

L I F E

OF

ANDREW THOMSON, D.D.,

MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S PARISH, EDINBURGH.

BY

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TO THE
REV. SIR HENRY W. MONCRIEFF, BART.

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS ABLE AND CONSTANT MAINTENANCE OF THE
PRINCIPLE IDENTIFIED WITH THE NAME OF ANDREW THOMSON,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS

Respectfully Dedicated

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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ANDREW THOMSON, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND YOUTH.

“God hath laid engagements upon Scotland. We are urged by Covenants in religion and reformation. Those then unborn are yet engaged, and it passeth the power of all the magistrates under heaven to absolve from the oath of God.”—*Dying Testimony of the Marquis of Argyle.*

Sanquhar, Sean Caer, the old fort, was the birth-place of Dr. Andrew Thomson, 11th July, 1779.

IN covenanting times, there was no part of our land where the fires of persecution raged more fiercely than in the south-west of Scotland. The higher part of Nithsdale especially is remarkable for many a scene of tragical interest. The ancient burgh of Sanquhar, which may be termed the metropolis of the surrounding district, was not only famous for the *Declaration* published at its cross, but it was at all times the haunt of our Scottish worthies who were driven from their homes and hearths to seek a shelter in the deserts around.

The scenery in the immediate neighbourhood of the town is rather bleak and tame, but at a little distance

there are rare scenes of grandeur and beauty, on the banks of the silvery streams of the Mennock and the Crawick. On the north-west borders of the parish, the imagination can scarcely conceive of solitudes more dreary and sterile than those which lie all around. In this wilderness, nothing can be discovered but rugged mountains of brown heath, and vast wastes of dark moorland, stretching onward for miles in the distance, with here and there the blue smoke curling from some lone shepherd's hut.

Every rock and glen has its sacred memories—here is the spot where the venerable Cargill held a conventicle; there the place where the youthful Cameron stood and uttered his divine denunciations of vengeance; and in the distance is the hill where Peden was saved by the providential mist which came down and hid him from his persecutors.

But above all, Sanquhar is famous for its Declaration before mentioned, which was proclaimed at its cross on the 22nd of June, 1680. On that morning the ancient burgh was startled by the appearance of twenty armed men who rode slowly up its street. Two of them dismounted at its old cross, and the rest formed a circle round them. The two who dismounted were Richard Cameron and his brother Michael. After a psalm was sung and a prayer offered, Michael read a paper amid the breathless silence of the people who had flocked from their houses and gathered around the horsemen. The words they then *heard were remarkable ones*:—"We do by these

presents disown Charles Stuart that has been reigning, or rather tyrannizing, on the throne of Britain these years by-gone, as having any right, title to, or interest in the crown of Scotland, for government,—as forfeited several years since by his perjury and breach of covenant both to God and His Kirk. We do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices," etc. After a concluding prayer, those twenty armed horsemen rode away into the pathless deserts from which they came, leaving the old burgh again silent amongst its green and desolate hills.

In 1680, this Declaration was treason; in 1688, it became the *Revolution Settlement*.

Such is something of the history of this old town in which a notable boy first saw light—a boy who was destined to be no mean successor of those dauntless men who won Scotland her freedom at the cost of suffering and death.

The father of that boy was the Rev. John Thomson, D.D., then minister of Sanquhar—he was afterwards removed to Markinch, Fife, and lastly to Edinburgh.

The old church of Sanquhar in which the Rev. John Thomson officiated was a building of great antiquity. It was many years ago demolished to make room for the present structure which occupies its site. That church was co-eval with the High Church of Glasgow, and contained several altars, one of which was known by the name of the *holy bluid*.

The time of the birth of Andrew Thomson was the

time of the greatest darkness in the Church of Scotland, and as Dr. John Ker beautifully remarks in his preface to "the Erskines," referring to the birth of Thomas Chalmers in 1780: "It was when moderatism was darkest—as if God's witnesses and the Church's children of revival came into the world at the hour of midnight."

But God never has left Himself without a witness on the earth. Two hundred years before, in 1680, at the time when Cameron and Cargill were lifting their voices in the Sanquhar *Declaration* and other papers, Ebenezer Erskine was born, and by the time he was ready for his work, that Church, which had preserved her independence unscathed in the fires of persecution, had sunk to effeminacy in the smiles of royalty, and was fast selling her birthright.

When Erskine and his friends, moved by the Spirit of God, lifted their testimony against the corruptions that were creeping into their Zion, to weaken her, and were expelled from a church, not worthy of them, a great revival spread over Scotland, by means of their faithful preaching.

The Church of Scotland, after expelling the Seceders at different times from its pale—first the Erskines, and then the Relief, and other bodies—was, with a very few exceptions, wholly sunk in moderatism. Everything was interdicted which bore the slightest aspect or tendency towards Evangelism, and had not upon it the secular brand of patronage. At last, in 1799, it put forth efforts to place under the ban of the

Assembly, such institutions as Chapels of Ease, Sabbath Schools, etc.; and the people having now become habituated to the presence of patronage, almost ceased to remonstrate against its evils, and accepted a fate from which there seemed no way of escape.

Such was the state of the Church when Andrew Thomson was born. Dr. John Thomson, his father, was an excellent and evangelical minister of the Church of Scotland, and he trained his family in the doctrines of the Reformation.

In his earliest years, Andrew Thomson was remarkable for intelligence and humour. One anecdote alone of his childhood has reached us: "On a chair," says Dr. Mc'Crie the younger, in his "Stories of the Scottish Church," "the back of which served as a pulpit, the lively boy would 'take off' to the life the ministers who came to assist his father at the communion. It is told that on one occasion the venerable Dr. Fleming of Lady Yester's was present and enjoyed the exhibition amazingly. 'But, Doctor,' observed one of the company, 'he can take you off as well as the rest.' The Doctor insisted on hearing how he could imitate him. Little Andrew at first stoutly refused, but after great pressing complied. The imitation was complete. The Doctor's face visibly elongated and he cried out: 'Stop there, Andrew; yours is a most dangerous faculty.'"

When Andrew was a child his father left Sanquhar for Markinch in Fife, a county like Dumfriesshire, remarkable for its zeal in covenanting times.

The village of Markinch, with its parish church, stands on the hill of the same name, famous both to the geologist and antiquarian.

To a boy coming from an inland locality, a village not far from the sea could not fail to be a great source of interest. How he would love to play on the banks, or paddle in the waters of the Leven which flowed within accessible distance from the Manse, not far from the ocean.

At Markinch both the sons of the minister were in the upper classes of the parish school. William was a steady scholar, but Andrew was fonder of play than of books. His father saw this with great concern, and told him one day that if he did not mend his conduct he would come to want. "Weel, faither," he said, "ye ken you're the minister; get Willie made the dominie, and mak' me the beadle, and precentor, and gravedigger, and then we'll mak' out to live, for we'll ha'e the haill profits o' the place amang us."

After being some years at Markinch, Mr. Thomson was removed to one of the Edinburgh churches. Andrew, in that city, was in the same class with the Lord Chancellor of England, the Solicitor-General, and Lord Murray: some of the most distinguished characters of the age.

It cannot be precisely ascertained at what time the lad turned his thoughts to the ministry.

In childhood he had been, as we saw, particularly intelligent, besides being manly and open-hearted—a *character*, this, which gave him in after years such a

hold over the affections of all who knew him, but we hear nothing of religion at that time. He had not been many years at college, however, before he became the subject of those serious impressions which form the best qualification for the sacred office.

Early in 1802, Mr. Andrew Thomson was licensed as a preacher of the gospel by the presbytery of Kelso, and in the spring of the same year he was ordained minister of the parish of Sprouston, in Roxburghshire, a beautiful place and full of historic interest, on the banks of the classic Tweed.

Shortly after his settlement at Sprouston, Mr. Thomson married Miss Carmichael, from Greenock, and truly in his union with her he enjoyed all the happiness that is to be found in the marriage relation.

The young minister was not long in his charge before he gave indications of those gifts which were destined to raise him to a high place amongst the eminent men of his country and time—unbending integrity of character, zeal for the cause to which his life was devoted, and a vigorous eloquence displayed in the church courts of which he was a member. In the retirement of that parish he published an excellent catechism on the Lord's Supper, which passed through many editions, and than which few better books for that purpose exist.

When the alarm of the French invasion was raised in the country, by fire-beacons being lighted on the heights, Mr. Thomson headed a numerous body of volunteers from the parish of Sprouston, and led

them to Kelso, the appointed rendezvous for this district.

The Rev. Mr. Craig sends a few gleanings of Mr. Thomson's ministry at Sprouston. He says, "I need hardly indicate the better known facts of his ministry, *i.e.*, that he succeeded Mr. Turnbull in 1802, and remained till 1808. It is somewhat interesting to learn how, when a tutor in the family of Sir John Pringle of Stichel House, as he stood one day on an eminence overlooking the vale of the Tweed, he expressed himself, saying how pleased he would be if his lot should be cast in some such quiet and beautiful neighbourhood. Little thinking, at the time, that Sprouston was for a while to be his home. Before his settlement, he had heard that the parish was in rather a wild state, and resolved to see for himself as far as possible what it really was. For this purpose he frequently walked about the glebe which extends to the river side, and if he happened to hear anything amiss on the part of the youths who resorted to the banks, he did not hesitate to present himself and rebuke them on the spot. On one occasion, when passing through the churchyard in the gloaming, he was met by the bell-ringer's daughter, who, mistaking him for another whom she expected to meet, went up to him and reproached him for keeping her so long waiting. She was very much put out when she discovered the minister instead of her lover.

"He afterwards said the place was not so bad as it had been reported to him.

“During all his ministry there, he took a deep interest in anything pertaining to the wellbeing of his parishioners, regularly visiting through the parish. ‘No raking about at all times,’ said my informant, ‘but most attentive in cases of sickness or trouble.’ ‘He was a very feeling man,’ was further added, which fact was illustrated by saying that on one occasion being present in the house of a poor woman whose husband had lately died, the minister was asked to break the news to the widow of the death of an only son. He was far more overcome than was the bereaved mother herself, who simply said, ‘The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away—blessed be the the name of the Lord.’ On the following Sabbath he chose those words for his text and preached a most impressive sermon.

“He showed a kindly interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of the people. During a year of scarcity, when meal was selling at seven shillings a stone, he had the glebe sown all over with oats, which he got ground and sold to the parishioners at cost price—the weights he used are still preserved. At the time of the threatened French invasion, when through the lighting of the beacons on the neighbouring heights, a false alarm was raised, Dr. Thomson set the parish bells ringing, and was himself the first at the appointed rendezvous, and marched at the head of the Sprouston contingent to Kelso square.

“He visited the parish school every week, twice each year catechised the older people in the church, ‘ask-

ing them questions, and if they couldna answer, just answering them himsel.'

"He was very strict in the exercise of discipline, and of great repute as a preacher. When he preached his farewell sermon, there was not a dry eye in the congregation, he himself was much affected, and when at the close he came down from the pulpit to shake hands with the people as they retired, he was not able to look up. When he left, and was taking his last view of the village, he said to a friend who accompanied him: 'I'll long remember Sprouston when Sprouston has forgotten me.' But it is not so. His memory is still cherished there, long after he has gone to his rest and reward. Some time after his settlement in Edinburgh, when he came to preach in Kelso, all Sprouston was emptied to hear him."

In 1808, Mr. Thomson was removed to the East Church, Perth, but was only there two years, for the fame of his faithful preaching having reached Edinburgh, he was called, in the spring of 1810, to the New Greyfriars Church in that city. This position was particularly adapted to display his talents and bring to the front the active character of his mind.

Many who afterwards distinguished themselves in Christian worth and attainments, owed their first religious impressions to his discourses in the New Greyfriars. To the young especially, and to the students attending the university, his ministry was at that period peculiarly attractive. Before this time it had been too much the custom of the town-council of that

city to translate from the country, to churches in their gift, ministers of good age and standing, whose habits and whose style of preaching were quite formed, and who were therefore not so easily qualified to adapt their ministrations to the intelligence and taste of their new audience.

A few months after his removal to Edinburgh, Mr. Thomson, with the assistance of several of his clerical brethren in the church and in the Secession, commenced the publication of the *Christian Instructor*. He was editor, and to him it was indebted for the most of its best and ablest articles; besides, he contributed many excellent papers to the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, conducted by Dr. Brewster.

CHAPTER II.

EDINBURGH—CHURCH WORK.

“The proud he tamed, the penitent he cheered,
Nor to rebuke the rich offender feared ;
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,
A living sermon of the truths he taught.”—DRYDEN.

WHEN Mr. Thomson was removed to Edinburgh, the New Town of that city was in the course of being built; Charlotte Square was not quite finished, and there were no buildings to the west of it. The only Presbyterian church in that part was St. Andrews, and the church accommodation was, in consequence, very deficient.

The Town Council, taking into consideration the wants of that new part of the city, resolved to erect another church in Charlotte Square, to be called St. George's; and, when it was in the course of erection, steps were taken to appoint a minister to the new church and parish: one who would fill the pews and bring in money from the seat-rents, and, at the same time, one who would be a faithful earnest preacher of the everlasting gospel. Their eyes were turned to the minister of New Greyfriars, and they unanimously made the first offer of St. George's to him, which, after some time for consideration, he accepted. The Town Council then fixed the 5th day of June, 1814, for opening the new church.

Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, was the officiating minister on that occasion, and he chose for his text "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil" (Eccles. vi.).

On the 16th June, 1814, Mr. Thomson was inducted minister of St. George's; the Rev. Walter Tait of the College Church preaching and presiding.

The name of Mr. Tait acquired notoriety afterwards in connection with the Row Heresy. He was deposed from the ministry in 1833.

Before we go on to speak of Mr. Thomson's ministry in St. George's, we may mention that thirteen years after Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, had opened the church for public worship, Mr. Thomson preached his funeral sermon, and in a sentence described that great and good man. "His character," says Mr. Thomson, "had a length and a breadth which made it obvious to all. It had nothing hidden or disguised or equivocal about it; it was bold, open, forth-coming: resembling in that respect his own outward person, which carried on it the impress of conscious integrity and bold independence, not only when he was in the prime and fullness of manhood, but even when his features had been softened and his stature bowed down with age, so that you could not fail to be conversant with its reigning qualities and its standard merits. There was a magnanimity in his modes of thinking and addressing, which was evident to the eye of observation, as were the

lineaments of his face and the dignity of his gait." There is an interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. xlvii., 1828), written by Lord Brougham on this sermon, which may interest our readers, as Brougham's remarks on Sir Henry as a preacher might almost have applied to Dr. Thomson. He says: "His talents as a preacher, accordingly, were of the very first order. There was nothing paltry, or affected, or vain, or worldly in either the matter of his discourse or the manner. He spoke with authority; delivering a great message to the congregation, and rejecting with disdain all the paltry arts by which lesser men on lesser occasions seek to win to themselves the attention of an audience; he sturdily assumed their attention as his undoubted right; for gaining which, he would make no sacrifice; for receiving which, would render no thanks. He had it, indeed, without the asking; and he went on from the beginning to the close as if he knew he had it. His manner was firm, manly, decided, even somewhat peremptory; but not harsh, not dogmatical; it was the manner that becomes a minister of God officiating at his altar, humble, indeed, when he has to offer up his people's supplications, but authoritative in declaring to that people his Master's will. He has nothing to do with the arts by which the poet seeks to please, or the songster to tickle the ear, or the player who struts his little hour to raise fantastic emotions and wind out some tale of woe; nor has he to implore favour at the hearer's hands, nor to mislead by per-

suasive topics, nor to argue and wrangle upon doubtful matters of worldly expediency, nor to call up the bad or the doubtful passions of our nature by setting up one frail man or another in estimation or in power. But his function is to declare the things of God: to proclaim His promises as the heralds of a higher power: to affright men from vice by painting its misery and its perils: to keep men steadfast in the faith by calling them back when they stray, by upholding them when backsliding, by arousing them when slumbering over the things that belong to their peace. That these high offices were performed worthily and steadily, but with all earnestness and with all tenderness, by this great presbyter, we have the impressive and eloquent testimony of his favourite disciple."

