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**MAKERS OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCH**

BY REV. W. BEVERIDGE, M.A.

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# MAKERS OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCH

BY

REV. W. BEVERIDGE, M.A.

NEW DEER

AUTHOR OF "A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY"

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## P R E F A C E

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“THE history of the world,” it has been said, “is the biography of great men.” It is true, also, to say that the history of the Church of Christ is the biography of the Christian heroes and heroines who have adorned the Church by their lives and advanced its work by their sacrifices. Progress everywhere depends on personality ; and the great man is God’s best gift to his generation and to the Church of Christ. Nowhere has this been more true than in the Scottish Church, and nowhere is there to be found a nobler roll of great men. It is with this conviction that the Author has written the present work. Further, he feels that there is no more illuminating study than the story of the Scottish Church ; and if that story is to be fully appreciated, there is no more profitable method of studying it than through the lives of the men and women who have done so much to make the Church in Scotland what it is to-day.

The Author desires to acknowledge gratefully the counsel and help of many friends.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PIONEERS OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCH.

*A.* Before we can appreciate or understand the movements that have made the Church of Christ in Scotland what it is, there are certain preliminary questions which must be answered. One question is: When did the Church of Christ begin in Scotland? That question compels us to ask another: What religion or religious worship was there in Scotland before the advent of Christianity? Along with this second question go others, as to the condition of the country and the stage of civilisation which it had reached about the beginning of the Christian era. These are the questions which must be looked at and answered before we can appreciate the efforts or the consecrated labours of the Makers of the Scottish Church.

We may consider these questions in the following order:— First of all, we may consider the condition of the country and the nature of its religious cult at the time Christianity came to Scotland. Afterwards, we may consider the coming of Christianity and the labours of its first missionaries, those pioneers of the Church who opened up the country to the influences of Jesus Christ.

1. We do not possess much information about the condition of Scotland, about the races that inhabited it, or the nature of their religion and worship, before the first century of the Christian era. The sources of information are scanty, and the conclusions to be



drawn from them are more or less speculative. It is difficult always to see behind the mists of the past, especially of that past which stretches beyond historic times. Some information about prehistoric Scotland may be gleaned from its stone implements, its axes and arrow-heads and stone-balls, or from its cave and underground dwellings. Information, also, may be gleaned from burial customs, or from monuments still remaining, such as cromlechs or stone-circles. From such meagre data investigators have striven to build up the story of Scotland. They have enabled us to read, through the haze of bygone ages, the story of a *palaeolithic* Scottish man, who probably lived before the great ice-age swept over Scotland, and the story of a *neolithic* man, who reached down to five thousand years ago and was within the age of history.

As to the appearance of the country, and the tribes which inhabited it about the time of the coming of Christianity, we have some reliable information. The Romans came over from Gaul to conquer Britain, and they have left an account of what they did and saw. They were able to secure part of Scotland, but in the mountains and beyond the Grampians the tribes were able to hold their own. About the year 410 after Christ the Romans left the shores of Britain for good. It was no small advantage for the tribes of Britain to come in touch with a nation such as the Romans. It meant coming in contact with a great military power, a civilised power, law-makers, and road-builders. It meant coming in contact with a people who believed in order, in law, and in cleanliness. There was a further advantage which the tribes themselves could not have been conscious of. Rome found Scotland a heterogeneous collection of clans and tribes without the pretence of unity. In a sense, therefore, Rome made the nation; for, in opposition to a common enemy, the ranks began to close up, and the idea of a nation with common aims and hopes began unconsciously to grow. In addition, it must not be forgotten that it was in the wake of the Roman legions that there followed the religion

of Jesus Christ, without which Scotland would have lacked a priceless benefit.

Julius Cæsar arrived on the shores of Britain in the year 55 B.C. He found certain tribes in Scotland and in other parts, to which he and subsequent writers, such as Tacitus and Suetonius, gave a number of names. The two leading names are Picts and Scots. There have been many opinions about these tribes. It is agreed, however, that the Scots came over from Ireland, and that they were on the whole a softer and more pacific race than the Picts. It is difficult, on the other hand, to reach any satisfactory conclusion about the Picts. Questions have arisen, and have occasioned keen debate, as to the name and origin of these tribes. The Romans thought that the name (Picts) had been given to these tribes because they were painted or tattooed. Modern investigators, on the other hand, hold that the name is an original Celtic word. There is much diversity of view on the origin of the Picts. Many authorities are of opinion that the Picts were a non-Aryan race, and that they were allied to the Iberians or Basques. Professor Rhys regards the race as pre-Celtic and akin to the Iberians. Others are of opinion that the Picts belonged to the Celtic family. It may be regarded as probable that the Picts were not the original inhabitants of Scotland, and that they belonged to a wave of immigration from Gaul. By the time of Julius Cæsar the Picts had been incorporated among Gaelic-speaking Celts, and the name had become, as Skene has said, "a collective name for the barbaric tribes of Northern Britain."<sup>1</sup>

The appearance of the country may be conjectured. The rivers in many places must have been simply vast marshes. The forests were dense, tangled growths of oak, alder, birch, and hazel. Clearings were rare, and only to be found on hilly slopes near streams. On such slopes at the present day are found

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i. pp. 194-212. Cp. Lang, *History of Scotland*, i. pp. 11 ff.

flint-axes and arrow-heads. The plough now and then unearths urns and stone-cists. Sometimes the place of the tribal burying-place is still marked by a stone-circle. Such indications point to the fact that on the hilly slope there had been a clearing, the home of some native tribe. Beyond the slope lay forests, and in the valley was a vast stretch of bog and marsh. Mr. Andrew Lang has described the appearance of the country in the following terms: "We must put the cultivated lands and trimmed woods of Scotland out of our minds. The rivers must in those days have been of greater volume than now, flowing through swampy, undrained country, over-grown with 'bush,' thickets of birch, alder, and hazel, scarce penetrable hiding-places of the foe. Cultivation, where not wholly neglected, would be found chiefly in the Straths. Deer, wolves, and the wild-cat abounded. A land of forest, hill, and quagmire."<sup>1</sup>

2. The question which next arises for consideration is of the deepest interest. It is the question of the religion of the Picts and Scots. What was the religion which Christianity found in Scotland?

Religion among the Picts and Scots was undoubtedly in a fairly advanced form. Tacitus is our authority that the Caledonians before going into battle offered sacrifices. That is proof that the native tribes had long passed through those early stages which every primitive people appears to traverse in its religious beliefs. They had passed through the stage of animism. Animism was primitive man's theory of the known universe. "All the movements and changes which are taking place in the world of things were explained by primitive man on the theory that every object which had activity enough to affect him in any way was animated by a life and will like his own—in a word (Dr. Tylor's), on the theory of animism."<sup>2</sup> The Celtic tribes of Scotland had outgrown animism, and had come to believe in spirits. The conclusion which has been reached in

<sup>1</sup> Lang, *History of Scotland*, i, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 22.

regard to the religion of the Celtic tribes is that they worshipped the powers of nature. Their religion had become a nature-worship. In nature, according to the Celts, dwelt mysterious beings. These spirits or demons dwelt in the heavens and the earth, in the sea, the river, the mountain, or the valley; and these mysterious beings had to be propitiated and conciliated. Hence arose the necessity for sacrifice. "Like other religions," says Professor Anwyl, "those of the Celtic lands of Europe supplemented the earlier animism by a belief in spirits, who belonged to trees, animals, rocks, mountains, springs, rivers, and other natural phenomena; and in folk-lore there still survives abundant evidence that the Celt regarded spirits as taking upon themselves a variety of forms, animal and human."<sup>1</sup> The name the Celtic tribes gave to these spirits or mysterious beings was *Sidhe*.<sup>2</sup> The very ancient *Book of Armagh*, telling us of St. Patrick, gives us an interesting glimpse of the popular conception of these *Sidhe*. We are told there how St. Patrick and his companions came to a well near Crochan, the ancient abode of the kings of Connaught. The two daughters of King Laoghaire came to the well to wash, and knew not who St. Patrick and his attendants were. They thought them *Sidhe*. The virgins said to them, "Where are ye? And whence come ye?" St. Patrick replied, "It were better for you to confess to our true God, than to inquire concerning our race." The first virgin said, "Who is God, and where is God, and of what is God, and where is his dwelling-place? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver? Is he ever-living? Is he beautiful? Did many foster his son? Are his daughters dear and beautiful to men of the world? Is he in heaven or on earth? in the sea? in rivers? in mountainous places? in valleys? Declare unto us the knowledge of him. How shall he be seen? How is he to be loved? How is he to be found? Is it in youth? Is it in old age he is

<sup>1</sup> Anwyl, *Celtic Religion*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> The name appears in the word "ban-shee." The "shee" gives the pronunciation of *sidhe*.

to be found?"<sup>1</sup> Such is the story, and it is satisfactory to know that the religious inquiries of Ethne the Fair were successfully answered by St. Patrick. But the story gives a very clear conception of the primitive nature-worship of the Celtic races. The belief in "the personified powers of nature" which we see in this early period in Ireland was undoubtedly the belief of all the Gaelic-speaking tribes of the age.

In connection with this primitive nature-worship falls to be considered the place of Druidism in the religious cults of the Picts and Scots. The name given to the priest who had the power to conciliate the demons or *Sidhe* was *Druí*. As a class these priests were known as *Druadh* or *Druada*. An ancient hymn tells us that St. Patrick "fought against hard-hearted Druids." The Druids were magicians, as well as medicine-men and priests. Professor Rhys says: "One may sum up the impressions of ancient authors as to the Druids by describing them as magicians who were medicine-men, priests, and teachers of the young."<sup>2</sup> In the old legends, the Druids appear to act as the soothsayers and magicians did in the days of Pharaoh. Thus we read in the *Book of Armagh*: "The Magus (*i.e.* Druid) in the presence of all commenced his magical incantations and brought down snow upon the whole plain; but St. Patrick blessed the plain, when the snow immediately vanished, without rain, clouds, or wind." Apart from their religious practices, the Druids held remarkable views on immortality and the transmigration of the soul. It is clear that the ancient Celtic religion had an outlook to the future life. The Celtic mind believed in a future after death. As an expression of this belief there were buried, with the dead, objects which had been of service among the living. Further, "the holed cromlechs of the Later Stone Age were probably designed for the egress and ingress of souls."<sup>3</sup>

We conclude, then, that the religion of the native Celtic world

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Anwyl, *Celtic Religion*, p. 57.

in Scotland was a nature-worship in which the powers of nature were personified. It was taught and believed that nature was full of spirits, or demons, which had to be always conciliated; and hence the high place given to the Druid, who was both medicine-man and priest. What a great gulf between such a religion and the faith of Jesus Christ! That comes out very clearly in one of St. Columba's poems:—

"I adore not the voice of birds,  
Nor the *sreod*, nor a destiny on the earthly world,  
Nor a son, nor chance, nor woman;  
My *Druí* is Christ the Son of God."<sup>1</sup>

The ancient faith which we have been describing, and which, as we have seen, attached *Sidhe* to objects in nature, has lingered long in the popular mind. The *Sidhe* are still recognisable under the name "Fairy." "The fairy tales," it has been well said, "which were composed in the infancy of the human race, and are still the delight of childhood, faithfully reflect what actually happened in the daily life of primitive man."<sup>2</sup> It is still possible to remember how it was told by an older generation that a fairy was in this and the other place, or presided over this and the other well. In modern times, also, such names as the *brownie* and the *kelpie* represent the ancient *Sidhe* which the Picts and Scots so sedulously endeavoured to conciliate.

3. It was into this land with its Picts and Scots, and into this atmosphere of primitive nature-worship, that the religion of Jesus Christ came. No one knows when Christianity came to Scotland. Some traditions have it that the first preacher to Britain was Joseph of Arimathea. According to other traditions, the first to reach the shores of Scotland with the gospel of Jesus Christ was Regulus, who brought with him the bones of St. Andrew. But all this is very uncertain. Indeed, the only thing which may be accepted as highly probable is that Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Jevons, *Introduction to History of Religion*, p. 16.

came with the Roman soldiers. Many of these knew Christ, and it is a persistent feature of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth that those who believe in it have a treasure which they dare not keep to themselves. It is therefore in a high degree probable that the truths of the religion of Jesus Christ percolated down through the Roman soldiers and reached the tribes with which they came in touch. When we remember that the Romans did not leave the shores of Britain till the year 410 of the Christian era, it becomes clear that the influence which came through the Roman soldiers had a long time to work.

*B.* The Christian religion advanced very slowly in Scotland, and the history of the Scottish Church is largely the story of great men who were raised up to be the leaders of forward movements in their day, and who left their names and deeds as imperishable memorials. These men were the pioneers of the Church of Christ in Scotland. We really know little about many of them. Of some we know little more than the names. Regulus has his name perpetuated in St. Andrews; Ternan has given his name to a district in Aberdeenshire; while Palladius has his name left to us in wells and fairs. The two names about which we may be said to know anything are those of Ninian and Kentigern. These are the greatest names in the early Scottish Church, except the name of Columba.

1. Ninian's sphere of labour was mainly among the Southern Picts of Galloway. He seems to have been born about the year 360, and therefore during the Roman occupation. From his youth upwards Ninian was a man of great devotion and consecration. So absorbingly devout was he, that "his repose no crowd disturbed, his meditation no journey hindered, his prayer never grew lukewarm through fatigue." According to tradition, he made a pilgrimage to Rome, was welcomed and instructed by the Pope, and sent back as a special evangelist to his own country. On his way home, he paid a visit to a celebrated man, Martin of Tours, the founder of monasteries in France. The visit made a

deep impression on Ninian. When he came back to Scotland, he set about the erection of a church on the shores of the Solway. The church appears to have been the first stone structure erected in the country. It was seen far over the bay of Wigtown; and the name given to it, *Candida Casa*, still survives in the Saxon *Whithorn*. The church was built about the year 400, and dedicated to Martin of Tours. It became a training-ground for preachers. Afterwards, Ninian went to preach among the Picts farther north of Galloway—indeed, apparently as far as Perth. The effect of Ninian's preaching was great. His biographer, writing in the twelfth century, says: "To the font of the saving laver run rich and poor, young and old, men and maidens, mothers and children; and renouncing Satan with all his works and pomps, they are joined to the body of believers by faith, by confession, by the sacrament." Ninian died about 432, one of the first and noblest pioneers of the Scottish Church.

2. The second name which has come down to us, and about which we possess some knowledge, is that of Kentigern, the patron saint of Glasgow. The saint is sometimes known by the name Mungo, apparently a pet name given to him in his youth, and meaning *My darling*.

Kentigern's life has been written by Jocelyn of Furness; but as Jocelyn wrote as late as the twelfth century, it is difficult to disentangle the facts from the romantic halo which tradition had woven around them. Though Jocelyn does not mention the names of Kentigern's parents, it is probable that his mother's name was Thenaw.<sup>1</sup> Jocelyn says that his mother was "the daughter of a certain king, most pagan in his creed, who ruled in the northern parts of Britannia." His mother had been cruelly deceived and violated. Her father had ordered her to be given over to the sea, and in doing so had used these words: "If she be worthy of life her God will free her from the peril of death, if He so will." The curach (a little boat made of hides) landed on the

<sup>1</sup> It is understood that this name appears in the modern *St. Enoch*, a name associated with Glasgow.



sands at Culross, and there Kentigern was born. At Culross there was living a famous saint called Servanus (St. Serf). When the child was presented to him, he exclaimed, "*Mochoho, Mochoho*" (*My darling, my darling*). The saint took charge of the little boy.<sup>1</sup>

After a time, Kentigern left the care of Servanus. Abandoning himself to the discretion of the oxen yoked to his wain, he was carried to Cathures, now known as Glasgow. When he had lived some time there, "the king and clergy of the Cumbrian region, with other Christians, albeit they were few in number, came together, and, after taking into consideration what was to be done to restore the good estate of the church, which was well-nigh destroyed, they with one consent approached Kentigern, and elected him, in spite of his many remonstrances and strong resistance, to be the shepherd and bishop of their souls" (Jocelyn). After some time, and through the intrigues of "certain sons of Belial, a generation of vipers of the kin of King Morken" (Jocelyn), Kentigern was obliged to leave his work in Strathclyde and flee to Wales. In Wales, he was able to do a notable work, building a monastery at Llanelwy, the modern St. Asaph's. Jocelyn, describing the life at the monastery, uses these remarkable words: "There flocked to the monastery old and young, rich and poor, to take upon themselves the easy yoke and light burden of the Lord. Nobles and men of the middle class brought to the saint their children to be trained unto the Lord. The tale of those who renounced the world increased day by day both in number and importance, so that the total number of those enlisted in God's army amounted to nine hundred and sixty-five, professing in act and habit the life of monastic rule, according to the institution of the holy man."

In 573, Kentigern was recalled from Wales by King Rederech (Roderick), "who, having been baptized in Ireland in the most

<sup>1</sup> Apparently an anachronism has crept into the old narratives here, for Servanus seems to have been two centuries later than Kentigern's time. Cp. Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 184.

Christian manner by the disciples of Saint Patrick, sought the Lord with all his heart, and strove to restore Christianity" (Jocelyn). With Kentigern came back to Scotland six hundred and sixty-five of his monks. His first sphere of labour was at Hoddam, in Dumfriesshire, and from there apparently he conducted missionary work among the Picts of Galloway, and in the eastern districts of Scotland north of the Firth of Forth. If tradition is to be believed, his labours stretched as far north as Aberdeenshire.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Kentigern settled in his old church of Glasgow, "where as elsewhere, yea, where as everywhere, he was known to shine in many and great miracles" (Jocelyn).

One of the most interesting incidents in the life of Kentigern is his meeting with Columba. Columba had begun to do missionary work about the river Tay after 584. He desired to meet Kentigern. Jocelyn says: "Saint Columba the abbot, whom the Angles call Collumkillus, a man wonderful for doctrine and virtues, celebrated for his presage of future events, full of the spirit of prophecy, and living in that glorious monastery which he had erected in the island of Yi, desired earnestly, not once and away, but continually, to rejoice in the light of Saint Kentigern. For, hearing for a long time of the fame in which he was estimated, he desired to approach him, to visit him, to behold him, to come into his close intimacy, and to consult the sanctuary of his holy breath regarding the things which lay near his own heart." They met on the banks of the Molendinar. When they met, says Jocelyn, "they mutually embraced and kissed each other, and having first satiated themselves with the spiritual banquet of divine words, they after that refreshed themselves with bodily food." Finally, the two saints "interchanged their pastoral staves in testimony of their mutual love in Christ." "With mutual love, they returned to their homes, never to meet again" (Jocelyn).

Kentigern lived to a very old age. According to Jocelyn, he

<sup>1</sup> As late as the eighteenth century, the following proverb was common in Aberdeenshire: "It is like St. Mungo's work, which was never done."

was one hundred and eighty-five years old when he died. This, however, can hardly be accurate. Probably the year of his death was 612.<sup>1</sup>

The world will never know how much Scotland owes to Ninian and Kentigern, and men of such an apostolic type. These men were pioneers, missionaries in the highest and best sense. Scotland, in its greatness, in its arts and industries, in its wholesome religious life, could never have become what it is, had not these men lived and laboured for its conversion to Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If he was born in 527, this would give the saint a lifetime of eighty-five years.

<sup>2</sup> LITERATURE.—For further study of this period, reference may be made to the general *Histories of the Scottish Church*, such as Cunningham's and Grub's, but particularly the latter; also, Hill-Burton, *History of Scotland*; Andrew Lang, *History of Scotland*; Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*; Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*; Rhys, *Celtic Britain*; Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom* (Hibbert Lectures); Adamnan, *Life of St. Columba* (Reeves' edition); *Book of Deer* in Spalding Club; *Chronicle of the Picts and Scots*; Anwyl, *Celtic Religion*.

## CHAPTER II.

### COLUMBA.

*A.* Columba is undoubtedly the greatest and most massive figure in early Scottish ecclesiastical history. He is a man who stands by himself in the history of Scotland, and with whom no maker of the Scottish Church can compare, except John Knox. Few men, indeed, have done so much for Scottish life. Columba is of interest to Scotland in many ways, and though his work lay mainly in the southern and western parts of Scotland, the Church owes him a debt in the east of Scotland also; for it was Columba, if tradition is correct, who brought Christianity to the east of Scotland, and through whose influence there was founded the historic monastery of Deer.<sup>1</sup>

1. In the previous chapter on the "Pioneers of the Scottish Church," we described the condition of Scotland at the time Christianity came to its shores. The tribes which inhabited the country were Picts mainly, and Scots. The Picts were divided into Northern Picts, unconquered and unconquerable, whose strongholds were north of the Grampians, as in Aberdeenshire and northwards, and Southern Picts, in such counties as we now call Perthshire and Forfarshire. In the valley of the Clyde there were tribes known as Brythons. There were also Picts in Galloway; while the Scots had their strongholds chiefly in

<sup>1</sup> See, further, Chapter V., on "The Monks of Deer,"

Argyle and the Isles. These Scots were an importation from Ireland. They were known as Dalriada Scots, and there was the very closest connection, as we may gather afterwards, between the Dalriada Scots in the south-west parts of Scotland and the same Scots in the north of Ireland.

