years he returned, and was ordained as pastor over a congregation of conforming Presbyterians. Taking up his former protest against declension, and in favour of Reformation principles in their integrity, he so displeased his brethren that he was constrained to renounce all fellowship with them, and henceforth devoted himself to minister to the large number of people, scattered over the northern counties, who approved of his position, and to superintend the "Societies" which he organized. These maintained a regular communication with the General Correspondence which had been formed in Scotland. At the earnest invitation of the General Meeting, Mr Houston came to Scotland, and was for some time associated with Renwick in his labours and perils. Returning to Ireland in 1687, he attracted great crowds around him by his faithful preaching, till in January, 1688, he was apprehended and conveyed to Dublin, and imprisoned for six months. He was then sent over to Scotland to be tried by the Council; but on his way through Ayrshire he was rescued by a party of the Society people at Bello Path, near Cumnock. He shortly after returned to Ireland, and laboured among the Societies till his death in 1696. Different opinions were held regarding him by the Societies in Ireland and those in Scotland. The Testimony of the Irish Church represents him as "the only minister in Britain or Ireland that fully upheld the standard of the Covenanted Reformation," and adds—"adherents to the same cause, from Scotland as well as Ireland, resorted to him for the dispensation of baptisms, marriages, and other ordinances." Regarding this statement it has to be said, that the latter part of it is quite true as matter of fact; but how the General Meeting in Scotland looked upon those who did so is manifest from a "Conclusion" of date 17th October, 1694:—"That there be no meddling with Mr David Houston until the mind of the Societies be inquired concerning him, and that all persons who go and marrieth with him, contrary to Conclusion and order, be suspended until satisfaction be given." In June, 1695, the General Meeting ratified this, and declared that he could not be owned in any ministerial function until he compeared before a General Meeting; and in October, 1695, the prohibition was repeated and the reasons for it were given. Whether there were any sufficient grounds for the course pursued, we do not know, yet it is evident that the Scottish Societies did not recognize Mr Houston as coming up to

their standard of what a faithful Covenanting minister should be.

A long period of destitution followed, during which the Societies were maintained, and some intercourse was held with the brethren in Scotland by deputies and by letters. Representatives from Ireland were present at the renovation of the Covenants at Auchinscough and Crawfordjohn; Mr M'Millan paid a brief visit to Ireland in 1707, and Messrs Nairn and Marshall in 1744; but it was not till 1757 that the Irish Societies enjoyed a stated ministry. The first minister was the Rev. W. Martin, who laboured among them till 1773, when he went to America. In 1763 the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland was formed; but in 1779 it was dissolved by the death and emigration of some of the ministers. It was re-constituted in 1782. Among the most prominent of the ministers of the day was the Rev. William Staveley, a man of great energy and zeal, who did much to consolidate the cause in the North of Ireland. The steadfastness of the Church there, was severely tested by the political commotions that arose near the close of the eighteenth and in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Not a few Reformed Presbyterians were more or less involved in the plots against the Government and the Union, and some had to seek safety by flight to America. Notwithstanding, a measure of progress was realized, and in 1811 a Synod was formed, consisting of four Presbyteries, having among them twelve ministers, and under their charge were eighteen congregations.

This comparatively small Church, though beset by many serious difficulties and discouragements, continued to labour diligently for the maintenance of a testimony for the truth, and enjoyed some measure of prosperity. The state of religion in the North of Ireland was very low in the early part of this century. Arianism had obtained a considerable hold in the larger Presbyterian body, the Synod of Ulster; and a long and exciting controversy arose within it, in which the late Rev. Dr H. Cooke greatly distinguished himself on the side of scriptural truth. Ultimately the defenders of evangelical religion succeeded in extruding the heterodox party, and in bringing the Irish Presbyterian Church into harmony with the other orthodox Presbyterians, on the basis of the Confession of Faith. In this controversy, some of the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church did good service by their writings in defence of vital doctrines of the Gospel. After the constitution of the

Synod, the Judicial Act and Testimony of 1761, and the Scottish Terms of Communion were adopted by the Irish Church. It was not till a very considerably later period that it drew up and published a Testimony of its own, to which all its ministers and members must give adherence. When in 1821 the Scottish Synod modified the fourth Term of Communion, by expunging the reference to the Auchinsaugh Renovation of the Covenants, the Irish brethren did not go along with them; but when subsequently a new Testimony was published, this Term was changed so as to include a reference to all acts of Renovation. The last clause now exists in this form: "And consistently with this, the obligation arising from the renovation of these Covenants by the Reformed Presbyterian Church."

The Irish Church has always suffered much from the continued and extensive emigration of its ministers, licentiates, and members to the British colonies, and especially to America. A consideration of the spiritual wants of those who had gone out from it, led in 1828 to the formation, under the direction of Synod, of a "Home and Foreign Missionary Association." Through its instrumentality, ordinances have been dispensed to the adherents of the Church who have settled in some of the large cities of England, while in the colonies of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, five congregations have been organized, and now constitute a Presbytery in connection with the Irish Synod. In Geelong, Australia, there is also a congregation under its jurisdiction.

From 1831 till 1840, the Church was agitated by a controversy regarding the extent of the power of the civil magistrate *circa sacra*. It is not necessary to discuss the merits of this unhappy dispute, in which men of high character and great ability were ranged on opposite sides, and in which, as in many similar cases, a good deal of personal feeling was manifested. Statements were made on the one side, which it was held would involve the magistrate in persecution, and were contrary to the rights of conscience; while the utterances on the other side, were spoken of as being inconsistent with the doctrines of the Confession, and were closely akin to Voluntarism, as it was then understood. Each side, of course, repudiated the charge brought against it by the other. The controversy reached a crisis in 1840, when five ministers separated and formed a distinct body, known afterwards as the Eastern Reformed Presbyterian Synod. It adopted the Scottish Terms of Communion, and also, with some

explanations, the Scottish Testimony of 1837 and 1839. These explanations were not deemed by the Scottish Synod to be a barrier to fellowship, and it maintained intercourse with both Synods in Ireland. Unsuccessful efforts were made to bring about re-union, and the breach remains unhealed.

In 1853 the larger Synod, after long consideration of the subject, carried out the work of Covenant Renovation at Dervock, in County Antrim, and a similar work was carried through in most of the congregations under its jurisdiction. In 1854, after the death of Professor Andrew Symington, a Theological Seminary was established, at which all candidates for the ministry have since been trained. Efforts have been made, not without a measure of success, to secure a more adequate support of the ministry. A mission to Romanists in the South and West of Ireland was also originated; the attention of the Church has been called to the work of Jewish and Foreign Missions; and though no independent sphere has been chosen, aid is given in support of the Syrian Mission of the brethren who left the Scottish Synod in 1863. The resources of the Church are somewhat limited, but it is a healthy sign, when it realizes its duty to aid in the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

The position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland has always been a difficult and somewhat discouraging one. It has had to maintain its ground, not only against a larger Presbyterian body, which, till a comparatively recent date, was subsidized by the State in the offensive form of the *Regium Donum*, but also against the influence and prestige of an endowed and established Episcopal Church, against the vast power of Popery which holds in subjection nearly four-fifths of the Irish people, and against the Arianism and Arminianism which were so widely prevalent for a long period among Presbyterians. It is therefore to the credit of this small Church, that it has maintained a decided testimony for scriptural truth with such unwavering steadfastness. Not only has it witnessed against the errors and evils that surround it in Ireland, but it has been prompt to break off connection with sister Churches outside Ireland, that were regarded as being unfaithful. While the Scottish Synod recognized both parties in America, the Irish Synod held intercourse only with the Old Light party. The Scottish Synod did not cast off the brethren who separated from the Irish Synod in 1840; but the latter cast off the

former after 1863, and recognized only the small party who then withdrew. The Eastern Irish Synod continued in fellowship with the Scottish, and contributed to its mission schemes. We distinctly object to one sentence in the Irish Testimony (p. 115) referring to the schism of 1863. It is not true that the majority was "bent on departure from their former testimony anent fellowship with an anti-Christian Civil Government;" it is not true that they were "eager for union with larger bodies who have never sympathized with that Testimony;" the question of union had not then come up before the Churches, and did not influence the Synod's decision. Equally unfounded is the assertion that the majority "deliberately laid upon the minority . . . the necessity of coming out and being separate." It was strongly maintained that fidelity to the essential principles of the Church did not require separation.

The most recent statistics show that there are in connection with the larger Synod in Ireland thirty-eight congregations, and in connection with the Eastern Reformed Presbyterian Synod there are less than half that number. More recently, the latter has entered upon negotiations for union with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

NO. VI. PAGE 232.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in America.