It was not long before every seat in the new church of St. George's was taken, and the Kirk Session filled with men whose names even yet are honoured and precious. Here the most public and brilliant part of Dr. Thomson's career commenced. He had difficulties to encounter both in collecting and retaining a congregation, but he of all men only grew stronger when difficulties met him. He became more eager and interested in his work, and redoubled his exertions to more ministerial fidelity. Previous to his appointment to St. George's, Dr. Thomson had not been in the habit of writing out his discourses. He had trusted to the natural promptness with which his ideas presented and arranged themselves, and to the

remarkable fluency of expression with which he was gifted; and though these did not fail him, he nevertheless thought it advisable, as he was to preach to a very intellectual and refined class of persons, to secure more correctness for his discourses, as well as greater variety, by committing them to paper. In pursuance of this resolution, he weekly composed and wrote two sermons, a labour of no ordinary difficulty when we consider that he was engaged in sustaining the ministerial connection with a congregation unusually large, and composed of persons very fastidious and exacting. There is a story told of a moderate minister, a keen fisher, who once said to Dr. Thomson: "I wonder you spend so much time on your sermons, with your ability and ready speech. Many's the time when I've written a sermon and killed a salmon before breakfast;" to which Thomson replied: "Well, sir, I'd rather have eaten your salmon than listened to your sermon."

Dr. Buchanan, in his "Ten Years' Conflict," speaking of the preaching of Dr. Thomson, says—"It had been the fashion, in the days of dominant moderatism, to identify evangelical preaching with intellectual imbecility, to be reported as *esprit fort*; it was essential to be at least on friendly terms with scepticism, and to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. The protest against this mingled impiety and insolence of an irreligious age, which, even in the worst times, had been offered in the person of such men as Erskine and *Moncreiff*, received from Thomson an immense acces-

sion of force. Occupying the pulpit of St. George's, in the very centre of the most influential classes of the northern metropolis, the prodigious energy of his character speedily gathered around him, and brought under the impulse of his ministry, many of the most vigorous and cultivated minds in the city. While his preaching was thus rapidly regaining for evangelism a former footing in those ranks of society from which it had been long almost excluded, his advocacy of Reformation principles—on the platform, through the pews, and in the courts of the church—was telling not less powerfully on men's views of ecclesiastical affairs."

Indeed, the "power of the pulpit," whatever may be the case now, was a great fact then. With one single illustrious exception (Dr. Chalmers), no one did so much as he, by his pulpit ministrations, by his intellectual force, and by his *momentum* altogether, as a man—to overcome what John Foster (in one of his Essays) treats of, "The aversion of men of cultivated taste to Evangelical Religion," and to turn the tide in its favour. "The prejudices of thousands gave way before the might and the mastery of his resistless demonstrations, his powerful appeals to scripture, and his no less powerful appeals to the consciences of men."

From an entirely different quarter, John Gibson Lockhart, afterwards the brilliant Editor of the *Quarterly Review*, in his well known book, "Peter's letters to his kinsfolk," we have the following graphic description of what he was at this period :

"The most popular preacher of the time in Edin-

burgh occupies a new and magnificent place of worship in the finest square, and most fashionable neighbourhood, of the whole city. Mr. Andrew Thomson (for that is his name), is a much younger man than either of those I have described (Dr. Inglis and Sir Henry Moncreiff), and perhaps his talents are still better adapted than those of either, for producing a powerful impression on the minds of people living in what may be called, strictly speaking, the *Society of Edinburgh*. Nor, indeed, can any better proof of his eminent qualifications be required than the effect, which, unless I am quite misinformed, his preaching has already produced in the place of his ministrations. I am assured that church-going was a thing comparatively out of fashion, among the fine folks of the New Town of Edinburgh, till this man was removed, from a church he formerly held in the Old Town, and established under the splendid dome of St. George's. Only two or three years have elapsed, since this change took place; and yet, although he was at first named with no inconsiderable coolness by the self-complacent gentry of his new parish—and although he adopted nothing that ordinary people would have supposed likely to overcome this coolness—he has already entirely subdued all their prejudices, and enjoys at this moment a degree of favour among all classes of his auditors, such as—to the shame of the world be it spoken—very seldom falls to the share of such a man, in such a place.

“ His appearance is good; and this is less of a trifle *in such matters* than he himself would perhaps be

willing to allow. He is an active and muscular man about forty, and carries in his countenance the stamp of a nature deficient in none of those elements which are most efficacious in giving a man command over the minds of persons placed under the continual operation of his intellect. Most of his features, indeed, are rather homely, than otherwise, in their conformation—but they are all well defined, manly and full of power. His eyes are quick and firmly set—his lips are bold and nervous in their motions, no less than in their quiescence—his nose is well carved, and joins firmly with a forehead of unquestionably very fine and commanding structure, expanded broadly below in sinuses of most iron projection, and swelling above in a square-compact form, which harmonizes well with a strong and curled texture of hair. His attitude has no great pretensions to grace, but it conveys the notion of inflexible vigour and decision. His voice sounds somewhat harshly at first, but as he goes on, one feels that it possesses a large compass, and that he wields its energies with the mastery of a musician. . . . Mr. Thomson strikes me as being, without exception, one of the most complete masters of this world's knowledge I ever heard preach on either side of the Tweed; and therefore it is that he produces a most powerful effect by showing himself to be entirely and utterly its despiser. . . . It is clear, from the moment he touches upon life, that he has looked at it narrowly, as if that observation had been his ultimatum, not his mean; and the probability is, that instead of smiling at his

ignorance, the hearer may rather find occasion to suspect that his knowledge surpasses his voice."

(Dr. Thomson, even when *reading*, was always in perfect sympathy with his people, and his eye was everywhere among them. In addressing such a critical audience, he felt it his duty to *show* that he had studied and written every word.)

Lord Cowan says of these sermons, "I still remember the earnest and eloquent appeals to the hearts and consciences addressed to his people, by this great preacher—his sermons on Infidelity in particular. What crowds they drew every afternoon for many Sabbaths successively—for they were preached continuously—the passages and lobby being so crowded as scarcely to admit of the congregation getting to their seats."

Sir Henry Moncreiff has kindly permitted me to use his estimate of Dr. Thomson's character in one of his Chalmers Lectures which he is preparing for delivery; in it he says:—"I cannot myself mention the name of Dr. Andrew Thomson, without strong emotion—I believe that I personally owe more to him than to any other human being, for my greatest principles and position. In early youth, I shared the effect produced upon multitudes of young men by the union of strength and tenderness in his pulpit ministrations. There was the force of argumentative clearness—there was also the touching potency of affectionate pathos.

"His love of music, his genial sociality, his truth and *fidelity* in personal attachment, his wondrous energy,

his devotion of time and attention to the edification and comfort of the weakest and most destitute, as well as of the highest and strongest, and his unwearied efforts for the accomplishment of good in all quarters among both young and old, these, along with his extraordinary eloquence, must all be taken into account in estimating the massive comprehensiveness of his character—Thus, and thus only, can we be ready to appreciate his courageous maintenance of spiritual independence in the face of obloquy and misunderstanding.”

Lord Moncreiff, at the centenary of Dr. Chalmers, held in Edinburgh in 1880, spoke thus of Dr. Andrew Thomson:—“ Much has been said, and deservedly, of the great man whose memory we celebrate, but there is one man to whom Scotland owes a great deal, whose memory perhaps is not kept so green and vivid as it ought to have been—I mean Andrew Thomson—because he not only was a great man in himself; but in the work he did, he laid the foundation of much that Chalmers was afterwards enabled to do. I read the other day, I won't say where, because controversy is not in my line—I read the other day about a fanatical preacher called Andrew Thomson, ‘who,’ said the writer, ‘was made minister of St. George's Church in Edinburgh by a fanatical Town Council in order to redeem the affairs or revenues of the city.’ Now, I think that great injustice was done to all of these persons. In the first place, I think the council of 1814 had good reason not to expect to be visited with any

such opprobrious term. If they were at all like their successors—easy-going citizens of Edinburgh of the old school—they were not likely to be roused into extravagant enthusiasm by anything of the kind. Imagine a writer of the present day saying to the public and to the world that Andrew Thomson was a fanatical preacher. He was one of the greatest teachers of men that I have ever come into contact with. He preached the word with an amount of power and social influence that was wholly unknown up to his time. He was a wonderful orator, with an ear for music, an ear for the harmony and rhythm of words, a voice of surpassing power and flexibility. He was one of those orators that made your heart palpitate to hear. A fanatic! I wish the man who wrote that word had stood in the Assembly Rooms when he delivered that great and overwhelming oration on the liberty of the slave—when he propounded for the first time to an overwhelming audience within those walls the doctrine of negro emancipation. I venture to say there are very few men now or then that could have delivered such an oration as that, and it rather stirs my indignation to hear the man to whom Scotland owes so much, and who was so endeared to all who knew him from one end of Scotland to the other, to hear the man spoken of in a foolish and ignorant manner, and without any knowledge of the real truth and substance of his character. Andrew Thomson's work in the evangelising of the masses of society came to a sudden end. *When Dr. Chalmers was lecturing to his class the day*

after the news of Andrew Thomson's death—for he died in a moment, with his harness on, and in the middle of his conflicts—Chalmers could not command his voice, his great and affectionate heart was so moved and stirred within him, that he tried to say a few sentences about the loss of so dear a colleague and brother. He was, however, obliged to stop in the middle and dismiss his class with the words, 'Rather than go on with a task for which I am entirely unable, rather would I join his sorrowful household, and weep with his desolated family.'

Dr. Thomson, like all enlightened ministers of the gospel, was greatly interested in education. He was distressed at the numbers in his parish who could not understand his ministrations—the young, who either did not attend his church, or whose circumstances and those of their parents rendered a greater degree of tuition necessary than it was possible to afford them on the Lord's day.

In order to meet this difficulty, Dr. Thomson projected a week-day school. His influence enabled him speedily to raise the necessary funds for the erection of the building, and his experience in the task of instructing the young led him to undertake the compiling of suitable books for the different classes, and even for a time to act as a teacher in the school.

What to other minds would have been drudgery, he delighted in, and would, if his many other engagements had permitted, have spent entire days teaching the children of the lower classes of his parish the elemen-

tary principles of education and religion; leaving the schoolhouse to prosecute the other part of his labour of love in his own study, in the compilation of these books—a strange sight this: one of Scotland's most gifted sons, heedless of the world's applause, bending his great mind and princely intellect to arrange elementary books for the poor children of his parish.

Dr. Thomson had the great pleasure of seeing the benefit conferred on the whole district by means of this school, which is still kept up under the designation of "Dr. Andrew Thomson's School."

From nature he had received an exquisite ear and taste for music, and feeling that every gift should be consecrated to the service of his Master, he began a reformation of the service of praise in the sanctuary. To him in a great measure is to be traced the improvement in psalmody which first was effected in the Church of Scotland. The better to accomplish his object, he drew up a collection of the most approved psalm tunes, all of which he carefully revised, and to which he added several original compositions of his own of great beauty, especially "St. George's, Edinburgh," and "Redemption." The leader of the choir was a man after the minister's own heart—Mr. R. A. Smith—whose name is still remembered in connection with his "Collection."

One of his relatives speaks of the Saturday night's practisings of psalmody in the minister's house. After the work of the week and the labours of his pulpit preparations, this was the time when the minister took

his hour of recreation, and then, with R. A. Smith as a leader, his family and himself were wont to sing over the psalms to be sung in church the following Sabbath.

Lord Ardmillan used to say, that when he came as a young man to Edinburgh, he had a letter of introduction to Dr. Thomson, at whose hospitable house he spent many happy evenings, music being the great attraction, in which Dr. Thomson and his family were proficient.

The Rev. Mr. Cousin, who has kindly aided me in getting up materials for this little book, contributes the following notice :—

“About the close of 1815, the country was shocked by the intelligence that a violent persecution had broken out against the Protestants of the south of France, under the instigation of the Jesuits, and with the sanction of the Government, for the restoration of which Great Britain had expended so much blood and treasure. It was understood that for political reasons the Government of the day wished the matter to be hushed up, and their supporters in Edinburgh did all they could to prevent any public action being taken on the subject. In those somewhat narrow and jealous days, indeed, all public meetings that did not originate with the ruling party were regarded with distrust. But a freer spirit was beginning to stir, and it could not have found a better representative and exponent than the minister of St. George’s in any matter that affected the cause of religion or humanity. Already his powers and influence were beginning to be felt

throughout the entire community. It seems to have been the first occasion on which his powers as a great debater and platform orator were summoned into action, and by all accounts never did his eloquence rise to a higher pitch, or tell with more immediate effect upon his audience, than in repudiating the attempts that had been made to repress the free expression of opinion, and in pleading the cause of religious freedom as violated by the persecutions directed against our fellow Protestants in France.

“ Unfortunately there is no adequate report of the meeting, which was presided over by Sir H. Moncreiff, and there is little more than a mere sketch of Mr. Thomson’s speech, and a tradition of the marvellous effects which it produced. Great pressure had been brought to bear upon the originators of this meeting, and violent imputations of mere political feeling and party spirit had been thrown out against them by the organs of Government. A brief extract may be given to show Mr. Thomson’s manner of dealing with such charges, which were much more formidable in those days than now. ‘No sooner do we engage in any public action or enterprise that happens to be offensive to certain gentlemen, than, whatever be its usefulness or beneficence, it is branded with the odious name of political partizanship. For my own part, I repudiate all party politics or party feeling in the case. If I belong to any party, it is to the party which, whatever be its politics, loves and would protect and cherish the plant of religious liberty, whether it

grows in our land or in the land of the foreigner. I am of the party of those who pity the sufferings of our oppressed fellow-creatures in every country under heaven, and will be ready to stretch out the hand of sympathy and relief. And this is the party of the British Government itself, which in all its best days has been ever ready to succour the oppressed, and to stretch forth the hand of sympathy and relief, and which even now is using all its influence to repress and put a stop to persecution in Greece—the party even of the French Government itself, in so far as it has co-operated in the same great cause, and for the accomplishment of the same high and noble end. And finally, Sir, I avow myself of the party of those who, once engaged in the cause of freedom and religion and humanity, and conscious of the purity and uprightness of their motives, refuse to allow themselves to be daunted or turned aside in their efforts—disdain and trample under foot the baseless imputations cast on them, by whomsoever they may be adduced, in whatever terms, through whatever channels conveyed, and with whatever consequences of personal obloquy or personal loss they may be ultimately attended.’ In that generation no bolder word had been spoken, at least by any minister of the Church of Scotland, in that day of prevailing Moderatism, when, with almost the single prominent and outstanding exception of grand old Sir Harry Moncreiff, scarcely a man among them was to be found who did not identify loyalty to the throne with subserviency to the Government of the day.

Such a challenge and demand for freedom of speech and action by a rising minister of the Church, was hailed as a sign of better days in Edinburgh, where, Lord Cockburn tells us, scarcely a public meeting had been held, except under sanction of Government, for more than a generation. It gave tone and character to the meeting, by which, after a magnificent speech of marvellous eloquence and argumentative power by Mr. Thomson, admirably enforced by Dr. M'Crie, resolutions were adopted on behalf of our fellow Protestants in France, which were not without good effect in arousing the nation and commanding the attention of public men."

Nor were his private labours less abundant. Great as he was in public life, it may be questioned whether he did not appear even to more advantage in the less-noticed walks of pastoral visitation among the families of his flock. It seemed his most congenial sphere when he sat by the sick-bed and pointed the bereaved and dying to the land of promise and rest.

It had pleased an all-wise Providence to lead him in the course of his ministry through a variety of discipline. One lady describes even yet the effects upon her of his sympathy and prayers when she was mourning the loss of a beloved child. She says it was indescribable what words of healing he had ready to soothe her bleeding heart, for he had drank deeply of the spirit of his Master, which made him more able to sympathise with the sorrowing or perplexed. Every one felt him to be a friend and brother in very deed. There was no affectation, no acting in his interest;

nothing but genuine kindness and heart-felt sympathy, combined with a certain straightforward manliness. The man who held imperial sway and ruled the passions of thousands on the platform, sat meekly by the dying bed and addressed the poorest and most obscure of his flock in words and accents of indescribable interest and regard.

