Rev. Robt Torrance
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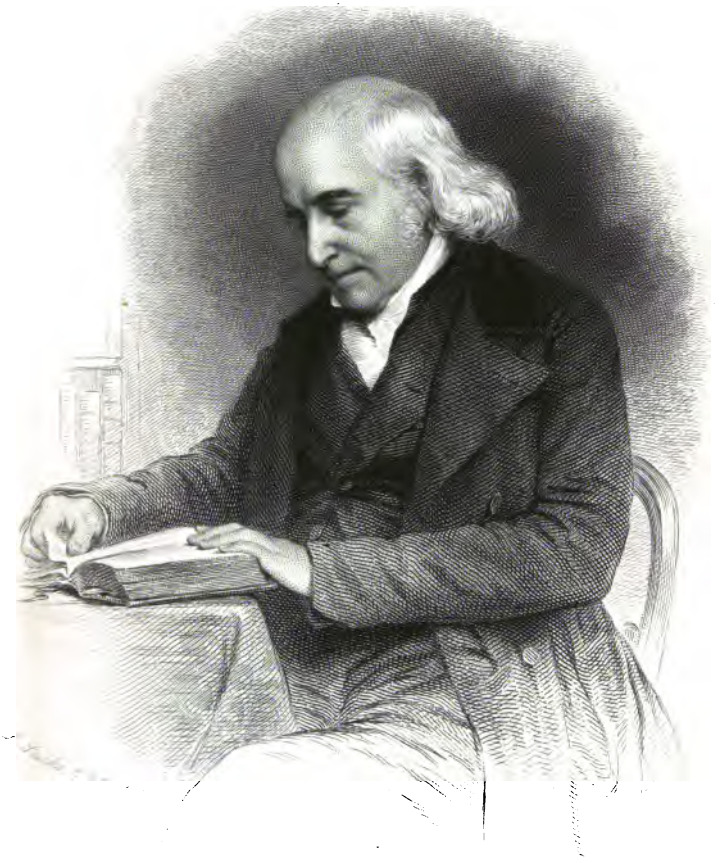

John Brown

MEMOIR

OF

JOHN BROWN, D.D.

SENIOR MINISTER OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, BROUGHTON PLACE, EDINBURGH, AND PROFESSOR OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY, TO THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY JOHN CAIRNS, D.D.

BERWICK-ON-TWEED.

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PREFACE.

THE following Memoir of Dr. Brown has been prepared at the request of his Family and Trustees. It was at one time intended to confine it within very narrow limits, and to publish along with it a number of Sermons or other remains not yet given to the world. Dr. Brown so uniformly expressed in his critical judgment of biographies a preference for this more brief and introductory style, that it was felt to be due to his memory to attempt to adhere to it in his own case. An honest effort was accordingly made to compress the existing materials into the requisite space; but it soon became clear that serious injury would result from such a contraction, and it was resolved to extend the Memoir, and to send it forth alone. The law of condensation has still, however, been somewhat rigidly adhered to; and letters and docu-

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ments usually introduced into such works, have, with a very few exceptions, been excluded.

An attempt has been made to combine the chronological order of narration with one more topical or systematic, such as the fulness and variety of Dr. Brown's life seemed to demand. But it is hoped that care has been taken so to indicate the exact place of every event thus narrated by anticipation, as to prevent any serious mistake or error.

The Author has gratefully to acknowledge his obligations to the many friends who have assisted his inquiries, and furnished him with information. Besides the family of Dr. Brown, who have kindly put all the materials in their possession at his disposal, his thanks are specially due to other relatives; more particularly to the Rev. Dr. William Brown of Duddingston, the Rev. Dr. Smith of Biggar, the Rev. Dr. Fletcher of London, the Rev. Dr. A. S. Patterson of Glasgow, James Waddel, Esq. of Crofthead House, and the late Robert Johnston, Esq., of Edinburgh. He has derived much help from the Funeral Sermons of the Rev. Dr. Thomson, and the Rev. Dr. Harper, as also

from the additional information which they have supplied. He has to thank the Rev. David Lamb, the Rev. George Jeffrey, the Rev. James Gilfillan, and the Rev. Dr. Smart, for extracts from the Secession Presbytery Records of Perth, Glasgow, Stirling, and Falkirk, and Edinburgh, respectively. He is indebted to the Rev. Dr. Thomson of Coldstream, the Rev. George Sandie of Gorebridge, the Rev. John Lawson of Selkirk, George Henderson, Esq., and others, for recollections of Dr. Brown as a student and preacher; to the Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Toronto, for an account of Dr. Brown's labours amongst students in Rose Street; to Alexander Banks, Jun., Esq., for extracts from a diary illustrative of Dr. Brown's Edinburgh ministry, as also to a manuscript history of the Rose Street congregation, by the late John Wilson, Esq.; to the Rev. John Ker, of Glasgow, for notices chiefly of Dr. Brown as a Professor; to the Rev. Dr. Pringle of Auchterarder, the Rev. Peter Davidson of Edinburgh, and William Oliphant, Esq., for information bearing on Dr. Brown's publications and other subjects; and to the Rev. Dr. George

Johnston, the Rev. James Robertson, and the Rev. William Gillespie, of Edinburgh, and to the Rev. Dr. Bruce of Newmilns, for their reminiscences, especially of the last period of Dr. Brown's life. Other friends who have contributed useful hints and suggestions it is impossible to enumerate; and it would be superfluous to recite the list of books, pamphlets, and periodicals that have been consulted. A general expression of obligation is, however, due to the Rev. Dr. Mackerrow's *History of the Secession Church*, more particularly to his account of the Voluntary Controversy.

Where no authorities are given, the Author has relied on his personal recollections, or his study of documents, which he does not deem it necessary to quote. He has spared no pains to insure accuracy, especially in matters of a controversial nature; but if, in a field so wide and in some respects perplexed, he has fallen into any error, he will thankfully accept correction from whatever quarter.

BERWICK, *May* 8, 1860.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

1784–1797.

Birth—John Brown of Haddington and the Early Seceders—John Brown of Whitburn—Isabella Cranston—School Days—Early Religion—A Mother's Deathbed.

JOHN BROWN was born at Burnhead, in the parish of Whitburn and county of Linlithgow, on the 12th of July 1784. He was the eldest son of the Rev. John Brown of Whitburn, who was for more than half a century minister of the Burgher Secession congregation in that village, and himself the eldest son of the Rev. John Brown of Haddington. As the life of the third John Brown derives illustration, not only from that of his father, but of his still more eminent grandfather, some notice of these venerable persons may be suitably prefixed to this narrative.

John Brown of Haddington is one of the best remembered names in the Scottish theology of the eighteenth century. His life is as remarkable as that of his somewhat younger contemporary, Thomas Scott, the self-taught English commentator. Born of the humblest parentage,

in the parish of Carpow, near Abernethy, in Perthshire, and left an orphan when only eleven years old, he received a very scanty English education, and never bestowed more than one month at school upon Latin. Yet he contrived to acquire a knowledge not only of that language, but also of Greek and Hebrew when tending sheep on the hills, and his progress seemed so marvellous, that rustic superstition, not without a tincture of malice and envy, ascribed it to an infernal origin. This reproach fell in vain, for his piety was as conspicuous as his learning, and in every respect worthy of that sacred vocation to which, amidst these struggles, he looked forward. The Secession had been by this time originated, and it was under the auspices of its founder, Ebenezer Erskine, and of his brother Ralph, that John Brown prepared himself for the ministry. They assisted him to open an adventure school, and to complete his studies in philosophy and theology, and though he had never been within the walls of a university, he became minister of the Secession in Haddington in 1750. He was at that time twenty-eight years of age, and his attainments, already great, were constantly increased by an almost incredible industry to the end of his life. He knew nine or ten languages, classical, oriental, and modern. He

had committed to memory much of the English Bible. He had amassed vast stores of Puritan, Scottish, and Dutch divinity. He had also read and compendized numerous works in universal history and miscellaneous literature. His ministerial life in Haddington was without incident, being made up of incessant study and self-denying labour amongst the people of his charge. It was only diversified by the publication of a series of works, mostly biblical, of which the best known are his *Dictionary of the Bible* and his *Self-interpreting Bible,* and by his appointment to the office of professor in training candidates for the ministry in the Burgher branch of the Secession. This appointment he held from 1768 till his death in 1787.

That form of Scottish dissent, called the Secession, with which the history of the first John Brown, and also of his son and grandson is so closely connected, had taken its rise in 1733. This movement was not the result of a mere technical controversy between the ruling party in the national church and the Seceders, but was a reaction of the religious life of Scotland against hostile elements, and was thus similar, in a wide sense, to the Wesleyan revival in England, and to the German pietism of the eighteenth century. From causes not

necessary to be here detailed, the Scottish Church at that period participated largely in the spiritual decline which marked the general state of the Protestant world; but there probably remained a larger body of zealous witnesses for purity of doctrine and strictness of life than in any other Protestant establishment. The conflict which thus arose was maintained not only by means of the pulpit and the press, but, as among a people long familiar with Presbyterian organization, on the arena of the Church courts, where all public religious questions were agitated and decided. Almost from the beginning of the century, protests had been raised against the toleration of unsound doctrine, and it was felt by the stricter party to be a serious grievance that the majority of the General Assembly passed over with slight censure the lax opinions of certain professors of theology in the national universities, while they visited with the severest condemnation the tenets of a book called the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, which was much cherished, as setting forth the so-called "doctrines of grace," and which, at worst, only set them forth in an exaggerated and paradoxical manner. Another grievance was the system of lay patronage, which, restored in 1712, and for a time kept in abeyance, had come ultimately

to be worked in such a way, with the sanction of the prevailing party, as to force unacceptable and worthless ministers on resisting congregations, and thus to threaten the destruction of the Church as a spiritual institution. It was on this point that the struggle was most keen and resolute, as the question seemed to both parties one of life and death. But at length the party which had contended for the right of popular election, as founded in Scripture and conformable to the purest traditions of the Scottish Church, were hopelessly defeated in the Church courts, and were even forbidden to relieve their consciences by a formal protest against the measures to which they were opposed. This attempt to enforce silence produced separation. The Rev. Ebenezer Erskine of Stirling, one of the leaders of the popular party, having used the pulpit as the only remaining channel of protest, and having denounced the policy of the majority in a Synod sermon preached at Perth in 1732, was, by the sentence of deprivation which this act entailed, driven to renounce the authority of the General Assembly, and with three other ministers who had made common cause and undergone the same sentence with him, to set up a distinct Church, under the name of the Secession. Concessions

and conciliatory proposals on the part of the General Assembly proved ineffectual to heal the separation; and as the Secession claimed to be a more accurate representative than the national Church of the original Scottish Reformation, and on this ground found much sympathy amongst the mass of the people, the foundation was laid, for the first time in Scottish history, of a large and extensive Presbyterian dissent. Unlike the Non-conformists of England, the Seceders only protested against the administration of the Church, and not against its doctrine or polity. They strove to distinguish themselves by their rigid adherence to the theory of the national establishment, and to the standard of the covenanting period; but the effect of their strictness in doctrine and life was the same as in the case of the Non-conformists of the South, and for a long time the word "Seceder" had much the same meaning as the term "Puritan," or the later coinage "Methodist." The recoil of this separated community from the abuses and declensions of the Established Church was so strong as to provoke in less than fifteen years after its origin a second disruption within its own bosom. The ground of quarrel respected a burgess oath introduced by the Government of the day, which

required a profession of attachment to the Church of Scotland. One section of Seceders held that this oath might be lawfully taken by members of their own communion, being construed as applicable to the Church of Scotland in her ideal purity. Another section contended that the words necessarily referred to the actual state of the Church, and that Seceders were bound by their protest against its corruptions to decline such an oath. The result of this conflict was a division of the infant communion into two nearly equal fragments, popularly known, from the subject of their quarrel, as Burghers and Antiburghers. This division, which was attended with much unhappy bitterness, did not hinder the steady growth of the Secession under its two rival forms, which were now a check on each other, as well as on the Established Church. The rising cause, radiating from the country between Perth and Stirling as its centre, and finding its way to ancient seats of covenanting zeal, or new localities impatient of the abuses of patronage, gradually spread to most of the principal towns, and to many of the agricultural and pastoral districts of the Scottish lowlands. No impartial writer of the present day will claim for these Secession witnesses unmixed praise or veneration. They

cannot be acquitted of that forgetfulness of spiritual perspective in confounding the great and the small, which has always been a weak side of Scottish religion. Their position as a struggling and often despised minority, concentrated their attention too much on themselves, to the neglect of the universal Church beyond; and their unfortunate pretensions to revive and embody the principles of the Covenanters did not favour the most tolerant views even of that portion of the Church catholic which fell under their eye. But it is not less true, that these earnest and devoted men (with earlier and later separatists from the Church of Scotland) rendered a vital service, by their robust piety and fearless courage, to the cause of Scottish Christianity; that their humble meeting-houses, often planted in the wilds, and of a style of architecture befitting the Church in a wilderness state, were the watch-towers of sound and scriptural teaching to thousands amid the ever-deepening night of error and indifference; and that the light which thus shone without the national establishment in the dark eighteenth century helped to avert the extinction of that which yet lingered within its pale, as well as promoted its general rekindling in the happier age that followed.

With this body, John Brown of Haddington had from his boyhood cast in his lot. We have seen that he was protected in his character and assisted in his studies by its leaders the Erskines, and in the disruption which took place, he sided with them, and adhered to the Burgher party. Worldly reward as a Seceding minister, he neither expected nor received; for his stipend rarely exceeded forty pounds a year. But the highest honour which the little denomination had to bestow—the charge of its rising ministry—fell to his share. The Secession, originating like Methodism, in the withdrawal of educated clergymen from a national Church, avoided the error of Wesley, in suffering learning to fall, and decided without hesitation for a trained ministry. One of the Secession founders had studied in Holland, and the rest were, in point of learning, above mediocrity; nor would any decline have been tolerated by the well-read middle-class that adhered to them, or even the intelligent peasantry, from whose ranks their supporters were chiefly drawn. The very theology of the Secession—that of the condemned "Marrow" volume—was abstruse and technical beyond the average Scottish standard, and demanded educated talent for its propagation. Young men had been readily found in both

branches of the Secession to offer themselves on such terms for the sacred office; and the ablest theologians of each body had been set to teach them, after certain preliminary studies, at first somewhat easier than those demanded for the Established Church, had been completed in the national Universities. Of these theological tutors, John Brown of Haddington was, up to his own day, by far the most eminent; and he is the only one who has achieved a national reputation. He was greater as a scholar and a saint than as an independent thinker; but his writings retain their place from the masses of information on miscellaneous biblical topics which they contain, and from the vein of spiritual fervour, rising at times to affinity with Richard Baxter, which runs through them all.

From this venerable and, in his kind, heroic figure, a considerable succession of persons have sprung, more or less distinguished in Scottish history and literature, who have developed in different directions the universality which lay in their common ancestor. He sent six sons into the world, with one daughter, in all of whom, or whose descendants, something of his lineaments may be traced. His eldest son, the second John Brown, and the father of the sub-

ject of this memoir, bore evident marks of his paternity. He was saintly in his character and simple in his life, with much of his father's theological tastes and predilections, and with not a little of the same passion both for acquiring knowledge and communicating it by publication. Though he did not reach the mental stature of his father, he was respectable in point of abilities and attainments, and his laborious diligence and perseverance in good works raised him, in his own day, to considerable influence in the religious world. His sphere of labour was Whitburn, a village more than twenty miles from Edinburgh among the wild uplands of Linlithgowshire, where a body of people, who had for the first time erected the standard of the Burgher Secession, had called him to be their minister. His ministry ran through fifty-five years, extending from 1777 to 1832, and preserved unchanged in style and manner, the type of the early Seceder. This also appeared in the range of his reading, which lay chiefly in the old divinity, many hundred volumes of which he had collected and studied, and still more in his exertions to perpetuate the memory and diffuse the doctrines of those writers whose names are connected with the Marrow theology. He omitted no opportunity

of exalting and defending such authors as Marshall on Sanctification, Boston, the Erskines, and Hervey. He inserted from time to time in magazines, notices of their lives and labours and extracts from their works. He urged the republication of their chief treatises, and the translation of them into foreign tongues. He wrote several volumes of his own to do them justice, one of which, entitled *Gospel Truth,* is considered to be the best account, in a small compass, of the Marrow controversy. In another respect, however, John Brown of Whitburn outran the primitive Seceders. He could not confine his labours to the secluded district where his lot was cast, though he abounded there in varied and even ingenious efforts to do good. He partook largely of the missionary impulse which had stirred the universal Church. Amongst other schemes of usefulness, he was especially devoted to the evangelization of the Highlands of Scotland. The cattle-drivers from the north on their way to the great markets passed his door, and he found that few of them could read the tracts which he offered them, either in English or in Gaelic. He gave up much of his time and labour to the neglected regions whence they came. He made innumerable appeals to the religious public on their

behalf, undertook repeated missionary journeys to the Highlands, and had a principal share in the formation of a Gaelic Society, which has since accomplished much in the work of vernacular religious instruction. All the labours of this excellent man were pursued with a guileless simplicity and single-mindedness, which at times departed from conventional ways and usages. But he had the respect and confidence of good men in a degree not granted to worldly wisdom. He effected in his generation no small amount of good, and was held in reputation not only for his father's sake, but for his own.

Shortly before Mr. Brown's settlement in Whitburn, he had been appointed to preach in London, where an offshoot of the Secession had been early planted, and which then flourished under the ministry of the Rev. Archibald Hall of Wells Street. He became acquainted, while fulfilling this appointment, with the excellent and in some respects remarkable woman whom he soon afterwards married. Her name was Isabella Cranston; she was a native of Kelso, in Scotland; and though of somewhat humbler origin than her future husband, she had raised herself, by force of character, to a position of equality, and had gained the warm friendship of Mr. Hall, her minister. Her early years had been

spent in Kelso, where her promising abilities had induced her parents to give her the best education the place afforded. Her religious character had been so soon developed, that she offered herself for the fellowship of the Church at the age of twelve. Some of the elders hesitated to receive her to the Lord's table, solely on the ground of her youth; but the minister, the Rev. Mr. Nicol, who had carefully examined her, cut short their scruples by declaring that it would be well if the oldest among them were as fit for the service. Portions of the diary of this young woman have been preserved, written between her fourteenth and sixteenth years. They give token of no small vigour of mind and sweetness of character; and they are pervaded by a strain of devotion both elevated in spirit and happy in expression. Later entries attest that she set apart a day for special prayer before her marriage with Mr. Brown; and this petition, amongst others, is recorded, "Never leave me to be a reproach to religion, nor a stumbling-block to any of thy people." This prayer was answered; and for sixteen years (1779-1795), in the sequestered district where she lived, though she was sorely tried with feeble health, and was naturally of a retiring disposition, she adorned her station and

the gospel of Christ. The providence of God had led this interesting woman, by very unexpected steps, to her connexion with Mr. Brown, which was one of mutual attachment and happiness; and the history of their first-born son, to which we now return, adds one more to the examples of eminent men whose characters have been formed under the influence of maternal piety.

John Brown, born as already stated in 1784, though the third child of his parents, was their first son, which naturally led to his inheriting the name of his grandfather the commentator. Many of his best qualities, through his father, he also inherited, especially the passion for letters, and the habits of untiring study. In face and form he is said to have more resembled his mother, whose personal beauty was remarkable; and he perhaps derived from her also the more meditative turn of character. For some days after his birth he was not expected to live; his infancy was feeble and delicate; and it was not till his college years that he shot up into tallness of stature, and developed the native strength of his constitution. The locality in which his boyhood was passed was wild and even dreary. Half-way between Edinburgh and Glasgow, on the old post-road, the traveller

reached the secluded village of Whitburn, in the midst of stretches of moorland and waste, which have since proved rich in iron ore, and are peopled with chimneys and furnaces. About a mile from the village of Wester Whitburn, on the left hand of the high-road, the ridge attains its highest elevation; and on its very summit stands, beside a new meeting-house built on the site of the old, the manse where John Brown's father spent his life, and in which his own early days after infancy were passed. From this point, called Longridge (*Scotticè*, Langrig), the eye commands an immense expanse all round: the rock and castle of Edinburgh rising full twenty miles off, as at the bottom of a defile, flanked on one side by Arthur's Seat and the Pentlands, while, on the other, stretch far away the Ochils and the distant Grampians, the horizon behind the spectator being bounded by barren and desolate moors. In the days of John Brown's childhood and youth, only a cottage or two, situated near the Longridge meeting-house, relieved the solitude; and thus his chief early companions were the other children of the family that survived infancy. These were two sisters, and a brother two years younger than himself, afterwards the Rev. George Brown of North Berwick. He received

the first rudiments of education from two relatives of the family, afterwards ministers of the Secession Church, the one the Rev. James Henderson of Hawick, and the other the Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown of Dalkeith, who when students of divinity resided in his father's house, and conducted a small school in the vestry. At the age of eight or nine he came under the care of a person of the name of Shaw, who taught a school in Whitburn, and was ere long transferred to the parish school of the same village, where he received the most valuable part of his education, both ordinary and classical. His teacher's name was Macdonald, a man of superior literary and classical attainments, who sent out some very respectable scholars. With him John Brown was a great favourite, and always looked back to his instructions with gratitude. The Scottish parochial system, knowing little difference in salary, has often planted men of great ability, and well acquainted with classical literature, in the humblest localities, and has thus rendered incalculable service to the rural population. In the Whitburn parish school, John Brown soon rose to the highest place; and a Bible is preserved, which he received from Lord Polkemmet—one of the Judges of the Court of Session, who had a seat in the neigh-

bourhood—as a prize. His taste for reading was almost coeval with his knowledge of the alphabet, and his passion for books became proverbial. He is remembered, when very young, to have been found sitting on a table reading Maundrell's *Travels in the Holy Land* to a person who had come to work in the house. On his way to and from school he had a book in his hand, and rarely joined in play with other children. The parish teacher, whose discipline was not of the strictest, and who used to beguile his school hours with Shakspeare, as a mark of special grace allowed his favourite pupil to read over his shoulder.

The growth of religious feeling seems to have kept pace, in these early days, with the development of mind. There is no record of anything, such as is commonly called conversion, in John Brown's history; but it cannot be doubted, that from the beginning the grace of God had been at work in his soul. His case is one of a multitude—happily on the increase—in which parental instructions and prayers, with the Divine blessing, preclude the necessity of any visible conversion, by drawing the heart in its first exercises to God, and stamping on the life an almost native impression of piety. In both parents, religion appeared in an amiable as

well as serious light. His father was remarkable amongst the ministers of his day, for attention to the young, and this, doubtless, affected favourably the catechetical lessons of his own fireside. His mother, whose chosen reading included books like George Herbert's poems, and Watts' lyrics, may well be supposed to have clothed the truths of religion in a dress attractive to the youthful mind. As a proof of the hold which these influences had taken, the boy, before he left Shaw's school, had commenced a morning prayer-meeting in it ere the work of each day began, which was attended by five or six other scholars. He would also reprove his comrades when playing with them on ice (the only play that could tempt him from his books), if they happened to use any improper language. He was looked upon as a minister almost from his cradle, and assumed the responsibility thus devolved on him. No date can be fixed for his choice of this sacred vocation, which seems to have sprung up in his mind with the same imperceptible growth as his personal religion. When still a schoolboy he had begun to teach a Sabbath-class, attended by children of the Longridge cottages, and the junior members of his own family. He gave them serious advices, and is remembered to

have dwelt on favourite passages of Scripture, among others on the 63d and 84th Psalms, and the 12th and 35th chapters of Isaiah.

Amongst the influences which must have acted favourably in confirming these early religious impressions, was the sacred excitement connected in those days with the observance of the Lord's Supper. The moorland solitude was then enlivened by immense crowds of worshippers, flocking under the summer's sun from all quarters, and ascending the ridge where the sanctuary stood as on Mount Zion, while within its walls, or beneath a tent erected outside, some of the saintly men of a former generation addressed the multitude. From scenes like these John Brown of Haddington had disappeared, while his grandchild was only three years of age. But the blank was filled up by his second son, the Rev. Ebenezer Brown of Inverkeithing—a man whose natural eloquence, loveliness of character, and heavenliness of mind, are still fondly remembered by a wide circle. His open-air discourses fell on the ear in the stillness of a communion eve like the finest music; and his conversation in private, which had an equal charm, must have left deep traces for good on the youthful Longridge family. On one of these occasions, his nephew,

then not more than fourteen years of age, had determined to join the fellowship of the Church, and sit down at his father's communion-table. An attack of fever which intervened frustrated this intention; but instead of waiting for the next season to come round, he accompanied his father to a neighbouring church of the same connexion, seven miles distant, at a place called Cambusnethan, where the ordinance was to be observed. There, while he celebrated his deliverance from recent disease, he professed for the first time his faith in Christ.

This public profession his pious mother, who had watched over his religious promise with the most tender interest, did not live to see. She had died when he was little more than eleven years of age; and in connexion with this event we have a touching record both of filial duty and early religion. The fatal disease was consumption, which after a slow and gentle decay reached its end in the summer of 1795. There was every motive to attach the dying wife and mother to life; but she overcame all with quiet submission, and manifested a cheerful yet humble hope in her Saviour. She selected a great variety of Scripture texts containing promises, and marking their place in her Bible, said, "These are my comforts." A

few days before her departure, she called for a short paper drawn up by her husband in the form of a covenant dedication of themselves and their children to God, "for time and eternity, to be directed, managed, and saved by Him." To this covenant, after her husband's name, she attached her own, saying, "I do this cheerfully, and with all my heart." The document is still extant, and the letters are traced with the trembling hand of death. Having become very deaf, and also unable to hold up a Bible longer, she employed her eldest son to copy the list of promises which she had marked, and this was constantly in her hand. In answer to a question, "Can you now trust these promises?" she replied, "Guilt stares me in the face; but through grace I desire to trust the promises." These were her last words; and after her death the list of promises was found in her bosom clasped in her dying hand. The removal of such a mother in so affecting a manner, opened the flood-gates of grief in the heart of her son, who reciprocated her special love to him; and he found relief in dwelling upon her memory, and in writing a child-like history of her life and death. This, his earliest composition, has been preserved, and consists chiefly of extracts from his mother's diaries,

illustrated by passages from her conversation, and closed by a sketch of her character, and a full recital of her deathbed sayings and experiences. This curious record may have been revised by his father; but the general structure seems to be his own, and shows how profoundly the graces and virtues of his mother had impressed his heart. Many years afterwards, this early sketch, with some alterations, was inserted by him in an edition of Gibbon's *Memoirs of Eminently Pious Women*. He mourned his loss many days. Verses exist dedicated ten years later to his mother's memory, and written with all the tenderness of recent bereavement. This first shock of grief is supposed to have called out that latent constitutional sadness into which he more or less relapsed at intervals to the close of his life. His father married again, and happily; and his children were much assisted in their future education by the kindness and energy of their second mother. But the course of events soon led the eldest son into the great world; and the direct influences of home were limited to visits and vacation periods, which could leave no mark like the first impressions of childhood.

CHAPTER II.

1797–1806.

Edinburgh University—Second Home—School in Elie—Hall Studies at Selkirk—Dr. George Lawson—Escape from Drowning—Residence in Glasgow—Poetical Enthusiasm—Friendly Criticism—License to Preach—Call to Biggar.

THE next step in the career of a youthful candidate for the Secession ministry, was to enter some one of the national universities. A full curriculum of study in languages and philosophy had by the end of last century been made imperative in theory; but the somewhat laxer practice of the early Seceders, who accepted sufficient attainments wherever made, had not altogether passed away. Still, attendance on a university was indispensable, and for the most part the course actually pursued was as full and lengthened as at the present day. The University to which John Brown was sent by his father was Edinburgh. There his attendance began in November 1797, and lasted through the next three Sessions to April 1800. No part of his life is less accurately known than this period. The transition of a young man from the seclusion of a remote village to the splendour of a great city which he probably sees

for the first time, and from the simple ways of a country school to the intellectual mysteries of a University presided over by the leading minds of the time, is one of the most important epochs of his life. It would have been interesting to know what a youth of quick parts and ardent temperament, like John Brown, thought and felt at this stage, and throughout the rest of his college days. But for this hardly any materials are to be found. We cannot tell with any exactness what amount of knowledge he possessed in any department beforehand, or for what particular study he had formed a predilection. We cannot even speak with confidence of the classes which he attended. It is certainly known that he studied Greek for two if not three winters, under Professor Dalziel—an accomplished scholar, and excellent teacher—which must have greatly contributed to his familiar acquaintance with that language. Of Humanity, or Latin, which was then taught by Dr. Hill, the same is probable, as we can hardly explain otherwise his ready command of that language, which he read ultimately like English. His second winter was devoted to Logic, under Dr. Finlayson, a follower of Reid, and who, though one of the ministers of Edinburgh, did something by his ability and success as a professor

to redeem that system of pluralities, which ere long received its death-blow in the celebrated Leslie case. He has left no name as a philosopher; but his general vigour and clearness must have been highly useful in enlarging the information, and forming the mental habits of a youth of fourteen; and, accordingly, Dr. Brown often spoke of this class as opening up to him a new world, and as favourably affecting his style of thinking for life. Considerable notes of this Professor's lectures exist, copied out with intelligence and neatness of style; and this is the only record of college labours or impressions. A much more celebrated lecturer—the most distinguished then living—adorned the University of Edinburgh, Dugald Stewart, at that time in the zenith of his fame. But his lectures on Moral Philosophy, John Brown was not permitted to attend. His father, inheriting the scruples of John Brown of Haddington, who regarded this study, in the form in which it had been taught in the Universities, as a vain substitute for the Christian revelation, disallowed the course. The youth, though he had by this time contracted a vehement passion for these inquiries, faithfully obeyed the interdict, which, as applied to Mr. Stewart, was certainly less justified than in the case of almost any merely

ethical teacher. He does not seem even to have once found his way to the Moral Philosophy class-room; but he soon mastered all the eloquent lecturer's writings, and spoke of him even to old age with an almost juvenile admiration.

When it is added that he studied Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, not in the University, but under private lecturers, we have exhausted the record of his college life. Towards these latter studies he never manifested any special attraction, and his attainments in them were not beyond the average of a liberal education.

Dr. Brown's student life happened to coincide with one of the brightest periods in the history of the University of Edinburgh, stretching over the three years, when in the Academy of Physics, Brougham, Horner, Thomas Brown, Jeffrey, and other eminent names, were strengthening in friendly combat the vast powers which were soon to astonish the world. With none of that circle does Dr. Brown seem in any degree to have been brought into contact. He formed connexions, however, with others, afterwards influential and eminent in various departments. Among these it may suffice to mention his greatly valued friend, Dr. Heugh of Glasgow, who entered the Logic class with him, the late

Principal Lee, and Adam Black, Esq., M.P. for the City of Edinburgh.

Principal Lee, nearly sixty years afterwards, on the occasion of the jubilee of his friend's ministry, thus referred to their early intercourse:—"I had the happiness of becoming acquainted with Dr. Brown in the year 1800. By that time I believe he was sixteen years of age, and had been three years at college. I had been six years a student, and had not the reputation of being idle; but well do I remember how strongly I was impressed with the proofs which he exhibited of great maturity of intellect, and remarkable power of giving expression to his thoughts in clear and felicitous language, more attractive to my somewhat fastidious taste than even the kind enchantment of his winning smile, and the lustre of his speaking eyes. Pleasing as his aspect was, and cheerful as was his conversation, it required no great amount of penetration to perceive that the amenity of his manner, and his other engaging accomplishments, were all subordinate to the love of truth and soberness, the earnest pursuit of solid and spiritual knowledge, the admiration of things superlatively excellent, and the ascendency of Christian principle exercised in labours of love." The testimony of the other

friend borne on the same occasion, may be added, as showing how sincerely these sentiments were reciprocated :—"Perhaps the oldest of my literary friends, whose exemplary character, extensive and varied learning, and amenity of manners, give dignity and grace to the chair of our metropolitan University, is Principal Lee. The courses prescribed to us by Divine Providence have lain considerably apart; but we never lost sight of each other, and never looked towards each other but with kindness. Our occasional and not infrequent interviews were, I believe, always a source of satisfaction to both. On some points which neither of us thought slight, we differed, but we never quarrelled. His immense stores of literary information have at all times been readily opened to me when I required them; and the kindly feeling which the juniors of 1800 cherished towards each other, has ripened into a very cordial good-will in the seniors of 1856."

Of his religious exercises during this period, as little is known as of his mental development. There were circumstances in his position fitted to counteract any tendency of his earlier seriousness to be exhaled in the heat of intellectual struggle or literary ambition. Besides spending his vacations at home, he found a second home

of equal sanctity, under the roof of his grandfather's widow, who had removed from Haddington to Edinburgh. Her youngest son, Dr. William Brown, the well-known author of the *History of Missions*, was his class-mate and daily companion. The only daughter of this family, afterwards the mother of the distinguished and lamented John Brown Patterson, was still at home. She had been a playmate of her nephew in earlier years; and towards her he had conceived an affection so tender and trustful, as to be perfectly romantic. She continued to exert over him an influence of the happiest kind, both intellectual and spiritual, which left indelible traces on his character. He transferred his affection to her children, and many years afterwards he wrote to one of them in these terms:—"I have never met with the superiors, I am not sure I have ever met with the equals of your mother and your brother John. 'By the grace of God they were what they were.' May I feel with growing force the obligations which rest on me from having been so closely connected in relationship and in friendship with such beautiful embodiments of the mind which was in Christ Jesus." The impressions fostered in this pious household were assisted by the ministrations of the Rev.

Dr. Peddie, whose sound judgment and manly eloquence were well fitted to commend the doctrines of evangelical religion to an aspiring student, and who cherished a special interest in this youth, as having been himself a favourite pupil of his grandfather.

Dr. Brown's University course ended before he had completed his sixteenth year. The absurd custom, still too common in Scotland, of ending the period of academic study when it should begin, has ruined many fine minds by forcing a premature growth, which exhausts the soil and is followed by no second harvest. The deeper class of minds indeed survive the process; but they derive little impulse at the time, and their education is in a great measure lost. This was the case with Dr. Brown, and hence in respect of the most difficult academic studies he was self-taught, the true development of his mind having succeeded the college period. One important result, however, of the swift close of his education, was his unusually early parting from his father's house to begin the business of life. It was customary then as now, for aspirants to the Dissenting ministry to support themselves by teaching; and the cases were rare in which even the sons of ministers did not find this a matter of neces-

sity. Mr. Brown had to send forth his son from the manse of Whitburn to meet this common lot. In April 1800, immediately after his last college session, and before he had yet entered on the study of theology, he commenced teaching a school in the village of Elie on the eastern coast of Fife, where he remained for three years. He carried with him a guinea and his father's blessing. The position was a trying one for a youth hardly escaped from boyhood. But he gained the full advantage of a Spartan discipline which has nursed a hardy and vigorous race of ministers; and in few of the class has the resulting stamp of self-reliance and independence been more conspicuous.

After an examination by the Burgher Presbytery of Perth, he entered, in August 1800, the Divinity Hall, which was then under the care of the Rev. Dr. Lawson of Selkirk. This venerable man had succeeded Mr. Brown of Haddington in 1787, and held the office till 1820. The Hall migrated as a matter of course to Selkirk, and there in the pleasant solitude of that small but ancient town, and amidst the pastoral beauties of the Etterick, the Yarrow, and the Tweed, it remained for more than thirty years. No adequate record of this remarkable person has ever been given to the

world; but the fragments of biographical information and the traditions of his pupils, together with his writings, show him to have been a man almost unique in point of character. So wonderful was his memory, that he could nearly have reproduced the English Bible, on which he habitually lectured to his congregation with the book shut. He had also by heart, large portions both of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, as well as of the classics. He had studied the Fathers more as a divine of the seventeenth century than of the eighteenth, and his range of information in modern divinity and church history was equally extensive. His powers of original thought, though not equal to his learning, were also great. He was able to reduce the structure of dogmatic theology to a form less abstruse and technical than usual, and to open up a vein of moral instruction too little cultivated before, and which, in his works on Esther, the Proverbs, and other parts of Scripture, yields results which have not been often surpassed for sagacity and deep knowledge of human nature. A sanctity and purity worthy of an ancient prophet were in him softened by a most amiable natural temper, and relieved by a familiarity of manner descending to negligence, as well as by a large intermixture of genuine

Scottish humour, which at times recalled to his pupils the irony of Socrates. A generous sympathy with liberty of inquiry and the cause of progress in the Church as well as the world, crowned his admirable character. Few theologians of his time, attached to the orthodox side, were so little fettered by the traditions of churches in interpreting the Word of God. In the controversy respecting the power of the civil magistrate, which at the close of last century split each section of the Secession into an Old and New Light party, and which reached its crisis about the beginning of Mr. Brown's studies for the ministry, he had taken a leading part. He had braved much obloquy in denouncing the tendency to idolize confessions of faith, and to stereotype the views of the Scottish Reformers and the Fathers of the Secession. A publication entitled, "Considerations on the Overture lying before the Associate Synod, respecting some alterations in the Formula concerning the Power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of Religion," is one of the noblest assertions of Christian liberty in the whole history of Scottish Christianity. It pleads the cause of mutual forbearance on the points at issue, which form still the grounds of division among Scottish Presbyterians, with a power of argument and a

sweetness of charity that almost entitle it to rank beside Robert Hall's *Terms of Communion.*

The influence of Dr. Lawson on his pupils was very great. The writer has heard many of them speak of him with an enthusiasm which had outlasted the disenchanting effect of long life and wide experience. On John Brown, the impression continued to be very perceptible. It was seen, not so much perhaps in any immediate impulse to critical studies, as in the tendency to simplify the style of theology, and go back from human systems to Scripture, as also in the prominence given to moral teaching as an integral part of the gospel, and in the liberal views as to Christian forbearance and the freedom of the Church from secular control. In these and other respects, the stamp of the professor was upon the pupil, and in some of the most prominent controversies of after days, the latter only developed and acted out on a wider arena, what he had learned from the recluse and unassuming teacher of his youth.

The terms in which he continued to speak of Dr. Lawson to the last, were those of almost unbounded love and veneration. He describes him as a man "in whom met strong natural talent, extensive and varied professional learning, originality of view, soundness of mind,

strict integrity, deep devotion, childlike simplicity, unaffected humility, and kindliness of heart, in rare, and so far as my observation has gone, when the degree of the qualities is taken into account, in singular union." "To have enjoyed," he says, "the advantage of the tuition and friendship of this truly great and good man, I count one of the principal blessings and honours of my life, and I have a melancholy satisfaction in thus recording the indelible impression made on my mind by so much erudition and wisdom, worth and benevolence."* "The world," he loved to say, "will never know all that was in that man." On the occasion of his last public appearance, he reverted with deep feeling to the days when, with the numerous band of his fellow-students, "more than fifty years ago, he used to listen to and all but worship that Christian Socrates, Dr. George Lawson;" and he thus also records his estimate of his writings—"There is a peculiar charm in the writings of that sage-like, apostolic man, Professor Lawson: writings in which most important, original, pregnant thoughts are continually occurring amidst those commonplaces of religion and morals which must form the staple of all pulpit instruction."†

* *Law of Christ on Civil Obedience.* Supplementary Notes, p. 73.

† *Hints to Students of Divinity*, p. 56.

The system of theological education over which Dr. Lawson so long presided, laboured under many and grievous drawbacks. His lectures were prepared amidst the distraction of full pastoral labour at the head of a large and scattered congregation. The whole work of training some fifty students for the ministry was thrown on one man, and was compressed within the six or eight weeks of autumn, that formed in Scotland the general school holiday. The course, which spread over five years, was necessarily limited to Systematic Divinity, to the exclusion of the wide field of general Biblical Literature, Scripture Interpretation, and Church History. Much of it was delivered in the inverse order, according as the student entered at a stage beyond its starting-point. Little time could be devoted to examinations on lectures or text-books, or to the extended reading of the original Scriptures, which was all the more to be regretted as the students often came up with limited Greek, and with Hebrew that did not go far beyond the alphabet. The radical evil was the brevity of attendance; for it appears from the records of the Presbytery of Perth, which sent up Mr. John Brown, that he entered on one occasion on the 20th August and left on the 29th September, and on another

entered on the 21st August and departed on the 20th September. A single discourse delivered annually before the Professor, with one or perhaps two during the long vacation addressed to the Presbytery, and subjected in either case to hurried criticism, without any regular series of examinations in Scripture or works of standard theological literature, made up the whole labours of a divinity student, till his career was ended. The number of accomplished theologians reared on so slender a discipline is perhaps to be ascribed to the native bent of the Scottish mind; but the personal influence of men like Dr. Lawson, and other professors in similar circumstances, also did much to compensate the defects of a naturally vicious system.

The student life of Mr. Brown extended from August 1800 to September 1804. Besides attending the prelections and readings of the Professor, he took an active share in the discussions and debates connected with the management of a student's society, and in these secured a high standing not only in point of literary ability, but of independence and energy of character. He was, however, more remarked for attention to philosophical and poetical, than to strictly theological literature. His temperament alternated between buoyant gaiety and

pensive sadness; and he was often found musing in solitude amidst the sweetly wild beauties of nature that opened out from Selkirk in all directions. Midnight was his favourite time of study, the day being given up after class hours to social relaxation, or solitary walks and excursions. These happily were not always solitary; for on one occasion when bathing in the Etterick he was in danger of being drowned, and was almost gone, when he was rescued by the exertions of one of his comrades, the late amiable and excellent William Lee, afterwards minister of Horndean, who had also saved others by his skill in swimming and his tallness of stature.

Mr. Brown's love of nature and poetry absorbed at this time most of the ardour of his character. He recited with enthusiasm large portions of the more striking passages of Sir Walter Scott's Poems which were published about that date, and made a midnight excursion with some of his fellow-students to Melrose Abbey, in order to verify the description in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" of that "ruined pile" as seen by moonlight. He discussed in private with his Professor, the relative merits of Scott and Byron, and other poetical controversies, though in such a presence graver and more ecclesiastical topics naturally preponderated.

The interest of Dr. Lawson in this young student was deep and tender, and his relations with him were more confidential than with any of his equals. He allowed him to call at all hours, and to engage in long and animated discourse in his garden or parlour on all subjects of interest. He also induced him to spend a few days at the close of every session in his house, and not only gave him private counsels, but took him with him to visit the sick, and to attend the "diets of examination" held in the various districts of his congregation, according to the usage of these times. In these exercises the student assisted the Professor, and became favourably known. He also maintained a distinguished place in other services conducted in public by each of the students during the session of the Hall. The sentence pronounced on these first public exercises by one who still remembers them is, that his manner was much against him, but that his addresses were as "full of good Scripture matter as a leaf of his grandfather's dictionary."

From the Divinity Hall year by year he returned to Elie and resumed his school. It may be interesting to recollect that Dr. Chalmers, his future friend and fellow-worker, was at this time engaged in a higher department of the same profession, teaching mathematics in St.

Andrews. Mr. Brown is still remembered as a successful instructor; but his time was passed in great seclusion, and his intercourse with the parents of the children was limited. His eager study of literature continued; and he used to spend the Saturday vacations in going out with a companion to recite poetry amongst the sea-caves, and in the ear of the German Ocean.

During Mr. Brown's stay in Elie, he was connected with a theological society formed by the students of the same church, who, to the number of six or eight, taught schools in the adjacent villages. These met once a month for the criticism of each other's essays and discourses, and for general improvement in divinity. Of this society he was one of the founders, and acted as its secretary. Amongst other names stands that of John Ballantyne, afterwards minister of Stonehaven, author of the ingenious *Examination of the Human Mind*, and of one of the ablest and earliest treatises in the Voluntary controversy. The records show that John Brown delivered six exercises, consisting of sermons, lectures, and essays, in the course of little more than two years. This must have been a valuable supplement to his more formal theological education. Meanwhile his interest in Sabbath schools continued. During his residence in Elie

he regularly taught a class in his school-room, which is remembered by some with gratitude, as the means of their spiritual benefit.

In April 1803, Mr. Brown relinquished his position in Elie, and went to reside as a private teacher in Glasgow, where he remained till the last year of his attendance on the Divinity Hall in August 1804. By this change the circle of his society was much enlarged, and he was introduced to several families with which he afterwards contracted the most intimate relations. His sense of mental power seems about this time to have become more developed, and also the grace and readiness, afterwards so conspicuous, with which he could act his part in society. No record of theological studies remains, beyond the notice of a discourse delivered each season before the Glasgow Presbytery; but there is abundant evidence of the intense eagerness with which he still cultivated miscellaneous literature, and especially poetry. In a commonplace book, dated Glasgow 1804, are inserted not less than fifty quarto pages of extracts, closely written, chiefly from the English poets. The range is not very wide, tried by the present standard; embracing a little of Shakspeare, something of Pope, and much of Thomson, Cowper, Burns, mixed up with long-

forgotten snatches of Langhorne, Penrose, and Mrs. Charlotte Smith. But the selection shows a much greater breadth of taste than was then current in Secession circles, and the insertion of third and fourth rate materials indicates the same interest in poetry below the highest which afterwards extended to theology. The most curious feature of this selection is that it contains some twenty or thirty pieces by a friend, and six or seven of his own. This friend was Mr. David Paterson, subsequently minister of Alnwick, who was then, and for some years afterwards, to his fellow-student the object of ardent and even romantic affection and admiration. Mr. Paterson was older by nearly ten years. His last year of study at Selkirk had coincided with Dr. Brown's first; and the acquaintance then formed now ripened into the closest intimacy. Mr. Paterson had greatly distinguished himself in the logic class in the University of Edinburgh. He had written an essay on Taste which the professor urged him to publish. He was supposed to have outstripped Brougham and Horner, and other leaders of a debating society to which he belonged, in metaphysical acuteness, and had gained the character of being the most accomplished among the Secession students of his

time. The performance of life certainly fell short of this promise; but the talent and literary sensibility of Mr. Paterson were never doubted. His "Sonnets Sentimental and Descriptive," which were once so widely circulated in manuscript, as to amount to a species of publication, display both elegance and tenderness. A volume of sermons which he long afterwards gave to the press, is as superior to most of the compositions of that period in subtlety of speculation and refinement of style, as it falls below most of them, and indeed his own regular ministry, in directness of gospel statement and appeal. The influence of this able and amiable man on his companion's literary tastes, appears in the traces of imitation which the poetical effusions of this time display. In the six or seven pieces, however, which Mr. Brown has appended to those of his friend, there is evidence of a more robust and passionate nature; and one sonnet in particular, dedicated to his mother's memory, reaches a depth of genuine pathos to which the more flowing and fanciful rhymes of Mr. Paterson never attain.

This is here inserted with another of earlier date:—

"Sprightly and gay I hailed life's opening morn,
But soon misfortune's clouds obscured my view;

From my young bosom my first friend was torn,
Chill on my head descended sorrow's dew.
The prospects of imagined bliss so fair,
Which oft in fancy's hour amused my mind,
Vanished in clouds of sorrow and despair,
And left, alas! no soothing trace behind.
Yet why should I, a living man, complain?
Affliction is the lot of man below;
Since all participate of care and pain,
Should I refuse to taste the cup of woe?
I'll drink, and praise the Providence 'whose will
In life's thin web has woven many an ill.'

ELIE, 1803."

TO THE MEMORY OF AN AFFECTIONATE PARENT.

"I love to wander pensive and alone,
By sad remembrance and affection led,
Where yonder unadorned and nameless stone,*
Points out a mother's cold and narrow bed.
Oft when mild twilight steals upon the scene,
The sun's last ray still lingering in the west,
I wander lorn 'neath the moon's ray serene,
And fervent wish to be with her at rest.
And seated by her grave I anxious hope,
That soon this weary heart which throbs with woes
Shall cease to beat, and this poor aching head
In sorrow's last retreat enjoy repose;
When this poor widowed heart again shall prove,
The grateful blessing of a mother's love.

GLASGOW, 1804."

This literary episode forming, with earlier manifestations of poetical enthusiasm, so curious a passage in the history of one who was afterwards to cultivate so different a field, connects itself with one of the most interesting and well

* Mrs. Brown's name was reserved for her husband's monument. She is there commemorated as "an amiable Christian."

remembered incidents in Dr. Brown's hall career at Selkirk. In the autumn of 1803, when this passion for literature seems to have been in unusually strong development, it fell to his lot to preach before the Professor and students upon the text, John xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God." The discourse, though perfectly orthodox, contained a somewhat scanty illustration of Christian doctrine, and was throughout cast in a more philosophical mould than was usual in the Hall exercises of those days. It elicited some severe criticisms from one or more of his brother students, all of whom used at will this privilege, and not less from a minister of standing and influence who happened to be present. The conduct of Dr. Lawson on this occasion, was an admirable compound of justice and delicacy. While commending the ability of the discourse, he concurred in the estimate of its defects, and expressed his fear that neither the grandfather nor the father of the preacher would have been satisfied with it. He then took his young friend apart, and affectionately addressing him by his Christian name, which he reminded him was the style in which his grandfather had always familiarly saluted himself, said half sportively, half in earnest, "John, we have both good reason

to look well to our work; for if you come short in anything, every one will say, how much better you would have turned out had you studied under your grandfather." The pupil, completely overcome, replied that if any fault appeared in him, it certainly could never be ascribed to his teacher, and having promised to do his best in future, the matter terminated.