THE Reformed Presbyterian Church in America owed its origin to refugees from the Stuart persecution, who sought in the Western World the liberty and peace which they were denied in their native land. With these were possibly associated some of those who had been banished because of their adherence to the cause of covenanted Reformation. They and their descendants entered into no religious communion with those around them, but formed themselves into private fellowship societies, and endeavoured to maintain a clear testimony for the full attainment of the Scottish Reformation. In 1743 these covenanting societies in the colony of Pennsylvania met at Middle Octarara, and renewed the federal deeds of their native land. In this act they were joined by the Rev. Mr. Craighead, a minister who had been connected with a Synod of Presbyterians that had been recently organized, and consisted of ministers who had come from Scotland, Ireland,

and England, along with some Congregationalist ministers from New England. Mr. Craighead did not remain long with them, but returned to his former connection. In response to the appeal of the Societies, Rev. John Cuthbertson came from the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland in 1752, and for twenty years, amid manifold perils and discouragements, laboured among the remnant of faithful Covenanters scattered over a vast region. In 1772 he was joined by the Rev. Messrs Linn and Dobbin, and in 1773 by the Rev. Mr Martin, all from Ireland; and shortly afterwards a Presbytery was formed under the designation of the "Reformed Presbytery of the United States of North America." An attempt seems to have been made to form the several independent Churches in the States into a sort of Confederation, allowing each to remain a distinct body, but united to the others by certain general regulations. It was found impossible, however, to carry this out; but in 1782 a union was consummated between the Reformed Presbytery and the Associate Presbyteries of New York and Pennsylvania, representing both branches of the Scottish Secession Church. This body was known as the Associate Reformed Church, and is included in what is now called the United Presbyterian Church. This union was condemned by the Scottish Presbytery as an abandonment of the principles of the Church. Many of the members refused to go along with their ministers, and they were for ten years almost wholly destitute of religious ordinances. Mr Martin was the only minister who did not enter the new body; he was settled in Carolina, and for some time administered ordinances: but by and by was disowned by the bulk of the Societies, on account of his irregular conduct. The visit of the Rev. James Reid of Galloway, in 1789-90, did much to encourage them. He visited the small Societies, scattered from Carolina to New York, and on his return to Scotland moved the Presbytery to send help to their witnessing brethren in America. In 1791 Mr M'Garragh arrived from Ireland; in 1792 Mr King was sent from Scotland, and they were commissioned to act as a Committee of the Scottish Presbytery. They were joined in 1793 by Mr M'Kinney, who had barely escaped from the hands of the Government for his connection with the troubles in Ireland. He was a man of great zeal and energy, and did very much to consolidate the cause in the United States. Further accessions came from Scotland and Ireland, the most notable of the former

being Mr Alexander M'Leod (afterwards Rev. Dr M'Leod of New York), who had been connected with the Established Church in Scotland, but who, under the influence of Mr M'Kinney, was led to embrace the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, and to devote himself to the ministry in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Matters had now reached the stage when it was proper, for the interests of the cause, that the Church in America should assume an independent position. Accordingly in 1798 it ceased to be a mere Committee of the Scottish Presbytery, and assumed the form of a regular Church Court. Important additions were soon after made to the ministry, and the Church entered on a career of vigorous labour, crowned by a large measure of progress.

Adhering, as the Church in America did very firmly, to the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, which were held to be of universal adaptation, still it was not to be expected that it would simply adopt the Testimony issued by the Scottish Church. Living as they did at so great a distance, and under a different form of Government, fidelity to these principles required that they should be presented in a form adapted to the circumstances in which the Church was placed. It was necessary not only to exhibit a Testimony for the essential principles, but to show their bearing on the Government of the United States, and thus regulate the action of the members in relation to the civil authorities. The Presbytery accordingly set itself to do this ; and after mature deliberation, adopted and published in 1806 a Testimony entitled "Reformation Principles exhibited by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." It consists of two parts, Historical and Doctrinal, and is a clear and able statement both of the Confessional system of doctrine, and of the historical position of the Church and its attitude towards the Civil Government. The American Reformed Presbyterians were all zealous republicans, but that did not prevent them from frankly condemning the faults and imperfections of the constitution under which they lived. That constitution violated as they deemed the teaching of the Word of God, and the principles of the Covenanted Reformation in several important points, and because of these they refused to own it as God's moral ordinance. It made no recognition of God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe ; it did not recognize the Mediatorial Sovereignty of Christ ; it admitted men

of all creeds or of no creed to places of power and trust, and it sanctioned the system of domestic slavery. They would not, therefore, swear allegiance to it; they would not vote in elections, nor form any part of the executive; they would not act as jurors in any of its courts, nor even take the oath in a court of justice, except on the avowed understanding that it did not mean a recognition of the Government. They would fight in defence of their country, but they would not own its Government. They thus took stronger ground than that which was occupied at the same date by their Scottish brethren; but the one aim animated both—the avoidance of whatever necessarily implied approval of what was held to be morally wrong.

The attitude of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America with respect to slavery, has been all along very decided and honourable. Two years after the Presbytery was organized, Mr M'Leod received a call from a congregation, which he refused; and one main reason for refusing, as avowed in the Presbytery, was that some slaveholders had signed it. The matter was thus brought directly under the notice of the Presbytery, and prompt action was taken to free the Church from all complicity in this terrible evil. By the decision of the Presbytery, no slaveholder could be a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; and this decision was at once carried into effect by means of a committee which was appointed to settle the affairs of the Church in the Southern States. Some years, indeed, before this, Mr King, as became one reared in the free atmosphere of Scotland, had refused to admit owners of slaves as members of his congregation, and from the year 1800 the Reformed Presbyterian Church stood forth openly, and for a time, alone, as a Church, in its condemnation of slavery.

To some it may appear strange, that a Church located in the United States of America should give such prominence as it did to the British Covenants. Living on another continent, and having no political connection with Britain, on what ground was this matter embodied in the Testimony, and acknowledgment of the Covenants made obligatory on the members? In answer to this it will be sufficient to quote the fourth term of Communion, as adopted by the American Church. It is to this effect:—"An acknowledgment that public covenanting is an ordinance of God, to be observed by Churches and nations under the New Testament

Dispensation, and that those Vows, namely, that which was entered into by the Church and Kingdom of Scotland, called the National Covenant, and that which was afterwards entered into by the three kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and by the Reformed Churches in these kingdoms, usually called the Solemn League and Covenant, were entered into in the true spirit of that institution; and that the obligation of these Covenants extends to those who were represented in the taking of them, although removed to this or any other part of the world, in so far as they bind to duties not peculiar to the Church in the British Isles, but applicable to all lands." This amounts, we presume, simply to this—that the essential principles of the Covenants concerning liberty and religion, the reciprocal duties of nations and rulers, and the obligation which both owe to Christ as Governor among the nations, were binding on American Churches and on American citizens who were of British origin. These principles are obligatory on all nations to whom the Word of God comes; and it may be matter of question whether anything is gained by this mode of extending the obligation of the British Covenants, and at the same time excluding all that was distinctively British.

The ministers, who in the early part of this century laid the foundation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States, were men of distinguished ability, as well as of zeal and energy. M'Leod, Wylie, Black, and M'Master, are names worthy of being held in remembrance. They had a wide and ever-extending field before them within the expanding limits of the great American Republic, and they spared no effort to promote the interests of Christ's cause. The Covenanters were scattered over the many hundreds of miles from South Carolina to Vermont, and members were ever moving westwards to the unoccupied territories. To watch over these, to organize societies, and preach to the increasing congregations, involved a vast amount of toil and sometimes danger. Ministers and probationers at home had toilsome work, but it was far greater in America. It was counted a small thing to travel a thousand miles on preaching tours in one season; and not seldom have the probationers travelled two thousand miles in a year, and that in regions worse provided with roads than was the South of Scotland at the same date. Yet they cheerfully underwent all, and were not a little cheered by the tokens of Divine blessing on their

labour, and by the increasing number and strength of the congregations. Additional labourers entered the ministry; and in 1809 it was judged expedient, both on account of the vast distances that separated the members and of the increase in their number, to divide the one Presbytery into three, and constitute a Synod. In 1807 a theological Professor was appointed. For a considerable number of years peace reigned within the Church, and it continued to extend northward and westward; while the high character and ability of the ministers in some of the chief cities secured its position in the general community.

The attitude of the Church towards the Civil Government sometimes involved the members in difficulty. Many of them were aliens, having conscientious objections to the oath of naturalization; and, to avoid the inconveniences imposed by the Government on such during the war of 1812, the Synod was willing to accept an oath pledging the members of the Church to renounce allegiance to any foreign power, and to defend their country against every assault. During the next twenty years, it became evident, that some of the leading ministers were disposed to modify their views regarding the attitude of the Church towards the civil government. Schemes were discussed which pointed in the direction of federal relations with other Churches, and opinions regarding the Civil Government were openly proclaimed, which seemed to many to be opposed to the avowed principles and position of the Church. The controversy thus awakened, combined with other causes of alienation, issued in a disruption of the Church and the formation of two distinct Synods in 1833, which were known the one as The Synod, and the other as The General Synod, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. So far as concerns the principles and position of these two bodies, these were clearly brought out in some negotiations for re-union that took place twenty-five years later, and were renewed in 1872. In 1821 the undivided Church had declared, "that no connection with the law, officers, or the order of the State, is forbidden by the Church, except what truly involves immorality." In 1872 it was declared, that the present position of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Old Light) is, "that all such civil and political transactions as imply an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and Government of the United States, involve a criminal incorporation with the institutions of the country, which is forbidden by the law of the Church." The

General Synod (New Light) accepted the declaration of 1821, but held, "that exercising the rights of citizenship does not necessarily involve immorality; and, being left to the conscientious convictions of Church members, is not made a term of communion." Substantially the same position had been announced by both parties in 1858, and we may perhaps find the reason for this early resumption of negotiations, by considering some action of the more rigid section in the interval. The Civil War, which raged during that period, had caused considerable ferment within the Old Light Synod. Impelled among other influences, by their strong convictions on the slavery question, members and ministers joined the armies of the Northern States; many of them took the ordinary soldier's oath, and fought under the banner of the general Government. Heated discussions took place in the Synod, where the conduct referred to was strongly condemned by some; but the Synod refused to censure their patriotic members, and rather vindicated and approved their action, though some effort was made to obtain a modified form of oath. The other Synod had of course no difficulty in this crisis, and it may have been thought that, since the sister Synod had gone so far in support of the Constitution and Government, negotiations might be hopefully renewed. If so, they were disappointed; the Old Light Synod consistently or inconsistently, re-affirmed the old ground, and made union impracticable. It is very manifest that the position of the New Light Synod is identical with that taken up by the Scottish Synod in 1863; and that of the Old Light Synod corresponds to that of the minority that seceded in that year. More than that, it may safely be maintained, that in the reasoning on the Army Oath in 1863, the majority in the Old Light Synod practically assumed the ground of the Scottish Synod on the kindred question of the Franchise.