In 1821, Dr. Thomson received the degree of D.D. from the University of Aberdeen.

CHAPTER III.

IN PRIVATE LIFE AND FRIENDSHIP.

“ There is a kind of character in thy life,
 That to the observer doth thy history
 Fully unfold ; thyself and thy belongings
 Are not thine own to propose, as to waste
 Thyself upon thy virtues, they are thine.
 Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
 Not light them for themselves ; for if our virtues
 Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
 As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
 But to fine issues.”—SHAKESPEARE.

IN private life, Dr. Thomson was everything that was amiable and engaging. Around his own family hearth, amongst his children and intimate friends he was peculiarly delightful. It is told as a proof of his love and tenderness for his wife, that on one occasion, when her life was despaired of, and the fact being too hurriedly communicated to him he fainted quite away, and was some time before he recovered. To his children he was the kind and affectionate father at the same time that he was their companion, the sharer of all their sports. Inheriting much of his love for music, songs, and the best of literature and sprightly conversation, it was to this relaxation the wearied man hurried home after

some fierce debate in the Assembly or exciting public meeting.

It is sad to think we have scarcely any letter or paper left us to show what Dr. Thomson was at home or amongst his friends. We have only been able to procure one letter to a daughter, dated April, 1827, which may be interesting to the reader. He says: "My dear Helen, my letter to Jane would inform you that I was at Erskine Manse. I left it on Tuesday morning, after experiencing much kindness from Dr. and Mrs. Stewart. They wished me much to go back; but I rather think that I will now keep at Mosshouse till the time of my return to Edinburgh, which will be about the end of next week. Mr. Paul insists on my remaining longer; that, however, is out of the question, for I must be home to attend to various things, young communicants, etc.; and, indeed, I am now greatly better, and hope to be able for my public duties as formerly. Your mamma, in her last letter, speaks of my going out to Millbank for a week. I would not like to disappoint Mrs. Nelson, since she is so kind as to expect me; but I fear it will be somewhat inconvenient. However, I shall determine nothing definitely till I come home. We dined yesterday at Govan Manse. Mr. and Mrs. Leishman were very kind; there was nobody there but D——'s (Here I was summoned away to breakfast, and, after eating a bowl—not a small one—of porridge and milk, I resume my pen—) sister, Miss Gill, she was very pleasant, and facetious, and instructive. Mr. Leishman is very retired. He

has two nice, stout, lively children. I had a call yesterday of Mr. Burns from Paisley. He is uncommonly attentive and friendly. I gave him a conveyance of half a mile, and then met Professor Walker on horseback coming to see me. We had a long colloquy. He is looking ill—but is much better than he was a year ago. Anne Ker is at her uncle's, Mr. Dow of Cathcart. She proposed coming to call on me. I preferred to meet her half-way. But we have not yet accomplished the interview. Your mamma says you don't take your steak since I left you. I hope, however, you take something else to nourish you. I always lunch at two o'clock, and, besides, take a slice of meat or a bit of pudding, or both at dinner-time. Do you get up any earlier in the morning? It would do you good to go sooner to bed—in neither case neglecting your reading the Scriptures and other religious exercises. I received John's letter and have read his articles in the *Courant*. The remarks on the two being profitable employment is rather a faint compliment to Mr. Smith. On the whole, the criticisms are well written; only they want that variety of expression and illustration which cannot be attained except by extensive and careful reading. I am satisfied that Mr. Murray should get another teacher of arithmetic. But has he yet gone to Espinasse or some other French teacher? He should lose no time. If Mr. Haldane calls, tell him that the Paisley Committee have broken off from London. But I believe I must write him the good news myself. Best love to

mamma— there is a letter from Mrs. Paul to her in my parcel to the printer—and to all the rest, not forgetting Mr. Murray. Mr. Paul is impatient.—Your affectionate father,

“ANDREW THOMSON.”

A letter received from a relation of the great man cannot fail to be interesting to the reader. In it the writer says:—“It is impossible to convey to the public any idea of what Dr. Thomson was in private—so strong and tender in his home affections, with a constant flow of innocent mirth, which made him specially attractive to the young—Children were very dear to him—He lost two of his own children in early life, one, a little boy who died in infancy—the other a girl of great promise—she died after a lingering illness in her eleventh year. During her illness, he often felt unable to speak to her as he would have wished, without breaking down; but a most tender touching letter which he wrote her, was kept under her pillow, and she often consulted it. At the same time he gave her some simple sentences and prayers for her use in her great weakness. Agnes’s death was a deep and lasting sorrow to him.

“Another thing about him was the simplicity of his tastes. He dearly loved the country, and used to say that there was no ottoman like a heap of hay. The last summer of his life he spent a part of it with his nephew at —, and it is remembered then that he anticipated a sudden and early removal—laying one day his hand on his heart he said, ‘I feel it here;’

but added, 'It is better to have no choice whether death is slow or sudden.' His place, he said, would soon be filled in the church, but he drew a deep sigh when he thought of the mourning ones he must leave behind.

"I hope that you will not fail to give prominence to what he did in the way of *congregational instruction*. I am not sure that his devoted attention to this matter is known; what he did to promote a better secular education is more generally understood, and gives him a claim to the lasting gratitude of the community."

Sir Henry Moncreiff remembers, when he was a boy, being at his Grandfather's at Tullybole, when on one occasion, Dr. Andrew Thomson, with his own father, Lord Moncreiff, and some other friends, were visiting there, Dr. Thomson advised that the gentlemen should take a ride after breakfast (there had been a discussion as to whether they should walk or ride). Lord Moncreiff's horse shied, and threw his rider, who dislocated his arm. Dr. Thomson was greatly vexed, the more so as by his advice the ride had been chosen in preference to the walk.

The Doctor asked Mrs. George Moncreiff who was present, if Mrs. James was much put about on account of the accident to her husband.

"Oh no," was the answer, "for she thought it was *you*." After a while Dr. Thomson jocularly told Mrs. James Moncreiff how pleased he was to have been of service to her.

Dr. Thomson was very fond of two cats, which were

always about his study, and when wearied with his work, he used to recreate himself playing with them. One was called "Earl Grey," and the other "Mary Hay."

Much has been said by his enemies of his sarcastic sayings, and hot temper, and on more than one occasion in public the Doctor lamented his hasty words. It is said that his dear friend Dr. Gordon came one day into his study and began to hint gently to him of his unguarded temper, when he looked up, the tears were rolling over his cheeks, as he answered, "you cannot feel my temper in the bitter way I do, I am humbled before God on account of this my weakness, my sin." Dr. Gordon was next unmanned, and felt he could say nothing.

Dr. Watson, in his Sketch, which accompanies the volume of sermons, has said of Dr. Thomson in his private life, that "he was mild, and gentle, and cheerful;—deeply tender, and acutely sensitive in his strongest affections; most faithful and true in his attachments of friendship, kindhearted and indulgent to all with whom he had intercourse. His firm adherence to principle, when he thought principle involved, whatever appearance of severity it may have presented to those who saw him only as a public character, had no taint of harshness in his private life. It may, indeed, be said with truth, that, great as were his public merits, and deplorable the public loss in his death, yet to those who had the happiness to live with him in habits of intimacy, the deepest and the bitterest feeling still is

the separation from a man who possessed so many of the finest and most amiable sensibilities of the human heart. In him the lion and the lamb may be said to have met together, It was equally natural in him to play with a child, and to enter the lists with a practised polemic. He could be gay without levity, and grave without moroseness. His frank and bland manners, the equable flow of his cheerfulness and good-humour, and the information which he possessed on almost every subject, made his company to be courted by persons of all classes. He could mix with men of the world without compromising his principles, or lowering his character as a minister of the gospel; and his presence was enough to repress anything which had the semblance of irreligion.

“The publication of the Life of Knox,” says Dr. M’Crie, the younger, in the life of his father, “first introduced him to that of the late Dr. Andrew Thomson, with whom he formed a friendship which continued unbroken till the death of that celebrated and much lamented individual. About the time at which we have arrived, Dr. Thomson had little more than commenced that brief but brilliant career, in the course of which he was mainly instrumental, by the force of his talents, eloquence, and decision of character, in re-introducing into the Church of Scotland the reign of evengelical preachings and of sound ecclesiastical principle, which have ever since been gradually gaining the ascendancy in her pulpits and councils. . . . Dr. Thomson was one of those persons whose real character

when known in private life, is found to be precisely the reverse of the picture which the imagination had formed of it from public appearances—who are either greatly beloved or deeply hated—and who receive from posterity the justice denied them by their contemporaries. ‘Bold as a lion,’ yet possessing all the generosity ascribed to that noble animal—matchless and unsparing as a public disputant, yet without the least drop of bigotry or bitterness—open-hearted as the day—and in his private character, frank, bland, and engaging in manners, and full of the milk of human kindness. Dr. Thomson was as much the idol of his friends, as he was the object of terror and dislike to his opponents. When to this we add his fearless independence of mind, his devoted attachment to the standards of the Church, and his honest zeal for her reformation, we need not wonder that between such a man and the author of the *Life of Knox*, there should have arisen an intercourse of the most cordial and confidential kind, notwithstanding the personal and professional differences which distinguished them. Dr. Thomson’s visits were short but frequent, and in the hilarity and fascinating humour of his conversation, our author found an agreeable relaxation from his severer studies; the hearty laugh proceeding from ‘the study’ was the well-known indication to the whole household, that he was closeted with Dr. Andrew Thomson. ‘It was in June, 1813,’ says Dr. Robert Burns, in a letter to the present writer, ‘that I was first introduced to Dr. M’Crie by the late Dr. Thomson. We spent a most

agreeable afternoon. I had been ordained about two years before—was quite raw—and not very conversant with the history of our Church. Nor do I think at that date Mr. Thomson's information as to those matters was very extensive. Well do I remember of his putting to your father the question "can you tell me anything about Robert Rollock?" your father was at home on the subject, and told us a good deal about the Principal and his newly-erected college, and many subjects of such a kind afforded materials for pleasing and instructive conversation. Next morning we breakfasted with him at his house, and the chief topic of course was a review of the Life of Knox in the Quarterly that had just appeared, and not a little amusement did it afford us. It was about this time that he began to write those able articles in the Instructor which shed such a lustre over that periodical."

Many letters passed between the two friends, principally about business for the Instructor; here is a specimen of one from Dr. Thomson to Dr. M'Crie, Dec. 4, 1816.

"My dear Sir,—I hope you are not forgetting your promise to review Jedidiah Cleishbotham. My opinion now is, that the author is the author of Guy Mannering, and that he is Sir Walter Scott. I will tell you the ground of my opinion when we meet. Blackwood is not close enough for us cunning dogs. . . . The *Christian Observer* is come, there is a paper in it signed 'A Scotchwoman,' in which the good lady attributes her conversion to the English Liturgy in England—

calls our form of worship dull and uninteresting, and at the same time complains that in this country the Episcopalians are very unsound and very unedifying. This paper appears to be got up for the occasion. As this is a sort of unfair indirect way of carrying on the war, I have a great mind to write a conversion or two for the *Instructor*, and give all the credit to our own standards! Why should not an Englishwoman be converted by a Scotch Presbyterian—even by a man clothed in ‘bottomless breeks.’”

Another letter in this correspondence from Dr. M’Crie to Dr. Thomson on the death of a child of the latter, is so interesting we cannot refrain from quoting it.

“So your daughter has at last escaped from the sorrows and sins of this life, and has left you behind to witness and to endure them. Is not this the true light in which you should view her departure? and ought not this consideration, if it does not abate our grief, to give it another direction than what it naturally takes. What a beautiful passage is that in the Lamentations beginning, ‘It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth!’ you have seen the truth of it in your daughter, and I trust you feel, and will feel it in your own experience resulting from this and from former tribulations. I lectured on the passage lately, but did not reach its spirit, and I would like to discourse on it again.

“I have no doubt that both you and Mrs. Thomson will remember the exhortation that speaketh to you

as to children, and remember it as the word of God and not of man. All have need of affliction. Do not ministers need it in a special manner? And are there not certain periods of their life, or certain situations in which they are placed, that eminently require it, and in which they may discover the wisdom, and love, and faithfulness of Him who sends it—their Heavenly Father and Divine Maker? If I have reason to be thankful for anything, it is for seasonable chastisements—how I have improved them is a different question. Good were the words of the prophet, ‘Thou, O Lord, knowest me: Thou hast seen me and tried mine heart *toward Thee* (Jer. xii. 3). If there were no other thing to reconcile us to afflictions, this should be enough, that they are necessary to fit us for the better and the fuller discharge of our duty to our people, according to the apostle’s declaration,—‘Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer.’ I am, dear Sir,

“Yours very truly,


“T. M’CRIE”

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

“Really great minds seem to have cast off from their hearts the grave’s earth, as well as dissipated the clouds which concealed the heaven from our view.”—RICHTER.

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince gainsayers.”—TITUS i. 9.

T was more as a public speaker, however, that Dr. Thomson did such splendid service to his church and to the liberties of the Christian people. His voice, like a trumpet, awoke the church to her birthright of freedom, and prepared the way for the Disruption conflict.

From the beginning of his ministry he attached himself strongly to what was then, and had long been, the minority in the Established Church—the evangelical minority, of which Dr. John Erskine and Sir Henry Moncreiff, were successively the leaders in the General Assembly, as in the Presbytery and City of Edinburgh.

On Sir Henry’s death in 1827, his place in that capacity by common consent was assigned to Dr. Thomson, with Sir James (Sir Henry’s son), afterwards Lord Moncreiff, for his trusty co-adjutor, along with such faithful allies as Chalmers, Gordon, Macfarlane, and many more who served with him. His influence

grew steadily, if not rapidly. Every year the minorities in the Assembly waxed larger ; once, at least, he found himself at the head of a majority ; before his death, the balance of power had been all but reversed ; and within three years after that sad event, the principles for which he had all his life contended became securely dominant, as they continued to be within the Establishment during the "ten years' conflict" which followed, until the Disruption in 1843 extended them by force of law to be exemplified in fuller development, and with more marked results, in another sphere within the "Free Church of Scotland."

In the Life of Dr. Chalmers by Dr. Hanna, we have this reference to Dr. Thomson : "It was," says Dr. Hanna, "as a debater in the ecclesiastical courts that Dr. Thomson shone pre-eminent. He had studied the constitution and made himself familiar with the practice of these courts. Prompt, self-possessed, and furnished with almost every kind of needful weapon, he varied the closest and most crushing argument with sallies of broad humour and shafts of playful satire. He rushed into debate as the war-horse into the battle, rejoicing in the conflict, merciless, indeed, in his onslaught, but generous to the honourable foe." "In the business of debate," said Dr. Chalmers, speaking of him after death had laid him low, "though great execution is often done by the heavy artillery of prepared speeches, yet the effect of these is incalculably aided by the well-timed discharge of those smaller fire-arms which are used in the skirmishing of extem-

poraneous warfare. I only knew one individual in our church (Dr. Thomson) who had this talent in perfection; and in his hands it was anything but a small fire-arm. Would that there were twenty alike able and intrepid, and as pure as I judge him to have been, on many of the great questions of ecclesiastical polity. The very presence of such would have resistless effect on the divisions of our judicators. But it forms a very rare combination when so much power and so much promptitude go together, or when one unites in his speaking the quickness of opportune suggestion with the momentum of weighty and laborious preparation." Here is yet another on the same subject—Dr. Robert Buchanan—he says: "Dr. Andrew Thomson not merely inherited the principles of Knox and Melville and Henderson—he was himself another of these giant men. Fearless as Knox; profoundly skilled, like Melville, in ecclesiastical affairs; and gifted, like Henderson, with that ready and commanding eloquence so indispensable to the leader of a popular Assembly; he belonged to the same high order of minds as that illustrious triumvirate. He was, moreover, imbued with their spirit; in him the very genius of these great reformers of the church lived again; their intense love of liberty, their unsparing and uncompromising enmity against all corruptions and abuses, their inextinguishable hatred of tyranny and arbitrary power, and, above all, their zeal in promoting the religious culture and intellectual improvement of the people, and their resolute and unflinching

maintenance of the spiritual independence of the church and the rights of the Christian people, formed the grand distinguishing characteristics of Thomson's character and life. And most remarkable was the progress made, during the brief but busy years of his public career, in bringing back the church towards the old paths so well defined in her constitution and so brightly traced in her history."