We have already described the religion, the native nature-worship, with which Christianity had to contend.<sup>1</sup> It was a genuine nature-worship, and the Gaelic-speaking tribes peopled the objects of nature with demons or spirits, with whom their magicians or Druids were best able to cope.

Much was achieved by the labours of men such as Ninian and Kentigern,—Ninian among the Picts on the shores of the Solway Firth, and Kentigern among the Brythons of Strathclyde. The labours of such men must have told on the native population. But the age was wild and rough. It is almost impossible for us to realise how rough and wild an age it was. The country was divided into tribes, and these tribes were in chronic and perpetual warfare. If ever might was right, it was in those early centuries in Scotland. Under the rule of the strong arm life was cheap, and the killing of enemies gave men little concern. Skene, describing that age, speaks of "its hopeless corruption, its utter disregard of the sanctity of domestic ties, its injustice and selfishness, its violent and bloody character." That picture is not too strong.

A story may be quoted from Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, to illustrate the state of society with which these early Christians had to deal. "When the holy man (that is, Columba), while yet a youth in deacon's orders, was living in the region of Leinster, learning divine wisdom, it happened one day that an unfeeling and pitiless oppressor of the innocent was pursuing a young girl, who fled before him on a level plain. As she chanced to observe the aged Gemman, master of the foresaid young deacon, reading on the plain, she ran straight to him as fast as she could. Being alarmed at such an unexpected occurrence, he called on Columba,

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I., on "The Pioneers of the Scottish Church."

who was reading at some distance, that both together, to the best of their ability, might defend the girl from her pursuer ; but he immediately came up, without any regard to their presence, stabbed the girl with his lance under their very cloaks, and, leaving her lying dead at their feet, turned to go away back. Then the old man, in great affliction, turning to Columba, said, 'How long, holy youth Columba, shall God, the just Judge, allow this horrid crime and this insult to us to go unpunished?' Then the saint at once pronounced this sentence on the perpetrator of the deed : 'At the very instant the soul of this girl, whom he hath murdered, ascendeth into heaven, shall the soul of the murderer go down into hell' : and scarcely had he spoken the words when the murderer of the innocent, like Ananias before Peter, fell down on the spot before the eyes of the holy youth." Adamnan adds : "The news of this sudden and terrible vengeance was soon spread abroad throughout many districts of Ireland, and with it the wonderful fame of the holy deacon."

The interest of such an incident as this is manifold. It shows us the callousness of the time, the lack of real kindly feeling, the utter disregard for human life. It shows us, also, how the Christian missionaries then came to be regarded as the protectors of injured innocence, as they are in the New Hebrides to-day. And it shows us something of the place which Columba, even in his youth, took among men, and how there grew up around him a certain nimbus or halo of sanctity, and how he came to be regarded as the greatest miracle-worker of his age.

It was into a society so rough as this that Ninian and Kentigern came with the message of the Christian religion. It becomes clear, however, that though the impression which these men themselves made on their age was great, their influence in a hundred years or thereby had died away, and the efforts which they put forth had failed to convert Scotland to Christ.

Further, as we study the situation, it becomes clear that some other method was needed in that rough and cruel age of Scotland's history. A method was needed which would make a greater

impression on the age. For it ought never to be forgotten that each age requires methods of its own. We have, indeed, our methods of carrying on religious work in Scotland in the twentieth century. We have our churches, our preaching, our ministry—all of them largely Presbyterian. And these methods we have carried on for more than two hundred years. We modify our methods, and it is right that we should modify them as circumstances arise. Perhaps the question may be asked whether the methods do not require to be modified more than they have been. Is the Church through her present methods in Scotland doing the work she might do? It is not necessary to pause to answer that question, but it is one which we may allow to linger in our minds. Those early Christians in Scotland came to see that the method which was followed more or less by men such as Ninian, Kentigern, and Ternan was not the method which the rude age called for. Their method, the first method, was in one respect somewhat like present methods: it was the method of what is called *secular* clergy—that is, clergy who might go anywhere, take their part in the world, and even live a married life, if they so desired.

That was the method, on the whole, of the earliest missionaries in Scotland; but the age seemed to call for another method—the method of *regular* clergy. The word “regular” in this connection means “under a rule.” The method, therefore, was the method of clergy *bound by a rule*—another way of describing what is known in Church History as *Monachism*. Monachism was the form or method of spreading the Christian religion by means of monasteries, with a certain number of monks in them. It was the name given to an order of clergy who lived, each man to a more or less extent by himself, all bound by a rule or vow to religious work, and especially to *celibacy*.

On the crest of the wave of monachism Christianity came in the fullest sense to Scotland; and it was with monachism that Columba came. Afterwards, as we shall see, there came a third wave, when the regular clergy gave place to *Eremitical* clergy,

“who dwelt in desert places, and lived on herbs and water,” “despising,” as an ancient manuscript says, “all earthly things, and wholly avoiding all whispering and backbiting.”<sup>1</sup>

2. Columba came to Scotland from Ireland; and at this point we may pause to understand something of what had been going on in Ireland. Monasticism had a real place in the Irish Church long before it had a correspondingly real place in Scotland.

Monasticism, monachism, or the system of monks and monasteries, is a fascinating subject of historical inquiry. For our purpose, however, it is sufficient to know that monasticism arose in the East, largely in Egypt. From Egypt it spread to Italy about the middle of the fourth century after Christ; and from Italy it spread, like a contagion, to France; and in France it was finally settled as a recognised institution by Martin of Tours, of whom we have already read in connection with Ninian.

Ninian, who visited Ireland, was probably the first to preach Christianity there; and his disciples, sent as missionaries from Whithorn, founded religious houses in the north of Ireland. Ultimately, there was founded by Finnian a great monastery at Clonard in Meath, “which is said to have contained no fewer than three thousand monks” (Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 50). This vast monastery, however, was in the centre of Ireland, and the influence which brought Christianity there came from another direction than the monastery of St. Ninian at Whithorn.

There is a good deal to be learned about these old Irish monasteries. One must not imagine that they were substantial buildings of stone and lime. When we read of a monastery containing three thousand monks, we are disposed to think of a palatial establishment housing a population larger than that of many of the parishes of Scotland. The fact, however, is that the monastery was really a *colony*, and the houses of the

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 13.



colony were built of the simplest and rudest materials. Not till near the close of the eighth century after Christ, and then under the insistent terror of Danish invasions, were the monasteries built of stone. The monastery of Columba's age was a thing of wattles, reeds, and clay. The word "kraal," so familiar to us from African exploration, describes it exactly. The cells of the monks were really booths, often built of the humblest materials, such as reeds and wattles. The old Irish stories tell us how many of these booths were built. Sometimes the huts were made of wood, the oak being first favourite. The name given to the early wooden church was *Duirthech*, a house of oak. In addition to the church, there were always such buildings as the refectory or eating-hall, the kitchen, the mill, and the stone-kiln, the last being indispensable for the drying of corn. Somewhat apart from the cells of the monks were the abbot's house and the house for guests, the "hospitium." Round the whole was a fence of earth or of earth and stone. The name given to this fence was *Rath*, which came to mean a fort.

Inside this monastery or colony of regular clergy were the monks, rarely fewer than one hundred and fifty. That, indeed, was the standard figure, and the number varied from one hundred and fifty up to three thousand or more. The monks were the *brethren*, and over them was the abbot.

Now, it is easy to understand how these monasteries grew. They were colonies in which men were safe in the surrounding distress, rudeness, and peril. The monastery was a place of refuge. It was a place, also, where instruction was given; and that alone gave it an enormous power over an ignorant population. It was a place which gave the only chance of a career to the young men of the tribe in which the colony was settled. One can easily understand what a power the monastery became everywhere, first in Ireland, and then in Scotland. All the sanctity and awe of religion clung to it. It was a place of refuge; it was a place of light; it was a place in which the

tribe on whose land it was came to have a hereditary interest ; and when we put all these things together, when we realise the labours of the monks for religion and for the gospel, we shall see that the monastery, though not a perfect organisation, might become, and in fact did become, a power of enormous weight wherever it was settled. In this way, the monastery became a Christianising influence among the rude Picts and Scots.

*B.* We have lingered rather long over the Irish Church ; but we have done so for this reason, that the conditions of monasticism in Ireland were almost exactly reproduced in Scotland ; and for the further reason that Columba himself came from Ireland, imbued with all the traditions and practices of the Irish Church.

1. Columba, or Columcille (that is, Columba of the cell or church), as he was fondly called, was born on the 7th of December 521. He died on the 9th of June 597, thus living seventy-six years—years in truth of incredible labour. He was of royal birth, and was connected in the female line with the kings of Dalriada, the name given to the kingdom of the Scots in Ireland and in the south-west of Scotland. He became first a pupil of Finnian, and afterwards of an aged bard called Gemman, of whom we have already read. Afterwards, he became a disciple of Finnian of Clonard, who had the greatest monastic establishment in Ireland, and who had the honour of training twelve missionaries so great that they are known as “the twelve Apostles of Ireland.”

It is unnecessary to say much of Columba's work in Ireland before he settled in Iona in 563. He spent forty-two years of his life in Ireland, and it is not to be imagined that these were idle years.

Columba's life has been very fully written. Two of his successors at Iona have told us the story. The first biography was written by Cummene, who was abbot at Iona sixty years

after Columba's death ; but the greater life was written by Adamnan, who became Columba's successor at Iona, eighty-two years after his death. Adamnan was so near Columba's own time that we may be sure of the main facts of the great missionary's life. There is, however, in existence what is known as "The Old Irish Life," and this tells us much about his work during the forty-two years of his life in Ireland. His first monastery was founded at Derry, when he was twenty-four years old. This monastery and another at Durrow were the chief of Columba's foundations in Ireland. This "Old Irish Life" glories in the wondrous deeds of Columba, of which we may give a specimen or two. One day, as Columba was in Derry, a little child was brought to him to be baptized. At the time there was no water near. But Columba made the sign of the Cross over the rock that was before him, so that a fountain of water burst out of it : whereupon the child was baptized. Or here is another : "As Columcille was on a certain day preaching to the multitudes, a certain man went from them across the river that was near them, in order that he might not be listening to the word of God. The serpent seized him in the water and killed him immediately. His body was brought into the presence of Columcille, who made a cross over his (the dead man's) breast : and he arose forthwith." Pages might be filled with such stories, which are the accretions that time brings to the memory of a great man in a myth-loving age.

2. When he was forty-two years of age, Columba took the greatest and, for Scotland, the most momentous step of his life. "The Old Irish Life" tells the story in the following way :—

"When Columcille had made the circuit of all Erin, and when he had sown faith and religion ; when numerous multitudes had been baptized by him ; when he had founded churches and establishments, and had left in them seniors and reliquaries and relics of martyrs, the determination that he had determined

from the beginning of his life came into his mind—viz. to go on pilgrimage. He then meditated going across the sea, to preach the word of God to the men of Alba, and to the Britons and to the Saxons. He went, therefore, on a voyage. His age was forty-two when he went. He was thirty-four (years) in Alba. His entire age was seventy-seven. And the number that went with him, moreover, was twenty bishops, forty priests, thirty deacons, and fifty students, *Ut dixit*:—

‘His company was forty priests,  
Twenty bishops of noble worth;  
For the psalm singing without dispute,  
Thirty deacons, fifty youths.’

“He went afterwards, in good spirits, until he reached the place the name of which to-day is Hii-Coluim-Cille. On Quinquagesima night, moreover, he arrived.

“He (Coluim-Cille) afterwards founded the church of Hii. He had thrice fifty persons in it for meditation under monastic rule, and sixty for manual labour, as the poet said—

‘Illustrious the soldiery that was in Hii,  
Thrice fifty in monastic rule;  
With their *Curachs*, along the sea,  
For rowing were three score men.’

“When Coluim-Cille founded Hii, he went on his circuit of instruction among the men of Alba, and the Britons and Saxons, until he brought them to faith and religion, after he had wrought many miracles, and had awakened the dead from death.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus are we told about Columba’s coming to found his world-famous monastery at Iona. It is not quite clear why he came across from Ireland. According to one account, it was because he had to flee through the pressure of a feud. It appears, however, that in reality Columba was a man of restless energy; that

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. pp. 491 f.

the apostolic and missionary spirit was in him ; and that he had determined to preach the Word among the tribes of Scotland also. There may have mingled a political motive with the other motives in Columba's mind. His own nation or tribe of Dalriadic Scots had suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Brude, King of the Picts, whose seat was in the region of Inverness. There was, indeed, considerable danger of the annihilation of the Scots in the south-west of our country ; and it is just possible that there was a motive somewhat political working towards this decisive step in Columba's life. If he could become the instrument in converting the Picts to the religion of Jesus Christ—of which the Dalriadic Scots were nominally, at least, professors—then his kinsmen would be saved.

3. Anyhow, in 563, Columba landed at Iona, a little island off Mull, on the Argyleshire coast. The name was originally Ia, or Hii ; and Dr. Reeves, who edits Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, and whose introduction to that work is one of the greatest contributions to early Scottish History, has shown that the name Iona has arisen from a misprint of *Ioua*, the *n* being printed instead of the *u*. Apparently there had been a Church in Iona before Columba's, a Church of the first or secular order ; but, unlike Columba's method, it had been quite unable to battle with heathenism. Iona has been often described. It is a little island three and a half miles long by about one and a half miles broad. The island was an ideal spot for a great monastery, safe and secluded, yet near the mainland. There are ruins on the island to-day, but they are not the ruins of the earliest monastery. That gave place to a stone structure in the eighth century, which was repeatedly ravaged and smitten by the Danes. The present ruins, like those of the Abbey of Deer, which we shall describe in a subsequent chapter, are not the remains of the old monastery, but of twelfth and thirteenth century monasteries, which came on another wave of monasticism of a different type altogether.

At Iona, Columba settled with his thrice-fifty followers. It was an ideal place for him.<sup>1</sup>

The first buildings at Iona were very simple, no doubt very much like the Irish monasteries. There were the usual buildings,—the church, the booths of the monks, the sacristy, the refectory, the guest-chamber, the mill, the kiln, etc. Columba's own cell was built of planks, and placed on the highest part of the ground, overlooking the monastery. Here he sat, wrote, or read; and "here he slept on the bare ground, with a stone for his pillow."

It is not necessary to describe the classes into which the monks were divided, or their varied work. The tonsure of the monks was peculiar. Generally the crown of the head was shaved, but in the case of the Columban monks the forepart of the head was shaved from ear to ear. Their dress was a white tunic or undergarment; above it a camilla, a sort of overall, body and

<sup>1</sup> In a poem which was translated some years ago, Columba gave expression to his joy in Iona:—

"Delightful would it be to me to be in *Uchd Ailiun*,  
On the pinnacle of a rock,  
That I might often see  
The face of the Ocean."

And then, after describing much that he might see, he proceeds to tell us what he might do in the rocky island:—

"That I might search the books all  
That would be good for my soul;  
At times kneeling to beloved heaven;  
At times at psalm-singing;  
At times contemplating the King of Heaven,  
Holy the chief;  
At times at work without compulsion;  
This would be delightful.  
At times plucking *duilisc* from the rocks;  
At times at fishing;  
At times giving food to the poor;  
At times in a *carcair*.  
The best advice in the presence of God  
To me has been vouchsafed.  
The King, whose servant I am, will not let  
Anything deceive me."

hood made of undyed wool. On their feet they wore sandals. The discipline of the monks was rigid. All were under the direct control of Columba. To show the severity of the discipline, one custom may be quoted. In order to crucify the lusts of the flesh, the monk passed some time immersed in cold water, all the while reciting his Psalter.

After two years at Iona, Columba set out to evangelise. He made many missionary journeys. His greatest was to Brude, King of the Picts, near Inverness; perhaps this was also his greatest victory, and his crowning mercy. The conversion of Brude opened the Picts to the work of Columba and his missionaries. In the course of one of his journeys among the Picts, Columba with his pupil Drostan founded a monastery at Deer.<sup>1</sup>

Of all his travels, as told us by Adamnan, of his wonderful deeds, of his magnetic personality, of his great voice which was heard a mile away, of his shrewdness, of his prophetic insight, space would fail us to tell.

C. Rather let us hasten to the end, and to the story of the last days, so pathetically told by Adamnan. Towards the end of May 597, Columba began to feel that his days were numbered. Saturday June 8th was his last working day on earth. "This day," he said to his attendant, "will be to me a day of rest . . . and in it I shall enter into my rest after the fatigues of my labours." He had gone with his attendant to bless the nearest barn. On his way back from the barn to the monastery, he rested; and there came to him the white pack-horse that carried the milk vessels from the cow-shed to the monastery. It came up to the saint, laid its head on his bosom, and shed copious tears. The attendant was to drive it away. "No," said Columba, "let it pour out its bitter grief. . . . To this brute beast, devoid of reason, the Creator Himself hath evidently in some way made known that its master is going to leave it."

<sup>1</sup> See, further, Chapter V., on "The Monks of Deer."

Afterwards he ascended a hillock and blessed his monastery. Then he went to his cell to transcribe the Psalter. When he came to that verse of the 33rd Psalm,<sup>1</sup> where it is written, "They that seek the Lord shall want no good thing," he laid down his pen, saying, "Here I think I can write no more ; let Baithen write what follows."

The rest of the night he spent on his hard couch, his pillow a stone. Reclining there, he commended his last words to the brethren, assuring them that God would be their Helper. When the bell rang at midnight, he rose hastily, went to the church, and knelt alone in prayer beside the altar. When his attendant came, he found the saint lying before the altar. Raising him up a little, he laid the head of the saint on his own bosom. The rest of the brethren ran in and gave way to lamentations. "The holy Father," says his biographer, "himself moved his hand . . . as well as he was able, and having thus signified to them his holy benediction, he immediately breathed his last."

So passed the soul of Columba, one of the greatest of saints and missionaries, a man whose memory we ought ever to cherish and revere ; for he did a work in Scotland which is telling to-day on the nation's life. He was one of the first, and certainly one of the very greatest, of those civilising and Christianising forces which have done so much to make Scotland what it is to-day.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 34th in the present versions.

<sup>2</sup> LITERATURE. — The following authorities for the Life of Columba might be referred to:—Adamnan, *Life of St. Columba* (ed. Reeves) ; Skene, *Celtic Scotland* ; *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, Iona Club ; *Book of Deer*, Spalding Club.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE CULDEES.

*A.* We speak and write familiarly of the "Scottish Church," but it is worth pointing out that to use the term "Scottish Church" in connection with the early period we have hitherto been describing is, technically at least, not altogether correct; for the term "Scottish Church" did not come into use until the ninth century after Christ. The Church in Scotland in the earlier centuries of its history was hardly Scottish: it was, indeed, largely *Pictish*. We may best describe the Church of those earlier centuries as *Columban*; while, to begin with, the Columban Church was Scottish in the sense that the movement which gave us that Church was a movement originally from the Scots in Ireland out toward their fellow-clansmen, the Scots in this country. There can be little doubt that the fact that the Columban Church was so much associated with the Scots helped in no small measure to give the name "Scotland" to the whole of this country.

1. The method of the Columban Church was a monastic method, where monks lived together and worked in common. In this way the Columban Church was able to make an impression on the heathenism with which it was surrounded. The Church of Columba was also a missionary Church, and its method of propagating Christianity was by its monasteries.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A few directions may be quoted from the Rule under which Columba bound his monks. One need not quote all the Rule, but some of its parts

Before we pass on, there are certain peculiarities about the Columban Church which ought to be referred to. These peculiarities brought the Church of Columba into considerable trouble.

Reference has already been made to the nature of the tonsure

will help us to understand the life and the aspirations of the Columban Church. (Cp. Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. pp. 508 f.)

"Be alone in a separate place near a chief city, if thy conscience is not prepared to be in common in the crowd."

"Let a fast place, with one door, enclose thee."

"A person too who would talk with thee in idle words, or of the world; or who murmurs at what he cannot remedy or prevent, but who would distress thee more should he be a tattler between friends and foes, thou shalt not admit him to thee, but at once give him thy benediction should he deserve it."