As showing how difficult, even impossible, it is to maintain consistently the position of the more extreme party, it may be stated that, more recently, the same question regarding the relation to the Civil Government has produced discussion and division in their ranks. For a considerable time, some efforts had been made to obtain such amendments in the Constitution of the States, as would make it possible for them to swear allegiance—such as, the recognition of God and of the Royal Supremacy of Christ as Mediator. In 1889, the Synod, by a majority, declared, that

voting for amendments to the State Constitutions, was not inconsistent with the position of political dissent maintained by the Church. A minority strongly held, that to vote on amendments as truly incorporates the voter with the political body as does voting for officers of Government, and this position seems reasonable and consistent. The controversy on this subject is not yet ended. In 1891, five ministers were expelled from the Pittsburgh Presbytery, for maintaining that the exercise of the franchise should be left to the conscience and judgment of individuals; and since that time a still larger number have left the Synod on the same ground. From controversy on such subjects, the New Light Synod has of course been free; but on another point it has experienced trouble. It took up strong ground in opposition to the use of hymns in public worship, and was for years greatly agitated, and its vigour and usefulness greatly impaired, by discussions on that matter, and by lawsuits that sprang out of it.

It ought to be frankly recognized, that both Synods set themselves with great vigour to meet the wants of the rapidly increasing and widely scattered population of the States. At the present time the Old Light Synod embraces over 120 congregations; the New Light Synod was never quite so strong. These congregations are scattered over a vast territory, extending on the one hand, from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to the Carolinas, and on the other, from the Atlantic seaboard to Iowa and Wisconsin. Both sections have shown a commendable zeal in mission work both at home and abroad—at home in sustaining a mission to the Freedmen, and abroad in vigorous and successful missions in Syria and in India. Both have at the same time been careful to maintain an educated ministry.

Occupying so decidedly the old ground of political dissent, the Old Light Synod has not been much exercised regarding its relations to other Churches; but the avowed position of the other Synod laid it more open to influences that tended to union. In 1869 a basis of union with the United Presbyterian Church (which had been formed by a union of the Associate and Associate Reformed Synods, both closely related to the old Covenanted Church), was agreed upon by the Committees of both Churches. It was accepted by the United Presbyterian Synod, but rejected by the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Previous to this, dissensions had broken out within the Synod

in connection with the case of George H. Stuart. This gentleman had not only occupied a prominent position in his own Church, but had taken a very active part in religious movements outside of his own denomination. Sabbath Schools, Young Men's Christian Associations, the Evangelical Alliance, and the Christian Commission during the Civil War, found in him a very liberal supporter and zealous advocate. His conduct in joining in the observance of the Lord's Supper with the members of the Evangelical Alliance, was viewed with disfavour by many in his own Church, and Mr Stuart knowing this, resigned all the offices which he held under the Synod, in 1857, but was at once re-elected to them all, and he held that by this act the Synod condoned his conduct. In 1867 he took an active part through the Synod in bringing together a great convention of Presbyterians at Philadelphia, which resulted in the union of Old School and New School Presbyterians in the States, in 1869. In helping forward this great movement, Mr Stuart joined in Communion and in singing hymns with Christians of other denominations, and for these acts he was summarily suspended by the Synod in 1868. This produced much dissension in the General Synod, the result of which was that entire Presbyteries, including the Missionary Presbytery of Saharapur in India, withdrew and joined the great Presbyterian Church or the United Presbyterian. Congregations were divided; lawsuits regarding property followed; and this branch of the Church has become a very small body, destined apparently to speedy extinction.

NO. VII. PAGE 263.

Report of the Committee appointed by the Reformed Synod to take into consideration the Scriptural Unity of the Church of Christ, and the Means by which it is most likely to be promoted, May, 1822.

THE main portion of this report is as follows :—"Your committee, nevertheless, have resolved :—

"I.—That the present divided state of the Church affords matter to deep humiliation and lamentation to every follower of Jesus, as it forms a striking contrast with the description given of the Church in Divine revelation, and must be extremely hurtful to piety, and the proper display of Divine truth; while being so long

continued, it tends more to foment and confirm certain prejudices, placing, too, to a greater and greater distance, the solacing prospect of future union.

“II.—That the present generation are favoured with means and opportunities of promoting union among Christians of different denominations, in a way far superior to anything of that kind with which our forefathers were privileged. In associations formed to send the Word of reconciliation—the Word of God without note or comment—where it is not yet enjoyed, Christians meet on known ground—ground that is common to them all, and where there is no great danger of disuniting. In like manner when they combine to send by the ministry of reconciliation the pure Gospel, which exhibits Christ and the atonement as the only foundation of a poor sinner’s acceptance with God, scriptural grounds of union are there laid down, such associations cannot be too warmly recommended to the people, nor can any intimacy with them be too closely formed, while these associations hold out union in a more practicable, interesting, and desirable light, by uniting the energies of the people of God in exertions in behalf of the most glorious cause. Friendly conference ought, then, to be held about the subjects of difference, and the way to have them amicably and scripturally adjusted. If a frank and courteous behaviour, which ought to be studied at all times, were then particularly attended to, it would, without doubt, greatly tend to facilitate such an improvement of these precious means and opportunities, so as to promote a proper and scriptural union.

“III.—That some knowledge of the differences subsisting among Christian professors is necessary, and that diligent inquiries into these should be made. By an increase of knowledge, by its wide spread throughout the world, everything hurtful in God’s holy mountain will be removed. It is, therefore, conceived to be of great importance to the knowledge of truth in general, and to the removal of error and schism, that these inquiries be made; and, moreover, until they are successfully made, it is presumed that any proposed union would neither be desirable nor advantageous.

“IV.—That explanations of those things which have produced divisions, and have increased the difficulties in the way of union, should be candidly sought and given. That in order to this, it would be advisable that meetings of an extrajudicial nature, by

delegations from the Presbyteries of the different denominations more likely to harmonize in their opinions, should take place. Thus might a more affectionate acquaintance be formed, misapprehensions cleared, and fruitless contentions terminated.

“V.—That prejudices of every kind should be guarded against, and that, in bearing testimony for truth, all attempts to colour, aggravate, or distort the views of others, by giving hard and provoking names, imputing improper or sinister motives, by misrepresentations or by any expressions indicating that wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God, be carefully avoided. Thus would the tenets of others be viewed in a proper light, and the phantoms of a heated imagination instead of those opinions would not, as formerly, become the subject of contentious warfare.

“VI.—That all the good things maintained or done by other parties should be as carefully exhibited as those which we have condemned, and that all these ought to be mentioned, not through constraint, but through affection and delight.

“VII.—That some method of forming a basis of union, by collecting in a very short summary those doctrines about which there is a cordial agreement, ought to be adopted. That those matters which appear, if not doubtful, at least of very difficult interpretation, need not be much insisted on; but that they should rather be the subject of Christian conference than tenacious debate; and, moreover, that the Christian rule of forbearance, or waiting till further light is obtained, should be more carefully exercised. In the meantime, it might be advisable not to do anything in framing a testimony, or in holding up our tenets, that would prevent our making attempts to obtain a scriptural union with Christian brethren at any future time. Your Committee do not view themselves warranted at present to say what should form a basis of union, they judge it sufficient to make the general proposal.

“VIII.—That in dispensing the ordinances, and indeed in every public service, the want of union should be frequently taken up as a matter of lamentation; and that if all parties were agreeable, some time or times should be set apart for this end, so that although they could not for a time meet together in this public exercise of Christian fellowship, they might, at least, with the same view and at the same time, meet together at the

throne of grace in pleading for the Lord's return in mercy to these long desolations.

"Having now, fathers and brethren, laid before you our views of this interesting subject, we conclude with our prayer that truth and peace may prevail among you ; and likewise that the Lord, in His own blessed time, may give to us and all our Christian brethren in other Churches, one heart and one way for our good and for the good of our children.

"It is not merely this abstract doctrine of Christ's supremacy over all to the Church, but also its practical application to the constitution and administration of Civil Government, for which we and our fathers have earnestly contended, and for which we are still bound and determined to make a stand. We consider it clearly inculcated in the doctrines of Scripture, indispensably necessary to the prosperity of the Church, the noblest bulwark that ever was reared against tyranny and despotism, and a prominent feature of that time when kings shall be nursing fathers to the Church, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ."

NO. VIII. PAGE 340.

The Minority Synod and the Ferguson Bequest.

It is not necessary to say much regarding the subsequent history of the minority that separated in 1863 and formed another Synod. They were allowed to take their own course, undisturbed by any process of suspension or deposition, such as had been resorted to in former days in similar circumstances by some other denominations. This minority Synod continues to exist ; the congregations of Whithorn and Stranraer have been received into it since the union of 1876, the latter in 1887, after the death of Rev. Thomas Easton, who had continued to retain a separate position. There are nine congregations with seven ministers connected with the Synod, and from the latest statistics that we have seen the membership amounts to over 1100. It maintains a small but interesting mission in Syria, and shows a commendable liberality in other departments of Christian work.

The only further reference that it seems proper to make to the brethren who separated from the Synod in 1863 is in connection

with an action at law which they instituted fourteen years later. On the day following the decisive vote the party that protested against it met and constituted themselves into a Synod, under the designation of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and claimed to have right and title to all that pertained to the original Synod. The Reformed Presbyterian Church was a participant in the benefits of the Ferguson Bequest Fund, and now this protesting minority claimed to have an interest in that Fund, to the exclusion of the majority. The Ferguson Trustees, however, were advised by their law agent to refuse this claim and acknowledge only the majority as entitled to any interest in the Fund until a legal decision was obtained. So matters continued until after the majority Synod had entered into ecclesiastical union with the Free Church. By the Deed of Union there is reserved to the Reformed Presbyterian Church its separate name and existence in so far as regards the civil rights and property now belonging, or which may hereafter accrue, or belong to it.

In the year after the Union the minority Synod renewed their claim, and raised an action in the Court of Session, in which the Synod and the Ferguson Bequest Fund were summoned as defenders. Following upon this the trustees of the Fund presented a Petition to the Court asking direction how to act in the circumstances. The aim of the minority Synod was to secure for themselves an exclusive interest in the Ferguson Bequest on this, among other grounds, that it was the only existing Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The other Synod, still existing *quoad civilia*, resisted this claim, and asserted for itself the exclusive right to representation and interest in the Fund. Judgment was given by the Lord Ordinary in favour of the defenders, and on appeal the First Division of the Court confirmed this judgment and dismissed the appeal. The Court, in response to the Petition, also directed the Trustees to receive and consider applications for aid from both sections of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, just as if they still continued one body. Of this judgment the able and learned author of "The Law of Creeds in Scotland," thus wrote at the time:—"I speak of this judgment not only (and of course) with deference, but with admiration. I regard it as showing more historical power and insight than any of those on the same general subject which have preceded it in Scotland, and I think that it may become the foundation of a large, and in many respects, a

new structure of law." It may not be without interest to indicate the grounds upon which the judgment proceeded.