Undoubtedly, there were at this time uneasy impressions in some quarters, that these symptoms augured ill for the adherence of this rising student to the old paths of the Secession. There is no evidence, however, that Mr. Brown was at this period shaken in his attachment to any doctrine of the gospel, or that his personal religion was compromised by his extreme addiction to philosophical and poetical literature. He seems to have felt a somewhat violent recoil from the popular style of evangelical preaching, and to have expected more from a different method than the wisdom of this world can ever yield. This gradually corrected itself, and ere long the matter of his discourses ran with sufficient clearness into the old moulds to lull all suspicion to rest. Had he been conscious to himself of any approach at this date to the moderate Christianity of the Establishment, he would certainly have admitted and regretted it

in the allusions of after years; whereas, he never could bring himself fully to subscribe to these criticisms on his youthful efforts, but maintained that the impugned studies had done him much good. It seems to have been a period when his whole creed was subjected to revision, with the usual risks attending conscious power and fearless independence, coupled with a strong tendency to literary admiration. But the genuine coin came forth from this process, unimpaired in substance, though in some instances wearing a novel stamp; and the lights of philosophy and literature became henceforth satellites of that ancient gospel, which for one moment they had threatened to obscure if not to displace. Not a little perhaps of Mr. Brown's subsequent toleration was owing to these early experiences of misconstruction, when he was consciously sound at heart. While it was but right to speak to him in the language of caution, the danger, so far as one may judge from the perusal of the discourse chiefly animadverted on, appears to have been exaggerated; and the more forbearing and hopeful style of criticism was obviously the only one from which such a temperament could derive any benefit.

Amongst the intimate associates of Dr. Brown at this period, must be mentioned the late Rev.

James Elles of Saltcoats, so well known in the churches of the Secession for the warmth of his heart, and his vigorous administration of public business. Mr. Brown spent some months of his residence in Glasgow in the house of his friend's parents, and is still remembered for the vivacity of his disposition, and his engrossment with books of all descriptions. He also enjoyed at this time the ministrations of Dr. Dick, then in the fulness of his strength as a preacher. This eminent divine, with his refined and classical taste, did not hesitate to curb, in somewhat strong language, the same tendency which had been animadverted on by Dr. Lawson. But this freedom in dealing with the juvenile blemishes of Presbytery exercises led to no permanent coldness, being succeeded by unbroken regard and friendship.

Having finished his studies in September 1804, Mr. Brown went to reside with the Rev. Michael Gilfillan, of Dunblane, one of the venerable men of that generation, and a relative of his father's second wife, who was a daughter of the Rev. William Fletcher, of Bridge of Teith. He completed his trial exercises for license before the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, to which he was for this purpose transferred by the Presbytery of Glasgow; and he was

licensed to preach the gospel on the 12th of February 1805. His own father, who belonged to the Presbytery, was present on the occasion; but the Rev. Mr. Harper of Lanark presided, and delivered the exhortation usual in such circumstances. He had not completed his 21st year, but entered immediately on employment. The itinerant life of a Secession preacher was then very different from what it has since become. The young men travelled from place to place on horseback, and required often to spend the whole week in reaching their destination. Of this life, however, Mr. Brown had very scanty experience. There was at that time a great scarcity of preachers in the Burgher Secession, and the Glasgow Presbytery claimed his services, as being properly one of their students. But the Presbytery which licensed him asserted their prior rights, not only to employ him themselves, but to send him into the adjacent Presbytery of Lanark, and by this appointment, his future career was virtually decided within little more than a month from the date of his license.

His first sermon was delivered in Bathgate, within a few miles of the place of his birth, on the Sabbath immediately after his license. His labours on the two succeeding days were in the

congregation of Stirling, then under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Dr. Smart, and were followed by a speedy call to be colleague of that excellent minister. This was almost the highest honour that could be put upon any Secession preacher, since the congregation was one of the largest and most intelligent in the denomination, and had long been ministered to by Ebenezer Erskine, with whom its founders had withdrawn from the national Church. Whatever misgivings as to Mr. Brown's theological tendencies may have existed in other quarters, these were evidently not shared by this congregation, for the call which came out was unanimous, and was subscribed by 967 persons, the minister lending his most zealous co-operation. These efforts, however, were unsuccessful. The appointment already mentioned in the Presbytery of Lanark, which was to the congregation of Biggar, then vacant by the death of the Rev. John Low, and which fell upon the 3d Sabbath of March, produced a still earlier call from that congregation. Both calls being, by a law of the Church now no longer in force, submitted to the judgment of the Synod which met at Edinburgh in the beginning of September, the claims of Biggar were preferred. On what principle the Synod decided

this call, like some others under that system, it is difficult to understand, since the congregation of Biggar, though highly respectable, was much the smaller. Mr. Brown himself felt no special attraction towards the larger sphere, but left himself in the hands of the Synod; and his father, with characteristic unselfishness, earnestly pleaded the cause of the smaller and less opulent congregation, as more suited to his son's inexperience. Probably, the father was supposed to speak the son's mind; but this was not necessarily decisive, as the Synod often acted with a sovereign indifference to ministerial inclination. The congregation of Stirling with their minister, were much disappointed at the result; but the hand of God may be seen in choosing out, against the present likelihood of things, that sphere which proved to be best in the end. A long and laborious youth of study and seclusion were thus secured, to be followed by an age of ripened service in a field still more extensive than that originally contemplated.

Six months elapsed between this decision of the Synod, and Mr. Brown's settlement in Biggar. In October 1805, he was sent, like his father in exactly similar circumstances, to supply the Secession pulpit in London. Here he made the acquaintance of the truly apostolic

Dr. Waugh, and was introduced to other circles in the metropolis. On his return as before, he ministered to various congregations till the date of his ordination. As a preacher he was universally acceptable; and the more solid attractions of his discourses were increased by the interest attaching to his name, by his juvenile appearance, by his great personal beauty, and also by the somewhat florid and poetical strain which he had not yet laid aside. An eye-witness describes him at this time, as he preached to the congregation of Stow in the south of Scotland:—"His appearance was prepossessing; he was in the bloom of youth; his locks bushy and black as a raven; and I need not say that his eye was intelligent and lively. When he began the service, his manner and tone were striking and solemn, and though at that time he stood still as a statue, from the depth and appropriateness of his illustrations, he was very impressive." The same witness adds, that he was tall, too tall for the pulpit; and in singular contrast to the clerical costume of the present day, dressed in light-coloured corded knee-breeches and Hessian boots, the Geneva gown and bands being in those days unknown in the Secession, and even the black coat not universal. Other contemporaries attest that his passion

for literature followed him in this stage, and that he would carry with him his favourite books, among which is remembered Sir James Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, and seek by reading extracts from them to infect others with his own admiration. It is certain, however, that he was much alive to the weight and seriousness of the work on which he had entered, and that his discourses, whatever other features might be remarked, breathed the savour of evangelical truth and experimental piety, without which they could not have secured such favour with the churches of the Secession.

An interesting anecdote, though dating after his settlement as a minister, will illustrate the freedom of Mr. Brown's pulpit style from any such doctrinal aberrations as had been by some apprehended. A venerable old man in a congregation not far from his native place, had heard the whole Brown family preach through their successive generations. He went a long day's journey to hear another of the race. Being a great enemy of legal doctrine, he was somewhat startled when the text was announced. This was Micah vi. 8, being in truth the subject of one of Mr. Brown's Presbytery exercises, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly

with thy God?" He sat deeply interested both in the speaker and in the development of the doctrine; and when all was ended, burst into tears, which he continued shedding for a good while. At length he spoke, "If there was a law text in all the Bible, it was that; but he has preached the sound gospel; for law doctrine was never in his blood."

Much in this young preacher was yet immature and undeveloped; but the root of the matter was in him; and the best judges saw in the very flush of the dawn, the promise of a bright and steady day of usefulness.

CHAPTER III.

1806–1822.

Town of Biggar—Congregational Prosperity—Marriage—First Period of Ministerial History at Biggar—Style of Lectures—Pastoral Life—Missions—Ministers' Libraries—Second Period—Reply to Yates—Christian Repository—Death of Mrs. Brown—Robert Owen—Other Works—London Missionary Sermon—Highland Tour—Synod Sermon—Dr. Dick—Robert Hall—Secession Union—Call to Rose Street, Edinburgh.

BIGGAR, the scene of Mr. Brown's first ministry, is a small town in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, on the old high-road from Edinburgh to Moffat and Dumfries, being distant from the capital about twenty-eight miles. The traveller who pursues this route gradually rises through a succession of valleys and moors, till he finds himself face to face with the central chain of hills which guard the sources of the Clyde and of the Tweed, and send down their outposts to the plain. The most conspicuous of these is Tinto, on the west, rising with ruddy summit to the height of more than 2000 feet, and washed by the infant Clyde, while the chain throwing up other peaks as it stretches eastward, joins at last the greener slopes that overhang the Tweed. It is the dividing ridge of Scotland in that part, for the waters of the

Clyde when swollen find a passage near Biggar to the Tweed, and the eye takes in from the summit of Tinto, on a clear day, the crag of Ailsa in the western firth, and the Bass Rock in the German Ocean. In the long and narrow strath or valley stretching from east to west, which the traveller crosses to enter the gorge of the hills, but nearer its eastern extremity, stands the town of Biggar. It consists chiefly of one wide street, with something of a grey and ancient look, which harmonizes well with its retired situation. The gigantic mass of Tinto rises on its western side, and, though five miles distant, seems almost to bound the street, and to cover the place with its shadow. The little town is a picturesque feature in the midst of moorland and meadow and stream, and of the silent hills which enclose it on almost every side. The population is now upwards of two thousand; and modern improvements have somewhat changed the face of the town, as well as of the surrounding country. But neither the increase of cultivated fields and thriving plantations, nor the stir and movement connected with the proximity of a railway, have effaced the pastoral wildness and seclusion impressed by the hand of nature. The place has only the resources of a small agricultural capital, formerly

increased by weaving for houses in Glasgow; but a look of quiet comfort pervades it, not always found in more fertile and opulent districts. If we suppose the country unclothed of the richer features given by draining, by planting, and by the preponderance of the agricultural over the pastoral element, and the population not only somewhat diminished in numbers, but cut off almost entirely from the great world, and thrown upon their own solitary reading and reflection, we shall have a picture of Biggar and the surrounding locality as it was more than fifty years ago, when Mr. Brown began his labours.

He was ordained on the 6th of February 1806, having with difficulty reached the place in a violent snow storm, which limited the attendance of the Presbytery to three members. His own father, however, was also present, and preached the ordination sermon, taking for his text 1 Cor. i. 17. This selection shows that he deemed it not superfluous to guard his son against the "wisdom of words;" and in an affectionate letter written shortly afterwards, the same monitory strain appears, and the highly characteristic counsel is urged home, to be "more acquainted with evangelical and practical divinity, such as Ebenezer Erskine's, Dr. Owen's, Trail's, &c." These exhortations were taken

in the best part, and their effect, greatly assisted by the seriousness of ministerial work, was seen in the gradual disappearance of every trace of juvenility and superfluous ornament. An introductory sermon was preached next Lord's day forenoon by the Rev. James Elles of Saltcoats, and Mr. Brown opened his ministry in the afternoon from Eph. vi. 18, 19.

The congregation of Biggar was one of the oldest in the south of Scotland, dating from 1761; but in the last days of its former minister it had somewhat fallen off, though still numbering about 300 communicants. It was above the average standard in point of intelligence, and presented an excellent field to the labours of a zealous minister. Its members, delighted with their success in gaining the object of their choice, received him almost as an "angel of God;" and "if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him." A large proportion of them were old men, and not a few of them thoroughly versed in the elder divinity, as well as experienced in grace; but they hung upon the lips of their youthful teacher with childlike docility, and received the law at his mouth. Accessions to the membership speedily took place from the rising generation, and the num-

bers were ultimately nearer four than three hundred, drawn from fourteen different parishes. A new place of worship, as well as a new residence for the minister, was erected; and so great was the impression produced, that many members of the Established Church, without leaving their own communion, took sittings and became frequent worshippers in the Secession meeting-house.

This stream of prosperity continued to flow all the seventeen years of Mr. Brown's life in Biggar; but as one year so greatly resembled another, it is not necessary to detail the incidents of his ministry in chronological order. It will be better to describe its leading features under certain heads, fixing attention on what was characteristic and not merely common to him with every Seceding minister in a rural district.

It may be mentioned, however, beforehand, that in August 1807, he married Miss Jane Nimmo, younger daughter of Mr. William Nimmo, a surgeon of eminence in Glasgow. With this lady, whose intelligence and piety qualified her in a high degree for his companionship, he had become acquainted some years before, and in her society he enjoyed the greatest domestic happiness, till her early death in May 1816. After this painful bereavement, which was the

most prominent incident in his uneventful Biggar life, his mother-in-law, who had before resided for some years in the family, presided over his domestic establishment, and took the charge of his four infant children, two sons and two daughters, when deprived of a mother's care.

Mr. Brown's ministerial history in Biggar falls into two nearly equal periods: the first, during which he confined himself to his studies and the duties of his pastoral office; the second, during which he appeared before the public as an author, and an agent in schemes of general usefulness. The dividing year is 1815, and this also marks the beginning of a still more warm and fervent tone in his ministry. This had been always orthodox and serious, and all traces of youthful exuberance had soon vanished; but from this date it was pervaded by a visibly increased earnestness and unction. This progress is supposed to have been connected with some painful spiritual conflicts and exercises, the history of which is not farther known; but we can easily believe that whatever they were, the school of domestic affliction through which he soon afterwards passed, would impress their lesson more deeply.

As a minister, Mr. Brown bestowed his first care upon the pulpit. He did not at all share

the loose and unscriptural opinion, that the duties of the pastor were superior or even equal in importance to those of the public teacher of Christianity. While in Biggar he wrote with care a lecture and sermon weekly, and devoted to their composition the best part of the last three days of each week. He accustomed himself from the beginning to make everything as perfect as possible, and almost never re-wrote his discourses before delivery. He never permitted himself to extemporize even when addressing the most casual audience. All was committed to memory, which was to him a work of great labour, and led to an occasional hesitation in delivery, though the word, when recollected, was always the more emphatic for the foregoing pause. Besides the clearness of thought and expression, and the tone of independence and authority which marked every discourse, two features were generally apparent: a very lengthened introduction, or prefatory essay, more than usually elaborate; and a recapitulation of the leading truths or principles that had been discussed before. This latter was all the more necessary, that he sometimes preached long courses of sermons; as, for example, upon the text, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," &c., which occupied a

whole year. The didactic character prevailed in the beginning and middle of his discourses; it was only in the close that they became awakening and impressive. His public prayers were carefully studied, and were more remarkable for uniformity than variety of expression. He read a portion of Scripture in his daily service, according to the Westminster Directory, when that practice was almost obsolete in Scotland, and by his admirable reading threw upon it much light. He also continued the usage, since almost extinct, of prefacing the psalm.

The chief feature of peculiarity, however, in Mr. Brown's pulpit ministrations in Biggar, was their highly critical and exegetical character. As this is of the greatest interest in connexion with his subsequent career, it would have been very desirable to have been able to trace the origin and growth of this feature more accurately than is now possible. It was to be expected that his philological talents, and great powers of logical analysis, would, when engaged in the Scottish practice of *lecturing* or expounding books of Scripture in course, lead sooner or later to some degree ef eminence in this department. But none of his early exercises indicated even a tendency towards the peculiar style he afterwards cultivated with such success,

and one or two years of his Biggar ministry passed away without any marked approach to it. By and by, the system of lecturing in his hands began to assume a new shape. The usual practice of taking the meaning of the passage almost for granted, and expending the chief strength of the lecturer upon devotional amplification, inference, and improvement, was given up, and succeeded by an earnest and resolute effort to settle the exact meaning, and to furnish evidence that this meaning and no other could be intended by the sacred writers. Each lecture became an exercise in interpretation, or portion of a regular commentary, shorn indeed of those references to the original which only a learned audience could understand, and relieved by an intermixture of doctrinal and practical matter, suitable to a popular audience, but still embracing all the elements of critical exposition, and exhibiting its processes as well as its results in the eyes of all. This feature became in Mr. Brown's lectures more and more conspicuous, till it reached the development which it afterwards steadily maintained throughout his ministry. On this subject little can be added to the interesting testimony of Dr. Harper: "At the commencement of his ministry, Dr. Brown's discourses were not without traces

of a youthful pen, in the choice of his subjects and adornment of his style. But very soon and completely he threw the bent of his talents into the course of exegetical study, in which he latterly attained such undisputed eminence. This was the more remarkable, that at that time the science of interpretation was but little cultivated in the schools of Scottish theology. Literary intercourse with Dr. Charles Stuart,* and the writings of Dr. George Campbell, whose originality and critical acumen Dr. Brown much admired, were, I have reason to believe, the principal means of giving Dr. Brown's mind so

* Though there is no record in Dr. Brown's works of his obligations to Dr. Charles Stuart, as above stated, there can be no doubt of the fact; and it may be worth while to append his character of this excellent, though somewhat peculiar person:—"Dr. Charles Stuart of Dunearn, once a minister of the Church of Scotland, but who from conscientious scruples left her communion, was long an eminent physician in this city. He was the son-in-law of Dr. John Erskine, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, and the intimate friend of Andrew Fuller; and the biographer of John Knox—in a eulogium on him soon after his death, at an annual meeting of the Gaelic School Society, of which it was not too much to say, that it was worthy of its subject and its author—with the beauty and simplicity of truth, says of him: 'In Dr. Stuart I always found the honourable feelings of the gentleman, the refined and liberal thinking of the scholar, and the unaffected and humble piety of the Christian.' Having, like that distinguished and lamented individual, 'had the honour and the happiness of an intimate acquaintance with Dr. Stuart during a considerable number of years,' I may be permitted to add, that for critical acumen, acquaintance with and veneration for the Word of God, I do not know if I have ever met with his superior."—*Law of Christ respecting Civil Obedience*, p. 510.

decided a taste for the study of exegesis. Descrying with a happy instinct the rich field before him, he caught the impulse and followed out the study to an extent far exceeding the range to which the great critic above named applied the principles of Biblical interpretation. The devout enthusiasm with which Dr. Brown became engrossed with sacred criticism was soon felt in his pulpit ministrations. At an early period he entered on the exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, and reared the framework of that important commentary which now forms so valuable a portion of his printed discourses. The same bias appeared in the composition of his library, in his counsels to students, in his criticisms on their discourses, in his fireside talk with brethren; in short, from thenceforth, in spirit and purpose, in reading and writing, always and by all means, he was the sacred expositor."*

To this testimony it may be added, that other early friends of Mr. Brown, while agreeing that his peculiar style became most fully developed in his lectures on the Romans, think that the first impulse came from the study of Vitringa's *Commentary on Isaiah.* Having in the early years of his ministry, as he was himself accus-

* Dr. Harper's *Funeral Sermon*, pp. 63, 64.

tomed to say, entered "with great presumption" on the exposition of this prophet, he read through the two folios of his great Dutch interpreter; and from them he must have learned something of that honest and thoroughgoing investigation of Scripture, by which with all their faults they are so honourably distinguished. Mr. Brown's critical apparatus remained for a time comparatively scanty. In his Preface to his Exposition of the *Epistle to the Romans*, he tells us that when he began the study of it forty years before, he had few other helps in addition to his Greek Testament, lexicon, and concordance, than *Poli Synopsis*, Bengel's *Gnomon*, and Koppe's *Annotations*, with Whitby, Locke, and Taylor. His own labour, however, in comparing parallel texts, and in meditating upon the chain of thought, was all the more intense; and his distance from books brought more fully into play his native independence of judgment. It is certain also that these studies were mingled with much prayer for light, as he came more and more to regard the searching of Scripture as the first of ministerial duties. Nothing parallel to these solitary inquiries could then be found in Scotland. The labours of Macknight had in them no such high devotion, and were due, in part at least, to the impulse of continental edu-

cation. Horsley and Pye Smith in England, with Magee in Ireland, afforded a nearer resemblance. But with them exegesis was more the handmaid of doctrinal controversy. None of them cultivated it so eagerly for its own sake, or published its results from a pulpit in the wilderness.

While Mr. Brown's lectures thus settled into a fixed critical mould, perhaps in some cases too rigorously adhered to, greater latitude appeared in his sermons, which departed much less from the usual Scottish model. There was always an exegetical groundwork, for the author could not tolerate fanciful accommodations, superficial guesses, or edifying meanings put into texts rather than brought out of them. But the critical element was more under restraint, and sometimes did not appear where it might have been anticipated. He was once called on to preach at Selkirk during the sitting of the Hall, some six or seven years after his settlement in Biggar. The assembled students expected from his text, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh," that he would enter deeply into the conflicting views taken of the difficult passage, and elaborately decide between them. He surprised and

perhaps disappointed his audience by a rapid statement of his results, and a lengthened practical improvement of the subject. He gained, however, from Dr. Lawson the pithy encomium, "Mr. John, you have, I am glad to see, a way of getting at the kernel without breaking your teeth upon the shell."

In Mr. Brown the labour of the student and the exactness of the critic appeared in somewhat unusual combination with the ardour of the evangelist. He inaugurated in his neighbourhood a new order of things, not only preaching on the Lord's-day evenings, and during the week in barns and school-rooms, but also in summer in the open air. These meetings were attended by great crowds, and their impression is still remembered. He selected for these occasions his best discourses, often those of a recapitulatory nature, containing the fullest and plainest statement of the gospel. He thus disturbed the slumbers of the moderate clergy of the Establishment; and one of them in a virulent pamphlet denounced him as "a recruiting serjeant," whose only aim in these out-of-door assemblages, was to gather adherents to the Secession standard. The charge was the more unjust, that Mr. Brown, with a liberality of sentiment almost singular amongst Seceders in

those days, did not require pious members of the Establishment to leave it, as a condition of joining occasionally with his congregation in the observance of the Lord's Supper, but carried out the long-forgotten principles of free communion so nobly expressed in the Westminster standards.

In the visitation of his flock, and other pastoral duties, the same love to the souls of men appeared. These were attended with no small amount of labour, leading him at times far up among the hills, and to outlying hamlets and cottages in the waste. Nothing special is recorded in connexion with these pastoral employments, save only with the exercise of examination. This is now almost everywhere discontinued, but was a valuable usage of other days, assembling young and old annually, district by district, to be publicly catechised and exhorted by their minister. This sometimes degenerated into routine, or took the more questionable shape of a theological fencing-match between the minister and some of the more disputatious of his hearers. But when rightly conducted it tended to keep alive religious knowledge, and gave scope for easy and familiar instruction. Mr. Brown greatly excelled at such times in throwing light on divine truth by his questions and comments; and these "diets" of examination

are among the cherished reminiscences of his Biggar ministry.

Another feature which honourably distinguished this period was Mr. Brown's anxiety to train his people to missionary effort. Though Scottish Christians partook the missionary impulse arising from the formation of the great Societies, they long stood in a position of discreditable inferiority to their English brethren. For the first twenty years of this century their utmost range of contribution in all to the Bible Society was about £7000, or one-tenth of England, and to all missionary societies about £6000, or one-twelfth of the sister kingdom. The ministers and congregations that made any approach to zeal and liberality could then be easily counted, and amongst these the Biggar congretion and their minister occupied a conspicuous place. In one year they are found contributing £14, 1s. 3d. to the Serampore Mission; in another £17, 9s. to the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews; in another £25, 1s. 6d. to the Edinburgh Missionary Society; and in another £31 to the British and Foreign Bible Society; their average contributions to all such purposes reaching £100 per annum. Such efforts would not discredit any rural congregation of the present day; and this congregation

has since maintained its high standard, and was declared by its former minister, in one of his last public appearances, to equal any in the denomination in its liberal support of the missionary cause. Mr. Brown was also zealous in the cause of education, and the collection taken at a monthly lecture defrayed the school charges of about thirty poor children of the locality.

In 1814, Mr. Brown started another scheme which was then without precedent in the denomination. This was the establishment of a minister's library, designed to be the property of the congregation, but to be under the charge of the minister, and subsidiary to his improvement. For this purpose between thirty and forty pounds were subscribed for the first purchase of books, and the stock was increased by an annual collection. When Mr. Brown was translated to Edinburgh eight years afterwards, this library had grown to 143 volumes, many of them folios and quartos, and consisting of some of the most valuable and expensive works in theology. The idea was singularly happy, and to it may be traced Mr. Brown's early acquaintance with works otherwise unattainable in a rural situation, and by a minister of limited income. The example, however, was not immediately followed; and it was not till 1852

that the scheme was extended. At that date the United Presbyterian Synod began to originate ministers' libraries by grants from a fund of £1600 which had been raised for the purpose; and, on conditions somewhat similar to those acted on in the Biggar congregation, about one hundred and fifty ministers' libraries have now been instituted.

The local efforts and enterprises of Mr. Brown from 1806 to 1815 had been preparing him for more public labours; and a brief account of these is now to be given, comprising the second period of his rural ministry.

His first appearance as an author was made in connexion with the Unitarian controversy. This controversy, after it had been well-nigh exhausted in England, was transplanted to Scotland by the Rev. James Yates, Unitarian minister in Glasgow, whose proselytizing zeal called forth, in 1814, Dr. Wardlaw's well-known *Discourses on the Socinian Controversy.* To this work Mr. Yates immediately published an elaborate answer, entitled, *A Vindication of Unitarianism.* This defence Mr. Brown had been engaged to review for the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, then commencing its vigorous career under Dr. Andrew Thomson. The review swelled to such a size, that Dr. Thomson re-

commended a separate publication; and the work was accordingly given to the world in April 1815, in the form of a treatise of seventy octavo pages, and with the title, *Strictures on Mr. Yates's Vindication of Unitarianism.* It was dedicated to his old professor, Dr. Lawson, and was published not in Edinburgh but in Glasgow, as the latter city was the seat of the controversy. It laboured under the great disadvantage of being the third work in a controversial series; but the remarkable acuteness, clearness, and condensation of its arguments, and the spirit and energy of its style, together with its extensive and well-digested learning, gave it at once a high rank, and stamped its author as equal to the weightiest topics of theological discussion. It naturally lost much of its interest with the speedy decline of Unitarianism, and the failing influence of its Glasgow advocate; but it remains still one of the most terse and luminous exposures of the Unitarian error then produced. In later years its author regretted an approach to asperity in the style, and regarded himself as having indulged too exclusively in a denunciatory strain, and shown too little of the pity and tenderness due from the adherents of the orthodox scheme to those who are unhappily blind to its truth and glory.

In the beginning of 1816, he took an active part in a larger enterprise. This was the starting of a monthly religious magazine, intended to occupy the same field with the *Christian Instructor*, but to defend the principles of dissent, and to furnish a theological organ to the Burgher Secession, such as they had never before enjoyed. Of this periodical, which was styled *The Christian Repository and Religious Register*, the editorship devolved on Mr. Brown, who held it during the five years of its existence, till it was united with the organ of the Antiburgher Secession, and merged in a new publication called *The Christian Monitor*. In this work Mr. Brown had his share of the discomfort and annoyance connected with a religious periodical, which in general is ill supported, thanklessly received, and doomed to a rapid oblivion. He succeeded however in collecting in this magazine some of the best talent of his denomination; and one still reads with pleasure and admiration, amidst considerable masses of less attractive matter, such papers as those of Dr. Lawson *On the Popery of Protestants*, and of Dr. Peddie *On Sacred Zoology;* and such critical essays as that by Mr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch on *Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses*, and by Mr. Balmer of Berwick on Hall's *Terms of Communion*.

Mr. Brown's own contributions to the review department are all excellent, some of them pre-eminent, and display a fulness of knowledge and a vigour of judgment not surpassed in the highest periodical literature of that age. These, with his miscellaneous contributions, are very various as well as numerous, and if collected would form a considerable volume. The selection of religious intelligence is also skilful, and presided over by a highly catholic spirit. The *Christian Repository* never attained to wide diffusion, being always considered more a minister's than a people's magazine. But it served to give a literary impulse to the denomination, to liberalize its tone, and to increase its credit with the Christian world. The same remarks apply to the *Christian Monitor*, which Mr. Brown edited till 1826.

Mr. Brown followed up his labours as a controversialist and an editor, by publishing, in 1816, a volume of discourses suited to the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. These are favourable specimens of his early manner, and indicate accurate study and laborious preparation, but with less of the glow and spontaneous richness of his later sermons. They discuss the Lord's Supper in its doctrinal not less than its practical aspects, and are chiefly remarkable in

a theological respect for the emphasis with which they disclaim the efficacy sometimes vaguely ascribed to the Lord's Supper as "a sealing ordinance," limiting the "sealing" effect to the outward gospel truth which this ordinance confirms, without any affirmation, direct or indirect, as to the state of the communicant.

It was in the midst of these varied labours that the stroke of domestic calamity fell, which for a time involved Mr. Brown in the deepest gloom, and spread its shadow over all the future years of his Biggar ministry. His wife, to whom he was passionately attached, was seized with a distemper which brought her by lingering steps, long unperceived by her husband, to an early grave. She died in his presence, confessing her Christian faith and hope, but leaving him with a sense of desolation rarely experienced even in such bereavement. By a great effort he prepared and preached to his congregation after the funeral a sermon on the words addressed to the prophet Ezekiel in connexion with the death of his wife. This he delivered unmoved when all around were in tears; and he subsequently uttered his grief in a very pathetic meditation founded on the words of David, slightly altered, "I shall go to her; but she shall not return to me." These

were, many years afterwards, published under the title, *A Tribute to the Memory of a very dear Christian Friend.** The wound thus received remained long unhealed, and a visible dejection spread over his whole demeanour. He acted, however, on the maxim so well expressed by Matthew Henry, that "weeping should not hinder sowing;" and the pressure of public duties constrained him in some measure "to forget his complaint and leave off his heaviness."

In the funeral sermon preached on the occasion of this bereavement, the following sketch of the character of his deceased wife is given:—"Endowed with an uncommonly mild and affectionate temper, blessed with a truly Christian education, and early brought under the governing influence of religious principle, she was in every stage of life a blessing and an honour to all with whom she was connected.

* The inscription on the monument erected to this excellent Christian lady in Symington Churchyard, amid the solitary beauties of the Upper Clyde, deserves to be copied:—"This tablet records the singular worth of Jane Nimmo Brown, wife of John Brown, minister of the Associate Congregation, Biggar, and the deep but not hopeless sorrows of her bereaved husband.

Sperabam longos, heu! tecum ducere soles,
Et fido acclinis consenuisse sinu!
Coelo aliter visum est—urnam mihi restat inanem
Ornare, et moestâ dicere voce Vale!

She died 28th May 1816, and her remains rest beneath in hope of a blessed resurrection."

She was a good daughter, a good sister, a good friend, a good wife, and a good mother. Unaffectedly humble, her aim through life was to be rather than to seem religious. In attendance on all the offices of devotion, secret, domestic, and public, and in the discharge of the active duties of life, she was most conscientiously regular. She loved the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honour dwells. Integrity and truth upheld her in all her deportment. Industry, economy, prudence, self-denial, and kindness, were the leading features of her domestic character. She was peculiarly fitted to be a helpmeet for her husband as a minister. 'His heart safely trusted in her;' and her wise management completely freed his mind from secular cares, and enabled him to devote his time and thought to the business of his profession. Habitually feeling herself a sinner, she reposed all her hope of pardon and salvation on the finished work of the Redeemer, and lived and died in the faith of the truth. For the last ten years of her life she bore almost constant uneasiness and frequently severe pain, not only with patience and fortitude, but even with cheerfulness. Her life was indeed in no ordinary degree innocent, useful, and happy, and her end was peace. I have no

wish to represent her as a faultless character, though I confess I would find some difficulty in enumerating her faults, and I wish to trace also her worth to its true source. By the grace of God she was what she was."*

It was fully a year after Mr. Brown's loss before any other publication was issued by him, and that only a reprint of two articles contributed to the *Christian Repository*. They had for their subject the *Plans and Publications of Robert Owen of New Lanark*.

The nearness of New Lanark—the scene of Mr. Owen's experiments—to Biggar, with other circumstances, had turned Mr. Brown's attention very strongly to these eccentric schemes and theories. Mr. Owen had not in 1817, when this notice appeared, broken so openly as afterwards with property, marriage, and the Christian religion; and the air of misguided benevolence, impressed on his efforts to revolutionize society, secured for him in these animadversions a more respectful treatment from Mr. Brown than Mr. Yates had met with, and certainly such as would not have been accorded at a later period. The moral foundations of his system, however, are overturned with great ability, and the mixture of truism

* *Tribute*, &c., pp. 54-56.

and paradox which they contain is happily exposed. It is shown with much clearness, that to lay down self-interest, as Mr. Owen does, as the primary motive of human conduct, is to overlook, as Butler long ago proved, the disturbing influence of the appetites and passions; that the harmony of self-interest and public good (another of Mr. Owen's principles) is too obscure, vague, and pointless to supply a directory of action, and can never be compared with the Christian law, which carries out its general maxims into detailed precepts, and rests both on Divine authority; and that Mr. Owen's expectation of moulding mankind at will by external circumstances, so as universally to make them act on these principles, is an enthusiastic over-estimate of the influence of education, which, unassisted by Divine grace, fails even in impressing truths of infinitely greater clearness. It is also demonstrated that the measure of success which had attended Mr. Owen's experiments in no degree confirmed his theories, since their success was accounted for by old and familiar principles of morality and political economy, common to him with all social reformers. Mr. Brown never wrote anything ablcr than this essay, which shows his intimate acquaintance with human nature, and

the extent to which he had prosecuted the study of moral and political philosophy. It attracted the notice of Mr. Owen himself, who invited its author to New Lanark, and doubtless heard a renewal of his criticisms. He however remained as imperturbable under this early assault on his system, as under the multitude of later ones. No force of evidence ever shook his faith in his first draught of the "new moral world." Even his late conversion to American spiritualism was not so much the token of a change of faith as of a final extinction of reason.

In 1818 were republished in a separate and improved form, three discourses on the *Character, Duty, and Danger of those who forget God*, originally inserted, in 1815, in the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*. These call for no special remark, except for the illustration they give of the vehement and impassioned character which occasionally from the beginning distinguished Mr. Brown's ministry.

But the most valuable and interesting of all the monuments of this period is his treatise, published also in 1818, *On Religion and the Means of its Attainment*. This is dedicated to Dr. Chalmers, then in the full splendour of his reputation. Nowhere had his pre-eminent qualities been more cordially, and at the same time dis-

criminatingly acknowledged, than in Mr. Brown's journal; but whether any personal friendship had yet been formed, it is now impossible to discover. The aim of this little treatise is to extricate religion from the artificial language of human systems, and to explain its nature in terms universally intelligible. Religion is defined to be right thinking, right feeling, and right action towards God; and this simple scheme, adapted to the most elementary division of the powers of human nature, is shown to include the whole of religion in general, and of Christian piety in particular. The grand means necessary, and yet effectual, of becoming thus religious, is Faith; and this is neither more nor less than the belief—in the ordinary sense of the word—of the contents of revelation, since this secures right thinking, and by a necessary law of dependence, right feeling and action. Faith again is produced by the study of the meaning and the evidence of the truth which is set forth to be believed; and the inveterate disinclination of man to enter on and pursue this study, which is the only hindrance to religion, is overcome by the influence of the Holy Spirit. How far Mr. Brown, in advancing these views of faith, was influenced by the reasonings of others cannot be accurately ascer-

tained. There is a wide departure from the theology of the Marrow-men, who, with many other schools, divided faith into various kinds, and included in it the working of affection and will, as well as intellectual assent to evidence. To what extent he might be assisted by the writings of Glas, Sandeman, and the still later Baptist authors, Braidwood and Maclean, the last of whom had waged a long controversy on the subject with Fuller, or by the opinions of Dr. Erskine and Dr. Stewart in the Church of Scotland, it is not easy to determine. Certainly the deduction that faith, as understood by Mr. Brown, meets the conditions of religion as defined by him, is original; and even those who may adhere to different views of faith such as then were, and still are, more widely current than those advocated in this volume, will acknowledge that it is a masterpiece of lucid and connected exposition. The writer of this notice is not convinced that the Scripture use of faith limits it to an act of belief, nor that the disinclination to attend to truth is the one grand moral obstacle to the reception of the gospel; but he regards the prominence given by the author of this work to truth and its evidence, and the emphasis with which to the last the aphorisms of this treatise were reiterated, as an immense

service to the cause of sound theology, and of effectual pulpit instruction.

Besides these various labours in the field of Christian literature, Mr. Brown was zealously engaged in the public support of Missionary and Bible enterprise. In 1816, he preached the annual sermon for the Edinburgh Missionary Society, which he afterwards published under this title—*On the Danger of opposing Christianity, and the Certainty of its final Triumph.* In May 1821, he preached in the Tabernacle, London, one of the anniversary sermons of the London Missionary Society. This was afterwards published under the title—*On the Duty of Pecuniary Contribution for Religious Purposes.* It is one of the most complete and exhaustive discussions of this topic ever given to the world, and few of the sermons preached for that Society during its lengthened career can be placed beside it for practical wisdom and scriptural eloquence. A part of the peroration may be quoted as a proof of Mr. Brown's elevated sympathy with missionary enterprise: "Were an angel to become incarnate, the station he would choose to fill would be the pulpit rather than the throne; he would prefer being a minister of the gospel to being a minister of state, or the master of such ministers; and

were he left to choose his own sphere of labour, it would not be in the high places of hierarchical dignity, but in the humble busy walk of missionary exertion. In the estimation of those pure intelligences, whose minds are unclouded by earthly prejudices, the fame of a Carey is more enviable than that of a Newton, and Henry Martyn breathing out his last sigh amid the deserts of Tartary, unheeded and uncomforted but by the unseen Lord he served, and his ministering spirits, is an object of higher admiration than a Wellington triumphing amid all the sanguinary glories of Waterloo."

In addition to these single sermons in the metropolis of Scotland and England respectively, Mr. Brown had, in the spring of 1819, preached several times in London, and elsewhere in England, as one of a deputation from the Scottish Missionary Society. He was attended on this excursion by Mr. Beattie, then Secession minister of Kincardine, by the Rev. David Dickson of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, and also by the Rev. Henry Grey, who was then perhaps the most popular minister in the Scottish capital. With him, and with his not less accomplished wife, who was of the party, Mr. Brown contracted, from this date, a most intimate and confidential friendship, which lasted amidst

many agitating scenes and vicissitudes unbroken to the close of life. This deputation were much assisted in London by the venerable Dr. Waugh, by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Charles Grant, and other leaders of the Christian world, and brought back £3000 of English gold to the Society which had sent them.

On his return from these labours, in which he had borne a most effective part, Mr. Brown paid a visit to Leicester, in order to see Robert Hall. He both heard him preach and preached for him, delivering a sermon which he long afterwards published, on the text, "And Barnabas was a good man." Mr. Hall's reception of his visitor was highly characteristic. He immediately entangled him in a discussion concerning the Union between England and Scotland, and having drawn out his views at full length in the debate, at last declared his agreement with him as to the benefits it had conferred on both countries. In the course of conversation, he also gave utterance to this sentiment, which he delivered with extraordinary energy: "To die in the cause of Christianity is the highest honour that can befal any man. To die in the cause of civil liberty is the next." Probably it was in this same interview, and not in a later one, that Mr. Hall propounded

the oracular sentence, "A man of genius, Sir, may produce one sermon in the week; a person of average talent may compose two, but nobody but a fool, Sir, can write three." Mr. Brown, like every visitor, was impressed with the profound devotion of Mr. Hall's character, and often mentioned the intense fervour with which he read the verse of the hymn—

> "O glorious hour! O blest abode!
> I shall be near and like my God,
> And flesh and sin no more control
> The sacred passions of my soul!"

This participation in the efforts and struggles of the Church catholic did not withdraw Mr. Brown's attention from the interests of his own denomination, and the wants of his own country. From the beginning of his ministry he had regularly attended the meetings both of the Presbytery to which he belonged, and of the Synod which then met twice in the year; and about this date he began to take a public part in the business of the latter court. His name frequently appears upon the committees which were from time to time appointed, and he seems also, though more rarely, to have addressed the house. His talents did not greatly fit him for debate; but his opinions were always carefully weighed and emphatically expressed.

Amongst other schemes then entertained by the Burgher Synod, he manifested a special interest in the evangelization of the Highlands, and other neglected districts of Scotland. His zeal in this cause was hereditary; but it was also the result of independent judgment and conviction. The spiritual necessities of the Highlands of Scotland forty years ago can hardly be conceived. The country was comparatively unknown even to the lowland Scotch. Education had made scanty progress, and the English language was little spoken and less understood. The Reformation had never thoroughly penetrated into the North; and though the framework of an establishment existed all over the country, the parishes were so vast and the population so scattered, that only superhuman efforts on the part of the Highland clergy could have spread the gospel through their districts. This body of ministers, however, with a few admirable exceptions, had long been more deeply sunk in the torpor of Moderatism than even their brethren in the South, and were slower to feel the impulse of the evangelical revival. A few societies, either connected with the national Church, or established upon a broader basis, did something by itinerant missionaries or schools to mitigate the darkness, and the Independents and

Baptists had also made very creditable exertions to preach the gospel both in English and Gaelic; yet the general features of ignorance, superstition, and spiritual destitution had not been, up to this time, materially relieved. In these circumstances it was not wonderful that, amidst the expansive movements of foreign missions, the claims of the Highlands of Scotland should be strongly impressed upon every section of Scottish Christians. Those ministers of the Burgher Synod, who, like Mr. Brown of Whitburn, had long laboured in this cause, at length succeeded in persuading their denomination to enter upon this field in their public capacity. His own son was selected as the first deputy of the Synod to visit the Highlands, and to evangelize in their name. This appointment he fulfilled in the autumn of 1818, and afterwards published an interesting account of his missionary tour. From this narrative we learn that he entered the Highlands by Comrie, and proceeded by Killin and Kenmore to Glenlyon, returning by Glendochart and Lochlomond to Glasgow. A very pleasing account is given of the revival which had taken place two years before in Glenlyon, under the preaching of Mr. Macdonald of Urquhart, and which had been subsequently fostered by Mr. Kennedy of Aber-

feldy, an Independent minister, to whom Mr. Brown was greatly indebted for assistance in this Highland mission. In the course of his excursion, which extended over three weeks, Mr. Brown preached twelve discourses to audiences more or less numerous, and dispersed a thousand tracts and Catechisms in English and Gaelic.* In the close of his narrative, he warmly urged on his denomination the continuance and extension of this system of itinerancy. Opposition, however, unexpectedly arose from the evangelical party in the Established Church. Mr. Brown's publication and the whole proposal were attacked by Dr. Thomson in the *Christian Instructor;* and though some efforts continued for a time to be made by the Secession to organize missions in the North, the work of Highland evangelization as a whole was left in other hands. Nearly the same result attended itinerant efforts made by the Burgher Synod in other places. Mr. Brown went, in 1819, with other deputies, on a mission into the Stewartry of

* Mr. Brown gives this curious notice of his preaching to Highland audiences:—"I was much pleased to learn that the people generally understood me. Some even of those least accustomed to the English language remarked, 'that they knew almost every word, for that minister does not preach grammar.' When a minister preaches in English so as that they do not understand him, they say he preaches grammar."—P. 63.

Kirkcudbright; but no considerable or permanent fruit seems to have accrued from these operations.

In September 1818, Mr. Brown was chosen Moderator of the Synod to which he belonged, and on resigning his office in the month of April following, he preached a sermon on the text Joshua xiii. 1, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." This was afterwards published under the title, *On the State of Scotland in reference to the Means of Religious Instruction.* Its bold and fearless statements in regard to the deficiencies of the Established Church in the cities, in the lowland districts, and especially in the Highlands, gave much offence to some parties in the Establishment, and led to the withdrawal of that part of his Biggar audience who adhered to the parish Church. But the unfavourable effect was only transient; and any candid churchman of the present day who reads Mr. Brown's sermon, will admit that it is marked by a spirit of moderation and even deference to the Established Church, very remote from sectarian bitterness, and that it only expressed regrets and censures now universally acknowledged to have been well founded.

The standing of Mr. Brown at this time in

the Burgher Synod, may be gathered from the following testimony of a surviving minister, the Rev. Dr. Bruce of Newmilns, who belonged to the other section of the Secession: "One day, more than forty years ago, and prior to the union between the two great branches of the Secession, I looked in on a meeting of the Associate Synod, and there for the first time I saw Dr. Brown, in the midst of his brethren. All of them, with a few exceptions, were strangers to me; but his fine countenance, beaming with intelligence, and glowing with Christian benignity, arrested my attention, drew forth my admiration, and made me single him out as the one who ere long should be *princeps inter pares.*"

When the venerable Dr. Lawson was removed by death in February 1820, the Burgher Synod judged it desirable to elect a successor to him in the professorship, without waiting for the completion of the Union with the sister church, which was effected in the September following. Four of the most distinguished ministers of the body were selected by a committee, as most worthy of this office, and another was subsequently added. Mr. Brown was one of the selected candidates; and the choice of the Synod ultimately lay between him and Dr. Dick of Glasgow. The latter was chosen by a

great majority; but the support extended to his youthful rival in such a contest, was a tribute of the highest kind. The mature gifts of Dr. Dick, cultivated in the direction of systematic theology, were more suitable to that stage of the Secession than the somewhat adventurous exegetical spirit of his competitor would have been, before it was tested by experience and commended to general confidence. The result was a most useful and successful professorship, which greatly contributed to the theological reputation of the Secession body, and left behind, in Dr. Dick's *Lectures on Theology*, a classic work, which, though undervalued by some who affect novelty, or confound obscurity with depth, will be regarded by all competent judges as one of the simplest, least exaggerated, and most scriptural exhibitions of the Calvinistic system ever given to the world.

At the time of the Union of the Burgher and Anti-Burgher Synods in 1820, Mr. Brown, while cordially rejoicing in that event, and using his utmost influence to promote it, headed, with his friend, Mr. Balmer, a small but influential party, who objected to some of the terms of union as too narrow, and as fitted to repress Christian liberty. In particular, without denying any doctrine of the Westminster standards,

they complained of their complicated and extensive nature as imposing too great a burden upon conscience. They regretted the assertion of the formula of ordination, that the Presbyterian is "the only form of government" sanctioned in Scripture, as needlessly offensive to sister churches. They also refused to exalt a declaration as to the morality of covenanting, and as to the wisdom of the conduct of the Scottish Covenanters into a term of communion, since this was to incorporate a comparatively minor and extra-scriptural question with the fundamental articles of faith. This party had to be satisfied, in 1820, with recording a protest against those portions of the basis of union; but, in 1847, when the Secession Church was incorporated with the Relief, such was the progress of opinion, that these grievances—with the exception of the first, which was left unredressed, by the Westminster symbols being retained in all their compass—were removed without dissent or resistance in any quarter.

It was to be expected, that a minister rising to such distinction as Mr. Brown had now attained, should be invited to fill some of the central stations in the Church. Already, in the summer of 1817, he had been called, by the newly-formed congregation of North Leith,

before obtaining their present minister, the Rev. Dr. Harper. At his own request, however, he was, without a vote, continued by the Synod in Biggar. A second call, addressed to him in the early part of 1822, by the congregation of Rose Street, Edinburgh, then vacant by the removal of its former minister, the Rev. Dr. Hall, and a portion of the congregation, to Broughton Place, was more successful. His translation was agreed to by the Synod on the 1st of May 1822. Mr. Brown being called to speak on the question of his translation, weighed the claims of the two congregations with impartiality, but honestly and frankly expressed his preference for the congregation in Edinburgh. This was ratified by the general sentiment of the Synod, and the congregation to which he had so long ministered, sorrowfully acquiesced. Though deeply afflicted, they acted with a dignity and Christian spirit which reflected on them the highest credit. They parted from him with every sentiment of respect; they requested him to preach a farewell sermon, which he did from 1 Cor. xv. 1-4; and when, in the space of two years, he returned to assist his successor at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, they received him with the utmost cordiality. Testimonies of affection continued on both sides to the close

of Mr. Brown's life; and his first congregation were "in his heart" in everything but "to live and die with them." The scenes and associations of his youthful ministry freshened as he advanced in years. His heart went back to the solitude where he had first learned to study deeply the word of God, and the shadow of the hills under which he had so long preached. He delighted to renew his ties with his old flock by regular visits, and to trace out the changing history, temporal and spiritual, of every family. Their congregational peace and prosperity, under his successor and kinsman, the Rev. Dr. Smith, afforded him the purest satisfaction. His feelings towards them were publicly uttered on the occasion of their presenting an address to him when he reached the jubilee of his ministry; and with words borrowed from that testimony, this section of our narrative may be closed: "Biggar was much endeared to me, as the scene of very sweet enjoyments, and very deep sorrows. 'The dews of youth' lay heavy on these scenes, and their recollection refreshes the heart."

CHAPTER IV.

1822–1834.

Edinburgh Ministry: First Period—Rose Street Congregation—Evangelism in Edinburgh—Mr. Brown's Popularity—Calton Hill Sermons—Character by John Brown Patterson—Religious Societies—Greek Testament Class—Christian Economic Society—Robert Pollok—Essays—Apocrypha Controversy—Visit to Ireland—Call to Broughton Place—Degree—Broughton Place Ministry—The Communion—Conversions—Impulse to Missions—His Father's Death.