"Yield submission to every Rule that is of devotion."

"A mind prepared for red martyrdom."

"A mind fortified and steadfast for white martyrdom."

"Forgiveness from the heart to everyone."

"Constant prayers for those who trouble thee."

"Hymns for souls, *to be sung* standing."

"Three labours in the day, viz., prayers, work, and reading."

"The work to be divided into three parts, viz., thine own work, and the work of the place, as regards its real wants; secondly, thy share of the brethren's work; lastly, to help thy neighbours, viz., by instruction, or writing, or sewing garments, or whatever labour they may be in want of, ut Dominus ait, 'Non apparebis ante me vacuus.'"

"Everything in its proper order."

"Follow almsgiving before all things."

"Take not of food till thou art hungry."

"Sleep not till thou feelest desire."

"Speak not except on business."

"Every increase that comes to thee in lawful meals, or in wearing apparel, give it for pity to the brethren that want it, or to the poor in like manner."

"The love of God with all thy heart and all thy strength."

"The love of thy neighbour as thyself."

"Abide in the Testaments of God throughout all times."

"The measure of prayer shall be until thy tears come;"

"Or thy measure of work of labour till thy tears come;"

"Or thy measure of thy work of labour or of thy genuflexions until thy perspiration often comes, if thy tears are not free."

These seem, on the whole, sensible rules; and men guided by rules such as these, if they kept faithful to them, were certain to become spiritual forces in the communities where they lived.

of the Columban monks. We in modern days would probably lay little stress on a fact of this nature, but the sentiment thirteen hundred years ago was much different. The Roman Church, as a whole, shaved the crown of the head; the Columban monks shaved the forepart of the head from ear to ear. The antagonism to the Columban tonsure was pronounced, and it grew with the growth of a Church which took its note from Rome.

The next peculiarity, though it is not necessary to linger over it, went deeper. The Columban Church was modelled very largely on the Irish Church; and in a monastery such as Iona the vast majority of the monks were simply *Presbyters*, or Elders, as we should call them, some of them being ordained priests. But the peculiar thing was that, along with these Presbyters, there were Bishops who alone had the right of ordination. Over all the monks in the monastery there was set an Abbot, who, as in the case of Columba himself, might be only a *Presbyter*. This was a condition of things which was not calculated to last; and as the power of the Bishop increased, and as the country began to be divided up into dioceses over which the Bishop was supreme, the power of the Presbyters waned.

The third peculiarity of the Columban Church was one which gave rise to enormous controversy, and it is difficult for us altogether to understand why it should have been so. This peculiarity concerned a question which greatly vexed the early Scottish Church. The question was, When ought Easter to be celebrated? In the West, the commemoration of Easter proper is on a Sunday. But on what Sunday and between what dates? The Western Church originally held that Easter was to be celebrated on the Sunday falling between the fourteenth and twentieth days of the moon, and the time was calculated on a cycle of eighty-four years.

It was at this point that the British Church was in close connection with the Church in the West generally. Ultimately, however, the Western Church came to an agreement that Easter was to be held on the Sunday between the fifteenth and twenty-first days of

the moon, and on a cycle of nineteen years. What happened, therefore, was this, that while "the Continental Churches celebrated the festival of Easter on the Sunday between the fifteenth and twenty-first days of the moon, calculated on a cycle of nineteen years, the British Churches and Irish Churches celebrated the same festival on the Sunday between the fourteenth and twentieth days of the moon, calculated according to a cycle of eighty-four years; the difference in the days of the moon causing an occasional divergence of a week, and that of the cycles a possible divergence of a month."<sup>1</sup>

2. In connection with this Easter question a vast and lamentable controversy came to devastate the British and Irish Churches. As the custom of the Columban monks was different from that of the Western Church as a whole, the Columban Church came to be regarded as schismatic and as following divisive courses. The question of the position of Rome was involved. When the early Church in Britain was in touch with Rome and the Roman Church, although that Church was certainly recognised as the head of the Western Churches, it had not arrogated to itself the power of universal control. By the sixth century the claims of Rome had grown enormously, and Rome presumed to lay down the law of the Church for the whole Christian world. Was Rome not the Church of St. Peter, and was it not on St. Peter, the rock, that the Church was founded? If, therefore, any Church, such as the Columban, refused to obey Rome, then that Church must be declared schismatic. Hence the struggle that arose to make the Columban clergy conform to the Roman view. Over this matter of Easter the struggle was intensely keen. It would take us too far afield to describe the details of the struggle; but it will be necessary to say this, that bit by bit the Roman view came to prevail, although it never was accepted by the monks of Iona. In the seventh century the Roman view of Easter came to prevail in a well-known monastery off the Northumbrian coast, in the Holy Isle. This monastery was an offshoot from Iona,

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 9.

and its patron saint was Aidan. In 664, at a council held at Whitby, the Roman view of Easter prevailed. As a consequence, Colman and his monks left Holy Island in indignation. Adamnan, who became abbot of Iona, as one of the successors of Columba, was brought personally to see the superiority of the Roman view of Easter; but when he went back from England to Iona he failed to carry his monastery with him in his change of view. The monks, faithful to the view of Columba, resisted all innovation, till at last, in 717, King Nectan, who sympathised with the Roman view, expelled them one and all from Iona. From Nectan's strong arm there was no appeal.

*B.* Now we have reached this fact, that the monks were expelled from Iona largely because of their faithful adherence to the view of their fathers, and their resistance to innovations intruded upon them from without, chiefly at the dictation of a distant Roman Church. Men who were ready to suffer in this way, because of their loyalty to their views, would never lack popular approbation; and one need not suppose that the expulsion of the monks from Iona lost them the favour of the people. On the contrary, it gave them a high and heroic place.

1. The expulsion of these Columban monks from Iona took place in 717, in the first quarter of the eighth century. It is at this time that the name appears which we translate *Culdee*; and it is after the eighth century that the religious associations, known as *Culdees*, begin to have a prominent place. Many, therefore, have supposed that the Culdees were simply the Columban monks under another name. It is difficult to prove this, and the best authorities do not accept the view. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that many of the Columban monks, when expelled from Iona, associated themselves with certain other movements out of which came in course of time the *Culdees*. That Columban monks and their successors appeared in course of time amongst the Culdees is a most likely thing;

that the Culdees were purely the Columban monks is not proved, and is indeed unlikely.

2. To explain the Culdees historically, we have to go back somewhat earlier than the eighth century, and we have to think of certain movements which were going on in the Church before the eighth century and after it. And the first of these movements is what we call the *Eremitical*.

(1) Religion has always had a tendency to *asceticism*. The ascetic was the man who *exercised* himself in religion, or who felt that he could cultivate religion best by a strict and rigid exercise of himself. These ascetics exercised themselves in religion in many varied ways. Long before Christianity came, there were ascetics in religion. We have them, indeed, in all religions, in India, in China, and in the islands of the seas; and the man who could live alone, unwashed, unkempt, and probably, therefore, very dirty, seemed to have a special claim on the veneration of his fellows. The Essenes in our Lord's time were ascetics, and, in a measure, John the Baptist was one himself.

After Christianity came, religious asceticism broke out in many varied ways. There were religious ascetics who lived in barrels, and Simeon the Stylite spent many long years on the top of a pillar. These things appear strange to us in the twentieth century; and the veneration in which such men were held is also strange to us, who have come to believe that the best religious life is achieved in the work of life and by those who copy the ideal of Jesus, a radiant Being who went about doing good, who was at home at a marriage feast, and sat down to eat with publicans and sinners. Asceticism took many forms in the early years of Christianity, and the names "hermit," "eremite," "ascetic," all describe the same singular feature of the religious life. Another name was "anchorite." The anchorite was the man who sought a retreat where, by himself, he might cultivate the religious life and exercise himself in purity and godliness.

The greatest impulse to this form of religious life came from St. Anthony in Egypt, in the end of the third century. For

long he lived in a grotto near his native village. Afterwards, for twenty years, he took up his abode in a ruined castle in the mountains. People supplied him with bread. He himself wove baskets, which helped him to provide some nourishment for himself and something for those who visited him. When about one hundred years old, he appeared in Alexandria for a few days, and his appearance made the greatest sensation of his time. People thronged to touch his garments, and pagans were converted in crowds. Round his cell or retreat many of his disciples came to live in cells of their own; and thus a movement began which spread over the Christian world, and in time reached the shores of Britain.

It is important clearly to realise that these movements swept over Europe in waves. The wave of anchoritism began in Egypt in the third century, and swept across the whole Christian world, till in the end it touched Britain and found itself among the hills of Scotland. It went along by the South of France, where the remnants of the movement are much better preserved than in iconoclastic and Presbyterian Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

(2) An anchorite, then, or a solitary monk of the sort just described,—whether he lived absolutely alone in a more or less inaccessible retreat, or whether, as in the case of St. Anthony, there were gathered round him a number of hermits each in his own retreat,—such an anchorite got a name which in Latin is *Deicola*, and means a servant or worshipper of God. An anchorite and a *Deicola* were synonymous terms. The *Deicola* lived a life of protest—of protest against the worldliness and wickedness of men, and against the secular spirit which he thought was creeping into the Church. If we ask for a parallel term in more modern religious history, perhaps we might take *Puritan*.

<sup>1</sup> The author remembers specially one hermit's cave in the South of France, high up on the Esterelle hills, with the ruins of a little chapel beside it. To-day it is a holy spot which the Catholics of France do not forget. Inside the cave are candles and images; and the devout pilgrims leave their names and their cards, hoping for the prayers of the saint.

This word *Deicola* seems to be the origin of the name Culdee, the Irish rendering it *Ceile De* with its Latin equivalent *Keledei*.

In Ireland this anchoritical movement took a firm hold. In the Irish monasteries there were beehive cells, built of unmortared stone, where any of the brethren might retire for a longer or shorter period for discipline, prayer, or penitence. But the more popular form and the anchorite form proper was when a monk withdrew from the monastery altogether, and sought a "Desert," as he called it, where in solitude he might spend the rest of his days. A very ancient document, describing these hermits, says: "They dwelt in desert places, and lived on herbs and water and the alms of the faithful. They shunned private property; they despised all earthly things, and wholly avoided all whispering and backbiting."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Now, if we understand the situation, we see that we have reached, not merely an order of anchorites, but an order of anchorite establishments in Ireland in the seventh century, where lived Keledei—men who got that name because they appeared to the world to be followers and worshippers of God in a special degree. One can well believe that in the Irish Church these establishments came to be centres of vast influence, while property accumulated round them. On the other hand, as they were in a measure outside Roman influences, a strenuous and persistent effort was made to bring them into conformity with the general Western Church—an effort which succeeded in the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gradually these anchorites formed themselves into establishments. In an island on the west coast of Ireland there are to-day the remains of an establishment of this nature. An uncemented stone wall encloses an area of 108 feet in diameter. Inside this wall is an oratory. On the east of that is an ancient stone sepulchre. Within this enclosure, also, are two beehive cells; one being, inside, a square of 9 feet, and 7 feet 6 inches high. The doorways are only 3 feet 6 inches high, so that the hermit had to bend considerably before getting in. On the other side are some smaller cells, which are 6 feet long, 3 feet wide, and only 4 feet high. Clearly the anchorite could not stand upright in such cells.

<sup>2</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 248.



It is scarcely necessary to say that the eremitical movement swept over to Scotland. However, it is not till after the expulsion of the monks from Iona, in 717, that we hear of these Deicolæ or Keledei. Establishments of these Keledei grew up at places such as Culross, Glasgow, and St. Andrews. Apparently these establishments took the place of the Columban Church. The monasteries of the Columban monks, with their great properties, seem at the same time to have been falling into the hands of laymen.

It may therefore be concluded that the name "Culdee" arose from that movement which we have called anchoritic, eremitical, or ascetic. The hermits were the followers of God *par excellence*, and hence the name they received, even after they were grouped together in establishments.

3. But the time came when the Culdees were put under what we call a *canonical* Rule; and this is associated with another movement, which we shall describe briefly.

(1) As we have seen, the Columban Church had been wholly monastic; that is to say, all its clergy were *regular*; they were bound by a Rule and lived within their monastery. This was the great feature of the Columban Church. But there was a greater Church in Europe than the Columban, and this Church, which we might call the Continental Roman Church, was a *secular* Church; that is to say, its clergy were not obliged to live in monasteries. Its Bishops might live in homes of their own; although, if clergy chose to do so, they might go and join the monasteries of the time. Here, then, was one leading feature of the Continental Church: it was a *secular* Church, with monasteries in a comparatively subordinate place.

A conflict set in between the Roman Church and the native Columban Churches, in which the Church of Columba was worsted. It was driven out from Iona in the beginning of the eighth century. Rome could not tolerate the monastic system, unless it was made subordinate to the Bishops and the Priesthood.

(2) The next step was to have a *unity of organisation*.

The monastic Church, as Columba conceived it, was gone. The secular clergy were growing in number everywhere, and alongside these were establishments of hermitical monks. The question arose, How were these varied organisations to be unified? An attempt to do this was made in 747. The situation as it existed could not last. There were secular clergy, living separately, but not under monastic rule; there were hermits in establishments, also living separately, and not under monastic rule; and, alongside all these, there were real monasteries.

In 747 a Rule was promulgated to bring the secular clergy and the anchorites together. This Rule was established by the Bishop of Metz, and was meant originally for the clergy of his own diocese. He wished these clergy to come together and to live a *regular* life; so he directed that the clerics who agreed to his canon should live in a cloister, and all sleep in one dormitory, except "those who might be permitted by the Bishop to sleep separately in their own dwellings within the cloister." This was not a monastic Rule at all; it was a Rule establishing a canonry, whereby the clerics might live together, except those who might join as anchorites and live in their own cells, yet inside the cloister. By this canonical Rule the anchorites were invited, and ultimately compelled to come into one establishment. The canonical Rule was adopted for the whole Roman Church in 817.

(3) What took place, therefore, was this. The monastery continued, but became subordinate to the Bishop; and attached to the Bishopric were the clergy under the canonical Rule, within the cloister, sleeping in the one dormitory, except in those cases where they wished a separate cell within the cloister. This canonical Rule spread everywhere. The secular clergy in the ninth century were drawn under it, and the anchorites or Deicolæ as well.

A similar process took place in Scotland; and the time came when the Keledei were drawn under the canonical Rule,

and attached to a Bishopric. In Scotland this took place in the beginning of the tenth century. At the same time, it ought to be recognised that the Culdees died out only after a struggle. There were anchorites in Queen Margaret's day, in the eleventh century. Her biographer, who was also her spiritual adviser, says: "There were many in the kingdom of the Scots who in different places, enclosed in separate cells, lived in the flesh, but not according to the flesh, in great straitness of life, and even on earth lived the life of angels. In them the Queen did her best to love and venerate Christ, and frequently to visit them with her presence and converse, and to commend herself to their prayers."

Yet the processes of reformation which Queen Margaret introduced inevitably conflicted with the claims of the Culdees; and the time came when the rights of the Culdees in Scotland were attached to the see of St. Andrews, and when other and greater monastic establishments arose to counteract the influence of the native Church. Bishoprics took the place of the Celtic Church, and in the great cathedrals there came an order of canons, a cathedral staff, as it were, which swallowed up the Keledei of the Celtic Church.

By the end of the thirteenth century the Culdees had disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One establishment in the north of Scotland was at Monymusk, in Aberdeenshire, a district which has had an interesting religious history. The Culdees at Monymusk do not seem to have had much to do with the Columban Church, because they are not heard of till the twelfth century, the first notice of them being in 1170. The tradition of the founding of the Monymusk Church is that, when Malcolm Canmore was on his way to Moray, he rested there, and finding that the barony belonged to the crown, he vowed it to St. Andrew, that he might secure victory. Probably the Culdees at Monymusk were a colony from St. Andrews. Gilchrist, Earl of Mar, built them a convent in the beginning of the thirteenth century. As Culdees, they were little more than secular canons. Monymusk kept up its close connection with St. Andrews. By 1245 the Keledei of Monymusk had disappeared, and instead there arose "a prior and convent of Monimusc of the order of Saint Augustine" (Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 392).

The passing away of the Culdees is intimately connected with the passing away of the native Celtic Church, which we call by way of distinction the Columban.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*; Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*; Lang, *History of Scotland*; Dowden, *The Celtic Church in Scotland*; *Book of Deer* (Spalding Club, Dr. John Stuart's Introduction); Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Islands*. Also, general *Church Histories*, such as those of Neander, Moeller, Schaff, Robertson, Kurtz, etc.

## CHAPTER IV.

### QUEEN MARGARET.

A. Though Queen Margaret did much for Scotland and in all the parts of Scottish life, yet, through her personal exertions and the influences she set in operation, she did more than anyone to cripple and destroy the native Celtic Church. Accordingly, the period before us in the present chapter might fitly be described as the period of the decadence of the Celtic or native Scottish Church.

1. Before describing the life of Queen Margaret, it will be necessary to understand some of the influences which were working in the Church toward decay. Some of these influences were secret, undermining influences. They were foes within the Church, which are always the most deadly. Some, on the other hand, were influences from without. They were what we describe, in military language, as frontal attacks. These influences may be briefly summarised.

(1) The first influence, no doubt, is what we describe by the word *secularisation*. The Church of Christ has never had a deadlier foe. Secularisation means submission to the spirit of the world. It is the first result of the power of wealth. When the Church gets the world's possessions into its hands, there is a danger that the Church which appears to conquer should be in reality conquered. This is a danger which every section of the Church has had to contend with. The Church's place must be

in the world, but the Church's heart must not be with the world. This danger came speedily into the Celtic Church. The tribe had its monastery, and the monastery was the centre of tribal life and influence. The succession in the headship of the monastery lay in the tribe. Was it to be wondered at, therefore, that wealth, land, and power became attached to the tribal centre? The process, indeed, was the most natural in the world. The time came when at the head of the monastery was a layman, a married man with sons and daughters, and with interests outside the immediate interests of his Church. This lay-abbot had his retainers and his fighting men; and the moment the Church interest waned, the lay-abbot seized and retained the rich lands and possessions of the Church. Some of these lay-abbots rose to be most influential men. For instance, the primacy of the Church was transferred in 850 from Iona to the monastery of Dunkeld. Ultimately, there came to be abbot at Dunkeld a layman called Crinan, who took as his wife a daughter of Malcolm II. And from Crinan's family sprang a race of Scottish kings, whose blood still runs in our royal house.

But apart from that, there is a danger always attached to accumulations of wealth in the Church. The danger is many-sided. Wealth spells power, and it brings with it the temptation to take a place, or force a place, in matters outside the proper work of the Church. Wealth in the Church of Christ, also, is apt to spell corruption; and the wealth of the native Celtic Church was slowly undermining its faith and its purity.

(2) But there were other influences at work, not so insidious, but certainly as disturbing. There was the terrible havoc of invasion. We can hardly realise what such invasion meant. A Danish invasion in the mild twentieth-century days takes the form of butter and eggs! In the early centuries of Scottish history a Danish invasion was much more volcanic. The Dane from Ireland swept round Scotland like a tornado. He found that the Celtic monasteries were worth while sacking. In particular, Iona received repeated visits from these inquisitive gentry.

For instance, in 986 Iona was plundered, while its abbot and fifteen of its clergy were slain. It is clear that an influence of this nature was certain to bring enormous changes. The tendency arose to remove monasteries to centres less subject to invasion, such as Dunkeld. There was the further tendency towards the development of a massive architecture. The old church and monastery of reeds disappeared, and in its place came strong buildings of stone, or such round towers for defence and refuge as are still left standing at Brechin or Abernethy.

Another form of invasion came from Rome. We have seen something of its nature already. We have seen how Roman customs came into conflict with native customs, as for instance in the celebration of Easter. These Roman customs had got a firm hold in the Continental Churches, and in Britain south of the Tweed ; and the conflict between the Church inspired from Rome and the Church inspired from Iona could have only one ending : the native Church began to succumb. And where it held out, as it might do through local powerful associations, there arose to counteract its influence vast monasteries on a different basis, and directly in touch with Rome. In this movement no one did more than Queen Margaret. She acted as she did with the best intentions in the world. She truly believed that the native Churches were in need of reformation. She believed that they were not the power for Christ that they might be. Accordingly, because she wished to see religion in the land, and on a higher and firmer basis, she used all the power she had to remove native customs and native forms of worship, and to replace them with the institutions which her life in England had made familiar to her. Thus the Celtic Church passes away with the coming of Queen Margaret.