The late Lord President Inglis gave the leading opinion, and it is a very clear and able statement. He held that the case could be disposed of without the Court entering into any investigation as to which of the parties was entitled to be called the "Reformed Presbyterian Church," or as to what were the distinctive principles of that body before the separation, or whether the changes introduced by the majority were an abandonment of these principles. His judgment is mainly based on what he conceived to be the main design and end of Mr Ferguson in selecting five Churches to be beneficiaries under his settlement. Considering who are excluded and who are included, it is held that the testator could not have been animated by any great zeal for Presbyterian Church Government, and cannot have attached any great importance to the doctrinal standards of any of the Churches selected, seeing that Congregationalists, who reject Presbyterianism and have no special standards or creeds, are among the beneficiaries. The main end and design of the foundation is the "maintenance and promotion of religious ordinances and education and missionary operations," through the agency of the five selected Churches. It is held that the principle of selection is to be found in two things common to all these Churches—they all teach and preach evangelical theology, and adhere more or less strictly to the very simple form of public worship introduced at the time of the Reformation. Supposing this to have been the testator's design, how will the operation of the scheme be affected by the separation of one Church into two, or by the union of two or more Churches? Not at all, in the opinion of the Lord President; such occurrences, whether of separation or of union, "were no emergencies at all, so far as concerned the administration of the Bequest, which was intended to advance the vital interests of religion, without respect to sectarian zeal or profitless controversy." Neither the separation of 1863, nor the union of 1876, "disturbs the scheme of the testator, or prevents the trustees, in the exercise of the discretion committed to them, from dispensing the benefits of the foundation substantially in the same way as before these events happened."

His lordship thus sets aside all discussion as to which of the parties held or had abandoned the distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and falls back on the intention of

the testator. We can imagine how even on that ground difficulty might arise ; a separation or a union might take place, when it might be necessary to investigate whether the principle of selection itself had not been violated, either in the matter of the theology taught, or the form of worship observed in the separated or united Church. In the present instance it is assumed, and justly enough, that this principle has not been violated by either party ; and while satisfactory in this instance, yet the sweeping statement that the separation of one Church into two necessitates no change of administration, might not always apply ; the investigation might only have to be shifted from the question, Which of the separated parties holds the distinctive principles of the Church ? to another, Which of them fulfils the intention of the testator ? Apart, however, from this, the Lord President declares that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to affirm of the Reformed Presbyterian Church that it is bound together by a contract or bond of union so definite and ascertained, that it is essential to the existence of this body that they should all remain permanently under the supervision and control of the same Synod or other superior Church judicatory." He recognizes the fact that it differs from the other Nonconformist bodies in Scotland, in that it never belonged to the Established Church, but refused to unite with it at the Revolution. The Secession published to the world a record of the reasons for their separation, and this became the bond of union or contract among themselves. "But with the Cameronians there was no occasion for any such formal record of the conditions on which they were associated together." They claimed simply to be the representatives of the Church of the Second Reformation ; and though they published Testimonies, these did not in their case constitute a bond of union or contract, but simply a means of recalling and recommending their principles and vindicating their position. Now, with all due deference to so high a legal authority, all this seems to us somewhat strange. Why, for instance, should a document giving reasons for not entering a Church not be a bond of union among those accepting it, while another document giving reasons for separating from a Church should be so to those who accept it ? Why should the Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in 1761 be regarded in a different light from that emitted by the Associate Presbytery in 1739 ? They were both designed to serve exactly the same purpose.

and were regarded in precisely the same light by the people under the respective Presbyteries. Why for that matter should not the earlier Declarations of the Cameronians, from the Informatory Vindication downwards, be regarded in exactly the same sense as bonds of union? Under these, as setting forth the reasons for remaining outside the Established Church, the people united in religious fellowship. If contract is to be the term employed, we cannot see why it should not avail among people uniting for religious exercises, though destitute of a minister or ecclesiastical court, as well as among those united under a Presbytery or Synod. The one gave as distinct practical embodiment to their opinions as the other. The principles of the early Cameronians, by which they were bound together as a religious community separate from the Established Church, were embodied in their authoritative documents, and those who rejected these could not remain in the community. We do not quarrel with the decision of his lordship, but we dissent from his statement that the Reformed Presbyterian Church had no definite or ascertainable bond of union; and we would give a different account of its leading principles than he does, when he says that these were "the Divine right of Presbytery and the perpetual obligation of the Covenants."

The other judges concurred in the judgment proposed by the Lord President, and for the most part, in the opinions which he had expressed. Lord Mure, however, in giving his opinion went further than any of the others, and distinctly indicates his view of the Act of 1863, on the ground of which the minority left the Synod. He did not discuss the intention or design of the testator at all, but he held that "the proceedings of the majority in 1863" did not constitute "such a violation of any of the fundamental principles or tenets of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as to warrant them in holding that the majority had ceased to hold the leading tenets of the Church, and had thereby excluded themselves from the benefit of Mr Ferguson's Bequest." He referred then to one point of difference between the Testimony of 1839 and that of 1761 with respect to payment of taxes, and added: "The conclusion to be drawn from this was that these matters were dealt with by that body as mere matters of regulation, and not as being in themselves the actual leading tenets of the body, or the leading contract which they had made among themselves. What was done in 1863 as to

the Elective Franchise and the Oath of Allegiance was not in the least degree inconsistent with what was thus done in 1839. It was merely making some matters of a similar nature 'open questions.' As then the majority had not abandoned any fundamental principle, while the minority adhered to the Testimony of 1839, both parties were entitled to claim benefit from the bequest. The view of Lord Mure as to the matter in dispute in 1863 is substantially that of the majority in the Synod, and it is of great value as that of a calm, unprejudiced judge, who had carefully gone over all the documents in the case; and is a much more satisfactory ground of judgment, so far as the Synod was concerned, than those assigned by the other judges, though we do not question their value. One interesting feature of these judicial opinions, is that in three of them, the question at issue is decided in its bearing on the union of Churches, as well as on the precise point submitted, which bore on the results of separation; and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, now in ecclesiastical union with the Free Church, but still existing as a separate body *quoad civilia*, was secured in the same position as previously as a beneficiary under the Ferguson Bequest.

NO. IX. PAGE 345.

Statement of Principles by the Reformed Presbyterian Union Committee respecting the Relation of Nations and their Rulers to Religion and the Church.—Approved by Synod, May, 1865.

"I. THAT Civil Government is the ordinance of God, for His own glory and the good of human society, and has its foundations in nature, not in grace. But this Divine ordinance having, in common with the other primitive institutions of human life, been depraved by the apostacy of man from God, and greatly perverted from the ends for which it was ordained, can be brought into perfect harmony with its original design only in connection with the Mediatorial economy. It has accordingly been placed by the Father in subjection to Christ as Mediator, to whom all power in heaven and in earth has been given; so that, not only are all things subject to His Omnipotence as God, and made subservient by His Providence to the interests of true religion, but a moral obligation rests upon nations and their rulers, wherever the light

of the Gospel is enjoyed, to acknowledge Him as their Lord, and to be guided in their public and official procedure by His law. It enters, therefore, into the design of Christ in the progress of His Mediatorial work to bring nations and their rulers into willing subjection to Himself as the King of kings and Lord of lords ; and thus, by bringing Civil Government under the regulation of Christian principles, to make it fully accomplish the ends for which it was originally appointed.

“II. That the Church and the State, while each acknowledging in its own province the authority of the Divine law, ought to exist in friendly alliance, co-operating for the advancement of the glory of God the interests of the Kingdom of Christ and the happiness of mankind ; and may so exist without any improper blending of civil and ecclesiastical authority. But while this friendly alliance, held forth in Scripture, ought always to be kept in view as the normal relation of the Church and the State, the question whether, or to what extent, the realization of it in any given case ought to be attempted, cannot lawfully or safely be determined without taking into account the circumstances, character, and attainments of both, particularly the degree of unity which the Church has attained, and the extent to which the State has become Christian. A variable element is thus introduced, which leaves room for mutual forbearance among those who hold the Head in regard to the expediency of alliances between Churches and States in the present condition of the world.

“III. That the Civil Magistrate, having no authority in spiritual things, ought not to prescribe to the Church a Confession of Faith or Form of Worship, and ought not to interfere with the establishment or direction of her internal government and discipline, nor to attempt the enforcement or propagation of religion by civil penalties. It is his duty, nevertheless, to embrace and profess the Christian faith ; to recognize the creed and jurisdiction of the Church when in accordance with the Word of God ; to remove external impediments to the progress of Christianity ; to protect the subject in the worship of God ; to promote Christian education ; and generally to further the interests of the Christian religion in every way consistent with its own spirit and enactments. The Church, on her part, as a public witness for the truth and claims of Christ, is bound to unfold the principles of the Bible respecting legislation, national duty, and magistratical responsi-

bility ; to uphold Civil Government founded on right principles, and directed to its appropriate ends ; as also to testify against whatever is immoral in the Civil Constitution or iniquitous in public policy. That when the Civil Magistrate sets himself in habitual opposition to, and abuses his power for the overturning of, religion and the national liberties, he thereby forfeits his right to conscientious allegiance, especially in countries where religion and liberty have been placed under the protection of a righteous Constitution.

“IV. That it is the express ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ that the members of the Church shall, with their freewill offerings, make temporal provision for the maintenance and extension of His Kingdom ; but it is competent to the Civil Magistrate, and is his duty, where circumstances render it necessary or expedient, to employ the national resources in aid of the Church, and it is competent to the Church to accept such aid ; provided always that the terms on which aid is given be such as shall not involve the Church in approbation of what may be evil in the constitution of the State, and be consistent with the preservation of her spiritual independence. But it is not lawful for the magistrate to grant aid to the Church from the national resources merely from motives of political expediency ; nor may these resources be employed for the support of truth and error indiscriminately.