WHEN Mr. Brown removed to Edinburgh, he had nearly completed his thirty-eighth year. He thus entered upon a new and wider sphere in the full vigour of manhood. Everything was favourable to an influential ministry, and that of Mr. Brown unfolded itself with great power and visible blessing.

Before narrating the incidents of his ministry in the sphere to which he was now translated, his views on the subject of the translation of ministers, as given in a later work, may be here recorded. "It is one of the most painful trials of human life, when a Christian minister, happy and useful in the midst of a flock who have chosen him, and whom he has chosen in the morning of his days, when the affections are warm, is called to leave them for

an obviously wider sphere of professional usefulness. It is well that such trials are of comparatively rare occurrence. The pastoral tie is a very sacred one, and on both sides it is best when it is formed, that the feeling should be that it is likely to last for life. Things are in a deplorable state in a religious body, when translation, and even repeated translation, is the rule, not the rare exception. At the same time there are cases where there can be no reasonable doubt that removal is the path of duty, however repugnant it may be to feeling; and he, who in these cases makes the sacrifice from a regard to his Master and his cause, however the principle on which he acts may be misunderstood by those whom he dearly loves though he feels compelled to leave them, and however painful may be the effects of such misunderstandings, may rejoice that there is One who knows the whole matter, and that it is to him he has to give his account. He will not misconstrue his object nor undervalue his sacrifice."*

The congregation of Rose Street, to which he had been called, was a vigorous offshoot from the original, and for a long time sole, Burgher congregation of Bristo Street. It was

* *Memorials of the Rev. James Fisher*, p. 41.

founded by the minority, which had, in lengthened disputes about the settlement of a minister, clung to the object of their choice, the Rev. James Hall, till they obtained a severance from the parent stock, and liberty to call him. Under the ministry of this able and accomplished man—a highly popular orator, and an efficient leader in the Church courts—the Rose Street congregation had grown apace, and was perhaps second to none in the United Secession body. It was much favoured by its central situation, being for many years the only Secession congregation in the New Town of Edinburgh. At length, after an harmonious existence of between thirty and forty years, the congregation divided on account of a difference in regard to the building of a new place of worship, and Dr. Hall removed with a portion of them to the locality of Broughton Place. The remainder, who continued in Rose Street, had been organized into a new congregation; and it was by them that Mr. Brown had been invited from Biggar. Though diminished in number, they had amongst them the elements of great prosperity; and few men have had to commence a city ministry in circumstances more auspicious than those by which Mr. Brown was now surrounded.

The state of Edinburgh as a whole, was more encouraging as a field of Christian labour, than it had been for half a century. Much had been done to loosen the hold of Moderatism on the public mind. Besides the efforts of the Secession ministers, the vigorous impulse of the Haldanes, and the steadfast exertions of an older race of faithful Churchmen, who struggled perhaps more to defend than to conquer, a powerful aggressive movement had been going on for years in the hands of a new generation of the Established clergy. The vigour of Andrew Thomson, the elegance of Henry Grey, and the fervour of Robert Gordon, had given a standing to evangelical religion long unknown in the Scottish metropolis; and though the victory was not complete, every fresh advocate was assured of a wider audience, and of a more respectful hearing, than would have been possible some years before. Mr. Brown thus passed at once across the limits of the Secession circle, and his ministry appealed to the large and growing public on whom the reviving evangelism had made a favourable impression. The peculiar qualities of his style were from the first recognised; and beyond the crowd of floating and unsettled hearers who gather around every new occupant of a city pulpit, there was a solid body of con-

firmed Christians or intelligent inquirers, who were willing for more than a season to "rejoice in his light."

An overwhelming crowd attended Mr. Brown's first service in Rose Street; and ere long the regular audience filled up every blank in the spacious edifice. His ministry underwent little change in its features, except the impulse which came from a large and eager congregation. His train of exposition hardly grew more elaborate, nor did his exhibitions of the gospel take more of a philosophical colouring than they had possessed from the beginning. The only aspect of novelty was the preponderance of discourses of a stern and awakening character, addressed with passionate earnestness to the unconverted, and delivered in the highest style of physical energy. His vehemence was hardly less than that of Dr. Chalmers himself in these moments of excitement; and his appeals, seconded by the glance of the eye and the stamp of the foot, seemed to shake not only the auditory but the very building in which they were uttered. The elements of instruction and discussion, however, maintained their place, and some of his most valued courses of sermons and lectures partook most of these qualities. In particular, a monthly course of Lord's-day even-

ing lectures on the history of the Jews, was attended by such crowds, that the preacher could hardly find his way to the pulpit. The impression was not confined to the circle usually attracted to Dissenting places of worship. Men of letters, such as Henry Mackenzie, author of the *Man of Feeling*, were found amongst his occasional hearers; and amongst the ranks of military and professional men, not a few gathered around him, as they found his manner of handling the Bible and deducing its lessons, solve their doubts, and open the path to spiritual Christianity. At the same time, the common people heard him not less gladly; and touching instances have come to light of serious impressions being made on the minds of domestic servants and others in the humblest stations, who waited on his ministry.

The following recollections of this period are drawn from the diary of a gentleman, who belonged for many years to his congregation :—"I can well remember, with hundreds then children but now advancing in life, that though not able to comprehend the exact meaning of Mr. Brown's discourses, we used to walk in company, with the sanction of our parents, to a considerable distance, when it was known that Mr. Brown of Biggar was to preach in

some country meeting-house, to enjoy the great luxury of at least seeing that never-to-be-forgotten face, and hearing the musical tones of his voice. From the time that he preached his induction sermon in Rose Street church, to the hour of his death, it was my unspeakable delight to sit under his ministry, and enjoy much of his personal friendship. The character of the attendance, from first to last, both at home and abroad, both in his early and later years, was such as to testify the high estimate formed of his pulpit services, and carries the mind back to kindred scenes witnessed in the early history of our Church. On a Sabbath day, between sermons, I have seen groups of intelligent working people, speaking earnestly together of the impressive truths uttered by him in the morning, and waiting anxiously for the afternoon or evening service; and then the crowds were so dense, that he was frequently led from the session-house to the pulpit, hand to hand across the tops of the pews. At a somewhat early part of his ministry, I have good reason to know that a number of young men in connexion with Edinburgh, and some of them in his own congregation, held very confused and low views of the Saviour's atonement and character as Mediator; and it has often

led me to desire that the discourses so very much blessed to them were placed within the reach of others. I refer to the discourses on Hebrews, many of which will not soon be forgotten by those who heard them, especially his illustrations of the eleventh and twelfth chapters of that book."

The same witness furnishes the following later example of the readiness of Mr. Brown to turn to account unexpected opportunities of usefulness:—"One very snowy day he came into my office for the purpose of shunning the storm. On laying aside his topcoat, he took a copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress* from a glass-case, and inquired if it was quite convenient to go among the work-people, which of course was hailed with delight. Placing himself amidst them, he said, 'It has always been thought that the first part of the Pilgrim's Progress was the best, but I have been greatly struck with the excellencies of the latter part also;' and opening the book at the encounter of Mr. Greatheart with the giant Slaygood, he read on. The power and beauty of his reading of Feeblemind's account of himself, and his explanation of the passage, made a visible impression on all present; and the men were afterwards heard saying, that they never thought the Pilgrim's Progress so

interesting a book before. No one present can forget his appearance when he came to that inimitable passage, 'As to the main, I thank him that loves me; I am fixed.' Ever after that he was a great favourite with the men."

Beside these less formal evangelistic efforts, Mr. Brown at a later date took part with other zealous ministers of Edinburgh in a scheme for open-air preaching, on the Lord's-day evenings during the summer months, on the Calton Hill. He selected for this field some of the most startling and impressive of his Biggar and Rose Street sermons, such as on the text, "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God?" and the slopes and crags might at such times be seen literally black with eager crowds listening with mingled curiosity and awe to his vehement appeals and exhortations.

Prior to this time there appeared in the *Edinburgh Star*, a weekly newspaper of that day, one or two sketches of the most distinguished ministers of the city. In the number for September 17th, 1824, there are given in one article sketches of Dr. Gordon and Mr. Brown. They were understood to be from the pen of Mr. John Brown Patterson, then a student at the University, who, some years afterwards, became famous as the

author of the prize essay, *On the Character of the Athenians.* He thus estimates his kinsman's gifts and eloquence, as they had already taken their place in the Edinburgh pulpit: "We have described the mind of the great preacher whose genius we are discussing, as one of the highest compactness and symmetry, each faculty existing in healthy expansion and in its appropriate place, and the whole producing a combination of perfect equilibrium and remarkable solidity. We go on to observe, that all these faculties seem to have been highly cultivated and diligently exercised in the appropriate departments of ministerial study. His general learning is extensive, and his theological science both wide and profound. His conceptions on every subject are (to use the logical phrase) correct, distinct, and accurate. His knowledge is completely arranged and consolidated, and every part of it is forthcoming when it is required. His style is very various, sometimes highly elevated, at others extremely familiar; sometimes splendidly imaginative, at others absolutely plain and unadorned. His chief defect is a want of freedom. His exterior and his manner are very striking, especially in the impassioned parts of his subject. Then his eye gleams with a dark and piercing light; the veins start into

prominence on his knit brow, and his whole frame is tossed as with an agony of earnestness. His conceptions become more vivid, his grasp of thought more free, his utterance more rapid and unrestrained. For the time he is an orator of the loftiest stamp."

Little more could be said respecting Mr. Brown's Rose Street ministry, except to give the titles of his lectures and sermons. But, besides his careful studies for the pulpit, engrossing the last two days of the week, every day almost had its congregational duty. One day was devoted to visitation of the sick, a second to the payment of brief pastoral visits, followed up by an address to the visited families and the catechising of their children, when they assembled on the evening of the same day in the session-house, a third to the teaching of a Bible class, which was attended by great numbers, and was limited to young women, the attempt to enlist the other sex having proved unsuccessful. This routine labour continued during the seven years of his ministry in this congregation, while, over and above, he had imposed on him from 1824 to 1831, the office of clerk to the Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh, which entailed considerable trouble and exertion.

The same public spirit which in the narrower

sphere of Biggar shone out in Mr. Brown's advocacy of missionary and philanthropic institutions, now carried him into the centre of those religious societies which had their seat in Edinburgh. Much of his time was given up to the Scottish Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the London Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, with several Irish Societies, such as the Hibernian and the Irish Evangelical Society. These and other societies, which either had their head-quarters or their auxiliaries in Edinburgh, were then more burdensome to their clerical supporters than they have since become. The work was not so thoroughly organized, and the number of willing agents, in proportion to the institutions maintained, was greatly less. Many precious hours were in this way spent by Mr. Brown ungrudgingly, and his natural recoil from the platform and even the committee-room was overcome at the call of duty. A compensation was found, however, in the valuable friendships thus cultivated beyond the circle of his own denomination. Amongst these, it may suffice to mention the names of Drs. Grey, Gordon, and Dickson, the Haldanes, Dr. William Innes, and Christopher Anderson.

Meanwhile his zeal in the prosecution of Bibli-

cal Science was unabated. Every available hour was devoted to the study of works illustrative of the Holy Scriptures. To study he now added teaching; for he had hardly settled in Edinburgh, before he commenced amongst the students attending his congregation, a society for the reading of the Greek Testament. This was formed in November 1822, and was continued for several years, its advantages being ere long extended, at their desire, to students of other denominations. This class met weekly, and read over in succession the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, with other parts of the New Testament, which were then critically expounded by Mr. Brown, each student at the same time preparing and reading a paper on some prescribed verse, subject to comment. These exercises were attended by great numbers, and many of the students who were thus engaged, rose to occupy important stations in different sections of the Church, and in distant quarters of the world. Dr. Brown, in his Preface to his Exposition of the Galatians, selects the names of John Brown Patterson, and of Dr. William Cunningham, now Principal of the New College, Edinburgh. Dr. David Brown of Aberdeen Free College, and Dr. A. S. Patterson of Glasgow, also attended. Mr.

Brown was solicited by this class, to publish his Notes on the Galatians, but declined. There can be no doubt, however, that these labours not only foreshadowed, but assisted his future work as a teacher of theology, from the impulse which they gave to his own studies. In addition to this formal and special effort to benefit students, and especially students of theology, he exerted much influence for good by his personal intercourse with them, and by his pulpit ministrations. Even in Biggar, he had shown extraordinary powers of attracting students by his preaching and conversational talents; and during his whole Edinburgh ministry, he was probably surrounded by a larger body of them than any other preacher whatever. Much of his usefulness lay amongst this important class, whom he pleased and edified by a kind of natural adaptation, but without any deference to their fastidious and exclusive tastes.

Mr. Brown's biblical studies were not confined at this time to exegetical literature. He formed a society amongst his clerical brethren for the study of sacred geography; which was not, however, of very long duration. After the settlement in Edinburgh of Dr. Chalmers, in whom he welcomed an old friend, another society was instituted in which they both met, called

the Christian Economic Society, which had for its object the discussion of political economy in its bearings on Christian philanthropy. This Society contained only one other clergyman, the Rev. Edward Craig of the Church of England. Amongst the laymen, who preponderated in it, were men like John Campbell, Esquire of Carbrook, Major (now Sir Duncan) Macgregor, and others then well known in the religious world. This society was altogether private, and met successively at the houses of the members. It bore throughout the stamp of Dr. Chalmers, whose genius Mr. Brown had always admired, but from many of whose views and schemes in Christian economics, he then, as always, expressed his dissent. As akin to the studies and associations of this period, may be mentioned his warm friendship then begun with James Douglas, Esquire of Cavers, and also with Thomas Erskine, Esquire of Linlathen ; the one maintained with singular agreement of view to the close of life, the other qualified but not cooled by grave and growing differences.

During these years, almost every kind of literature received from him some passing attention. He took interest in phrenology, then a favourite Edinburgh study, though he did not

allow it to displace his earlier philosophical creed. Most new books found their way to his table; and he relaxed himself almost every afternoon by half-an-hour's conversation with literary friends in the backshop of his relative, Mr. David Brown, bookseller in St. Andrew Street, a man of letters as well as of books, who was much consulted by his associates in the pursuit of their several studies.

One service which Mr. Brown rendered at this time to literature, is worthy of special commemoration. The poet, Robert Pollok, had attended his ministry as a Secession student of divinity, and for the first time had essayed to preach in his pulpit. Mr. Brown had all along recognised his genius, and when the shy and melancholic author of the *Course of Time*, already depressed by incipient consumption, confided to him the MS. of that wonderful production, he not only cheered him with unbounded praise, but zealously negotiated with Mr. Blackwood for its publication. He soothed with the tenderest sympathy every stage of the descent of the poet to his early grave; and in conjunction with a friend, Dr. John Belfrage of Slateford, made all those arrangements for his removal to a warmer climate, which death interrupted ere he left the shores of England.

During the whole course of Mr. Brown's Rose Street ministry, the demands of pastoral and public labour prevented him from issuing any considerable publication. He compiled a number of tracts on the gospel ministry, under the title of *The Christian Pastor's Manual*, and another series entitled, *The Mourner's Friend*. He wrote three essays for Collins' series of *Christian Authors*, one on Systematic and Biblical Theology, prefixed to Maclaurin's *Essays and Sermons;* another on the True Theory of the Sacraments, prefixed to Henry's *Communicant's Companion;* and a third on the Distinction between Natural and Christian Ethics, prefixed to Venn's *Complete Duty of Man*. These papers, especially the first and last, are written in the more abstract and philosophical style which marks his review of Robert Owen, and contain fine and deep thoughts, though inferior in expression to his work on *Religion and the Means of its Attainment*. He wrote also a brief memoir prefixed to a volume of Remains of the Rev. Alexander Fisher of Dunfermline, a young minister who had been a member of Rose Street congregation, and had then been called to the church so long associated with the memory of Ralph Erskine; where, however, his early promise was soon blighted by death.

The only other publication of Mr. Brown during this period was called forth in 1828 by the Apocrypha controversy. This unhappy strife is after thirty years well-nigh forgotten, and no friend of Bible circulation would wish to revive its memory, now that the disputants and their successors have long been walking in peace over its ashes. Mr. Brown could not avoid taking a side in this controversy, which agitated Scotland even more than England, and Edinburgh more than any other Scottish city. He had all along been an active member of the Edinburgh Bible Society, and his position also as a leading Edinburgh minister made neutrality impossible. He went cordially along with Dr. Andrew Thomson, and the more zealous protesters against the London Committee of the Bible Society, in reprobating the circulation of the Apocrypha on the Continent as a help to that of the Bible, and in demanding that it should cease. On this point all the Edinburgh Committee were agreed; and their union and energy rendered a valuable service to the cause of truth. Differences arose as to the steps to be taken next; whether the Continental societies should be discarded or retained in the circulation of the pure Bible, in what terms the London Committee should disavow the past, and

how far they should be treated with confidence for the future. Mr. Brown, though not altogether satisfied with the first concessions and arrangements of the London Committee, yet took the more lenient view; and when the Second Statement of the Edinburgh Committee, prepared with so much ability by Dr. Thomson, was adopted, he with others dissented from it. Amongst the reasons of dissent read on the 20th March 1826, and afterwards published, the statement of Mr. Brown follows more lengthened statements of the Rev. Henry Grey and John Campbell, Esq. The name of Edward Craig is associated with that of John Brown, and stands above it; but the paper bears internal evidence of Mr. Brown's authorship; and though limited to four pages, almost exhausts the controversy. When the breach between the London and the Edinburgh Society became final, the dissenting members of the latter, with others, formed themselves in June 1827 into a Committee of Correspondence with the London Society, of which John Campbell, Esq., was elected chairman; the Rev. Dr. Peddie, treasurer; and Revs. Henry Grey, John Brown, and Edward Craig, secretaries. It fell to Mr. Brown, in the name of this body, to write the defence of their movement, which naturally

called forth much hostile criticism from the other side. This was published in 1828, under the title "Statement of the Claims of the British and Foreign Bible Society on the Support of the Christian Public." As the London Society had by this time brought their measures into perfect harmony with the convictions of their Scottish supporters, Mr. Brown in this pamphlet pleaded their cause with much cordiality; and nothing more able or temperate appeared on that side of the question. It was the aim of the Statement to show that the constitution of the British and Foreign Bible Society stood before the Christian world exactly as at the beginning, with the additional advantage of being fenced by stronger securities than at first against Apocryphal circulation, and that the executive of the Society, though betrayed into error on this point, had not thereby sacrificed Christian integrity, or done anything subsequent to the change in their regulations to forfeit public confidence. This defence confronted the line of battle displayed by Dr. Andrew Thomson in the Second and Third Statements of the Edinburgh Bible Society; and whoever reads these papers has a full view of the argumentative aspects of this controversy, free from the unhappy personalities by which on both sides it

was embittered. Mr. Brown not only wrote, but appeared on the platform in defence of the London Society. Gradually the waves of agitation subsided; but the aspect of the religious world in Scotland was changed. Co-operation in Christian enterprise was enfeebled. Evangelical Churchmen and Dissenters having for the most part differed on this question, did not again coalesce, and the Voluntary controversy, which soon afterwards broke out, inherited much of the bitterness of the earlier strife. It was a source of satisfaction to Mr. Brown, that his most intimate friends, both in the Establishment and beyond its pale, were ranged on the same side with him in this prolonged contest. Dr. Heugh of Glasgow was almost the only exception; but by a felicity rare in that time amongst men, as both were, of strong conviction and eager temper, their cordiality was not disturbed or shaken.

During the period of his Rose Street ministry, Mr. Brown, engrossed with the labours which have been recited, and engaged in the superintendence of his youthful family, rarely went to any distance from Edinburgh. He paid, however, a lengthened visit to Ireland in the summer of 1826, as a delegate of the Scottish Missionary Society, proceeding by Dublin as far as

Sligo, and preaching many times on his tour. Besides the intercourse thus naturally opened up with Presbyterian and Independent ministers, he found introduction to an interesting circle in the Irish branch of the Church of England. The Viscountess Powerscourt had attached herself to his ministry when resident in Edinburgh, and at the seat of this excellent Christian noblewoman he met not a few of the Irish clergy, and was also introduced by her to the Earl of Roden. Another gratifying incident of this visit, was an interview with Miss Edgeworth at Edgeworthstown. This lady he thanked in the name of his children, for the instruction and pleasure she had afforded them, and received in return a few flowers plucked in her garden, and good-naturedly sent as a present to these distant readers. Mr. Brown was most painfully impressed by the contrasts of Irish life, especially in Dublin, which he saw during this visit; and his general estimate of the religious state of the country, notwithstanding the favourable exceptions he met with, was strongly tinged with depression and despondency.

The only other visit he paid was to London, in the beginning of 1829, to supply the pulpit of Albion Street Chapel. This visit was as fruitful of labour as any other, and brought

a large accession to his acquaintance; but his enjoyment of it was somewhat impaired by the uncertainty of the relation in which he had been brought to stand with his congregation at home, an uncertainty which soon afterwards ended in his separation from them.

Dr. Hall, the first minister of Broughton Place, had died in November 1826, without having had time to consolidate the new congregation. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Brown without the most remote idea that he should be asked to occupy the vacant place. After, however, an interval of more than a year, the congregation of Broughton Place formally called him, and on their call being set aside by the Synod in May 1828, they renewed the attempt in the autumn of the same year. The intervening months till the Synodical meeting in May 1829, were passed by Mr. Brown in great anxiety. He hesitated much as to whether it was his duty to leave a people who were so warmly attached to him, and amongst whom his ministry had been so greatly blessed, that an effort was in the course of being made to erect a larger and more commodious place of worship. On the other hand, the claims of what was virtually a church extension enterprise weighed with him; and their force was increased by a misunder-

standing which arose from the delay in erecting the contemplated new building in Rose Street. By the time of the meeting of Synod, his own mind was prepared to acquiesce in removal; but the issue of the case was highly problematical; and he would probably have been continued, had not Dr. John Belfrage of Slateford, in a powerful and energetic speech, decided the vote in favour of his translation. Dr. Belfrage was one of his most intimate clerical friends, and a man of great but undeveloped force of character. His influence over Mr. Brown was remarkable; and his interference at this crisis to influence others in regard to him, materially affected his whole future history.

About 200 members of Rose Street congregation disjoined themselves, that they might continue to enjoy Mr. Brown's services; but under the acceptable ministry of his successor, the Rev. John M'Gilchrist, the congregation sustained no permanent diminution.

Considerable excitement was at first created by Mr. Brown's removal to an adjoining congregation in the same city, and one associated with the recollection of past differences; yet to use his own words—"There was nothing envenomed in the wound, and though painful, it healed by the first intention, as the surgeons

say, leaving no unseemly scars behind it." He found his way by and by to occasional ministration amongst his old flock, and continued to look back on the seven years spent in their service, as one of the most active, happy, and useful seasons of his life.

The venerable Dr. Peddie, the unshaken friend of Mr. Brown from youth to age, presided at his induction to Broughton Place Church, on the 20th of May 1829. It was the commencement of a ministry which lasted nearly thirty years, and was enriched by the ripest fruits of study and Christian experience. It was also blessed by unbroken harmony and unclouded prosperity, the only trials and afflictions that marked its continuance, coming from without and not from within. In all its essential features, it was a continuation of the ministry in Rose Street; and its history might be written in a few sentences, were it not that the writer, who can here speak from personal recollections, feels bound to attempt a somewhat fuller sketch of one of the most remarkable styles of pulpit instruction which has ever distinguished Scottish Christianity.

It may first be mentioned that, shortly after Mr. Brown's translation to Broughton Place in the autumn of 1830, he received from Jefferson

College, Pennsylvania, the degree of D.D. He was neither one of those who courted nor of those who decried such distinctions. American degrees would have ranked higher had they always been as worthily bestowed. One very advantageous service it rendered to him, by discriminating him from his predecessors of the same name—a distinction so much needed, that it has been hard to resist the temptation of giving him his honorary title from the first, so as to save awkwardness and confusion.

The outward success of Dr. Brown in Broughton Place Church, was from the first decisive. By the end of 1830, the number of members had risen from about 600 to more than 1000; and the place, which contained nearly 1600 sittings, was almost uniformly full. The membership continued to rise; and though its highest point cannot be ascertained, the average was about 1200. Many of these members were admitted for the first time; and the amount of labour entailed in the requisite examinations, on one who like Dr. Brown held strict views of Christian fellowship, was very great. The audience did not greatly differ in its constitution from that in Rose Street. It embraced not only an invariable quota of students, armed generally with their Greek Testaments, and perhaps a

constantly augmenting number of educated and refined intellects, but much likewise of the solid worth and vigorous intelligence that mark the religion of the Scottish middle and lower classes.

A visitor seated in the immense area, or in the galleries of Broughton Place Church, would be first struck with the venerable beauty of the preacher as he entered, the premature baldness and grey hairs only bringing out in relief the finely sculptured head and dark piercing eye. The devotional look and fervour of tone would soon chase these thoughts away; and even the expressive reading of the psalm and chapter would be forgotten in the new light which it cast on the subject. The prayer would be remarked, almost stereotyped from week to week, but singularly full of the leading truths of the gospel, presented in a form peculiar even to quaintness, yet redeemed from all semblance of eccentricity by the profound seriousness and glow of the delivery. The exposition in the morning would strike by its long recapitulation of preceding verses or even chapters; by its accurate weighing of words and clauses, combined with a luminous breadth and vigour, that made the sense of Scripture not only distinct but radiant; and by its under tone of fervour and earnestness, stirring the heart and conscience all

along, and often breaking out into passion at the close. The sermon in the afternoon would appear only a laxer kind of exposition, headed by an opening essay, then branched out into doctrinal lessons and results according to the subject, fortified by parallel texts, and urged with an intensity of application, as vehement as the discussion had been exact and logical. Perhaps a stranger would be most struck with this combination of clear method and fiery energy. He would feel that the light burned as well as shone; and he would carry away the sense of moral and spiritual impression even more than of instruction or illumination. A regular hearer would, however, be yet more struck with this conjunction, since to him certain key-words of Dr. Brown's teaching, the clearest and most definite that could be framed, would be repeated with an emphasis that never abated, and with an inspiration that kindled the same flame of excitement in the soul, voice, and eye of the preacher. Amongst the formulas most earnestly repeated are these: that Jesus Christ is the divinely called, the divinely qualified, the divinely commissioned, the divinely accredited, the Divine Saviour; that faith is the truth seen in its meaning and evidence; that repentance is a change of mind; that salvation is offered to

men in a plain, well-accredited revelation; and that this salvation may and must be theirs if they do not obstinately refuse to receive what is freely given to them of God.

This estimate may be confirmed by the words of Dr. Brown's colleague and successor, addressed in a funeral sermon to the congregation of Broughton Place:—"I believe there was scarcely a text or a paragraph of the Bible on which he had not formed a deliberate and definite opinion. When he took up the exposition of a book of the Bible, as for example an Epistle of Paul, it was not a mere comment on individual verses, and a bringing from them of useful lessons, but literally an analysis, an opening up of the body of thought in its every connexion and relation, until at the end of the series, the whole inspired composition stood illuminated before you; and in your familiarity with the peculiar modes of thinking and phrases of Paul, you felt as if the great Apostle had become to you a sort of 'inner friend.' It is astonishing with what conscientious and ungrudging toil this master in Israel laboured to understand some of the more difficult passages that have tried the skill and scholarship of interpreters, even from the earliest ages, when these sometimes met him in the path of exposition. Thus, I remember how he

paused for many weeks before that singularly obscure passage in the First Epistle of Peter, chap. iii. 19-21, which speaks of Christ going and preaching to the spirits in prison,—how, thinking much himself, and ransacking every commentary in his magnificent library, and praying not a little, he at last saw light breaking in upon it, and found his way to that clear and consistent exposition, which is believed by many to have supplied the true key to its complicated wards. And then what a high luxury it was, after such a process in the study, to see the old minister coming forth into this place with his hoary head, his noble countenance, and dark intelligent loving eye, uttering in his clear manly voice his weighty and well-weighed opinions, and sending you home with the consciousness that you knew your Bibles better when you left the church than when you had entered it. It is superfluous to remind you, who were his regular hearers, that these instructions were not the mere perspicuous statements of a high scholarship, but that his personal piety and great experience gave him singular power to bring all at last to bear on daily life, and that while the body of the discourse was often clear and compacted as a mathematical demonstration, all was made to flow at last with consolation to the

sorrowful, and encouragement to the earnest, and to flash with most thrilling appeals to those who were still 'despising the day of their merciful visitation.'"

The chief ornament of Dr. Brown's discourses was happily-quoted Scripture. The niceties of metaphysics, and the resources of rhetoric, he left to those who were less in earnest. All sentimentalism and affectation in the pulpit were abhorrent alike to his religious feelings, and to the masculine simplicity of his nature. Strong and emphatic, even to vehemence, as was his assertion of the doctrines of Christianity, he inculcated good works with equal fervour, and explained them with a philosophical precision and accuracy, always rare in Scottish preaching.

Closely allied to this luminous yet passionate character of Dr. Brown's ministry was its tone of authority. This did not spring from any hierarchical views of the ministerial office, or even from a sense of intellectual superiority, or a consciousness of wide familiarity with the labours of other minds in making truth clear and indisputable. It was the result of his strong persuasion that the Scriptures are self-evidencing, and that the gospel scheme finds a witness in every conscience. He held that this ground had been too much surrendered; and he did not

fear the charge of dogmatism in reclaiming it, as if it had never been abandoned.

The principal expositions delivered by Dr. Brown in Broughton Place were those on the Gospel History, and on First Peter. He also re-delivered his Lectures on Isaiah, and on the Hebrews, and compendized his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. Many sermons of extraordinary power and energy belong to this period. His discourses preached before the administration of the Lord's Supper were invariably of an elevated and inspiring character, and marked by a greater profundity of thought and elaboration of style than was possible in his ordinary ministry. These occurred once every two months—the greatest approach made by him in practice to what he held in theory, the weekly celebration of the Communion. The effect of these sermons was heightened by the presence of the communicants in one compact body in the lower part of the church, and by their simultaneously partaking of the ordinance —a deviation from the old Scottish custom since widely followed, though the act of communion does not often so immediately succeed the sermon as it did in Broughton Place. Hardly any impressions of eloquence could be greater than what remain from these hallowed seasons. More

copious invention and soaring imagination the writer has heard; but more of the fulness and depth of the gospel, set forth with the masculine grasp of thought and ardour of expression worthy of its grandeur, he never expects to hear in this world.

The spiritual results of the Broughton Place ministry, kindled as before by the highest of all convictions into the true eloquence of earnestness, and prosecuted with unchanging singleness of purpose and style, amidst the varying fashions of thirty years, it is beyond all human power to calculate. This can least of all be done in the present life. "The harvest is the end of the world." Dr. Brown regarded himself as having been more useful in edifying believers than in awakening the careless and worldly. But there can be no doubt that he underrated his influence upon the latter class. A sufficient number of instances is known, to a limited number of individuals, to prove how extensive must have been the entire operation of his ministry as a means of commencing the spiritual life. Some of the cases reported are of persons of education; others of persons in humbler circumstances, such as domestic servants, who seem, to a degree perhaps unexpected, to have been influenced by his labours.

One only of each class of cases can be here recited.

Testimony was borne to a case of the first description on a public occasion, and in the hearing of the writer. When the Rev. James Dalgleish, now in the employment of the London Missionary Society at Berbice, was ordained, a considerable number of years ago, in Broughton Place Church, in which he had been brought up, he furnished a narrative of his religious experience, such as is required by that Society on these occasions. He stated that the words of Dr. Brown, uttered with vehement earnestness, "a just God and a Saviour—that's what the sinner needs," had come home to him as with power from heaven, and had been the means of his conversion. Similar impressions must have been made in the case of others who have since become Christian ministers; for in Broughton Place, as in Rose Street, the number of students of divinity supplied by the congregation itself, bore a considerable proportion to those attracted to it from other quarters.

The other case is authenticated by a lady who conducted Dr. Brown to visit a servant girl from Orkney, dying of consumption in the Edinburgh Infirmary. She had previously declared, that Dr. Brown was the instrument of

her conversion; and she repeated in his presence the testimony, which was supported by a consistent life and a happy death.

A different kind of impression was sometimes produced. On one occasion a woman called on him on Monday in a state of high displeasure, to complain that on the foregoing day he had publicly called her a hypocrite. Dr. Brown disclaimed all such personality; but the woman warmly rejoined, "You need not deny it, Sir, for you looked straight in my face when you said it." The sermon had been a very solemn one, and the anecdote illustrates the pungency of his style and the keenness of his eye.

The circle of Dr. Brown's pastoral labours, while in full charge of the Broughton Place congregation, did not vary much from his earlier standard. As he found it more difficult to attract the families visited by him, with their children, to a common place of meeting, he was gradually led to conduct a religious service in every household; and he then transformed the evening catechetical lesson into a familiar lecture. His classes for the young remained unaltered, and the growing development of the Sabbath-school system gave him ultimately so many assistants, as to bring almost all young persons connected with the congregation, and

many neglected children beyond it, under instruction.

The early years of his Broughton Place ministry coincided with a great expansion of missionary and philanthrophic effort in the Secession Church; and Dr. Brown's congregation was one of the first to give the impulse. In many congregations a society for religious purposes had existed, scattering pecuniary help over a wide surface, and endeavouring to sustain interest by a monthly meeting devoted to missionary intelligence. Nothing more than this existed in Rose Street during Dr. Brown's labours there; and in Broughton Place, when he entered it, through various hindrances, no such institution had been formed. A society, auxiliary to the leading missionary institutions, was organized in 1830; and for about four years distributed on an average about £250 per annum. As, however, the Secession Church had, in 1832, entered on the mission field in its denominational capacity, the leading congregations of the body felt aroused to greater energy. Amongst these that of Broughton Place assumed to itself in 1835 the support of one foreign missionary, while it also began to employ a mission agent at home. The funds rose at once to more than £500. An interesting mission church in Ja-

maica was gathered from emancipated negroes, and called after the parent church, New Broughton. It was supported at first under the ministry of the Rev. James Paterson, and afterwards of the Rev. Andrew G. Hogg, the present missionary; and though a change in the administration of the missionary finances has since placed this and similar congregations under the more direct control of the United Presbyterian Synod, it still maintains the connexion, and remains a monument of the liberality and zeal of the congregation whence it derived its name. The number of city missionaries was also soon increased, and assistance given them in their labours by the members of a Christian Instruction Society. A juvenile missionary association was founded, with a cluster of other benevolent institutions, so that at the end of ten years the income had increased twofold, and in ten more fivefold. In all these exertions, Dr. Brown took a leading part, and his name stands, in the reports of the congregation, as a contributor to missionary purposes alone of not less than £20 per annum. He had the happiness of being assisted in this, as in other departments of Christian usefulness, by a body of elders of great intelligence and zeal; and willing agents started up all around him to second every good

work. The influence of the Broughton Place congregation at this period, worthily emulated by that which Dr. Brown had so recently left, combined with a parallel advance in one or two leading congregations in Glasgow, stamped a new impress on the Secession as a missionary church, and inaugurated a new era in its history. If any name ranks higher than that of Dr. Brown in this movement, it is that of his friend Dr. Heugh, to whom assuredly he would not have grudged the pre-eminence.

Before narrating the remainder of Dr. Brown's ministry in Broughton Place, it is necessary to advert to other incidents and events, both of a private and public character, which coincide with its earlier years.

It may here be mentioned, that in February 1832 he lost his venerable father, who had reached an advanced age, and had long rejoiced in his son's eminence and usefulness. He attended him on his death-bed, and received assurance of his hope in Christ, first audibly, and then when utterance failed, by his significant assent to a passage which he read to him from the works of Ambrose Serle, expressive of the feelings of a dying Christian. This death-bed experience must have recalled to mind that of his mother in the days of his childhood. The

son preached his father's funeral sermon, from the words, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." As may easily be conceived, the occasion drew together an overflowing congregation, and the services were equally affecting to the audience and to the preacher.*

* These and other notices of the Rev. John Brown of Whitburn are extracted from a Memoir by his son-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Smith of Biggar.

CHAPTER V.

DR. BROWN AS PROFESSOR OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY.

1834–1858.

Death of Dr. Dick—Mr. Jameson's Pamphlet—Dr. Mitchell, Professor—System reorganized by Dr. Brown—Dr. Brown's colleagues—Experimental Session in Glasgow—Style of Exegetical Lectures—Synoptical View—His Learning—Library—Disregard of Tradition—Practical Exhortations—Criticisms in the Hall—Library Lectures—Literary Sympathies—Influence on the Students.

In 1833, the Rev. Dr. Dick, who had been Professor of Theology in the Secession Church since 1820, died, and in consequence of that event, Dr. Brown, whose qualifications had been so highly acknowledged at the time of the former vacancy, was at length introduced to that sphere for which his whole life had been a preparation. He was not, however, appointed successor to Dr. Dick; for an important modification was at this time made in the Secession Divinity Hall, which was in a great measure due to his influence. Of this change, and of his subsequent professorial labours, the order of time requires an account to be inserted in this place, though a period must be included that extends to nearly a quarter of a century, as Dr. Brown's professorship only terminated with his life.

Each branch of the Secession, before the Union in 1820, had been satisfied with a single professor, who carried his students over the whole round of divinity, in sessions of nominally eight weeks each, extended through a period of five years. The manifold defects of such a system were very faintly, if at all recognised; and probably but for the Union, it might have been handed down to a succeeding generation. The prospect, however, of having two professors placed at their disposal, neither of whom could be discarded, familiarized men's minds with the idea of plurality, which although novel in the Secession, was not so in the National Church, since in it Hebrew and Church History had been taught by distinct professors, in addition to Systematic Theology. There was a considerable hazard that this new idea would vanish as soon as it had been suggested, for the Professor of the Antiburgher Synod, the Rev. George Paxton, did not ultimately accede to the Union; and the temptation was great to abide by the simplicity and economy of the old system. However, a committee was appointed to take the subject of a second professorship into consideration; and thus there was an opening for light to enter and spread. The opportunity was improved by a remarkable pamphlet, which

appeared at this time from the pen of the Rev. John Jameson of Methven, a man of true genius, and the fragments of whose mind show an originality and brilliancy not often reached in the finished productions of others. This pamphlet appeared in 1822, and was entitled "Observations on the Mode of Conducting Theological Tuition in General Use, with a Plan humbly submitted for the Divinity Hall belonging to the United Associate Synod." It struck at the defects of the current system, with a vigour and clearness perfectly irresistible, and went far ahead of the boldest innovation in respect of the remedies which it suggested. Its opening sentence is characteristic of the quaint but nervous style in which the discussion is conducted:—"In England, ten men are allotted to the making of a pin. In England, one Professor of Divinity only is allotted to the making of a minister. This perhaps may be safely stated as one of the reasons why, if you compare a row of pins with a batch of ministers, merely as an article of manufacture, the latter are evidently so much inferior, showing, in the bulk, neither the same head, nor the same point, neither the same soundness and mass of firm texture, nor the same general and exquisite polish." The mischiefs arising from setting

aside the law of the division of labour in theological education, and the absurdities incident to a course of lectures where the student begins at the end and ends at the beginning, were never more happily exposed than in this tract; and the writer, extending his remarks to the Church of Scotland as well as to the Seceders, asks what the former might not have done, if instead of scattering her best theological lights over the different national universities, she had concentrated them all in one fully equipped Divinity Hall. The plan broached in this pamphlet, contemplated for the United Secession a body of five professors acting as a Theological Faculty, each of whom should be attended, for one year in succession, through a period of five years, as the teacher of a separate branch of divinity, according to a prescribed division. It proposed to give this body great powers of examining students at their entrance and from year to year, and of excluding or detaining those found incompetent; while it connected them with the Synod by the tie of an annual visitation and constant superintendence. It called on the Church to terminate the migrations of the Hall, and to give it a constant seat in Edinburgh. It suggested for each professor the modest payment of £50 per annum as an

allowance for his expenses, and acquiesced in the short session of two months in August and September, as an arrangement not to be altered. The outline of almost every reform that has been since adopted in the denomination, is here sketched; and in respect of the plan of an annual examination by a fixed and uniform tribunal, it is still before the age. The weakest part of this sagacious proposal, is its division of the theological course. The author justly recommends a Chair for Biblical Literature, and another for Pastoral Theology; but he errs by striking out Church History as too vast and extensive; and he breaks down Systematic Theology into three ill-defined and undefinable sections, over each of which he appoints a professor. The ingenuity and earnestness with which this innovation in teaching was urged and defended against objections, had a considerable influence on public opinion; but the progress was so slow, that it was only in 1825, after very lengthened discussion, that one new professor was added. This was the Rev. Dr. Mitchell of Glasgow, who had gained, at an earlier period, the prize founded by Dr. Claudius Buchanan, for an essay on the "Civilisation of India," and was now associated with Dr. Dick as head of the new department of Biblical Literature.

One of those who thoroughly sympathized with Mr. Jameson, and lent him most cordial support, was Dr. Brown; and when the older chair became vacant, in 1833, by Dr. Dick's decease, he strenuously exerted himself, and not without success, to obtain a more complete re-organization of the system. At his instance, a large committee was appointed in April 1833, before filling up the vacant chair, to consider the whole subject of theological tuition. As their convener, he gave in a report in the following September. On this he had bestowed the greatest attention, reading and pondering all the details of British, Continental, and American systems of training, weighing the recommendations of his brethren in their debates, and then bringing out the result in a few clear, definite, and mature suggestions.

The scheme thus constructed, sets forth under the heads of the preliminary training of students, the conduct of the Hall, and the superintendence of Presbyteries, the regulations which in substance continue in force to this day. Under the second of these heads, with which alone we are here concerned, the scheme reduces Mr. Jameson's five professors to four, and makes other modifications. But its great originality lies in its setting apart a separate professor for

the hitherto unknown department of Exegetical Theology, which had no place before in any Scottish Divinity Hall, and which is not even mentioned so much as by allusion in Mr. Jameson's otherwise thoroughgoing pamphlet. That the principles of interpretation should be taught was taken for granted, and this had been already provided for as a branch of the subject of Biblical Literature; but to found a chair for the practical application of these principles, in the actual exposition of large portions of Scripture read in the original languages, was a complete novelty. This arrangement also secured an entirely distinct province, so that each of the four chairs ultimately placed side by side, viz., Biblical Literature, Exegetical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Pastoral Theology, including Ecclesiastical History, had its well-defined landmarks. It was also recommended that the two former should be studied for the first two years of the course, the two latter for the three years which remained. The report expressed a preference in the abstract, for sessions extending over a much larger part of each year, and fully occupying the time of the professors, but gave way to the actual necessities of Secession students, mostly needing to support themselves during a long vacation by teaching and other

labours, though it exacted in future the full eight weeks without curtailment. It is worthy of remark, that Dr. Brown afterwards changed his mind on this subject, estimating more lightly the disadvantage of a session of two months, and rating more highly the influence of professors fresh every year from the duties of the ministry, and thus maintaining a wholesome reciprocation between theory and practice.

The arrangements recommended in this report were finally, after the fullest discussion in two successive Synods, adopted by a great majority in April 1834. The next step was to elect professors to fill the three chairs that were without occupants. It was felt to be a just tribute to Dr. Brown to elect him to that chair of Exegetical Theology, for which his studies had so eminently fitted him, and which he had done so much to found. To the chairs of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, the Rev. Dr. Duncan of Midcalder, a divine of much depth and learning, and the Rev. Dr. Balmer of Berwick, whose merits have been already mentioned, were appointed respectively, and an exchange, which these newly-elected professors made of their offices, was at once sanctioned by the Synod. The framework of the system thus set up was not materially altered during Dr. Brown's life.

He was associated afterwards with the Rev. Dr. Eadie of Glasgow, and the Rev. Dr. Harper of Leith, who filled up the vacancies caused by death among the Secession professors; and with the Rev. Dr. Lindsay of Glasgow, and the Rev. Dr. M'Michael of Dunfermline, who, as professors of the Relief Church entered the joint Hall after the Union of 1847. The only change made by the Union, so far as Dr. Brown was concerned, lay in his being transferred from the junior to the senior Hall. Dr. Lindsay and Dr. Eadie divided between them the somewhat indefinite field of Biblical Literature, and occupied the first two years of the course, while Dr. Brown in his original chair, united with Dr. Harper as professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, and with Dr. M'Michael as professor of Ecclesiastical History, filled up its remaining period. With all these fellow-labourers, from first to last, he maintained the most cordial and intimate relations, and their harmony was never for a moment interrupted. He delighted to bear testimony to their varied gifts and high Christian character; and they yielded him at all times a respect and esteem which became more deferential with his advancing years.

Dr. Brown's great exertions in improving the system of theological tuition, did not spring from

any ambitious wish to be employed in working out his own scheme. He reluctantly accepted the appointment, and applied himself to the work with an almost overwhelming sense of the difficulty of presiding at once over so large a congregation, and taking part in the training of a body of students numbering from 100 to 150. The hope of emolument could be no powerful motive, as the allowance to each professor was long but £50 annually, latterly increased to £100; and expert arithmeticians connected with the body had no difficulty in proving that the cost per head of the students of the Secession Church was numbered by shillings, while in other denominations it was counted by pounds, and that their Divinity Hall ranked among the very cheapest of human institutions.

The first or experimental session of Dr. Brown was spent in Glasgow during the months of August and September in 1834. During that time the friendship between himself and his fellow-professor, Dr. Balmer, already one of the closest of his life, was greatly strengthened, both of them having occupied the same apartments, and conferred daily upon the difficulties and prospects of their new position. Both of them loved the work; but both sent in to the next Synod a resignation of their office. Dr. Balmer's

principal difficulty was a delicacy of his eyesight, while Dr. Brown found his lengthened absence from his congregation in Edinburgh a source of great inconvenience. The scruples of both were overcome by an earnest petition of the students to the Synod in favour of their continuance, and by the peremptory refusal of that body to accept their resignation. For the sake of smoothing Dr. Brown's way, his colleague, Dr. Mitchell, with great kindness offered to hold the meetings of the junior Hall alternately in Edinburgh, instead of confining them to Glasgow as before; and this arrangement continued till the resignation of that most amiable and saintly man, when the junior Hall became stationary, as the senior Hall had for some years been, in Edinburgh.

Dr. Brown was fully fifty years of age when his appointment as Professor of Exegetical Theology was confirmed. His labours in this department undoubtedly left his earlier services behind. His studies for the pulpit had always had a large exegetical groundwork; and his older lectures, which had been delivered to his congregation, were now transformed into prelections to his students, while new ones were written for Broughton Place, with the Divinity Hall in his eye. He was now, however, not

only at liberty, but required, to enter into philological discussions alien from popular teaching, and to detail opinions and canvass authorities on all controverted questions of interpretation, with a fulness which, in a Christian place of worship, would have been intolerably pedantic. The Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament took the place of the English version, and the forms and nomenclature of science were superinduced upon the expository and hortatory matter which had been addressed to his people. It was a difficult problem to effect this transformation; and sometimes his students felt that the discourse was too much of a *concio ad populum*, as the congregation perhaps at times complained that it was too much of a *concio ad clerum*; yet the compromise was on the whole accomplished with skill and success, and the students were not too much "eased," as the congregation had not after all been too much "burdened." Dr. Brown himself unquestionably felt more at home as an expositor in the professor's chair than in the pulpit. He was like a chemist allowed the use of his symbols, or a mathematician of his algebraic notation; and the stores of his biblical learning, before repressed, now flowed forth in all their exuberance. At the same time he held firmly that mere critical and

learned discussion, addressed to students of divinity, had an unfortunate tendency to fix their minds exclusively on the intellectual side of Scripture. He lamented this excess in the exegetical schools of Germany; and he would have thought it a severer censure upon his own method of instruction, that it had too few echoes of the pulpit than that it had too many. "There is something sadly deficient," he has in his last publication remarked, "when the Christian system, either in the Bible itself, or in the attempts to reduce it to the order of human science, can be treated in the same manner as a mathematical problem, or an abstract speculation in metaphysics."*

Dr. Brown taught in all twenty-four sessions, and probably not much less than a thousand students passed under his hands. Some of these were from foreign countries, or connected with other sections of the Church; but the great mass belonged to the denomination, and were trained for its service at home, or in the colonies and the mission-field. The principal part of their instruction consisted of lectures occupying at least one hour daily, while another hour was taken up with examinations, or the hearing of exegetical exercises prepared

* *Address to Students*, page 22.

by the students, which were then criticised by the Professor. The best and most satisfactory account that can be given of the lectures delivered by Dr. Brown, which formed the staple of his course, is contained in a description of his department by himself in an opening lecture delivered in 1841, and published under the title of *Hints to Students of Divinity.* From this a somewhat full extract may be presented:—"The second branch of study in which you will be called to engage is EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY. The principles of interpretation are now to be applied, not only to particular words and phrases, as in the illustrations of the Laws of Hermeneutics, but to the exposition of large portions of the Inspired Writings. In the plan of study embodied in the Act of Synod, it is obviously contemplated as desirable, that in prosecuting this branch of their studies, the students should, while in the Seminary, have expounded to them in a close and critical manner as large a portion as possible of both divisions of the Sacred Volume; the more interesting and important portions of the Old Testament history, the leading statutes of the Mosaic law, the principal prophecies, especially those relating to the Messiah and his kingdom, the discourses of our Lord, the principal narratives of his life, and

the establishment of his religion among men, and as many as possible of the apostolical Epistles; with, at any rate, a *general* view of the prophetic part of the Apocalypse. It seems also to have been wished that the individual who presided over this branch of study, should give a short biblical view of the various economies or dispensations,—the Paradisiacal, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. Hitherto comparatively little has been done to fill up this goodly plan; and till a much greater portion of time can be devoted to their study, I despair of anything being seen at all approximating to its completion. On entering on his duties, the present superintendent of this department of study soon discovered, that to do all this was in the circumstances impracticable; and judging that it was better to do a little somewhat thoroughly, than even much superficially, he has never been able to do more than to give lectures on some select passages in the Old Testament history, such as the account of the creation of the world and the fall of man; on a few of the Messianic Psalms, such as Ps. ii., xvi., xviii., cx.; on some of the more interesting and important prophecies of Isaiah; on the leading discourses of our Lord, and on the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews.