2. It will be necessary, before we can appreciate the life of Margaret, to understand something of the history of the Scottish kings up to the reign of Malcolm Canmore, Margaret's husband, in the last half of the eleventh century. It is difficult to describe this period—the period between the ninth and the eleventh

centuries. Phantom kings come and go ; monarchs rise and fall : and over all the period hangs the grim shadow of war, pillage, assassination, and bloodshed.

(1) We may take as a starting-point the reign of Kenneth McAlpin, who in 844 succeeded in uniting the Picts and Scots under one rule. This was an immense step towards the consolidation of the country, and Kenneth stands out in history as one of the great makers of Scotland.

From Kenneth McAlpin to Malcolm Canmore is a long stretch of over two hundred years. In that period much happened ; more particularly, there were added to the kingdom of Scotia, over which Kenneth reigned, the kingdom of Strathclyde and the kingdom of Lothian, which last in sentiment and nationality was really one with Northumbria and the northern parts of England. The period of two hundred years was one of constant warfare and battling. The kings of the Picts and Scots had to contend with the Norwegians beyond the Grampians, and with the men of Moray ; and in the South they had to contend with rulers in Strathclyde and Lothian. One may imagine how unsettled the time was when it is remembered that out of fifteen kings for about two hundred years after Kenneth McAlpin, ten were assassinated or died in battle.

At the same time, during those years, there was a gradual movement toward the consolidation and unity of the country, and this movement came to a height, first in the reign of Malcolm II., who died in 1034, and in whose reign Strathclyde and Lothian were added to the crown, and then in the long reign of Malcolm III., known as "Canmore," or "Big Head," who was able in large measure to conciliate the Norwegians in the North, although these lands were not yet added to the crown.

Malcolm II. died in 1034, and was succeeded by his grandson Duncan, whose father was Crinan, abbot of Dunkeld. In Duncan's reign the Saxon element in Lothian began to assert itself against the Celtic, and Edinburgh came more and more to be the capital and seat of royal influence. Duncan was an un-



fortunate monarch, and in the six years of his reign had war after war, until in 1040 he was slain near Elgin by Macbeth, mormaer of Moray, a man of great valour and bravery, but outside the recognised royal line. Macbeth ruled seventeen years, during which Malcolm, son of Duncan, and heir to the Scottish throne, was an exile in England. Apparently, Macbeth had gained the goodwill of all parts of the kingdom, being specially generous to the native Church. At last, in 1057, he was slain by Malcolm, probably in open fight, at Lumphanan.<sup>1</sup>

In 1057, Malcolm III. came to the throne, and reigned until 1093. Malcolm's reign was long and notable, the most notable thing about it being the work of his queen. Malcolm was a big man. He was big in body and big in heart. He was great in his loves and in his hates ; yet there must have been something noble in his rough nature when it drew out the lifelong affection of Queen Margaret. In Malcolm's reign a further step was taken in the consolidation of Scotland. The Northern parts, more especially the parts we know now as Sutherland and Caithness, ruled over by the warlike Norwegian Thorfinn, were conciliated by Malcolm's marriage to Ingiborg, a daughter of Thorfinn. Ingiborg did not live long to share Malcolm's throne. They had one son, who afterwards became Duncan II.

(2) Malcolm himself was a man of war, and even the piety of his second queen, Margaret, did not and could not wean him from that. It is more than probable that Margaret never thought of weaning her husband from war. Malcolm's wars were chiefly with England, and it is said that he crossed the Border five times with fire and sword. It was on the last of these forays that he met his death (1093). The only other thing to be recorded about his reign is that, nine years after he came to the throne, viz., in 1066, there occurred one of the epoch-making events in British

<sup>1</sup>This appears to be the true story of Macbeth ; and for the picture which Shakespeare gives us of " a diabolic personage," weak in will and mastered by his wife, we must go to the poet's imagination working on the materials of the old chronicler Hollingshed, who in turn borrowed from Boece.

history, the *Norman Conquest*. The landing of William the Conqueror was an event fraught with tremendous consequences to our little island; and in these consequences Scotland shared to the full. Without the Norman Conquest, Scotland in all probability would not have seen Margaret, Saint and Queen.

*B.* Margaret was of royal Saxon line. Her father had sought the security of the Continent, and had married a Hungarian princess, Agatha, by whom he had two daughters, Margaret and Christian, and one son, Edgar the Ætheling. After the Norman Conquest, Edgar had endeavoured to regain the English crown, but his forces had been shattered by Norman William near York. After this there was no help but in flight. The fugitives made their way to Scotland, and landed on the Fifeshire coast. Their destination was the court of Malcolm at Dunfermline. The time was October 1069.<sup>1</sup>

1. Every account that has come down to us of Margaret tells us that she was very beautiful, very gentle, and very pious. Her heart was given to religion, and in the exercises of religion she found a holy joy. Such was the woman Malcolm welcomed to his palace, and such was the woman to whom he gave his heart. They were strangely contrasted. Margaret was a little over twenty; Malcolm was forty-seven years old. He was a warrior; she was a saint, and yet a saint who was in every way a true woman. Malcolm was brave, strong, bold, and daring; rough, also,—for the age in which he lived was rough. He could not read, as Margaret with her English culture could; but he had a strong right arm, which was ever at her service. Their marriage took place on the 5th of April 1070; and for twenty-three years Margaret held her royal lover's heart. Malcolm could not always understand her ideals, but he could worship her. "Seeing that

<sup>1</sup> Half-way between the shore and the palace, where "the great-headed" monarch resided, is a stone known as "St. Margaret's Stone." Tradition says that this stone rises from its bed and whirls three times in the air whenever the cock is heard to crow at the adjoining farm! At this stone the little company rested on their way to Malcolm.

Christ dwelt in her heart," says one, "he was always ready to follow her counsels; what she disliked he disliked, and what she loved he loved for the love of her."<sup>1</sup>

It need not be supposed that the course of true love ran always smooth in Margaret's case. Some time after his marriage, it was reported to Malcolm that, after he had left the palace to hunt, his wife went to enjoy herself with other companionships. Deep jealousy and wrath burned in the royal breast. He resolved to watch her movements. Hiding himself in the wood, he waited till he saw the Queen come out alone. She went northwards towards a ravine, and then disappeared in a cave. Malcolm followed, his sword ready to wreak vengeance on this rival in the Queen's affections. As he approached he heard a voice; it was Margaret's, but no one responded to it. Then he heard his own name pronounced, and the truth broke on Malcolm that his young wife had sought this calm retreat that she might have fellowship with God, and cast all her care, the care of her home, her husband, her kingdom, on a Father's heart. Do we wonder that Malcolm dated his true manhood from that hour? This little episode did more for the highest life of Malcolm Canmore than all he had ever heard or learned. Henceforth, his wife's voice was to him as the voice of God.

2. We may now endeavour to answer the question, What did Margaret do for Scotland? In the first place, *Margaret set many fashions*. Margaret was a great lady—a fact which we

<sup>1</sup> A Dunfermline poet has chronicled the nuptials thus:—

“ And holy voice invoked Heaven's care  
 To bless thro' life the Royal pair!  
 For many days the nuptial feast  
 Spread joy around in every breast,  
 And Senachies were loud in song  
 With voice and harp to cheer the throng.  
 A theme so fertile could inspire  
 The brethren of the holy choir;  
 Their strains amid the joyous time  
 May thus be sung in modern rhyme.”

(Mackie, *Margaret, Queen and Saint*, p. 31.)

must not forget. Also, she came from England, where manners were higher than in Scotland. People there dressed better, lived better, were more polite and correct. With Margaret there came to Scotland the manners of Saxon England. This was undoubtedly a gift to Scotland, whose kings and nobility from Malcolm downwards were somewhat rough and clownish, though doubtless their hearts were good. Margaret dressed well; indeed, it is whispered by her biographers that she was fond of dress. Margaret was *correct* in her court etiquette, and had a large retinue both at Dunfermline and Edinburgh. It is said, also, that she insisted on her royal table having gold and silver plate. Anyhow, it is clear that the manners of this noble Saxon lady must have done much for Scotland.

But Margaret was correct in matters that went deeper than those referred to. She was correct in her speech, just as her life was pure and her discipline in religion exact and rigorous. It was said of her, "In her presence nothing unseemly was ever done or uttered." Further, with Queen Margaret came what we call *chivalry*. Tennyson has given the world an exquisite picture of Arthur and his court, of how the pure and generous Arthur by his own example made his knights chivalrous to women and kind to all who were in distress. Margaret had the same influence at the court of Malcolm. She taught her husband chivalry; and the great shock-headed King, who could not read her books but could kiss them, was taught by the slender young Saxon Queen to love all that was good and to be chivalrous to all who were poor and needy. One may be certain that his nobles strove to imitate Malcolm.

Further, she set an example of charity and of personal piety. Her charity and piety are described in Hailes' *Annals* in the following words:—"Every morning she prepared food for nine little children, all indigent orphans. On her bended knees she fed them. With her own hand she ministered at table to crowds of poor persons, and washed the feet of six children. While the King was occupied with affairs of State, she repaired to the altar,

and there, with long prayers, sighs, and tears, offered herself a willing sacrifice to the Lord. In the season of Lent, besides reciting particular rites, she went through the whole Psalter twice or thrice within the space of twenty-four hours. Before the time of public mass, she heard five or six private masses. After that service she fed twenty-four persons ; and then, and not till then, she retired to a scanty ascetic meal." There can be little doubt that these ascetic and rigorous habits undermined her own health, and when she died, in 1093, she was only a few years over forty. A woman of her type, however, considers her own life but a small thing compared with what she can do for the lives of others.

But Margaret had much to say to the Church. She found it a Celtic Church, and she left it largely Saxonised. Margaret was English to the core, and her English ways and English habits of religion found much that was uncouth in the native Celtic Church. In her zeal for reform Margaret held several councils of the clergy, in order to correct, if possible, those habits which seemed to her "to be contrary to the rules of the true faith as well as to the sacred customs of the universal Church." Turgot, who was her confessor and who wrote her biography, tells us of one council in particular in which for three days she contended with the native clergy, urging them to remove native customs. In this council, her husband, who knew the Saxon speech as well as the native Gaelic, acted as her interpreter. We may rest assured that the Celtic clergy did not like the innovations of this Saxon woman. That may be taken for granted ; but when the innovations had behind them the strong arm of Malcolm, the native clergy had no alternative but to yield.

There were five points particularly in which Queen Margaret insisted on reformation, and gained the day. We need not enlarge on these, and may simply note that they dealt with the beginning of Lent, the taking of Communion on Easter Day, a reformed ritual of the mass, a stricter observance of the Sabbath, and lastly the suppression of marriage with a stepmother, or with a deceased husband's brother. Turgot adds : "Many other

practices which were contrary to the rule of faith and the observance of the Church, she persuaded the council to condemn and to drive out of the borders of the kingdom."

There were, of course, many abuses which Margaret was not able to remove, and the chief of these, the filling of abbacies by laymen, Malcolm himself could not stop: it would have caused too great an upheaval. As it was, Margaret's innovations caused much discontent among the Celtic clergy; and when the strong arm of Malcolm was removed, the discontent blazed out in the short-lived rebellion of Donald Bane.

C. Let us hasten now to the end. Malcolm and his son Edward, sorely against the Queen's wish, had gone on their last campaign across the Tweed. At Alnwick they were both cut down,—no doubt, through treachery. This was on November 13th, 1093.

Margaret was herself ill, dying, indeed, in Edinburgh Castle. When Edgar, her son, entered the chamber, she eagerly asked him for news. "How fares it," she said, "with the King and my Edward?" "They are well," was his evasive answer. "I know, I know it," replied the Queen. "By this holy cross, by the bond of our blood, I adjure thee to tell me the truth!" So Edgar told her all. Raising her eyes to heaven, the Queen offered her last prayer: "Praise and blessing be to Thee, Almighty God, that Thou hast been pleased to make me endure bitter anguish in the hour of my departure: thereby, as I trust, to purify me in some measure from the corruption of my sins. And Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, who, through the will of the Father, hast given life to the world through Thy death, have mercy on me." And then the soul of the Saint and Queen passed to "where beyond these voices there is Peace."

Everyone must feel that we have here a beautiful life. Dr. Skene has used these words about Queen Margaret: "There is perhaps no more beautiful character recorded in history than that of Margaret. For purity of motives, for an earnest desire to

benefit the people among whom her lot in life was cast, for a deep sense of religion and great personal piety, for the unselfish performance of whatever duty lay before her, and for entire self-abnegation, she is unsurpassed, and the chroniclers of her time all bear testimony to her exalted character."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 344.

LITERATURE.—Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, vol. i. Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland*. Hill-Burton, *History of Scotland*, etc.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MONKS OF DEER.

*A.* The story of the monks of Deer is of interest for a variety of reasons. For one reason, the story has a peculiar significance for all who live in the North of Scotland, and for those especially who dwell near the Ugie, the stream which flows past the site of the ancient monastery at Deer. For another reason, we find in the story of the monks of Deer a typical illustration of the course of the Church's history in Scotland up to and beyond the Middle Ages; and when we study this history as shown us in miniature at Deer, we are able to grasp it more firmly and follow it better than when we try to study it broadly and on a larger scale. We shall find that the movements which were taking place over the whole of Scotland, and indeed far beyond Scotland, reflected themselves in the monastic life of Deer. No further apology, therefore, need be made, for this short study of the history of the foundations at Deer, though at the first blush one is disposed to think of them as somewhat provincial. We are often apt, in our descriptions of the history of the Church, to confine ourselves to the Church's movements as exemplified in great centres; but we obtain a more intimate conception of the Church's influence and leavening powers when we study these as shown us in remote districts or in a small sphere of influence.

1. The history of a thousand years in Scotland, from the sixth



century to the sixteenth, can be traced in the Church at Deer.

We have already seen a little of the dark age of Scottish history, and something of the forms of worship and primitive culture before the dawn of Christianity. It is unnecessary to say more about these ; it is enough for us to remember that the Northern Picts in Scotland, as far as we can gather, shared in the religious practices and primitive nature-worship which we have already described.

There is no evidence to show that Christianity reached as far as Deer in the first five centuries of the Christian era. The labours of men such as Ninian and Ternan do not appear to have penetrated so far. Christianity came to Deer on the top of the *monastic* wave. We have seen already how the fourth century of our era witnessed a remarkable development of the monastic life.<sup>1</sup> Those who yearned for the highest things in religion imagined that they were to be found in separation from the world, in devotion to divine things, and in self-crucifixion. From Egypt monasticism spread through the East ; through Rome westwards ; through Spain, and through France. The centuries, as they passed, found monasticism more firmly rooted in the customs of the time and in the hearts of the people. Popularity brought dangers with it. In the sixth century there arose a cry for reformation. The cry was answered by Benedict, the reformer of monasteries in the West. Benedict drew up a code or "Rule" for all monasteries. He ordered that an abbot should be at the head of every monastery ; that candidates should be submitted for a year to probation, and their property, if they had any, given to the monastery ; that the monks should be well employed, attending eight services daily and working seven hours. At meals a book was to be read, and no conversation allowed. Meals themselves were to be of the simplest character. The monks were to sleep by ten or twelve in a room, each in a bed by himself, with a lamp kept burning. The monks

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III., on "The Culdees."

were to do most of the work within the monastery itself or within its grounds, where provision was made for mill, garden, well, bake-house, and so on. There were many further instructions in Benedict's "Rule," as, for instance, his instructions in regard to humility, regarding which the following striking sentences may be quoted: "When the monk has passed through all these stages of humility, he will soon attain to that love of God which being perfect casteth out fear, and through which he will begin to practise naturally and through custom, without anxiety or pains, all those rules which he before observed not without fear. He will no longer act from any fear of hell, but from love to Christ, from the energy of right habits and joy in that which is good."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the nature of the Rule of Benedict in the first quarter of the sixth century, and from it we can gather some indication, not merely of the aims which monasticism kept before it, but of the abuses to which a system which became so popular was liable. Benedictine monasteries sprang up far and near; and a new impulse was given by them to Christianity and to all those civilising and purgative influences which Christianity brought with it into heathenism.

2. But long before the sixth century, as we have already seen, monasteries had appeared in Britain. The monastic movement, beginning in Egypt, had passed through France, and through France to Ireland, and from Ireland to Iona and Deer. In the first quarter of the sixth century the Irish Church gave to the world a very remarkable man, whose destiny it was to become the Apostle of the Picts. Columba passed from Ireland to Iona, where he made his missionary headquarters. About two years after Columba had settled at Iona, he began to direct his labours toward the great country that lay to the east of him. The thought of those Picts dwelling in darkness and ignorance lay heavy on his heart; he determined to bring them light.

<sup>1</sup> Neander, *Church History*, iii. pp. 370-75 (Bohn's edition); Robertson, *History of the Christian Church*, ii. pp. 344-55 (edition 1875).

Accordingly, he set forth, and found his way to the great monarch of the Northern Picts, Brude by name, who had his capital near Inverness. When he had obtained the help and co-operation of Brude, his work became easier ; and by the end of the sixth century many Columban monasteries had arisen as the result of his labours.

Did Columba, then, visit the north-eastern corner of Scotland? Did he visit Deer? It appears that he did. A number of years ago, the Librarian of the University Library in Cambridge came upon a work in manuscript which had lain forgotten for centuries. The work was not a big one. It was all in handwriting, and experts said that the most of the handwriting belonged to the ninth century of our era. The bulk of the book consisted of a Latin version of the Gospels—not a very exact version, but well written and in parts well illuminated. Besides this version of the Gospel in Latin and a collect for the Visitation of the Sick, there were scattered through the volume, at the foot of a page or at the side here and there, various notes or memoranda in Gaelic—a Gaelic similar (as other ancient records showed) to the old language of Ireland. These notes or memoranda were in a handwriting later than the time when the Gospels were written. Most of them, indeed, were in a handwriting of the eleventh century. They were notes of grants of land and property given by chiefs and kings to a monastery at Deer. Other ancient monasteries possessed their books: and here, in short, was the remarkable discovery of the *Book of Deer*—the copy of the Gospels used in the old monastery of Deer, along with other matters, chiefly memoranda of grants of land given to the monks. There seems little reason to doubt that here in the *Book of Deer* we have a work written out in the monastery itself by the banks of the Ugie, containing also notes of their possessions, which the shrewd monks knew it would be for their interest, in those troubled times, to possess in writing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Book of Deer* has been published by the Spalding Club, with an Introduction by Dr. John Stuart.

The legend of the founding of the monastery is thus stated in the *Book of Deer*: "Columcille and Drostan, son of Cosgrach, his pupil, came from Hi, as God had shown to them, unto Abbordoboir (Aberdour), and Bede the Pict was mormaer of Buchan before them, and it was he that gave them that town in freedom from mormaer and toisech. They came after that to the other town, and it was pleasing to Columcille because it was full of God's grace, and he asked of the mormaer, to wit Bede, that he should give it to him; and he did not give it, and a son of his took an illness after refusing the clerics, and he was nearly dead. After this, the mormaer went to entreat the clerics that they should make prayers for the son that health should come to him; and he gave an offering unto them from Cloch in tiprat to Cloch pette meic Garnait. They made the prayer, and health came to him. After that, Columcille gave to Drostan that town and blessed it, and left as his word, 'Whosoever should come against it, let him not be many-yearred or victorious.' Drostan's tears came on parting from Columcille. Said Columcille, 'Let Deer be its name henceforward.'"

Here we have an interesting story. Columba and Drostan come to Aberdour. The great ruler, a sort of independent king, with a chief under him, is Bede the Pict. Aberdour is given to the monks, free of any tribute-money to king or chief. Columba and Drostan then push through the country. Probably Bede the Pict had another of his leading forts at Deer; there the population was well gathered together, and the place was eminently suited for a monastery. Down in the valley, the stream running past, the bog and the morass around, the forest clothing the hillsides, there was a quiet, secluded spot such as monks loved for their monasteries. Columba himself seemed to have been fond of oak forests. His own old monastery of Derry in Ireland got its name from the oak trees around it. And Deer reminded him of Darrow and Derry; for no doubt the name *Deer* is really derived from the Gaelic for an oak. Names like "Aikiebrae" and "Yokieshill" survive

still to remind us of the oak trees which clothed the slopes around the Ugie. Here, then, with the oak woods around it, the sound of the Ugie beside it, the bog and the morass in the valley, the hill-fort or rath of Bede on the height beyond, Columba founded his monastery, perhaps near the spot where afterwards arose the parish church of Old Deer.