“V. That the conditions of a legitimate alliance between the Church and the State not having been secured at the Revolution Settlement, and that Settlement having involved a departure in several important particulars, from attainments reached during the Second Reformation, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, while not requiring of her members an approval of every step taken by their fathers, yet holds that they had valid reasons for declining to acquiesce in that Settlement ; and that subsequent events—particularly the Secession of 1733 and the Disruption of 1843—have gone far to justify their convictions as to the evils of the Revolution Settlement, as well as the position they assumed in regard to it. Accordingly, not merely from the character of the Government, as illustrated in the assumption of supremacy over the Church, and its patronage of other ecclesiastical systems by which dangerous errors are taught and propagated, but from the express terms of the Settlement by which the Scottish Church was established, the Reformed Presbyterian Church is united in

regarding as still valid, the grounds on which it has hitherto continued in a state of separation from the present Church Establishment in Scotland."

NO. X. PAGE 348.

Principles which the negotiating Churches hold in common as to the Province of the Civil Magistrate in relation to Religion and the Christian Church.

"(1.) THAT Civil Government is an ordinance of God for His own glory and the public good ; that to the Lord Jesus Christ is given all power in heaven and in earth ; and that all men in their several places and relations, and, therefore, Civil Magistrates in theirs, are under obligation to submit themselves to Christ, and to regulate their conduct by His Word.

"(2.) That the Civil Magistrate ought himself to embrace and profess the religion of Christ ; and though his office is civil and not spiritual, yet, like other Christians in their places and relations, he ought, acting in his public capacity as a magistrate, to further the interests of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ among his subjects in every way consistent with its spirit and enactments, and that he ought to be ruled by it in the making of laws, the administration of justice, the swearing of oaths, and other matters of civil jurisdiction.

"(3.) That while the Civil Magistrate in legislating as to matters within his own province, may and ought, for his guidance, to judge what is agreeable to the Word of God ; yet, inasmuch as he has no authority in spiritual things, and as in these the employment of force is opposed to the spirit and precepts of Christianity, which disclaim and prohibit all persecution, it is not within his province authoritatively to prescribe to his subjects, or to impose upon them a creed or form of worship, or to interfere with that government which the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed in His Church, in the hands of Church officers, or to invade any of the rights and liberties which Christ has conferred on His Church, and which, accordingly, all powers on earth ought to hold sacred ; it being the exclusive prerogative of the Lord Jesus to rule in matters of faith, worship, and discipline.

"(4.) That marriage, the Sabbath, and the appointment of days

of humiliation and thanksgiving, are practical instances to which these principles apply. (1.) In regard to marriage, the Civil Magistrate may and ought to frame his marriage laws according to the rules of the Divine Word. (2.) In regard to the Sabbath, the Civil Magistrate—recognizing its perpetual obligation according to the rule of the Divine Word, especially as contained in the original institution of the Sabbath, in the fourth commandment, and in the teaching and example of our Lord and His apostles, and recognizing also its inestimable value in many ways to human society—may and ought in his administration to respect its sacred character, to legislate in the matter of its outward observance, and to protect the people in the enjoyment of the privilege of resting from their week-day occupations, and devoting the day to the public and private exercises of Divine worship. (3.) The Civil Magistrate may, and on suitable occasions, ought to appoint days on which his subjects shall be invited to engage in acts of humiliation or thanksgiving, but without authoritatively prescribing or enforcing any special form of religious service, or otherwise interposing his authority beyond securing to them the opportunity of exercising their free discretion for these purposes.

“(5.) That the Church and the State being ordinances of God, distinct from each other, they are capable of existing without either of them intruding into the proper province of the other, and ought not so to intrude. Erastian supremacy of the State over the Church, and anti-Christian domination of the Church over the State, ought to be condemned, and all schemes of connection involving or tending to either are, therefore, to be avoided. The Church has a spiritual authority over such of the subjects and rulers of earthly kingdoms as are in her communion; and the civil powers have the same secular authority over the members and office-bearers of the Church as over the rest of their subjects. The Church has no power over earthly kingdoms in their collective and civil capacity; nor have they any power over her as a Church. But though thus distinct, the Church and the State owe mutual duties to each other, and, acting within their respective spheres, may be signally subservient to each other's welfare.

“(6.) That the Church cannot lawfully surrender or compromise her spiritual independence for any worldly consideration or advantage whatsoever. And further, the Church must ever maintain

the essential and perpetual obligation which Christ has laid on all His people to support and extend His Church by freewill offerings."

What is distinctive of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on this subject will be found in the paper that precedes, "Statement of Principles," by the Union Committee, especially in paragraphs II., III., and V., and relates mainly to the conditions necessary to any legitimate alliance between Church and State; the duty of the Church towards the State; and as to how the Civil Magistrate may forfeit his right to conscientious allegiance.

NO. XI. PAGE 372.

Statement by the Union Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, presented to meeting of the Joint-Committee on Union, 20th January, 1875.

"THE Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland having appointed a Committee to confer with the Union Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in regard to an incorporating union between the two Churches, the first meeting of the two Committees was held on Tuesday, the 22nd of December, 1874. It was, at the outset, mutually explained, that neither Committee had power to enter on formal negotiations for union, or to commit the respective Churches to any positive conclusion, as the Committees had been appointed for conference only. A statement was made on behalf of the Reformed Presbyterian Committee to the effect, that in their judgment it would greatly conduce to the hopefulness of the proposal for union, if it were understood from the first that the proposal is for such a union as would enable each of the Churches, the smaller as well as the larger, to retain its historical position and distinctive principles; and the points were mentioned which appeared to the Committee to fall within the scope of the proposed condition, so far as the Reformed Presbyterian Church is concerned. The brethren of the Free Church Committee having expressed themselves favourably in regard to this representation, and having expressed a desire to get, in a written form, the substance of what had been stated, the Reformed Presbyterian Committee readily agreed, and now respectfully submit the following Statement:—

“I. Since its origin as a distinct denomination, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has always cherished a warm attachment to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Reformed Church of Scotland, believing these to be, in a remarkable degree, conformable to the Word of God. While this conviction of their Divine authority has always been the primary ground of the attachment thus cherished, its influence has been fortified by considerations springing out of the dealings of God with the Church and nation, more particularly by the consideration that the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Scottish Church was matter of solemn national Covenants, and thereafter of sufferings, even to death, on the part of a long succession of martyrs, whose memory and testimony have ever been dear to us.

“II. The fathers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church regarded the attainments reached during the period commonly styled the Second Reformation, as, in many respects, a real and valuable advance on those of the preceding century, and in declaring from time to time their continued acceptance of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, they were accustomed to give prominence to the important explanations and qualifications with which these were originally approved and accepted by the Scottish Church, particularly in the Act of Assembly, 1647. Accordingly they were unable to acquiesce either in the legislation of the Restoration Government, which put the attainments of the Second Reformation under the ban of the Act Rescissory, or in the Settlement made at the Revolution, which suffered that infamous Act to stand, and so deprived the Church as established by law of the benefit of the qualifications with which the Confession had been approved, and of other precious safeguards of its liberties.

“III. The fathers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, while thankful to God for the release from arbitrary power and grievous sufferings vouchsafed by Him at the Revolution of 1688, and while far from deeming it either necessary or lawful to make such a stand in opposition to the new Government as they had been obliged, in self-defence, to make against the preceding tyranny, nevertheless were constrained, in conscience, to take up a position of dissent from the new order of things in Church and State. In the altered circumstances of our times we do not hold ourselves obliged, or even at liberty, to maintain, in all respects, the position thus taken up by our fathers. In contemplating union, however,

with our honoured brethren of the Free Church, we desire it to be understood, that we still abide by our objections to the Revolution Settlement; nor do we commit ourselves to an approval of an alliance of the Church with the British State as at present constituted, having in view especially the unscriptural character of its ecclesiastical relations.

“In the history and contentings of the Free Church we have witnessed, with great admiration, very much which encourages us to submit, with all frankness, the Statement now given of the historical position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and which suggests the hope that there is nothing in this position which need occasion difficulty, on either side, in the way of the union now contemplated. We are much confirmed in this hope by the views set forth in the Act and Declaration adopted by the General Assembly of the Free Church in 1857, and printed along with the Subordinate Standards, and other Authoritative Documents of the Church. We refer to the following passages among others :—

“‘1. WITH REFERENCE TO THE SECOND REFORMATION.

“‘When the Parliament of Scotland was at last moved to own the Reformation work of God in the land, this Church obtained a ratification of her spiritual liberties much more full and ample than had ever previously been granted.’ . . . ‘The principles of religious liberty not being so thoroughly understood in that age as they are now, it is not surprising, however much it is to be lamented, that our fathers should have given some occasion to the charge of intolerance in the laws enacted, though seldom enforced, with a view to inflict civil penalties for offences partly, if not entirely, religious.’ . . . ‘But notwithstanding these evidences of the hand of man in the transactions connected with the Second Reformation, we would grievously err and sin were we not to recognize, in the substance of what was then done, the hand and Spirit of God; and were we not to discern in it such an adaptation to the exigencies of the times, and such an amount of conformity to the Divine mind and will, as must ever be held to give to the attainments then made by the Church and nation a peculiar force and obligation, and to aggravate not a little the guilt of subsequent shortcomings and defections.’ (Pages viii. and ix.)

“2. WITH REFERENCE TO THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT.

“That the “Revolution Settlement” by which the liberties of the Church were secured, under the reign of William and Mary, was in all respects satisfactory, has never been maintained by this Church. On the contrary, various circumstances may be pointed out as hindering the Church from realizing fully the attainments that had been reached during the Second Reformation. Not only were the three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, unprepared for prosecuting the work of “reformation and uniformity in religion,” to which they had pledged themselves; but even in Scotland itself, the reluctant concessions of statesmen were limited to what a people, worn out by long and heavy tribulation, were barely willing to accept as a relief, and did not thoroughly undo the mischief of an age of misrule.