With perhaps the single exception of Henry Brougham, Dr. Thomson was the foremost man of his time, "holding imperial sway over every understanding," in whatever assembly he addressed.

In connection with the question of Patronage he did noble work, and was far ahead of the other leading men of that day. His far-seeing sagacity proved to his mind that its total abolition was the only way of dealing with the question. "What!" said a moderate one day to him, "would you have the brutes choose their own shepherd? "Yes," said Thomson, "better that, than to have the shepherd chosen by one of the brutes, and he perhaps the greatest brute among them!" Then, with an energy and eloquence all his own, he repudiated and denounced that union of secular with ecclesiastical affairs, by which the sacredness of the pastoral character is deteriorated, and the unity of the pastoral obligation is violated. It was just the theme to rouse his burning zeal, and his "orations" on the subject were splendid, but indeed he excelled himself on every subject on which, when his heart was stirred, he threw the lustre of his genius.

Mr. Maclagan, in his History of St. George's, gives an account of one single occasion in which he put forth in wonderful force and combination, the best gifts of his mind and heart, bringing his fearlessness, humour, and evangelical warmth to bear upon a question in which the characteristic indifference of Moderatism and the earnest spirit of evangelical religion came into sharp and decisive collision.

The Parish of Little Dunkeld, in Perthshire, had become vacant ; and the Crown—acting no doubt under the guidance of its Scottish advisers—presented to the charge a Mr. Nelson, a probationer of the church, who knew absolutely nothing of Gaelic. The Moderates defended the appointment, and resolved to give effect to it, referring with painful obsequiousness in their speeches, to the fact of its being a royal presentation, and therefore peculiarly entitled to instant acquiescence. The case was discussed in Presbytery and Synod, and finally in the Assembly of 1828.

It could not fail to be an occasion of interest and of powerful conflict.

Jeffrey, Cockburn, and Patrick Robertson, were engaged as counsel at the Bar, and the foremost men of the Church were speakers on the subject.

“The representatives of the Crown,” says Mr. Maclagan, “had appeared in the inferior courts by mandatory to uphold the presentation ; but now in the Assembly no appearance was made for the Crown, and Dr. Thomson's acute mind at once saw the purpose of this manœuvre. The officers of state, or whoever

represented the Crown, could not, if they had appeared as parties, give any vote, and hence their absence in the former character.

“With a fearlessness all his own, Dr. Thomson called attention to the fact, and denounced the attempt to appear as parties in the lower courts, and as judges in the highest, as “corrupting the administration of justice.” Solicitor-General Hope, with more promptitude than wisdom, took high ground, challenged Dr. Thomson to say what officers of state were in the House, for he was none, and added that the observations of Dr. Thomson were obviously pointed at him as an individual.

Dr. Thomson’s reply was brief, but pungent. “There are,” he said, “some people in this world, who entertain such a mighty idea of their own importance, that not a word can be uttered respecting what is great, but they must appropriate it to themselves, forsooth! and of this we have now a very striking instance in the language of the Solicitor-General. He says that there are no officers of state in this House, and immediately afterwards makes an attack upon me, as if I had personally alluded to him, when I spoke of officers of state. He says he is not an officer of state, and yet I must be held as referring to him, when I mentioned those parties! I marvel greatly at the learned Solicitor’s logic—and, Moderator, I will not allow the Solicitor-General, or any other man whatever, to call my motives or conduct in question, when I am merely exercising an undoubted privilege, and en-

deavouring to fence this Assembly, as a court of Review, against improper and irregular intrusion."

Not content with such a conclusive reply, the Solicitor-General rose and said, "I then ask the Reverend Doctor, if his remark did not apply to me, to whom it did apply?" To which Dr. Thomson laconically replied, "To the Officers of State,"—followed by a shout of laughter from the House and by the collapse of the Solicitor, whose tendency to dictate and scold met with a rebuke all enjoyed.

The debate proceeded, and at length Dr. Thomson rose to speak. His artillery was in perfect order, and his lighter armoury all at hand. It was clearly a case which admitted of, and merited, his whole powers of ridicule and humour. Dr. Thomson then went on to plead for the people. He said—"But first it is to be observed, that when we speak of the Gaelic population, we do not mean a population that understand Gaelic and nothing else, but that understand English so ill that they cannot be adequately instructed in that language, and for their edification need the services of religion to be performed as much as possible in the Gaelic tongue. The principle implied in this definition is of great importance, and I would offer a few remarks in illustration of it. I may mention a fact which occurred many years ago, and which this day's discussion brought forcibly to my recollection. When my father was minister of Markinch, in Fife, a Highlander came down to superintend the making of some roads in that quarter. He was a respectable and

sensible person, and did his duties with satisfaction to his employers. He had a child to be baptized, and on applying for that privilege to my father (for there was no Gaelic minister within his reach), was as usual examined as to his religious knowledge; but he answered so ill, that my father was on the eve of declining to take him as sponsor for his child, when he instantly recollected that at that moment my late mourned friend, Dr. Fleming, who was an excellent Gaelic scholar, was in the house on a visit. He immediately called in the Doctor, who questioned the man at some length, and found him not only qualified, but more than ordinarily intelligent and well informed on the subject of religion.

“I must mention another thing, which it is very odd has not occurred to any of my brethren in the course of this debate. They seem to have forgotten that Gaelic chapels have been established in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Greenock, Aberdeen, Dundee, &c., established under the sanction and by the authority of the General Assembly. These chapels are provided for Highlanders, but for Highlanders who dwell in the very midst of an English population, who must necessarily carry on the ordinary business of life in the English language, and who must be supposed better able to understand what is said to them by an English minister than their countrymen who inhabit a Highland district, and converse almost perpetually in their vernacular tongue. And why, Sir, have you given these people Gaelic ministers, and why

have you in the case of Edinburgh given a minister to preach to them forenoon and afternoon. . . . Now, Sir, begging the House to keep these things in view, I come to the evidence, that there is a Gaelic population in the parish of Little Dunkeld, and here, I should have thought, the very situation of the parish and the name it commonly goes by, would have had some effect in determining the question. Why, Sir, it is called *the mouth of the Highlands*, and surely it may be presumed that the mouth of the Highlands must have a Gaelic tongue in it. And what should have confirmed us in this belief, did not you observe the difficulty that the learned counsel (Mr. P. Robertson) evidently felt in reading the names of persons and places that occurred in the course of his comment on the map of the parish and on the petition of the parishioners. Though not unused to Gaelic, he had almost broken his jaws in attempting to pronounce these hard words. And now, Sir, I must take notice of the statement which I should have adverted to before. In a printed paper put forth and circulated in Mr. Nelson's name, and which I regret should have issued from such a quarter, I find a calculation respecting the Gaelic inhabitants which, though he intended it not, certainly and unequivocally goes to substantiate all that we have advanced on this topic. He puts it down in this document that in the Highland part of the parish, exclusive of the Amulree mission, the total number of males is 598. That is the confession of the presentee himself. But why

does he count males only? Does he not think females worthy of having a place in the enumeration? These being reckoned, we have it formally and judicially acknowledged by the opposing party that at least there are 1196 Highland parishioners. And while this is surely to be founded on as an admitted fact, and not merely a questionable averment, I must remark, in passing, that it does appear both extraordinary and discreditable that the presentee should, in making out his argument, find it necessary to exclude the female portion of the parishioners from his pastoral care, a circumstance which is not mended by also excluding, in another part of his calculation, all the young persons under 15 years of age from the advantages of his ministry.

“It is impossible to discredit the statement which the people of Little Dunkeld give in their petition respecting their incapacity of being benefited by the ministrations of an English pastor. They have been blamed, indeed, for coming forward at all at that stage of the proceedings. But really, Moderator, I must ask where is the rule that made this step on their part improper or irregular. There is no such thing as a law of any kind to prohibit them from acting as they did. Nay, Sir, I maintain, that the petitioners did exactly what the circumstances of the case required. They were most commendably alive to the spiritual interests of themselves, of their families, their neighbours, and their friends. And when they, a Gaelic population, heard that a minister who could not speak Gaelic, was to

be sent among them, what more natural, more justifiable, than to come forward and acquaint the Presbytery of their situation, and ask that such a measure may not be carried into effect. And was it not better, far better, to do this at the outset, than to wait till the procedure had gone a certain length, till the difficulty of warding off the evil had increased, till it might have been alleged that they ought to have given this information at the commencement. Sir, if the people had delayed they would have been wrong—they would have run the risk of frustrating their own views—and would have shown a lamentable carelessness about their best and dearest interests. But then there is an objection to the petition itself. It is not good, we are told, because it is not written and subscribed on one sheet. This objection shows great ignorance of the way in which petitions are usually and necessarily managed. Nay, Sir, have the objectors never heard of the petition laid before the House of Commons, which was so very long and consisted of so many sheets, that the member who brought it up said, that he believed the other end of it was still in Yorkshire. Nothing, I suppose, will satisfy these gentlemen, but that the petition should have been written on that paper which is manufactured in the form of webs. O, but, the petitioners were so ignorant as to attach their names to the petition by signing on a separate paper, and then uniting the two by means of a rusty pin! Well, and what then? Of what consequence was it, how or by what the several parts of the documents were fastened to-

gether, if it was all there, and if there was reason to believe that it was authentic? Sir, there could be no doubt of its being the petition of the people, and I suspect that this was one reason for being offended at it. For mark, Sir, the petition was not sent by post, it was not conveyed by a messenger of whom the Presbytery knew nothing, it was not laid upon their table by some suspicious or unknown agent. *It was brought up by the people themselves.* Had they petitioned *verbally* or *vivâ voce*, that would have been quite regular and satisfactory. But first, their petition is written and subscribed in due form, and then the 440 petitioners appear *propria personâ* to present, and to authenticate, and to enforce it. This was making 'assurance doubly sure,' and rendering the petition of the people of Strathbraan as complete and unexceptionable a document of the kind as was ever produced before any court. And this petition, I repeat it, bore testimony to the important fact that a Gaelic minister was necessary, and, let me add, that this testimony was borne by the very individuals who must afterwards give evidence, if we go into the proposed inquiry, and being in circumstances far more favourable for eliciting the truth than they can ever be at any future period.

"Sir, I cannot leave the subject of the petition without giving it my humble meed of approbation, in spite of all the exceptions taken to it and of all the imperfections imputed to it. . . . It is the petition of a free Christian people, addressed to their ecclesiastical rulers and spiritual guardians, and supplicat-

ing from them what it should be their desire and their happiness, as it is their high honour and their bounden duty, to grant. It is a petition asking from them no political privilege, no temporal boon, nothing to gratify a factious temper, nothing to flatter a groundless prejudice, nothing that should awaken an alarm in the mind of one human being, be he clergyman or layman. It is a petition praying that the Presbytery should not give the charge of their souls to a man by whose instructions they cannot possibly be profited, because they cannot comprehend the language in which he is to convey it to them: who is incapable of touching or affecting their hearts by reason of what I might almost call his physical incapacity of reaching their understanding: who is utterly and irremediably disqualified for answering the only purpose for which, as a minister of the gospel, he is to be set over them, since from his ignorance of the very elements of their vernacular tongue, he cannot expound to them one truth, or enforce upon them one duty, or impart to them one consolation of that religion which yet it is to be the great object of his life and of his labours among them to teach. It is a petition entreating that court to which you have directed them to apply in all their difficulties and distresses, not to put them under the care of an individual of whom you may as well send them a stucco image as send them his own living person; but to give them instead, one whose speech will be intelligible to them as being their own: between whom and them there can by this means be carried on the

requisite interchange of thought and sentiment: who can preach the word of God and dispense divine ordinances to them in such a manner as that they can perceive the meaning and feel the application of what he says to them: and whom, therefore, they can follow as their good shepherd, because they know his voice as it guides them along their Christian pilgrimage and calls them to glory and to virtue. In short, Sir, it is a petition pouring out the devout and earnest prayer of their heart, that, instead of frowning upon them, and driving them away from you, and making them outcasts from that church in which—scanty as has been the fare that you were able to afford them—they have lived contented, and grateful, and happy, and in which they had wished and hoped to die, you would be pleased to continue with them that frugal share of your good things which they have been accustomed to receive; that you would not only retain them within the geographical limits of your establishment, but keep them fast in your spiritual embrace and under your moral influence; and that, while you perpetuate to themselves the means of grace which they enjoyed under their former pastors, you would give them the additional consolation of believing that their children will be blessed with the same advantages and treated with the same tenderness, after they shall have been gathered to their fathers. Of this character, Sir, as it appears to me, is the petition which was presented to the Presbytery of Dunkeld, and now lies upon your table. And, I ask, is it consistent with

good feeling, or with dutiful conduct, to refuse its prayer? The petitioners cast themselves on your protection and implore your blessing; and will you be indeed so hard hearted as to blight their expectations with a curse? When they beg for bread, will you give them a stone? When they ask a fish, will you throw in among them a serpent? Then, Sir, you are evil, and you are evil beyond all calculation, for you know not how to give good gifts, even to your affectionate and devoted children. 'How think ye,' said the Saviour Himself, 'how think ye, if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray; doth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?' This is the maxim of divine wisdom—this is the dictate of divine mercy. But observe the practical comment which is made upon it by certain persons, and by which we are advised to govern ourselves in the decision of the present question. In fact, Sir, we are required to adopt, as it were, a new reading of the sacred text, and to make it run thus: 'How think ye, if a man have an hundred sheep, and ninety and nine of them be gone astray, doth he not hold fast by the one and leave the ninety and nine to perish in the mountains?' The great Shepherd of the sheep accounted even one of the poorest and meanest and most unworthy of his flock too precious, and purchased at too costly a price, to be lost or neglected on any account by those to whose pastoral care he had committed them. But we are this day required to learn

and to practise a far different lesson ; we are required to deny necessary pasture and suitable guardianship to hundreds and even thousands of them ; and all this injustice and cruelty is to be perpetrated, merely that a presentation may not be sent back to have a different and unexceptionable name inserted in it, and that a young man may not lose a piece of the bread that perisheth—provided for him, no doubt, by the kindness and liberality of his patron—but provided for him by that patron, let it be well observed, out of the patrimony of the church, and at the expense of interests that should be dearer to us than all besides—the spiritual and eternal interests of the people.

“ Sir, it was a joyful, as well as a marvellous thing, to the devout men out of every nation under heaven, dwelling in Jerusalem, when on the day of Pentecost, they heard the Apostles speak to them *in their own tongues*, the wonderful works of God. It is matter of congratulation and of gladness to see the enlightened philanthropy of modern times reproducing, as it were, that astonishing miracle, and exhibiting it in almost its original splendour, and in more than its original extent, to the most distant and unfrequented parts of the habitable globe. And we have been delighted to observe the Established Church of Scotland coming forward somewhat tardily, I confess, yet, I trust, with perfect sincerity, to lend *her* aid in this good work and to assist in imparting to heathen tribes, and in imparting to them *through the medium of their own language and of their own dialects*, the glad tid-

ings of salvation. And, sir, is it in these circumstances—is it with such facts fresh in our memory—with such prospects beaming in our eye—is it in the very first blossom and promise of our missionary zeal that we are urged to withhold from the people dwelling in the bosom of our own land, and endeared to us by every tie that religion and humanity sanction—that precious, that inestimable boon, which we are so ready to communicate even to the inhabitants of Caffraria, or of Hindostan? Sir, I feel mortified and ashamed that such urgency should come upon us—not merely from the presentee, for whom I am willing to make every allowance; but from ministers of the gospel whose peculiar province is to watch for souls, as those that must give an account and to see that not the poorest and most destitute of the people under their superintendence be allowed to pinch or to faint for want of spiritual food. But could I anticipate such a melancholy result as that the General Assembly should yield to such urgency and force in an English preacher on a Gaelic population, I acknowledge that my shame and my mortification would be unbounded. I should regard such a judgment of this house as stamping disgrace on its character and fair fame—as forfeiting its title to that public confidence and respect which it has heretofore enjoyed—as calling down upon it the just and overwhelming indignation of the Christian world for setting aside all the great principles by which we ought to be governed when we sit here as we profess to do, to deliberate, vote, and determine for the glory

of God, and the good of His Church. Sir, it would be virtually ascribing foolishness to the miracle of Pentecost, and denouncing that illustrious and instructive event as an unnecessary, unreasonable, and wasteful expenditure of divine power. It would be administering a bold and presumptive rebuke to the wisest and the worthiest of our countrymen, for having given a better direction and a more efficient operation than it ever had before, to the Christian philanthropy which distinguishes and adorns our age. It would be a stultifying of ourselves as to all our proposed exertions for evangelising the heathen abroad, seeing that these efforts for evangelising the heathen abroad would be coupled with efforts just as strenuous, just as determined, and, believe me, Sir, far more efficacious, for manufacturing heathens at home.