One can easily imagine the sort of structure the first monastery of Deer was. To begin with, it was built on the plan of the monastery of Iona, which in turn was built on the plan of the Irish monasteries. It was a simple structure—turf, stone, wood—a simple, homely structure, depending in that age for its protection on the sanctity that gathered round the service of God. A simple church, a simple dining-place or refectory, a simple room of monks' cells, a simple place for guests, a simple house for its abbot, Drostan—these made up the first monastery of Deer.

Gifts of land and of possessions began to flow into the monastery from those who had got benefit to their souls or were anxious to obtain the prayers of the monks. The *Book of Deer* gives us memoranda of these grants. It would be needless to describe these grants in detail. One chief after another added something to the monastery, or freed it from some tax which had rested on land already in its possession. One chief, Cathal by name, besides giving his share from certain lands, promises, because of what he owed to God and Drostan, to give a dinner every Christmas and Easter to a hundred people.

3. There can be no doubt that during the years which followed the founding of the monastery of Deer in the sixth century, it became a rich and powerful place. And herein lay its danger. There was the danger, on the one hand, of internal decay, arising from pride and the temptations of wealth and position; there was the danger, on the other hand, of becoming a prey to the hungry nobles, who were ever on the outlook for spoil. It is certain that the monastery of Deer passed through the fire of this twofold danger.

It is not necessary to show in detail the way in which ruin overtook many of the monasteries in Scotland. The sixth century saw their establishment; the following century saw their glory; the next three saw their decay. Briefly, the process was this. From the sixth to the eleventh century a vast part of Scotland was in the possession of the monks. To themselves this was a temptation, while it filled the eyes of the rude and strong nobility with envy. Now and then, especially on the west coast, the Danes swept down on the monasteries, slew the abbots and monks, and stripped them of their treasures. The monks had to appeal for help; thus the laity got a footing in the monastery. In many cases, the monastery was swept away, and the lands belonging to it passed into the hands of the chiefs of the district. In other cases, the noble seized the monastery, called himself abbot and dubbed his followers monks, little recking of sacrilege if he were able to enjoy the fat rentals and tithes of the monastery. Accordingly, when in the eleventh century Malcolm Canmore and his Saxon Queen Margaret came to the throne, they found matters in such a deplorable condition that nothing but a wholesale reformation could satisfy the religious needs of the time.

How far the process we have described affected the monastery of Deer is uncertain; but it seems clear that attempts were made by chiefs without the piety of the early mormaers to get a grip of the lands attached to the monastery. The monks seem to have come off victorious. Anyhow, the monastery never appears to have lost its original clerical character.

But in the reign of Malcolm Canmore a new era began in Scottish Church history. The impulse came from Saxon England, mainly through Queen Margaret. The original Scottish Church being in a lifeless state, a reformation had to take place. Saxon ideas of bishops and dioceses and parishes began to fill the air, and soon shaped themselves into realities. In place of the old tribe there now sprang up the parish, which

sometimes, as in the case of Deer, was of great size ; and in place of the monastery came the parish church. The monastery of Deer seems to have given place to the church of the parish of Deer in the reign of David, in the first half of the twelfth century. Probably the first parish church of Deer was simply a part of the original monastery. The monks may still have been connected with it as canons, but the church of Deer itself was attached to the bishopric of Dunkeld. In the process of transition from the monastery to the parish church a part of the lands seems to have been seized. The clerics complained ; and a great charter was accordingly given them by David, in which all the property originally given to the monastery was confirmed to the parish of Deer and its episcopal connection, and the clerics, as it is put, were "free from all service of layman and undue exactions as it is written in their 'Book.'"

*B.* We must pass now about a hundred years during which we know nothing of the church of Deer. We have reached the thirteenth century. The system of monks, abbots, and monasteries was by no means dead. It still had a living hold on the heart and the enthusiasm of the Christian world. But a wave of reformation was passing over Europe. It was felt in life, in literature, in religion. In literature, it manifested itself in Dante and his *Divine Comedy* ; in the Church it resulted in the pulse of a new life, beating through friar, monk, and monastery.

1. The new movement is a deeply interesting one, for it reached as far as Buchan, and traces of it are standing to-day in the ivy-clad ruins of the *Abbey of Deer*.

The peculiar movement for reformation in monasteries, with which we have now to do, had its seat in France. It began in the twelfth century, and its fruit was the *Cistercian* order. The Cistercian monasteries began with ideas of simplicity and severity. The order differed from another great order of the time, the monks of Clugny, in its simplicity and its want of

grandeur. The monks were commanded to wear a white dress. At certain seasons their food was to be one meal daily. Their monasteries were to be built in lonely and retired spots. Painting and sculpture, everything indeed that would distract the mind from spiritual things, was to be discarded. A great simplicity was the badge of the new order.

In the beginning of the twelfth century there joined the Cistercian order one of the greatest men in the Middle Ages, Bernard of Clairvaux, and the charm of his personality and eloquence helped enormously to extend the Cistercian order through the whole of Europe.

At length, early in the thirteenth century, the impulse reached the north-east of Scotland. One mile or thereby west of where, in all probability, the original Columban monastery stood, there rose, in 1219, a Cistercian abbey and monastery, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The founder was William, Earl of Buchan, a member of the great house of Comyn. The earldom of Buchan had come to him through marriage. Besides founding the abbey, he richly endowed it with broad acres. It seems probable, also, that the parish church with its tithes was made a dependency of the abbey.

The position, therefore, was this :—On the site of St. Drostan's monastery was the parish church, endowed with its tithes and now a dependency of the abbey ; and one mile or thereby west of this the abbey itself, with its monastery, to which were now attached those possessions which had been gifted to the monks of St. Drostan.

2. Although a monk from stately Melrose once spoke disdainfully of "the lowly roofs of Deir," yet it is evident that the abbey must have been a notable institution in its day. The buildings were of red sandstone, and the abbey itself was built in the form of a cross. The abbey was the private chapel of the monastery. Round it clustered the buildings peculiar to monastic establishments—the chapter-house and dormitory, the refectory and the guest-chamber. In the heart of all lay the cloisters.



Within this abbey and monastery a busy life went on. All day long, monks in their white mantles flitted through its buildings. Some were attending to devotional work ; some conning their psalms ; some instructing the young ; some transcribing Gospels and books of devotion ; some managing the business affairs of the monastery, receiving rents and tithes, or granting feu charters ; and others superintending and carrying out domestic matters or affairs of the garden and the field. The moving and guiding head of the whole was the abbot.

So the life of the monks went on, a life, taken all over, far superior to that of the people among whom they lived. The abbey was a centre of light in the wide district of Deer. Here, if anywhere, virtue and weakness were safe. Of course, it was an imperfect life ; that goes without saying. The monks were sometimes too fond of the delights of the table ; sometimes quarrels broke out, contested elections over an abbacy, bitterness over a Bishop's interference ; but in the life was a great ideal, an ideal of holiness and purity such as the age sadly required, and which it had set before it in a measure, at least, in the abbey and monastery of Deer.

3. It would not be possible here to tell the complete story of the abbey from its founding in 1219 to its passing away in the sixteenth century. The materials for the story are not overabundant, but they are of the deepest interest, both for their own sake and as an indication of movements all over Scotland. The first abbot, Hugh, came from Kinloss ; to him succeeded a long race of abbots until the Reformation dawned. The struggle between Robert the Bruce and the Comyns was a trying time for the abbey of Deer, whose founder had been one of the Comyn family. But the victorious Bruce did not visit the transgression of his enemy on the abbey ; he added to its possessions. Part of the confiscated property of the Earls of Buchan he also gave to his friend the Marischal Keith—a gift which gave the Keiths a footing in Buchan and an interest in the abbey of Deer.

The earliest records connected with the abbey show us the

monks receiving gifts of land or money, granting feu-farms and charters of life rents, or making bargains, like the one in 1246 made with a certain William Pratt to receive four shillings yearly as rent for the mill of Crichtie.<sup>1</sup>

The last days of the abbey of Deer were now at hand. Like other institutions of a similar kind in Scotland, its day was almost over. Religion had forsaken the cloister and the abbey. In 1543 the charge of the abbey came into the hands of the great Keith family. Robert Keith, a brother of the Earl Marischal, was appointed abbot on the presentation of the Queen Dowager, Regent of the time. His term of office did not last long; he died in Paris eight years afterwards. The Reformation was now near. At the Reformation, all the religious houses of the time came into the hands of the nation. Robert Keith, second son of the Earl Marischal, was appointed "Commendator" of Deer, and is the last in the line of abbots. He was no great friend of Protestant principles. It was part of his duty to pay out of the revenues of the abbey the stipends of ministers in the various churches within the "Barony of Deer"; but from all accounts he

<sup>1</sup>In course of time serious abuses seem to have arisen within the monastery, as they did so often in similar institutions. In 1531 a new draft of rules was sent down to Deer for the better management of Cistercian monasteries in Scotland. The draft of rules is an interesting document. Evidently, things were not going rightly in Deer, just as all over Scotland abuses had set in, and the affections of the people were being forfeited. The document points out that in the services of the Church disorder had set in; misdemeanour was common among the monks, and smiling or laughing during service was specially prohibited. An order was given that each monk's cell and the dormitory should be carefully inspected every night. If any monk should wander abroad without his cowl, he was to be punished: bread and water for three days. Good and strong prisons were to be provided in every monastery. No one, no matter who, was to be allowed without punishment to go to a marriage, or a feast, or games, or to frequent taverns. Every monk was to observe a discreet silence in the monastery; for "silence," says the document, "is the key of religion." Every monk had to be well instructed in grammar, and must be able to repeat his psalms; for, as the document says, "an ignorant youth was the mother of a miserable old age, and ignorance was the cause of many evils." Finally, monks were ordered to remain at home, and not go to this place and the other place to manage distant farms.

was by no means liberal or regular in his payments. In 1569 he made a request to be relieved of some of these payments, but the General Assembly replied very sensibly that "they could in no wise demit the thing that pertained to the poor ministers."

Anyhow, Robert Keith as "Commendator of Deer" was resolved to keep his hand on the rich possessions of the abbey. He was no admirer of the Reformation, but he judged it better to acquiesce than to lose his grip on the lands of Deer. In 1587 he resigned the possessions of the abbey into the King's hands. The document in which he did so is still preserved. It begins with a declaration that "the monastical superstition for the which the said abbey of Deer was of auld erectit and foundit is now be the laws of this realme utterly abolished, so that na memories thereof shall be heirafter." It prays, accordingly, that all the possessions of the abbey should be erected into a temporal lordship, to be called for all time coming the lordship of Altrie, and to be held by Robert Keith himself during his lifetime, and after him, by George, Earl Marischal.

The prayer was granted by King James; and so the whole lands, abbey and all, passed into the hands of Robert Keith, now Lord Altrie. The charter granting this closes with the provision that in the four parish churches connected with Deer there should be a manse and a glebe, and that the minister of Deer should receive as stipend three chalders of meal and 200 merks in money.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the possessions of the abbey passed into the Marischal Keith family, after whose ruin they were broken up and scattered. The abbey itself quickly fell into decay. The rough hands of our forefathers helped the process, for the stones of its buildings were wonderfully convenient for their houses and farm-steadings. Now it stands in the valley of the Ugie an ivy-clad ruin, whose voice is of days and of glories that are gone.

We are not asked or expected to-day to approve of the

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Spalding Club, vol. iv. p. 559.

monastic ideal of the religious life. We believe that a life is best lived when it is lived among men and in the heart of human struggle. We believe that it is *not* in fleeing from the world or in afflicting the flesh that men become holy. Yet it is right to look at things in their historic relations. When we do so, we see that the monastic ideal, when lived out in Deer, was a genuine protest against the unbridled licentiousness of the time, and we cannot believe that such a protest was without its effect.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>LITERATURE.—*The Book of Deer*, Spalding Club; *Collections of History of Aberdeenshire* in the Spalding Club.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PATRICK HAMILTON.

*A.* The life of Patrick Hamilton is one of singular interest and of very great charm. The story of his life brings us to the Reformation dawn in Scotland.

1. It will be necessary, before we come to the details of Patrick Hamilton's life, to indicate some of the transition stages between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries. It will be possible to do this only very briefly; but it requires to be done, because otherwise we could not quite appreciate the remarkable life that is before us, nor could we see how it came about that reforms in Scottish Church life had become absolutely necessary, if the Church was to remain as it had been for so long, and as it ought always to be, a real power in Scottish life and thought.

An important place in this connection must undoubtedly be given to Queen Margaret's son, David I., who reigned some thirty years, from 1124 to 1153. Dr. Hume Brown, who is one of the most recent, and certainly one of the most reliable of Scottish historians, says very truly of David's reign, that it was "a radical breach with the past." Nowhere was this more true than in his treatment of Church questions. David was a monarch whose heart was in the Church, and his whole aim, in following the impulse given by his mother, was to consolidate and adorn the Scottish Church. He did so with the very highest motives, but the wealth which he contrived to give to the Church

was withdrawn from the material interests of his kingdom. He gave the Church power, prestige, and political influence, though the wealth which he gathered into the Church became in the long run its greatest temptation.

David brought into the Church Norman influences, which showed themselves in the establishment of vast dioceses, of which the diocese of St. Andrews came to be supreme, and in the growth of parish churches. Along with this, as we have seen, went the building of monasteries and abbeys. When he came to the throne, the dioceses were St. Andrews, Glasgow, Moray, and Dunkeld. He established dioceses in Ross, Caithness, Aberdeen, Brechin, Dunblane, and Galloway. In addition, he founded such abbeys as Holyrood, Kelso, Melrose, Newbattle, Jedburgh, and Cambuskenneth. As Wyntoun the old chronicler says of him,

" He illumynyd in his dayis  
His landys wyth kyrkys and wyth abbayis."

We may take for granted that, in the process of illumination, David considered he was doing his best for Scotland.

Now, all these vast establishments could not live upon air, and the Church of the twelfth century no more thought of doing that than the Church of the twentieth century. To each of these great abbeys or monastic foundations David gave vast tracts of land, and the process went on until by the time of the Reformation ecclesiastical property was equal to about one half of the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is of some interest to notice that the Church divided its income into two main divisions: one was called its *temporality*, under which term was put the rent that came to the Church from lands and houses; the other was called its *spirituality*, under which term was put the revenue derived from teinds and Church dues. The teinds were known as the great and the small: the great teind was the tenth sheaf from the harvest-field, while the small teind or tithe included the tenth of hay and of the yearly produce from the dairy, the garden, and the live-stock. Church dues were very heavy, and were exacted on such occasions as baptisms, marriages, or funerals. (Cp. Hay-Fleming, *The Scottish Reformation*, p. 2 sq.).

Here one must point out what often happened after David's reign and in the period before the Reformation. What happened was this, that the parish church, with its teinds, was in many instances given to the abbey or cathedral, as the case might be. The abbey drew the teind, and gave the vicar who preached or did the work in the parish a certain allowance—too often a scanty wage. One can see at a glance what abuses became possible under arrangements of this nature. The abbey flourished; the vicar starved, or, to eke out a living, had to exact more than was right. No more need be said on this point, except to show how great the abuse became. To the abbey of Arbroath were granted thirty-four parishes; Paisley had thirty, Holyrood twenty-seven, and so on. One consequence of all this came to be that abbeys or cathedrals did not care very much who had a living, if they received the rent from it. As has been pointed out, "Rich livings with the care of thousands of souls were held by boys, by infants even, by men deformed in body, imbecile in mind, hardened in ignorance, old in wickedness and vice."<sup>1</sup> This is a statement which could be proved to the hilt.

It is needless to say that such enormous wealth became a serious temptation, and the history of the period before the Reformation shows us how the heads of abbeys or dioceses gave themselves not merely to pleasure and to immorality,—in which respect they were followed by the smaller men in the Church,—but above all, to that ambition and love of political power and intrigue which has so often been a snare to the Church. This was the case in all the dark centuries with which we are dealing, and it became very notably the case after the battle of Flodden, in 1513, in which so many of Scotland's nobility and natural leaders fell. This gave a power to the Church of which it availed itself to the full. "The chief offices of the Church," it has been said, "had become places of enormous profit and power, and the great families of the kingdom coveted and seized upon them as eagerly as they divided among themselves the principal offices

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Hay-Fleming, *The Scottish Reformation*, p. 8.

of the State. The nobles and chiefs of the world had only to put on a different costume to become the consecrated princes and aristocracy of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

2. That is one side of what was happening during these years ; but happily there was another side. Light was streaming in. Influences were being brought to bear on the Church which culminated in the Reformation. The same influences were at work over Europe, infecting and permeating the minds of men.<sup>2</sup> Some of these influences may be briefly referred to.

(1) There was, to begin with, *the revival of learning*. Scholars began to read the classics for themselves ; and others were not content with a little bit of Scripture such as they might get in a missal or prayer-book : they must read the Scriptures for themselves in the original tongues. The revival of learning, associated with the great name of Erasmus, swept over Europe like a breath of new life.

(2) Along with the revival of learning came the foundation of Universities. When the revival reached Scotland, it was at once felt that there must be seats of learning. The first University in Scotland was that of St. Andrews, founded on the 28th of February 1411-12. Next came that of Glasgow, on the 7th of January 1450-51 ; then Aberdeen, on the 10th of February 1494-95 ; and finally Edinburgh, on the 14th of April 1582.

(3) It is certainly remarkable that about the same time there came an invention which has had the most far-reaching results. The modern world would hardly know itself without printing, yet printing dates only from the fifteenth century. The first of our English printers, William Caxton, carried on his work during the latter part of the fifteenth century. Revolutions were certain to come when the people had books in their hands, and were thereby delivered from the bondage of the only educated men of the time, the priests.

(4) And very specially was this true when the book put into

<sup>1</sup> Lorimer, *Precursors of Knox : Patrick Hamilton*, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> See Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, vol. i. (1906).



the hands of the people was the *Bible*, in the speech they could read and understand. That was the dawn of liberty, and the priests knew it; hence their frantic efforts to keep the Bible from the people. The first man to give the people the Bible in their own speech was Wycliffe, who died in 1384. Wycliffe was, indeed, the morning star of the Reformation. Though he himself died in the communion of the Romish Church, he set influences at work which inevitably led to the Reformation. The truths for which Wycliffe lived and for which he toiled were like seeds cast into good soil: they bore fruit. Wycliffe taught that Scripture was the supreme and absolute authority in the religious life. And teaching that, he felt compelled to teach much more, particularly the imposture of the mass, which lay at the root of the Romish religion.

Among the men to whom we owe the Bible in our English speech, a place by himself must be given to Tyndale, who died in 1536, ten years before the death of Luther. Tyndale had resolved that the boy who drives the plough should know more of the Scriptures than the priests themselves did; and he lived to see the resolution on the way to fulfilment. His New Testament had been given to the world in the English speech in 1525, and soon Scottish merchants were shipping it across to Leith, hidden in bales of unsuspecting goods!

3. In the same year, 1525, the Scottish Parliament seemed to waken up to the fact that the Church was on the eve of a revolution. Parliament found that unsettling influences were coming into Scotland from abroad. Books were pouring in from the pen of Luther or of Luther's disciples. Driven to exasperation by the abuses which he saw in the Church, specially by the abuse of the Indulgence, Luther had nailed his theses to the church door of Wittenberg in 1517. At once Europe was in a blaze and the fire was pouring across into Scotland. The Parliament in Scotland thought that it could drown out the fire. In July 1525 the clergy succeeded in getting Parliament to pass an Act, that the damnable opinions of heresy "should no

longer spread, for the Church of Scotland had always been clear of such filth and vice." So it was enacted that no books of Luther or of his followers should be allowed inside the Scottish shores, except at the risk of serious pains and penalties. It is interesting, to say the least, to hear Luther's books and so-called heresies described as "filth and vice." Little did the clergy dream that something worse than such "filth and vice" was being shipped across in innocent-looking bales of goods, viz., the New Testament in the language the people could read!

*B.* Now we may be able to appreciate the forces which moved in Patrick Hamilton's life and the forces which were arrayed against him.

1. If we might speak for the moment of Scottish blue blood, then Patrick Hamilton was the possessor of that. This is a fact we sometimes forget. It is perfectly right to say, as has so often been said, that the Reformation in Scotland was a thing of the people, and from the people went upwards; while in England the process was reversed. There is a sense in which that is perfectly correct, but it ought not to be forgotten that the first Scottish Reformer, the man who imprinted his personality deep on the whole story of the Reformation, belonged to the royal house; and there can be no doubt that the death of Patrick Hamilton, if only from the fact that he was a member of a ruling Scottish house, caused an upheaval in Scottish life of which we have little comprehension to-day.