“Thus for instance, in the civil sanction then given to Presbytery, the Parliament of 1690, overlooking altogether the higher attainments of the Second Reformation, went back at once to the Act 1592, and based its legislation upon that Act alone, as being the original charter of the Presbyterian Establishment. Accordingly it left unrepealed the infamous Act Rescissory of King Charles, by which all that the Church had done, and all that the State had done for her, in the interval between 1638 and the Restoration, had been stigmatized as treasonable and rebellious. Thus the Revolution Settlement failed in adequately acknowledging the Lord’s work done formerly in the land; and it was besides, in several matters of practical legislation, very generally considered by our fathers at the time, to be defective and unsatisfactory. Some, and these not the least worthy, even went so far as to refuse all submission to it. But for the most part our fathers, smarting from the fresh wounds,’ etc. (Pages ix. and x.)

“IV. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has been led to bear witness with special emphasis to the truth and value of the principle, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Mediator, besides the sole Headship pertaining to Him in and over the Church, which is His body, has been invested with moral dominion over all things, and particularly over the nations; and that it is, accordingly, the duty of nations enjoying the light of Revelation to frame their constitutions and laws according to the Word of

God. With regard to the scope and bearing of this far-reaching principle, it seems unnecessary to make any more specific statement in this place, or to do more than refer to the 'Articles of Agreement' drawn up by the joint Committee of the four Churches, lately negotiating for union, together with the 'Distinctive Article' drawn up by the Reformed Presbyterian Committee. These Articles, both common and distinctive, have been expressly approved by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and contain the latest statement of our belief on this subject.

"On this head, also, the Reformed Presbyterian Committee refer with great satisfaction to the Declaration made by the General Assembly of the Free Church, in its finding of date 29th May, 1873, in which the Venerable Assembly recognizes as a 'great fundamental principle' of the Free Church 'the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Head over all things to His Church, and supreme over nations and their rulers, who are consequently bound, collectively and officially, as well as individually and personally, to own and honour His authority, to further the interests of His holy religion, and to accept the guidance of His Word as making known His mind and will.'

"V. The questions put to office-bearers in the Reformed Presbyterian Church before ordination, are not quite the same as those in use in the Free Church and the relative Formula; but there seems to be such agreement, in substance, as to leave little doubt that, if it would please God to open up the way, in other respects, to the union now proposed, the Questions and Formula of the Free Church may, consistently and with a good conscience, be accepted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church without alteration. It has been already stated that the Confession of Faith has, from the first, been accepted by us subject to the explanations specified by the Scottish Church in 1647; and a similar explanation has subsequently been added in our Church's 'Testimony,' with the design of guarding the principle of religious liberty—the latter explanation being to the same effect as that given by the Free Church in the Act of 1846, 'Anent Questions and Formula.' It might, perhaps, have been more satisfactory to us, if the Free Church Formula had contained a more explicit reference to the explanations which the Church has from time to time given regarding certain parts of the Confession, and particularly to those contained in the above named Acts of 1647 and 1846. But it is presumed that a

sufficient reference to these is intended in the words of the Formula, which describe the Confession as ‘The Confession of Faith approved by former General Assemblies of this Church.’”

NO. XII. PAGE 372.

Extracts from Statement by the Free Church Union Committee, presented to a Meeting of the Joint-Committee, 17th February, 1875.

“THE Committee of the Free Church have very fully considered the Statement presented by the Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at the meeting of Joint-Committee, held on 20th January, 1875. . . .

“Further, and with special reference to the particulars contained in the statement by the Reformed Presbyterian Committee, the Free Church brethren cordially acknowledge that, from its origin, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has given ample evidence of its warm attachment to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Reformed Church of Scotland. Such an attachment, grounded on the persuasion that these doctrines and institutions are conformable to the Divine Word, and deepened by a regard to God’s providential dealing with the Church and Nation, in successive generations, the Free Church desires to cherish in all its members. . . .

“The Free Church has not thought it expedient to pledge her office-bearers or members to detailed judgments with respect to particular passages of history, or with respect to the merits of particular proceedings of contending parties, or of the Church, in past times. But as the Free Church undoubtedly adheres to the attainments of the Second Reformation in point of principle—in proof of which it may suffice to point to the contendings which resulted in the Disruption—so also the memory of the labours and conflicts through which, in the seventeenth century, these principles were upheld, is lovingly and gratefully cherished in the Free Church, and the unprincipled legislation of the Restoration Government, referred to by the Reformed Presbyterian brethren, is regarded in the Free Church with feelings similar to their own. As respects the Revolution Settlement, a difference no doubt arose between the fathers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church

and the ecclesiastical predecessors of the Free Church, which yet was a difference not so much in principle as in the application of principle to emergent circumstances. But the Revolution Settlement, in the language of the act unanimously passed by the Free Church Assembly in 1851, 'was very generally considered by our fathers at the time to be defective and unsatisfactory.' It involved elements of danger which, even before the end of the seventeenth century, became on several occasions exceedingly threatening. Under it, the conditions of the Establishment were ultimately determined, by the courts of law, to be of such a kind, that it became necessary for the Free Church to abandon its connection with the State. And no obligation to entertain a favourable opinion with respect to it is imposed by the Free Church upon its members. . . .

"The Committee of the Free Church are glad that their brethren are able to take so favourable a view of recent acts and declarations of the Free Church referred to in their Statement. . . . On their part the Free Church Committee are persuaded, that the view in which the Reformed Presbyterian brethren are disposed to regard the Free Church Formula as satisfactory is well grounded. That is to say, there can be no doubt that the Formula is to be read in connection with the relief against misconstruction given by the Act of 1846. As regards the Act of 1647, it has never been conceded by the Free Church, or those whom they historically represent, that that Act ceased to have force, or to be in full operation ecclesiastically, notwithstanding the disregard of it in the civil legislation at the time of the Revolution Settlement. But if any doubt could exist on that point, it is conceived that the fourth question put to ministers and their office-bearers at ordination more than covers the whole substance of the Act 1647, and determines the sense in which the Confession is received." . . .

NO. XIII. PAGE 379.

Act of Union of the Free Church of Scotland and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 25th May, 1876.

"WHEREAS the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, on the 30th May, 1874, upon Overtures from Presbyteries, declared the cordial satisfaction with which they would contemplate a

scriptural union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and authorized their Commission, at any stated diet, to entertain any communication from the Reformed Presbyterian Church to that effect. And the Commission, on the 18th November, received a communication from a Committee on Union, appointed by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, requesting the appointment of a Committee on the part of the Free Church for conference with respect to union. And such a Committee was appointed accordingly by the said Commission, and in the months of January and February, 1875, Statements on the part of the Committees were exchanged, setting forth the principles and historical position of both Churches, and the terms on which union was contemplated on either side, and especially on the part of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, with reference to the Second Reformation and Revolution Settlement. And whereas, upon the Report of its Committee, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, at its meeting in May, 1875, resolved to transmit to Presbyteries and Sessions an Overture wherein, *inter alia*, the Synod, considering, 'as the result of more recent conferences, there is the hope that the Free Church may be prepared for union with this Church as such, on terms which would leave its members free to maintain and abide by the views and principles embodied in the "Statement" by its Committee above referred to, agreed to union with the Free Church, and appointed a Committee to take such steps as might be needful to accomplish the object of the Overture, with due regard to the Regulations of the Church, and to all its interests, spiritual and temporal; and the General Assembly of the Free Church, at its meeting in May, 1875, on the Report of their Committee, adopted and transmitted to Presbyteries, in terms of the Barrier Act, an Overture wherein, after reciting previous steps, and declaring that the Report of the Committee was satisfactory on the question of the views expressed by the Committee of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, so far as the question of union with the Free Church is concerned; and also, that it appeared that the Reformed Presbyterian Synod were willing to accept, without reserve, the existing Formula of the Free Church of Scotland, on the understanding that the Act of Assembly, August 27, 1647, and the Preamble to the Act 12, Assembly 1846, are held to be in force as interpreting the said Formula, and also to allow the name of the united Church to be

the Free Church of Scotland, so as to involve no change by that Church in that respect : ‘ Therefore, the General Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain that an incorporative union may now be effected by the Assembly upon the terms above indicated, it being understood that the United Church may be declared to consist of the Free Church of Scotland as existing previously to the union, and of the Reformed Presbyterian Church as existing previously to the union, under the common designation of the Free Church of Scotland simply, and that other secondary details may be adjusted in such manner as to the Assembly may seem meet, provided the adjustment be consistent with the terms specified in the previous parts of this Act.’ And whereas the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, at its meeting in March, 1876, having found that the Overture sent down by them had received the approval of all the Presbyteries, and of all the Sessions reporting, with the exception of two, declared that the said Overture had become the resolution of the Church in accordance with its law and practice, and empowered its Committee to take steps with a view to the adjustment of all remaining details ; and the General Assembly of the Free Church, at its present meeting, having found the Overture before mentioned to have been unanimously approved by the Presbyteries of the Church reporting, passed the same into a standing law ; and the General Assembly of the Free Church, and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, having severally passed the Acts necessary in order to prepare for the consummation of the designed Union, on the terms agreed upon, have severally resolved to meet together for that purpose, and are now met accordingly :

“ Now, therefore, the said General Assembly and Synod thus met first of all desire to express their devout thankfulness to the great Head of the Church for the spirit of love and concord which has prevailed during the negotiations for union, humbly acknowledge their entire dependence on the mercy of God for all the happy results which they hope for in connection with it, and entreat the Divine blessing on the step now to be taken, and on all the congregations and people under their charge.

AND

“ The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, empowered as aforesaid, do hereby, in terms and in pursuance of the deliverances

of their respective Church Courts, ENACT AND DECLARE, that the two Churches do and shall henceforth constitute one United Church in all matters spiritual and ecclesiastical; that the said Church shall include and consist of the Free Church of Scotland as existing previously to the Union, and of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland as existing previously to the Union; that the name of the United Church shall be 'The Free Church of Scotland;' and that its Supreme Court shall be designated, 'The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland;' but reserving to the said Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland its separate name and existence in so far as regards the civil rights and property now belonging, or which may hereafter accrue or belong to it, or to any of its congregations, with full power to the Ministers and Elders of its congregations, and to the successors of such Ministers and Elders for the time being, to meet hereafter as the Courts of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, with the necessary officers, as heretofore, but only in order to deal with the said civil rights and property now belonging, or which may hereafter accrue or belong to that Church as aforesaid, and with power to make all arrangements and do and perform all acts and deeds proper and necessary to preserve and protect said civil rights and property.