“It would be proclaiming it as our opinion that the solicitude which our forefathers uniformly felt, and the care which they ceaselessly employed for providing Highland parishes with Gaelic preachers and ministers, were utterly useless and absurd, and that all the bustle we are now making about the instruction of that too much neglected portion of our Church is little else—is *nothing* else—than affectation and hypocrisy.”

In that same Assembly, Dr. Thomson appeared as a champion on the Plurality Question. The question was against the union of professional and clerical emoluments and duties—the holding of university chairs and church pulpits and parishes by the same individual. It was the very subject to rouse the burning zeal of a man

like Dr. Thomson, who knew the burden of a congregation to a minister watching for souls, and who regarded with contempt the man who, heedless of what was for the benefit of his people, thought only of gaining a higher income for himself.

The debate was opened by the Rev. Patrick Macfarlane of Glasgow, and seconded by James Moncreiff, Esq., advocate (afterwards Lord Moncreiff), supported by Dr. Chalmers, the Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews.

Dr. Thomson began by saying that "Personality has been (in that debate) deprecated," and then he goes on "For my own part, I make no great professions on the subject. I disclaim, indeed, all wish, and all intention, to hurt unnecessarily the feelings of any person, whether he be absent or present; but further than this, my disclaimer does not go. I will not allow mere courtesy to spoil my argument in such a case as the one before us, or refrain from speaking freely of persons as well as of things, when it is requisite for supporting what I conceive to be the cause of truth. Personality has been practised in reference to myself more than once. A learned gentleman whom I have the honour of numbering among my stated hearers, and who has been pleased to speak in terms of approbation of my services as a minister, was good enough to say that I might, over and above the discharge of my pastoral duties, undertake the duties of a Professorship. Now, Sir, this kind of personality is rather gratifying; it is particularly gratifying, however, as it affords me an

opportunity of saying to the house that I could no more perform what is justly expected of a Professor along with my labours as a parish minister, than I could fly to the moon. I speak from experience. I do not see how I could have leisure to teach in a college, as teaching in a college ought to be conducted, and fit to be in any tolerable measure faithful to the people committed to my spiritual care. I think I might aspire to a Professorship with as much propriety, and perhaps with as much chance of success too, as some of my neighbours, but I have not done so ; and I could not do so without relinquishing and violating what I hold to be my primary and most solemn obligations.

“ But then there is another species of personality which is not quite so easily and safely disposed of. The pluralists themselves have come forward to-day and boldly challenged us to say that pluralists have neglected the duties of either of the situations which they fill. My reverend co-presbyter (Dr. Ritchie) has been very loud and peremptory in his challenge. Well, Sir, the ground on which he asks me to meet him is somewhat delicate, but I do not flinch from it. When he says, ‘Do you bite your thumb at *me*, Sir?’ I would answer, were I influenced by any nice and retiring sensibility, ‘No, Sir, but I bite my thumb.’ But if he insists on coming to close quarters and will make me to speak plain, then, in spite of my natural modesty, I will use all plainness of speech ; and when he asks me again more doggedly than he did before, ‘Do you bite your thumb at *me*, Sir?’ I answer point

blank, 'Yes, Sir, I do bite my thumb at *you*. What, Sir,' he asks, 'do you accuse me of failing in any part of my duty to the church or to the university?' Now truly, were I to give a very direct and personal reply—were I to say, 'Yes, Sir, you neglect these duties'—this might be deemed harsh, and it might irritate my reverend friend and make him angry, which I would be sorry to do. But I will give a response less offensive, though quite the same in its meaning and very obvious in its application to the matter in hand. I say not plainly and practically that you neglect your duties, but that it is *impossible* for you to perform them as you ought. You have placed yourself in a situation which, whatever be your willingness, deprives you of the power of being at once a good Professor and a faithful minister. This is the charge I bring against *you* and against the pluralists. And that being my general doctrine, you may apply it as you have a mind.

"I must also beg, Sir, to make a remark or two on the subject of a school with which I am connected. The Reverend Principal, I think, gave some hint about it. Well, Sir, I may be mistaken; but I know that such a subject has been stated. I know that it has been privately animadverted on and made an argument against me. And though at the best it is but an *argumentum ad hominem*, yet, as I should be sorry that I were in any respect the means of injuring the great cause which I have so much at heart, I request permission to give an explanation which, I feel confi-

dent, will be satisfactory to every one that hears me. It is well known, Sir, that our burgh parishes have no parochial schools. This is a desideratum that has long existed, and has been the cause of much regret to the well-wishers of education. I set myself to supply the want as far as I could, by establishing a parish local school for St. George's. I procured subscriptions for this purpose to the extent of £1,400. I met with the most generous support from many friends and public-spirited individuals, and I cannot omit the opportunity of bearing my testimony to the handsome and liberal conduct of the Solicitor-General in forwarding my views, and to whom, I am sure, it will be best of all rewards to be told that the institution is prospering beyond my most sanguine expectations. Sir, I am not, and never have been, the teacher of the school, as has been alleged. A regular teacher was appointed at the beginning. He has two assistants under him, and these again are aided by as many monitors as the classes require. But I did give a larger portion of my time and attention to the school at the outset than I should have felt myself authorised to bestow on any other object, because I was introducing a new plan of education, which, for its success, needed to be not merely explained but exemplified both to the teachers and the scholars. Observe, however, this plan of education is pervaded by religion. So that I considered myself as strictly within the sphere of my ministerial duty—it being the appointed duty of ministers to superintend the seminaries of learning

within their bounds, and to use their best efforts that none of the children be allowed to grow up without the advantage both of literary and of sacred tuition. Observe, also, that the children attending the school are the children of my own parish ; for it is a rule to admit none from other parishes. They are the lambs of my own flock ; they are the youthful part of that people to whom you have appointed me to minister the truths of Christianity. Observe, farther, that they belong to the lower classes of the people—to those classes with whom, in large towns, we feel it as difficult as it is important to maintain a pastoral intercourse, and to be on such habits as that we can make our labours bear usefully and effectually on their spiritual welfare. And, finally, if I am found fault with for my exertions as to the institution in question, my offence consists in this, that, by the establishment of this local parochial school, I have on Sunday, and on every day of the week, an opportunity of coming into contact with hundreds of the children living in that district over which I am set in holy things, and to whom I could scarcely, if ever, have had access in any other circumstances, and by seeing that they are trained up in useful knowledge, and especially in Christian knowledge, and of personally addressing to them those advices and admonitions which I think suitable to their conduct and condition. The short experience I have had of the benefit of the institution has impressed me strongly with its importance and utility, as an instrument of ministerial duty in my

and more eloquence by far, than all the arguments and all the eloquence we have heard since the commencement of this debate, potent as that argument and commanding as that eloquence have been.

“As to Principal Robertson, I need not speak of the lustre which he shed on the University of Edinburgh as if that were unknown to any one. He was an eminent literary character, and one of the greatest historians that this or any other country ever produced. We do not know too much about him as a parish minister; though even in that capacity, it is certain he was not idle. But certain we are that the engagements which his parochial care exacted from him, he was both inclined and able to achieve. I need not tell *you*, Sir, how much time and labour historical research demands from all who are employed in it. My worthy friend, Dr. M'Crie, has almost renounced the pursuit, on account of its tendency to encroach on what he owes to the congregation that has the benefit of his pastoral services. And, indeed, every one who is at all acquainted with that department of literature must be satisfied that to attain a high reputation in it, requires much undisturbed leisure, and much patient and laborious exertion. When, therefore, I consider the case of Principal Robertson, I cannot help concluding that while another person might easily have been found to do the duties of the parish far better than ever he performed them, all the efforts which he expended on these, were just so much subtracted from that fame which he was acquiring as the head of a great

academical establishment, and from that service which he was rendering to society as a writer of history. To show you that I am right in this conclusion, I will produce authority which our opponents cannot and will not gainsay. I will produce you, Sir, the authority of Principal Robertson himself. In Professor Stewart's life of Dr. Robertson, there is a letter addressed by the Principal to Mr. Baron Mure (dated Nov. 25, 1761), in which are the following sentences :

“ Were I to carve out my own fortune, I should wish to continue one of his Majesty's chaplains for Scotland, but to resign my charge as a minister of Edinburgh, which engrosses more of my time than one who is a stranger to the many innate duties of that office can well imagine. I would wish to apply my *whole time to literary pursuits*, which is at present parcelled out among innumerable occupations.

“ . . . Here, then, you have Principal Robertson's explicit and recorded acknowledgment that his avocations as a parish minister prevented him from giving himself so vigorously as he wished to those literary pursuits in which, as the head of a college and a man of learning, he was anxious to excel, and that it is probably owing to this very circumstance that we have not more historical works from his able and elegant pen.

“ And all this, Sir, let it be remembered, though he had a colleague who was the very model of a parochial clergyman. I mean the venerable Dr. Erskine—who, from his diligent discharge of duty, must have greatly lightened the Principal's labours.

“In regard to the union of parochial charges with secular professorships, the spirit and genius of the constitution does not seem to give much sanction to that abuse. At least it was not insisted upon in the course of the Reverend Principal’s historical detail, except, perhaps, he had an eye to it when referring to very recent practice. For it must be confessed, that of late it has prevailed in some measure; and I am sorry to say that the Town Council of Edinburgh have so far given it their countenance. Of this modern innovation I can say nothing but what is condemnatory. I know nothing to justify or excuse it. It appears to me to be equally inimical to literature and theology. But this point has been so ably handled by some of my friends who have gone before me in this debate, that I shall not trouble you with any discussion of its merits. I can only express my fear, if the union alluded to be permitted, of seeing realized a very curious mistake that once occurred at St. Andrews. When an eminent literary character from England was paying a visit to that university, the Senatus, with their well known hospitality, gave him an entertainment. After dinner, this very appropriate toast was announced by the Principal, ‘*The Arts and Sciences* ;’ on which Professor Brown, who was, unfortunately, rather deaf, rose and audibly repeated the toast in the altered phrase of ‘*Our Absent Friends*.’ Now, Sir, one of the great objects we are aiming at in our motion is simply this, that the arts and sciences may not become *absent friends* in all the universities, as they were in

that of St. Andrews. And we humbly conceive that there is no other way of preventing that catastrophe, but by putting down the pernicious system of pluralities.

“The pluralists, in their unconquerable love of double livings, plead that, at least, they may be allowed to hold those professorships, between which and the pastoral functions there is what they are pleased to call *congeniality*. But what congeniality is there, I would ask, between the problems of geometry and the maxims of the gospel, or between the mode of solving the one, and the mode of illustrating and enforcing the other? I can see none. Perhaps our opponents are thinking of the mathematical clergyman who was endeavouring to demonstrate some point of Christian doctrine, and summed up his argument to a country audience by telling them that what he had been labouring to prove was, in short, as clear and certain as that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; or, perhaps, their notions of congeniality are somewhat like a piece of rhetoric which a reverend friend of mine on the other side favoured us with last night. My reverend friend beside me (Dr. Chalmers) sent over two very distinct and appropriate metaphors for the edification of our opponents; I mean the fountain of poisoned waters, and the pigeons and jack-daws, I suppose in illustration of the doctrine of congeniality, having been carefully put into the fountain of poisoned water. In truth, this congeniality just means any resemblance, however remote, or any point of contact,

however small, which afford a pretext for a clergyman aspiring to a chair ; and I do not know of one professorship, with respect to which I could not discover as much congeniality as would completely answer my purpose. Let us take a few instances, and suppose that we are all smitten with the love of pluralities. There is my worthy friend, Dr. Lee, who is not only a Doctor of Divinity, and a Doctor of Laws, and would certainly have been a Doctor of Music had any such degrees been given among us, but is also a Doctor of Medicine—why, he might aspire to be Dr. Munro's successor ; and he could plead not only that he is qualified by his previous course of study to teach anatomy—though, by your real pluralists, any previous qualification is held rather cheap—but that there is a congeniality between the doctrines of divinity and the bones and muscles and nerves of the human body ; in proof of which he would refer you to Archdeacon Paley's Treatise of Natural Theology. Then there is the chemistry class ; I am going to keep that to myself, for it is very amusing to make chemical experiments, and it is more amusing still to draw four guineas a-piece from five hundred students. And I would find no great difficulty in establishing the point of congeniality, for I would refer to Professor Leslie's book on Light and Heat ; which, though containing no theology in itself, was yet the cause of much theology, such as it was, in other men. Soon, then, the law chairs, Sir, would most certainly be invaded, and we should be told, in order to show the congeniality between law

and divinity, that, in days of yore, in the times of Andrew Melville, all the great divines were also great lawyers, and all the great lawyers were great divines. And if the present state of law and divinity were quoted against us, we could easily reply—for we pluralists are most ingenious in working our way to a double living, and in defending ourselves when we are there—that as our lawyers would not be the worse of a little more divinity, so our divines would not be the worse of a little more law. In short, Sir, I would go through the whole circle of academical studies, and on the principle of congeniality get hold of a professorship in conjunction with a parochial charge. . . . The reverend Principal at your right hand (M'Farlane) pleads for the union of offices—so he did at the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr; because a clergyman, after the laborious duties of his parish, to which he allows there is no maximum, requires the situation of a professorship in order to *relax himself*. These Glasgow gentlemen, it would appear, have strange notions of relaxation. For the late Dr. Findlay, Professor of Divinity, an able and an excellent man, but no pluralist, when going to the country to spend the summer, was asked how he was going to relax himself. And what do you think was his answer? Why, he was going to read through *Poli Synopsis Criticorum*, a book which on a moderate computation would weigh, at least, two or three hundred-weight, and this was, I suppose, what the Glasgow literati called *light-reading*.

“It strikes me, Sir, that our reverend friend at your

right hand, and the rest of the brethren, owe their ideas of relaxation to a misapprehension of a passage in the life of Andrew Melville, which says, that the master of the grammar school in Glasgow confessed that he learned more understanding of the Greek and Latin classics by *cracking and playing* with Andrew Melville than from all the commentators. Sir, this statement of Principal M'Farlane does account most philosophically for a phenomenon, which has lately vexed the minds of parents a good deal. They have been complaining that their boys come from college fonder of play than of study. But no wonder, when the professors do nothing but relax themselves. The Glasgow professors enjoy a very lucrative sort of fun. It is a fine thing to get relaxation; but it is a far finer thing to get five hundred a-year for taking it. Who would not relax himself at that rate? O, Sir, I should like exceedingly to peep into the college of Glasgow some day, and see the reverend Principal and his colleagues playing at Professors."

I have stated before, that this Assembly was a memorable one, for in it Dr. Chalmers made his grand peroration, when an accusation of inconsistency was brought against him.

It will be interesting to our readers, if at this place we should recall that incident. Dr. Chalmers had lectured on chemistry in St. Andrews, saying, "It affords a rational and dignified amusement, and it fills up that spare time which I should otherwise fret away in indolence and disgust, but it touches upon no

essential duty, and I expend as much effort upon the religious improvement of my people as any minister within the bounds of my Presbytery."