Patrick Hamilton seems to have been born in 1504, the year before the date which is generally (though in all probability wrongly) taken as the year of John Knox's birth. He was the younger son of Sir Patrick Hamilton of Kincavel and Catherine Stewart, daughter of the Duke of Albany, the second son of King James II.; so his mother was a granddaughter of the King. We know little about the character of Hamilton's mother, though we know that her son cherished her in his heart, and sent from the stake a message to cheer her. We know a good deal

about his father, Sir Patrick Hamilton, and all that we know shows him to have been a man of stainless honour, of great personal bravery—"a perfect gentil knight." Sir Patrick was a natural son of the first Lord Hamilton: his brother became Earl of Arran. He comes down to us as perhaps the purest and bravest figure at the Court of James IV. Many stories are told us by the old writers of Sir Patrick's courage and of his skill in arms, in all which his reputation was the highest in his day. No braver or more generous spirit adorns the story of Scottish chivalry. He died fighting, when his son Patrick was still young; but one feels that the heroic young Reformer was a hero's son.

To begin with, then, we should keep clear before our minds that Patrick Hamilton was a member of the upper classes in Scotland, and was under all the influences of these upper and ruling classes. It may be presumed that these influences were highly conservative. For the upper classes are always slow to move—the more so, if they are ruling classes. Movement may mean, and often does mean, loss and transference of power. Hence we can imagine the wrench which it must have been for Hamilton to break with the ruling classes which he belonged to; and hence, also, we can imagine something of the stir which his breach with the Church and the State on religion brought about.

2. It is not known where Patrick Hamilton received his early education. It may be assumed that he was a lad of bright promise, and it is quite likely that his early education was given to him in some monastery. The fact that Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, was a relative on his mother's side has led some to think that he may have got his early education under the eye of that prelate. If he did so, his classical education would not have been neglected; for Gavin Douglas, though a stormy character, was one of the best Latinists of his day, and his poetic translation of Virgil is still read and relished.

Anyhow, it is clear that Hamilton soon went across to Paris;

for France was then, as George Buchanan said, "the genial nurse of all the liberal arts." Probably he went over to Paris in 1517, the year Luther began to thunder in Europe. In 1520 he took his degree in the University there.

In the University of Paris there was, as in Universities generally, even the most modern, a strongly conservative element along with what we should call a radical element. In the days of Hamilton the hero of the radicals of Paris was Erasmus; and it is not to be wondered at that a Scotsman with the national *perfervidum ingenium* (which means Scottish caniness mingled with brains and touched with emotion) should have thrown himself on the side of Erasmus; and, therefore, on the side of the radicals. There was growing up in Paris a new atmosphere, "new tastes and sentiments" (as one puts it), "accompanied with a growing aversion and indignation against the narrow-minded and malignant obscurantists who persecuted in France, in Flanders, in Germany, and in England, the Erasmuses, Reuchlins, and Colets of the age."<sup>1</sup>

The great question at Paris, when Hamilton was there from 1517 to 1520, was the question of the theses of Martin Luther. The old "fogies" of the University, who were conservatives to the core and obscurantists, condemned Luther and his doctrines. The result was that men such as Patrick Hamilton were driven into the Reformed faith. We may well regard it as a remarkable thing that such a young and representative Scotsman as Patrick Hamilton should have been at Paris at the moment when all Europe was ringing with the views of Martin Luther, and when the great theological school of Paris was obliged to face and discuss the Reformer's beliefs.

3. In 1523, Patrick Hamilton came back to Scotland, and in 1524 was received into the Faculty of Arts in St. Andrews. He was, also, apparently ordained as a priest, and was appointed abbot of Ferne. At the same time, he hated all monkish hypocrisy and never wore a monkish dress. In later life, he

<sup>1</sup> Lorimer, *Precursors of Knox*, p. 32.

married, showing, as Luther did, how he had absolutely broken with the Romish Church.

We have already described the condition of the Church in Scotland in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and have recalled the fact that it was in 1525 that the Scottish clergy urged on Parliament to fine and imprison all who might have or might bring in books of Luther or of his disciples. Perhaps it was this Parliamentary and public rejection of Luther which brought Patrick Hamilton to speak out. Convictions had been maturing in his mind, and the time had come when he must let men know what thoughts had gathered there. Beaton was then Archbishop of St. Andrews, and seems to have kept his eye on Hamilton as one "who was inflamed with heresy." It came to the Reformer's ears that all his doings were watched, and he deemed it prudent for the time to leave the country.

So he went across to Germany, first to Wittenberg, and then to Marburg, where a new University had been opened. It is remarkable to find that on this visit to the Continent, Patrick Hamilton met Luther, Melanchthon, and Tyndale; and who can tell what encouragement and strengthening he received from these men? His stay at Marburg was not prolonged, but during that stay he gave to the world his "Theses." It is curious to find that a Scotsman was the first man at Marburg "to put forth a series of theses to be publicly defended." The theses were evangelical, and conceived in the spirit of Luther. They have been translated, and are known as *Patrick's Places*—"places" being a contraction for "commonplaces." His translator says that "the Book teacheth exactly of certain common-places which known ye have the pith of all divinity." This little book is the only work left us by Patrick Hamilton, and we may find in it the sum and substance of all his teaching and preaching.<sup>1</sup>

The book begins by setting forth first the doctrine of the Law; then it gives a statement of the Gospel; and then it proceeds to give the antithesis between the two. A few characteristic

<sup>1</sup> It may be found conveniently in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.

specimens of Hamilton's style may be quoted. For instance, he contrasts the Law and the Gospel in the following way :—

“The Law showeth us our sin, the Gospel showeth us remedy for it.

“The Law showeth us our condemnation, the Gospel showeth us our redemption.

“The Law is the word of ire, the Gospel is the word of grace.

“The Law is the word of unrest, the Gospel is the word of peace.”

Or again :—

“The Law saith to the sinner, Pay thy debt ; the Gospel saith, Christ hath paid it.” “The Law saith, Thou art a sinner, despair, thou shalt be damned ; the Gospel saith, Thy sins are forgiven thee, be of good comfort, thou shalt be saved.” “The Law saith, Where is thy righteousness, goodness, and satisfaction? The Gospel saith, Christ is thy righteousness, goodness, and satisfaction.”

Or one may quote what Hamilton says about Faith :—

“Faith is a certainty or assuredness, a sure confidence of the things which are hoped for and certainty of things which are not seen. He that hath faith wotteth well that God will fulfil His word. Faith is to believe God like as Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. The faith of Christ is to believe in Him, that is, to believe His word, and believe that He will help thee in all thy need, and deliver thee from all evil. Thou wilt ask me what word? I answer the Gospel. He that believeth not the Gospel believeth not God, he that believeth the Gospel shall be safe. He that hath faith is just and good. . . . Faith is the gift of God, it is not in our own power.”

We need not quote more from this striking booklet, the first of Reformation books in Scotland, but we may take to our

hearts such words as these : "Oh, how ready would we be to help others if we knew His goodness and gentleness toward us ! He is a good and gentle Lord, for He doeth all for nought. Let us, I beseech you, therefore, follow His footsteps, whom all the world ought to praise and worship. Amen." In using words such as these, the young Scotsman laid bare to us the secrets of his own heart, for he had made up his mind to follow in the steps of Christ, and he knew that before him lay death.

In the autumn of 1527, Hamilton was again in Scotland, strong in the strength of his Master, to do whatever his Master called on him to do. Whenever he came back, he began to preach at Linlithgow, round his old home, and in other places, "laying open," as an old historian says, "the corruptions of the Roman Church, and showing the errors crept into the Christian religion ; whereunto many gave ear, and a great following he had, both for his learning and courteous behaviour to all sorts of people" (Spottiswoode). The Church authorities were alarmed, anxious to seize him, but afraid because of his powerful family connections. Beaton at last invited him to St. Andrews, which he reached in January 1528. Here he was encouraged to speak, as the Church authorities wished full evidence of his heresy. For a month he was left at liberty ; many wished him to flee, but he refused, because he felt that his testimony for Christ was needed in Scotland. At length he was arrested, tried on the 29th of February, condemned, and led to the stake at noon the same day.

4. One wishes it were possible to tell, as it ought to be told, the story of Hamilton's remarkable trial, and of his still more remarkable death for Christ. At the trial he was called "Heretic" to his face by Friar Campbell, who had formerly pretended great friendship : for Hamilton also had his Judas.

"Nay, brother," said Hamilton, "you do not think me heretic in your heart : in your conscience I am no heretic."

"Heretic !" exclaimed Campbell, "thou saidst it was lawful

to all men to read the Word of God, and specially the New Testament."

"I wot not," replied Hamilton, "if I said so, but I say now, it is reason and lawful to all men that have souls to read the Word of God, and that they are able to understand the same, and in particular, the latter will and testament of Christ Jesus, whereby they may acknowledge their sins and repent of the same, and amend their lives by faith and repentance, and come to the mercy of God by Christ Jesus."

"Now, further," said Campbell, a little after, "thou saidst it is not lawful to worship imagery."

"I say no more," replied Hamilton, "than what God spake to Moses in the 20th chapter of Exodus, in the second commandment, 'Thou shalt not make any graven image; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them.'"

"Heretic!" exclaimed Campbell again, "thou sayest it is but lost labour to pray to or call upon saints, and in particular on the blessed Virgin Mary, or John, James, Peter, or Paul, as mediators to God for us."

"I say with Paul," was the reply, "'There is no mediator betwixt God and man, but Christ Jesus, His Son.'"

"Heretic!" persisted the Friar, "thou sayest it is all in vain our labours made for them that are departed, when we sing soul-masses, psalms and dirigies, which are the relaxation of the souls that are departed, who are continued in the pains of purgatory."

"Brother!" was the noble reply, "I have never read in the Scripture of God of such a place as purgatory; nor yet believe I that there is anything that may purge the souls of men but the blood of Christ Jesus, which ransom standeth in no earthly thing, nor in soul-mass nor dirigie, nor in gold nor silver, but only by repentance of sins, and faith in the blood of Christ Jesus."

These were noble words, but they were uttered to deaf ears. The cry of the priests was, "Away with this man!" At noon he was chained to the stake. The wood was green, and the



agonies of the martyrdom were prolonged. The martyrdom lasted six hours. "When nearly burnt through his middle by the fiery chain, a voice in the crowd called aloud to him that if he still had faith in the doctrine for which he died, he should give a last sign of constancy. Whereupon he raised three fingers of his half-consumed hand, and held them steadily in that position till he ceased to live."

His last words were: "How long, Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this kingdom? how long wilt Thou suffer this tyranny of men? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

So died Patrick Hamilton, only twenty-four years old. No wonder that the saying became common that "his reik" infected all on whom it blew. For he was a saintly figure, a Christ-like soul, who tried to live the Gospel. He was not a creative personality, as Knox was; but he was a saint, who lived and died for the truth of the Gospel, and whose life profoundly moved Scotland, and indeed moves it to this day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—*Histories of the Reformation*, esp. Lindsay (vol. ii., T. & T. Clark); Lorimer, *Precursors of Knox: Patrick Hamilton*; D. Hay-Fleming, *The Scottish Reformation* (Scottish Reformation Society); Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*; Mitchell, *The Scottish Reformation*; Spottiswoode, *History of the Church of Scotland*.

## CHAPTER VII.

### JOHN KNOX.

*A.* In our studies of the Makers of the Scottish Church we have reached the historic figure of John Knox. For the purposes of this study one may be permitted to associate his name with that of Queen Mary. These are two names which never lose their interest for Scottish people,—two personalities about whom everyone knows something and holds some more or less definite and perhaps coherent opinion. There are no two names more important or more interesting in Scottish history than the names of John Knox and Queen Mary. The period in which they lived was perhaps the most epoch-making in all Scottish history, and the men of that age impressed themselves on all future generations. It was the age of the Reformation, the birthday of light and freedom for Scotland politically as well as in Church and Doctrine. The men and women who lived in those days, who struggled and suffered and died, have from that fact alone a certain prestige of their own. But there were men in those days who in any age would have been famous,—Knox was one of them; and persons who in any age would have left their mark on the life of the time,—and Queen Mary was one of these.

How strangely unlike were Knox and Mary Queen of Scots! The one grave, bearded, and masterful; the other light, gay, and fair: the one trained in a school of theology which called

forth elements the most severe in human nature ; the other a pupil of the religion and gaiety and intrigue of France : the one blunt, perhaps to a fault, courageous, straight, and honest ; the other reared in a political atmosphere where intrigue was inhaled at every breath, accustomed also to the sensual and relaxing habits of Continental life. But both had a strong and unique personality ; both were born to lead ; and both had at heart a deep-seated passion,—the one to see Scotland Protestant and free, worshipping the supreme Christ, scorning whatever intervened between the soul and the object of its faith ; the other to check the Reformation and bring Scotland back to the religion of the fathers, the priest, the altar, the monk, and the mass. To these deep-seated passions both gave their lives : and it was a strange struggle which was seen in Scotland between the two movements—the one movement, the liberal movement of the day, toward light and freedom and Christ, headed by the Reformer, experienced and masterful ; the other movement, conservative and backward toward Rome and the mass and the priesthood, headed by a girl of about twenty summers, yet wise beyond her years, very fascinating, and passionately devoted to the religion and the Church of her fathers.

1. In order that we may understand the struggle and see it in its true light, it is necessary that we turn our minds backwards and note what had been taking place in Scotland in the years immediately preceding the Reformation in 1560. Outwardly, the Church looked strong,—one half at least of the nation's wealth was in her hands,—but inwardly the Church was a seething mass of bigotry and vice. The ignorance was amazing. One would have imagined that the Bible at least would have been known to the clergy : it was not so. It has never been the aim of the Roman Church to have priesthood or people proficient in Scripture. Before the Reformation the Roman clergy generally knew no more of the Bible than was inserted in Church services ; and some of them had little desire to know more. One writer makes the remark that just before

the Reformation in Scotland "the ignorance of the times was so great that even the priests did think the New Testament to have been composed by Martin Luther." One bishop is reported to have thanked God that "he knew neither the Old Testament nor the New, and yet had prospered well enough in his day." It is almost impossible to overdraw the picture of Church life in Scotland immediately before the Reformation. It was black as night. The Church had lost the people. Her ministers were the subjects of common scandal: her threats and punishments were treated with scorn: satirists assailed her in stinging verse: Lindsay and Dunbar made her the laughter of the nation, as in England Chaucer scourged monks and friars, or as the lash of Burns' sarcasm fell with unsparing severity on the hypocrisy and cant of a later age.

Nothing perhaps brought the Church into greater contempt with the people than her devices for extracting money. The Church had become the victim of unbounded greed. An ingenious method for gaining money was the sale of indulgences. For a trifle, just for a florin, the sinner might obtain a pardon or a written declaration that after death the punishment of his sin would be remitted. It was a wonderfully easy way of making terms with God and eternity; so indulgences became popular. They were manufactured wholesale at Rome: friars left Rome, each with his bundle: they hawked the country from end to end. Just for a trifle an indulgence might be got, the more one gave the better one's indulgence; and the profits of this infamous traffic went to uphold the splendour and éclat of a brilliantly equipped and notoriously corrupt papal court at Rome. No wonder that the better sense of right-thinking men revolted at the thought of it. No wonder that a single monk, rising from the study of his Bible in a monastery, sounded the note of rebellion, and in 1517 nailed his theses to the church door of Wittenberg. A thousand hearts leapt into sympathy with Martin Luther.

Away on the Continent, in Germany, at Geneva, and other places, a great upheaval had taken place. New ideas were filling men's minds. Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin were the leaders of the new movement. Substantially, they were agreed in teaching that religion was a much simpler thing than men thought. The Bible was the only and sufficient guide in regard to salvation. The Bible taught that a man was saved entirely through grace. It was no work of man : it was faith that secured forgiveness of sin. Neither was any man required to come between the soul and God : every believer was a priest : every believer had free access to the audience-chamber of God : the soul had to deal with God, and with God only. As for the sacraments, they were Christ's gifts to the Church : in themselves they had no magical efficacy to help or save : their power depended on the state of the believer's heart. The sole Head of the Church was her living Lord and Master Jesus Christ ; and between Christ and the Church, or Christ and the individual, no earthly power had the slightest right to interfere.

One can easily imagine what a tremendous revolution thoughts such as these, driven home to the hilt by the Word of God, caused in men's minds. If we admit that a man is justified through faith, that every believer is a priest, that the Bible is the only rule for salvation, then the whole fabric of Romanism topples into dust. And these were the truths contended for at the Reformation : and as sometimes, to use an old illustration, a hunter's shout will set an avalanche in motion, so the intrepid voice of Luther electrified and roused Europe.

The Church of Scotland was well aware of its condition. It was well aware that it harboured many abuses. It knew that the affection of the people was being lost : it saw with alarm the rising tide of Protestantism, and knew that most of the intellect and nobility of the realm was passing away from it. What was the Church to do? To keep its position the Church tried three methods, and each of them failed. The first was to

reform itself and to sweep away the abuses it harboured. Council after council was held; commissions were appointed to deal with clerical immorality; monasteries were ordered to be inspected; churches must be repaired; bishops must preach; the clergy must come into living touch with the people, be more intelligent themselves, more kindly to the people, more anxious to impart good instruction. Council after council uttered its edicts in vain: these Church Reformations only touched the fringe of the problem: nothing less than an open Bible, a free Gospel, a living Christ, nothing less than an entire upheaval in the Church's doctrine and organisation would satisfy Scotland. That plan failed. The second method was intrigue, civil power, French money, and French troops. King James V. had married a daughter of a great French family, Catholic to the core. Mary of Lorraine herself was now Regent; her daughter the Queen was in France at school. Mary of Lorraine was a passionate Catholic, and ultimately threw all her soul into the struggle for the supremacy of the Catholic faith in Scotland. She carried the Church with her: all that power, influence, intrigue could do was tried to stem the current of Protestantism. That plan also failed: the conscience of Scotland was becoming enlightened, and no enlightened conscience can tolerate that its religion should be dictated from the Crown. The third method which the Church tried was persecution, and that had the most ignominious failure of all. Had the Roman prelates really set their hearts on the Reformation, they could have chosen no quicker method of promoting it than the martyrdom of men so saintly and so sincere as Hamilton and Wishart. It was a fatal step for the Catholic supremacy. The cruelty of it fanned Scotland into a passion; nobles and people became linked in a common sympathy; the stake turned Scotland to indignation, not to dismay. The truth of Protestantism had passed through the fire unscathed, and the time for its vigorous assertion was at hand.

2. For, the martyrdom of Wishart was the call of John Knox. Before that time his life had been quiet and obscure : henceforth he was to be the pillar of Protestantism in Scotland. Circumstances call out men ; Knox was exactly the man the temper of that age required for leading the Protestant movement, and leading it to victory. At the time of Wishart's death he was somewhat over his thirtieth year, in the maturity of all his powers physical and mental. He had thrown in his lot with the Protestant party, and a character of such force and energy must have been a notable accession to their strength.

Fifteen years were to elapse before the dream of his life was fulfilled, for him fifteen years of labour and suffering. It would take us too far afield to tell the story of Knox's life during those fifteen years ; but briefly it was this. After the death of Cardinal Beaton in 1546, the conspirators threw themselves into the castle of St. Andrews as their only place of refuge. Here they were joined by many whose adherence to Protestant views put their lives in danger. Among others Knox came to St. Andrews. Here by and by he was appointed preacher, and quickly rose to a position of power and influence. When the castle was at length taken, Knox was carried away prisoner by the French, and for nineteen months, often in peril and sickness, served as galley slave on board a French vessel. Out of this miserable life he was ultimately delivered, chiefly through the efforts of Edward VI. of England. Knox repaired to England. His life there was full of interest, and he rose to a position of striking influence. On the death of Edward, Protestants had to flee for their lives, and Knox ultimately found his way to Geneva, the great home of Protestantism, reigned over by the supreme intellect and genius of John Calvin, with whom Knox formed a lasting friendship. At Geneva, Knox ministered to the English Church. It can only be regarded as a blessing to the Church of Scotland that Knox was led to Geneva, the centre of Protestantism in that age ; and that he was admitted to the friendship of Calvin. It meant that Knox became thoroughly familiar with

Protestant truth, and was thus able to transmit, pure and unadulterated, the teaching of John Calvin to the young Church in Scotland.