"WM. H. GOOLD, *Moderator of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.*

"JOHN KAY, *Clerk to Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.*

"THOMAS M'LAUHLAN, *Moderator of General Assembly of Free Church.*

"H. WELLWOOD MONCRIEFF, *Principal Clerk of General Assembly of Free Church.*

"WILLIAM WILSON, *Principal Clerk of General Assembly of Free Church.*

"GEORGE MELDRUM, *Depute Clerk of General Assembly of Free Church.*"

No. XIV. PAGE 381.

Speech of the Rev. W. H. Goold, D.D., at the Union of the Free and Reformed Presbyterian Churches, 25th May, 1874.

IN the earlier portion of this powerful address the Rev. Doctor spoke of the spirit in which the union negotiations had been conducted. He maintained that the normal condition of Presbyterianism is unity, and illustrated this by reference to facts in the history of his own denomination that have been noticed already in this volume. We give the concluding part of the speech as a further memorial of the great occasion on which it was delivered :—

“I hasten to say a word in reference to a few points which need to be stated on this occasion. The movement which has issued in union has a twofold significance—doctrinal and historical. It has a doctrinal significance and value in reference to the great distinctive doctrine for which as a Church we have been distinguished hitherto in Scotland. I refer to the great doctrine of the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over the nations—the great principle that He is Head over all things to the Church, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject unto Him. We hold that all men in their public and official capacity, as well as in their private duties and relationships, are not without law to God but under law to Christ. We attach the greatest value to that doctrine, for, in the first place, it gives a warrant for the right establishment of religion; for the magistrate is under Christ, and surely should aim at establishing and fostering the cause of Christ in his dominions. And more than that, it supplies the true test for the right kind of establishment. It requires that this establishment be no mere State Christianity upheld for political purposes. It must be genuine homage to Christ—the direct and legitimate outcome and expression of the whole nation’s loyalty to Him. It is long, sir, since the truth began to dawn upon us that in regard to this great doctrine we were at one with the Free Church. Among the earliest documents of the kind that met my attention was a circular-letter written and signed by eight ministers in 1852, asking their brethren of the Free Church in all their pulpits to explain the Act of Union with the Original Seceders, and the transaction it ratified. That paper was signed by eight men worthy of the profoundest esteem in all the Churches of Christ. Alas !

sir, that, with the exception of one, they are all gone. Robert Gordon is gone, William Cunningham is gone, Robert Candlish is gone, Robert Buchanan is gone—one only remains, and long may he remain in the midst of us—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—the great Presbyterian missionary from the banks of the Ganges—the apostolic Duff. To that document I ask your attention for a single moment. It will supply me with ample proof in favour of the position for which I am now contending—that in reality they held the same doctrine as ourselves. It is said in the letter in question, speaking of the Union with the Original Seceders: ‘It is a Union on the great doctrine of Christ’s Headship as King of nations as well as King of saints.’

“This doctrine of the Headship of Christ over the nations is of essential importance in support of the real ecclesiastical position of the Free Church of Scotland; and until your position and the argument in favour of it stand confirmed by that doctrine, I am afraid your position is lacking in logical conclusiveness. The doctrine of co-ordinate jurisdiction is to the effect that as the Civil Magistrate is supreme in civil matters, so is the Church to be recognized as supreme in matters ecclesiastical. If the Civil Magistrate turns round upon you and asks: ‘On what ground am I to respect this alleged autonomy and alleged independence for which you contend?’ your only answer is derived from the Headship of Christ over the nations, from the fact that His law is equally binding upon the magistrate as upon the Church; and if Christ makes His people free, the magistrate must in no sense enslave them when they are acting in that sphere in which they are responsible not to Cæsar but to God. We therefore recognize in this doctrine of the spiritual independence, which has given a peculiar character to your testimony, the doctrine which we love and hold with all our might. Yes, sir, it may be slighted and spurned by certain men of culture and learned divines. They may talk of it as a doctrine that must be relegated to the kitchen, which Betty, the cook, may embrace, but which learned divines must be expected to ignore. In the hearing and presence of this vast audience, I say I am prepared to take my stand by Betty, the cook, side by side with her, arm in arm with her if you will, reconciled to my position, aye, rejoicing in it, when I find associated with me in the maintenance of the same principle, such statesmen—I speak apart from political references and prepossessions—as Cavour of Italy, and

Gladstone of England. I regard it as the triumph of my principle, and a testimony to its solid worth, when the humblest piety and the highest intellect alike combine to own and honour it. It was a saying of a man of science in a past generation, commenting upon certain views opened up by the discoveries of geological science, then in its infancy, that these often brought upon him the conviction that reason could sometimes go further than imagination could venture to follow. And so it is no paradox when I say that in spiritual questions the instincts of humble piety, enlightened by the Word, and sanctified by the grace of the Spirit, can go further and sound with a deeper line than the mightiest intellect that relies on no strength and guidance but its own.

“In closing, let me say that the movement which has found a happy consummation this day is not without its historical interest and importance. It may serve to remind us of the connection which the united body possesses with the past—with the Old and the Reformed Church of Scotland, the Church of Knox and Melville, of Henderson and Guthrie, of Cameron and Cargill. A great principle underlies the effort to maintain a legitimate connection with the Church of past ages—I say legitimate connection, for the principle oftentimes appears in a spurious form, and is perverted to an erroneous application. It would invalidate, at least it would greatly weaken, the claim of any system of truth to be a revelation from God if it were the mere offspring of yesterday—if the Gospel we preach to-day were not in substance identical with the promise vouchsafed to Adam when he fell. There are assailants of Christianity who have pursued the tactics of Rodney in naval warfare, when he beat his adversaries by breaking their line of battle; and so it is not so long ago that in Germany one school of criticism, adverse to evangelical religion, sought to establish between the essential doctrines of the Old and New Dispensations not continuance and development, but contradiction and opposition. It is the force of this consideration—the necessity of a connection with the Church of the past in its essential creed—it is this consideration, in a form grievously perverted, that invests with plausibility certain claims of Romanism—that leads high Anglicans to insist on the tenet of apostolical succession, at which all honest history laughs—that operates, in a great measure, I believe, to detach from the cause of Protestantism such minds as John Henry Newman. All the more on this account should we

seek to establish the true principle in its right character and on its proper foundation—the principle which Presbyterian divines have sometimes called the succession of the witnesses—not the transmission of a fictitious officialism, but of the essential verities of the faith, and the blood-bought privileges of the Church.

“ It is no disservice, therefore, to the claims and standing of the Free Church, I must say now in the terms of the Uniting Act —‘ as existing previously to the Union,’ when a sister, though much smaller and humbler Church, feels itself able, in perfect consistency with its claim to be the oldest genuine form of Scottish Presbyterianism, and quite free to cast in its lot with you. Just in proportion as we cherish a wise and discriminating reverence for the past attainments of the Church, are we likely to make progress for the future. It is no paradox I am uttering ; it is more of a simple truism. For to move is not necessarily to advance—all novelty is not improvement—there may be change when there is no progress. It is not progress when a vessel drifts from her moorings, and threatens to become a wreck on some rock-bound coast. It is real progress when the structure rises upon the solid foundation, each tier of stones resting square and plumb upon the tier beneath it, till the copestone crowns the whole building. Even as regards the unity of the Church of Christ, this wise adherence to recognized and established principles is not to be overlooked. It is when the Church of God ‘ raises up the foundations of many generations ’ that she proves herself, and shall be called, according to the Divine promise, not merely ‘ the restorer of paths to dwell in,’ but ‘ the repairer of the breach.’ And so the Union of this day, accomplished on the old Standards of the Reformed Church of Scotland, as it honours the past, affords a precious augury for the future. We accept them, not as articles of peace resulting in nothing better than a hollow truce or armed neutrality. We accept them, not as a barren creed, but a brotherly covenant in which we pledge ourselves to each other, to the world, and to God, to spread the glorious Gospel they embody till all the nations of the earth rejoice in its light. We count it no small honour to be associated with you in such a work of faith and labour of love. Many interesting events have occurred in this hall. The event of this day will not be the least interesting, when here as in some sweet vale of Avoca, kindred streams have met and mingled, never to dis-part, but to roll on together till they meet and mingle with

the eternal ocean of love and unity in heaven—the broad and deep stream of Free Church zeal and principle and liberality, receiving into its ample waters a tiny moorland rill, that derives its chief interest as coming from scenes which, in the beautiful language of Renwick, are ‘flowered with the graves of martyrs.’ Whatever honour we derive from the Union, I trust you will be no losers when you add another link, not your only link, not your most important link, I am happy to concede, still another and a genuine link connecting you with all that is venerable and sacred in the past history of Scotch Presbyterianism,—when on your tower of David, gleaming with the shields of the mighty, and covered with banners signalizing past victories of the faith all men henceforth, especially Christian strangers from distant lands, acquainted with our common history, and appreciating our common principles, shall recognize and discern an old blue flag, of which no ridicule will ever make us ashamed, as no persecution ever made us relax our grasp of it, riddled with the shot of Claverhouse and Dalziel, consecrated with the blood of martyrdom, and inscribed with the imperishable legend, dear in a sense to every leal-hearted Scotsman, to every lover of civil and religious liberty—‘For Christ’s Crown and Covenant.’ But, above all things, all human documents and earthly badges, let us on both sides, or rather as now one Church, live and labour in a spirit of supreme and abiding loyalty to Him who graciously condescends to reveal and offer Himself as Jehovah Nissi, ‘The Lord our Banner.’ ”

No. XV.

List of Ministers and Missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, with their charges, up to 25th May, 1816.