This act, however, of the young minister was answered by his Presbytery, and in a pamphlet, which he wrote defending himself at that time there occurred the following sentence—"after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties a minister may occupy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure, for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage."

A speaker at this time having referred to this youthful production of his pen, in order to twit him with inconsistency, the great man rose (perhaps a more thrilling scene was scarcely ever witnessed within the walls of the house), and not only acknowledged the pamphlet as his, but disposed of it in a manner which at once discomfited his opponent and electrified his audience. Repeating his own words, *as to the small amount of time required for the discharge of ministerial duties*, he finished a magnificent address in these words, "Alas! Sir, so I thought in my ignorance and pride. I have now no reserve in declaring that the sentiment was wrong. Strangely blinded that I was. What, Sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But then, Sir, I had forgotten two magnitudes, I thought not of the littleness of time, I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity."

It is interesting to us in our days to hear the senti-

ments of Dr. Thomson, the man who, with zeal and effect, maintained the ancient struggle of the church against the inroads of a debasing and secularizing policy, walking about our ground, telling her towers, admiring her palaces, and employing all his energies in defence of her bulwarks, and, in tones that found an echo in every heart in Scotland, lifting up his voice against the power which would thrust upon a people hungering for the bread of life a heartless and unqualified pastor.

The Rev. James C. Burns, Kirkliston, says that when a boy he once heard Dr. Thomson keep an audience breathless with attention for three hours: story after story was told which helped to enthrall his listeners, and upon some one remarking upon the length of time he had kept up the attention of the people, the Doctor said: "Whenever I see them get dull I throw in a story. I consider a story has an effect—for twenty minutes."

CHAPTER V.

PUBLIC AND PHILANTHROPIC WORK.

“ He was not born to shame ;
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit.
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned
Sole monarch of the universal earth.”—SHAKESPEAR.

IN addition to the interest which he felt and manifested in whatever concerned the ministerial office, he took upon himself a large part of the management of the city charities, and of those benevolent institutions which have for their object the alleviation of the miseries of mankind. He was ever ready to aid, either by his pen or words, the cause of such.

In connection with this sprang the part he so prominently took in the discussions of the Apocrypha Controversy.

From the commencement of the British and Foreign Bible Society, he entered warmly into its views. He saw in it a mighty instrument of enlightened philanthropy, and hailed it as a presage of the glory of the latter days. He fought its battles when mistaken and narrow-minded men attacked it, and was esteemed one of its warmest friends. No sooner, however, had war ceased from without, than elements of a more fatal kind began to gather and to show themselves within; and so, great was his astonishment, as well as the

astonishment of other friends of the institution, when it was discovered that the society was circulating the Apocryphal books along with the canon of Scripture. Then Dr. Thomson, with his characteristic energy threw himself into the middle of the fight. He advocated the pure and unadulterated Bible, and he was right.

The effect produced on Dr. Thomson's health by this grand struggle for the purity of God's blessed word was very bad. The sleepless nights and busy days which the part he had undertaken imposed on him, silently wore down the strength of his constitution, and prepared it for yielding to that blow which put an end to his labours and anxieties.

The great question, however, which occupied his mind, even to the injury of his health, was the question of the Abolition of Slavery in our West-Indian Colonies. With the friends of humanity and religion, Dr. Thomson was so far cordially united: the only point on which they differed, and in which he was far ahead of his friends, was that he wished *immediate* emancipation, while they advocated *gradual*: arguing that the slaves were not in a condition for *immediate* liberation. Years had passed since the subject had first been mentioned, and nothing had been done to bring to a close the horrid system.

Two great meetings were held in Edinburgh in October, 1830, on this subject, both of which Dr. Thomson attended. His appearance on the first of *these occasions* has been described as "a most splendid

and varied display of wit, argument, and impressive eloquence." Then again, on the 19th of the month, with a power of argument, and an earnestness and elevation of tone which can never be forgotten, he entered on the subject, the moral dignity of which seemed to have imparted its character to the man and to his eloquence. Never, perhaps, did he appear more truly great. The following extract, given by Mr. Maclagan, will show its force and eloquence :

"As a proof of the necessity of gradual Emancipation, Mr. C—— tells us the old story of a man who had been confined for thirty years in the Bastile, and who, when liberated, at the destruction of that horrid state prison, became more miserable by the suddenness of his transition ; and adds that his liberators would have been both more rational and more human had they provided an asylum to receive him. This I agree with Mr C—— in thinking they ought to have done : but the analogy does not hold ; for, instead of proposing that the slaves should be turned adrift and cared for no more, we propose that such arrangements shall be made as are suited to the exigencies of their condition. This is what our petition prays for, along with their emancipation. It is what they are entitled to in equity, as well as in compassion ; and far be it from us to say or do anything that would disparage such claim. But really, Mr. C—— does not seem to entertain a lequate ideas on the subject. 'His eye,' says he, 'could not bear the effulgence of day because its physical structure had accommodated itself to the twilight glimmering of

a gloomy cell.' It is really trifling with the subject to talk thus gravely, on the man's eye being unable to bear the daylight, for that is the plain meaning of the words. Why, Sir, a green shade would have answered the purpose, and then, Sir, I would infinitely rather be a free man with my eyes hermetically sealed against all the beauties of the earth, and all the magnificence of the firmament, than I would be a slave with my eyes wide open to look upon my chains that were never to be broken, and upon my taskmasters who were never to have done with oppressing me, and upon my dearest kindred who were either enjoying a blessing from which I was for ever excluded, or to be my fellow-sufferers without hope, under the basest and bitterest of all human degradation.

"But if you push me, and still urge the argument of insurrection and bloodshed, for which you are far more indebted to fancy than to fact, as I have shown you, then I say, be it so. I repeat that maxim, taken from a heathen book, but pervading the whole Book of God, 'Fiat justitia reat cælum.' Righteousness, Sir, is the pillar of the universe. Break down that pillar and the universe falls into ruin and desolation; but preserve it, and though the fair fabric be dilapidated—it may be rebuilt and repaired—it will be rebuilt and repaired, and restored to all its pristine strength, and magnificence, and beauty. If there must be violence, let it even come, for it will soon pass away; let it come and rage its little hour, since it is to be succeeded by lasting freedom, and prosperity, and

happiness. Give me the hurricane rather than the pestilence. Give me the hurricane, with its thunder, and its lightning, and its tempest ; give me the hurricane with its partial and temporary devastations, awful though they be : give me the hurricane, with its purifying, healthful, salutary effects : give me that hurricane infinitely rather than the noisome pestilence whose path is never crossed, whose silence is never disturbed, whose progress is never arrested by one sweeping blast from the heavens ; which walks peacefully and sullenly through the length and breadth of the land, breathing poison into every heart and carrying havoc into every home ; enervating all that is strong, defacing all that is beautiful, and casting its blight over the fairest and happiest scenes of human life ; and which, from day to day, and from year to year, with intolerant and interminable malignity, sends its thousands and its tens of thousands of hapless victims into the ever-yawning and never-satisfied grave."

Never was the triumph of truth and eloquence more complete. Before he was half through, the majority of the meeting was with him, and after speaking two hours and a half, an amendment that the measure be immediate was carried by rounds of applause, and in the rapturous acclamations of that crowded assembly was heard the first echo of that voice of freedom which over all the world proclaimed liberty to the captive children of men.

CHAPTER VI.

LAST DAYS—DEATH—SUMMING UP OF HIS CHARACTER.

No earthly clinging—
 No lingering gaze—
 No strife at parting—
 No sore amaze ;
 But sweetly, gently,
 He passed away !
 From the world's dim twilight,
 To endless day.—ANON.

UP to the period of his death, it might be said, Dr. Thomson's heart and time were engrossed with the subject of slave emancipation, and he almost expired with it on his lips—a worthy termination to the labours of one whose governing principle had been love to God, and, issuing from that, love to man. For some time before his death, it is believed he had experienced presentiments, of the approaching event. When urged by his family to take more rest and care, he was wont to reply with solemnity, "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work." Then the increasing earnestness and richness of his prayers struck every one who heard him, still his strength was outwardly firm and his natural force appeared unabated.

"On the Sabbath preceding his death, Dr. Thomson officiated in his own pulpit in the morning," writes Mr.

Maclagan, adding, "Dr. Robert Buchanan told me some months ago that he thought the young minister of Salton in Haddingtonshire occupied St. George's pulpit in the afternoon of that day, and conducted the last service Dr. Thomson took part in, and preached the last sermon he heard. On the following Wednesday, Dr. Buchanan attended the meeting of the Edinburgh Presbytery and heard Dr. Thomson speak. In the evening he dined with Dr. Gordon, to whom after dinner a note was handed. He kept it in his hand, playing with it as the conversation proceeded, and at length opened it. Unable to speak, he handed it to Dr. Buchanan. It announced the death of Dr. Thomson, whom they had parted with, scarcely an hour before in apparently vigorous health."

On the 9th of February, 1831, Dr. Thomson, as was his custom, rose and had breakfast at an early hour. At family worship he read the last three psalms and concluded with a prayer remarkable for its spirituality and earnestness. He then attended a meeting of presbytery, and displayed his usual interest in the business of the court. Returning home about five o'clock he walked with a friend, Mr. Burn Murdoch, to his own door, 29 Melville street, and when about to enter the house he fell down on the threshold and expired without a struggle or a groan, supposed to be from disease of the heart. Dr. Sibbald, Hope Street, was sent for, but life was extinct.

A stroke so sudden and unexpected reverberated over Scotland. At the comparatively early age of 52,

just when the church and country needed him so much, he had been taken away as if to warn those who would trust in an arm of flesh. Even his foes mourned for him, those who while living regarded him as a formidable antagonist could not refrain from according to his memory the tribute of respect, but to his family and friends and his congregation his loss was irreparable.

Lord Moncreiff stole into the darkened room where the body lay to weep in silence over his beloved friend, while he sat bowed in grief, a hand was laid gently on his shoulder, and the brother of the deceased, the Rev. Mr. Thomson of Perth, said softly, "My brother shall rise again," and thus spoke the Christians to each other with bated breath, for sorrow and love, like all true love and sorrow, seemed almost too deep for words.

His funeral was a public one ; none had ever been before seen like it. He was buried in a piece of ground close to St. Cuthberts Church-Yard, which then belonged to the town of Edinburgh but which has since been acquired by the trustees of St. John's Episcopal Church. A simple marble tablet marks his grave and a willow hangs over it, the slip of which was brought from Calvin's grave.

On the following Sabbath (February 28th), a funeral sermon was preached in St. George's church by Dr. Chalmers in the forenoon, from Heb. xi. 4. ; from which we quote a few paragraphs.

"It is just as if Death had wanted to make the highest demonstration of his sovereignty, and for this

purpose had selected as his mark, him who stood the foremost and the most conspicuous in the view of his countrymen. I speak not at present of any of the relations in which he stood to the living immediately around him, to the thousands in church whom his well known voice reached upon the Sabbath, to the tens of thousands in the city whom through the week in the varied rounds and meetings of christian philanthropy, he either guided by his counsel or stimulated by his eloquence. Few know, over and above, how far the wide and the wakeful and the untiring benevolence of his nature carried him ; and that in the labours and the wanderings connected with these he may be said to have become the personal acquaintance of the people of Scotland—this so much so, that there is not a village in the land where the tidings of his death have not conveyed the intimation that a master in Israel has fallen ; and I may also add, that such was the charm of his companionship, such the cordiality lighted up by his presence in every household, that, connected with his death, there is at this moment an oppressive sadness in the hearts of many thousands, even of our most distant Scottish families. And so a national lesson has been given forth by this event, even as a national loss has been incurred by it. It is a public death in the view of many spectators. And when we think of the vital energy by which every deed and every utterance was pervaded—of that prodigious strength which but gamboled with the difficulties that would have so depressed and over-borne other men,—

of that promptness in conflict, and that promptitude in counsel with his fellows—of that elastic buoyancy which ever rose with the occasion, and bore him onward and upward to the successful termination of his course—of the weight and multiplicity of his engagements, and yet, as if nothing could over-work that colossal mind and that robust frame, the perfect lightness and facility wherewith all was executed ;—when one thinks, in the midst of these performances, how intensely he laboured I had almost said how intensely he lived, in the midst of us, we cannot but acknowledge that death, in seizing upon him, hath made full proof of a martyr that sets all the might and all the prowess of humanity at defiance.” Then, speaking of the cold reign of moderatism, from which Scotland had been awakened, in the same discourse, the preacher said, in reference to evangelical religion: “ There is none who gave it greater momentum or borne it more triumphantly along, than did the lamented pastor of this congregation. His talents and his advocacy have thrown a lustre around the cause. The prejudices of thousands have given way before the might and the mastery of his resistless demonstrations. The evangelical system has in consequence risen prodigiously of late years in the estimation of general society, somewhat to a great degree, we doubt not, under the blessing of God, with his powerful appeals to Scripture, and his no less powerful appeals to the consciences of men. If, indeed, our next war is to be a war of principles, then, before the battle is begun, the noblest of our champions has fallen. Yet we dare not

give up to despondency, a cause which has truth for its basis, and the guarantee of heaven's omnipotence for its complete and everlasting triumph. We are 'distressed, but not in despair : troubled, yet not forsaken : cast down, yet not destroyed ;' ' help, Lord, when the godly man ceaseth, and the righteous fail from the children of men.' "

Dr. M'Crie, who knew him well, says of his dear friend : " Those who saw Dr. Thomson once, knew him ; intimacy gave them a deeper insight into his character, but furnished no grounds for altering the opinion which they had at first been led to form. Simplicity—which is an essential element in all minds of superior mould—marked his appearance, his reasoning, his eloquence, and his whole conduct. All that he said and did was direct, straight-forward, and unaffected ; there was no labouring for effect, no following in a double line. His talents were such as would have raised him to eminence in any profession or public walk of life which he might have chosen—a vigorous understanding, an active and ardent mind, with powers of close and persevering application. He made himself master in a short time of any subject to which he found it necessary to direct his attention : had all his knowledge at perfect command : expressed himself with the utmost perspicuity, ease, and energy : and when roused by the greatness of his subject, or by the nature of the opposition which he encountered, his bold and masterly eloquence produced an effect, especially on a popular assembly, far beyond that which depends on the sallies

of imagination, or the dazzling brilliancy of fancy work. Nor was he less distinguished for his moral qualities, among which shone conspicuously an honest, firm, unflinching, fearless independence of mind, which prompted him uniformly to adopt and pursue that course which his conscience told him was right, indifferent to personal consequences, and regardless of the frowns and threats of the powerful." Though Dr. Thomson was known as a popular and able preacher from the time he first entered on the ministry, the powers of his mind were not fully called forth and developed until his appointment in St. George's. He entered on this charge with a deep sense of the importance of the station, as one of the largest parishes of the metropolis, containing a population of the most highly educated class of society; and not without the knowledge that there was in the minds of a part of those among whom he was called to labour a prepossession against the peculiar doctrines which had always held a prominent place in his public ministrations. But he had not long occupied that pulpit when, in spite of the delicate situation in which he was placed by more than one public event which obliged him to give a practical testimony (displeasing to many in high places) in favour of the purity of Presbyterian worship and the independence of the Church of Scotland. He disappointed those who had foreboded his ill-success, and exceeded the expectations of such of his friends as had the greatest confidence in his talents. By the ability and eloquence of his dis-

courses, by the assiduity and prudence of his more private ministrations, and by the affectionate solicitude which he evinced for the spiritual interests of those committed to his care, he not only dissipated every unfavourable impression, but seated himself so firmly in the hearts of his people, that long before his lamented death, no clergyman in this city was more cordially revered and beloved by his congregation. Nothing endeared him so much to them and so deservedly, as the attention he paid to the young and the sick; and of the happy art which he possessed of communicating instruction to the former, and administering advice and consolation to the latter, there are many pleasing and, it is to be hoped, lasting memorials.