During those years spent by Knox at Geneva, quietly ministering to his flock, quietly studying the eternal truths of religion, eagerly treading with Calvin the main roads and by-paths of doctrine, he kept himself in touch with the Church in Scotland. Once he came across to see for himself how the struggle was advancing, and always he kept in communication with the leaders in the movement, chief of whom was Lord James Stuart, half-brother of Queen Mary. Events were hastening to a crisis in Scotland. Persecution had again broken out: Walter Mill, four-score and two years old, had been burned at the stake. The Protestant nobles had banded themselves together as a Congregation; the mass was forsaken by the Reformers; the Queen Regent was alarmed, angry, and threatening; the Protestant preachers had just been outlawed. The crisis had come.

At this juncture—the year was 1559—Knox landed at Leith, and at once joined his friends, who at the moment happened to be at Perth. His mature and massive intellect, his rousing eloquence, and the masterful force of his personality were the qualities required at that anxious moment. A sagacious contemporary said of him, "The voice of one man is able in one hour to put more life in us than five hundred trumpets blustering in our ears." Knox was a born leader of men; and the qualities of the man were those in urgent demand at the time. Rough, ready, boisterous; unflinching and incorruptible; deeply persuaded of the truth and justice of his cause; willing to sacrifice time and life itself for the people of Scotland; such a man became an inspiration, and roused all the energies of Reform. His position and his opportunity were unique, and he availed himself of them to the full. Men are always willing to hearken to a man who knows his own mind, and has energy to speak and to do, to will and to work. Men instinctively cling to the stronger nature. And in Knox the people of Scotland had a character in their



midst, certainly not perfect, sometimes rough, sometimes barely chivalrous, sometimes over-stern and dictatorial ; but a character, on the whole, essentially great and fitted to appeal to the sympathies and passions of his age. Knox had a magnificent opportunity. The guidance of public opinion was practically in his hands. There was no public press to stimulate and mould the sentiments of the people. There was just one leading Scotsman, and the echoes of the great voice which thundered in St. Giles penetrated through Scotland. Historians may now safely admit that the counsel of John Knox was for the nation's highest good ; at least it was dictated by no selfish spirit ; and had the Reformer been able to carry out all his generous plans for education, for religion, and for the poor, Scotland would have become an object-lesson to Europe.

When Knox, on his return from Geneva, attached himself heart and soul to the Protestant party, the Reformation went forward by leaps and bounds. The Queen Regent did what she could, but it was vain to oppose the march of a nation thoroughly aroused. In a year a great change had passed over Scotland. The power in religious life had changed hands ; papal jurisdiction had come to an end, for the people had declared for Protestantism. It would be useless to deny that elements of a doubtful character entered into the struggle. All were not of Knox's mind who joined in helping him. The nobility, "the gaunt and hungry nobles," had a keen eye for the fat lands of the Church's monasteries and abbeys. Certainly, land had been unscrupulously taken from their pious but superstitious ancestors, and the nobles were determined to get it back. In many cases they succeeded, but it was this struggle for Church spoil which saddened Knox in his reforming zeal, and frustrated all hope of achieving his cherished plans for the people's good. Further, it would be useless to affirm that the Reformation was accomplished in an ideal fashion. Knox himself admitted that "it was too violent." Monks and priests were driven from their homes ; abbeys were burnt ; monasteries were broken up ;

precious Church heirlooms were trampled under foot ; old Church records were destroyed ; Church treasures and property were ruthlessly abstracted ; an iron heel passed over the Church. And yet it would be foolish to condemn all this utterly. The nation was roused : in a time of revolution, when men who have suffered and been blinded arise in their indignation, something must be allowed. Besides, if, as we believe, the existence and power of the Roman Catholic Church had come to be a hindrance to Scotland's welfare, politically as well as religiously and morally, and if some stringent and thorough measure had to be taken to prevent its return, there may have been method in this madness ; for, as Knox himself is reported to have said, it was a wise thing "to pull down the crows' nests, lest the crows should return."

*B.* The Reformation, then, was an accomplished fact in 1560 ; that same year the Queen Regent died. The Reformed faith was making steady advance, and everything pointed to still greater progress. But in August 1561, Mary Queen of Scots returned to her native shores from France : and a change was felt. She was only nineteen years old, but the discipline of sorrow through which she had already passed and the training which she had received in the political life of France compensated somewhat for the wisdom of age. She had the reputation of being one of the most beautiful and fascinating women in Europe. If wit, beauty, and personal fascination could make Scotland hers, no one had such a brilliant opportunity as Mary had ; and, in truth, no one knew better how to take advantage of it. Had Mary with all her charm and singular shrewdness possessed one other power, the power over her own passions, it would have gone hard with the Reformers to withstand her.

1. Scotland welcomed its young sovereign with a heartiness which was characteristic and genuine. Had Mary been wise, she would at least have tried to leave the religion of her fathers behind her with her old French life. She came back to Scotland anxious for its good, anxious to promote peace, unity, and

commerce, anxious to make herself the Queen of a happy and glad people. Had she only curbed the passion for her own faith, and allowed herself to tolerate, if not to advance, the religious views of her people, all might have gone well. But Mary would not do this. In her own private chapel in Holyrood she insisted on the celebration of the mass : that fact alone lost her the sympathy of many. Yet it was wonderful how she succeeded. Few could resist the charm of Queen Mary when she set herself to conquer. Rough nobles came under the spell of her beauty. Men who came to Court pronounced, even rabid, haters of the mass and Popery, left it cold and lukewarm towards Protestantism. There was an enchantment about Mary which few could resist. She ruled her Court in virtue of her fascinating personality.

But there was one man whom Mary completely failed to win, the one man whom she herself most wished to capture. John Knox saw with prophetic clearness the whole drift of Mary's policy, penetrated the subtle plans which the Queen was pursuing. It was clear as daylight to him that Mary was simply playing with the Scottish nobles ; when the time came she would bring back Popery, and crush the new faith with a ruthless, if a dainty heel. It was well for Scotland, for Scottish thought and Scottish liberty, for freedom political and freedom ecclesiastical, that there was one man at least in Scotland who was not blinded. And if the cause for which Knox contended was precious and great, if his insight, prophetic almost, into the Queen's motives was real, as the event proved that it was, then something ought to be allowed for the manner in which Knox dealt personally with the Queen. It has always been thrown at Knox that he was rude, boorish, unpardonably cruel in his treatment of the young Queen, or, as Mary said herself, that he "gart her greet." Knox admitted himself once that he was "by nature churlish." But there is suspiciously little proof that Knox was insolent or rude in his interviews with Mary, and still less that his conduct toward women generally was harsh. Much of what is said against Knox's chivalry has its origin in sheer malice or party spirit. "God

knows," he said on his deathbed, "that my mind was always void of hatred to the persons of those against whom I thundered my severest judgments." What Knox saw is what we see to-day, that in Queen Mary was a craft far beyond her years, that she was setting herself to win back Scotland to the mass and to Popery, that she was doing her best to fascinate him, the Reformer, the friend of Calvin and the leader of Protestantism ; and Knox saw that if he yielded he would be disloyal to God and to his country. Resolved not to yield, determined to be true, he did now and then let fall expressions which seemed harsh ; but if any excuse is to be sought for him, let it be this, that his passion for the highest good of his country so held and possessed him that he must be straight and fearless in all he said and did. If sometimes, when the Reformer spoke plainly, bitter tears fell from the Queen, one ought not hastily to condemn Knox ; for the tears were sometimes the tears of irritation and anger, and one ought to remember what has been said, that "a woman's tears are far less costly than a nation's blood."

2. Into the story of the interviews between Knox and Mary it would be impossible to enter in any detail. The first interview took place shortly after Mary's arrival in Scotland. The mass had been celebrated at Holyrood. At St. Giles, Knox declared that one mass was more fearful to him than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm. Mary sent for him to Holyrood ; they must fight the matter out. And fight it they did ; the Queen frank and subtle, Knox fearless and outspoken. "Yes," said the Queen, "but ye are not the Church that I will nourish. I will defend the Church of Rome, for I think it is the true Church of God." "Your will, madam," replied Knox, "is no reason, neither doth your thought make that Roman harlot the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ." To another remark of Knox's the Queen replied, "My conscience says not so." "Conscience, madam," retorted Knox, "requires knowledge, and I fear that of right knowledge you have but little." "But," replied Mary, "I have both heard and read." "And so had the

Jews that crucified Christ," was the crushing retort. No wonder that the poor Queen exclaimed, "Ye are ower sair for me!" Yet when Knox was leaving the Queen's presence he uttered these generous words: "I pray God, madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland as ever Deborah was in the commonwealth of Israel."

Some months passed, and the Queen had another interview with Knox. The subject was a sermon on dancing which had been reported at the palace. The report had been distorted, as Mary found when Knox told her what he really said. Then, said Mary, it would be better if he would come and tell her personally when he had anything to reprove. Knox's reply displeased the Queen: he had other things to do than "to wait at her chamber door and whisper in her Majesty's ear." Mary dismissed him in anger. As he went out, one man whispered, "He is not afraid," and Knox at once hurled back the reply, "Why should the pleasant face of a lady affray me? I have looked in the faces of many angry men and have not been afraid above measure."

Next year other interviews are reported to have taken place. Knox, indeed, came within danger of falling under the Queen's fascination. In May of 1563 a rising of Westland gentlemen took place against the mass: several Roman Catholics were arrested. As the Queen was out of Edinburgh, she sent for Knox to see if his good offices might be obtained for peace and toleration. Knox went to Lochleven, where Mary then was. Argument failed her the first day. Next day the Queen herself yielded, took Knox into her confidence, purred over her love affairs, asked his good help in reconciling the Earl and Countess of Argyll, finally promised to do all he wanted against the Catholics. For the moment the Reformer was thrown off his guard: but in reality the Queen's task was hopeless. Shortly after, a stormy interview took place between the two. The great subject before the country was the Queen's marriage. It was a subject of international importance, for Mary was next heir to the English throne. There was talk of her marriage with the heir of the Spanish

throne. Knox could not brook the idea. "If," he thundered from his pulpit in St. Giles, "if the nation and nobles consented to a marriage with a Papist, they would banish Jesus Christ from the realm, and bring God's judgment down upon them." This was enough: Knox was summoned to Holyrood. The Queen was deeply incensed. "What have you to do," she cried, "with my marriage? What are you within the Commonwealth?" "A subject born within the same," Knox replied, "and albeit I be neither earl, lord, nor baron, yet hath God made me a profitable and useful member." He went on to say: "Whenever the nobility shall consent to your marrying an unlawful husband, they will do as much as in them lies to renounce Christ, banish truth, betray the freedom of the realm, and bring discomfort on yourself." The Queen's tears fell fast: even Knox himself thought good to try to comfort her. He must speak the truth, he said, but it grieved him to see her weeping: he took no delight in the weeping of any of God's creatures. The Queen, however, would not be comforted, and Knox was ordered to leave her presence.

3. But the subject of the Queen's marriage did not rest. We have already said that Queen Mary was not mistress of her passions: and the event shows the truth of that. Politicians planned and intrigued: Elizabeth suggested and advised: this course and the other course were counselled: Mary settled the matter for herself, and, in doing so, blindly rushed to her fate. Her fancy fell on her cousin, the young Lord Darnley. What she saw to admire in that "lang lad," no one knew: he was young, handsome, and gallant: that was all. There was nothing in him to satisfy a proud and masterful heart such as that of Queen Mary. A year or two showed how vain and dissolute and incapable he was. They were married, but it was a marriage cemented by no holy passion or common sympathy. By and by the Queen discovered that she had linked her fortunes to a puppet stuffed with the sawdust of vanity and vice. Her chagrin was intense. Passion turned into indifference: indifference turned into

neglect : neglect developed into hate. Darnley himself saw that the Queen had no liking for him, and he was jealous that nobody, not even the Queen, paid the slightest attention to his wishes. Plot succeeded plot ; Darnley conspired to murder David Rizzio ; Bothwell conspired to murder Darnley. Mary herself was now a mother, but her heart had long left her husband. She was passionately enamoured of Bothwell, one of the blackest scoundrels of Scottish history. Whether Mary herself knew of Darnley's murder and assented to it, will remain a problem with some : it is charitable to hope that she did not, but it is difficult to imagine her ignorance when we remember how close was her intimacy with Bothwell. Anyhow, this is certain : every one believed that Bothwell was the murderer of Darnley. Mary was ever in his society. He was brought to trial, but the trial was a farce ; and within a little more than three months from the tragedy of Darnley's death, Mary had given her hand to the heartless Earl who had planned and carried out the murder of her husband.

How are the mighty fallen ! Rank, position, ties of heart and home, the affections of a loyal people, discarded utterly at the impulse of unholy passion. For conduct such as this there can be small apology. Mary had abandoned herself, and Bothwell was a scoundrel. Terrible was the awakening : repentance came too late : for, the people who had loved her as their Queen had begun to despise her. Her portion henceforth was suspicion or the prison. The tale is soon told. It was in 1561 that she came to Scotland, and her heart was high : it was in 1567 that she abdicated the throne. Next year saw her a fugitive, throwing herself on the mercy of Queen Elizabeth, a woman without "an urgent conscience." For something over eighteen years she pined and plotted and fretted within the bars of an English prison : and then came the end. "Some sins," it has been said, "are evident, going before to judgment." Mary's sin was evident : it preceded her to judgment ; it lifted the executioner's axe. From that pitiful scene at Fotheringhay the world turns away its

eyes in heart-felt sadness. For Mary was one of the gifted women of her age, one of the most powerful and fascinating personalities that have ever moved men's hearts: and the pity, the horror of it, grows upon us that her life should have been so fruitless and her death so sad: yet all history is a commentary on the truth that the first element in a life that looks for reward and fruit is to be master of its own passions: and no position or responsibility without that, no gift of nature in mind or body without self-control, will arrest the fate which leads to misery, defeat, and death. The law of moral retribution is inflexibly stringent.

C. Of all the tragedy of Mary's life Knox was a spectator, interested and sad. As the years went on, his power grew greater. The Earl of Moray, who became Regent after Mary's abdication, was his fast friend, and the friend of the cause he had at heart. The Reformation made every day fresh progress. On the death of the Earl of Moray things became again unsettled: some got into power who were selfish and grasping; the Reformed Church was in danger. Happily Knox was still a power in the land, and from the pulpit in St. Giles he stirred the nation's conscience. Troubles began to press on him. The party which had favoured the Queen still had a following, especially after Moray's death; and the Castle which frowned over Edinburgh was held by some of that party, Maitland of Lethington and Kirkaldy of Grange. For a year or two the Reformer deemed it prudent to retire to St. Andrews. His strength was failing him, but his dauntless courage remained to the end. James Melville was then a student in St. Andrews, and he tells us in his Diary how he had seen John Knox, "go hulie and fear with a furring of martricks about his neck, a staff in one hand and good, godly Richard Bannatyne, his servant, holding up the other oxter, from the abbey to the parish church, and by the said Richard and another servant lifted up into the pulpit where he behoved to lean at his first entry, but ere he had done



with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads and fly out of it."

In the autumn (August) of 1572, when things were quietened in Edinburgh, Knox returned, to die. In the beginning of November he made his last appearance in his old pulpit of St. Giles: it was to install his colleague and successor. A day or two after, he was seized with his last sickness. He lingered until the 24th of November. On the last day of his life he asked his wife to read where he had cast his first anchor, the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel. Later on he exclaimed: "By the grace of God I am what I am; not I, but the grace of God in me." After evening prayers, when asked if he had heard them, he exclaimed: "Would to God that you and all men had heard them as I have heard them: I praise God for that heavenly sound." A little after, he expired without a struggle.

They laid him, their Leader and Reformer, in the churchyard of St. Giles. As they stood by his open grave, the stern Earl Morton, now Regent, pronounced these words, which fitly described his character: "Here lieth a man who in his life never feared the face of man: who hath often been threatened with dagge and dagger, but yet hath ended his days in peace and honour: for he had God's providence watching over him in a special manner when his very life was sought."

"For the mass of his countrymen," says Dr. Hume Brown, "those who have shaped the nation's destinies in the past as they must shape them in the future, Knox is the greatest person their country has produced, and the man to whom in all that makes a country great they owe the deepest and most abiding debt."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>LITERATURE.—Knox's *Works* (edited by David Laing); *Lives of John Knox*, by McCrie, Hume Brown, Taylor Innes, D. MacMillan, and Henry Cowan (1905); Stalker, *John Knox, his Ideas and Ideals*; Guthrie, *John Knox and his House*; D. Hay-Fleming, *Mary Queen of Scots*; Andrew Lang, *John Knox and the Reformation*; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*; general Histories of period, esp. Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANDREW MELVILLE.

*A.* Andrew Melville's career stretched from the death of John Knox in 1572 to the union of the Crowns in 1603. His public life in Scotland covered about thirty years. The period was one of the stormiest of the Church's history. It was a period when there was no unity of rule and administration in the country, and when the Church was very much at the mercy of one regent after another, and finally at the mercy of King James Sixth of Scotland and First of England, one of the shiftiest and most unsatisfactory monarchs who ever ruled a kingdom. Everyone knows something of the character of King James. He was a man born with a twist in his nature, and was described happily as "the wisest fool in Christendom." He was a man of great but of undigested learning, which he loved to exhibit, and of considerable natural shrewdness. He was a man, moreover, who sometimes had better moments, moments in which he saw what he ought to do for the Church and for the kingdom. But at heart he was not sincere; and he had really no great object in life except his own advancement. He was a lover of pleasure, and not of good men. Though his famous tutor, George Buchanan, had done all for him that a man could possibly do, he could not change his heart. Perhaps no truer thing has ever been said of King James than the remark of the English historian, Rawson Gardiner, "When the temple of a man's heart

is empty, he becomes unconsciously a worshipper of himself." That was pre-eminently true of James, and truer of him than of almost any public man we have had in Scotland. His heart was empty. No great hopes or passions or ideals burned in it; and thus, all his policy in Scotland, as afterwards in England, was simply the policy of a self-seeker, who wanted to make the best of things for himself, and who had little interest in the highest concerns of his country.

One can well understand how distasteful to all earnest men is a self-seeker such as this. If there are men—and happily there are always such men—who see what their nation requires and what will promote national righteousness and the glory of God, one can understand how their souls would revolt against men such as King James, who have no caring for these things, and who, with passing gleams of what they ought in righteousness to do, still pursue what will bring to themselves or their party most power.

1. The struggle in which Andrew Melville took such a prominent part, and which went on during those thirty years of his stormy career in Scotland, and indeed for many years after, was the struggle between a people wishing to realise itself, wishing to be free to follow the dictates of its conscience, and a King with a party which had no sympathy with the aspirations of the people, and which did not care much what happened, so long as their own interests were secure. It was a struggle between intense conviction on the one side, and pure greed of wealth or power on the other.

If we ask what the struggle was about, we may reply shortly that it was about *spiritual independence*.

It was a struggle for liberty. Was the Church to obtain the liberty of taking those forms of Church organisation which she wished to take, and which she found warrant for in the Word of God? Was the Church to put on the robe which she saw, with a sure spiritual instinct, to be the best for her, or was she to go about fettered, as she knew she must be, in a robe which

she did not like, which was not suited for her, and which, as she supposed, had not the same Scriptural warrant? Was the spirit of the Church of Scotland to clothe itself in a Presbyterian or in an Episcopalian form? Was the Church to have this liberty? "No," replied King James. "Yes, and yes, and yes," thundered Andrew Melville. Melville said in effect this: "The Church in Scotland wants to be Presbyterian, wants to clothe herself in this robe. She likes it; she thinks it the will of God; she finds warrant for it in Scripture; she finds it best for her work in Scotland; and she *will* have it." Through Melville the Church asserted her liberty; while King James wished to have the Church moulded after *his* mind.

2. It ought to be clearly understood that this was a different kind of struggle from the one John Knox had to pass through. Knox's struggle was rather for freedom of faith; this was for freedom of worship. It ought, also, to be kept in mind that Knox's views on the subject of worship and Church government were not altogether those of Melville. John Knox believed in Presbyterianism. He believed that Presbyterianism, as he saw it in Geneva, was a right form for a Church to take. But he would not have said that it was the only form. He would not have said that there is warrant in Scripture, a *jus divinum*,—to use that sorely battered expression,—only for Presbyterianism. And, in truth, we should be disposed to-day to take Knox's view. It is doubtful if many would care to go the length of saying that Episcopalians or Congregationalists have no warrant in Scripture for their Church organisations. What we should say would rather be this: "We are Presbyterians. We believe that Scripture gives us sufficient warrant for Presbyterianism. We believe that it is an admirable vehicle for the work and worship of the Church. We believe that Scotland likes it, and we believe that where there are free institutions men and women will turn more and more to Presbyterianism. But if a man says that he wishes to remain an Episcopalian or a Congregationalist, then he must be at liberty to follow

where his conscience leads him ; for God alone is Lord of the conscience."