Name.	Date of Ordination.	Sphere of Labour.	Date of Death.
Donald Cargill - - -	1651	Barony Church, Glasgow; ejected 1662	1681
Richard Cameron - - -	1679		1680
James Renwick - - -	1683	Among the "Societies"	1688
Thomas Lining - - -	1688	Joined Est. Ch. 1690	
John M'Millan, M.A. (1st) -	1701	Balmaghie. Joined Societies 1706	1753
Thomas Nairn - - -	1710	Abbotshall. Joined M'Millan, 1743	
Alexander Marshall - - -	1744		1757
John Cuthbertson - - -	1747	Emigrated to America, 1752	1791
James Hall - - -	1750	Edinburgh - - -	1781
John M'Millan (2nd) - - -	1750	Pentland; Sandhills -	1708
Hugh Innes - - -	1751	Fife - - -	1765
John Courtass - - -	1755	Quarrelwood - - -	1795
William Martin - - -	1757	Ireland - - -	
John Thorburn - - -	1762	Pentland - - -	1788
John Fairley, sen. - - -	1764	Douglas - - -	1806
William Steven - - -	1777	Crookedholm - - -	1796
John M'Millan (3rd) - - -	1778	Stirling - - -	1819
Walter Grieve - - -	1779	Inverkeithing - - -	1822
John Reid, sen. - - -	1783	Chirnside - - -	1801
James Reid - - -	1783	Newton-Stewart - - -	1837
Thomas Henderson - - -	1787	Kilmalcolm - - -	1823
Archibald Mason, D.D. - -	1787	Wishaw - - -	1831
John Reid, jun. - - -	1788	Lauriston - - -	1820
William King - - -	1792	Emigrated to America -	1798
John Fairley, jun. - - -	1794	Glasgow - - -	1837
Thomas Rowatt - - -	1796	Penpont - - -	1832
James Thomson - - -	1796	Quarrelwood - - -	1810
Robert Douglas - - -	1797	Stranraer - - -	1800
Adam Brown - - -	1802	Kilmarnock - - -	1838
John Cowan - - -	1804	Stranraer - - -	1817
William Goold - - -	1804	Edinburgh - - -	1844
James Phillips - - -	1807	Chirnside. Resd. 1812	1840
Andrew Symington, D.D. -	1809	Paisley - - -	1853
A. M. Rogerson - - -	1810	Darvel - - -	1850
John West - - -	1813	Colmonell - - -	1844
David Armstrong - - -	1815	Glasgow - - -	1838
John Jeffray - - -	1817	Dumfries - - -	1831
John Osborne - - -	1818	Castle-Douglas - - -	1850
William Symington, sen., D.D.	1819	Stranraer; Glasgow -	1862

Name.	Date of Ordination.	Sphere of Labour.	Date of Death.
Peter Macindoe, D.D. -	1819	Chirnside; Kilmarnock	1850
William Anderson, M.A. -	1820	Loanhead - - -	1866
John Milwain - - -	1822	Douglas-water - - -	1860
Hugh Young - - -	1822	Lanri-ton - - -	1862
Stewart Bates, D.D. -	1823	Kelso; Glasgow - - -	1856
Thomas Halliday - - -	1824	Airdrie - - -	1827
William M'Lachlan - - -	1825	Kilmalcolm; Port-Glasgow	1876
Robert Winning, M.A. -	1826	Eaglesham - - -	1856
Gavin Rowatt - - -	1826	Whithorn - - -	1832
William Stevenson - - -	1827	Stirling; Dundee - -	1879
James Ferguson - - -	1827	Kilbirnie - - -	1862
James M'Lachlan - - -	1827	Missionary to Canada -	1864
James M'Gill - - -	1829	Hightae. Resd. 1864 -	1883
Thomas Martin - - -	1829	Strathmiglo - - -	1879
John Carslaw - - -	1829	Airdrie - - -	1847
Thomas Neilson, M.A., sen. -	1830	Rothsay - - -	1872
Joseph Henderson - - -	1830	Ayr. Resd. 1844 - -	1872
John Campbell - - -	1830	Newton-Stewart. Resd. 1839	1867
James Brown - - -	1831	Dumfries - - -	1834
Malcolm M'Lachlan - - -	1832	Castle-Douglas - - -	
John Graham, D.D. - - -	1832	Wishaw; Ayr; Liverpool	1876
Andrew Gilmour, M.A. -	1833	Greenock - - -	1859
Peter Carmichael - - -	1835	Penpont; Greenock -	1867
John M'Dermid - - -	1835	Dumfries; Glasgow -	1872
Thomas M'Indoe - - -	1836	Dundee; Whithorn -	1865
William M'Murtrie - - -	1837	Whithorn - - -	1838
James Geggie - - -	1837	Missionary to Canada -	1863
Thomas Marshall - - -	1839	Chirnside - - -	1842
James Brydon - - -	1840	Kelso. Resd. 1851 -	1883
William H. Goold, D.D. -	1840	Edinburgh - - -	
Joseph Wilson - - -	1841	Dundee. Resd. 1847 -	1873
John M'Leod - - -	1841	Stranraer. Resd. 1849	
James Duncan - - -	1842	Missionary to New Zealand	
John M'Kinlay - - -	Recd. 1842	} Renton - - -	1856
James Goold - - -	1843	Newton-Stewart - -	
Thomas M'Keachie - - -	1843	Missionary to Canada -	1844
John Inglis, D.D. - - -	1843	Missionary, New Zealand; New Hebrides -	1891
David Henderson - - -	1843	Chirnside; Airdrie -	1875
William Symington, jun., D.D. -	1846	Castle-Douglas; Glasgow	1879
John Cunningham LL.D. -	1846	London; Missionary to Jews	1872
John M'Lachlan - - -	1846	Missionary to Canada -	1870
John W. Macmeeken - - -	1846	Lesmahagow - - -	

Name.	Date of Ordination.	Sphere of Labour.	Date of Death.
James Morrison - - -	1847	Eskdalemuir - - -	1879
Robert Harkness - - -	1847	Colmonell. Resd. 1857	
M. G. Easton, D.D. - - -	1848	Girvan; Darvel - - -	
William Binnie, D.D. - - -	1849	Stirling; Aberdeen - - -	1886
Alexander Young - - -	1849	Darvel - - -	
Thomas Easton - - -	1850	Stranraer, - - -	1887
John Kay, D.D. - - -	1850	Airdrie; Castle Douglas; Coatbridge	188-
Charles N. McCaig - - -	1851	Lochgilphead - - -	1880
John Biggar - - -	1851	Wishaw. Resd. 1855 - - -	
George Lennie - - -	1852	Kilmarnock - - -	1852
John Guy - - -	1853	Kelso. Resd. 1867 - - -	1873
George Clazy - - -	1854	Paisley - - -	
David Berry - - -	{ Ind. 1856 }	Wick; Airdrie - - -	1887
A. M. Symington, D.D. - - -	1856	Dumfries. Resd. 1867 - - -	1891
Robert T. Martin - - -	1856	Wishaw - - -	1867
Thomas Ramage - - -	1856	Kilmarnock; Douglas-water	1888
John Hamilton - - -	1857	Renton; Glasgow - - -	1878
John H. Thomson - - -	1857	Eaglesham; Hightae - - -	
George Proudfoot - - -	1857	Chaplain; Glasgow - - -	
John Bates - - -	1857	Emigrated to Australia	1858
John G. Paton, D.D. - - -	1858	Missionary to New Hebrides	
Joseph Copeland - - -	1858	Missionary to New Hebrides	
Andrew Clokie - - -	1858	Glasgow. Resd. 1868 - - -	
John Torrance - - -	1859	Colmonell; Glasgow - - -	
David Taylor - - -	1859	Ayr; Greenock; Glasgow	
Matthew Hutchison - - -	1859	New Cumnock - - -	
Alexander Davidson - - -	1860	Stromness; Kilbirnie - - -	
Robert Naismith - - -	1861	Chirnside - - -	1891
Thomas H. Lang - - -	1861	Ayr - - -	
James Naismith - - -	1862	Douglas-water - - -	1870
William Milroy, B.A. - - -	1862	Penpont - - -	1893
Donald Mc'Lachlan - - -	1862	Lorn - - -	1878
Peter M. Martin - - -	1863	Kilbirnie. Resd. 1869 - - -	1888
John Jackson - - -	1863	Girvan - - -	1887
John Edgar, M.A. - - -	1863	Glasgow - - -	
Walter Whyte - - -	1863	Carnoustie. Resd. 1873 - - -	
Andrew Symington - - -	1864	Lauriston; Greenock - - -	
James Niven - - -	1864	New Hebrides - - -	1878
John Riddell - - -	1864	Dundee. Resd. 1868 - - -	
James Paton, B.A. - - -	1865	Airdrie. Resd. 1873 - - -	
Matthew Brown - - -	1865	Hightae. Resd. 1877 - - -	1878
James Cosh, M.A. - - -	1865	New Hebrides - - -	
James Mc'Nair - - -	1865	Do. - - -	1870
Thomas Neilson, jun. - - -	1865	Do. - - -	

Name.		Date of Ordi- nation.	Sphere of Labour.	Date of Death.
D. D. Robertson, M.A.	-	1866	Whithorn. Resd. 1872	
Robert M'Kenna, M.A.	-	1866	Port-Glasgow ; Dnm- fries - - -	
William Watt	- - -	1868	New Hebrides - - -	
John Wylie	- - -	1869	Dundee - - -	
Alexander Baird	- - -	1869	Port-Glasgow - - -	
James Hunter, B.D.	- - -	1870	Lauriston - - -	
Walter R. Paton	- - -	1870	Coatbridge ; Whithorn	
Allan M'Dongall	- - -	1870	Rothesay ; New He- brides - - -	
Nathan Cosh	- - -	1871	Douglas-water; Strath- miglo - - -	
Thomas W. Patrick	- - -	1872	Rutherglen - - -	
George Lawrie	- - -	1872	Castle-Douglas - - -	
James Bowie	- - -	Ind. 1874	Dunscore - - -	1887
William Clow	- - -	1874	Kilmarnock - - -	
George Davidson	- - -	1875	Renton - - -	
D. D. Ormond	- - -	1876	Stirling - - -	
J. M. Fulton	- - -	1876	Lochgilphead - - -	1877

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