A short set of lectures on the advantage of a critical study of the Bible has been prepared and partially delivered, and a variety of difficult passages of Scripture have been discussed in occasional lectures. The view of the Economies, he has endeavoured to give in his prelections on the Epistle to the Galatians. Limited as this range is, in comparison of what must be accounted desirable, even this course cannot be completed in less than five sessions. . . . The student is expected, not only to wait on these lectures, but to prepare for them by a previous examination of the passages to be explained, to take notes of them, and to hold himself ready to be examined on them."* Besides the books and subjects comprised in this enumeration, Dr. Brown subsequently delivered lectures on the whole of First and part of Second Peter, on the 15th chapter of First Corinthians, and on the Uses of Scripture. Many parts of Scripture that he had expounded to his congregation, he did not reproduce in the Hall; but probably the whole ground surveyed in the Hall had first been travelled over in the pulpit. His materials were in a constant process of augmentation and improvement, and were presented from the chair in the most finished shape. Few congre-

* *Hints to Students of Divinity*, pp. 41-44.

gations have had the honour of standing in such close juxtaposition to a theological seminary, and of so materially assisting its labours.

The qualifications displayed by Dr. Brown in these academical prelections on the sense of Scripture, were of the highest order. As he had recognised the fundamental importance of this study when it was almost universally neglected in Scotland, and was the first to revive it from the chair, so he lifted it at once to an elevation which rivalled the best times and productions of sacred literature. His learning was great and varied. He had bestowed deep attention upon the sacred tongues in which Scripture is written. He modestly disclaimed, especially in regard to Hebrew, the title of learning, in the sense in which a lexicographer or minute grammarian is learned; but in that language he was much at home, and he read Greek quite familiarly, being particularly conversant with the idiom of the New Testament. His learning more than sufficed for the decision of all critical questions, on the ground of independent and original investigation, and more especially by the comparison of Scripture with Scripture; while he had studied much the writers who illustrate the New Testament from the Septuagint, and from Josephus, Philo, and

the classics. He had the principal editions of the Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament in his library, the latter of which he had begun to collect, from the time he was fourteen years of age, till ultimately the series embraced about a hundred—from Erasmus to Tischendorf—including some of the very rarest, and not less than fourteen before the received or Elzevir text of 1624. With versions ancient and modern he was also largely supplied; and had a most accurate acquaintance with the history of the English Bible. It was, however, in the department of annotations, scholia, and commentaries on the original Scriptures, that his learning was vast and even boundless. The exegetical treatises of the Greek and Latin Fathers, and of the Schoolmen and later Romish authors, he knew as well as any one who has not made them a special study; while he had completely mastered the great commentaries of the Reformation period, with those produced by all the succeeding diversities of Protestantism, from Cocceius and Owen to Grotius and the Polish Brethren. He had looked into most works of interpretation that had appeared either in the Church of England or among the Nonconformists; and probably no Scottish work of the least note had escaped him, his knowledge of

this region descending even to the worthless and the inane. His thorough acquaintance with German commentary, much to his regret, was limited by his imperfect mastery of that language; but he was intimately conversant with its older results, as contained in the Latin works of Ernesti, Morus, Knapp, Storr, and others. He also collected and studied all its recent productions, whether in volumes or fugitive academic theses, that still appear in Latin, and not less the translations of its masterpieces that have been made into English; so that he probably knew more of German exegesis than many who have had full access to its sources. This familiarity with works of exposition was assisted by a study, only less copious and extensive, of systematic theology, history of doctrines, church history, and classical and miscellaneous literature, all of which was made to revolve around Scripture interpretation, and to supply it with helps and illustrations. Dr. Brown's library contained several thousand volumes, being probably next to that of Principal Lee, the largest clerical library in Scotland; and its value was above all proportion to its size, not only in rare books, but in carefully selected series and classes of authors. With all its contents, however, he declared him-

self, on inquiry, to be so well acquainted, that he could give some account of every book in particular; and when, on one occasion, a friend seeing a somewhat formidable list of expository works referred to in one of his publications, said, "These, I suppose, you have occasionally consulted?" his reply was, "Sir, I have read every word of them that has the least bearing upon the sense of Scripture."*

This mass of learning Dr. Brown had not only digested, but used with entire subordination to an independent and penetrating judgment in all matters of criticism and interpretation. He illustrated by contrast the quaint saying of Robert Hall, "Some men put so many books on their heads that their brains cannot move;" for all that he read supplied impulse to the analytical processes of reflection upon the sense of Scripture, which were perpetually going on in the inner chamber of his mind. He had

* The following recollection, from a diary already quoted, illustrates Dr. Brown's sympathy with book-buyers, as well as another very marked feature of his character, his impatience of disparaging remarks in conversation:—"Two gentlemen met Dr. Brown in my office, the one known to him, the other a stranger. The latter happened to leave, and the other remarked, that he had thoughtlessly spent a large fortune. 'I am sorry for that,' was Dr. Brown's answer. The conversation was still pressed, and it was stated that the fortune had been squandered in the reckless increase of a library. Dr. Brown lost patience, rose to his feet, and making his bow, said, 'Good morning, Sir; there are worse ways of spending money than buying books.'"

the rare gift of throwing his mind into sympathy with the sacred writers, especially the more logical and reflective, and could survey the text as if it never had been trodden down under the host of commentators. He was deaf to the charm of tradition, and could set aside the most venerable and time-hallowed misinterpretations without mercy. Nothing was more common from the pulpit than the sentence passed on some current sense, "This is truth, important truth, and truth taught elsewhere in Scripture, but not *the* truth contained in this passage." This was often repeated in the Hall, with the more curt definition of an interpreter's business, "*Expositio non impositio.*" He contended that Papists and Socinians had interpreted, not the proof-texts of their systems, but some other texts, better than the orthodox. He held the Papal view of Abraham seeing Christ's day, that is, seeing it from heaven; and one akin to the Socinian, of Christ preaching to the spirits in prison, that is, to men still in the prison-house of this world. In these views he may have been right or wrong, but they were illustrations of his principle, to abide by the true sense of Scripture, and by that alone, no matter in what company. The strenuous and incessant reiteration of this truth, and the tena-

city of purpose with which in all his lectures the very sense of Scripture was searched out and held up in self-evident clearness, tended powerfully to develop an exegetical conscience in his students, and to give a more simple and biblical cast to the theology of the denomination.

He strongly inculcated, what indeed this elaborate exegetical apparatus implied, veneration for the Bible. He had the freest sense of the individuality of its writers, and all notions of its inspiration that could be described as mechanical, were most alien from his mind. But to him it was all the Word of God, the supernatural utterance of Divine thoughts in the fittest speech, and he treated it as a true oracle, first by labouring to elicit its certain sense, and then by submitting to that sense as final. Towards the close of his professorship, he spoke of it to a friend as one of the highest privileges of his life, that so much of it had been spent in the prolonged struggle to bring out the mind of God from his own Word; and his only regret was, that his efforts had not been more earnest and reverential. "Dr. Chalmers," he said at another time, "has hit the true key-note, not, what *thinkest* thou? but, what *readest* thou? Had he only himself been

still more of an expositor, what weight it would have lent to his testimony!"

The glow and fervour of personal Christian faith pervaded and kindled all Dr. Brown's prelections. He regarded his academic office as a "ministry" of a higher kind; and the warmth of piety which distinguishes the commentaries of Calvin or Bengel, shone through and relieved all his disquisitions. He delivered also express and special exhortations to his students, to prepare for the solemnities of the pastoral office by living devotion and consecration of heart to God. He circulated amongst them the earnest addresses of his grandfather on this subject; and followed up the impression by such words as these of his own:—"A ministry destitute of vital religion, however well instructed, however distinguished for orthodox preaching and correct morals, is one of the most unnatural of all things, and one of the deadliest curses which can light on a Christian body; and to the individual himself it is full of eternal hazard. An unregenerate man, after joining a Christian Church, is less likely to be converted than he was previously. Every time he observes the holy communion, to him no holy communion at all, the likelihood of his being saved is diminished. If he become a student of divinity, the

probabilities of final impenitence are prodigiously multiplied; and if he enter on the functions of the ministry, the hope of his being saved is faint indeed."* These appeals were uttered sometimes with a subdued tenderness, and at others with a vehemence and energy that made the deepest impression.

Dr. Brown's lectures as a professor, were read with much of the force and emphasis of his pulpit style. His eye wandered over the class with much of the same power, and his voice brought out with perfect nicety every shade of thought or feeling. Occasionally he paused, and lifted his spectacles to his forehead, which was the signal for some illustrative anecdote, criticism of a book, or practical advice. Thus when lecturing on the Gospel of John, he used to repeat in such an interval, a remark of Mr. Jameson of Methven, the reformer of theological tuition, made to a brother minister who had congratulated him on expounding that gospel to his people, since it was so simple. "You think John simple; but try him, and you will find him deep as the Dead Sea." Another anecdote was at the expense of Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, who, as is well known, published a Key to the Epistle to the Romans, which pro-

* *Hints to Students of Divinity*, p. 27.

fesses to open it, in harmony with the lowest Arminianism. Dr. Brown used to recite, with much enjoyment, the verdict passed by a contemporary divine on this performance :—"The poor man gave the key a violent wrench, and behold it moved; but it was not the door that was opened, it was only the lock that was broken."

Besides delivering such courses of lectures as have been mentioned, Dr. Brown also conducted examinations of his class; but these latterly became rare and irregular, as he found his time fully occupied with the work of prelection. He was also called upon to hear the discourses of students, and to pass judgment upon them. This he did with the decision and energy of his nature, but in a kindly and even forbearing spirit. He was occasionally unsparing and indignant, but only to sloth, recklessness, or affectation. His students felt that he was not a man to be trifled with; but his favourable sentence was so frequent, and so certain to follow sense and diligence, that awe was softened into confidence, and there was enough of love to "cast out fear." He encouraged his students to communicate to him their difficulties; and he readily assisted them with advice or showed them other marks of kindness. He also invited

them annually in parties to his house. It generally happened, as conversation in these circumstances was to him somewhat difficult, that the evening was spent in a highly instructive monologue upon authors and systems; book after book being taken down from his shelves, and passages read in illustration. These evenings recalled the library lectures which were a favourite exercise of Doddridge with his students; and indeed Dr. Brown followed this practice to a great extent with all his visitors and friends.

Dr. Brown recommended to his students, the cultivation of classical and general literature, as well as of that strictly belonging to theology. He himself studied and re-studied not only the Greek and Roman authors, but our great English classics, with a devotion only second to his love of the Bible. The Latin literature of the Reformation period, the French of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the Scottish of all ages, were known to him with more than superficial familiarity; and his acquaintance with forgotten books, from the buried folio to the extinct magazine, continually astonished those who best knew his resources. He judged rightly that a contracted and merely professional study of Christian theology, could only narrow the lessons of that Divine Book, which

is in itself an epitome of all literature, and which requires the breadth of absolute universality to take in its full revelations. Only a solitary individual here and there in a generation can aspire to such affluence of learning and cultivation; but the lesson is for students of all capacities and opportunities. Scottish theology, though cradled as Dr. M'Crie has shown amidst the highest literary culture, has not always maintained its character for wide and catholic attainment; and Dr. Brown, along with the historian of Knox and Melville, and others, did excellent service in re-attaching enlarged literary tastes and habits to that form of doctrine and style of life, which are justly dear to all sections of Scottish Christianity.

So devoted was Dr. Brown to the work of theological instruction, that for some years after his appointment to the Professorship, he conducted a separate class during the winter months, for those students of divinity who belonged to his congregation. Students in the midst of their university career were also permitted to attend, though they took no active part in the duties, which resembled on a smaller scale those of the Divinity Hall.

It only remains to be added, that the same affectionate interest in his students which ap-

peared in his attentions to them, and in his cordial recognition of their hopeful gifts while they were under his charge, followed them to the scenes of their ministry, or other spheres of labour in which by the changes of life they were scattered abroad. Their visits to him from time to time were among his greatest pleasures; and the sense of his kindly solicitude for their success and welfare, attended them as a guarding and quickening influence. He will continue to be to many of them one of the brightest figures in the recollections of student life, associated with the hopes and aspirations of youth, and with that Word of Truth which he taught them stedfastly to follow in that fervent season, and rightly to divide amidst the calm of after years; and those lessons, which have made an epoch in Scottish theological instruction, and have given an impulse in every denomination to the study of the Bible, will be connected by them with more tender reminiscences in which the image of the profound scholar and original interpreter is lost in that of the father and the friend.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOLUNTARY CONTROVERSY.

1835—1843.

Second Marriage—Origin of Voluntaryism—Its Novelty—Dr. Marshall's Sermon—Progress of Dr. Brown's Mind—First Voluntary Association—Dr. Brown's Two Addresses—Freedom from Bitterness—Scottish Central Board—Endowment of Chapels of Ease—Annuity-Tax—Refuses to Pay—Robert Haldane's Letters—Dr. Brown's Lectures on Civil Obedience—Goods distrained—Answer to *Memoirs of the Haldanes*—Non-Intrusion Contest in the Established Church—Dr. Brown's Views as to the duty of Dissenters at that Crisis—His sympathy with the Non-Intrusionists—The Disruption—Secular Questions and Church Courts.

In June 1835, after a widowhood of nineteen years, Dr. Brown contracted a second marriage with Miss Margaret Fisher Crum, only surviving daughter of Alexander Crum, Esquire, of Thornliebank, near Glasgow. The mother of this lady was Miss Jane Ewing, eldest daughter of Walter Ewing M'Lae, Esquire, well known as a Christian and philanthropist in Glasgow. The wife of Mr. Ewing M'Lae was Miss Margaret Fisher, daughter of the Rev. James Fisher, who was the first Secession minister in Glasgow, and son-in-law of Ebenezer Erskine. By this marriage of Dr. Brown with the great-granddaughter of Mr. Erskine, two historical lines in the Secession became connected, and Dr. Brown again realized the highest and purest joys of domestic life, which were only too soon to be clouded by

separation. The biographer must here borrow Dr. Brown's own words: "He had known her from her infancy, having, during the period of his theological study, been frequently, through the kindness of her parents, a guest in their hospitable mansion, as well as in that of her maternal grandfather, the resort of many of the excellent ones of the earth; and he had observed with much interest the opening blossoms of her childhood and youth, little anticipating that the matured fruit was one day to form the sweetest of his earthly enjoyments, the richest of his worldly possessions. The course of Divine providence placed him in a remote sphere of pastoral labour, which for many years prevented anything but very unfrequent and occasional intercourse with his friends at Thornliebank. He formed a happy but short-lived marriage connexion, and had spent many years of widowhood, devoted to the labours of his profession, and the education of his family, having never formed and scarcely expecting to form a second attachment, when circumstances occurred which renewed and rendered more intimate an intercourse which though interrupted had never been broken off. It was not till after years of intimate friendship, leading into a much more extensive and minute mutual acquaintance with opinions and feelings and habits than in most

cases is attainable, that a relation was formed, which by the Divine blessing, during the too short period of its continuance, has produced as large an amount of happiness as could well be crowded together into six years and three months."* Of this admirable person, who, to a heart tender and meditative, united a remarkably sound and vigorous judgment, Dr. Brown farther says, " Her husband found in her, in all the extent of meaning belonging to the very expressive word, a *helpmeet*. She relieved him of all secular care. She cordially entered into and co-operated in all his plans of usefulness. She took an interest in all his studies and pursuits, and he found in her a harmony of opinion and of feeling to an extent he could scarcely have anticipated." This accession had hardly been made to Dr. Brown's domestic comforts before he was again involved in severe labours and serious trials of a public character. These arose out of the Voluntary Controversy; and to the history of that violent struggle, and of Dr. Brown's arduous part in it, it is now time to proceed.

The history of the Voluntary Controversy cannot yet be fully and fairly written, for this among other reasons, that it is not yet ended. No writer can expect to be perfectly dispas-

* *Memorial of Mrs. M. F. Brown*, pp. 17-19.

sionate in describing a movement which continues so powerfully to influence the condition and relations of all British, and especially of all Scottish Churches, and which still supplies watchwords and signals of denominational action. All that can be attempted by one who accepts the general results and conclusions of Dr. Brown and his coadjutors, is to show by what steps they came to hold and advance these controverted opinions, to explain with clearness what these doctrines were, and to narrate by what means and with what success they sought and laboured to give them currency. A biographer of Dr. Brown is further limited to his share in the common struggle.

It is well known that English Nonconformity, in spite of many contradictions and inconsistencies, had, by the middle and still more by the end of the seventeenth century, attained to views of the magistrate's power in matters of religion far beyond those of any section of Scottish Presbyterianism. In the northern part of the island, no discord broke the uniformity of acquiescence in the 23d chapter of the Westminster Confession; the only complaint being, that the Revolution settlement had fallen short of the strictness of that symbol. A parallel situation to English Nonconformity only arose with the

Secession, as the earlier separation had failed to spread among the people; and slowly, but surely, the sense of self-reliance, and the natural reaction against the existing Establishment as a mark for protest and opposition, led to the opinion that the whole system of establishments wanted a just foundation. The Relief Separatists, who arose twenty years after the Erskines, being connected by their founder Gillespie with Doddridge and the English Independents, arrived at this conviction much sooner than any parties in the Secession. The Glassites, and other minor sects related to England, also preceded. In the earlier public documents of the Secession, some remarkable passages occur, as to the limitation of the magistrate's power, which contain the germ of later developments; but these are neutralized by equally strong assertions of his authority in spiritual matters, and by an unqualified approval of the transactions of the covenanting period. It was not till the close of the eighteenth century, that the impulse given by the American and French Revolutions, and the impression made by the constant discussion of the claims of the Roman Catholics in the British Parliament, began to produce a wide and conscious divergence amongst the Seceders from the

ground practically occupied by their fathers. The attempt to adjust the formularies of both branches of the Secession to these altered views, produced in both what was called the New Light controversy, leading in each to a partial disruption. But while a relaxation of the strictness of subscription on this head was effected, the Burgher branch of the Secession stopped short with a disclaimer of "compulsory, persecuting, and intolerant principles in religion," and the Antiburgher with a testimony "against all such conjunctions of Church and State as subjects the State to the Church in civil matters, or the Church to the State in those that are religious." The distinct and explicit condemnation of the principle of connexion between the Church and the State is not to be found in any record of these times, or only in the Treatise by Graham, a Secession minister in Newcastle, published in 1794, and entitled *Review of Ecclesiastical Establishments in Europe.* The progress of civil liberty, however, silently influenced the ecclesiastical mind; and though, in the United Secession Testimony of 1827, no advance beyond the New Light boundaries be discernible, it cannot be questioned, that in the Secession, as in other Nonconformist bodies in Scotland, there was a wide preparation for more

decisive speech and action, when the Voluntary Controversy burst upon the world.

This controversy, as is well known, commenced with a sermon of the Rev. Dr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch, preached in Glasgow in April 1829. The great ability of this discourse, the reputation of the preacher, who then stood among the highest names in the Secession, and the earnest manner in which the disendowment of all religions was urged as the only safeguard against the endowment of Popery—which was dreaded by many at that time as a sequel to Catholic emancipation—produced a wide impression, which the subsequent controversial publications of its author only deepened. In the year 1832, Voluntary Associations began to be formed all over Scotland, whereby the question was transferred to the political arena, and the separation of Church and State for the first time set forth as a practical measure. Almost all sections of Scottish Nonconformists united in this struggle. The English Dissenters, excited by the tone of Hall and Foster, which was decided and even vehement beyond the example of the past century, lent their co-operation. The political power conceded to the middle classes by the Reform Bill, made this organization formidable; and the concurrence of the Roman

Catholics of Ireland, bent on the secularization of the Establishment revenues of that country, added so considerable a weight to the confederacy, that for a time not only the Irish Church, but the whole body of Church Establishments in the empire seemed to be in jeopardy.

It is impossible not to admire the courage and energy displayed by the handful of Scottish Voluntaries, who, foreseeing none of these combinations, and strong only in their abstract convictions, yet commenced and carried on a war against one of the most powerful institutions of the country, entrenched behind the interests, the prejudices, and the sacred associations of the great majority of the nation. This praise is especially due to those who projected the first Voluntary Association in the end of 1831, and afterwards founded it in Edinburgh in the autumn of the following year. To this number Dr. Brown belonged; and he continued to stand in the front ranks of the contest.* It is impossible to discover by what steps he had been led to embrace the views which he henceforth so strenuously advocated. His father,

* A committee was deputed, in 1831, by a number of ministers of the United Associate Synod, to organize such an association. Its members were, Rev. Dr. Brown, Broughton Place, Rev. John M'Gilchrist, Rose Street, Rev. Wm. Lowrie, Lauder, and Rev. David King, Dalkeith. Mr. M'Gilchrist to be convener.

departing from the strongly intolerant views of the first John Brown, the Professor and Commentator, had ranged himself on the side of the New Light. He himself had been much impressed in his youth by the enlarged and liberal sentiments of Dr. Lawson. His love of political liberty amounted to a passion; and from such books as Sir James Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, which we have seen him carrying about in his student days, he had read his way back with increasing enthusiasm to Locke and Milton, to Sidney and Vane, to Owen and Cartwright, and all the other writers of the Revolution and Puritan periods, whose works are the fountain-heads of our civil and ecclesiastical freedom. He had, when yet a country minister, taken in the *Edinburgh Review* from the beginning, and subscribed to the *Scotsman* newspaper, when this was wont to be reported to the Government of the day as a proof of disloyalty and rebellion. His views of the spirituality of the Christian Church, derived by his exegetical studies from the New Testament, were equally strong; and his discernment of the contrasted and opposed character of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as taught in the Epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews, annulled in his case all validity of the argument for national churches often drawn

from the Old Testament. There is, however, no evidence of any advance beyond the New Light standard in his earlier publications; and his frequent friendly allusions in them to the Established Church, even while condemning its errors, lead us to suppose that his opinions as a Voluntary were of later date. They probably were slowly matured during his Edinburgh ministry; but were at length so fully formed, that they only awaited the signal of such a declaration as that of Dr. Marshall, or the somewhat prior appeal of the friend of his youth, the Rev. John Ballantyne, in his work entitled, *A Comparison of Established and Dissenting Churches*, to start into kindred action.

The meeting which founded the Voluntary Association was held in Edinburgh on the 13th September 1832. It was attended by a large body of evangelical dissenters of all denominations. The leading resolution was moved by Andrew Coventry Dick, Esq., the distinguished author of the *Dissertation on Church Polity*, and was seconded by Dr. Brown. The fundamental principles of the Association were asserted in that resolution, and were strongly put as follows:—"That a compulsory support of religious institutions is inconsistent with the nature of religion, the spirit of the gospel, the

express appointments of Jesus Christ, and the civil rights of men: That in every case where the individual disapproves of the system supported, or of the principle of its support, it is an unwarrantable attack on the right of property, and a direct invasion of the rights of conscience: That it keeps in a state of unnatural separation those who ought to be united, and in a state of unnatural union those who ought to be separate: That its tendency, as exhibited in its effects, is to secularize religion, promote hypocrisy, perpetuate error, produce infidelity, destroy the unity and purity of the Church, and disturb the peace and order of civil society: That by its direct and indirect influence it is among the principal causes of the low state of Christianity in those countries where it is professed, and of the slowness of its progress throughout the world; and that while thus unreasonable, impolitic, unjust, and mischievous, it has not even the plea of necessity, Christianity having within itself, in the native influence of its doctrines on the minds of those who believe them, everything which is requisite for its efficient support and indefinite extension."

The Association thus inaugurated held its first public meeting in Broughton Place Church, on January 29th, 1833. On that occasion Dr.

Brown delivered a long and eloquent address on the "Nature and Design of Voluntary Church Associations," intended to remove prevalent misconceptions, and to support the statements contained in the above-recited fundamental resolution. He delivered another address in Glasgow at the annual meeting of the Glasgow Voluntary Society, March 3d, 1835, on the "Financial Law of the Christian Church." In this he sought to show that the voluntary support of Christianity is a Divine ordinance, and that the system of establishments supersedes a law of Christ. In this latter address, as in the former, he vindicated the interference of ministers of the gospel in such debates and contests by an appeal to the vital spiritual interests at stake, and thus expressed his sense of the paramount importance of the question in its religious bearings. "The religious view of the subject has always appeared to me the most interesting as well as the most important view that can be taken of it. I like to look at it chiefly as a religious question, and not only as a religious question, but a Christian question. I like to look at it as a Bible question, and not only as a Bible question, but as a New Testament question." These addresses produced a great impression when delivered; and being

soon afterwards published, with a large Appendix of Notes, chiefly selections from writers of eminence, within and without the pale of the Established Churches of the country, they ranked with the best literature called forth in the controversy. One excellent feature they shared with the contemporary publications of Drs. Heugh and Wardlaw; for though somewhat keener in tone than the writings of these advocates, especially those of Dr. Wardlaw, they are as entirely free of bitterness or malignity. The following specimen will indicate their reigning spirit:—"It is my firm persuasion that both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, were the change which we think most desirable effected, would continue large ecclesiastical bodies, and incomparably more active and useful than they have ever hitherto been. We do not interfere, we have no wish to interfere with their creed, their worship, their government, or their discipline; and surely a church that continues in the full possession and peaceful enjoyment of all these is not destroyed. We merely wish those Churches relieved from what is a burden to others and an injury to themselves. We can honestly say, we love them as we love ourselves. We would to God that they were not only almost but

altogether such as we are, *except these bonds.*"*

Beside these efforts, Dr. Brown took an active part in founding, in 1834, "The Scottish Central Board for Extending the Principle of Voluntary Churches and Vindicating the Rights of Dissenters." In the consultations of this body, which formed a rallying point for about ten years to all sections of Scottish Dissenters, he was deeply engaged; and some of their published papers bear, if not the traces of his pen, at least distinct marks of his spirit. This body, amongst other labours, made vigorous head against the efforts of the Scottish Establishment to procure additional endowments for the old chapels of ease, and for others called into existence by Dr. Chalmers in his Church Extension enterprise. This struggle lasted with varying fortune from 1834 to 1839; when the growing weight of the Dissenting interest, and the alienation of both parties in the State from the Non-Intrusion policy of the Church of Scotland, led to the abandonment of the whole scheme. The resistance of Dr. Brown and other leading Dissenters, arose from no indifference to the religious destitution existing in many parts of the country, but from their con-

* *Address* I., p. 10.

viction that the proposed measure unfairly overlooked the exertions and disregarded the claims of Dissenters, and would, as incorporating the vicious principle of endowment, not only prove powerless to meet the evil, but even augment it by neutralizing the efficiency of the non-endowed chapels, which had long been among the best wrought parts of the Establishment.

In the midst of the general Voluntary controversy, and of this particular phase of the struggle, Dr. Brown was involved in an additional conflict almost peculiar to himself, and in which he stood so conspicuous, that it has been still more identified with his name. This was his resistance in the years 1836, 1837, and 1838, to the payment of the Edinburgh Annuity-Tax.

The impost so called, is a tax levied for the payment of ministers of the Established Church in Edinburgh, the only town in Scotland, except Montrose, where the clergy are thus supported. The tax, amounting to six per cent. on rental, is paid by the occupiers of houses, and is appropriated to the maintenance of the eighteen ministers who labour in thirteen city churches. All beyond the boundaries of what is called the royalty are exempted; and the members of the legal profession, or College of Justice, are also free from the tax. This

system reaches back as far as the age of Charles I.; and it was even from early times a source of contention, the Presbyterians refusing in great numbers to pay the impost to the Episcopalian clergy after the Restoration. The keenness of the Voluntary controversy speedily awakened similar scruples in the breasts of Dissenters; and to the former unpopularity of a tax so obviously partial and unequal in its operation, there was added the odium of compulsory assessment for a purpose believed to be sinful. To what extent such scruples of conscience had mingled with the more prevalent grounds of dislike, strengthened as these were by the surreptitious manner in which Parliamentary authority had, in 1809, been obtained for the application of the tax to the support of a larger number of ministers than before, cannot be accurately known. But soon after the Voluntary controversy began, resistance to the payment of the tax became more general; recusants multiplied to hundreds if not thousands; and the clergy, in whose hands the collection of the impost lay, were reduced to the necessity of enforcing their demands, not only by distraint, but in some cases by imprisonment.

The payment of this tax became to Dr. Brown, as it had been to others, a grave and serious

case of conscience. He had resided for years beyond the royalty of Edinburgh; but having occasion, in 1835, to come within it, in order to start his eldest son in the medical profession, the question immediately assumed a practical form. At first, he satisfied himself that to follow up the payment of the tax by a public protest against its unscriptural and sinful character, would be a sufficient exoneration of his conscience, and an adequate testimony to his principles. Such a protest he accordingly inserted in the *Scotsman* newspaper of January 2d, 1836. Ere long, however, he came to regard this step as an imperfect discharge of his duty; and at a public meeting against the Annuity-Tax, held in Rose Street Church, October 19th, 1837, he read a lengthened statement, in which he announced his resolution never again to pay the impost in any other way than by submitting to distress, and at the same time assigned the grounds of this resolution. In this statement he carefully distinguished between the payment of taxes for the general purposes of government, and for some specific purpose regarded by the payer as sinful; and while disclaiming all hostility to the Established Church as a religious body, or to its ministers as individuals, and waiving all other objections to the Annuity-

Tax, he fixed on its character as a tax for a specific object, which he believed to be unscriptural, and gave this as the sole reason why he had not paid, and could not conscientiously pay it. "For me voluntarily to pay such a tax," he says, "would be to assist in doing what I believe God disapproves, and it would be an inversion of the inspired maxim,—'to obey' man 'rather than God.'" In this same statement he declared that the ground he took was what has been called that of "passive resistance" for conscience' sake. This he carefully distinguished from active rebellion against the civil power; and after asserting the consistency of his former payment of the tax under protest, with the ground of passive resistance now taken, since his protest was but a feebler expression of passive resistance, he thus met the not unnatural question, why he did not again pay the tax under a similar protest? "For this plain reason, that I am convinced from experience that all the desirable ends of passive resistance have not been gained in this way, and that a stronger manifestation, both of the iniquity of the system and of my abhorrence of it, is likely to be made by permitting those who are unhappily interested in the execution of what I account an unjust law, to avail them-

selves, if they so please, of whatever powers the law may give them to punish me for my conscientious conviction. I consider it my duty, not only to keep my conscience 'void of offence,' which my public protest did, but to do this in the way most calculated to produce the greatest degree of good, as well as the least degree of accompanying evil. On these principles I have not paid; and while they continue unaltered, I never will pay the Annuity-Tax. Such is the path which my conscientious convictions have chalked out for me. I call on no man to follow me farther than he is a participant with me of these convictions. 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' 'Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.'"*

The publication of this statement naturally produced a great commotion among the adherents of the Established Church in Edinburgh; but none of them assumed the leading part in reply. That office was claimed by Mr. Robert Haldane, a man who had rendered eminent services to evangelical religion at home and on the Continent of Europe, and who had taken a prominent part in the Apocrypha Controversy on the opposite side to that

* *Law of Christ respecting Civil Obedience*, p. 197.

of Dr. Brown. In this former contest he only discharged a duty which naturally fell to his share; but in defending the payment of the Annuity-Tax, and especially in offering himself as the voluntary assailant of Dr. Brown, he must be held "to have meddled in a strife not belonging to him." He published a series of eleven letters in the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, extending from November 13th, 1837, to March 18th, 1838, in which he inveighed with no small heat and vehemence against Dr. Brown's conduct, and in particular, charged him with inexcusable disregard of the Scripture law as to the payment of tribute laid down in Rom. xiii. 1-7. The close of his first letter may be quoted as a sample of the whole:—

"You, sir, hold a very responsible situation as a minister of a numerous congregation, as an influential member of a large denomination, and as one who is employed officially in training young men for the ministry; and if on so momentous a question your conscience is misinformed, how mischievous must be the influence of your doctrine and conduct! I am shocked with your determination of going to prison rather than pay a tax of which you disapprove. What an example is this to your congregation! What an extensive and perni-

cious effect must it have, not only on your own denomination, but on Christians in general! What mischief is it calculated to excite in social life! To what violence and bloodshed may it not lead! Is this like the doctrine and conduct of the Apostles and first Christians? Can anything be conceived more opposite? Your views of the scriptural way in which the religion of Christ ought to be maintained, you have a right to promulgate and defend by argument. But to resist a tax imposed by the Government under which you live, is to rebel against Christ, and in the end may kindle the flames of civil war. You may attempt to excuse yourself as you will, but it must be evident to those who tremble at the word of God, and understand the import of the passage above quoted, that a more flagrant violation of the divine law has seldom been exemplified than in the line of conduct which you have adopted, and the deliberate purpose which you have avowed."

Dr. Brown felt so keenly the gratuitous nature of Mr. Haldane's censures, as well as the asperity of his tone, that he resolved from the first to address to him no direct reply. But as the letters involving charges so serious were actively circulated by the defenders of the An-

nuity-Tax, and as Dr. Brown's position was in itself liable to misconstruction, he determined, as the best means of self-vindication, to explain the true Christian doctrine of civil obedience and tribute-paying, in Sabbath-evening lectures to his congregation. This design he executed on the third Sabbaths of December 1837 and January 1838, expounding on the first occasion the verses in Rom. xiii., which speak of the general duty of Civil Obedience, and on the second the following verses which bear on the Payment of Tribute. In his first lecture he inquired with his usual exegetical rigour what the meaning of the apostolic precept was to the Roman Christians, and then what it is to us. He interpreted the words as a strong injunction to them to be subject even to a heathen government, and as a much stronger injunction to us to submit to a government so much superior. He contended, however, that obedience to civil government was no more unlimited than any other duty expressed in Scripture without qualification. Its limits he then discussed, maintaining that all obligation to obedience ceased, where the magistrate issued commands at variance with the law of God, or contrary to the human law under which he was bound to act, or beyond his province as a secular ruler.

These positions he fortified by Scripture, and the consent of leading divines, and touched in conclusion on the question, whether not only particular commands of the civil magistrate might be passively resisted, but an unjust government actively subverted. In regard to this he held, that while the Roman Christians had in Paul's words a special revelation to remain submissive under a despotism, no such injunction fettered the disciples of Christ when placed in happier circumstances.

The second lecture was a corollary from the first, travelling over the same ground and arriving at exactly the same results in regard to the range and limitation of the duty of tribute paying. Dr. Brown, however, in the course of it, exposed more in detail the strange assertion of Mr. Haldane, that the selection of tribute-paying by the apostle, as matter of express precept, showed its obligation, unlike that of all other acts of civil obedience, to be unlimited, and that hence tribute must be paid even in support of idolatry. He also led evidence to prove that the early Christians refused taxes for idolatrous purposes, and produced an array of eminent Christian moralists, who concurred in the general doctrine that taxes for sinful objects were not binding on the conscience.

These lectures, written with the full sweep of the author's learning and eloquence, and delivered with the impassioned energy of conscious innocence and strong conviction, produced on the audience a vast impression. The writer, who then mingled in the enormous crowd and listened to Dr. Brown almost for the first time, recals the vivid sense of exhilaration with which he heard Christianity purged from affinity with slavish principles and tendencies. He was not convinced then, and is not now, that those Dissenters who decided this case of conscience differently from Dr. Brown, and continued to pay the Annuity-Tax, while protesting against it, were to blame for their different application of the same general principles of religious freedom. But he rejoices that, in connexion with this act of resistance, these principles were so unanswerably vindicated, and the right of deliberation and refusal, in the case of all questionable taxation as of other doubtful demands of civil government, maintained as an inalienable part of Christian liberty. The reasonings of Mr. Haldane in favour of unquestioning compliance were not only repelled but annihilated; and he was shown in this controversy to be as weak in argument as he was strong in temper.

Dr. Brown's expositions were immediately published, and in a few months reached a third edition. They were gradually enlarged, by the insertion of an immense body of notes and extracts, to the size of a thick volume. This is doubtless one of the most important works of casuistical theology recently produced. Probably none but its author could have drawn from so wide a range of reading in biblical, and especially in ecclesiastico-political literature, the whole number of authors quoted being upwards of three hundred.* Almost the whole history of opinion in regard to the province of the civil magistrate is contained in the selected extracts; and such a body of quotations as is given respecting the right of resistance cannot perhaps be found elsewhere. Many testimonies were borne to the value of this treatise, even amidst conflicting views as to the duty of Dissenters in regard to the Annuity-Tax. Two of these may be quoted:—"I am reading," says the late Dr. Joseph Fletcher of Stepney, in a letter to a friend, "Dr. Brown's elaborate pro-

* Dr. Brown, in a manuscript note, applies to his own book the humorous self-description of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum;* "Hic liber est conglutinatus ex tam multis libris quot unus pinguis cocus, oves, boves, sues, grues, anseres, passeres, coquere, aut unus fumosus calefactor centum magna hypocausta ex illis calefacere possit."

duction on civil obedience, and deem his reasonings and criticisms *unanswerable*." "I have never seen," says Lord Brougham, in a letter to the late Lord Cuninghame, "the subject of civil obedience and resistance so clearly and satisfactorily discussed." This testimony referred only to the first part of the exposition, the second not having been then published.

It only remained for Dr. Brown to carry out the principles thus asserted and defended, into consistent action. For this an opportunity was speedily given. Once in February, and again in May 1838, at the instance of the agent of the clergy, he suffered distraint for arrears of the Annuity-Tax; and an eight-day clock, a mirror, and other articles carried off from his house, were sold, with the poinded goods of other citizens, amid hostile demonstrations of the crowd, at the City Weigh-House. The second distraint took place in the presence of a number of his brethren, whom he was entertaining during the meeting of Synod. Dr. Brown quietly suffered the law to take its course, and only renewed on each occasion his protest, by inserting in the *Scotsman* newspaper a notice of the seizure. In his last notice he intimated, that "should the law give those interested authority to take farther measures against him, and

they be disposed to avail themselves of it, they would find him quite as ready to allow his person to be conveyed to the City Jail, as his goods to the City Weigh-House." With this publication, however, his personal resistance to the grievance terminated; for having found occasion, for reasons altogether unconnected with this matter, to leave the royalty of Edinburgh, and reside henceforth in the suburbs, the Annuity-Tax ceased in his case to be exigible.

During these trying and somewhat stormy proceedings, Dr. Brown's congregation clung to him with unabated affection and confidence. A memorial expressive of their feelings was presented to him, signed by all the members of session and managers, and a similar testimony was unanimously subscribed by the members of the congregation. Such was the weight of his character, that his standing also with the general community, even in the heat of this controversy, was in no respect shaken.

It only remains to add, that when many years afterwards a narrative of this controversy appeared in the *Memoirs of Robert and James Haldane* (a work published in 1852), which Dr. Brown considered inaccurate, he deemed it his duty to furnish in a brief pamphlet the means of correction. He confined himself to

two points. The first was the charge, repeated in this volume, that he gave the apostolic precepts only a local and temporary application. In reply, he showed conclusively, by citations from his work, that his doctrine was, that "we must consider the apostolical epistles as a part of the permanent and universal revelation of God's will, and hear the Spirit speaking to the churches in all ages, while directly addressing the churches in Palestine, Greece, or Italy, in Jerusalem, Corinth, or Rome." The second mis-statement was, that the effect of Mr. Haldane's letters had been to silence and all but extinguish resistance to the Annuity-Tax. On the contrary, Dr. Brown proved from public documents, what indeed was notorious, that recusants had continued steadily to multiply, and opposition to increase, till at length sales of distrained goods could only be effected under military protection. While complaining of and correcting these misrepresentations, Dr. Brown bore this generous testimony to the eminent services of his antagonist and his brother to the common Christian cause. The passage, though long, demands quotation, as much of it has a biographical interest in connexion with Dr. Brown himself.

"The history of these remarkable men well

deserved to be written; and a full and faithful record of their various and varying plans of public usefulness, and of their results, would furnish many important lessons both of warning and of encouragement, to those who may follow them in their disinterested course of expenditure and labour in the cause of Christianity. The generous, though unsuccessful attempt of Mr. Robert Haldane towards the evangelization of India, is above all praise. By making use of the brothers in commencing a series of religious movements, which, though in many cases taking a direction different from the intention of their authors, have brought Scotland, in a religious point of view, into a state so much superior to what it was at the end of the last century; and by employing Mr. Robert Haldane as the leading human agent in originating a revival of religion in Geneva and France, which has produced great effects, which will produce still greater, and in putting down the circulation of the Apocrypha by the British and Foreign Bible Society, God greatly honoured them: and—while not approving of all that was done in reference to the last of those works, and still less of the spirit in which it was done—for the good service they have performed to the common cause of evangelical Christianity,

I always have honoured, I will always honour them." "This is the testimony of one, out of comparatively few now alive, who witnessed the Christian career of the two brothers, from its commencement to its close; who more than half a century ago, while but a boy, felt intense interest in the 'Laird of Airthrey's' noble enterprise, and in the conversion and preaching of 'Captain Haldane,' and amid considerable variation of opinion and feeling, but with unshaken confidence in their integrity, traced the lengthened course of both till it terminated in an honoured grave; who, while he respected the principled munificence, the sturdy sense, the indomitable will, the untiring energy of the one, never either flattered him or feared him; and while he revered and loved the other as an exemplary Christian and Christian minister, did not hesitate to reciprocate the kind though painful office of reproof, 'withstanding him to the face' when he thought 'he was to be blamed.'"*

The Voluntary Controversy was connected

* *Remarks on certain Statements by Alexander Haldane, Esq., in his "Memoirs of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and his Brother, James A. Haldane,"* p. 4. The last allusion is to a pamphlet, the title of which explains its nature, published by Dr. Brown in 1839, *The United Secession Church vindicated from the Charge made by James A. Haldane, Esq., of sanctioning Indiscriminate Admission to the Communion.*

by more than a chronological sequence with the ultimate Disruption of the Scottish Establishment. It was all along a great source of strength to the Voluntary party that the institution which they assailed was divided against itself, and that the evangelical clergy admitted the untenableness of the Establishment principle on any other construction than their own. For them to make the Established Church in point of fact square with theory, by a complete redress of the evils of Moderate administration, was not only to gain an internal victory, but to fortify the Church against its outward assailants. A motive of this kind must be held to have co-operated in the enactment of the Veto Law, and in the refusal to repeal it, or to set it aside at the bidding of the civil courts; and though it would be unfair to represent this as the sole or even chief reason that led the Evangelical party to a step otherwise entirely in the line of their natural policy, yet the development of that policy was probably hastened by the Voluntary Controversy, and a recoil from it was unquestionably rendered more hazardous and difficult. It is certain that Dr. Brown and the other leading Dissenters, regarded the series of contests in which the Establishment was involved with the civil powers, from 1837 onwards, in order to

vindicate the principles of Non-Intrusion and Spiritual Independence, as the result, in part at least, of the Voluntary impulse. They accordingly suspended their own exertions to diffuse Voluntary principles, believing that the reforming party in the Establishment were doing their work; and they looked upon it as the strongest practical testimony to the truth of their views, when the only historical structure in which, according to the ablest of their opponents, the rival theory had ever been embodied, gave way by the very efforts to perfect it, and fell in pieces.

In the earlier stages of the conflict between the General Assembly and the civil tribunals, the Dissenters maintained silence; looking upon the controversy as one in which, though deeply interested, they had no call to intermeddle. At the most, they contented themselves with the utterance, that while the one party had the clearer view of the privileges of a Christian Church, the other had the juster estimate of the liabilities of an Establishment. In 1839, however, appeals began to be made by Non-Intrusionist Churchmen to Dissenters, to assist them by their active co-operation; and attempts were set on foot, in which Dissenters were expected to concur, to make the question at issue

the rallying cry of a new party gathered from men of every political and ecclesiastical creed, and strong enough to secure for the contested points a final legislative sanction. To these proposals and arrangements, the Dissenters, through their various organs, replied by a direct negative; and amongst others, Dr. Brown in 1840, spoke out in a pamphlet intended to be anonymous, but ultimately published with his name, entitled, *What ought the Dissenters of Scotland to do at the Present Crisis?* In this tract, Dr. Brown contended that Dissenters, while as Christians they heartily sympathized with the desires of Churchmen, so far as they went, to curtail patronage and assert spiritual independence, could not consent as citizens to liberate an Established Church from national supervision and control, or as Voluntaries to ask any legislative settlement of an ecclesiastical controversy, but could only use political influence to obtain the cessation of all State connexion. At the same time, he urged on Dissenters, instead of forming part of such a mixed alliance as had been proposed, to organize themselves into a separate political section, which might not only assert their principles in the face of this accidental coalition, but resist the constant tendency of the party in the State most nearly

allied to them, to overlook their rights and interests. This pamphlet soon reached a second edition; and though some of the class addressed broke through its rules and cautions, in obedience to a not unnatural and even generous sympathy with the Non-Intrusion struggles, it was very widely accepted by Dissenters as defining their line of duty.

As the Non-Intrusion contest deepened, Dr. Brown's own sympathies with its leaders increased. When the struggle reached its crisis, they were intense. The vitality of old friendships, buried for a time under the dust of controversy, asserted itself; and his concern for the honour of Christianity involved, even beyond any favourite ecclesiastical theory, in the fulfilment of the pledge given by hundreds of Scottish ministers, to break away from a connexion which they could no longer reconcile with their allegiance to Christ, was almost overwhelming. He was not one of those, however, who, even among Dissenters, continued almost to the last to distrust, and in some cases publicly to question, the fidelity of this great party to conscience. On the memorable day of the Disruption (May 18th, 1843), anticipating the issue, he could not resist the impulse which led him, regardless of the irregularity of the proceeding, to take his

place on the empty platform of Tanfield Hall, which the Disruption ministers, arriving in procession from the General Assembly, were expected by and by to fill.* As these at length entered, amidst the respectful demonstrations of the vast surrounding assemblage, almost too much agitated to raise a cheer, Dr. Brown, who was soon lost in the stream that rushed in, eagerly saluted such of his old friends as caught his eye. The exchange of salutations between him and Dr. James Buchanan was peculiarly cordial. The latter, grasping his hand, exclaimed, "Dr. Brown, I am glad to see *you* here;" to which Dr. Brown, with equal but different emphasis, replied, "And I am glad, Sir, to see you *here*." The controversies of years were obliterated, and the foundation laid of a cordial relation between the Free Church and the older Dissenters, which, in spite of occasional jars and misunderstandings, continued to increase amongst the

* A friend of Dr. Brown already referred to, contributes another reminiscence of this day from his diary. "Dr. Brown was particularly solemnized in his manner at the time of the Disruption. On that eventful morning, my office was filled with somewhat fashionable people who had strayed in to see the Queen's Commissioner passing up to the Established Assembly. After a few words in his usual kind manner, he saw that the spirit of the company was different from his own, and yet his commanding and dignified deportment arrested the attention of all present. On turning to leave, he said with great seriousness, 'This is a great day, sir, for the Church of Christ and for the world.' He was on his way to Tanfield Hall."

leading men on both sides to the close of Dr. Brown's life.

In the most unexpected manner his own words uttered amidst the heat of the Voluntary Controversy were fulfilled:—"We are determined, so long as they do not make it impossible, to cherish towards them the feelings of brethren, and to look forward to a period when, even here, we may yet meet still more agreeably, and co-operate still more cordially than we were accustomed to do in days that we will ever look back to with pleasure; and should this expectation not be realized, we have a yet more 'glorious hope,' which we know will not make us ashamed, if on solid grounds we really cherish it, of meeting those brethren in Christ, from whom, through imperfections cleaving to both sides, we have been separated for a season, in the world of perfect light and love and purity and peace, where, if there is regret or shame at all, it will be, if, when the great Master inquires, 'What was it you disputed about by the way?' we be obliged to reply, that it was 'which of us should be the greatest.'"*

Before bringing to a close the narrative of Dr. Brown's labours and struggles in the Voluntary Controversy, and in questions of ecclesi-

* *Law of Christ on Civil Obedience*, pp. 325, 326.

astical polity to which it gave rise, it is necessary to advert to the strong views which he held and acted on, in relation to the non-interference of the Christian Church with questions that affected the administration of the State. He believed that the Church, in its organized capacity, had as often intermeddled unwisely in temporal matters as the temporal power in spiritual; and he could not regard the religious interests, mixed up with secular affairs, as affording any justification of this encroachment. Hence he objected to the discussion of such questions as that of National Education in the courts of the Church to which he belonged, and also to all petitions sent by these bodies to the Legislature, as well as to deputations intended to influence men in power. All these questions he remitted to the church member in his character of a citizen, holding that in that capacity it was the duty of every Christian to bring his religion to bear on secular affairs, always with the understanding that he respected the consciences of others; and believing that by this arrangement ecclesiastical assemblies would better execute their own business, and at the same time withhold from the State every pretext to interfere in their concerns. These views were never adopted in all their extent by the

church to which he belonged; but his persevering assertion of them exerted considerable influence, and checked in some degree the tendency inherent in every powerful organization unduly to widen its own province.