“Great as Dr. Thomson’s popularity was (and few men in his sphere of life ever rose so high in popular favour), he was not exposed to the woe denounced against those ‘of whom all men speak well.’ He had his detractors and enemies, who waited for his haltings, and were prepared to magnify and blazen his faults. Of him it may be said as of another Christian patriot, no man ever loved or hated him moderately. This was the inevitable consequence of his great talents, and the rough contests in which he was involved. His generous spirit raised him above the indulgence of envy and every jealous feeling, but it made him less tolerant of those who displayed these mean vices. When convinced of the justice of a cause, and satisfied of its magnitude, he threw his whole soul into it, summoned all his powers to its defence, and

assailed its adversaries, not only with strong argument, but with sharp, pointed, and poignant sarcasm; but unless he perceived insincerity, malignity, and perverseness, his own feelings were too acute and too just to permit him gratuitously to wound those of others. That his zeal was always timed by prudence, that his ardour of mind never hurried him to a precipitate conclusion, or led him to magnify the subject in debate, that his mind was never warped by party feeling, and that he never indulged the love of victory, or sought to humble a trying or pragmatic adversary, are positions which his true friends will not maintain. But his ablest opponents will admit that in all the great questions in which he distinguished himself he acted conscientiously; that he was an open, manly, and honourable adversary, and that, though he was sometimes intemperate, he was never derisive. Dr. Thomson was by constitution a reformer; he felt a strong sympathy with those great men who, in a former age, won renown by assailing the hydra of error, and of civil and religious tyranny; and his character partook of theirs. In particular, he bore no inconsiderable resemblance to Luther, both in excellencies and defects; his leonine nobleness and potency, his masculine eloquence, his facetiousness and pleasantry, the fondness which he showed for the fascinating charms of music, and the irritability and vehemence which he occasionally exhibited, to which some will add the necessity which this imposed on him to make retractions, which, while they threw a partial shade over his fame, taught

his admirers the needful lesson, that he was a man subject to like passions and infirmities with others. But the fact is, though hitherto known to few, and the time is now come for revealing it, that none of those effusions which were most objectionable, and exposed him to the greatest obloquy, were either composed by Dr. Thomson, or seen by him, until they were published to the world; and that in one instance, which has given rise to the most unsparing abuse, he paid the expences of a prosecution, and submitted to make an apology, for an offence of which he was innocent as the child unborn, rather than give up the name of the friend who was morally responsible for the deed—an example of generous self-devotion which has few parallels.”

In the *Christian Instructor*, a friend, writing of him after his death, says—“Conversing on topics and styles in preaching several years ago, Dr. Thomson said, ‘Ministers,’ and his eyes became suffused with tears as he spoke, ‘are very apt to judge of the experience of others by their own. I know that I need the law to be often presented to me, and thus I preach much upon the law.’ Such was the humility of this eminent servant of Christ, for these words were addressed by him, at the height of his popularity, to a mere stripling. We have seen that his assiduous preaching of the law arose, according to his own humble confession, from another source than cold and indistinct impressions of the Divine love as manifested to sinners in the gospel. Amid the distracting

avocations of his employment, the intense interest with which he engaged in them, and the manifold temptations of popularity in an opulent and accomplished circle, he must have deeply felt the dangers of self-confidence, and as his prayers in church continually showed, had very awful impressions of guilt incurred in sinning because grace abounds. The law, therefore, as the great rule of Scriptural obedience, he anxiously and continually sought to impress on himself and others, both as a schoolmaster to lead the sinner to Christ, and as a criterion by which the saint might judge of his real progress in grace, considered apart from mere passing emotions. But on sacramental occasions, and when the presence of affliction in his own family, or in those which composed his flock, removed him for a season from those scenes of business and temptation in which he felt his danger of sinning greatest, it was seen and confessed by all how clear was his views of the doctrines of grace, and how completely and powerfully the consolations of the gospel occupied his soul. Thus, at the very seasons when the legalist and the formalist are sure to display the practical effects of their false notions and cold affections, Dr. Thomson shone forth with surpassing lustre as *complete in Christ*. Rejoicing in his partial deliverance from the besetting temptations of common life, he drank largely, for he felt he could drink safely, of the waters of salvation; and these, too, his deep and affectionate sympathies led him to communicate, with a full and overflowing heart, to his flock. But these

overflowings of intense affection never degenerated into mawkish sentimentalism. Loathing insincerity and hypocrisy with his whole soul, he could not affect the language of feelings which the ordinary business and scenes of life make it impossible always to sustain. At no time indeed, and in no circumstances, did his affection for his flock, and especially for the younger members of it, ever forsake him. I remember mentioning to him in London that a pious and promising lad, who had attended St. George's Church from his childhood, was living some twenty miles off. The Doctor learnt this news with great interest, and made a point of seeing the young man before returning to Scotland. But in his sacramental prayers and addresses, what anxiety and solicitude, what depth of affection, what exquisite fidelity and tenderness in discriminating between the careless and the fearful, what an intense consciousness of the ties by which he and his youthful flock were connected together, and what ardent longings after entire success in uniting them for ever to his and their ever-living and adorable Head! The whole mystery of their future lives seemed to lie before him, and with every temptation and perplexity and sorrow with which they were likely to be beset, he seemed to sympathise as keenly as if each individual among them were an only child.

“ We may, perhaps, refer to another peculiarity in Dr. Thomson's habits to the same vigilant regard to his own besetting temptations, although I am not aware that it influenced his general maxims. From

the wonderful vigour and richness of his conversation, he was no doubt often tempted to court the society of master minds like his own, to keep aloof from that of ordinary and weak-minded persons, and even to be chary of his words in their company; and may we not infer that it was from a consciousness that he was liable to such risings of pride, ambition, and self-seeking, that he carried perhaps to excess his accessibility to all who sought his society. Divine grace seemed to impart to him a peculiar joy in every triumph over such feeling, however natural; and we may even suppose that the consciousness that he was thereby subduing such propensities, gave an additional interest to the labours he underwent in teaching the children of the parochial school, to which he devoted so much of his time."

One instance of the boldness with which Dr. Thomson defended what he thought to be right must not be omitted; it was when orders were given in council for the celebration of the funeral of the Princess Charlotte. Dr. Thomson refused to open his church on that occasion for divine service, for he saw in the order an invasion made upon the spiritual independence of the Scottish Kirk. The same thing happened when the command was issued for a form of prayer to be used in church in order to omit the name of Queen Caroline, the divorced wife of the King. Then, as before, Dr. Thomson asserted the spiritual independence of the church and its ministers, and would not use the prescribed formula.

Before Dr. Thomson came to Edinburgh it had been the fashion of the gentlemen of the city to despise going to church—they left church going to ladies; but it was not long before Dr. Thomson made quite a revolution on that subject, and his church was soon filled with men as well as women. And not only did the Edinburgh gentlemen shun the house of God, but they largely frequented the theatre and such like places. The Doctor's spirit was greatly grieved at such a state of things, which were brought to a climax by the following incident. One Saturday night late, when he was returning from visiting the dying bed of one of his hearers, he happened to pass the house of an elder of St. George's and saw it brilliantly lighted up, and sounds of music coming from its walls. He went home in indignation. The next day he preached the first of the series of sermons on "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," which made quite a stir in the West end of the city, and brought about a new state of matters.

I cannot finish this sketch better than by giving a letter received from the Rev. Mr. Cousin as to the late respected minister of St. George's. In it he gives his personal recollections of this greatly gifted man.

CHAPTER V.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

“The true One gives you truth ; a heritage
Richer than that which kings may buy or sell.
For children’s children to the farthest age ;
Guard thou that treasure well.”—BONAR.

“My dear Miss Watson,—It is one thing to talk over one’s reminiscences to such a sympathetic hearer as yourself, and quite another to sit down alone to commit them to paper, in regard to events that all came to a close more than fifty years ago. I find, however, that after these recent conversations with you, and enjoying the advantage of going over Mr. Maclagan’s most admirable and interesting sketch, ‘St. George’s, Edinburgh,’ those scenes which made such a deep impression at the time, and used to be so often talked of among friends for many a year thereafter, have come back with a freshness beyond what I could have conceived possible. Whether they will be of any use to you is another question which you must decide for yourself.

“My remembrances of Dr. Andrew Thomson reach back to a very early period of my life. For, in my father’s house, as in thousands of others over the whole of Scotland, ‘St. George’s, Edinburgh,’ both in and out of the Establishment, was then, as ever since, by universal consent the Metropolitan Church. And though in those days it was not customary or approved for families to divide in going to church, I was sometimes allowed to wander from the West Kirk to St. George’s to

hear 'The Doctor.' It was always crowded to the door and in all the passages. So great was the demand for sittings that it was generally impossible for an entire family to obtain accommodation without waiting on the town council with petitions, sometimes for years. On the somewhat rare occasions, when, as a boy, I went to St. George's, I remember being profoundly impressed and melted by the psalmody, which, under the direct superintendence of Dr. Thomson himself and his admirable coadjutor, his friend and precentor, Mr. R. A. Smith, was the very model of our grand old Presbyterian worship. Amidst the exquisite power and harmony of the well trained human voice divine, there was no need, as there was no thought, of the organ. Dr. Chalmers had recently published a magnificent sermon on the popular notions of heaven, as sometimes involving little more than 'floating on a cloud perpetually singing psalms,' and I remember that, in listening to the 'hallelujahs and hosannas of the St. George's anthems, I used to feel that, after all, the popular notion was not so much amiss as at least one ideal of heaven.

"As a preacher, Dr. Thomson may have had some equals, and, it may be, one or two superiors, but it may be questioned if there was even one so peculiarly fitted for the time and place and work to be done in the new parish of St. George's. Certainly, there was not one in Edinburgh to whom the cause of evangelic truth owed so much at the time. In that most important and peculiar sphere, he won over the great mass of the educated classes in favour, and, to no small extent, brought them under the power, of the doctrines of grace, as embodied in his stated preaching. One of his greatest published discourses, his funeral sermon on Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, attracted the notice of

no less a man than Henry Brougham, himself the greatest orator of his day, by whom it was reviewed in the January number of the *Edinburgh Review*, 1828. Mr. Brougham extracts largely from the sermon, and always in terms of high admiration. Perhaps you could not gratify those who revere the memory of both Sir H. Moncrieff and Dr. Thomson, and love to find them associated together as the revered master and 'favourite disciple,' better than by finding room for a quotation from Brougham's most interesting delineation of 'Sir Harry,' as a preacher, every word of which is almost equally applicable to Dr. Thomson. *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 47, p. 24. After all, however, it was as a leader of men in the open field of public life that Dr. Thomson stood out pre-eminent, conspicuous, alone. In the church courts, on the platform, in public controversy, there was no man that came near him. His greatest and most enduring work, however, was in connection with the great controversy in defence of the unadulterated purity, the sole and supreme authority of Scripture, as alone and in every part of it, the Word of God, as distinct from the Apocrypha. To the amazement and dismay of the christian people of Scotland, this had come to be fatally imperilled by the actings and reasonings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, hitherto regarded as one of the noblest christian institutions of the age. They had been earnestly supported by men of all the churches, and by none with more zeal and effect than Dr. Thomson. By-and-bye, however, it began to be whispered, and was soon absolutely demonstrated, that in their anxiety, apparently, to extend the influence and operations of the society, its London committee had, against the fundamental laws of the institution, been by its foreign agents, Papists and Socinians, circulating the

Apocrypha along with the Word of God, and *as* the Word of God. It was felt that in thus placing the Apocrypha on the same level as the Scriptures, the London committee were virtually reducing the Scriptures to the same level as the Apocrypha, with its vain and foolish legends and deadly heresies. Attempts were made, but in vain, to get these and other alarming abuses of management rectified, and effectually guarded against, for all time coming. In the London committee there were men of strong will and somewhat tortuous ways, who would neither acknowledge wrong-doing in the past, nor give anything like adequate guarantees for the future. At last, therefore, it was found necessary by the Edinburgh committee to take some decisive action, and after much consultation it was laid on Dr. Thomson to draw up a paper afterwards known and much abused as the 'Second Statement.'

"This document had been gone over and revised most carefully by Dr. Gordon, Dr. John Lee, Dr. Paxton, Dr. Peddie, and others equally calm and equally venerable. It had been found necessary to be explicit and outspoken in exposing the abuses that had crept into the management of the society. When, therefore, like Paul at Antioch, Dr. Thomson saw the Barnabases of the Church beginning to be 'carried away with their dissimulation,' he had not scrupled to withstand the committee to the face and to use great plainness of speech. It was no time for speaking smooth words, for, in defence of the committee, strange things were beginning to be said and written. To extenuate their circulation of the Apocrypha side by side with Scripture, doubts were thrown, in various organs of the party, upon the very canon and inspiration of the Bible itself. Thus the whole standard of faith and

practice in the Church of God was thrown loose and brought into doubt. Step by step, and almost perhaps unconsciously, they had been led into the adoption and defence of measures by which, as so often in ecclesiastical history, truth had been wounded in the house of her friends, and christian principle sacrificed to a false and fancied expediency.

“It had been long before Dr. Thomson and those acting with him could make up their minds to the public exposure of these malpractices, lest the cause of Bible circulation should suffer. But as the supreme magnitude of the interests involved gradually opened out, he came to feel that necessity was laid on him to put forth all his strength in defence of the purity of God's Word. As the controversy went on, and new abuses were unveiled, he spoke strongly out in their exposure; and none the less so that they had sprung up under the countenance of good men, and in the supposed interests of a great religious institution. Like all who have done good work in the exposure of abuses in the world, or evil practices in the church, he was a man who could be roused to great vehemence; but as Chalmers nobly distinguished, his was the vehemence, not of passion, but of sentiment and principle.

“But from the days of Paul of Tarsus down through every age of the church, the defenders of God's truth have invariably been met by the charge of undue severity and want of charity. Few men ever suffered more from this than Dr. Andrew Thomson. And though he was not the man to quail before bitter words, none the less, as a man of warm and generous affections, and of a very tender heart, he felt keenly the coldness or desertion of timid friends, and the misrepresentations of angry opponents, whose misdoings

he had been obliged to expose and rebuke. But with such coadjutors as the Haldanes, Paxtons, Gordons, and others, representative men from all the churches, he carried the Christian manhood of Scotland along with him. For, in defence of the great cause he had undertaken, he had traversed every part of it. And in form and feature, in personal character, in structure of mind and style of eloquence, he was every inch a man—a strong, straightforward, genial, generous, kingly man, carrying a breezy sunshine with him wherever he went, in public or in private. All his highest powers and characteristics came out in those memorable meetings of the Edinburgh Bible Society; the remembrance of which, after 50 years, arouses the enthusiasm of the few of us that survive to speak of them. For, after all the great events we have seen, and the noble men we have heard, the hero of our student days is our hero still. In 1829, when an unexpected movement of the London party required a special meeting of the Edinburgh Bible Society, such an assemblage came together as had seldom been seen in those days; and no one present will ever forget the boundless enthusiasm with which, at the close of the meeting, when a special vote of thanks was unexpectedly proposed to Dr. Thomson in person, by one well-known layman, and seconded by another, it was caught up and carried amidst the acclamations of the vast assemblage.

“It may be that it was felt he needed encouragement, for it was beginning to be known that his strength was giving way amidst the protracted and overwhelming labours, and the weariness and estrangements of the long strife, all the bitterness of which had come to be concentrated on him as the ablest and most indefatigable leader and champion of the cause. There

was but one other meeting in connection with this great cause at which he was ever to be heard again. In some respects it was the most memorable of them all. Robert Haldane delivered a most complete and conclusive defence of their position; but, even then, the speech of the day was that of Dr. Thomson. As if with some premonition that it might be his last opportunity, he went once more over the whole ground, closing up with some pathetic words of unwonted allusion to himself. With characteristic magnanimity, he first of all acknowledged, and frankly and without reserve expressed his deep regret for, the undue violence into which he had occasionally been betrayed amidst the aspersions to which he had been exposed in the course of the controversy. 'But, after all,' he added, 'it was for the unadulterated purity of God's Word that I was contending. Sir, I have fought for myself; I have been called to do so; having withstood to the face and sharply rebuked and relentlessly exposed the desecrators of God's holy Word, I was for that service defamed in my character and wounded in my feelings. . . . I have fought for my brethren, and verily from such I have had my reward. But, Sir, I have fought for the Bible—the book of God—the record of saving faith—the foundation on which rest all our hopes for eternity. I have fought for the Bible, and there is a reward for that; there is,' he added, laying his hand on his breast, 'there is a reward here, there is a reward yonder, which no man, be he friend or be he foe, shall ever take from me.'