In the attempt to settle these boundary questions, Dr. Brown had much in mind the words of the noble sonnet of Milton to the younger Vane, which he often quoted, and with all the more delight that he felt towards both these great men a sentiment of congeniality amounting to something like personal friendship:—

> "Besides to know
> Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
> What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done;
> The bounds of either sword to thee we owe;
> Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
> In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son."

CHAPTER VII.

ATONEMENT CONTROVERSY.

1840–1845.

Serious Illness—Letter asking a Colleague—Dr. Thomson called to be Colleague—Death of Dr. Brown's Second Wife—Rise of Atonement Controversy—Rev. James Morison of Kilmarnock—Charges against him—His deviations from Dr. Brown—Historical Sketch in *Secession Magazine*—Fuller's "Conversations"—Sentence on Mr. Morison—Dr. Brown's Dissent—Mr. Walker acquitted—Distrust of Professors—Dr. Marshall's Concessions—Dr. Balmer's "Preface"—Conference of Synod—Dr. Marshall's Retractations—Dr. Balmer's Death—Synod of 1845—Dr. Marshall's extreme views—Memorials rejected—Dr. Brown's Complaint sustained—Libelled by Dr. Marshall—Five Counts—Acquittal—Results of Atonement Controversy.

THE studies, labours, and agitations of various kinds in which Dr. Brown had been for so many years incessantly engaged, began at length to affect his health. Early in the spring of 1840 he was taken ill in the pulpit, and laboured for many months under such nervous exhaustion as all but interrupted the exercise of his ministry. No special form of disease appeared; and the quiet and seclusion of the country were resorted to as most likely to renovate his overwrought system. He resided during the summer months at New Mills near Balerno in Mid-Lothian; and though he suffered two serious attacks which brought him very low, he was

able at other times to converse with friends, to drive into the country, and even to address a small religious meeting in his own room. His convalescence was such that he could, though with some difficulty, perform the duties of the Divinity Hall in the autumn at Glasgow; but he found himself unequal to the labours of the ministry in the succeeding winter. As his strength returned so slowly, and as the meridian of life was past, he judged it right, although not without hopes of ultimate recovery, to request his congregation to supply him with a colleague in his pastoral work. The proposal was altogether spontaneous, and came earlier than was usual in such cases; but it was in keeping with that sense of public duty which appeared in Dr. Brown's whole ministerial life. It was also his express desire that his colleague should receive equal stipend with himself, for which purpose he renounced a third part of his income; and when afterwards the prosperity of the congregation warranted an increase, this rule of equality was strictly adhered to. It need not be added, that Dr. Brown left all arrangements connected with the selection of a colleague unreservedly in the hands of his congregation. His letter to the Session is here given at length, requesting assistance in his ministry.

"EDINBURGH, 4, BELLEVUE TERRACE,
20*th October* 1840.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—When my pastoral relation with the United Associate Congregation of Broughton Place was established, I engaged, 'as I shall be answerable at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints, and as I would be found in that happy company at his second coming, faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work among them to the edifying of the body of Christ.' Under these high sanctions I have been endeavouring during the eleven years that have since elapsed, to redeem the pledge then so solemnly given, 'before many witnesses,' to my Master and to the flock over which I believe 'He made me overseer;' and though conscious of many and great imperfections, it affords me heartfelt satisfaction to be able in the retrospect to record my gratitude to Him for enabling me to perform with satisfaction to my people, and comfort to myself, the duties of my office. In the peaceful and prosperous state of the congregation, and their uniformly dutiful and affectionate conduct to me, both as a body and as individuals, I have been furnished with evidence which renders it impossible for me to doubt that my labours have been far above their desert acceptable to my people, and gives me solid

grounds for hoping that they have not been altogether unproductive of those spiritually salutary results contemplated by the 'one Lord' in the institution of the Christian Church and of the gospel ministry.

"For six months it has seemed good to Him 'whose I am and whom I serve,' in a great measure to disqualify me for public duty. Under this dispensation I have met with much mercy from my Master, assistance from my brethren, and kind considerate sympathy from my people. For some time I anticipated that the issue of my indisposition in a short time, either in my entire removal from, or my full restoration to, the sphere of pastoral labours, would render it unnecessary for me to bring before the congregation any proposal respecting the means of securing for themselves that adequate measure and regular supply of doctrine and oversight, teaching and superintendence, so necessary to the continued well-being of a Christian community. He who orders all things well and wisely has seen it fit to appoint it otherwise. 'The will of the Lord be done.' My health is so far restored as to make it not improbable, as my medical advisers inform me, that with constant care my life may be spared for some years to come, and that during these years I may be in some de-

gree fit for pastoral duty. Whatever portion of bodily health or mental vigour may be granted to me, it is my earnest wish to spend it in doing my Master's work, and promoting the spiritual interests of those to whom I am a willing servant for His sake. I would not wish, if it be His will, my pastoral relation to be dissolved but by the hand of death. It is in my heart to live and die with my people. But the same professional opinion which bids me hope for a somewhat protracted period of limited labour, assures me that I am not likely soon, if ever, to regain that measure of capacity of bodily and mental exertion I once possessed, and which I have always felt to be less than was requisite to the right teaching and superintendence of so large a congregation as that committed to my trust.

"In these circumstances, I feel compelled by a sense of duty to request you, my respected friends and brethren, to take an early opportunity of acquainting my people with my settled convictions on this subject, so interesting both to them and me, and of bringing before them the question of the propriety of immediately taking measures for obtaining a second Pastor to take part with me in the work of the ministry among them, and on whom, should he survive me, the undivided charge of the congregation may devolve. Other plans for temporarily

meeting the necessities of the case may indeed be devised; but my own mind is fully convinced, that no plan is so likely ultimately to gain the great object of the congregation's continued and increased spiritual improvement as that which I have ventured to propose. Even should I, in a degree which I do not expect, be restored to health and vigour, there is room enough for two Christian men in the full enjoyment of all their physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities, to spend and be spent within the limits of useful pastoral exertion in such a congregation as ours; and I cannot help thinking, that in the event of my leaving you, it would lessen the anxieties of a death-bed to know that my flock was not to be left without a shepherd, that they were to be spared the hazards of a vacancy in the pastoral office, and that they were still to be under the care not only of the great Shepherd, but of one of his servants, sent by Him, chosen by them, who would 'naturally care for them.'

"I need not, I trust, assure you and them, that my most fervent prayers shall be offered to the great Head of the Church for the guidance of the good Spirit in this crisis, so big with important consequences to them and to their children, and to the interests of religion in our city, and in the religious denomination to which we belong, or that I will most cordially concur in

such arrangements as shall be found requisite and advisable to gain the object in view, in a manner which, while securing the comfortable and honourable maintenance of him whom, through their choice, the Master shall appoint to be my fellow-labourer, shall, without unduly burdening the congregation, sustain the character of enlightened and consistent Christian liberality by which as a body they have so long been distinguished.

"In concluding this communication, I gladly avail myself of the opportunity of expressing in words, what I hope my conduct has long made evident to you, the high esteem and cordial affection I cherish for you as individuals, and the great satisfaction I have enjoyed in your counsels and co-operation in conducting the affairs of that flock of God over which we have been made joint-overseers. 'I rejoice, brethren, that I have confidence in you through the Lord in all things.'—I am, my dear friends, your ever affectionate Pastor,

"JOHN BROWN."

It was not, however, till June 1842, that a colleague was obtained by the translation of the Rev. Andrew Thomson from Lothian Road, Edinburgh, to Broughton Place. The relation thus formed

was one of unbroken harmony, and was fraught with much advantage to Dr. Brown and to the congregation; but the fuller account of this collegiate ministry belongs to a later period.

It was when his congregation were still unsettled, and when the anxieties inseparable from their position were aggravated by the pain and weariness of his own broken and doubtful health, that Dr. Brown was visited with the overwhelming affliction of a second widowhood. His excellent wife, "whose society," in the words of Dr. Balmer, "contributed not a little in impelling him to discharge his public labours with even more than his former alacrity and energy," was taken from him on the 19th of September 1841. She had gone to her mother's residence at Thornliebank, in the summer of that year, partly to confirm the returning strength of her husband, and partly to recruit her own failing health, which had declined after the birth of a child some months before. No danger was suspected; and as it was not perfectly convenient for her to return to Edinburgh, as had been at first contemplated, with her husband, when he resumed his duties as Professor in August, she remained with her three infant children at Thornliebank. A brief visit at the end of each alternate week was all that her husband could

pay her; and on one of these occasions he was startled to find that the disease had assumed a critical aspect. Compelled to return to his public duties, he spent the succeeding days in agonizing anxiety, and was set free in the end of the week, only to learn that his worst fears were to be realized. On the evening of the Lord's day, soothed by his consolations and prayers, and in the full hope of the Christian immortality, his wife expired. Dr. Brown's grief and dejection were unspeakable; but he bowed his head and worshipped. The same day also deprived him of the excellent and venerable relative who had been his companion during all the years of his widowhood. He thus announced the event of his wife's decease to Dr. Balmer:—"The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me. My beloved wife is gone to her first and better husband. She peacefully departed last night about nine. I am very desolate and afflicted. My poor motherless children are unconscious of their immeasurable and irreparable loss." On the succeeding Lord's day, Dr. Balmer preached in Broughton Place Church a singularly pathetic funeral sermon, on the text, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days;" and Dr. Brown soothed his grief by composing a

brief and touching memoir of his deceased wife, which, with Dr. Balmer's sermon, was printed for the use of friends. This memorial is rich in illustration of his own character, and might have supplied interesting details had the plan of this narrative allowed us to incorporate its sketches, which breathe the very soul of tender sorrow, in harmony with the motto prefixed :— "Quanto minus est cum aliis versari quam tui meminisse!"*

The shadow of these heavy personal and domestic trials had not passed away, when Dr. Brown was involved in the severest public struggle and contest of his whole life, and one fraught with an amount of anxiety and suffering, to which even the agitations of the Apocrypha and Voluntary Controversies, seemed rest and tranquillity. This was the prolonged and violent strife known by the name of the Atonement Controversy. Of this the United Secession Church was the chief theatre; and from its commencement in 1841, it had a tendency to connect itself with Dr. Brown, till in 1845 it

* The following extract from Dr. Heugh's Diary refers to this bereavement:—"Had a sad visit to pay on Monday last. My dear friend, Dr. B., has been suddenly deprived of his excellent wife. Calm, holy, dignified sorrow. Never saw him so venerable. Looked on the body in its unbroken rest, every feature being spared by the hand of death. Appeared a profound peaceful slumber, and so it is, for she sleeps in Jesus."—*Dr. Heugh's Life*, p. 397.

gathered all its stormy elements around him, and threatened to make him its martyr. Some account of this important theological debate must be written; but the writer, who happily had no part or lot in it, will seek to be no resurrectionist of its already decaying members, and will strive not needlessly to wound the feelings of any surviving combatant. At the same time, he is convinced that the danger of this controversy has vanished, and that no interest will suffer by an attempt to narrate its history with fairness and candour.

The controversy took its rise in 1841, in connexion with the views and proceedings of the Rev. James Morison, who had been recently ordained minister of the Secession Church in Kilmarnock. Mr. Morison had been a favourite pupil of Dr. Brown, and was distinguished for his learning and ability, as also for the zeal and fervour with which he had embarked when a preacher of the gospel, in certain revival movements then widely diffused in Scotland, and to which he professed himself indebted for his first experimental knowledge of the gospel. In particular, he fixed on certain views connected more or less with the universal aspect of the atonement, which, as having first given peace to his own mind, he urged with constitutional

ardour on others. These he published in a tract, containing an answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" The sentiments of this tract gave offence to the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, as apparently inconsistent with sound doctrine; and Mr. Morison was only ordained on giving explanations which were considered satisfactory, and also a pledge to suppress its circulation. Soon afterwards, the Presbytery, holding him to have violated this agreement as to the tract, and to have persisted in teaching error, suspended him from the office of the ministry. This took place in March 1841, and as Mr. Morison appealed to the Synod, the questions at issue became in the interval matter of wide and anxious discussion. It is probable, if not certain, that had Mr. Morison confined himself to an assertion that in some sense the atonement of Christ was universal, while holding, as he then did, that there was a special purpose by means of it to save the elect only, no controversy would have arisen; and indeed, his views regarding the universality of the atonement, were not made a ground of charge against him by the Presbytery. The erroneous view charged against him in connexion with this point was, "that the object of saving faith to any person, is the statement that Christ

made atonement for the sins of that person, as he made atonement for the sins of the whole world; and that the seeing of this statement to be true is saving faith, and gives the assurance of salvation." It was held that this view restricted unduly the horizon of faith, excluded from it the vital element of trust or confidence, and especially took for granted the previous safety of the individual, which was only possible on the unscriptural theory of universal pardon. Other seven charges were made against Mr. Morison's doctrines to the effect, that he held that all men were able of themselves to believe the gospel unto salvation; that no person ought to be directed to pray for grace to help him to believe, even though he be an "anxious sinner," and that no person's prayers could be of any avail till he believed unto salvation; that repentance in Scripture meant only change of mind, and was not godly sorrow for sin; that justification was not pardon, but that it was implied in pardon; that God pardoned only in his character of Father, and justified only in his character of Judge; that election came in the order of nature after the atonement; that there were in Mr. Morison's publications, many expressions unscriptural, unwarrantable, and calculated to depreciate the atonement; and that

he was not prepared to say that all men by nature are deserving of the punishment of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, on account of Adam's first sin. Of these other charges, little account need here be made, as the views impeached were most of them peculiarities limited to Mr. Morison, and exerted no appreciable influence on the subsequent controversy in the Secession Church. Those that in any measure re-appeared, were the strong assertions as to man's ability to believe the gospel, and the posteriority of election (that is, as explained by Mr. Morison, the purpose of election) to the atonement, as also the hesitation as to the consequences of original sin.

Though Mr. Morison was not formally accused of any error in regard to the extent of the atonement, the objectionable peculiarities with which he had surrounded that part of his scheme, excited a strong recoil, and a severe collision was anticipated at the meeting of Synod between those who held the more wide, and those who held the more restricted view of the bearing of the death of Christ. Dr. Brown shared this fear, and thought it his duty to caution the Church against extreme and violent measures. This he did by inserting a long historical sketch of the Controversy respecting the

Reference of the Death of Christ in the *United Secession Magazine* for June 1841. As he had also been frequently charged in public and in private with the paternity of Mr. Morison's sentiments, he took the opportunity of publishing a collection of extracts from his own works, as an authentic exposition of his views on the debated questions. This was entitled, "Opinions on Faith, Divine Influence, Human Inability, the Design and Effect of the Death of Christ, Assurance, and the Sonship of Christ;" and it included in its second edition, along with other notes, the historical sketch which had first appeared in the *United Secession Magazine*. This publication was sufficient to a candid reader to absolve Dr. Brown from any culpable connexion with Mr. Morison's innovations. Some distant likeness might indeed be traced; but the general complexion of the two systems was different. Mr. Morison's views coincided with those of Dr. Brown in regard to the meaning of repentance as a "change of mind," and the nature of faith as characteristically an operation of the understanding, though both asserted godly sorrow to be the consequence of the one, and fiducial trust of the other. Mr. Morison also agreed with Dr. Brown in holding that faith included the hope of personal salvation, and that

this hope rested on truth, independent of the moods and frames of the mind that cherished it; for this Dr. Brown had earnestly maintained in a paper contributed to the Edinburgh *Amethyst* in 1832, and excerpted in his published *Opinions*. But a serious difference arose at this point, inasmuch as Dr. Brown did not hold saving faith to have for its object any isolated proposition such as this, "Christ died for me," but rather to fix on the union of benignity and holiness in the Divine character as manifested in the atonement, which could not be contemplated as a reality without awakening trust and the personal hope of salvation. Dr. Brown thus found a personal hope or germ of assurance wrapped up in the very exercise of faith, without needing to believe any unrevealed and untrue proposition as to the soul's prior safety; and in this way he escaped the illogical inference as to the personal certainty of salvation, drawn by Mr. Morison from an atonement which, according to him, made nothing certain. On the subject of man's ability to believe the gospel, Mr. Morison at this time was chiefly distinguished from Dr. Brown, and indeed the great body of Calvinistic divines, who have drawn the distinction between natural and moral inability, by the strength and vehemence

of his language, while there was a comparative absence of those earnest and emphatic assertions of the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's influences to all spiritual good, with which Dr. Brown's writings had always abounded. With regard to the extent of the atonement, Mr. Morison did not go beyond Dr. Brown in holding that the death of Christ might be spoken of as a true atonement for all men, "so as to lay a foundation for unlimited calls and invitations to mankind to accept salvation in the belief of the gospel; or so as to remove all the obstacles in the way of man's salvation, except those which arise out of his indisposition to receive it."* But he entirely deviated from him in maintaining that Christ died for all men equally, and that the atonement did not secure salvation to the elect; and his placing of the purpose of election after that of atonement he had not learned in the school of Dr. Brown, who discouraged all such attempts to divide and arrange the decrees of God as presumptuous and incompetent. The other peculiarities charged against Mr. Morison by the Kilmarnock Presbytery, found nothing at all analogous in Dr. Brown's teaching.

The treatise which Dr. Brown had compiled

* *Opinions*, &c., p. 68.

from his earlier writings, as an authentic record of his opinions, was memorable in the Controversy, as having used for the first time in clear contradistinction the two phrases, "the general reference," and the "peculiar or special reference," of the death of Christ. As this came to be the turning-point of the whole debate, it would be interesting to know when Dr. Brown himself had been led to adopt the views which he thus avowed, and which were expressed by him in this tract in a quotation from Polhill, who himself borrows the words from an ancient writer: "Etsi Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, pro nobis tamen specialiter passus est, quia pro ecclesia passus est." In a sermon, inserted in the *Secession Magazine* for 1835, and extracted in the published *Opinions*, the twofold view shines through, but with a feebler light on the special reference, which was not required to be made prominent, as the sermon was on this text, "Christ gave himself a ransom for all." In the close of this sermon, the author laments the existence of "angry controversy" amongst those who are "substantially agreed." At an earlier period of his ministry, it is doubtful if he held such extended views; as in the first edition of his *Discourses on the Lord's Supper*, he speaks, without scruple, of Christ as

dying for "an elect world." His friend and fellow-sufferer in the Atonement Controversy, Dr. Balmer, as is apparent from his conversations with Robert Hall, passed through a long and painful process of inquiry before he arrived at the conclusion that the Atonement was in one sense as wide as the human race. There is no record of Dr. Brown having experienced equal struggles, since he perhaps was earlier acquainted with the history of opinion on the subject, and was never disposed to look upon the extended view as a material deviation from the great stream of Calvinistic theology.

The historical sketch already referred to, is chiefly designed to show that this controversy belonged not to the controversies between Calvinists and Arminians, but among Calvinists themselves. The following extract from it may be here inserted:—"The Arminian controversy not only raised the old Pelagian question, ['that God willed the salvation of all men *equally* by the death of Christ,'] but also the question between Godeschalcus and his opponents, ['that our Lord Jesus Christ was not crucified and put to death for the *redemption* of the whole world, but only of those who are saved, *i.e.*, the predestinated.'] The Synod of Dort, which determined the first question, left the other in a

great measure an open one. The Gomarists were bent on its being decided, but the English deputies had sufficient influence to prevent this. John Cameron, whose extensive and accurate learning and critical acumen do honour to his country and age, taught, 'that while the elect are, by an effectual and irrevocable calling, saved through the death of Christ, Christ died for all men, with the intention that they might be invited and called to repentance; and that when so invited and called, it arises from themselves alone, and the hardness of their heart repelling the means of salvation, that they are not saved.' This sentiment was strongly supported by Amyraut, and opposed by Rivet, Spanheim, and Des Marets. Amyraut defended himself with much ability, both from the press and before synods, and was ultimately honourably acquitted of heresy. His views are supported by Daille, Mestrezat, Claude, and other distinguished French Protestant divines. They became the common doctrine of most of the Reformed Churches, including the Church of England. At present, this doctrine, with modification, is held by the great body of evangelical Protestants on the continent of Europe, of the Congregationalist and Baptist churches in this country, of the Congregational

churches of New England, and of both the great divisions of the Presbyterian Church in America; for it is quite a mistake to suppose that the doctrine of a limited or general atonement, as understood among Calvinists, is one of the points of difference between these two bodies." *

Dr. Brown, then, after referring to controversies on this subject about the time of the Westminster Assembly, between men like Owen and Witsius on the one side, and Davenant and Polhill on the other, quotes the several passages from the symbols framed by that Assembly, and contends that they admit the larger interpretation, as well from their own language, as from the unlikelihood that their framers could have meant to exclude from the ministry "many of the best Christians and theologians who adorned that and the preceding age—Archbishop Usher, Bishops Davenant, Carleton, and Hall, Fenner, Preston, Baxter, Corbet, Howe," &c.†

This review is closed by a citation of the various public documents issued by the Secession Church on the doctrine in question. Such assertions are given on the one side as, "that Christ died in one and the same respect for all those for whom he in any respect died," and

* *Opinions*, &c., pp. 70, 71. † *Ibid.* p. 75.

that "it is a deviation from truth to hold, that although all men shall not be saved, yet Christ, according to the purpose of God and his own intention, died for all men, actually expiating the guilt even of those who eventually perish." Extracts are furnished, on the other side, to the effect, that "there is a general, free, and unlimited offer of Christ and salvation through him by the gospel unto sinners of mankind as such, upon the foundation of the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of Christ, his relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer to mankind-sinners as such, and the promise of eternal life through him to mankind-sinners as such in the gospel;" and that "if by placing us in a salvable state were meant that the anger of God is appeased by a true and complete satisfaction to justice, so that, without reference to decrees, which regulate intention and determine effect, salvation is offered to all men, then doubtless it is true that so far as the requisitions of law and justice are concerned, all obstructions are removed, and every one may be called on as welcome and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work." With regard to the passages cited, Dr. Brown remarks, that it "would perhaps not be easy completely to reconcile them with each other, or with

some of the statements in the symbolical books. In them, we believe, will be found statements as strong as either the friends of an exclusively particular or of a general reference of the atonement would wish to make. It is evident that, during the whole course of its history, the Secession Church has been anxious to maintain with equal firmness the doctrine of personal election and particular salvation, and the doctrine of the unlimited calls and invitations of the gospel; and that their great object has been to state the doctrine with respect to the reference of the death of Christ in a manner which, while agreeable to the word of God, seems best to harmonize with both these doctrines. The controversy now pending, like most on the same subject, respects much less a principle than the manner of stating it, so as to make it 'agree,' as Baxter says, 'with the rest of our theology.' Here considerable latitude seems to be required, and probably may be given, without materially endangering either of the great doctrines referred to."* The paper closes with a dissuasive against schism or disruption on such grounds, borrowed from Andrew Fuller, whose "Three Conversations on Imputation, Substitution, and Particular Redemp-

* *Opinions*, &c., pp. 77, 78.

tion," written to defend his own views, which were exactly similar to those of Dr. Brown, against his brother Calvinist, Abraham Booth, Dr. Brown also at this time reprinted. Fuller puts these words into the mouth of the umpire, who is understood to represent Dr. Ryland, "Brethren, there are many adversaries of the gospel around you, who would rejoice to see you at variance; let there be no strife between you. You are both erring mortals; but both, I trust, the sincere friends of the Lord Jesus. Love one another."

When the Synod, for which Dr. Brown had thus sought to prepare, met in Glasgow in June 1841, after a long and earnest debate, the sentence passed on Mr. Morison was confirmed; his sentiments were condemned as erroneous and self-contradictory; and as he could not be brought to renounce his views or submit to the sentence, he was declared to be no longer in connexion with the Secession Church. He speedily developed his views into greater consistency, by excluding from them the Calvinistic elements which had been struggling with other tendencies; and became the founder of a religious body which, with something of a Pelagian tinge on the one side, and of evangelical colouring on the other, holds the

usual doctrines of Arminianism. The general voice of the Secession Synod in condemning Mr. Morison in 1841 must be held to have better divined the leanings of his theology at that time than did Dr. Brown, who, while censuring much both in his views and in his language, not only stood alone in pleading for a milder treatment than was extended to him, but dissented from the sentence when passed, though he speedily became convinced of its practical necessity. This forbearance was the result of a natural partiality for a distinguished pupil, of a charity which "hoped all things" to the last, as well as of a generous reluctance to salve his own orthodoxy at the expense of another who was undergoing judgment. This extreme of lenity, for such the general sense of his brethren considered it to be, was amply atoned for by the years of suspicion and distrust in some quarters through which he had to pass, arising partly at least from this step. Dr. Brown, indeed, in some discussions of Synod, which sprung out of his dissent, made an explicit disclaimer of such identity of opinion with Mr. Morison as had been erroneously imputed to him; but in the excited state of men's minds its effect was only partial; and the further errors into which Mr. Morison soon fell, not only dis-

appointed those friends who had sought to save him, but exposed them to the increased prejudice of his more zealous antagonists.

This same meeting of Synod, however, while it refused to tolerate the doctrine of a universal atonement, in connexion with the startling language and dubious tendencies of Mr. Morison, did not condemn it in the somewhat more guarded form in which it had been held by another minister, the Rev. Mr. Walker of Comrie. Having been suspended by the Presbytery of Perth on allegations of a similar complexion to those brought against Mr. Morison, he convinced the Synod that he held no real error on the subjects charged, and was restored to his office. The propositions to which he gave his assent, and which were the basis of the favourable judgment of the Synod, while leaving the order of the Divine decrees an open question, and strongly asserting the certain salvation of the elect by the atonement, in consequence of its special relation to them, equally assert that the mediation of the Saviour was appointed "to open a door of mercy to mankind-sinners," and "that the death of Christ bears such a relation to all men, that all men are now free and welcome to come to God through Him." From the line thus chalked out in this first meeting,

in which indeed the controversy was almost exhausted, the Secession Synod never deviated; and it is obvious that its decisions, in principle, coincided with the views of Dr. Brown. An important pleading on behalf of forbearance was also addressed to the Synod on this second case by his colleague in the professorship, Dr. Balmer, whose views had been waited for with much anxiety. In the course of his speech he quoted a sentence from Jonathan Edwards, the highest name in modern Calvinism, which almost anticipates the judicial language of the Secession Church in this whole controversy. "From these things it will inevitably follow, that however Christ in some sense may be said to *die for all*, and to redeem all visible Christians, yea, the whole world, by his death, yet there must be something *particular* in the design of his death, with respect to such as he intended should actually be saved thereby."* In these discussions, also, Dr. Heugh took a leading and influential part, and a Statement of Principles framed by a committee, in the sense of the decisions given at this Synod, and adopted by the succeeding one, was understood to have had him for its author.

The disturbed feeling of the Church on the

* Edwards *on the Freedom of the Will*, Conclusion.

subject of the Atonement continued, and suspicions of Dr. Brown's orthodoxy were still entertained by some, notwithstanding his explanations. Hence, in opening the Hall in August 1841, he took occasion in a valuable address, afterwards published under the title *Hints to Students of Divinity*, and already referred to in another connexion, "to caution his pupils to guard against reckless innovations, and to speak the things which become sound doctrine." At the same time he was led, by the latitude which Mr. Morison had allowed himself in professing only an adherence to the "scope" of the symbolical books, to discuss the extent of subscription expected in the Secession Church. He declared this to be "something far above the dangerous laxness of a pledge to the 'scope' of a confession, and something considerably below the impracticable rigidity of a profession of adherence to every iota contained in it." This middle ground he found in adhesion to the system of doctrine as a whole, and in its separate parts, the meaning of which no honest man of ordinary intellect could fail to discover. Against this interpretation, even in the excited state of men's minds, no voice was raised; and the discussion probably had some effect in restoring confidence.

Mistrust, however, still lingered; and in the Synod of 1842 Dr. Brown had again to resume the work of explanation. This consisted in renewing his declaration of dissent from Mr. Morison's views, while at the same time he repelled the idea that his past disclaimer had in it anything of the nature of a retractation; and also in exposing the absurdity of an insinuation that had been made, that a passage in the Secession Testimony of 1827, favourable to the general aspect of the Atonement, had been surreptitiously inserted under his influence. He also stated, that the surmises and allegations against him had had such an effect on his peace of mind, that for eleven months his habitual feeling had been to resign his office as Professor, which he could only retain upon a renewed and explicit declaration of confidence. The result of this appeal was, that a strong expression of entire confidence was given, only one individual declaring himself not satisfied. This Synod continued the work of the foregoing one, by suspending from his office the Rev. Mr. Morison of Bathgate, for doctrines similar to those charged against his son, and by issuing a Condemnation of Errors on the subjects debated; but its proceedings added little or nothing to the doctrinal results of the previous discussions.

As a sequel, however, to the adoption of the act condemning errors, the only two ministers who disagreed with it were exscinded at next meeting of Synod in 1843. These were the Rev. Messrs. Rutherford of Falkirk and Guthrie of Kendal, both of whom maintained that the Synod falsely condemned the assertion that the Atonement, in itself considered, secures the salvation of none.*

Meanwhile the controversy continued to agitate the Secession Church, and new materials were supplied for it by two publications which were connected, and that not remotely, with each other. The Rev. Dr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch, who had spoken in 1841 as a leading antagonist of Mr. Morison's opinions, and especially of the doctrine of a universal atonement, and whose name carried great weight with the stricter party, published before the Synod of 1842 a work entitled *The Death of Christ the Redemption of his People*, in which, as he afterwards himself declared, from a desire of conciliation, he made great concessions to the other side. While strenuously maintaining the special relation of Christ's death to the elect, he allowed that "for all men, for sinners in general, the Saviour died," that "he died in their nature, he died in their

* The former of these ministers has since renounced the error condemned, and joined the United Presbyterian Church.

stead," "making reparation to the justice which they had provoked," "removing every legal obstruction that lay in the way of their obtaining life," "bearing the curse to which they were subjected;" and that in this way he not only died for all, but "had covenanted to die for all." He also used this language in speaking of the gospel call: "The mere sufficiency of the atonement I have always thought, how glorious soever, how infinite soever, is really not ground enough on which to rest the universal call. In this I agree so far with the brethren whom I oppose; but what I do not find in the sufficiency of the atonement I find in the fact that it was a general remedy. In some sense it was an atonement for all. In some sense the Saviour stood in the room of all."* This admission seemed to reduce any remaining controversy respecting the extent of the atonement amongst those who held its special relation to the elect to a mere logomachy; and accordingly Dr. Balmer, who, as well as Dr. Brown, had laboured under some degree of suspicion, emboldened by Dr. Marshall's language, and by the friendly terms in which he acquitted the professors of any responsibility for the "unpleasant agitation which had

* Marshall's *Death of Christ the Redemption of his People*, pp. 70, 71, 203.

arisen under their sway," came forward to plead that the agitation ought now to cease, as the controversy was virtually at an end. He republished, after the Synod meeting of 1842, a work of Polhill on the Extent of the Death of Christ, in which that author, a lay divine of the Commonwealth period, had advocated the two-fold view adopted by the Secession Synod, but with the emphasis upon the larger reference; and to this work he prefixed a recommendatory Preface. In this preface, without naming Dr. Marshall, he contended that all parties were now at one in admitting the universality of the atonement, congratulated the Church on the greater clearness with which the doctrine, darkly indicated in the earlier documents of the Secession, had been developed; and while pleading for the term "universal atonement" as the fittest to describe what Christ by common consent had done for sinners, advised his brethren to forbear in the meantime its use, since the day was probably near at hand when such phraseology would give no offence. These well-meant and perfectly innocent observations created in the breasts of some of the stricter party much dissatisfaction, especially the pleading for the term "universal atonement," while the hint as to progress was supposed to reveal

a dark design, by the use of professorial influence, rapidly to obliterate the old landmarks of the Secession Church. Hence the Preface to Polhill became a centre of disturbance, and continued to spread its shadow alike over Dr. Balmer and Dr. Brown, who had now become, by the resignation of Drs. Mitchell and Duncan in 1842, the senior professors of divinity. In the May Synod of 1843, a number of dissatisfied brethren, who privately complained to Dr. Balmer, were so far moved by his explanations as to renounce their intention to bring the matter before the open court. But in the autumnal meeting of that year, rendered necessary by the pressure of business, a formal complaint against this Preface came up from the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock, accompanied with another overture from the same presbytery, "that the Synod should enter at an early day into a free and confidential conversation regarding the differences that divided the body, and that the two senior professors be requested to be present, and to deliver their sentiments on the subject." This latter proposal, as the more comprehensive, was first taken up; and on the 5th of October 1843, in a committee of the whole house, and amid eager attention, the professors delivered their senti-

ments. Few spectacles more impressive have ever been witnessed in any ecclesiastical assembly. Dr. Balmer, as the most deeply incriminated party, led the way in a speech of two hours, and by his visible candour and moderation, tempered with dignity and firmness, dissolved for the time all prejudice and opposition; while Dr. Brown followed in a terse, compact, and luminous statement of his doctrines, making towards the close some personal references of a very emphatic though not unconciliatory character. "Were my views," he said, "of these subjects, or on any subject, not, in my own clear conviction, accordant with the avowed sentiments of this body, as they are expressed in our symbolical books, and if I were not persuaded that this is the opinion of the majority of my brethren, I would not continue an hour a minister, much less a teacher of theology, in connexion with this body." A remarkable feature in the statements of both professors was, that they had never lectured on the extent of the atonement, or broached the controverted topics in the Divinity Hall.

The doctrinal import of these statements does not need, after what has been stated at large, to be detailed; but such was the effect of their delivery, and of the excellent spirit in

which they were couched, that after a long and confidential conversation, the whole Synod, including the former solitary dissentient, declared itself satisfied, and agreed unanimously to this conclusion :—"That, on explanation, supposed diversities of sentiment in a great measure disappeared, and that scriptural harmony prevailed among the brethren ; that, in particular, on the two aspects of the atonement there was entire harmony, namely, that in making the atonement the Saviour had special covenant relations to the elect, had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation ; and that his obedience unto the death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God, as that, on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is opened to all men, and a free and full salvation is presented for their acceptance." Unfortunately, not a little of the conciliatory effect of the conference and of this general resolution was lost by a keen debate which followed. This arose on the question, whether, in a caution against misleading phraseology which the Synod agreed to append to the above resolution, the expression "limited atonement" not less than "universal atonement" should be forbidden. This equal sentence of prohibition, after much

resistance, was carried, and was the first decisive test of the strength of parties.

The conference had produced on the whole a highly favourable impression; but the storm was far from spent. Dr. Brown, in bidding farewell to Dr. Balmer after the Synod, with something of prophetic sagacity, had said, "Take care that the clouds do not return after the rain." The words were soon fulfilled. The professors, in compliance with a general request, thought themselves at liberty, and almost bound to publish their "Statements," as these had been made with closed doors. This led to fresh controversy, some perhaps recoiling from views in a printed form which they had accepted in a spoken, and others complaining that the decision of the Synod was thus made unfairly to cover the whole breadth of one side of the question, as if everything contained in the professors' statements had been included in the alleged harmony. An aged minister in the north sent up to the Synod of 1844, with the consent of his Presbytery, a representation of dissatisfaction with the decision of the former Synod, from which he had been absent. A majority, however, refused to disturb the decision complained of; but to guard against mistake, it was declared that this decision involved

no alteration of the standards of the Church, but merely asserted the existence of harmony as to the sense put upon them.

A more painful accusation against the professors, and the first of an unhappy series, was disposed of at this meeting. Dr. Marshall, whose part in the controversy has been already referred to, had by this time withdrawn his concessions, and begun to write zealously in favour of the exclusively limited sense of the atonement. This was not till after he had concurred in the virtual acquittal of the professors in 1843, though he then, in allusion to Dr. Balmer's narrative of the influence exerted by his large admissions, repeated a retractation of them made some time after Dr. Balmer had written his Preface to Polhill. In the beginning of 1844, he made a more extended, though still somewhat indefinite retractation, in a work entitled *The Catholic Doctrine of Redemption Vindicated*, the main scope of which was to oppose Dr. Wardlaw's theory of the extent of the atonement—a theory which differed in some particulars from that of Drs. Balmer and Brown, and especially in making the purpose of election posterior to that of atonement. In an Appendix to this work, Dr. Marshall animadverted with much severity on the published

"Statements" of the professors, which he accused, in common with Dr. Wardlaw's doctrine, of virtually abolishing the essence of the atonement. He uttered in this Appendix some insinuations, which it is not necessary here to record, against the professors and others; and the truth of these he declared his resolution to leave unexamined, although Dr. Brown had repeatedly and publicly demanded that all dissatisfied parties should prosecute himself or any other offender by a regular process of libel. The two professors complained of this Appendix to the Synod; and the result was, that Dr. Marshall disclaimed any intention to bring charges against them, and spontaneously intimated his purpose to suppress the Appendix altogether.

From this Synod Dr. Balmer, whose former services to the Church were universally acknowledged, and whose candour and gentleness in these trying scenes had made a deep impression, returned to die; and Dr. Brown, who had been as much bound to him by tender friendship as by identity of opinions, was left to struggle through the remaining passages of the controversy alone.*

* Dr. Brown preached Dr. Balmer's funeral sermon, edited two volumes of his Academical Lectures and Sermons, and wrote his epitaph in the following terms:—"Dr. Balmer was a man of high endowments, attainments, and worth; a sincere and devout Christian; an accurate and elegant scholar; a learned and sound divine;

The year 1845 brought with it the issue of this prolonged and painful strife. Almost the whole Synodical meeting in May was occupied with the controversy; but the discussion of the general question presented exceedingly little that was novel or interesting in a theological point of view. The only feature of this kind, was a disposition to insist that the larger reference of the atonement trenched upon the true nature of an atonement, and by interfering with the ideas of suretiship and substitution, impaired the strength of that cardinal article of Christianity. This had been all along a stumbling-block to able and excellent men who clung to the more limited view; but the more emphatic assertion of it distinguished this meeting of Synod. A great many memorials, in which this idea had a leading place, came up from Presbyteries and Sessions, craving a withdrawal of the brand placed upon the expression "limited atonement," and the recal of any decision that countenanced the opposite doctrine. This was also the main theme of a new publica-

an instructive and impressive preacher; a faithful and affectionate pastor; an able and skilful tutor; an enlightened and ardent friend of liberty, order, and peace, in the Church and in the State; firm yet liberal in his principles; kind and generous in his dispositions; bland yet dignified in his demeanour; and in the discharge of all the duties of ecclesiastical, civil, social, and domestic life, most conscientious."

tion of Dr. Marshall, entitled, "Remarks on the Statements" of Drs. Balmer and Brown, in which it was used to point such severe charges as that the gospel set forth in their Statements was "a worthless gospel," and its call "little better than a solemn mockery." Dr. Brown, who strongly complained that such charges were advanced against him through the press, and not brought before the Church Courts, made a statement to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, asking their advice as to whether it was not his duty to call in the aid of the Synod, either to protect him from such allegations, or compel his accuser to have them tried in the proper quarter; and advice having been given accordingly, this personal matter also came up for decision. In the petition which Dr. Brown in these circumstances transmitted to the Synod, he met the charge of subverting the proper suretiship and substitution of Christ, by arguing that the work of Christ, though in itself one, might serve more than one purpose; that in obeying the precept and enduring the penalty of the law of God for any portion of mankind, the Saviour necessarily did what all of them were bound to do, and suffered what all of them deserved to suffer; and that it was a mere question of words, whether, after the term "substitution" had in its

strict sense been applied to his relation to the Church, it might not also in a laxer sense, like many other Scripture terms, such as the names of his saving offices, be extended to denote his relation to the whole world. In regard to the use of terms, Dr. Brown declared himself much more disposed to reject than employ such novel phrases as "double substitution;" but said with energy, "The doctrine of the general aspect of the death of Christ must not be given up. That is an essential principle of Christian truth. The clear exhibition of that truth has been one of the characteristic glories of the Secession in the whole course of its history."*

These closing statements were intended to meet the new and startling tendencies of Dr. Marshall, who, pressed by the logical necessities of his position, had, with a melancholy consistency, proceeded to condemn the time-hallowed language of the Secession, that Christ's death had removed "legal bars" to salvation, and "opened the door of mercy." He had also maintained that God "loved only his own," that the gospel offer was only an offer to all men of a salvation strictly limited to the elect, and that every man in believing the gospel was to pre-

* *Statement made before the Presbytery of Edinburgh on asking their Advice*, p. 24.

sume that this salvation was "intended for him," nay, though only three men were to be saved by the blood of Christ, to believe with assurance that he was one of them. In this singular way did extremes meet, for Dr. Marshall thus came round to Mr. Morison's view of assurance, which was, that every man was to hold that Christ's death had saved him.

The recoil from these doctrines, which were held by very few, was favourable to the efforts of the party who sought the termination of the controversy. It became also apparent to many that the differences were chiefly verbal; and that where there was real discrepancy, as between those who held an atonement intrinsically sufficient, and those who held an atonement formally made, for all, the discord was so neutralized by other agreements as to fall within the limits of Christian forbearance. The laity likewise desired in general the cessation of strife. They could not enter into the subtlety which declared a proposition like this, "Christ died for all," heretical, and another, borrowed from the Marrow of Modern Divinity, "Christ is dead for all," orthodox. Their longing to escape from this region was expressed in the saying of an elder after one of these meetings, "This has been a *doctrinal* Synod; I hope the next will

be a *practical* Synod." To these various sentiments Dr. Heugh had powerfully appealed in a pamphlet entitled *Irenicum*, published before the Synod met; and he led the party that discouraged continued agitation.* The motion made by him was carried by two to one, refusing to enter farther into these doctrinal discussions, and exhorting all parties "to abstain from this unprofitable strife." So near had the two sides come, that the motion proposed by the minority contained a clause asserting "the all-sufficient virtue of the Saviour's sacrifice for guilty men without exception;" and it was publicly asserted, that if a clause which was intro-

* In this publication Dr. Heugh had protested in these earnest terms against any approach to the denial of the universal benignity of the gospel:—"I should not choose to be the preacher who, in beseeching sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God, should classify the species into two orders, and say to the one, to you indeed the door of mercy is open, and to the other, to you it is shut. If the door of mercy, through faith in the Son of God, is not opened to every creature, where then are the good news which I have to publish to every creature? Let a church lay her interdict upon this language, or words equivalent, and I would leave that church. For the sake of the truth contained in it, I should even be willing, were I reduced to that necessity, to stand alone in the world; and with my Saviour by my side, and with his unrolled commission in my hand, I would proclaim the good tidings of mercy through redeeming blood to every creature willing to hear me; and in the name of Him who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, would never cease to urge his invitation in all its unrestricted amplitude, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."—*Irenicum*, p. 30.

duced by the Synod into its answers to their reasons of dissent, conceding that Christ was the exclusive head and surety of his people, had been incorporated beforehand with the motion that carried, it would have disarmed opposition.

The general question being thus disposed of, the Synod proceeded to the personal matters between Dr. Brown and Dr. Marshall. A motion was carried by a very great majority approving of Dr. Brown's conduct in appealing for protection, and expressing entire confidence in his soundness in the faith; the minority not sanctioning in their motion the charges against him, but simply urging that they should be investigated. On the other hand, Dr. Marshall was, by a large majority, admonished for having left unfulfilled his promise to suppress the Appendix in which he first brought charges against Dr. Brown and other parties, and for having renewed these in other forms, the Synod holding "that he had thus pursued an unconstitutional course, inasmuch as, if he really believed that such doctrines were held and promulgated, he ought to have brought the matter before the Church Courts in the only competent way." During the exciting discussions that arose on this last motion, Dr. Marshall once and again declared himself able to substantiate his

charges against Dr. Brown at the bar of the Synod, whereupon the latter challenged him to do so; and upon a motion being made, that he either substantiate or retract them, he declared his readiness to adopt the former alternative. Accordingly, Dr. Marshall, after he had accepted the vote of censure by the Synod, expressed his intention to bring a libel against Dr. Brown; and a meeting of Synod was fixed within two months, that the libel might be proceeded with before the Session of the Divinity Hall.

The Synod met on the 21st of July 1845. Dr. Marshall then proposed to delay his libel till May 1846, but the voice of the great majority condemned this as unjust to Dr. Brown, who besides had refused to conduct the approaching session of the Hall, with accusations against his orthodoxy unrepelled. Dr. Marshall then presented his libel, which was also subscribed and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Hay of Kinross. It was drawn in the form of a syllogism. The major proposition set forth five heads of doctrine as contrary to Scripture and the standards of the Secession Church. The minor proposition alleged that these errors had been avowed and promulgated by Dr. Brown, and rested the proof chiefly on passages quoted from the joint "Statements" of himself and Dr.

Balmer made in 1843. The conclusion asserted that he ought to be found and declared deserving of censure. The Synod ordered this libel to be printed and sent to all its members present and absent, and fixed the 29th of July, five days after the date of the production of the libel, for its final consideration.

Universal interest was excited by a proceeding so unexampled in the Secession Church as the libelling of a professor of theology; and it was also remarked, that of the twelve citations alleged to contain error, nine were taken from the statements of Dr. Balmer, with which Dr. Brown had avowed his accordance, so that both professors were on their defence. An unusual body of ministers and elders were in attendance, for it was felt that the last stage of the controversy had at length arrived. On the day fixed, the Synod resumed its sittings, which were held in Broughton Place Church. Dr. Brown lodged brief answers and defences to the libel, consisting chiefly of explanations drawn from the already published writings of himself and Dr. Balmer, and closing with an expression of satisfaction that he had this opportunity of vindication.

The Synod then resolved on its mode of procedure. Instead of deciding first the relevancy,

in other words, whether the errors charged were really errors, and then taking the proof, that is, whether they were brought home to Dr. Brown, it was agreed by a large majority to consider together the relevancy and the proof under every count or head of the libel. To this departure from technical order, the Synod was moved by the fact, that the libel was irregularly drawn, and would have been necessarily thrown out on mere technical grounds, a result which would have been altogether unsatisfactory to the Church. The Synod then proceeded in the course which it had marked out. Each count of the libel was read separately by the clerk, then supported by the oral pleadings of Dr. Marshall, who came up to the bar, after which Dr. Brown, advancing to the same place, replied. His pleadings were of the briefest character, confined for the most part to a few words, and indicating almost an impatience of the formality of defence, which yet respect for the Court induced him to make. The discussion of the Synod followed, with the vote on each count. The whole proceedings extended over four days.

The *first* count charged Dr. Brown with denying the immutability of the Divine decrees. The evidence alleged only showed that he allowed the non-elect to be salvable in this sense, that

their salvation was not hindered by the decrees of God, but by their own unbelief. About a fourth part of the Synod thought some of the expressions founded on capable of an unsound sense, but Dr. Brown was unanimously acquitted of using them in such a sense.

The *second* count related to original sin, and thus lay outside the general track of the atonement controversy. The errors charged, a fourth part of the Synod thought real errors; but all agreed in acquitting Dr. Brown of holding them.

The *third* count brought up the long vexed and agitated question of the extent of the atonement. After very extended discussion, Dr. Brown was unanimously acquitted of holding any heretical doctrine, the portion of the Synod, less than a fifth in number, which supported the relevancy of the charge, allowing "that Dr. Brown repudiated the doctrine of universal atonement as held by Arminians, but not in terms sufficiently definite to exhibit a proper statement of the truth upon this subject as exhibited in the Scriptures and the subordinate standards of the United Secession Church." The discussion on this count exhibited a greater tendency to coalescence than any former debate in the Secession Synod.

The *fourth* count of the libel caused universal

astonishment and perplexity. It seemed to charge it as an error that the death of Christ needed divine appointment, independently of its intrinsic worth, to make it a sufficient atonement; and the passages adduced from Dr. Brown only repeated the commonplace of theology, that without Divine appointment the Atonement has no existence. The various motions made all set aside this count as irrelevant, and declared the charge of error against Dr. Brown unfounded.

The *last* count charged Dr. Brown with the error of teaching that Christ in his death was the substitute of all men, and thus subverting his substitution in the room of his people. Here, also, Dr. Brown was acquitted of error; but a small minority found fault with his language as inconsistent with the received doctrines of the Church.

It only remained to pass a general vote upon the results of the libel; and after expressions of satisfaction from all sides, that Dr. Brown had been entirely cleared of heresy, the following motion, proposed by James Peddie, Esq., W.S., was unanimously adopted, "The Synod, on a review of its deliberations and decisions during this and the last six sederunts, finds that all the charges made against Dr. Brown have

been disposed of, being severally declared to be unfounded: Finds that there exists no ground even for suspicion that he holds or has ever held any opinion on the points under review inconsistent with the word of God, or the subordinate standards of this Church. The Synod therefore dismisses the libel; and while it sincerely sympathizes with Dr. Brown in the unpleasant and painful circumstances in which he has been placed, it renews the expression of confidence in him given at last meeting, and entertains the hope that the issue of this cause has been such as will, by the blessing of God, restore peace and confidence throughout the Church, and terminate the unhappy controversy which has so long agitated it."

Dr. Brown, on receiving intimation of this sentence from the Moderator, spoke as follows: —"Moderator, I retire from your bar, at which these four days I have appeared as a panel, with mingled emotions; with deep regret that I should have been the occasion—in the inmost consciousness of my mind I feel, the unintentional, the most unwilling, the innocent occasion—of so much trouble to this Court; with entire satisfaction with the sentence to which, after so much patient investigation, they have come; with humble gratitude to God for relieving me

from imputations so injurious to my usefulness, and so painful to my feelings; and with sincere thankfulness to this Court as the instruments of his goodness. For the expression of their sympathy, and for this renewed assurance of their confidence, I return my heartfelt thanks. I trust, Sir, that that confidence will not be found misplaced. I hope, that during the few remaining years that may be assigned me (few they must be at most), I shall be enabled with increased diligence and circumspection to discharge the duties of the highly responsible station in which you have placed me, and that I shall be permitted to pursue and end my course in peace." This address was delivered in a very solemn and impressive manner, and many members of Synod were affected even to tears.

Strong language was used by some of the most forbearing members of the Synod, as to the vexatious character of the libel thus disposed of; but instead of quoting any of these expressions, it is more agreeable to produce the words written by Dr. Brown upon the margin of his copy of that document, and applied by him to Dr. Marshall. They are the words of Amyraut to Rivetus, used in defending himself two centuries before against very similar charges brought by that theologian :—"Tam certus sum

idque εἴδως καὶ ἐπιστήμων te errare in eis in quibus dissidemus, quam falli me δοξάζεις vehementer et obstinate. At te non accuso, quia pater es; de te nihil pronuntio, quia tibi non sum a Deo judex attributus; tuos errores, quantum possum, excuso ob communis humanitatis fragilitatem; ex animo, crede mihi, te diligo, quia sum Christianus et evangelii Domini nostri Jesu Christi minister; eruditionem tuam magnifacio, quam perspectam habeo ex librorum tuorum lectione."

Thus terminated this violent controversy, in which Dr. Brown had been a principal actor and sufferer for nearly five years, and which had repeatedly threatened to rend the denomination in pieces. It was so thoroughly exhausted, that in a short time hardly a trace of it remained; nor could it have been discovered, amid the cordiality of attachment and confidence, of which Dr. Brown became more and more the centre, who had been opposed to him in these contests, and who had taken his side. The general results of the controversy were in a high degree salutary. The gospel was not preached more freely in the pulpits of the Church; for that was not possible. But relief was brought to many minds hampered and disturbed by the apparent inconsistency between

a universal offer of salvation, and a limited atonement on which to rest it; and an example was afforded of Christian large-heartedness and charity, in giving to the terms of ministerial communion, and to the interpretation of symbolical books, the widest comprehension consistent with truth and sincerity. Nor were the protests and struggles of the stricter party, among whom were men of distinguished ability and high Christian character, without use in checking a tendency to rash speculation, and in bringing to light the difficulties and mysteries which at every imagined outlet still guard this awful subject, and shut up human reason to the sobriety of Scripture language, and to the obedience of faith. Upon the whole it may be affirmed that the controversy, though confined, with the exception of the Scottish Congregationalists, to the United Secession Church, has, by its remote, as well as its direct impression, exerted a valuable influence in liberalizing the tone of Scottish theology, while it has done nothing to derange its equilibrium or remove its landmarks.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLLEGIATE MINISTRY.

Sympathy of his Congregation—Visit to the Continent—Labours as a Colleague—Canongate Home Mission—Foreign Missionaries—Pastoral Scenes—"Comfortable Words for Christian Parents"—Monday morning Meetings—Rev. Dr. Goold—Evangelical Alliance—Dr. Cunningham—Union with Relief—Summary of Principles—Memorials of Fisher—Sabbath Railway Travelling—Speech in Edinburgh Presbytery.

BESIDES the testimony of a good conscience, and the countenance of friends too numerous to be here mentioned, Dr. Brown was sustained all through the atonement controversy by the unshaken confidence and sympathy of his congregation. His colleague earnestly defended him in the Synod and elsewhere, while his congregation, with a just sense of propriety, abstained from any testimony during the proceedings before the Church Courts; but when these were ended, they presented him with a gift of £200, and other tokens of their affection. By their conduct from first to last in this crisis, Dr. Brown was very deeply touched, almost more than by any other indication of regard during his whole lifetime. Long afterwards, on the occasion of the jubilee of his ministry, he referred

to the behaviour of his people in these terms: "In the season of greatest trial in my public life, when, amid serious personal and severe relative affliction, my integrity was questioned, and my usefulness endangered by the charge of unsound doctrine, the slightest token of suspicion never appeared among them. Were it possible, their personal kindnesses and their attention on my public labours were more exemplary during this period than ever. But this was not all. However deeply they felt for themselves and their minister, they never allowed themselves in the slightest degree to interfere with the solemn march of judicial proceeding. They left the Ecclesiastical Courts to do their own business in working out a full confutation of the charges; and then, and not till then, did they publicly and as a body give their minister and the world solid proofs of how they had sympathized with him in his sufferings, and how they rejoiced with him in his joy. These are benefits such as comparatively speaking very few congregations ever have it in their power to bestow upon their minister." With equal gratitude Dr. Brown received at this time a present of valuable books, expressive of the feeling of his students on his acquittal, and on the termination of the controversy.

The storms of the Atonement Controversy were relieved by considerable intervals of rest and sunshine. During one of these, Dr. Brown, in company with his brother-in-law, James Crum, Esq., and Mrs. Crum, paid a visit to the Continent for the first time. He left Edinburgh on the 19th of May 1843, the day after the Disruption, and returned in the beginning of July. The party sailed from London to Antwerp, and proceeded through Belgium and up the Rhine into Switzerland. Here they went as far as Chamouni, and took on their way home Lucerne, Zurich, and Schaffhausen. The voyage down the Rhine was made by Rotterdam. Dr. Brown's letters from places abroad, show a lively appreciation of their peculiar features; and he also made entries in a small diary, the only one apparently kept by him at any period of his life. But it would be out of place to record at length his impressions of scenes so often described, and so familiar to all travellers. One or two slight notices will suffice. In the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle, the service of high mass vividly reminded him of the Apocalyptic Babylon; but the sermon of a young preacher in the same place, who dwelt with much fervour on the love of Christ, led him to hope that even there the truth as it is in Jesus might be known

and valued. His delight in the scenery so rapidly passed over, was great. The Castle of Heidelberg, with the Neckar, he pronounces "transcendently beautiful;" the views from Chamouni to Martigny, "oppressively grand;" the descent on the Lake of Zurich from Einsiedeln, "most enchanting." In Lausanne, he had peculiar gratification in meeting Vinet, whose views on the relations of Church and State so entirely agreed with his own; and they exchanged some of their works, and also a few thoughts and feelings, chiefly through the medium of Latin, the only language in which both were equally at home. In Geneva, he renewed old ties with the venerable Cæsar Malan, and with Professor La Harpe, and formed new ones with Drs. Merle d'Aubigné and Gaussen. He attended here four different services on one Lord's day, feeling it his duty, as he said, to worship, if possible, "with all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus." In those places where no Protestant worship existed, his own party formed a little conventicle, in which he read a sermon. At Carlsruhe, he found with difficulty the neglected grave of Heinrich Jung Stilling, with the striking inscription over it, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." At Basle, when standing

before the tomb of Œcolampadius in the cloisters of the cathedral, he recollected that it was the anniversary of his coming to Edinburgh, and made this entry in his diary, "How much of good and evil has befallen me during these twenty-one years; Ebenezer!" His relative impressions of foreign countries and of his own are thus given, "I have seen many beautiful lands and splendid cities, but none, taking everything into account, to compare with my own native country, 'mine own romantic town.' We are not as we should be; but oh, when I compare what Scotland is with what I find every place on the Continent, I find that our causes of gratitude are innumerable and inappreciable." "We return, not out of humour with foreign countries; we have no reason; but greatly in love with our own, and saying in our hearts, 'The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.'"

Dr. Brown had, by the time of his return from the Continent, in a great measure recovered his health; and the good fruits of his collegiate relation were more and more visible. His colleague divided with him the labours of the pulpit, taking each service alternately, and also the house-to-house visitation of the congre-

gation, which last ere long almost entirely devolved on him, Dr. Brown only visiting in case of sickness, or from some special call. He preached, however, with great regularity, being only hindered by occasional attacks of lumbago, at which times his colleague readily discharged the whole duty. From the time of his severe illness, by medical advice, he read his sermons, instead of delivering them from memory. The occasional hesitation of his manner thus disappeared, and his reading was highly impressive; but many lamented the absence of the speaking eye, which was one of the most peculiar features of his oratory. He was accustomed to say, that his congregation gained in the quantity of teaching, since he could read in one hour, what would have taken an hour and a quarter or more, to deliver. His reading was still often more vehement than the delivery of many preachers.

Under their two pastors, who lived in unbroken confidence, and cordially appreciated each other's gifts, the Broughton Place congregation continued to advance in public spirit and Christian activity. With increasing numbers (for large as they were before, the labours of two ministers in full activity considerably increased them) there was a fresh development

of spiritual resources. The Home Mission in the Canongate was prosecuted with growing earnestness and success. To the former labours of district missionaries there was added a preaching station, with a staff of visiting agents and Sabbath-school teachers, a day-school, a library, and a savings'-bank, with a course of popular lectures. These efforts were as interesting and successful as those of Dr. Chalmers in the West Port. With them the name of the Rev. James Trench is inseparably associated. He acted as the first evangelist in the mission chapel, and many of the other branches of this enterprise were his creation. He died when the fruit was only beginning to appear, having caught fever in the discharge of his duties as superintendent of the Edinburgh City Mission, to which he had been transferred. Ultimately a regular mission church in the Canongate grew out of these beginnings, the two congregations over which Dr. Brown had successively presided having united their efforts to support the minister. In this city mission scheme Dr. Brown took the deepest interest, and was in the habit of saying, that he would lay his head on his pillow with greater ease, could he think that the spiritual destitution of all Edinburgh were thus supplied. Besides continuing their rela-

tions with the mission church of New Broughton in Jamaica, which became to a large extent self-supporting, the congregation agreed, some years before Dr. Brown's decease, to support a missionary in Old Calabar; and the Rev. Zerub Baillie was sent out, and has since laboured in that character. To enumerate all the exertions of this congregation in the cause of Christian benevolence would be superfluous. It may only be mentioned, that in the last year of Dr. Brown's life the sum raised for such purposes was upwards of £1100, being about a fivefold increase in a quarter of a century. These missionary exertions were facilitated by the extinction in 1851 of a large building debt remaining on the congregation.

From Dr. Brown's later ministry the following incidents may be selected, drawn from the reminiscences of a lady long connected with Broughton Place congregation. This lady happened one morning to visit an aged and bedridden widow also a member, and of mature though self-distrustful piety. Instead of her usual placid look, the lady encountered an expression of much anguish and perplexity. A minister holding Mr. Morison's views of assurance was sitting beside her bed, and insisting that mere hope in Christ availed nothing with-

out the absolute certainty of salvation. The lady having exhorted the good woman to set aside this novelty, and to keep stedfastly looking at the *object* and not the *act* of faith, and having assured the minister that but for his ignorance of this humble Christian's long-tried character, he would not have disturbed her mind, returned home. Dr. Brown happened soon to call. On learning how this minister had troubled one of his flock, he said very firmly, "He had little to do when he did that, I will go and see her," and instantly carried out his purpose. The lady called again in the afternoon, when the cloud had vanished and given place to peace and joy. "I have had a visit of my own minister," she exclaimed, "and he has set my feet upon a rock."

The other incident occurred in the house of mourning. The same lady had seen the father of a young family breathe his last in the faith and hope of the gospel. Dr. Brown entered at that moment. The poor man's wife said to him, "It's all over, sir," whereupon Dr. Brown replied, "Let us give thanks," and was about to pray. The youngest child of the family, a mere infant, playing on the floor, interrupted him by a scream of delight, caused by seeing her own face reflected in the polished surface

of his boots. The sudden contrast completely unmanned him. Tears rolled down his cheeks, his voice choked, and it was only after a lengthened pause that he could find utterance. The bereaved woman said long after, that that prayer was, under God, the main stay of her widowhood.

On the 8th of March 1846, Dr. Brown lost by death the youngest member of his family, bearing the name of his deceased wife, a most lovely and engaging child, aged little more than five years. He felt this stroke with inexpressible keenness, though he gratefully recollected that death in this form had not visited him before, as it did not visit him afterwards to the end of his life. A touching little volume, *Comfortable Words for Christian Parents bereaved of Little Children*, a volume which has been very useful, is the record of this bereavement.

In this later period of Dr. Brown's life, all the earlier societies to which he had once belonged had been broken up, and no new ones had been formed in their place. The only substitute in any shape was a Monday morning prayer-meeting, consisting of ministers and friends of different denominations, which was held in his house, first in Gayfield Square, and then at Arthur Lodge, Newington. This dated back

as far as 1840-41. A number of his friends used frequently then to meet him; and Dr. Brown once, quite incidentally, suggested that they should not part without prayer. Of this re-union Mr. Douglas of Cavers, Mr. Ellis, a venerable member of Dr. Brown's Session, and the Rev. James Robertson, Newington, were original members; and it continued to number in its ranks other 'devout men,' whose recollections of its exercises are dear and sacred.

Though these meetings were prevailingly devotional, yet a great latitude of discussion and reading was allowed; and in particular Dr. Brown loved to collect, from the most diversified sources, whatever could interest a circle of intelligent and educated Christian minds, and enlarge their mutual conceptions of the range of Christ's kingdom. The blanks made by the hand of death in this happy fraternity deeply affected him; and when names like Ellis, Trench, Arthur, and Innes, were successively withdrawn, he loved to dwell on it as so much taken from the earthly scale of the balance and placed in the heavenly, to enhance the prospect of everlasting reunion.

One great charm of these meetings, to his mind, was their perfect catholicity. They were an embodiment of the apostolic utterance,

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." The number of denominations represented was great; but all distinctions were so completely forgotten, that they never came into mind. The members were ready "by love to serve one another," and none more than Dr. Brown. When the Rev. Dr. Goold, one of the circle, became a Professor of Theology in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr. Brown immediately wrote him a very affectionate letter of congratulation, at the same time putting at his disposal any books in his own library that might be required for the preparation of lectures. Next morning, to Dr. Goold's surprise, Dr. Brown was seen, though then very infirm, making his way up his friend's stairs, with a volume under his arm; and the purpose of his visit was soon apparent. "It struck me," said he, "after my note was sent off yesterday, that it might seem to contain only words of course, when I spoke of your making free use of my library; I have therefore brought up to you the catalogue here, that you may look it over at your leisure, and mark whatever books you may care to see."

The congregational duties and private associations thus described, went hand in hand with important public labours. Among these is to

be counted Dr. Brown's part in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance. He was one of the subscribers of the Scottish circular which called together the Liverpool Conference in October 1845; and was a deeply interested actor in this memorable assembly, which paved the way for the organization of the Alliance at the London meeting of 1846. He occupied the chair at the last session of the Conference in Liverpool, when one of the most remarkable incidents of that convocation took place. Mr. Bickersteth had proposed a resolution deploring the violence of controversial language in past times, and pledging the brethren to avoid in future all wrath and bitterness. This he supported in a speech full of penitent acknowledgments and confessions. Principal Cunningham, who had been asked to speak to the same resolution, did so in a similar strain, and in closing, electrified the whole assembly by turning to the chairman, and addressing him in these words, "I have peculiar satisfaction in making such acknowledgments in an assembly where you, sir, preside." The directness of this allusion to the heats and personalities of the Voluntary Controversy, produced first a dead silence, and then a burst of admiration from the audience; and when Dr. Brown, deeply affected, rose and ex-

pressed his sense of the magnanimity of such a declaration, and of the degree in which it exalted its author in his esteem, the applause was renewed. Dr. Brown's love to the Evangelical Alliance when formed, was steady and ardent. He attended its meetings so far as in his power, and defended it in various publications against current objections. The following remark may serve as an example of his advocacy, "The object is to get such a doctrinal declaration as will bring together the greatest number of the right class. I may regret that on the platform there is not room for my good friends, 'the Friends;' but what if, by making room for them, I make others, whom I at least equally esteem, leave the platform, and after all perhaps do not succeed in getting 'the Friends' to come up? It would be a very poor consolation, that I had got a very broad and altogether unobjectionable platform, if I could get nobody to fill it."*

A kindred labour, and one which afforded Dr. Brown peculiar delight, was the promotion of the Union between the Relief and Secession Churches. This was at length effected, and the United Presbyterian Church formed by their fusion, in May 1847. Dr. Brown had for many years regarded this as a desirable issue; and

* *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord*, vol. iii. p. 389.

the Rev. Dr. Mackelvie of Balgedie, to whom the honour of originating and carrying through this measure chiefly belongs, found no more zealous seconder. When the articles of Union were being prepared, Dr. Brown exerted himself greatly to give the new association, which was to embrace more than 500 congregations, the widest and most unsectarian character; and some peculiarities of the old Secession basis, to which he had always objected as too narrow, were dismissed. When the Secession Synod was about, on the 13th of May 1847, to leave their place of meeting in Broughton Place Church, to be united with the Relief Synod in Tanfield Hall, Dr. Brown was requested by the Moderator to offer up a prayer; and this he did in terms so appropriate and affecting, as to produce a deep impression. No Secession minister had more of the confidence of the other body, as none was more ready to love and honour those that belonged to it; and the complete success of this Union yielded him the deepest gratification. When, after some years, it was judged necessary to have a brief manual of the history and doctrine of the united body for popular use, Dr. Brown was, by general consent of the Committee which superintended this business, appointed to draw it up; and the

draught furnished by him, with some corrections, was adopted and circulated by the Synod as their Summary of Principles. In connexion with a more private scheme for editing the early literature of the two churches, he wrote and published in 1849, *Memorials of the Rev. James Fisher.* As Mr. Fisher was one of the four leaders of the Secession, and the first Professor of Divinity to the Burgher Synod, this narrative contains Dr. Brown's opinions relative to the early Secession and contemporary church history; at the same time his connexion by marriage with one of Mr. Fisher's descendants, as well as his own taste in biography, leads him to bring out in this volume many curious details of a more private and domestic interest.

In the end of 1846 and beginning of 1847, the Scottish public were much agitated by the question as to the lawfulness of opening the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway for regular passenger traffic on the Lord's day. The general feeling of the community was strongly expressed against this measure, and it prevailed. The influence of church courts, as well as of other public bodies, was largely exerted in petitioning the Directors of the Company to restrain this use of their railway. Dr. Brown was led to deliver his sentiments on the ques-

tion in connexion with a memorial of this tenor, which came before the Edinburgh Secession Presbytery on the 17th of February 1847. In the transmission of this memorial he did not concur; and as his views were opposed to those of the great majority of his brethren, as well as of the religious public in Scotland, he stated them with all the more care and accuracy. He had nothing in common with those who regarded the Sabbath as a Judaical appointment; for he held and taught its permanent obligation as a part of the moral law. Nor was he insensible to the mischiefs and dangers of the contemplated traffic, for he professed his horror of Sunday travelling as one of the greatest evils which could befall our country. His objections to interference were connected with his views of the province of church courts and of the secular magistrate in matters of religion. He did not regard it as the business of a church court to protest specifically against this evil, save in the case of those under its jurisdiction, any more than against a multitude of other sins committed by public bodies. And he did not look upon the railway directors as authorized to use a public trust according to their private convictions of Christian law and duty. They were, in his eye, in consequence of their mono-

poly of the means of travelling, virtually in the position of a legislature, which takes away a civil right because of a religious difference. His objection on this ground was summed up in these words, "He but imperfectly understands the Voluntary principle, who thinks that it prohibits only those invested with civil power from employing physical means to produce moral effects." Dr. Brown, in this same statement, professed his belief in the competency of the civil magistrate to enact and enforce the observance of the Lord's day as a day of secular rest, in compliance with the general will of the community; and he also declared his readiness to interfere on behalf of any class who might be unduly deprived by Sunday labour of their natural right of worshipping God. Whether these views were entirely consistent with the rest of his statement, may admit of question. If a public body may enforce the Sabbath law as a convenience or a natural right, it does not seem clear why it may not enact it, for its own observance, as in harmony with an express Divine appointment. A minority cannot here complain of persecution. The only persecution or compulsion is, where the minority are restrained in their rights without a sufficient reason; and it seems a sufficient reason for the majority

to act upon in this case, that they must not give up what is either their own property, or at least their share of national property, to be used by others against their view of the will of God. If there is a natural right of worshipping God, there seems to be an equal right of administering property according to what is believed to be His will; and the use of all property, personal or public, must be governed by this principle. These and similar arguments prevented many zealous Voluntaries from entering into Dr. Brown's objections; but the respect in which he was universally held, secured for his statements wide consideration, and no name stood higher in the small but respectable minority of Scottish Christians, who were opposed to ecclesiastical interference with railway legislation on this subject.

CHAPTER IX.

PUBLICATION OF EXEGETICAL WORKS.

1848—1858.

New Period of Authorship—Lectures on First Peter—Their Reception—Discourses and Sayings of our Lord—Exposition of our Lord's Intercessory Prayer—"The Resurrection of Life"—Conversion of a Sceptic—"Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah"—Epistle to the Galatians—"Parting Counsels"—Analytical Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans—Epistle to the Hebrews—Life as an Author.

THE year 1848 was memorable in Dr. Brown's life as the commencement of a new period of authorship. From that date onward for ten years, in rapid succession, his exegetical works were given to the world. His earlier publications have been already noticed in the course of this narrative; and if we add funeral sermons for Drs. Mitchell, Balmer, Peddie, and Heugh, given to the press as these friends one after another departed (followed afterwards by one for Dr. Wardlaw), the enumeration will, up to this time, be all but complete. It was felt, however, by others, and probably by Dr. Brown himself, that no adequate expression of his peculiar powers had yet been furnished; and that the multitude of scattered and miscellaneous essays, pamphlets, and compilations, almost did

injustice to his reputation. Hardly in any of these, save the work on the Annuity-Tax, based on the fragment of the Epistle to the Romans, there so profusely illustrated, was Dr. Brown's master-faculty of interpretation called fully into play. They were the inferior ranges of the mountain, to which the crowning peaks were yet to be added. Dr. Brown delayed publication of works which had cost him a life-time of labour, doubtful of the public taste, anxious to perfect his productions by fresh touches, and naturally reluctant to alienate his most valuable prelections from their academic use. At length his scruples were overcome by the pressing request of his congregation to have some memorial of his expository labours. Having once entered on the work, it became delightful and almost necessary. It shed a mild lustre over the quiet but busy evening of his life. He was much assisted by the accumulation of materials in a comparatively finished state, and by his happy collegiate relation, which lightened his pulpit labour. Still, for a writer half-way between sixty and seventy when he began, to have in less than ten years produced eleven octavo volumes, and these of the most elaborate structure both in point of matter and style, is one of the rarest occur-

rences in literary history. Dr. Brown had granted him, what his friend Dr. Chalmers solicited in vain, a Sabbatic period after the struggles of active life. But it was liker the Sabbath of heaven than of earth, for he "served day and night" in this temple. A rapid sketch will be given of these publications, suitable to the requirements of a biography, and not of a critical review.

In May 1848 were issued, in three volumes, *Expository Discourses on the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter.* The lectures, when delivered to his congregation, had been spread over a period of sixteen years; and to an importunate request for their publication, Dr. Brown at length yielded. To this he alludes in the Preface: "The author would probably never have thought of offering these illustrations to the world, had not a number of much respected members of his congregation earnestly solicited him, before increasing age should make it difficult, or approaching death impossible, to furnish them with a permanent memorial of a ministry of considerable length, full of satisfaction to him, and he trusts not unproductive of advantage to them. Such an application could not be treated lightly; and on weighing the subject, he found that he durst not refuse to comply

with it." The blending of doctrine and practice in this Epistle rendered an exposition of it peculiarly fitting for a pastor's legacy to his congregation; and hence Dr. Brown prefixed to his work the touching passage, 2 Peter i. 12-15, where the Apostle speaks of shortly putting off his tabernacle, and endeavouring that others after his decease might be able to have his words always in remembrance. There is in these volumes much doctrinal amplification after the manner of the Scottish lecture; and the discussion of relative and other duties, from the various texts of the Epistle, is singularly complete and beautiful, and affords a striking example of the accuracy and earnestness with which Dr. Brown enforced moral teaching as a part of Christianity. Nevertheless, the work is substantially a commentary, though in a form somewhat peculiar. To use its author's own words, "The Epistle is divided into paragraphs, according to the sense—of course varying very considerably in length. Each of these paragraphs, embodying one leading thought, forms the subject of a separate discourse, in which an attempt is made to explain whatever is difficult in the phraseology, and to illustrate the doctrinal and practical principles which it contains,—the object being

not to discuss, in a general and abstract manner, the subjects which the text may suggest, but to bring clearly out the Apostle's statements and their design, and to show how the statements are fitted to gain the objects for which they are made. If the author has been able in any good measure to realize his own idea, grammatical and logical interpretation have been combined, and the exposition will be found at once exegetical, doctrinal, and practical."

Dr. Brown prefixed to this work, considered as a commentary, two mottoes, which, as the key-notes of his whole exegetical system, deserve quotation. The one is from Melanchthon, "Scriptura non potest intelligi theologice, nisi antea intellecta sit grammatice." The other is from Ernesti, "Interpretationem librorum sacrorum esse summum idemque difficillimum Theologi munus ipsa res, et ratio, et usus, et omnium meliorum seculorum consensus docet. Nam omnis certa veritatis divinæ et scientia et defensio, e sacrarum literarum intelligentia et accurata interpretatione ducitur; et cum interpretandarum literarum sacrarum studio, et lapsa et restituta est, religionis Christianæ puritas." The grammatical learning which is thus asserted to lie at the foundation of sound theology, Dr. Brown displayed in these volumes

in the form of notes, intended for the learned, and devoted to the critical settlement of the sense. The number of Greek words and phrases remarked on, as appears from a separate Index, is above one hundred and sixty, and the authors quoted above two hundred, including twenty or thirty separate commentaries on the epistle. Some passages are discussed with singular minuteness and elaboration, as for example that on "preaching to the spirits in prison;" but the critical element, in general, rather interpenetrates the texture of the work, than stands out from it, and is throughout subordinated to its popular design. Many passages are quoted from Leighton, not so much for interpretation, as for practical uses; and Dr. Brown's character of the Archbishop's Commentary may be extracted as a specimen of his remarks on books and writers, of which an immense collection could be made. "That very remarkable work teaches a singularly pure and complete theology, a theology thoroughly evangelical in the true sense of that often abused epithet, being equally free from Legalism on the one hand, and Antinomianism on the other; in a spirit of enlightened and affectionate devotion, love to the brotherhood, and charity to all men; and in a style, which, though very unequal, indicates in its general

structure a familiarity with the classic models of antiquity, and in occasional expressions is in the highest degree felicitous and beautiful. As a biblical expositor, Leighton was above his own age; and as a theologian and experimental and practical writer, few have equalled, still fewer surpassed him, either before or since his time."

Dr. Brown's *Lectures on First Peter* were dedicated to the congregation of Broughton Place, with his colleague and session; and were published, like all his exegetical works, by his friend Mr. Oliphant, of Edinburgh. The work met with a rapid sale, the whole edition of one thousand copies being disposed of in little more than a year, and the second being called for in October 1849. In many critical notices the rare merits of the work were acknowledged; and the author was encouraged to proceed in a career which recalled the ancient distinction of Scotland in Scripture interpretation, and promised to rival the current schools of Germany in learning and independent inquiry, without anything of their lax and unsound tendencies. In 1851, this work was reprinted in America, by Messrs. Carter of New York, and met there with an equally favourable reception. Dr. Brown's reputation had long extended to the American

continent. He had made the acquaintance of many eminent American divines who visited Edinburgh, such as Drs. Breckinridge, Sprague, and Spring, with Professors Park, Edwards, and others. With these he afterwards cultivated friendly relations; and he maintained a somewhat minute familiarity with the ecclesiastical and literary history of all sections of American Christianity.

The next considerable work of Dr. Brown appeared in July 1850. It was in three volumes, and had for its title, *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, illustrated in a Series of Expositions.* This was a work of less continuity than his first, but of wider range, and probably of greater interest to an interpreter, as being occupied with the central and unquestionably not least difficult portions of the New Testament. Like the valuable contemporary work of Dr. Stier, this is in a great measure a commentary on the Gospels. The parables are omitted, but the other principal discourses, especially in the Gospel of John, with many sayings, are included. There is much fulness in the discussion of the Sermon on the Mount, which occupies the half of the first, and of the Valedictory Discourse, which occupies the whole of the last volume; and probably no such clear

and coherent development of the sense of these discourses is anywhere else to be found in the English language.

Dr. Brown had laboured in the study of the Gospels for more than forty years. In a curious entry in an early pulpit note-book, these words occur, "Began to lecture John's Gospel, June or July 1807. Concluded it October 1813, —six years and three months. During the same time delivered 106 lectures on the first forty-one chapters of Isaiah, making in all 227 lectures." He adds a list of works on John's Gospel then consulted by him, amounting in all to ten, most of them of the most common description, with only Calvin and Lampe in Latin. This language contrasts strongly with the words of his preface to the work which embodied all his later studies. "In preparing these volumes for the press, I have studied the original text of their subjects with all the grammatical and lexical helps I possessed. I have further availed myself of every assistance within my reach, to be derived from versions of, and commentaries on, the passages explained. My aim was not to produce an original work, but a satisfactory exposition of an important portion of Scripture; and if I shall be found in any measure to have succeeded, it will not in any wise diminish my

satisfaction that my success be considered the result less of independent thinking or discovery on my part, than of having carefully consulted and deliberately weighed the inquiries and conclusions of others. In every case, indeed, I claim to have exercised my own judgment; but I have always felt more satisfied when I found myself, as I have usually done, following in the track of the learned and pious of former generations, than when compelled, as I have sometimes been, to walk alone. It might wear the appearance of ostentation to present a formal list of the works, in various languages, which have been consulted."

It was the aim of Dr. Brown in these expositions of our Lord's discourses, to minister to a fervent yet rational and manly piety, founded on personal and direct knowledge of Him whose words are "spirit and life." They fulfil, in a high degree, his own idea as thus expressed: "Dr. Owen did good service to the cause of Christianity, two hundred years ago, by showing the pre-eminent place the person of Christ holds in that religion, in opposition to the British rationalists of the age, who had almost lost sight of Him in speculation about evidences and dogmas and ethics; and Schleiermacher, and his noble followers, Neander and Tholuck, have

done a similar service, in opposition to the German rationalists of our times. A personal Deity is the soul of natural religion; a personal Saviour, the real living Christ, is the soul of revealed religion. How strange that it should not be impossible, how sad that through a perverted ingenuity it should not be uncommon, in reference to both of these, to convert that into a veil which was meant to be a revelation!"

This work was dedicated to Mr. Douglas of Cavers, Dr. Brown's intimate friend, in these words: "Your honoured name is placed in the front of these volumes, not so much to grace them (though, as Selden says, 'Bookes are most fitly consecrated to true lovers of goodnesse, and all good learning') as to gratify their author, by giving him an opportunity of expressing the deep conviction he has long felt, of the important and enduring service you have in your writings done to the cause of Christian truth and love, and of recording the pleasure and advantage derived from intercourse with you for nearly thirty years, and the ever-increasing cordial regard which has grown out of that intercourse."

The high and valuable qualities displayed in this second work of Dr. Brown, with the popular interest of the subject, secured for it a ready

sale; and a second edition was called for in March 1852. This might seem indeed but moderate success, compared with the extensive sale of works on the gospels in Germany, and of many popular religious writings in our own country. But in Germany the gospel history became, after the publication of the work of Strauss, for a time the favourite study; and in our own country, it is not exposition, at least of so strict and exact a character as that of Dr. Brown, but other religious literature, which commands the widest and readiest circulation.

The second edition of the *Discourses and Sayings* was issued simultaneously in this country and in America, an arrangement having been come to for that purpose with the New York publishers, who reprinted the work on First Peter.

As a sequel to the *Sayings and Discourses*, there appeared in September 1850, in one volume, *An Exposition of our Lord's Intercessory Prayer.* The same blending of accurate interpretation, with rich Christian sentiment, which distinguished the other expository works, re-appeared very conspicuously in this; and unlike most of the series, it was the fruit of the studies of old age, being written for the first time shortly before it was published. The

author's preface is full of biographical interest; and the following passage may be quoted in this connexion:—"I cannot recollect a period when this chapter had not a solemn charm for me; but it is comparatively of late that I have made it a subject of thorough critical examination. Providential circumstances seemed to say to me, 'Now turn aside and see this great sight.' In complying with the call, I trust I did not forget that the place whereon I stood was holy ground; and as I drew near, if I do not strangely mistake, the objects of contemplation became much more distinct though not less glorious. I think I understand this passage somewhat better than I did, and I am willing that if it be so, my Christian brethren should be sharers of my satisfaction. I know few enjoyments to be compared with that of obtaining satisfying views of Divine truth; and none in which the feeling of a wish for the sympathy of the like-minded more naturally rises in the heart. 'Rejoice with me.' 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.'"

Dr. Brown complains that this Prayer has been so little expounded, and accounts for it by supposing that "the disposition to inquire is lost in the resistless impulse to adore." He says, "In studying this singular composition, I felt myself bound to use all helps within my

reach. They were fewer than I had anticipated. Many excellent remarks are to be found in the two large folio expositions of this chapter by Burgesse and Manton, as well as in the briefer interpretations of Jefferson and of Drummond. Willett's *Thesaurus Ecclesiæ*, a commentary on this chapter, is, I have no doubt, like his other exegetical works, elaborate and acute; but, like Thomas Hooker's Exposition, I have not been able to obtain a sight of it. I have found Gerhard's exposition in the learned, accurate, and most spiritual *Chemnitio-Lysero-Gerhardine Harmony*, Lampe's *Commentary*, Glassius' *Exegetical Dissertation*, and the *Scholia* of Tholuck, Olshausen, and Neander, very useful. There are two other continental works on this chapter by Bode and Aarland, which I have reason to think valuable, but I have sought after them in vain."

If one might judge from the frequency with which he spoke of it, the pleasure, which Dr. Brown had in the composition of this treatise, was greater than in the case of any of his other works. It was dedicated to the Evangelical Alliance, and specially to Sir Culling Eardley; and few books composed since the formation of that Association breathe more of its spirit. This work has been favourably received by the Chris-

tian public, and has been for some time out of print.

In December 1851, Dr. Brown sent out *The Resurrection of Life*, an Exposition of 1st Corinthians xv., in one volume. The plan of this work was exactly similar to that of the rest, containing a body of luminous exposition and practical exhortation, with large critical notes for the learned. He had about thirty years before, had some indistinct thoughts of publishing a work on the first eleven verses of this chapter, being a development, from a Scripture groundwork, of views similar to those in his early book on *Religion and the Means of its Attainment*. Hence this part of the exposition departs more from his later style, and its size is somewhat disproportionate to that of the rest of the work. The remainder, however, written immediately before publication, is in his most finished manner, and discusses with singular ability such vexed passages as, "the delivering up of the kingdom," "being baptized for the dead," the "natural" and "spiritual body," and the other numerous difficulties of that most profound and sublime chapter. Here as everywhere Dr. Brown is most interesting where the difficulty is greatest; his faculties for the adornment of the commonplace, bearing no propor-

tion to those which served for the elucidation of the obscure.

Dr. Brown was not satisfied with any foregoing interpretation of this chapter, as his words indicate: "Most of the interpretations which have been given of it have been examined; and while all of them appear to me liable to objections, it is but justice to acknowledge that to some of them, as will appear from the margin [containing about two hundred references to authors, many of them commentators], I have been greatly indebted; and that probably there is not one of them from which useful hints have not been derived." Whether he has settled all the controverted questions in a field so arduous will of course be estimated differently; but as to the high value of this contribution to exegesis, both in its results and as a specimen of the art, there can be no diversity of opinion amongst competent judges.

The contemplation of the resurrection had much practical interest for Dr. Brown, from his advancing years, now rising towards seventy; and in the writing of this work, as of the foregoing, he had much delight. It is dedicated to seven of his oldest friends in these words:— "To the Reverend William Kidston, D.D., Glasgow; William Innes, D.D., Edinburgh;

Henry Thomson, D.D., Penrith; Henry Grey, D.D., Edinburgh; Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., Glasgow; Christopher Anderson, V.D.M., Edinburgh; and William Brown, M.D., Duddingstone, this volume is inscribed by the author with cordial esteem and affection, in memorial of unbroken friendly intercourse for nearly half a century; intercourse which, though soon to be interrupted, will, he trusts, be renewed to be broken no more for ever." Of these friends, only Dr. Thomson of Penrith, and Dr. William Brown, survive. The rest, with the exception of Dr. Henry Grey, "fell asleep" before Dr. Brown himself, who thus pointed them to the "blessed hope" of the Christian resurrection.

This volume shared the cordial welcome of its precursors, and is now out of print. A very interesting anecdote is related of its impression on the mind of a sceptic in the district of the Canongate Mission, to whom it had been lent by one of Dr. Brown's elders. Amongst other supplementary extracts published in the Appendix, are two beautiful parables from Hallett, the one illustrative of the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus, the other of the possibility, scientifically considered, of the resurrection of the Christian. The latter is the story of a servant, who receiving a silver cup from his master,

suffers it to fall into a vessel of *aquafortis*, and seeing it disappear, contends, in argument with a fellow-servant, that its recovery is impossible, till the master comes on the scene, and by infusing salt water, precipitates the silver from the solution, after which, by melting and hammering the metal, he restores it to its ancient shape. With this apologue, the sceptic, one of whose great stumbling-blocks was the difficulty connected with the resurrection, was so struck that he ultimately renounced his opposition to the gospel, and became to all appearance a partaker of the Christian hope of immortality.

In December 1852, Dr. Brown published the only work of this series which bears on the criticism and interpretation of the Old Testament. The portions of his lectures selected for this purpose, were those on Psalm xviii. and Isaiah liii.; and the work was entitled, *The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah*. Though the materials had been in his hands for more than thirty years, and repeatedly revised, the whole work was now, after a thorough review, re-written. Among the "multitude of expositors" to whom he declares himself indebted, he specially mentions Peirce on Psalm xviii., and Hengstenberg on the oracle in Isaiah. He also claims for himself the credit of an honest effort

to interpret the sacred Word unfettered by prejudice. "The object of a great deal of interpretation of Scripture," he says, "has been (unconsciously we doubt not) to find as much as possible of the interpreter's already formed opinions there; not simply to discover what is there, whether confirmatory or condemnatory of these opinions. It has been my sincere desire to bring out of the inspired words what is really in them, and to put nothing into them that is not really there; impressed with the conviction that imaginary exposition is one of the worst ways of adding to 'the words of the prophecy of this book,' and that he who thus adds to God's Word, 'deceiving and being deceived,' is in great danger of 'proving himself a liar.'"

Dr. Brown, in his Preface to this treatise, goes to the extreme of underrating, rather than overrating, his qualifications as an interpreter of the Old Testament. He speaks of himself in the words of Joseph Scaliger to Buxtorf, "Ego unus sum inter Hebraismi non *peritos* sed *studiosos*, qui minimos progressus in ea lingua fecerim." His knowledge of Hebrew, however, was competent, and his reading of Old Testament commentary so varied and extensive, as to give full play to his admirable judgment

in selection. His discussion of the laws and canons of Messianic interpretation is clear and vigorous, whatever may be thought of his use of them in the assigning of the 18th Psalm to Christ. Rejecting as he did the double sense of prophecy, his views are more consistently carried out than those of many who have repudiated it in form, and retained it in substance. His comments on the celebrated oracle in Isaiah, are of peculiar interest. Details are here inadmissible; but the careful student of the Old Testament will not leave illustrations of so mature and solid a character unregarded.

The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah was dedicated by Dr. Brown to his four colleagues in the Divinity Hall, in token of his esteem and affection. Perhaps the more scholastic interest of the exposition limited the sale, since the work appears to have found fewer readers than most of his other productions.

In May 1853 appeared the most finished and elaborate of all Dr. Brown's expository works, that on the Epistle to the Galatians. This was dedicated to the ministers, preachers, and students, who had studied exegetical theology under the author's care. In this work, the highest qualities of Dr. Brown's mind are called forth, and in their happiest conjunction. It is

the fruit of almost incredible labour, not less than one hundred and fourteen critical and hermeneutical treatises, according to his own statement, having been consulted by him in the course of his preparations. Yet the result is condensed into one moderate volume; and the numerous difficulties connected with the general course of the argument, as well as with particular words and phrases, are handled with equal brevity and clearness. The amplification necessary to the pulpit, is here severely restrained; and though the opposite extreme is occasionally approached, the just balance is perhaps more perfectly reached than elsewhere between the critical and the popular element. A profound and philosophic acquaintance with the entire Pauline theology is also displayed; and one of the most luminous sections of the work brings out the Apostle's views of the relation of the Jewish and Christian economies. No extracts could illustrate the pregnant brevity of the strictly exegetical parts of this treatise. The concision of the more practical may be exhibited in a few sentences. "Never was there a man more disposed than the Apostle Paul to bear with weak brethren; but never was there a man more determined to expose false brethren." "Let us be certain that a man is to be blamed

before we withstand him ; and when we do so, let it be to his face." "This passage of Peter's conduct at Antioch teaches us the importance of consistency of conduct ; the danger of worldly wisdom in the management of ecclesiastical affairs ; the great caution with which men distinguished for their office, talents, and influence should act ; and the extreme danger of making any man's opinion and conduct the rule of ours."

It is due to Dr. Brown's character as an interpreter, to quote from the Preface to this treatise his views of the history and province of exegesis, and of the aim of his own labours in that department, since nowhere are these so fully and eloquently expressed : "There is an inextinguishable vitality, an innate vigour, an indestructible symmetry, an ineffaceable beauty, in the saving truth—the glorious gospel of the grace of God as stated in these epistles. It has been successively, as it were, laid on the Procrustean beds of the Oriental, the Neo-Platonic, the Aristotelian, and the Scholastic Philosophies ; but it has outlived all the rackings and amputations which were requisite to fit it to enter into these artificial forms, and it needs only to be 'loosed and let go,' to start up 'whole, as it was,' and to resume its interrupted march

through the world, to scatter light and life, liberty and blessedness, among men of 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' Thus to loose the truth, which has been unhappily so long fettered, is the great end of a true exegesis. Much was done towards the attainment of this end by the expositors of the age of the Reformation, numbering among them some of the greatest men of an age singularly fruitful in great men; Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Zuingle, Œcolampade, and Martyr, and others of scarcely inferior ability, learning, and piety. In the age that followed, the fetters which had been shattered were strangely repaired by many of the second and third series of Protestant expositors; and, with some noble exceptions, humanly constructed theories for harmonizing the varied statements of Divine Revelation, under the plausible name of 'The Analogy of Faith,' were by them not only used as a direct means of interpreting the Scriptures, but so elevated above all other means as to control, and indeed in a great degree to supersede them. A better course has been entered upon. The true nature and design of Exegesis appear to be more clearly apprehended. Christian expositors seem now generally of opinion that, however true may be

their 'systems of divinity,' and however manifold and important their uses (and, for my own part, I would find it difficult to overstate my sense of the value of that system of divinity held, in common with all evangelical churches, by that religious denomination to which it is my privilege to belong), it is wiser and safer to make the Bible the basis and the test of the system, than to make the system the principal, and in effect sole, means of the interpretation of the Bible; and that if, in any case, the system, fairly interpreted, should forbid the reception of a doctrine, which the well-established principles of interpretation, fairly and cautiously applied, bring out of a passage of Scripture, there must be no hesitation as to whether it would be better to modify the system, or to misinterpret the Bible. To aid, in however small a measure, the removal of these bandages and entanglements which have surrounded inspired truth, so that it may walk at liberty, and perform those high and holy functions which are its exclusive prerogative—in reforming the Church, and converting the world,—has been the main object of my public life, and especially of those exegetical works, which I have, perhaps in too great number, of late years sent from the press. The present publication

has the same object, and substantially the same character, as its precursors. Like most of them, though published at an advanced age, it is the result of the inquiries and studies of youth and manhood. This statement deprives the Exposition and its Author of some claims, which they otherwise might have had, on the indulgence of the readers. But it is right that the truth should be told. The Horatian period for retaining in the Author's repositories forthcoming publications, has been considerably more than trebled since the first sketch of this Exposition was produced; and during the period which has since elapsed, the manuscript has often been reviewed, corrected, curtailed, and added to. In its substance, it has been delivered to a Christian congregation; and, with its philological appendages, repeatedly read in the Class of Exegetical Theology, over which I have presided for nearly twenty years."

Of this exposition, part of a large edition was destined for New York, and the entire sale has been considerable, though limited by its severely scientific character. An acknowledgment of its value, though by no means adequate, has been made in Ellicott's more recent work on the Galatians, and it must necessarily influence more or less all succeeding interpreters.

The ten volumes enumerated, reduced, by a curtailment in the second edition of the earliest of the series, to nine, appeared within little more than five years, or at the rate of a volume in six months. Dr. Brown, though not exhausted with the effort, did not choose to prolong it; and an interval of more than three years was allowed to pass without publication. He had often been urged to publish an interpretation of the Second Epistle of Peter as a companion to his work on the First Epistle, but though tempted by its peculiar difficulties, and the "almost singular paucity of expositions," he declined. Though satisfied of the canonical authority of the book, and understanding its general object and scope, he found himself labouring under such uncertainty in regard to much in the second and third chapters, as "to forbid him till better informed and more fully assured to come forward as their interpreter." As the First Chapter, however, was complete within itself, and as he judged himself to have obtained a more satisfactory view of it than he had met with in any one commentator, he gave an exposition of it to the world in November 1856. As both the apostolic work and the commentary on it were written in old age, and in a valedictory strain, he entitled the book *Parting Counsels*, re-

marking of it, that "it seems peculiarly fitted to form the subject of a communication from a pastor who has passed more than half a century in official labour, to those whose spiritual interests he has ministered to; and on the supposition of such a communication being made, it may be better to offer it as a present than to leave it as a legacy."

This work, though written at the age of seventy-two, and dealing with very difficult exegetical problems, as for example the celebrated text, that "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation," shows unabated acuteness, and in some places even originality of view; while it glows with sacred fervour when descanting on such subjects as the voice from the "holy mount," and is suffused by a deep pathos caught from the words "knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." "Ministers of Christ," he says, "should be animated with Peter's spirit; they should as a matter of duty, from an early period of their ministry, begin to lay up, and finish with the utmost care, what may be, when they have put off this tabernacle, a valuable and availing treasure to the congregation, to the Church, and to the world. This would have good influence on their own minds. It would add to the edification of their people

even now, and the number of really good books, by no means too great, would be increased." "It goes to soften the pang of separation between a Christian pastor and his flock, when he knows that after his decease they will be able to remember the things which he has taught them, and when they know that even when dead he will continue to speak to them, the pages, as they peruse them, strangely calling up the countenance and form hid in the grave, and echoing back a voice which they must hear no more for ever."—P. 169.

With these *Parting Counsels* were included some other discourses of public interest, and the volume was dedicated to his friend Dr. John Taylor of Toronto, Professor of Divinity in the United Presbyterian Church of Canada, and a member of his Rose Street Greek Testament class.

The last exegetical treatise of Dr. Brown, published in July 1857, was his *Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans.* This epistle had for more than forty years exercised his mind, and perhaps more deeply than any other part of Scripture. His early studies of it in Biggar, with his scanty apparatus of commentary, have been already narrated. Slowly the affluence of his learning gathered around it,

and in the light of manifold authorities every sentence and clause of the original had been often explored. His conclusions had been repeatedly presented to congregations and to classes of students. But when called to give them to the world in the form of full and learned commentary, his sense of the magnitude of the work prevailed; and with a pang of regret such as few have been capable of feeling, he deliberately renounced the purpose. An analytical commentary, for the English reader, took the place of his long projected work, for the sacred scholar. The words in which he records this change are full of interest and pathos. After enumerating the qualities of a perfect commentary, he observes, "To produce such an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans would be to bestow on the Church and on the world a boon of inappreciable value. Such a work remains to be executed; and its accomplishment may well be an object of ambition to Christian scholars of the highest abilities and the most extensive attainments. Much indeed that is valuable has been written on this marvellous book; but a complete exposition of it is still a desideratum." "Under the impression that I might be able to shed some new light on the general design of the epistle, and on some of

the more important and obscure passages in it, I at one time entertained the design of either publishing or leaving for publication, an exposition which might have some claim to the threefold appellation of a grammatical, historical, and logical commentary. The work is still, however, so far from being what I think it ought to be, that at my advanced period of life, I cannot reasonably expect to be able to complete it in the way that could be desired, and I have therefore given up, not without a struggle, this long and fondly cherished expectation. Yet I am unwilling to go hence without leaving some traces of the labour I have bestowed on this master-work of the apostle, without contributing some assistance, however limited, toward the production of what, whenever produced, will mark an era in the history of scriptural exegesis, a complete exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. Forbidden to build the temple, I would yet do what I can to furnish materials to him who shall be honoured to raise it. For the last twelve months, my principal occupation has been, so to condense and remodel my work, as to present in the fewest and plainest words, what appears to me the true meaning and force of the statements contained in this epistle, of the doctrine and law of

Christ, and of the arguments in support of the one, and the motives to comply with the other; and to do this in such a form as to convey, so far as possible, to the mind of the general reader unacquainted with any but the vernacular language, the evidence on which I rest my conviction that such is the import of the apostle's words."