"These words, as coldly read, may seem simple enough; but in the eloquent and thrilling tones of the speaker, in all the circumstances and surroundings, I have never heard anything reach home to the heart

with more thrilling effect. For, in all the long controversy, he had never spoken with more fulness and force on behalf of the great cause on which he had just spoken for the last time. In less than a year, under the strain of his prodigious labours, his vital energies gave way; the tender heart too much strained suddenly ceased its beatings, as he long expected, and he was suddenly cut down in the vigour of his manhood and full-orbed splendour of his powers. But before he was thus called to enter on his rest, the great work of his life was virtually done. Good men had got into a false position, and it took some time before they could right themselves. But now, as the result of the great controversy, there is not a Bible Society in England or Scotland in which the Apocrypha is allowed to be circulated directly or indirectly, or which is not conducted on the very lines contended for amidst so much labour and obloquy by Dr. Andrew Thomson of St. George's, Edinburgh.

“But though thus his eloquent voice was for the last time heard in connection with the Bible controversy, some months before his death, he was in harness up to his last hour. In the great awakening of the nation before and after the era of the first reform bill, the cries and wrongs of our 800,000 colonial slaves were finding voice in the national ear, and exercising a power that could no longer be resisted in its heart and conscience. Wilberforce and his noble successor, Fowell Buxton, had seen their labours so far crowned with success that even the government had, under the leadership of Canning, introduced measures for the palliation of slavery with some dim and distant hope of its ultimate extinction. But the experience of every passing year only more conclusively proved that

slavery would admit of neither palliation nor restraint. All attempts in that direction, by alarming and irritating the planters, only rendered slavery more intolerant and more intolerable. But in England, its doom was knelling out by Brougham in his magnificent Philippic on the great text, that 'man cannot hold property in man.' And in Scotland, the same text had been already taken up for years by Dr. Thomson, and placed upon a christian basis, and enforced by all the powers and motives of the christian revelation. In the pulpit, where he addressed the most influential congregation in Scotland—in the Press, and on the Platform, he had thrown all his energies into the great plea, alike for the claims of God, and, under Him, for the rights of immortal man. And though as yet parliament still faltered, it came to be felt that the people were won. Under the auspices of the anti-slavery society, accordingly, first one great meeting and then another yet further in advance, was called in Edinburgh. The first was summoned for 8th October, 1830. It was known that Francis Jeffrey and others of high name and great popularity were to take part in the proceedings. It was taken for granted that Dr. Thomson could not be wanting. There was an immense assemblage. Jeffrey spoke with his usual brilliancy and power, and, with a view to the gradual abolition of slavery in the British colonies, moved a petition to the effect, that every child born after 31st December, 1831, should be declared free. He was seconded by Dr. John Ritchie, then a most popular leader amongst the Dissenters, and it seemed as if they would carry all before them. It had been observed with amazement, that Dr. Thomson, of all men in the world, was not on the platform. But at last the well-known face was seen rising from the body of the Hall,

and was received with acclamation mingled here and there with some slight tokens of disapproval. At once he was most cordially invited to the platform by the chairman, Lord Provost Allan. 'No, my lord,' said Dr. Thomson, with a look of good humoured drollery, 'I cannot come to the platform this time; I am going to speak against your resolutions.' The meeting was amazed. Dr. Andrew Thomson going to oppose resolutions for the abolition of slavery! What could it mean? In a few sentences, he made it plain enough, that there was no mistake on his part, that it was they, not he, who were inconsistent with themselves. He put before them the converse of their own proposal—that in petitioning for no more than that every child born after 31st December, 1831, should be declared free, they were virtually asking that no child born before that date should escape from life-long bondage. He pictured with infinite pathos, the forlorn mother looking from the midst of slavery with its intolerable wrongs and nameless infamies upon her free-born children, from whom she must now of necessity be dissevered, and the children looking from their freedom—looking on their mother still in chains, still liable to be torn by the horrible bamboo before their very eyes. Briefly, but with resistless power, he showed the impossibility of training up a generation of free men under such a system; and rising amidst the enthusiasm swelling around him, he utterly denied the right of the meeting to ask, or of the parliament to grant, legislation that would produce such a monstrous and unnatural state of things.

"Long before he was done, the entire meeting was with him. 'Move, move, move,' rose from every quarter of the Hall. He had sat down. But again with beaming face, he rose and said, 'I had merely

meant to exonerate my own conscience as a member of committee, but since you insist on it, I *will* move that we petition for absolute and immediate emancipation, with such arrangements as may be needful for the welfare of both slaves and owners.' Then was witnessed such a scene as has seldom been observed on any platform before or since. One member of committee after another rose, and expressing perfect sympathy with Dr. Thomson in feeling and principle, pleaded with him for the sake of peace, not to press his motion. To each in turn he had his answer ready, with unexampled rapidity, and resources of debating power; all was tending to a unanimous decision in his favour, when, irritated at the course that things were taking, and misunderstanding in his heat and haste the bearing of the well-known quotation, 'Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum,' Mr. Allan suddenly abandoned the chair. It might have broken up the meeting in confusion, but for Dr. Thomson's good humoured presence of mind in suggesting as a compromise, their immediate adjournment to an early day.

"After a hurried consultation on the platform, this was at once accepted by the meeting, and all closed in happiness and hearty good will. He had already put platform and hall into good humour by his pleasant retort on his friend and recent ally in the apocryphal controversy, Dr. Ritchie, who had implored him to withdraw his motion for the sake of harmony. 'Harmony!' said Dr. Thomson; 'let my excellent friend only get his friends on the platform to bring their resolutions into harmony with those of the meeting down here in the hall, and then we shall have perfect unanimity, and the Doctor himself will have his own

deepest convictions carried out.' Dr. Ritchie could not deny the soft impeachment, and all ended well.

"But now, what next? Edinburgh was in a state of not a little excitement. The 'West India' interest were in trouble and wrath at the menace to the value of their 'property.' Even the men of the Parliament House were, naturally enough, not over-pleased at seeing their brilliant and deservedly most popular chief baffled on a field where he had been carrying all before him. Most of the newspapers were down upon the bold intruder who had ventured, single-handed, to enter the lists against a whole committee with such a leader and mouth-piece as Francis Jeffrey. It was for Dr. Thomson to consider whether his very success might not lead to his own greater confusion, and only injure the cause of the slave. He was himself sufficiently aware of the danger he had incurred by the daring and successful measure of the day. But he was not the man to sit down in helpless panic. That very night, as I learn from my friend, Dr. Goold, Dr. Thomson wrote to his father, the excellent Mr. Goold, stating, that in prospect of the coming meeting he did not know of a single man on whose active aid he was entitled to rely, but that he counted on him, if only as representative of that old covenanted church, which even in the United States, had never ceased to maintain its uncompromising protest against the abominations of the entire slave system. What other appeals he made I know not; but when the memorable day arrived, the Assembly-room was crowded, and the platform was filled with the best and most representative men in Edinburgh and from different parts of Scotland. But the danger was not yet over. Here and there, there were little groups planted

to create division or confusion. I found myself by accident in the midst of such a group of young men, merrily talking over their determination to pay back 'Andrew Thomson' in kind, for what he had done at the previous meeting. Obviously enough, however, they had a good hearty liking and admiration for himself, but were resolved to have a lark at his expense. And in the early part of the meeting there were appearances of noise and disorder. It quieted down, however, during a calm and masterly address by Mr. Buchanan of North Leith, afterwards Professor James Buchanan of the Free Church College.

"At last Dr. Thomson rose and was greeted with enthusiastic applause, not, however, unmingled with audible tokens of opposition, in which the party around me joined. Calmly and manfully he pursued his way in one of the most magnificent and effective orations ever heard within those walls. In less than twenty minutes the entire meeting was with him, including the youthful party of malcontents, whom I was amused and delighted to observe laughing as heartily at his bright and genial humour, and cheering as enthusiastically his reiterated bursts of masculine and overwhelming eloquence as any in the hall. I have heard the greatest orations of Chalmers and Candlish and Cunningham and Guthrie, each so different, but, judged by immediate practical effect, in feeling and in act, even from them I have never heard anything superior to that magnificent oration, the greatest and the last, of Dr. Andrew Thomson. Under its potent spell Edinburgh was the first city in Britain to sound the watchword, soon caught up over all the land, and acted on by the Legislature, of absolute and

immediate emancipation for every slave within the British empire.

“ It is impossible by mere extracts to give any idea of a speech so closely and compactly linked together in fast logical connection, and in which every appeal rested on the irrefragable ground of fact and reason. Perhaps, however, I may be allowed to give one or two passages which I can still remember as telling with greatest power on his audience. Explaining that ‘ immediate emancipation ’ is not to be understood as irrespective of all measures for the welfare and safety both of the slaves and their masters—as equivalent not to an ‘ instant ’ act declaring them free, but only as in contrast with some dim, distant, faltering series of measures by which, as suggested in the former petition, at least one generation should be kept in hopeless bondage, he took his stand upon the principle, as self-evident under the Christian Dispensation, that for man to put or to keep his fellowman in hopeless slavery—to buy and sell him like the beasts that perish, is nothing short of sin. ‘ To say,’ he continued, ‘ that we will come out of the sin by degrees—that we will only forsake it slowly, and step by step—that we will pause and hesitate and look well about us before we consent to abandon its gains and its pleasures—that we will allow another age to pass by ere we throw off the load of iniquity that is lying so heavy upon us, lest certain secularities should be injuriously affected,—and that we will postpone the duty of doing justly and loving mercy till we have removed every petty difficulty out of the way, and got all the conflicting interests that are involved in the measure reconciled and satisfied : to say this is to trample on the demands of moral obligation and to disregard the voice which

speaks to us from heaven. The path of duty is plain before us, and we have nothing to do but enter it at once, and to walk in it without turning to the right hand or to the left. Our concern is not with the result that may follow our obedience to the Divine will. God reigns over His universe in the exercise of infinite perfection : He commands us to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke ; and submitting, without procrastination, and without any attempts at compromise, to that command, we may be assured that He will take care of all the effects that can be produced by compliance with His authority, and give demonstration to the truth that obedience to His behests is our grand and only security for a prosperous lot.'

" Having proved by facts and public documents that all efforts by the legislature to restrain and mitigate slavery had been openly set at nought through the contumacy and defiance of the planters, he continued, ' Mitigate and keep down the evil as much as you can, still it is there in all its native virulence, and still it will do its malignant work in spite of you. The improvements you have made are merely superficial. You have not reached the seat and vital spring of the mischief. You have only concealed in some measure, and for a time, its inherent enormity. Its essence remains unchanged and untouched, and is ready to unfold itself whenever a convenient season arrives, notwithstanding all your precautions and all your vigilance, to break out in those manifold acts of injustice and inhumanity which are its genuine and its invariable fruits. You may whitewash the sepulchre—you may put upon it every adornment that fancy can suggest—you may cover it over with all the flowers and evergreens that the garden or the fields can furnish, so

that it appear beautiful outwardly unto men, but it is a sepulchre still—full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Disguise slavery as you will—put into the cup all the pleasing and palatable ingredients which you can discover in the wide range of nature and of art, still it is a bitter, bitter, bitter draught from which the understanding and the heart of every man in whom nature works unsophisticated and unbiassed recoils with unutterable aversion and abhorrence. Why, Sir, slavery is the very Upas tree of the moral world, beneath whose pestiferous shade all intellect languishes and all virtue dies. And if you would get quit of the evil you must go more thoroughly and effectively to work than you can ever do by any or by all of these palliatives, which are included under the term "mitigation." The foul sepulchre must be taken away. The cup of oppression must be dashed to pieces on the ground. The pestiferous tree must be cut down and eradicated; it must be, root and branch of it, cast into the consuming fire, and its ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven. It is thus that you must deal with slavery. You must annihilate it—annihilate it now—and annihilate it for ever.' One concluding extract. Having proved as far as anything dependent on human action can be proved before hand, that 'insurrection and bloodshed were to be feared rather from undue delay than from immediate action in putting an end to oppression and in doing justice to the slave.' Dr. Thomson closed as follows:

“ But if you push me, and still urge the argument of insurrection and bloodshed for which you are far more indebted to fancy than to fact, as I have shown you, then, I say, be it so. I repeat that maxim, taken from a heathen book, but pervading the whole Book

of God,—“*Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.*” Righteousness, Sir, is the pillar of the universe. Break down that pillar, and the universe falls into ruin and desolation. But preserve it, and though the fair fabric may sustain partial dilapidation, it may be built and repaired—it *will* be rebuilt and repaired, and restored to all its pristine strength and magnificence and beauty. If there must be violence, let it even come, for it will soon pass away—let it come and rage its little hour, since it is to be succeeded by lasting freedom and prosperity and happiness. Give me the hurricane rather than the pestilence. Give me the hurricane, with its thunder, and its lightning, and its tempest;—give me the hurricane with its partial and temporary devastations, awful though they be;—give me the hurricane, with its purifying, healthful, salutary effects;—give me that hurricane, infinitely rather than the noisesome pestilence, whose path is never crossed, whose silence is never disturbed, whose progress is never arrested by one sweeping blast from the heavens; which walks peacefully and sullenly through the length and breadth of the land, breathing poison into every heart, and carrying havoc into every home, enervating all that is strong, defacing all that is beautiful, and casting its blight over the fairest and happiest scenes of human life—and which, from day to day, and from year to year, with intolerant and interminable malignity sends its thousands and its tens of thousands of hapless victims into the ever-yawning and never satisfied grave.’

“This was the last and greatest of his efforts—the crown and consummation of a great and noble Christian life. In his former controversy he had found himself strangely and unexpectedly dissevered from

many good, however mistaken, men. In this he was once more in the midst of them and at their head ; and so when, a few months later, the blow fell so suddenly which forever silenced his eloquent voice, and withdrew his manly form from our streets, all Edinburgh, from such men as Professor John Wilson, whose muffled voice and tearful eye when alluding to the 'illustrious dead,' I even yet so well remember, down to the humblest of its abodes, was wrapt in one common sorrow. And as the tidings flew over the land, all Scotland felt that she had lost, if not her very greatest—for Chalmers had already come to the front though as yet moving in another and yet higher sphere—at least the most familiarly known and loved of all her public men. The Sabbath immediately after his death, but before the funeral, Dr. Chalmers, by previous arrangement, preached in St. Bernard's Church. He entered the pulpit with the hurried step and clouded brow by which we used to know when he was weighted with some great thought, or overshadowed by some great sorrow, as on the day when he announced to us the death of Edward Irving. As if unable to trust himself, he made no reference to the subject which was yet present to all, till at the very close, and in a single sentence he enforced some appeal that he was making, as 'having been recently called away to be a learner himself, as he stood by the silent bed, and gazed upon the features of one who so shortly before had been instinct with living energy, but was now wrapt in the insensibility of death.' In a moment I saw through blinding tears a whole congregation, mostly men, bowed down by no burst of eloquence, but by the simple allusion to a death already well known, in one great and universal sorrow.

“One other scene that came to be strangely associated with the memory of Dr. Thomson and the people of Edinburgh, comes back to my remembrance. Shortly after his death, there happened to be a great illumination on account of one of the early triumphs of the first reform bill, then passing through Parliament; and the mob, in those days of rough excitement, tore through the town breaking all the windows in the better streets that had failed to illuminate for ‘the people’s victory.’ Among others they were sweeping along Melville Street, breaking every window that was dark, when in the midst of blazing windows, one house wrapt in utter darkness, was just about to share the common fate, when a voice was heard, ‘That’s Dr. Andrew Thomson’s house!’ and instantly the rough and excited mob was quiet, and passed on in reverential silence—as touching a tribute, in its own way, as was ever paid to the memory of a public man.—Yours faithfully,

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