In carrying out this plan, which, as a matter of course, excluded grammatical and even historical interpretation, as beyond the compass of any but scholars, and left room only for a logical analysis of the argument, Dr. Brown composed a large volume of more than six hundred pages, the substance of which he delivered at this date to his congregation. It is occupied mainly with tracing the scope and bearing of the several parts of the epistle, but incorporates also large and precious fragments of critical and theological discussion from his unpublished work, and throws over even the most rigid and skeleton-like outlines, the warmth and freshness of vital Christian piety. Many portions of this treatise are unsurpassed by its author in depth of thought and finish of style; and no one probably will be able to read it without having his views of the epistle in some respects modified, corrected, or enlarged. Its author's

decision to suppress the full work is perhaps to be regretted; but the general results of his life-long studies are preserved with sufficient distinctness, and must be fruitful of manifold advantage to all who shall pursue this highest walk of exposition.

In his Preface to this work, Dr. Brown strongly declares his dissent from the principles on which Professor Jowett has attempted to expound the writings of the Apostle Paul; and he also separates himself from a class of German interpreters, of whom Rückert and Fritzsche are specimens, "whose acuteness and learning," he says, "we would gladly secure at any price short of the taking along with them their unduly high estimate of themselves, and their unduly low estimate of the sacred books and their authors."

An equal number of copies of this work were destined for America as for the home sale, the edition being the largest on which he had ever ventured. Dr. Brown feeling that it would probably be his last effort in the field of exposition, dedicated it to his very early friend the late Principal Lee, of his connexion with whom he thus speaks:—"It is just about sixty years since we first met as fellow-students in the Halls of that University over which you now preside. Though necessarily a good deal separated by the

widely different spheres of duty we have been called to fill, we have never during that long period lost sight of each other, nor ever looked towards each other with any feeling but respect and good-will; and now at its close we are so happy as to find, amid the shipwrecks of many literary and ecclesiastical friendships on all sides, that in our case, the liking of youth has ripened into the esteem of age, to be perfected, let us hope, in the friendship of heaven."

One other large work, an exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Dr. Brown retained in his repositories to the last. It had passed through all the same processes of preparation for the press as his other treatises, having been delivered from the pulpit and the chair, and continually corrected and revised. On this epistle he bestowed almost as much labour as on that to the Romans; and the suffrages of competent judges who have had opportunities of comparing both, are divided as to their relative excellence. As Dr. Brown has laid no such interdict on the publication of this work as his own conduct interposed in the case of that on the Epistle to the Romans, it is expected that it will be given to the world without unnecessary delay. He was averse in general to posthumous works. "A dead man," he would say,

"is a man out of mind." But a regard to his reputation, to the interests of sacred literature, and probably also to his own desire, not altogether to lose the fruits of so much labour, seems to call for the appearance of this commentary. Of some of his expositions he once said, "They will sleep till I sleep," the Epistle to the Hebrews being included in the number.

The whole of the expositions of which an account has now been given were, with the exception of the first, written in Arthur Lodge, a house on the outskirts of Newington, where Dr. Brown spent the last nine years of his life. There, in happy solitude, in the bosom of his family, and with the cares of pastoral and public life reduced to little more than a pleasing variety of labour, he plied his task. The windows of his magnificent library looked out upon the grand outlines of Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, and a fresh and juvenile delight in nature was associated, amidst the changing aspects of days and seasons, with the perpetual study of the Word of God. Literature of all kinds, from the most classical to the most fugitive, relieved the mental strain, which was also lightened by the visits of friends and by unbroken interest and occasional action in ecclesiastical and public affairs. Some part of the week was devoted to

preparation for the pulpit; and the Sabbath hours were passed in strict but cheerful rest. With these exceptions, month after month saw the same work of writing, correcting proofs, and verifying references proceed from morning to night; and as each exposition was finished, the published copy became the repository of fresh notes, and the starting-point of new struggles to bring it nearer to perfection. Amidst these occupations the shadow of past domestic griefs sat more lightly, and the echo of public strifes and tumults died away. The rich and genial elements of Dr. Brown's nature, released from the irritations of controversy, and fostered by association with the noblest Christian minds of all ages in their highest studies, expanded from year to year in ever brightening proportions. A larger spirit breathed over his expositions, and the divergent sections of that true Church, which has in God's word its living root and centre, responded to the catholic tone of these interpretations, and welcomed them as their common possession.

We may believe that the general consent which has ranked Dr. Brown's expository works so high, gives some pledge of their lasting influence. It is always rash to anticipate the verdict of posterity. Yet the works which live

are those which ripen slowly, as the fruit of years of toil, and which, calmly disregarding ephemeral tastes and fashions, connect themselves with permanent necessities and interests. Nothing is more enduring in Christian literature than commentary which unites the qualities of solidity, clearness, and devotion. These marks Dr. Brown's expository writings bear as visibly as any kindred works produced in the present generation; and therefore it may be predicted with some confidence, that they will maintain their place in the pure and elevated region into which they spontaneously rise, when the mass of our contemporary theological authorship has passed away.

CHAPTER X.

OLD AGE.

1850–58.

Prosperity of the United Presbyterian Church—Union with Free Church—Sir George Sinclair—Dr. Brown's Views—Union delayed—Dr. Brown's Jubilee—Jubilee Services—Testimonial Fund—Addresses and Reply—Speeches—Farewell to the Young—"Plain Discourses"—"The Three Gatherings"—Reference Bible—Theological Tracts—Culverwel's "Light of Nature"—Literary Activity.

DURING the years which were occupied with the publication of his commentaries, Dr. Brown's life ran on in a singularly even tenor. His health, but for an occasional attack of lumbago or sciatica, was good. His congregation enjoyed unbroken prosperity. The Theological Hall continued to flourish beyond any former example, attended by about two hundred students, and filling up to each professor two busy months, with congenial labour. The United Presbyterian Church, as a whole, had rest and was edified, enjoying one of those happy periods which leave little mark in history. Dr. Brown appeared regularly in the meetings of Presbytery, and also of the Synod, lending weight and sometimes vivacity to their discussions; but his

venerable form, from year to year more grey, and bent, though still moderately, with age, was associated no more with struggle and excitement, but presided over the gentler victories of peace. Though nothing of a debater, and little of a diplomatist, he was recognised as the leading mind of his denomination; and his rising to deliver with Spartan brevity, and something of Roman authority, the few sentences into which he compressed his views on any question, never failed to command hushed attention. It is not necessary to recount his part in the general business of the United Presbyterian Church during this period. A few words may be given, however, to a wider project, in which he took a lively interest—the Union between that Church and the Free Church of Scotland.

When Sir George Sinclair began, about 1852, his well-meant and zealous exertions to effect this object, Dr. Brown was one of the first ministers whom he consulted. He was favourable to the proposal, but had a much less sanguine anticipation than its author of its speedy accomplishment. His views are fully expressed in a letter, dated January 8, 1852. "To promote union among Christians, without compromise of principle, has been one of the first wishes of my heart, one of the leading objects

of my life; and in the union first of the two great divisions of the Secession, and then of the United Secession and the Relief Church, as well as in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, I have had this wish gratified, this object gained, to a greater extent than I could at one time have anticipated. The Disruption of the Established Church was in my view but a step towards further union. The Union of the Free Church with the United Presbyterian Church, I regard as an event of the future, it may be not of the very distant future. I am afraid, however, that there is little probability of its being *very* soon effected, so as to secure peace and permanence to the united body. As to principle, there is nothing to prevent such a union to-morrow, except the Free Church continuing to insist on making the principle of connexion between Church and State, as embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith, a term of *official* communion. The United Presbyterian Church do not, I trust they never will, make a disclaimer of that principle a term of communion either official or Christian; but the great body both of her members and ministers, conscientiously disbelieve the principle, and therefore could not join a body which includes this principle in its confession, and requires a

solemn declaration of belief in it from all its ministers and elders. Were this difficulty, obviously insurmountable while it continues, removed out of the way, still I am afraid those habits of thought, feeling, and action, naturally acquired in an Establishment, and those learned in such a body as the United Presbyterian Church are so different, as to lay a foundation for reasonable fear of uncomfortable collisions in church courts, composed of those who have been formed to those respective habits."

In the winter and spring of 1854, a good many conferences were held in Edinburgh between ministers and elders of both Churches, to consider this subject. Most of these were held at the house of Sir George Sinclair, but one also met at Arthur Lodge. "Things are not ripe," Dr. Brown wrote to a friend, "for union; but they may ripen the faster for the genial heat of such interviews." The persevering exertions of Sir George Sinclair, which were continued for several years, received from Dr. Brown, and apparently from all who represented the United Presbyterian Church, cordial encouragement. Among other modes of appeal, Sir George Sinclair inserted a series of letters in the *Scottish Press*. In regard to these, Dr. Brown thus wrote to the editor of that journal in September

1856, "I read with much interest and pleasure Sir George Sinclair's letters in the *Scottish Press*, and I believe my feelings were those of most of my brethren. I have no doubt their publication did good, and that their re-publication would do more good. The event on which the good Baronet has set his heart, is, I think, one of the most certain of futurities; and such publications as his are fitted to prepare for what assuredly will come, *when* and how is another question." Matters never approached distinct negotiation, or formal consideration of articles of union. It was, however, the strongly expressed opinion of Dr. Brown, that if ever they should reach that stage, it would be both unjust and impolitic in the United Presbyterian Church to compromise the unfettered right of protest, which its individual members had hitherto possessed, and which many of them had exercised, against the Establishment principle in all its forms, and equally unfair to require any renunciation of that principle on the other side; and that no good, but evil, would arise from any formula or preamble which sought to mask the divergence of these incompatible principles, or carry them up to some higher unity, in subscribing which members of both Churches might combine. He held that

the *status quo* of forbearance in the United Presbyterian Church could not be relinquished; and hence he was much gratified when many leading laymen of the Free Church, in 1857, headed a declaration, subscribed also by many of the United Presbyterian laity, in which this point was explicitly conceded. The special resolution on this subject, which obtained his most cordial concurrence, is as follows: "That in the judgment of both Communions, it is a duty incumbent upon all men, and especially upon those in authority (from whom He who has given them much, is entitled to expect the more), to recognise the paramount supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, as being the Governor among the nations, as well as the Supreme Head of his Church, and consequently to regulate their conduct, in whatsoever capacity, by his laws. But as those who entirely concur in all other ecclesiastical matters, may and do entertain different views as to the course which the State is bound to pursue in reference to the interests of the Church, and more especially on the question of endowment (some holding that one denomination should be supported at the public cost, others that different sects should be so simultaneously and proportionally, and others

that the pastors should be maintained by the members of their own communion), this point ought to be left as a question of forbearance, on which ministers and members may be allowed to entertain such a view as they deem most consonant with Scripture, and most conducive to the welfare of the Church, more especially as any formal deliverance on this subject is of no practical consequence in the case of self-supporting communions."

It speedily became apparent, from the refusal of a large body of the ministers and members of the Free Church to entertain the proposal of Union on these terms, and even from the disposition of some of them to subject the movers in the matter to formal ecclesiastical censure, that Dr. Brown had taken a juster view of the difficulties in the way than his more sanguine friend. The latter, whose exertions in the cause did the greatest credit to his liberality and zeal, was reluctantly shut up to the conclusion, as he himself happened to express it to a friend, in sacred words, that "the time of figs was not yet;" and the adjustment of this question was left to a more auspicious day.

Dr. Brown's conduct in this series of discussions, was in perfect consistency with his whole

public life. He would not narrow the basis of toleration for the sake of an outward peace; and ardently as he longed for the downfal of sectarian differences, he could not consent to union on any principles which would only enthrone a numerically larger sectarianism in their place. He felt that such views were especially necessary to be acted on in the religious atmosphere of Scotland, where coalescence by proselytism is easy, but full and avowed comprehension is difficult. Besides, the great importance which he still attached to the Voluntary principle stood in the way. The views for which he had struggled so earnestly, though somewhat softened and mellowed by the lapse of time, and by the extent to which the ecclesiastical world had been altered by their spread and practical adoption, were unchanged; and he could not abate his testimony to their truth and sacredness. Any proposal from any quarter to compromise these principles, he would have met with the same fearless spirit which had never flinched before men like Thomson, M'Crie, and Chalmers, and which, when the interests of religious freedom were at stake, could be almost as concentrated and stern as that of John Milton or John Foster.*

* The following testimony to Dr. Brown's zealous adherence to

On the 6th of February 1856, Dr. Brown completed the fiftieth year of his ministry; and he celebrated that event by preaching to his congregation in Broughton Place, the sermon which he had delivered at the commencement of his ministry in Biggar. This was afterwards included in his volume *Parting Counsels,* published in the course of the same year. The sermon contained a forcible statement of the responsibilities of those who fill the sacred office, and of the need of prayer on their behalf. Dr. Brown added only a few pathetic words to the discourse, declaring that his convictions on the subjects treated of, only strengthened and deepened with age, and expressing with much humi-

these principles, was given by his early friend, Adam Black, Esq., M.P., at a public meeting held in Edinburgh in April 1859. Mr. Black introduced into his speech these words of John Locke:—"No private person has any right in any manner to prejudice another person in his civil enjoyments, because he is of another Church or religion. All the rights and franchises that belong to him as a man or a denizen are inviolably to be preserved to him. . . . . If we may openly speak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither Pagan, nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion. The gospel commands no such thing. The Church which judgeth not those that are without wants it not, and the commonwealth which embraces indifferently all men that are honest, peaceable, and industrious, requires it not." Mr. Black then added:—"In the last conversation I had with that great divine and estimable man, the late Dr. John Brown, on his death-bed, he referred to these expressions of Locke, and his angelic countenance brightened up as he recommended me to maintain them in the House of Commons."

lity his sense of the defects of his own ministry. "In looking back, I wonder at the kind reception my imperfect labours have met with from my brethren, to whom I have been called successively to minister; and in looking forward, I can only cast myself on the mercy of my Divine Master, 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'" He requested the continued prayers of his congregation, and concluded by addressing a few sentences to candidates for the Christian ministry:—"It is probable there may be some hearing me who are looking forward to the sacred office. It would be strange if I did not feel a peculiar interest in them. As a proof of this interest, I would press on their most serious consideration, the importance of due preparation for that office which they are aspiring to, and I am about to lay down; and I prefer doing this in the words of another, the venerable Dr. John Erskine; for while his words exactly represent my convictions and feelings, the sacrifices he made in choosing the Christian ministry as a profession, and his remarkable diligence as a student, combined with the singular worth and wisdom, which made him so bright an ornament of the Established Church of Scotland during the latter half of the last century, give the declaration

and advice a weight and value to which no expression of the result of my experience could justly lay claim: 'I have no cause to repent my choice of a profession; but I do lament that I entered on the sacred function, ere I had spent one-fourth of the time in reading, meditation, and devotional exercises, which would have been necessary in any tolerable degree to qualify me for it.'"*

It was the earnest desire of Dr. Brown, that beyond this pulpit allusion to his fiftieth anniversary, which also drew forth an affectionate address from his Session, no more public celebration should take place. He at length, however, gave way to the strong and urgent representations of his congregation and other friends; and as his state of health did not then admit of much fatigue and exposure, the contemplated services were postponed till the beginning of April. On Tuesday the 8th of that month, the jubilee celebration took place; an event in many respects remarkable, and deserving to be recorded here as the natural and appropriate close of Dr. Brown's public life. From a memorial volume published at the time, a fuller account of these exercises may be obtained.

A morning service of worship was conducted

* *Parting Counsels*, pp. 324, 325.

in Broughton Place Church, attended by Dr. Brown's congregation, and by many ministers and others who had come from all parts of the country, as well as by his brethren of different denominations in Edinburgh, and members of all Christian Churches, who thus united in presenting their congratulations and thanksgivings. The writer of this memoir preached on that occasion, from Lev. xxv. 10. In the evening, the interest, greatly heightened, was transferred to Tanfield Hall, where the principal celebration was to take place. This immense building had been selected to meet the urgent demand for accommodation; and its vast spaces sacred to Free Churchmen as the meeting-place of their first Assembly, and to United Presbyterians as the scene of their Union, were again filled to overflowing. The Rev. Dr. Thomson, as colleague of Dr. Brown, presided over the meeting, surrounded by the other professors, and a very large body of ministers and leading members of the United Presbyterian and other denominations. Six out of eight of Dr. Brown's surviving Selkirk contemporaries, were on the platform. Of these, Dr. Henderson of Galashiels, one of Dr. Brown's most endeared friends, and his companion not only in life, but almost in death, was called on to offer the opening prayer. Dr. Thomson in

gracefully sketching Dr. Brown's career, bore cordial testimony to the mutual confidence that had marked their united ministry :—"We have now laboured together in the same pulpit, and over the same people for thirteen years, and during that long period we have never exchanged an angry word or known a single hour of disturbed confidence." He then read letters of apology for the necessary absence of Principal Lee, and other eminent ministers of different churches. The letter of Principal Lee, containing a lively retrospect of Dr. Brown's University period, has been already embodied in this narrative.

There was next presented to Dr. Brown an address of warm congratulation from the congregation of Broughton Place, along with a gift of £610 as a token of their esteem and gratitude. This sum, Dr. Brown, in the course of the evening, announced his intention to devote to the Fund, then in the course of being formed in the United Presbyterian Church, for Aged and Infirm Ministers. Such an act was in keeping with the generosity which Dr. Brown, though never at any time wealthy, had always shown in pecuniary matters. He added to his people's gift, a donation of £50; and the entire sum, doubled by the liberality of the family of

Dr. Heugh, and farther increased by £100 from the children of the late Rev. Thomas Leckie of Peebles, was set apart, in perpetuity, under distinct conditions, for the relief of some one aged minister, who should be selected by trustees, and approved of by the Synod.

Addresses were then presented to Dr. Brown from the ministers who had studied under him, to the number of more than one hundred and fifty, and from more than fifty preachers of the gospel, dwelling upon the influence for good exerted on them by his labours as a Professor, and also by his personal character. Of the latter, the Rev. John Ker of Glasgow, in the course of a beautiful and touching speech, thus spoke:—"The influence of your personal Christian character, ardent and single-minded in action, firm and rock-like in trial, generous and sympathizing in repose, has followed us across wide intervals of time and space; and if changes greater should come, the memory of it will still be a shadow from a tower of strength, to make us thank God that we were once brought close to you in knowledge and love."

The list of addresses was closed by two more, one from the congregation of Rose Street, and another from that of Biggar; each presented by a deputation, and recalling with much affection,

the peculiar features of Dr. Brown's ministry in those several spheres.

The chief interest of the evening centred in Dr. Brown's speech, which now followed. It was long, characteristic, and more than usually happy. He made a separate reply to each of the addresses which he had received. In thanking his congregation for their gift, he said, "The debt, large as it is, that I have contracted to-day to this congregation, is small indeed compared with that which I owe them. I am here to acknowledge the innumerable and the inestimable kindnesses which they have contrived to crowd into nearly twenty-seven years of most dutiful and affectionate congregational conduct." He also bore special testimony to their kindness in supplying him with a colleague, whose aid he so highly valued, and to their sympathy during the Atonement Controversy. He then thanked his fellow-professors, and other ministerial brethren, for their presence, "giving a cheer to the old vessel as it neared the haven." He reverted to the friends of other days. "Few men have been privileged to have more and such friends. My earlier friends among the *primores* of the Synod, which I entered more than fifty years ago, such as Gilfillan and Greig, and Husband and Hall, and

Heugh and Peddie, and Dick and Smart, and of the Synod to which that was united more than thirty-five years ago, such as Pringle and Jamieson, and Muckersie and Mitchell and Stark, with all of whom I was privileged to live on terms of intimate intercourse, with some of them of confidential friendship, have most of them long ago departed, and their memory is blessed. They have most of them been so long away, that we do not think of them as if they might have been present. But Wardlaw, and Heugh, and Balmer, and many more of my contemporary friends, what a felt blank their absence makes! They are not here; but I do not need to say, Where are they? I know where they are; and I trust, by the grace of our common Lord, ere long to meet them there. We know Him who has said, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be.'"

After thanking the ministers of other denominations who had taken interest in the celebration, especially Principal Lee and Dr. Henry Grey, and touching on the growing spirit of union in the Christian Church, Dr. Brown bore this emphatic testimony to the general advancement of Christian society: "Looking back on threescore years, during which I have taken some interest in the religious affairs of man-

kind, I dare not say the former days were better than now. I might find it impossible, certainly I should find it difficult, to name individuals whom I would place so high as I placed some at that period; but the Church and society generally are prodigiously improved, and my voice to my younger brethren is, 'Thank God, and take courage.'"

The close of Dr. Brown's address was remarkable, as making almost the only approach to a public revelation of his inward religious experiences, in his whole history. "I have avoided as much as might be details of private history, and it would be most unbecoming to obtrude on the attention of such a meeting the experiences of the inner life. The good old gentlewoman was right, who said to her younger friend, when broaching such a subject on the street, 'Whist, lassie, thae are no causey cracks,' yet I would feel as if I had neglected a duty, did I not ere closing make an acknowledgment how good a Master, for these fifty years, I have had, and how unprofitable a servant he has had in me. Yes, He has been a good Master, sustaining me in weakness, guiding me in perplexity, comforting me in sorrow. Were He and I now finally to part, which God forbid, he would leave me much his debtor. He has given

me wages *with* my work, and wages *in* my work: all I am, all I have, I owe to Him. I can endorse the declaration of one of my forefathers, 'There is no master so kind as Christ; no service so pleasant and so profitable as His; no reward so full, satisfying, and permanent as His.' While I thank him for so far counting me trustworthy as to put me into the ministry, and bless him that hitherto he has preserved me from becoming a disgrace to it, I must acknowledge that, in the review of my ecclesiastical life, I see much, very much that has been wanting and wrong; and if I see this, what does He see whose eyes are a flame of fire, and who searches the reins and the hearts? I could look forward with nothing but despair to the judgment-seat, very near which I stand, but for the confidence, that 'the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin; and that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' The only port that in the last storms my shattered vessel can hope to take, or has any desire to take, is that of sovereign mercy."

Eloquent addresses on selected topics were subsequently delivered by Professors Lindsay and Harper, Dr. Henry Grey, the Rev. Alex-

ander M'Ewan, and Principal Cunningham, all replete with interesting recollections of intercourse with Dr. Brown, and bearing an harmonious testimony to the value of his labours. Dr. Cunningham's words summed up the general sentiment, "It is right that Dr. Brown should be assured that many, very many belonging to other sections of the Church of Christ, regard with cordial admiration and heartfelt thankfulness to God, his long-continued and consistent course of eminent Christian usefulness, and the important services which in many ways he has rendered to the Church of Christ." "Men usually excel in some one sphere or department, but he has distinguished himself in many, and all of them of high worth and value—as a pastor, a preacher, a professor, and an author." Dr. Cunningham also touched on the peculiar character of this jubilee-celebration, as reflecting in one focus the work and history of a lifetime. "The proceedings of this evening have certainly been of a very remarkable and impressive kind, bringing out, as they do, an amount of valuable work done during a long life, in all the highest departments of Christian activity and usefulness, and an amount of cordial and hearty appreciation of this work by the various classes who have had the benefit

of it, that is really very unusual and extraordinary, and that has not been often exhibited, even in the case of God's most highly favoured servants." This meeting lasted till near midnight, when Dr. Young of Perth offered the closing prayer; and the great assembly, the last ever held in Tanfield Hall, and connected by many associations with the first, dispersed.

A week after, the Sabbath-school children of Broughton Place held a separate meeting, to present an address to Dr. Brown. In a singularly affectionate and solemn manner he greeted the crowd of youthful faces; and after alluding to the zealous labours of his colleague amongst the young, to the long-continued and successful exertions of his own son-in-law, Mr. James Young, who had superintended a class for young men nearly from the commencement of his Broughton Place ministry, and to the diligence of a multitude of other teachers, male and female, he proceeded to exhort and charge those present, as one who was in all probability addressing them for the last time. Words which he had often used, and which had impressed many, he then repeated, "Beware of that mistake which is the ruin of thousands, the taking shadows for realities, and realities for shadows." One other weighty sentence

deserves to be quoted, "Never forget that innocence is better than penitence, and that a sin prevented is a better thing than even a sin pardoned."

The whole spirit of these jubilee services was that of deep religious seriousness. Levity and adulation, as equally abhorrent to Dr. Brown's nature, had no place in them; and not a few derived from them an onward impulse in the Christian life.

It was remarked by more than one speaker, at the time of Dr. Brown's jubilee, that while more than seventy years had left their outward mark upon him, the activity of his intellectual faculties was as great as ever. "His mind," said Dr. Harper, "is as healthy in its tone, his every faculty as acute, his interest in all measures affecting the welfare of Church and State as lively, his taste for the studies and accomplishments of his sacred profession as keen in its relish now, as at the commencement of his jubilee period." Of this assertion, ample proof was given in the large and erudite works already enumerated, some of which were issued after the date of his jubilee. These, however, did not fully occupy him; and his redundant energies found scope in a variety of minor publications, dropped at intervals in the midst of the larger

series, or continued after its succession had closed.

Dr. Brown issued in 1852, a volume entitled, *Plain Discourses on Important Subjects*, two of these being Canongate Lectures, delivered to the mission audience in that locality. This volume was distinguished by all the best qualities of his preaching, and soon reached a second edition; one of the Canongate Lectures, on "The Bible: What it Is; What it Does; What it Deserves," being separately circulated in thousands. He also published in the beginning of 1857, a small volume of Missionary Discourses, on Isaiah lvi. 8, entitled *The Three Gatherings*. This he stated, in his Preface, to be the fruits of early studies in Vitringa, prosecuted by the advice of his venerated tutor, Dr. Lawson. It contained, along with much exposition, the result of all his later meditations on the philosophy of missions, both to Jews and Gentiles, and was designed to stimulate his congregation in their missionary career. His views on some recently debated topics may be quoted. "The question has been agitated as to the priority and connexion of the two gatherings of the Jews and Gentiles, which together are to form the third gathering. Are the Jews or the Gentiles to be first converted? Are the

Jews to be the instruments of the conversion of the Gentiles, or the Gentiles of the Jews? Unfulfilled prophecy, generally covered with clouds, gives on these subjects no very certain sound. So far as I can discover its meaning, it intimates that both events shall take place, if not exactly contemporaneously, yet during the same epoch; and Gentiles will be instrumental in the conversion of Jews, and converted Jews extensively employed in the final in-bringing of the unconverted Gentiles. It is while men are 'fearing the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun,' that 'the Redeemer will come to Zion.' 'The blindness which happened to Israel' continues till 'the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,' or rather till the fulness of the Gentiles shall be gathering, 'and then all Israel shall be saved.'" In another passage, he rejects the view of those who expect the present economy to be superseded by some method of propagating Christianity more or less miraculous. "We find that God communicates useful knowledge to an individual; that is, he makes him to discover or to invent; and then the important discovery, the useful invention, by communication from man to man, becomes the property of the species. He did not make a revelation of the

steam-engine. He enabled James Watt to invent it, and made him the honoured instrument of conferring inappreciable benefits on his race. He gave freedom to the slave, not by miraculously breaking their fetters, but by raising up Wilberforce, and Clarkson, and Buxton, and other philanthropists, by the use of the appropriate moral means to accomplish the glorious object. It is but natural, then, that the means so extensively employed for communicating benefits, should be employed in the communication of the highest kind of blessings. In no case can this method be more suitable and more advantageous."*

In connexion with this subject, it may be stated, that it was the fixed opinion of Dr. Brown, often urged with much eloquence in conversation, that the world was approaching vast and decisive changes, likely to be attended with much political convulsion, and perhaps social disorganization, but preparatory to the final and tranquil reign of Christianity. He had very limited

* *The Three Gatherings*, pp. 84, 85, and 91, 92. It will appear, from the above statements, that Dr. Brown was no expectant of the personal Advent before the last day. He was accustomed quietly to remark, in regard to the views of others who hold the pre-millenarian hypothesis, "We do not look for the Saviour so soon as some of our friends do, but if He should come, we shall be very glad to see Him."

faith in exact vaticinations founded on prophetic studies, and both spoke and preached against the confidence of those whose folly in such utterances, he used to say, was "manifest to all men but themselves." His own more cautious view he derived from what he supposed to be the concurrent lines of prophecy, and less from the aspects and portents of the present age.

There was a scheme closely connected with the biblical studies of his life, which at this time occupied a good deal of Dr. Brown's attention. This was the preparation and publication of a Reference Bible upon a new and peculiar principle. He conceived that in the ordinary reference Bibles there is no adequate distinction of texts which are only parallel in words, and texts which are parallel in sense. Hence a leading feature of this scheme was to carry out such a distinction, having one column for verbal references and another for doctrinal, while the received version was to stand first on the page, making three columns in all. Another feature of this scheme was to append footnotes, containing both improved readings of the original, translated into English, and also improved renderings of the received text. These notes were to stand in distinct columns, with the names of the critical authorities or translators annexed to each

emendation. In this enterprise Dr. Brown was associated with Principal Cunningham, and with Drs. Alexander and Goold of Edinburgh, each having assigned him a portion of Scripture which he was to edit, with the help of friends chosen by himself to collect the references and perform other parts of the work. The whole was under the patronage of a number of Scottish gentlemen interested in Sacred Literature, who had agreed to defray the expense of the publication. The design unfortunately stopped at a very early stage. Only a portion of the Gospel of John was printed as a specimen, for the guidance of the different labourers in the work, that they might proceed upon a common principle. This was executed under the superintendence of the Rev. Peter Davidson, on whom Dr. Brown mainly relied for assistance in his portion of the labour, and who had already repeatedly aided him in the revision of his commentaries. To what extent materials may have been collected by the other editors, before the design fell to the ground, is not known; but it is to be hoped that a work which, if competently executed, would fill up a blank in biblical literature, may at some time or other be accomplished. Dr. Brown was so convinced of its importance, that he declared himself ready had

he only been ten or twenty years younger, to have undertaken the task, and attempted to execute it alone.

In these later years Dr. Brown also occupied himself with the realization of a project which he had long cherished. This was the publication of a set of theological Tracts, combining the two qualities of rarity and intrinsic worth in such a degree as to make them a welcome present to the general theological reader. In this design he was assisted by the friendly offer of Mr. Douglas of Cavers; and a very considerable sum was expended upon the undertaking, which could not be expected to be self-supporting. The publication began in 1853, and the series extended to three volumes, of which the last appeared in 1854. The tracts were selected from writers of all schools of theology, English, Scottish, and American, from the seventeenth century downwards; and many truly valuable pieces were embraced in the issue. A number of original treatises were included, as, for example, in the first and second volumes, Essays by the Rev. John Ballantyne on the Origin of Evil and the Being of God, and in the last volume some of the most important Lectures of Dr. Balmer, not before published. Dr. Brown introduced the works of the separate writers with biographical

and critical sketches, which display the ample stores of his varied and accurate learning in this department, to great advantage. The whole work, thus made up of extracts and sketches, may be regarded as an extension of those library lectures of which he was so great a master; and the series might have been greatly prolonged, as he originally intended that it should be, without exhausting the treasures of his information.

The only additional treatise which appeared in connexion with this enterprise, Dr. Brown sent forth in a separate volume. This was the work of an all but forgotten writer of the seventeenth century, a philosopher among the Puritans, Nathanael Culverwel, who had anticipated some of the most important results of later speculation, and adorned his discussions on the harmony of faith and reason with wonderful learning and genius. His treatise, *The Light of Nature*, was a great favourite with Dr. Brown, and his laudable zeal to revive it at length took the form of this edition. He hoped to publish the rest of Culverwel's remains, but this desire was unfulfilled. On the editing of *The Light of Nature*, he bestowed the greatest labour, ransacking every repository for the materials of a biography, and for the verification of the innumerable and recondite quotations with which

the work truly overflows. A portion of one of the illustrative notes appended is quoted below, not so much for its own sake, as for its being a sample of the minute diligence with which Dr. Brown pursued all bibliographical researches.* This work was dedicated to Henry Rogers, "in token of the editor's gratitude for the instruction and delight derived from his writings."

Dr. Brown's republication of Culverwel appeared at the same time with his work on the Romans, in July 1857, when he was entering upon his seventy-fourth year. His literary activity

* "Of Eugubius (so the name is given in the second edition) and his work I could find no trace. I thought it likely that the word was Eugubinus, and that the author referred to was a native, or perhaps the Bishop of Gubio, which Hofmann says is a small episcopal city in Italy. I found my conjecture so far confirmed. In the editions of 1652, 1659, and 1669, the word is Eugubin; but still I could find no trace of Eugubin in Morhoff, or any of the ordinary Biographical Dictionaries. Observing in a London catalogue a work on the Pentateuch by Eugubinus, I sent for the volume, and found that the full designation of the person referred to by Culverwel was Augustinus Steuchus Eugubinus. From the following notices gleaned from Hofmann, Moreri, Morhoff, and Scaliger, he appears to have been a man of considerable note. He was a native of Gubio, in the duchy of Urbino. [Then follows his history, and the account of his work on the Pentateuch. Dr. Brown continues:] His other publications are *Adversus Lutheranos Libri tres*, *Cosmopœia seu de Opificio Mundi*, an extended commentary on the first chapter of Genesis, and his *Magnum Opus*, referred to by Culverwel; *De Perenni Philosophia Libri decem*. According to Morhoff, who speaks highly both of the author and his work, Dr. Theophilus Gale has made liberal use of Steuchus' treatise, both in his *Philosophia Generalis*, and his *Court of the Gentiles*, though I have not noticed any reference to it in either of these very learned but not very readable works."—Pp. 287, 288.

had never been greater; and his most intimate friends observed still at work, and perhaps in increased degree, that power which, along with these explorations of the past or the eternal, took in all the currents and eddies of contemporary theological speculation. With all the symptoms and tendencies which mark this age as one of doubt, uneasiness, and transition, he was perfectly familiar. The decision of his nature, and the strength of his Christian experience, raised him above all risk of being involved in its cloudy and ambiguous novelties. The old Puritan theology, traced to its roots in an inspired and unalterable Bible, contented him the more the longer he lived. But he looked from year to year on the struggles of others with livelier sympathy and more earnest desire to remove their difficulties. His views of the present age in regard to its theological relations and tendencies had nothing of a morbid or alarmist tinge. The ancient Christianity, he was convinced, was surely making way, and would emerge, unchanged in substance, and in a form yet more pure and apostolical, from the conflicts and reactions of the nineteenth as of all foregoing centuries.

CHAPTER XI.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

First Serious Illness—"The Beginning of the End"—Nearness to Death—Slow Recovery—Consolations of Old Age—Michael Angelo—Love of Exposition—Work on Revival of Religion—Letter to his Congregation—Reply—Last Meeting of Hall—Hints on Faith and Hope—Address to Students of Divinity—Last Letter to Students—Farewell—Study of the Psalms—Dr. Marshall—Tone of Prayers—Dr. Henry Grey—Rev. C. J. Brown—Deputation of Presbytery—Readings from Dr. Owen—Sabbath Exercises—Narrative of the Loss of the "Kent"—Definition of the Gospel—Last Notes—Reclaimed Sceptic—Last interview with Dr. Thomson—Death Scene—Funeral—Funeral Sermons—Minute of Synod—Dr. Brown as a Friend—Religious Character—Variety, Consistency, and Completeness of his Life—Conclusion.

THE closing scenes of the life of Dr. Brown were full of special interest, and supply somewhat copious materials of biography. His illness was of considerable duration, and during its course the features of his character became, if possible, more distinct, and his utterances more memorable than at any former time. In particular, his deeper religious feelings and experiences, which had all his lifetime been restrained and nearly suppressed, were disclosed with some approach to freedom. This peculiarity of his last days, together with the characteristic nature of other incidents belonging to this period, will explain the greater fulness of the succeeding narrative.

In the autumn of 1857, Dr. Brown discharged for the last time his duties as Professor. He felt more than usual fatigue towards the end of the Session, and sought to recruit his strength by a visit to Crofthead House, near Whitburn, the residence of his brother-in-law, James Waddel, Esq., where he was wont to spend annually some days or weeks amidst the scenes and associations of his childhood. He returned somewhat improved in health, and was able to appear regularly in the pulpit for three or four Sabbaths, without betraying any sign of infirmity. He preached for the last time on the 15th of November. On this occasion he paused in the middle of his discourse from a sudden and sharp attack of indisposition; but after giving out a hymn was able to conclude the sermon with some degree of animation. He had arranged, feeble as he was, to preach on the succeeding Lord's day, and had made provision for its services, when he accepted the offer of a friend to take his place. His strength continued to fail, and henceforth his colleague relieved him of all pulpit duty. He had nearly completed the fifty-second year of his ministry when it thus ended.

In Dr. Brown's mind, distrust of ultimate recovery, though with some alternations, pre-

vailed from the first over hope. An internal disorder, attended with acute and most distressing suffering attacked him, and gave him, especially in the night-season, little rest. During its paroxysms, his earnest prayer was that patience might be granted him, and he specially requested the prayers of all his friends for that grace. A frequent reflection at this time was, how many kinds of pain he had been spared all his life long, which his present experience told him he might have endured, and with what entire ignorance of the hand of God in it, the exemption had been enjoyed. He suffered not from one disease only, but from a complication of diseases, partly at least the result of his intense studies and arduous labours. In the words of his son, Dr. John Brown, who with filial anxiety watched from day to day every symptom of his father's illness, assisted by his brother, Dr. William Brown of Melrose, and the most eminent Edinburgh physicians, "the machinery for a much longer life was there, but the motive power was gone. The ardent, unsparing soul had wasted itself by excess of intensity and effort. He became as it were suddenly old, and died twenty years older in constitution than in age." This inward sense of languor and exhaustion led him to receive

the suggestions of friends who spoke of recovery with a dubious smile, often accompanied with the words, "It is, I fear, the beginning of the end."

The suffering and weakness which he had to endure towards the end of 1857 were very great. They were met with the fortitude and sweetness which, in seasons of great affliction, had always been remarkable in one of so energetic a temperament, and now appeared to increase with the trial. The first weeks of 1858 brought relief from pain; but much physical depression remained. Towards the end of the month of January his strength seemed completely prostrated, his voice all but failed, and his state excited the most serious alarm. To his daughter, Miss Brown, who had for many years presided over his household, and who, with its other members, consisting of a younger daughter and son, now watched him with the most affectionate solicitude, he dropped remarks which showed how imminent his danger appeared to his own eye. "I do not know," he said, after he had somewhat rallied, "that I have ever been nearer the unseen world than at this time;" "but," he added, alluding to the well-known passage in the Pilgrim's Progress, "I felt the bottom, and it was good." At another time he remarked, "The sovereign love of God, the infinite atone-

ment of the Redeemer, the omnipotent power of the Divine Spirit,—that is sufficient for any; it is sufficient for me."

"One evening," says the Rev. James Robertson, a friend endeared to him by long and confidential intimacy, "when I was sitting alone by his bedside, he turned round very solemnly and said, "Here is an old man going away to give in the account of his stewardship. The path of suffering by which I am led sometimes looks gloomy and forbidding, and I am sometimes afraid lest I dishonour God by impatience under pain. Yet I believe I shall have safe guidance through the dark passage, and there is glorious light at the other end. I am 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'" To the same friend, when suffering acute pain, he said, "I am a *poor* sufferer, I mean that I little know what it is to suffer *well*. You are running about on God's errands, and I am lying here under his hand. The latter is decidedly the more difficult of the two. There is no one who has more need to be prayed for than I."

An interval of comparative ease and rest followed. It brought with it little accession of strength, but it allowed again of reading and converse with friends. Dr. Brown eagerly welcomed these resources of the sick-chamber.

The table beside his bed was again covered with books and periodicals; and his more intimate associates enjoyed intercourse with him, which betokened entire vigour and clearness of intellect, with a deepened sense of spiritual realities. As his strength slowly returned, he was able to sit up in bed and to prosecute trains of thought, with the help of the volumes by which he was surrounded. A favourite course of reading, was upon old age. One day, the Rev. Peter Davidson, whose intimacy with him has been already mentioned, found him in the midst of nine or ten authors from Cicero downwards, including Steele and Dr. Lawson, all treating of this subject. Passing from the immediate topic, he remarked, that it had long been a matter of earnest desire and even of prayer to God, that if it were the Divine will, he might continue working in his Master's service as long as he lived; and that he would prefer dying in the harness. The same desire he expressed to other friends, and spoke of continued Christian labour, as one of the best consolations of old age. Another intimate friend, the Rev. Dr. George Johnston, who saw him once or twice weekly during his illness, and enjoyed much of his affection and confidence, found him one day reading with extraordinary interest, Cicero *De*

Senectute. "What!" said he, laughingly, "have you gone back to heathenism for comfort in old age?" "No," replied Dr. Brown, "but sit down and let me tell you, that ignorant as he was of the Bible, and of the true ground of comfort and support in old age, Cicero does go as far as a heathen man can go." From every course of reading, he returned with warmer gratitude and deeper confidence to the Bible and the Cross. It was therefore with intense pleasure that at this time he found in Hurford's admirable Life of Michael Angelo which was brought him, two sonnets written when that sublime genius had passed his eightieth year, and in which he renounces everything but the Christian hope. With a trembling yet exulting voice, he read to his family these lines:—

"My thoughts once prompt round hurtful things to twine,
What are they now, when two dread deaths are near,
The one impends, the other shakes his spear?
Painting and sculpture's aid in vain I crave.
My one sole refuge is that love Divine,
Which from the cross stretch'd forth its arms to save."

When asked at this time in the morning how he was, he would sometimes reply:—"Well, I am labouring under an incurable disease, old age. The machine by gradual tear and wear is coming to a stand." He would then add, with a look of composure and joy, one or two favourite texts—"There is none like unto the God

of Jeshurun." "This God is our God for ever and ever."

As spring advanced, his convalescence appeared to keep pace with it; and he was at length able to sit up in the evening, and even to descend to his study. A severe attack of sciatica which succeeded, greatly darkened this prospect of improvement, and brought back the discipline of suffering. At this time he read with much interest Dr. Stier's *Words of the Lord Jesus*, and also Dr. Candlish's *Life in a Risen Saviour*, which had all the greater attraction for him, that he had travelled over the same ground in his *Discourses of our Lord*, and in his *Resurrection of Life*. Exposition was still the favourite exercise of his mind. Even after a wakeful and distressing night, he became lively and cheerful, if, in the morning, his opinion was asked of any text, and an opportunity given of bringing out and enforcing the true "mind of the Spirit." He would say in connexion with these incidental comments, "If I have written anything that will live after me, it is because it has been linked on to the ever-living word of God." The pressure of trial deepened his sympathy with other sufferers. He often, in Scripture language, thanked God for the alleviating circumstances of his own case as compared with theirs. His letters to

the afflicted, though brief, had always been pregnant with consolation. These he continued to send, with appropriate books and messages of sympathy, to the very last. The play of all his affections was quickened, instead of being deadened, by age and suffering. On parting with his kinsman, the Rev. Dr. A. S. Patterson of Glasgow, about this time, he grasped his hand and with almost exciting earnestness said, "As I draw nearer to the grave, I love and cling to my friends with greater tenderness."

From his sick-bed, during the months of winter, Dr. Brown had watched all public events with unabated interest; and now, with his partial recovery, there came a great religious movement, which agitated him with mingled joy and anxiety. This was the American revival of 1858. He eagerly read every account of this work on which he could lay his hands, and felt called upon to task his feeble strength by writing on the subject. He had, in 1839, amidst the revival movements of that year, of which Kilsyth was the centre, delivered before the Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh, and afterwards published, a discourse on the *Means and Manifestations of a Genuine Revival of Religion.* This treatise, which embodied a sober and scriptural estimate of the subject, founded upon

the experiences of Pentecost, had gone through two editions at the time; and now, in the end of April, Dr. Brown re-issued it with a Preface and Appendix, bearing chiefly upon the movements in America. The state of his health did not allow of lengthened composition; but his views are stated with all his former terseness and vigour. "The following pages," he says, "will serve their purpose, if they, on the one hand, guard against any tendency towards mysticism and fanaticism, and on the other, against grieving or quenching the Spirit." "The present movement bears on its forehead many characteristics more promising than some that have preceded it. It is not at all sectarian, but has appeared among all classes of evangelical Christians, or at any rate, it has affected many individually among all these classes; it is not mixed up with any of the metaphysical theories which some American theologians so unhappily identify with their views of the elementary facts of Christianity; it has led, so far as I know, to no 'new measures;' and it chiefly shows itself in an increased measure 'of the spirit of grace and supplication.' Still it is of high importance that we carefully attend to the apostolical admonitions, 'Try all things, hold fast that which is good.' 'Beloved, believe not

every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.'"

In the earlier editions of this little treatise, Dr. Brown had maintained a studied silence as to the Kilsyth movements. He now wrote in regard to them, "What the results have been of the movements referred to, he would be a rash man who even yet gave a very decided and determined judgment. I have no doubt that there were many solid conversions from sin to God, and as little that of those who joined the bands of the revivalists, not a few have gone back, and walk no more with the Saviour whom they acknowledged. The bearing of the 'fervent prayers' of 1839-40 on the events of 1843—events the importance of which is but imperfectly developed—will never be fully known till 'the day shall declare it.'"

The subject which had thus broken the enforced silence of affliction, continued greatly to occupy Dr. Brown's mind. When some one in his presence dwelt on the multiplication of prayers as a favourable sign of the American revival, he answered, "True, but I should like to hear the prayers." He also insisted that the revival must permanently affect the tone of feeling in regard to slavery, or be self-condemned. His anxieties with the lapse of time

did not disappear; but his prevailing sentiments were those of gratitude and hope.

As spring passed into summer, Dr. Brown appeared very slowly to increase in strength. He was able by the end of June to drive out and enjoy the air; and some faint hope of recovery began to mingle with his presentiment of dissolution. The first use which he made of his slightly recruited vigour, was to compose a pastoral letter to his congregation, which was read on the 4th of July, after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. This letter was, by the resolution of the congregation, printed and circulated among them. It is here inserted, as affording evidence from Dr. Brown's own hand, of the depth and solemnity of those religious exercises through which he had passed during eight months of dangerous illness, and of the nature of the consolations by which he was sustained. It is believed, also, that nothing could give so lively an idea of the degree to which his style had run into the mould of Scripture, making his sentences in many cases a selection and tesselation of its sacred words.

"My very dear Christian Friends,—Eight months have elapsed since, as your senior minister, I bade you the usual solemn weekly

farewell; invoking on you the apostolic benediction,—'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God' the Father, 'and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.' It is meet, after so long and so unexpected an interruption of our communications, that my first utterance among you should be that of Christian greeting.

"'Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

"For some time after the sudden and sharp attack of indisposition on the day I last addressed you, I entertained the hope of being able to prosecute without interruption my ordinary labours; and, with this expectation, had proceeded so far as to make provision for the services of the approaching Sabbath. God was however pleased to order it otherwise; visiting me with severe and protracted affliction, the

sustaining of which made me for some months fit for little more than its own endurance. 'Sufficient,' indeed, 'unto the day was the evil thereof.' 'Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me.' But 'He mercifully stayed his rough wind in the day of his east wind,' and did not lay on me a burden which he did not enable to bear. I gladly then 'set to my seal' that 'He is faithful who has promised:' 'I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.'

"Since in God's great mercy I have been delivered to a good degree from continuous acute suffering, I have from time to time put off making any communication to you, hoping that ere long I might be able to do this orally from the pulpit; and having the satisfaction of knowing that my esteemed friend, brother, and colleague took every befitting means for keeping you so informed with regard to the state of my health, as that you may be guided in your intercessions in my behalf.

"As, however, the progress of my complaint seems to indicate that the result, whether in restoration to health or removal from life, is not

likely to take place very soon or suddenly, I can no longer refrain from opening my heart to you.

"It has been and is to me a subject of deep gratitude to God, that during my illness and consequent incapacity for pastoral duty in all its forms, you have suffered none of the disadvantages of a vacant congregation, and have been in no respect 'as sheep scattered without a shepherd.' The religious services of the Lord's day have been uninterruptedly observed, and both in conducting them, and in the numerous laborious duties of the every day pastoral ministry, the beloved brother 'who has so long as a son with the father served with me in the gospel,' has given you additional proof of how 'naturally he cares for you,' and having received from 'the great, good Shepherd' the shepherd's heart, how willingly he 'spends and is spent for you.'

"I beseech you, my brethren, continue to make him the proper return. 'He seeks *you* not *yours*;' and therefore you should 'know him as labouring among you, being over you and admonishing you; and esteem him very highly for his *work's* sake,' as well as for his *own*. And show this by 'not neglecting the assembling together,' and 'being at peace among

yourselves ;' for few things so unnerve a minister's exertions and sink his spirits, as to notice among his people anything like a want of either of these badges of the Christian character.

"I give God thanks for sustaining him amid these accumulated labours, and pray that in seeing our spiritual children 'walk in the truth,' 'the joy of the Lord may be his strength.'

"I can assure you that though 'absent in the flesh' from you, I have been 'present with you in the spirit,' both in the church, 'joying to behold your order and the steadfastness of your faith,' and in your families, sympathizing with you amid life's cares and enjoyments,—'thanking my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus, for me, by my coming to you again :' in the hope 'that your conversation will be such as it becometh the gospel of Christ ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, and hear of your affairs, ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel,'—'that so yé may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation ;

among whom shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.'

"I most cordially thank you for the many kind expressions of interest in me which during my affliction, I have received from you: and I pray God to recompense all this kindness bestowed on the servant for the Master's sake. My comfort is, that while I am altogether incapable of doing more than *acknowledging* your kindness, 'my God' can far more than *compensate* it, by 'supplying all your need, and making all grace to abound towards you through Jesus Christ.'

"In your regular observance of public ordinances, in your continued prosecution of exertions for promoting the cause of Christ at home and abroad, and in the love and peace which continue to characterize you as a body, I have a pleasing token that He who has been 'mindful of us' 'blesses us still:' and it will be well for us, brethren, if we seriously reflect that the continuance and increase of religious privilege can only be warrantably expected in proportion to its improvement. My prayer therefore is, 'that ye may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every

good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness,' 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God.'

"It may serve a better purpose than the gratification of curiosity, to inform you how the great subjects—which occupy our sole attention in this place, in the sacred hours of worship, and which ought to occupy our principal attention at all times and in every place—*bulk*, when looked at from the bed of affliction, felt to be not unlikely the bed of death. I can assure you they do not seem *less* real and important than I have ever *here* represented them to you. Believe me, they *are* the *supreme*, comparatively the *sole* realities. Everything else rather *seems* to be than *is*. This alone cannot be overrated.

"It will be found well for the individual, in these circumstances, who has laid firm hold of the sovereign grace of God, finding its way to guilty man through the mediation of his Son, brought near us in the word of the truth of the gospel, and by the influence of the Good Spirit seen and felt, as the sole ground of hope to *him*. That is good, safe ground in passing

through the dark river. It is the only good safe ground.

"May you and I, when placed in these circumstances, 'know whom we have believed, and be persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed to him.' *Then* 'though we walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, we will fear no evil, for He the Good Shepherd, our Shepherd, is with us, his rod and his staff, they comfort us!' His word *is* 'spirit and life.' 'Fear not, for I am with you.'

"For my own part, looking onward to the judgment seat, I must declare that I have no hope but in mere *mercy*—no dependence but on 'the testimony of God.' 'Sovereign grace is the port,' as Rutherford says, 'that I airt at.' I never can be accounted more than 'an unprofitable servant,'—well off if not brought in guilty of 'having wasted my Lord's money:' and determined by God's help to continue to the end 'looking for the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

"It is, I believe, unnecessary to assure you with what deep satisfaction I would, if it so pleased God, take my place with you at the Communion Table on the approaching first day of the week—a place often occupied by me, greatly to my own delight, and somewhat, I

trust, to your edification. But it may not be. God has willed it otherwise; and 'the will of the Lord be done.'

"It is pleasant, however, to reflect, that while denied the privilege of observing the external ordinance together, we are not excluded from the spiritual 'fellowship of the body and blood of Christ,' in 'eating his flesh which is meat indeed, and drinking his blood which is drink indeed,' in the faith that he 'died for us, the just in the room of the unjust,' and having been 'delivered for our offences,' and 'raised again for our justification,' so unites us to him both relatively and really, as that we know the 'fellowship of his sufferings, and the *power* of his resurrection.'

"Whosoever's seat may be empty, may He sit at the head of his own table, and fill the guest-chamber with his glory: And may you all sit under the shadow of the Man who is as a 'great rock in a weary land,' and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which springs out of the clefts of that rock, which was smitten for you, and drink of the healing waters which flowed when the rod of God touched it; and be constrained to say as some of you have been sweetly compelled to say on former occasions: 'I sate down under his shadow with great de-

light, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' 'It is good for us to be here.' 'A day in His courts is better than a thousand.'

"So much for the *past* and for the *present*. With regard to the *future*, THAT is entirely in the hand of God. 'My times are wholly in HIS hands;' and where else could I wish them placed? I am led to believe by my medical friends that my restoration to such a measure of health as may enable me to resume, within certain limits, my pastoral duty, is, from the course the disease is taking, a not very improbable event. Under a strong conviction that ecclesiastical relations are constituted in order to the discharge of correspondent duties, and that they should in all ordinary cases be continued or dissolved with a reference to that object, I have deeply pondered the question, whether this long-continued affliction were not an intimation from my Master that I should cease to occupy a situation, the active duties of which I am not likely ever to be able to fill. After serious consideration, and looking up for direction to Him who has promised guidance to those who in a right spirit ask it, I have arrived at the conclusion that it would be wrong in me at present to take any step which would lead towards separation. I never will break the bond

by which He has bound me to you, till He has made it as distinctly evident to me that I ought to cease to be your minister, as He made it evident to me that I should become your minister. It is my wish, if my Master so pleases, to die in His service, and not only in His but in yours,—in my place, at my work.

"'I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me' to do something in His service, and for your edification. I have no reason to complain,

> 'How my light is spent
> Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide:'

yet should I be glad to be allowed to do a little more before I go hence. But I wish to remember Patience's reply in the poet,

> 'God does not need
> Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; HIS state
> Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
> THEY ALSO SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT.'

'And if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again, and show me his habitation; but if he does say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do unto me as seemeth good to him.'

"I need not, I am persuaded, request the continuance of your earnest prayers, that God would sustain me under affliction, and give me

'the strength to suffer,' as well as 'the will to serve;' that if it please him, relief may become recovery; and that he may yet allow me to appear among you,—even though it may be but for a short season, and in great bodily weakness,—'in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.'

"On a former occasion, when God, by a long-continued and dangerous affliction, seemed to say to me, 'Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live,' he was pleased, in answer, I believe, to the prayers of my people, to add graciously unto my days more than 'fifteen years.' Any such addition at this time is neither to be wished nor hoped for; yet it is perfectly allowable in you, under submission to the divine will, to pray that he may 'spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more.' If the Lord should thus again 'open my lips, my mouth shall,' I trust, 'show forth his praise.' 'I will teach transgressors his ways, and sinners may yet, through my instrumentality, be converted to him.' Meanwhile, my prayer is, 'Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every

one that is to come.' 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.'

"And now, 'brethren,' thankful for this opportunity of having opened my heart to you, I bid you 'Farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.' 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.' 'And ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.'

"Receive, my brethren, this affectionate communication, as it is given as what may be the last from one who would fain so 'take heed

unto himself and unto his doctrine, continuing in them, that in doing this he may both save himself and them that hear him ;' and present every man of you 'perfect in Christ Jesus,' at his coming. 'When He shall appear, it is our desire that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming,' and we are therefore anxious that '*ye* look to yourselves, that *we* lose not those things which we have wrought,' in your complete salvation—'the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.' Christian ministers have a double reason for such an earnest desire in reference to you. Your salvation will be our reward. It will not only be its measure, but in some degree its very substance. 'For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye *are* our glory and joy.'—Your affectionate Pastor, JOHN BROWN.

"ARTHUR LODGE, *July* 1, 1858."

It will be seen from this communication that Dr. Brown had seriously contemplated the resignation of his pastoral charge. It was a great satisfaction to him that his congregation in a very affectionate reply, conveyed by a deputation, responded so earnestly to his own strong

desire, and now settled conviction, that the relation should be broken only by the hand of death.

With an equal desire to satisfy his own conscience, and to study the interests of the Church at large, Dr. Brown had weighed the question, whether he ought not to resign his professorship. He had made this the subject of anxious deliberation before the Synod meeting in May, and had consulted his friends as to the path of duty. In deference to their unanimous judgment he forbore to bring the matter before the Synod, and availed himself of the kindly proffered help of his colleagues, who undertook to conduct the session in his absence. Lectures on Exegetical Theology were delivered by Dr. Lindsay, and the other professors divided among themselves the remaining duties of the chair. Dr. Brown most gratefully received this aid, but felt that he could not be altogether silent on what might be his last opportunity of addressing the Divinity Hall. He had for many years given a small book to each of his students as a token of personal regard, and as a means of cherishing profitable recollections. He had prepared for this purpose, in June, as his strength began to return, a short collection of *Hints on Faith and Hope*, containing one tract by the

late Dr. Stewart of the Canongate, and another of his own; both embodying the views on these subjects, which he had so earnestly and undeviatingly taught from the date of his book on *Religion and the Means of its Attainment.* The work had been first published amid the agitations of the Row controversy on Assurance; and in now re-issuing it, Dr. Brown added, from his large stores of Christian poetry, a very quaint and curious piece on Faith and Hope from the *Ter Tria* of Faithful Teate, D.D., a Nonconformist minister of the seventeenth century, who had written in the style of Herbert, Quarles, and Vaughan.

Along with this book Dr. Brown had arranged to give to each student a separate little treatise, entitled an *Address to Students of Divinity*, extracted from the Preface of his grandfather's *Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion.* Of this he had printed a large edition when he became Professor in 1834, and had ever afterwards presented a copy to each student on his leaving the Divinity Hall. The edition had just been exhausted, but a liberal friend, James Marshall, Esq., of Leith, had undertaken to continue the supply for an indefinite course of years. Of this Address Dr. Brown in his Preface speaks as "both in matter

and manner, well fitted to guard against a style of theological instruction, the introduction and prevalence of which, in the Church of Scotland, the dying Halyburton so strongly deprecates, and which is the plague that threatens to overwhelm our time as well as his, a 'rational' [a *mere* rational] 'sort of religion, ordinances without power, doctrine without influence, a religion which is not Christianity at all properly so called, but mere Deism, having no relation to Christ Jesus and the Spirit of God,' of which assuredly Christ is not 'all in all.'"

On the 23d of July 1858, Dr. Brown wrote a letter to his students announcing the arrangements which had been made for the conduct of the Session, exhorting them to diligence in their studies, and recommending to their earnest attention the works which he had prepared. Of the topics discussed in the first, he says, "The study of these leads directly into the heart of all that is most peculiar and important in doctrinal, experimental, and practical Christianity; and it is of radical importance to you, both personally, and in the character to which you aspire, "men of God," "ministers of the word," that your views on these subjects should be extensive and accurate, not only consistent *with*, but derived *from* a careful exegesis of the

'words which the Holy Ghost teacheth'" With regard to his grandfather's Address, to which he had added notes, and also lists of books suitable for students of theology, he speaks with yet greater solemnity, "I am not entirely without hope of being allowed again personally to address you, but should it be otherwise, I wish the small accompanying tract to be received by you as containing in it the substance of what I would wish to be my final farewell to you. I prefer it for this purpose to anything of my own composition. The topics are judiciously chosen, and the remarks are singularly terse and condensed, chiefly expressed in the words that are 'quick and powerful;' 'a fire and a hammer breaking the rock in pieces;' 'a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Besides having now the recommendation of that venerableness which time alone can give, they bear the strong impression of having been written under 'the powers of the world to come.' 'The judgment seems set and the books opened.' 'It is the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' 'when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.' He must be a 'stout-hearted' sinner, or a well-established saint, who, under the felt responsibilities of a minister of the gospel, or even of a

student of divinity, can read this tract without 'great searchings of heart.'"

The remainder of this letter was in these words:—"I confidently count on an interest in your intercessions, and in return will earnestly pray that God, having 'reconciled you to himself by the blood of his Son,' may in due time make you able, faithful, and successful ministers of reconciliation to your fellow-men; and having 'given you the grace,' the office,—at once an honour and a favour,—to 'declare among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,' may enable you to be such 'good stewards' of so precious a trust, that *you* may not 'run in vain,' and that *we* 'may not have laboured in vain.' This, from a sick-bed, by the hand of another, from your affectionate tutor,

"JOHN BROWN."

Dr. Brown had cherished to the last the hope of appearing among his students ere September closed, and delivering the parting memorial with his own hand. His recovery, however, fell short of his anticipations, and the distribution was made in his absence, after these touching words had been read:—"The continued very precarious state of my health forbids my tasking unnecessarily its feebly returning energies, and I have

therefore to solicit Dr. Lindsay, in addition to his other labours, to take measures for putting this tract into the hands of the students, bidding them in my name an affectionate and not improbably a *final* farewell, final till 'our gathering together unto our Lord Jesus Christ' at his coming. That will be a meeting never to part, a 'gathering together' to be succeeded by no 'scattering' for ever." This message was heard in deep silence. The farewell had something of the dignity and solemnity of that of an ancient prophet about to be taken up from his children.

During this time Dr. Brown was slowly but imperceptibly losing his remaining strength, and sometimes he suffered much bodily depression. This rarely, if at all, assumed the form of religious dejection; but his inward frame to some extent took a colouring from his outward state. He did not deceive himself with hopes of recovery. When he partially rallied, he would say that he was like a vessel sailing down a river, which still descended, though taken for a time into some quiet creek or inlet. He had for some weeks sufficiently regained his voice to conduct the psalmody at family worship; and in this exercise he took great delight. He addressed to his children or servants comments on the passage read, with a force and directness greater

than usual; and his domestic prayers became continually more fervent and penitential. In these devotions there breathed the deepest sense of personal unworthiness, as if his whole religion were condensed into the words, "God be merciful to me a sinner," together with intense adoration of the holiness of God, and desire for conformity to his will and for the progress of his kingdom. He made a special study of the Psalms, at once analytical and experimental; and frequently broke out, in family worship, and at other times, into devotional remarks suggested by them. On the words, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord *thinketh* upon me," he observed, "A *thought* from Jesus saved the dying thief, a thought from him can make us happy in life, safe in death, and give us Heaven at last. The voice of the Lord is powerful, and so are his thoughts, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give us an expected end.". He often also repeated the fine parallelism, his countenance shining as he spoke,

> "His anger, a *moment;* his favour, a *lifetime;*
> Weeping for a *night;* joy in the *morning.*"

He continued also to meditate much on the peculiar phrases of Paul. Among these were the words "in Christ," which mark a leading feature of what he used to call, before the ex-

pression became general, the "Pauline" theology. Dr. Brown dwelt greatly on the union to Christ set forth in this phrase, as the most glorious privilege of the believer. "It is not easy," he observed to Dr. Johnston, "to attain to it. I think I have; but it was after a long and desperate struggle."

The writer had the happiness of spending a day or two with Dr. Brown in the middle of August, and again in the middle of September, when setting out on, and returning from a visit to Ireland. The conversation naturally turned upon his Irish tour in 1826, and the other incidents of his personal history. These he discussed with a fulness and abandonment of reserve quite unusual. A very great range of subjects was gone over by him, in the intervals that could be rescued from pain and languor. The contrast was great indeed between the sunken cheek, the bent and wasted form, and the feeble and tottering step with which, assisted by a staff and the arm of friends, he descended into the carriage for his daily drive, and the serene vigour and perfect balance of all his intellectual and spiritual faculties. He gave lengthened and characteristic notices of the works published in his youth, many of them by clergymen, and most of which had fallen into obli-

vion. He spoke with the most perfect calmness of his own writings, declaring that no doubt they would find their level. He went back to some of the great English classics, which he had been re-perusing, especially the *Areopagitica* of Milton. His reflections upon his own life, and his views of his contemporaries, are almost confidential. But no delicacy requires the suppression of his kindly and even pathetic references to Dr. Marshall, with whom he had often wished to re-open the friendly communication of earlier days.*

On one of these mornings, at the hour of family worship, which he conducted in his bed-

* Dr. Marshall died in November 1854. He had left the Secession Church, at the time of the Relief Union, on the same doctrinal grounds which influenced his conduct in the Atonement Controversy. An obituary notice in the *United Presbyterian Magazine*, contains the following passage, which may be regarded as reflecting the general sentiment of that Church. "His books on the Atonement, although from their number they cannot be appealed to as authorities, will always be accepted by students as valuable aids, being the productions of a strong-minded reasoner, who handles the arguments of his antagonists so roughly, that his reader is compelled to look at them on all sides, and who follows out his own arguments so unshrinkingly to their legitimate consequences, that all his fallacies are self-detected. It was to be deplored, and not on his own account only, that he should have been alienated in his declining years from a communion in which so much of his life was spent, and in which his learning and character were so highly appreciated. He has now renewed his fellowship with the dearest friends of his youth and manhood, in a world where the Atonement is not the subject of debate, but the burden of an everlasting song."

room, all through his illness to the last day but one of his life, the course of reading brought him to the first Psalm. After a long pause, with trembling utterance he broke into a sublime thanksgiving, that when the voice of praise in this world had been paralysed and struck dumb by sin, it had burst out again in strains like these which were not of earth but of heaven. Not less remarkable was a prayer offered up for his children and children's children, that they might serve God as long as he had any posterity.

With a frame of mind thus superior to the earth, he manifested no desire to quit it. He was willing rather to abide; and mentioned various minor works which it would give him pleasure to execute. They were of a nature akin to Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, or other tracts of the most direct practical usefulness. He spoke however, as he had always done, more than doubtfully of his convalescence. Driving out at this time amidst the rich scenery to the south of Edinburgh, he was struck with the progress of autumn, which, from the unusally early season, had already left the fields bare ere the summer had well begun to fade, and said with much feeling, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not healed."

Amongst other visitors about this date, were his old and endeared friends, Dr. Henry Grey and Mrs. Grey, who did not long survive him. The interview was peculiarly solemn, as if all three had foreseen that it was the last; and the conversation related to that heavenly state where the tossings and agitations which they had shared together or apart, should be no more. Another minister of the Free Church, the Rev. C. J. Brown, paid a visit in company with the Rev. James Robertson. They found Dr. Brown lying in a state of great debility. After a kindly mutual salutation, Mr. Brown, touched with his look of prostration mingled with composure, repeated the words of Psalm cxxxi., according to the Scotch version :—

"I surely have myself behaved
With quiet sp'rit and mild,
As child of mother wean'd: my soul
Is like a weaned child.
Upon the Lord let all the hope
Of Israel rely,
Ev'n from the time that present is
Unto eternity."

Dr. Brown kindled into animation, "Yes, *Israel*, that's a *cosmopolitan* word, *God's Israel.*" They spoke with fervour of the common Father, the common hope, and the common home of "the Israel of God." Mr. Brown closed with the doxo-

logy, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory!" To which Dr. Brown replied, "*All* our hope began there long ago; but we are going to end just where we began. We want nothing new, nothing additional. Our first hope is our last hope. The beginning of our confidence is the end of our confidence." Thus his mind returned, as others have done, to the simplest elements of the gospel, after it had made the whole circuit of theological learning. It was always, however, a special characteristic of Dr. Brown's teaching, to turn away the view from inward experiences and results of self-examination, to the eternal truth as to the reconciled character of God, which, according to him, could in no circumstances be believed without inducing trust and hope. The emphasis laid on this point, which gave unwonted simplicity to his doctrinal system, gave not less stability to his personal experience.

This tendency to dwell on the elements of the gospel, appeared also in his retrospect of his past ministry. The humble view he took of it was very affecting; but he indicated that the discourses, which he looked back upon with the greatest satisfaction, were such as set forth most simply the gospel of salvation, and tended

most directly to bring the souls of men to Christ.

About this time a deputation of the Presbytery, to which he belonged, waited upon him to convey the sympathies of their brethren. The interview is thus reported in the Funeral Sermon preached by Dr. Harper, who gives almost the exact words used by Dr. Brown, from the recollection of one of the deputies :—

"After expressing his sense of the Presbytery's kindness, in the form in which they had conveyed to him their sympathy, he said, 'The Lord is calling upon this Church to do a great work. No religious body in the country, it seems to me, occupies at present so favourable a platform for doing important service to the cause of Christ, as the United Presbyterian Church. It has taken a hundred years to bring us to our present position, a position which devolves great and weighty responsibilities in reference to the maintenance of great truths relative to the nature of Christ's kingdom.

"'Assure the Presbytery of my heartfelt gratitude. May the Lord return into their own bosoms a hundredfold the kindness shown to me. My prayer for all the members is, that they may continue, with the help of the "good Spirit," to labour as faithful ministers of Christ,

and to acquit themselves as public-spirited members of the great human republic, LOVERS OF LIBERTY, and ready to every good work; "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before."'

"Dr. Brown subsequently referred to the meetings which had been held by the Presbytery in reference to *revival*, and showed the deep interest which he took in that great object, and his thorough sympathy with the views and feelings which led to these meetings being called.

"On reference being made to the strength of his voice, notwithstanding the feebleness of his frame, he alluded to the great satisfaction he had derived from having recently resumed the singing of the *Psalms* at family worship, himself leading in the praise, a practice which the state of his voice had obliged him a considerable time ago to discontinue. He then quoted a remark of John Ballantyne, made to himself, regarding the Psalms of David, to the effect that, though seemingly desultory and without connexion, there is in them a thread of continuous thought and sentiment, which a devout mind alone can trace; and in reply to questions, gave conversational but most characteristic and interesting estimates, at considerable

length, of the merits of some of the leading expositors of the Psalms—Augustine, Geierus, Amesius, Hengstenberg, and others—revealing the exuberant richness and ripeness of his learning, in his favourite department of Exegetical Theology.

"In the course of the interview, referring to himself, he said, 'I see in the retrospect of the past much that has been wanting, and much that has been wrong; and I shall have much ground of thankfulness if I am not rejected as an unprofitable servant. I think I have got in some degree the will to labour, but, oh! I find myself very deficient in willingness to suffer. I hope that the members of the Presbytery will pray for me, that I may be enabled patiently to suffer what the Lord requires me to endure. I cannot say that I would think it desirable to continue here long, if it were not the will of God that I should be permitted to do something for the cause of Christ. Should He be pleased to spare me a little longer, I should be very glad to remain here a short while, as there are a few things I should like to do that might perhaps be of some little service.'* He added, at this time, that if he should live to write another book, he thought it

* *Funeral Sermons*, pp. 77-79.

would be on the Purity of Church Fellowship. He recurred to this subject as his end drew nearer, and said to a friend more than once with solemn emphasis, 'Oh, when will men cease to daub with untempered mortar the walls of Zion, and seek to build them up only with living stones!'"

An incident occurred at this interview which brought out strikingly his views of salvation by grace. One of the deputies, not unnaturally, touched on the comfort which he might derive from the contemplation of his faithful services in the ministry. With a significant look, peculiar to himself, Dr. Brown replied, "If I am to be dealt with on the ground of my faithfulness in the discharge of my ministerial work, I may well tremble. I have nothing to plead, nothing to trust to but mere mercy, the mercy of God in Christ Jesus unto eternal life."

During his illness, he greatly delighted in the writings of John Owen. He repeatedly perused his last work, *Meditations on the Glory of Christ.* He wrote in pencil on the fly-leaf of the old volume, the following testimony, "This is an admirable book, and in some parts of it equal to anything Howe has written in the *Blessedness of the Righteous*, or Baxter in the *Saint's Rest.* These three men are the 'Worthies of the Noncon-

formists;' and these three books, everything taken into view as to thought and feeling and expression, their masterpieces. What a glorious society, where the least is greater than Baxter, or Howe, or Owen! Happy is he who has joined that society; next he who has good hope through grace of joining it.—J. B., June 22, 1858."*

The Rev. Dr. Bruce of Newmilns, whose account of his earliest recollections of Dr. Brown has been already quoted in this narrative, thus writes of his last interview, "I found him in bed, pale, thin, and feeble, yet retaining in a remarkable degree the outlines of countenance on which I looked with such interest forty years ago, and possessing very much of the elasticity of mind that was characteristic of his earlier years. The ruling passion seemed also strong in the near view of death. Around him, as he sat in bed, were several volumes, and amongst others was Owen's *Meditations on the Glory of Christ.* Dr. Brown made very particular reference to that passage near the close of the preface, in which the author communes with death and the grave, saying, 'He therefore that would die comfortably, must be able to say within himself, Die then, thou frail and sinful flesh;

* *Funeral Sermons*, pp. 37, 38. † See p. 93.

dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,' &c. Dr. Brown expressed his admiration of the passage, and applied it to his own case. This led to a little conversation about Owen, about the death of believers, and about our own approaching dissolution ; and never have I felt more deeply solemnized than on the occasion referred to. I was struck with the similarity at the close of life between the great Puritan divine, and our distinguished expositor. After a lengthened life of usefulness, and when about to rest from his labours, the one was taking hold of the same consolations that had sustained the other, in the prospect of lying down in the dreary grave."

An equally striking incident connected with another work of Owen is thus related by Dr. Johnston : " A short time before Dr. Brown's death, on entering his room one day, I found him as usual, surrounded with books, and propped up with pillows. He was busy reading Owen *On the Person of Christ.* Our conversation naturally turned on that author, and especially on the book before him. He readily admitted that this, like all Owen's works, contained passages which were heavy and cumbrous. 'But,' he added, 'there are perpetually occurring paragraphs which amply repay all the labour and

toil of getting at them; and in this very book there is one passage, perhaps as fine and noble as is to be found in the English language. It is that magnificent sentence in which he attempts to describe the feelings of the saint when he enters into heaven, and gets there his first glimpse of the glories of the Redeemer seated on the throne, encircled by the angelic hosts and the spirits of the just.' He then took up the book, and read the passage, and I will not soon forget the triumphant tone in which he read it. He seemed to be in the expectation of soon beholding for himself that Redeemer in the glories of his person, as the divinely qualified and divinely commissioned Saviour, the foundation of his hope now, and the theme of his praise hereafter. His voice was at first feeble in its tone, but it gradually attained firmness and strength, and at length became equal, in volume and energy, to his best days."

Not a few remarks of equal interest were made to the members of his own family, especially in the evening hours, after domestic worship; but of these no note has been preserved. The Sabbath was usually a day of great spiritual joy; but if pain or languor then clouded his mind, the shadow of depression was all the deeper. The tenderness of his conscience in regard to the

sanctity of this day was indicated in a very touching manner. "On one of his last remaining Sabbaths on earth," says Dr. Harper, "it did not occur to him on his awaking that it was the morning of the Lord's day; and when shortly after it was brought to his recollection, he expressed himself as if pained and self-reproved for his obliviousness. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak." The Sabbath, to one in his frame of mind, had ceased to have almost any mark of distinction from other days. On another Sabbath, his joy was all but seraphic. He told Miss Brown that he had been thinking of that sublime doxology, "Unto him that loved us," &c., and added, that he thought he could preach a sermon from it, giving at the same time a sketch of its divisions.

While the inward man was thus daily renewed, the outward man became more feeble. But to the last he strove to work. One of his latest employments was to peruse afresh his grandfather's *View of Natural and Revealed Religion*, and to append marginal annotations to various passages. One little labour alone remained, the last before that night in which no man can work.

A Christian lady, long a member of his congregation, was in the habit of visiting him in

his illness, though on her part an infirmity of hearing prevented direct intercourse. She brought with her an open note, containing any little matter in which Dr. Brown was likely to feel an interest, to which he wrote a reply on a slate; and then, having exchanged smiles, they parted. One of these notes recalled a singular incident in the history of Sir Duncan Macgregor, one of Dr. Brown's close and early friends, and a fellow-member of the Christian Economic Society. This officer had been in command of a large detachment of the 31st Regiment on their passage, in 1825, to the first Burmese War, when the *Kent* East Indiaman, the vessel in which they were conveyed, was destroyed by fire in the Bay of Biscay. Before the rescue of Sir Duncan (then Major) Macgregor, and of a large portion of the souls on board by the generous exertions of the master of the *Cambria*, a merchant vessel that came to their deliverance, this Christian soldier had written a pencil note, which he enclosed in a bottle and dropped into the waves, declaring that the ship was on fire, and that he, with his wife and sister-in-law, committed their spirits into the hands of their Redeemer, whose "grace enabled them to be quite composed in the prospect of entering eternity." Nearly two years

afterwards, this identical bottle came into Major Macgregor's hands in the island of Barbadoes, whither he had been called by his military duties. His servant had seen it float towards him while bathing, and had conveyed it to his master at the mess-table, by whom it was at once recognised. Dr. Brown was greatly impressed with this remarkable illustration of special Providence; and though various narratives of the loss of the *Kent* had appeared, he conceived the design of writing another brief account of it, and specially of the heroic conduct of Sir Duncan Macgregor and his companions, as a tribute to the power of Christianity. The composition of this narrative began towards the end of September, and completely engrossed Dr. Brown's thoughts for almost a fortnight till it was finished. It forms a principal topic of the few notes copied from the slate of his friend, which have been preserved. It has not been judged necessary to publish this little narrative, as it contains nothing that is new in point of fact; and the colour of its reflections is sufficiently indicated in this notice. It is chiefly interesting as a testimony of Dr. Brown's tender interest in his friends, and of his desire to extract from every suitable event a testimony to God's special providence and efficacious grace.

He showed this manuscript to his friend Mr. Robertson, who suggested that, if published, it might fall into the hands of some readers not sufficiently instructed to understand what that gospel was, by which the Christian survivors of the *Kent* had been sustained in the hour of peril. Dr. Brown accordingly wrote in pencil a long note, containing a definition of the gospel, to be inserted in the narrative. This, his last written testimony to the truth of Christ, is subjoined :—

"It is of infinite importance that we attach definite and correct notions to the word *gospel*, that we clearly understand what the gospel is, and how it operates in the way of promoting salvation. Our salvation hangs on our believing it when rightly understood, only *when* rightly understood. It is a clear thought, which however works effectually only in them that believe it; and in them only in the measure of their faith. It is not the generalized abstraction men call Christianity, and which is different in every two men who profess to behold it. It is not that Jesus Christ was a perfect man, a divine messenger, a safe teacher, a faultless exemplar, and that the Scriptures contain an infallible account of the way of salvation through him. It takes for granted all this as

sufficiently proved. The gospel is something much more specific than all this. It is that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Divinity, has done all and suffered all that is necessary to the deliverance of men from guilt, depravity, and misery, in all their forms, consistently with the perfections of the Divine Nature, another phrase for the principles of His government; and that *whosoever* believes in Him is, in the measure of his faith, saved; that to this 'finished work' of Christ the sinner is entirely indebted for salvation, and that there is not, and need not be, any other mode of salvation. This is the 'ministry of reconciliation,' that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses, for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' God is 'the just God, and the Saviour,' for 'Christ died, the just in the room of the unjust;' and therefore none can condemn the unjust believing in Jesus; and all men are naturally unjust, 'for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' Thus is God the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. It is God believed, trusted in, loved, submitted to, that *saves*. A firm belief of a divine Saviour who died, but who has been raised by the

power of God, is plainly sufficient to transform the whole character. And how can this state of things be produced in the human mind, naturally under the power of the evil heart of unbelief, but by the gospel being made 'the power of God to every one that believeth!' He who *knows* the only true God, *has* eternal life, *has*, not only *shall have*, though that is the truth also. He who is thus 'in Christ,' 'is a new creature; old things have passed away, all things have become new.' The whole form of thought and feeling is regulated by the great master-thought and feeling. The Holy Spirit, who alone can produce this faith in the gospel, this mode of thought and feeling, is promised to *all* who ask him; and every believer is 'transformed by the renewing of the mind.' This is the *gospel*, this is *religion*, this is the *manner* in which they operate."

It was on the day after the last Sabbath of his life but one, that Dr. Brown composed this remarkable statement. Mr. Robertson called again on the evening of next day, when Dr. Brown proposed to read it to him. He lifted the candle from the table at his bed-side, and began to read, but paused again and again, turning the paper various ways, in order that the light might fall on it more fully. At length,

with a very exhausted look, he laid it down and said, "That's strange, for I think it is the first time I have been unable to read my own hand." It was the first sign of the gathering darkness. His eyelids were already heavy with the shadow of death.

On the Monday (Oct. 4th), he wrote on the slate of his friend, "The disease has taken a turn, and the crisis may be for good." Two days afterwards, he wrote, "I am thankful you are able to go out a little; but that is a precious description of heaven, 'They shall go no more out.' With kindest wishes and hopes we shall meet there, ever yours." His last written words are dated on the 8th of October, "I am glad to find Janet [Mrs. Young, his eldest daughter] is near you with her flock, in whom you kindly take an interest. Thank you in their name—the grandfather in the room of the grandchildren! Though feeble, I have much cause to be thankful."

In the course of this week, the Rev. Mr. Gillespie called to inform him of the interesting case of the unbeliever in the Canongate Mission district whose mind had been favourably impressed by his book on the *Resurrection of Life*. Dr. Brown was greatly affected. He put his hands together, and gave thanks, that though he was

laid aside from active work, it pleased God to bless anything he had written. He directed that liberal relief should be sent to the man, who was ill and unable to work, and turning to the missionary said, "You will go, Mr. Gillespie, to Mr. Oliphant, and get a copy of that book on the Resurrection of Life, and give it to the man with my kindest wishes, and with the prayer that that Saviour who is all my hope, may be his Saviour too." This message was to the man like a voice from another world, and greatly deepened the impression which the book had made.

This "daily dying" was now to close. The friends and visitors to whom Dr. Brown in his sick-chamber, like "Paul the aged" and "now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ," had for months "expounded and testified the kingdom of God," and whom he had often sent away wondering and awe-struck at the elevation of grace above the decays of nature, were now to take their last farewell. There was no return of suffering to cloud his remaining days. His words to his son, "The clock will just stop," were fulfilled. But near the close of the week, a visible increase of languor gave warning of the approaching end. His weakness was extreme, and he often seemed not fully awake. Dr. Johnston called on the Saturday, and saw him for the last time.

"When I entered the room," he writes, "and saw him so feeble, I expressed an unwillingness to sit down; he held my hand and pointing to a seat said, 'You must sit down.' On expressing my anxiety about him, he replied, 'I have everything I can need.' I at length rose to go, and as I gazed upon his pallid countenance, it became irradiated with a benignant smile, as he said, 'What great reason have I for thankfulness!'"

His last Sabbath and the day following, were days of great weakness and silence. On the Tuesday his strength slightly returned, and was expended in a last effort "to magnify Christ in his death." He said to a young medical friend, "I feel myself on the verge of eternity. It is a solemn thing to be there. There is a hope that can sustain us in the prospect of entering eternity," adding a meek expression of his participation in that hope.

His colleague, Dr. Thomson, saw him for the last time. He thus narrates the interview in his funeral sermon:—"The day immediately before his death, I conversed with him for a few minutes in a solemn interview never to be forgotten. He then intimated his belief that he was just on the verge of the eternal world, but declared with all this consciousness of the nearness of the unseen state, that he had peace,

resting on the Rock of Ages. . . . Holding me affectionately by the hand, and informing me, as I have already told you, of his peace of mind, and of his consciousness that he was very near an eternal world, he added with a kind of majestic solemnity, 'Our united ministry has been a happy, and I think a profitable one. I am now about to be taken from your side, and to leave you in the care of our beloved people. I commit them with confidence to you, and anew I commit them to the keeping of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.' He then added in language which took me by surprise, 'I hope you will forgive me for everything that has been wanting, and everything that has been wrong in my temper and conduct towards you as a colleague.' My feelings were overcome by this expression of humility, but I found strength to reply, 'Dear Dr. Brown, I have nothing to forgive, but much, very much for which to thank you and to thank God.' He then with a strong affectionate pressure of my hand, bade me farewell, Oh, I trust not for ever!"*

One or two other intimate friends saw him in the course of the day. In few words, with much fervour and perfect adaptation to their circum-

* *Funeral Sermon*, pp. 21, 30.

stances, he bade them all a true and Christian farewell. These efforts left him prostrate and speechless; but he remained in perfect tranquillity, and was evidently thankful that his last work was done.

During the night, it seemed doubtful whether he were not unconscious; but as the day broke (Wednesday, Oct. 13th), in answer to a question from Miss Brown as to how he was, he replied, "*Wonderfully* well." From the emphasis laid on the word "wonderfully," it appeared to be his wish not only to tell how he was, but to speak of his whole state as a wonder of the Divine mercy. These were his last words. Again he seemed to be completely withdrawn from all human intercourse, and to be walking alone—yet not alone—through the dark valley. A parting gleam of recognition was, however, vouchsafed. When told that his son, Dr. John Brown, had been sent for, he looked pleased to hear it, and knew him when he arrived. His eye then passed from one to another of his children, who alone were with him; resting on each with affection, while he repeatedly made a faint effort to smile. The farewell was mutually understood; and as his youngest son at the same time came nearer him and sat on his bed, he noticed the movement with visible satisfac-

tion. Miss Brown whispered in his ear, the words, "I will never leave thee;" but it is doubtful if they were heard. His eye became inexpressive, and after a few gentle breathings, and one longer and deeper sigh, about half-past nine o'clock his spirit was released from the body, and entered into the joy of his Lord.

The death of Dr. Brown, though it had been long anticipated, made a wide and very deep sensation. His funeral took place on the 20th of October, a week after his decease. It was one of the largest ever known in Edinburgh, and formed a striking tribute to the eminence of his public services, and to the dignity and consistency of his Christian character. Devotional exercises were conducted beforehand in Nicolson Street Church, attended by the members of the three congregations to which Dr. Brown had successively ministered; and also at his own house by ministers of various denominations in the presence of different groups of mourners, who filled three of its apartments to overflowing. The Magistrates of the city, Professors of the University, and other eminent citizens, with a multitude of ministers of the United Presbyterian and other churches, of city missionaries, and of representatives of all classes of the community, mingled in the procession. The

shops were generally closed, and thousands of persons were congregated in every part of the line from Newington to the New Calton Burying-Ground, the very walls of the buildings in certain parts, and the lower elevations of the Calton Hill being crowded with spectators. The members of Dr. Brown's congregation stood uncovered in a double line, while four of their number, preceded by the managers and Session, bore him to the grave. As the coffin was lowered, many in the vast assemblage were affected to tears. He was laid beside his wife and child, on whose tomb he had inscribed the Christian hope of death being "swallowed up in victory," and also his favourite text, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."*

* Dr. Brown had written out an inscription for himself to be added to the epitaph of his deceased wife. Both are appended as follows, the blanks in the latter portion being filled up:—"The burying-place of John Brown, D.D.—In the faith that 'Death shall be swallowed up in victory,' here have been laid the mortal remains of his wife, Margaret Fisher Crum, who died at Thornliebank, Renfrewshire, 19th September 1841, aged 42 years, 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'—By her side, in the hope of together with her putting on immortality, lies the body of her husband, who died October 13th, 1858, having been fifty-two years a minister of the Gospel of Christ, sixteen years in Biggar, Lanarkshire, thirty-six years in this city, and twenty-four years one of the Professors of Theology to the United Presbyterian Church. 'All flesh is grass. The word of the Lord endureth for ever.' 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'"

In the immense crowd who had thus carried Dr. Brown to his burial, and made great lamentation over him, was the poor reclaimed unbeliever of the Canongate Mission District, whose religious impressions had dated from the perusal of the work on the *Resurrection of Life.* Though very feeble, he had crept forth to look on the scene of mourning. Six months afterwards he died, praying to the last, and giving utterance to the deepest expressions of penitence and trust in his Saviour. He was interred in the same burying-ground, and by a coincidence altogether undesigned, it was found after he had been laid to rest, that he was placed near Dr. Brown's grave, and at his feet. "Perhaps," says the Rev. Mr. Gillespie, who gives this account, "on the morning of the resurrection of life, this that came last may be among the first whom the man of God may claim and acknowledge as the fruit of his labours, saying, Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from the Lord of hosts."

On the Lord's day succeeding the funeral, sermons appropriate to the occasion were preached in Broughton Place Church, by the Rev. Dr. Thomson in the forenoon, from Heb. xiii. 7, 8; and by the Rev. Dr. Harper in the

afternoon, from John xii. 26. Each of these discourses, since published, was addressed to a very crowded and deeply affected audience, and embodied a tender and faithful delineation of Dr. Brown's character.* Discourses of a funeral nature were also preached in a multitude of other pulpits of the United Presbyterian Church, and many allusions were made to the subject by the ministers of other communions. Lengthened notices of Dr. Brown's life and labours also appeared in the different organs of public opinion, and recorded the general conviction, that one of the greatest of the ministers and theologians of Scotland, and her very greatest teacher of Biblical Science, had passed away.

At the following meeting of Synod in May, a resolution was prepared by a committee, of which the Rev. Henry Renton of Kelso was convener, and unanimously adopted, expressive of the sense entertained by the Church of Dr. Brown's services, and of the loss sustained by his death. It was also agreed not to appoint a fifth professor, but to transfer Dr. Lindsay to

* The Congregation of Broughton Place have since erected to Dr. Brown a beautiful but plain Tablet in the entrance of the Church, beside that of Dr. Hall. It bears this simple inscription: "To the honoured Memory of John Brown, D.D., S.T.P., their Minister for thirty years, by his affectionate and grateful People. Born 12th July 1784. Died 13th October 1858." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."

the vacant chair, and thus return to the clearness and simplicity of the outline which had been sketched in 1834. With the synodical resolution, touching Dr. Brown's character and labours, the narrative part of this Memoir may appropriately close.

"Mr. Renton, convener of the committee which was appointed to prepare a special record of the loss sustained by the Church in the removal of the Rev. Dr. Brown by death, presented and read the following draft of minute, which was unanimously approved of and ordered to be engrossed:—

"In entering upon its minutes the death of the Rev. John Brown, D.D., Senior Minister of Broughton Place Congregation, and Professor of Exegetical Theology to this Church, the Synod records the deep sense which it entertains of the loss which the Synod and the Church at large have thereby sustained.

"His unequivocal piety as a Christian, his eminence as a preacher, his diligence as a pastor, as well as the remarkable combination of amiable and faithful qualities which distinguished him in the domestic and private relations of life, and the enlightened and consistent principles and spirit which marked his discharge of the public duties of a Christian citizen, it is sufficient here simply to mention.

"His special relation to this Synod was that of Professor of Exegetical Theology. To himself belonged the initiation in Scotland of the proposal for a separate chair in that department, and of the extended scheme of professorial instruction of which it formed a part, adopted by the United Associate Synod twenty-five years ago. Called to be the first occupant of the new and important office, he filled it for a quarter of a century with distinguished credit to himself, profit to his students, and satisfaction to the Church.

"It is a matter of devout gratitude to the Father of mercies, that Dr. Brown was enabled for so long a period to fulfil and adorn the office of a theological professor, and for more than double that period the office of a Christian minister, and that the advantages of his great attainments as a scholar and a divine, and of his most assiduous studies and mature reflection, were not confined to the students who enjoyed his prelections, nor to the congregation whose members and stedfastness testified its appreciation of his gifts, but are preserved and diffused for the benefit of the Christian Church, in that series of volumes so numerous and so rapid in their succession which he published in his latter years, and which constitute the most extensive and valuable contri-

bution to the interpretation of the Sacred Word which has ever been furnished by any Scotch divine.

"In connexion with his relations to this Synod, it is proper also to refer once more to the munificent donation of his jubilee gift for the foundation of the Aged Ministers' Scheme, a donation the greatness of which can now be more fully estimated, since his decease has disclosed that he was a man of very moderate means. 'Give him of the fruit of his hands, and let his own works praise him in the gates.'

"His career furnishes a striking and edifying illustration of the words of the Psalmist, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him.'"

It does not seem necessary to attempt any formal sketch of Dr. Brown's character, in addition to the facts which have been presented, and the various testimonies which have been cited in the course of this narrative.

This Memoir has entered but slightly the

region of domestic and private life, though this department has not been altogether neglected. Nor has it been deemed necessary to enlarge on Dr. Brown's qualities as a friend. These have been incidentally brought out, and if any formal testimony were needed, it might be given in the words of Dr. Harper :—"In my early childhood, I often met him under my paternal roof, and fresh to this hour are my recollections of that winning kindliness that captivated every youthful heart. In my course of study, I knew him as taking a leading part in the presbyterial superintendence of students for the ministry, and as their kind adviser, under their anxieties in prospect of so weighty a charge. At an after period my intimacy was renewed with him as a co-presbyter, and latterly as a colleague in the Theological Hall; and during all these stages, I knew him as a friend on whose countenance I never saw a frown from first to last."*

The depth and intensity of Dr. Brown's religious convictions, and their controlling influence amidst the varied and troubled scenes of life, till they inspired and exalted a deathbed of peculiar solemnity and interest, do not, it is believed, require any additional assertion or illustration. If this Memoir have any value, it is in showing how a strong, vehement, and pas-

* *Funeral Sermon*, p. 60.

sionate nature, uniting many of the highest elements of manhood, may be completely subjugated by Christianity, so as not only to work with energy, but also to believe with humility, and to suffer with patience. It exhibits a mind of the "Pauline type," with masculine intellect, ardent temperament, and unyielding will, brought under the decisive influence of the Cross, and expending all its energies in subduing other minds to the same obedience of faith. It sets before us an independent inquirer, of high and rare gifts, who, amidst the doubt and scepticism of an unsettled and shifting century, resigns his whole being to the empire of the Word of God, employs his entire powers in its study and defence, and proclaims more and more earnestly to the last that he has chosen the good part, and that the great Bible doctrines of Atonement and Sovereign Grace have been the solace of his life and are his stay in death.

It is impossible not to be struck with the variety of elements in Dr. Brown's character, and with the fulness thus imparted to his life. The central quality of his mind was a singular clearness of apprehension, nearly allied to penetration and soundness of judgment. With this was coupled a depth of reflection on the one hand, and a strength of memory or capacity of acquisition on the other, rarely

found in union, and in such perfect harmony as almost to conceal their full proportions. These qualities, applied to theology, made him a scholar, a critic, a philosophical divine. But there were also in his nature a fountain of tenderness and a sweep of impetuous indignation; and, with these ardent elements thus singularly and almost anomalously superadded, he became a vehement preacher, a zealous philanthropist, a stern Christian reformer, who, because he feared the Lord, hated evil, and defied and attacked it whenever it crossed his path. He possessed in combination a large portion of the fervour of Baxter and of the breadth of Owen, with something of the contemplation, not untouched with melancholy, of Howe. He could thus take up, and find room for, his many divergent labours as a minister, an ecclesiastical leader, and a theological teacher and writer. The same amplitude of faculty was seen in his culture of a wide literary field, in the midst of intense devotion to theological studies; in his eager interest in this world's politics, while visibly a citizen of a higher kingdom; in his reconciliation of deeply marked denominational attachment with genuine catholicity; and in his conjunction of affectionate regard for the venerable names and traditions of his own Church and of evangelical Christianity

in general, with an invincible resolution to call no man master, but to assert in the face of the systems and institutions of other times, and of the prevalent beliefs of his own, the imprescriptible right of every age and of every individual to interpret afresh the Word of God. The many contrasts thus blended in his character were tempered by the discipline of experience; and his life in all its various activities seemed to become more rich, genial, and harmonious, as it approached its close.

A hardly less remarkable feature is the unity and consistency of Dr. Brown's lengthened career. There is development, but not change or fluctuation. There is hardly any intellectual extreme provoking recoil, and certainly no moral aberration followed by recovery. His life moves forward almost without pause in one stream, and is controlled by one law. His moral and spiritual image thus preserves the classic expression of his natural features. The beauty of goodness, holiness, and single-minded devotion to the highest ends of the Christian life, and to the special work of his own, is never obscured. The grace thus bestowed upon him is the more eminent, when account is taken of the dangers of popularity he at one time incurred, of the fiery trials of an opposite kind which succeeded, and of the perfect freedom which he

maintained in handling all questions, whether public or personal, that arose and called for speech or action. A life which so little suffered any eccentric impulse to lower its tone, or waste its energies, but in its sustained exertion and even progress so much fulfilled the scriptural idea of a race, supplies an important tribute to the Christian cause, and a powerful incentive to all Christians and Christian ministers to act on the same maxim, "This one thing I do."

One other impression which Dr. Brown's life makes is that of completeness. In no department of his manifold usefulness were his purposes broken off or the thoughts of his heart unaccomplished. Above all, his Christian authorship was brought to its conclusion. Hardly any eminent writer, even though spared to old age, has presented in so full and regular a shape all his best and maturest conceptions. It seemed indeed at one time as if the accumulated treasures of youth and manhood were to be shipwrecked in their passage amidst the storms of controversy, and finally lost. This danger was averted by that Father of Lights, who, superior to all dependence on the creature, wills that the "good and perfect gifts" bestowed on some minds should perish, while those of others, as perhaps more needful for the Church, should live. Dr. Brown was allowed thus to finish his

course, and to do almost everything that his hand found to do. His life may be contemplated as resembling a work of epic art, having a beginning, a middle, and an end; and the Divine order which reigns unseen, even when the most useful career is cut short, or the brightest genius snatched away, is not here shrouded in any darkness. It may be believed, without superstition, that a life so visibly divided into a youth of study, a manhood of struggle, and an old age of repose and mature production, was specially watched over by Him who prepares and uses his instruments at his pleasure; and it may be hoped, without presumption, that having prolonged the work of His servant to a new and endless career in heaven, He will guard and bless its remaining fruits upon earth. It will be the highest reward of the writer of this record, the imperfect shadow of such a life, if it share in any measure the blessing extended to the original, of which he has sought, however unworthily, to catch the spirit and to diffuse the influence; and he sends it forth, written as it has been in weakness, and fear, and much trembling, amidst sore griefs and great hindrances, with the earnest prayer that it may not have been written in vain.

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