But Melville took stronger ground than that. He believed that Presbyterianism—the system, that is, of elders acting in Sessions and Presbyteries, and all leading up to a central representative Assembly—was the right thing and the only thing for Scotland ; that it was the right thing and the only thing for the world ; and that it was the only Church government for which Scripture gave an absolute and unmistakable warrant. It had a *jus divinum*, a divine right.

And we cannot but agree with Melville that Presbyterianism was and is the right thing for Scotland. It suits the Scottish people. It suits a liberty-loving people. It suits a people who believe in free institutions. Wherever men desire to have a real and living voice in the government of their Church, *there* Presbyterianism is the right thing. One cannot do better than quote here the very remarkable words about Presbyterianism used by Principal Rainy in his famous reply to Dean Stanley in 1872. "Presbyterianism," he says, "meant organised life, regulated distribution of forces, graduated recognition of gifts, freedom to discuss, authority to control, agency to administer. Presbyterianism meant a system by which the convictions and conscience of the Church could constantly be applied by appropriate organs to her affairs. Presbyterianism meant a system by which quickening influence anywhere experienced in the Church could be turned into effective force and transmitted to fortify the whole society. Presbyterianism meant a system in which everyone, first of all the common man, had his recognised place, his defined position, his ascertained and guarded privileges, his responsibilities inculcated and enforced, felt himself a part of a great unity, with a right to care for its welfare and to guard its integrity. From the broad base of the believing people the sap rose through Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, to the Assembly, and thence descending diffused knowledge, influence, organic unity through the whole system.

Yes, Presbyterianism is a system for a free people that love a regulated and self-regulating freedom; a people independent, yet patient, considerate, trusting much to the processes of discussion and consultation, and more to the promised aid of a much forgiving and a watchful Lord."<sup>1</sup>

In such wise words as these do we see what Presbyterianism really means.

*B.* If we turn now to consider some of the incidents of Melville's career, we shall certainly gather from them the conception of Melville as a brave, fearless, and outspoken leader of men, brave and fearless because he loved the truth. He was also a keen wit and a scholar, perhaps the finest scholar in Scotland at the close of the sixteenth century. Probably, his greatest failing was that he was choleric, short and sharp of temper; and in this he did himself a considerable injustice in his dealings with King James and the Court. At the same time, it ought never to be forgotten that it was Melville's real love of truth and his genuine hatred of all sham and hypocrisy which made him so often lose patience with trimmers.

Melville has been most fortunate in one respect, that he had a nephew who kept a Diary; and in this Diary James Melville gives a prominent place to his uncle. The two were linked together by the warmest ties of affection. In James Melville's Diary is to be found a lifelike picture of the uncle whom he loved as a brother, and whom he served so loyally to the very end. The Diary gives us, also, a lifelike picture of the time; and the men and women who pass across it are painted with a touch which makes them live. The whole is written in exquisite and homely Scotch, and is the most valuable picture we have of the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

An illustration of the Diary may be given. After Andrew Melville came back from the Continent, where he had been for ten years and where he had acquired a reputation for learning,

<sup>1</sup> Robert Rainy, *Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, pp. 13 f.

he accepted the Principalship of Glasgow University. On his way to Glasgow from his home at Baldovy, he went with James Melville past Stirling, where the King, a boy of nine, was. George Buchanan, the King's tutor and the most versatile man of his day, was also there. This was their first visit to Buchanan ; but, seven years later, the two paid the great scholar another visit. He was then in Edinburgh. "When we cam," says James Melville, "to his chalmer, we fand him sitting in his chaire, teatching his young man that servit him in his chalmer, a, b, ab ; e, b, eb, etc. Efter salutation, Mr. Andro sayes, 'I sie, sir, yie are nocht ydle.' 'Better this,' quoth he, 'nor stelling sheipe, or sitting ydle, quhilk is als ill.'" When Buchanan gave Melville to read the *Epistolary Dedication to the King* with which he was prefacing his *History of Scotland*, he suggested some amendments. "I may do no mair," said the old man, "for thinking on another mater." When asked what that was, Buchanan replied, "To die."

1. Andrew Melville was born, the youngest of nine sons, at Baldovy, near Montrose, in 1545. At St. Andrews, which he entered as a student in his fourteenth year, Melville was the only man in the University among students and professors who could read Aristotle in the original Greek. James Melville tells us how sometimes the Provost of his College "wad tak the boy betwix his legges at the fire in winter, and blessing him say, 'My sillie fatherless and motherless chyld, it's ill to wit what God may mak of thee yet.'"

After St. Andrews, Melville went abroad for ten years, returning in 1574, two years after Knox's death. Almost immediately, he was appointed Principal of Glasgow, where he worked till 1580, when he became Principal of St. Andrews. There he remained till 1606, when he was driven into exile.

From St. Andrews, Melville influenced all the educational life of Scotland, acting besides as a real leader in Presbyterianism. He was a man of dauntless courage. For instance, in St. Andrews he had no hesitation in rebuking the magistrates to their face. Preaching one day in his own College pulpit, he spoke out

very plain. "With ane heroicall spreit, the mair they stirit and bostit, the mair he strak with that twa-eagit sword, sa that a day he movit the Provest, with sear rubbing of the ga of his conscience, to ryse out of his seate in the middes of the sermont, and with some muttering of words to goe to the dure, out-throw the middes of the peiple." Afterwards, Melville took the irritable magistrate before the Presbytery, where he apologised and was forgiven.

2. In addition to his remarkable courage, Melville was a man of strong convictions; and it was with his strong convictions that he threw himself into the Church controversy in Scotland. He was always for the Church's freedom, and therefore on the side of the Assembly and the people.

The ecclesiastical controversy from Knox's death in 1572 to 1592, when the Church obtained its charter of Presbyterianism, is involved and curious. A few words will indicate its nature. The old Church had passed away in 1560 under the insistent pressure of reform. An agitation immediately arose about the Church's property. The teinds were safe; but the Church had vast property in lands. Much of that passed at once into the hands of the nobles; but much remained and was held in trust for Church purposes, though it never came into the possession of the Reformed Church in reality. The nobles were keenly anxious to get it. One device of the Regent Morton, of whom a contemporary said that he was "wonderfully given to gether gear," was to appoint a nominal bishop, who drew a nominal salary, while the real income passed into the hands of Morton or other nobles. The people in ridicule called these bishops "Tulchans." That sort of thing could not last, and, in the end, the Crown attached to itself all unappropriated lands, and the teinds fell to the Church.

In 1578, the Second Book of Discipline, perhaps the greatest of Scottish Presbyterian documents, was issued by the Church, and in 1580 the Church abolished bishops. Not till 1592, however, did the Church obtain her charter of Presbyterianism, which was in truth a charter of freedom.



We may relate at this point a memorable interview which Morton, the Regent, had with Melville. Morton wished to corrupt Melville, but it is needless to say his offers were rejected. One day, he sent for Melville to see him, and denounced his *Geneva Discipline*, crying, "Ther will never be quyetnes in this countrey till halff a dissonne of yow be hangit or banished the countrey." "Tushe! sir," replied Melville, "threaten your courtiers in that fashion. It is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground. The earth is the Lord's; my fatherland is wherever well-doing is. I haiff bein ready to giff my lyff whar it was nocht halff sa weill wared, at the pleasour of my God. I leived out of your countrey ten yeirs as weill as in it. Yet God be glorified, it will nocht ly in your power to hang nor exyll His treuthe!"

Along with this may go a story of a later scene. Attempts were being made to restore Episcopacy, and the King, still greatly under the influence of favourites such as Lennox and Arran, was asserting his authority in Church matters, or, as Melville graphically put it, driving a "bluidy gullie" into the affairs of the Commonwealth. So the Church drew up a statement of grievances, and Melville and others were appointed to lay the subject before the King at Perth. There was considerable danger in so doing. At the interview, Arran spoke up, to brow-beat Melville and his friends. The scene is thus recorded: "Arran began to threttin with thrawin brow and bosting langage. 'What,' says he, 'wha dar subscrivye thir treasanable articles?' 'We dar, and will subscrivye them,'" was Melville's courageous reply. He at once put his name to the statement of grievances, and the other Churchmen present followed his example. From that day, Lennox and Arran saw that "the Kirk had a bak."

3. In 1592, as we have said, Presbyterianism was ratified on the basis of the Second Book of Discipline. If King James had been a man of honour, the arrangements come to would have stood. But James was at the best a shifty character. Moreover, he was an absolutist. He aspired to rule by divine right—the

fatal aspiration of the Stuart line. He saw that he would succeed better with a compliant Episcopacy than with a stubborn Presbyterianism. Accordingly, he began gradually to bring back Episcopacy into the Church. Another thing to be borne in mind in this connection is that many of his subjects were Roman Catholics, whose favour James wished, if possible, to secure. And it was still more to the point that many of the subjects of Queen Elizabeth were Roman Catholics. With these, also, James wished to stand well; for it was a settled policy with him that one day he must secure the English throne.

A matter concerning the *Popish Lords* had arisen, and it was one which gave the Presbyterians much trouble. They were resolved that James should stand true to his compact of 1592. In 1596 the Estates of Parliament met at Falkland to determine about the Popish Lords. The King was resolved that they should retain their estates and honours; and he carried his point. In September of the same year the Commission of Assembly met, and a deputation, consisting of the Melvilles and two additional ministers, was appointed to bring the Assembly's complaint before the King, asking him at the same time to delay or prevent the decree of Parliament being carried out: for, the Presbyterian Church had a horror of the Papists: The scene at Falkland is one of the most memorable in the history of the Scottish Church; and James Melville tells it in a way which it is impossible to surpass: "Mr. Andro Melvill, Patrik Galloway, James Nicolson and I, cam to Falkland; whar we fand the King verie quyet. The rest leyed upon me to be speaker, alleaging I could propone the mater substantiuslie, and in a myld and smothe maner, quhilk the King lyked best of. And, entering in the Cabinet with the King alan, I schew his Majestie, That the Commissionars of the Generall Assemblie; with certean uther breithring ordeanit to watche for the weill of the Kirk in sa dangerous a tym, haid convenit at Cowper. At the quhilk word the King interrupts me and crabbotlie quarrels our meitting, alleaging it was without warrand and seditius,

making ourselves and the countrey to conceive feir whar was na cause. To the quhilk, I beginning to reply, in my maner, Mr. Andro doucht nocht abyd it, bot brak af upon the King in sa zealus, powerfull and unresistable a maner, that whowbeit the King used his autoritie in maist crabbed and colerik maner, yit Mr. Andro bure him down, and outtered the Commission as from the mightie God, calling the King bot 'God's sillie vassall'; and taking him be the sleive, says this in effect, throw mikle hat reasoning and manie interruptiones; 'Sir, we will humblie reverence your Majestie alwayes, namlie in publick, but sen we have this occasioun to be with your Majestie in privat, and the treuthe is yie ar brought in extream danger bathe of your lyff and croun, and with yow the countrey and Kirk of Chryst is lyk to wrak, for nocht telling yow the treuthe, and giffen of yow a faithfull counsall, we mon discharge our dewtie thairin, or els be trators bathe to Chryst and yow! And thairfor, sir, as divers tymes befor, sa now again, I mon tell yow, thair is twa Kings and twa kingdomes in Scotland. Thair is Chryst Jesus the King, and his kingdome the Kirk, whase subject King James the Saxt is, and of whase kingdome nocht a king nor a lord, nor a heid, bot a member! . . . And, Sir, when yie war in your swadling-cloutes, Chryst Jesus rang friely in this land in spyt of all His enemies.'"

At the close of this memorable interview, the King made a sort of promise to give no favour to Popish Lords; but his promises were of the type that were meant to be "kept no longer than it suited his convenience to keep them."

4. The struggle between James and the Church went on during all the time he was in Scotland. He succeeded in brow-beating the Church. He insisted on Assemblies not meeting without his permission, which, of course, was not agreed to except under protest. He got a resolution passed appointing a standing Committee to confer with the King on the Church's affairs. James Melville describes this Committee as "the very neidle to draw in the Episcopall threid." Finally, it was decided

that representatives of the Church should be a kind of Third Estate in the councils of the nation. This meant the revival of Episcopacy. Their representatives must get the name of bishops ; and, finally, not merely did they get the name, but the bishop became the constant moderator of the Presbytery ; and though the Church was in name Presbyterian, it was for all purposes Episcopalian during the years that remained of James' reign. The Church, however, did not formally surrender till the packed Glasgow Assembly of 1610.

Melville and King James were then in England. King James had requested Melville to step across the Border in 1606 ; and Melville never saw Scotland again. The King ostensibly wished to confer with him in London about the affairs of the Church in Scotland. There was no doubt in his own mind, or with his friends, about what this meant. It meant, practically, imprisonment, and from 1606 to 1611 Melville was more or less a prisoner in London. Perhaps, if Melville had had a less clever wit, or had used a little more sparingly his "nippy tongue," things might have gone more pleasantly with him : but he was a fearless man who had a passion for the truth. Mere expediency had no weight with Andrew Melville.

The English bishops could not tolerate a man like this, who swept in amongst them as a cold, biting wind from the North. Here, for instance, is the picture of a scene at Whitehall, which James Melville describes with his wonted vigour. Andrew and he had been summoned to answer for certain clever Latin verses, in which Melville had ridiculed the English Church ritualistic practices. Richard Bancroft, who was Primate at the time, thought fit to interrupt Melville during the interview, and to denounce his offence as treason. He hardly knew the man he had to deal with. Turning on him, Melville exclaimed, "My lords, Andrew Melville was never a traitor. But, my lords, there was one Richard Bancroft, (let him be sought for) who during the life of the late Queen wrote a treatise against His Majesty's title to the Crown of England ; and *here* is the book which was

answered by my brother, John Davidson." This was turning the tables with a vengeance, and treatment to which the Primate of England was not accustomed. But that was not all. Melville soundly accused him of harsh treatment of the Puritans. Taking him by the white sleeves of his rochet, he shook them "in his maner frielie and soundlie, and called them Romish rags and the mark of the Beast."

C. Such a man could not well be allowed to remain at large either in England or in Scotland. He was too clever and too clear-sighted and had too great a passion for sincerity to satisfy James or his bishops. So Melville was practically a prisoner, until in 1610 a request came from France to allow him to go to Sedan as a Professor of Divinity there. Melville was unwilling to go: he did not like the idea of deserting the country for which he had toiled so many years. Yet, as things then were in England, he could not serve Christ so effectively as he might do among the Protestants of France: so he went, carrying his brave spirit and wit across the Channel. Some of his letters home to his nephew have been preserved, and they are interesting reading. For instance, in one he says: "We old men daily grow children again, and are ever and anon turning our eyes back on our cradles. . . . Suffer me then to dote; for I am now pleased with old age. . . . I try daily to learn something new, and thus to prevent my old age from becoming listless and inert. I am always doing or at least attempting to do something in those studies, to which I devoted myself in the younger part of my life."

He was much saddened by the news of his nephew's death in 1614: for they had been as brothers, and James Melville was a noble spirit. Eight years after (1622), Andrew Melville followed his nephew James into that land where there are no partings and no exile.

Few greater men have appeared in Scotland; and at least this can be confidently said, that no braver man has ever stood

up for the Church and the Kingdom of God in Scotland. When things were at their worst, and the greed and indifference of King and Court were crushing the Church and her liberties, God sent Andrew Melville to keep Scotland and the Church true to that inheritance of liberty which is the Church's birthright.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—*Life* by Dr. McCrie; Morrison, *Melville* (Famous Scots Series); James Melville, *Diary* (Ban. Club); Spottiswoode, *History of the Church of Scotland*; Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*; Gardiner, *History of England*; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, etc.

## CHAPTER IX.

ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

*A.* What we propose to do in this study is this: first to describe briefly the movements in which Henderson played a part, and then to attempt an estimate of his personality and of his place in Scottish History.

The history of the time we are dealing with may be thrown conveniently into a threefold division. The first part blossoms into the "National Covenant" of 1638; the second into the "Solemn League and Covenant" of 1643; while the third closes with the national sorrow of Henderson's death in 1646. It will be useful for clearness to remember the three outstanding incidents.

1. Through all the chequered history between the death of Knox and the National Covenant there runs one continuous struggle, the struggle between power and the people's aspiration for religious liberty. These sixty odd years are filled with the pathetic story, on the one hand, of a people clinging to a form of worship which instinct taught them was consonant with their genius, and, on the other, of attempts more or less successful to stifle or thwart the people's aspiration. It is a time-old story; plots, intrigues, concessions, withdrawals; now, a regent sternly repressive; now, a sovereign shifty and pedantic, covering constitutional weakness with a show of learning and a wealth of adjectives!

For a time, the old Episcopal framework had been retained, but the people who were really Presbyterians laughed at it. They saw in it simply a selfish expedient for retaining the Church's property and slowly turning it into private channels. Not only were the mass of the people Presbyterian, but in those years they had been learning with deep satisfaction what Presbyterianism meant.

There can be no doubt that King James bitterly disliked Presbyterianism. His dislike is sufficiently intelligible when we remember what Presbyterianism was and what the King's own claims were. In the previous chapter we saw something of the nature of Presbyterianism. We know, also, the nature of the King's own claims. He held the loftiest ideals of his royal prerogative. The King, he said, must be supreme over all persons and all causes. It is no surprise to us, therefore, that King James disliked Presbyterianism. It is on record, indeed, that at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, one of the most mournful exhibitions in history of ecclesiastical flattery and regal garrulity, the King said that "Scottish Presbyterianism agreed with monarchy as well as God and the devil; then Jack and Tom, Will and Dick, shall meet and at their pleasure censure both me and my Council."

When, therefore, we keep clear before us, on the one hand, the character of Presbyterianism as the expression of a people's legitimate religious aspiration and freedom, and, on the other, the nature of the royal claims, we have the key to the struggle which issued in the National Covenant of 1638. Further, we can understand the meaning of the oft-repeated aphorism "No Bishop, No King," with which James imagined he could govern his realms. Whatever his faults may have been, there was, at least somewhere in that gross unwieldy figure, a native Scottish shrewdness which assured him that the bishops would not pull him by his sleeve, scout him as "God's sillie vassall," or disturb his slumbers by dreams of Canossa.

(1) If the aphorism "No Bishop, No King," was dear to



James, it was of still greater worth in the sight of Charles I., who came to the throne in 1625.

The position of things in England and Scotland at the moment might be described in a sentence. In England, the repressive ecclesiastical policy of Queen Elizabeth was bearing fruit. James I. had continued that policy, with consequences which may be imagined. The people and their leaders were driven back upon Scripture, the Word of Truth; and the more England became "the people of a Book," the more the volume of Puritan dissent rose to the flood. Presbyterianism, which had assumed its most aggressive form in Cartwright, was spreading perceptibly over England. Independency, which had sprung into vitality in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, had already established a hold; and in 1620, five years before Charles came to the throne, the Pilgrim Fathers, in despair of English freedom, had landed in New England. The feeling in England was growing in favour of a purer, freer, more Scriptural, and more spiritual worship. There were even hushed whisperings of Toleration.

In 1625 Scotland was partly Episcopalian in name, largely Presbyterian in heart. What the people felt was not despair; it was indignation. The Articles of Perth in 1618 had marked an epoch: henceforth the people knew that between them and freedom there lay a struggle which indeed might issue in defeat, but certainly must be faced. The heart of the people braced itself for conflict.

The crisis came with startling rapidity. There is something entirely fatuous in the career of Charles I. It appears to us that never was such stupendous folly adhered to with such dogged tenacity. He had hedged himself about with divine right; he had built himself a fortress of royal prerogative, and thought it impregnable; he had surrounded himself with men whose watchword was "Thorough"; he had taken to his counsels an iron will in Church and an iron law in State—Laud of the "rheumy obstinate eyes," and Wentworth, who had

Ireland in terror at his feet. And yet it was simply stupendous folly. To establish a national despotism in Church and in State, to fetter the free expression of opinion, to employ the divine right of Kings to trample on the people's Parliament and to dictate the people's religion, could have no result but one: and a tyro might have known it.

The crash began in Scotland,—a curious commentary on Clarendon's remark "that no man ever inquired what was doing in Scotland, nor had that kingdom a place or mention in one page of any gazette." But Charles, guided by Laud, had been devoting some attention to Scottish matters. A visit in 1633 had convinced them both that Scotland was singularly belated. It would never do, Laud thought, to allow such a mongrel and heathenish worship to continue. There must be uniformity with England; for Laud, in common with his age, could not imagine anything like "spiritual unity without outward uniformity." In 1636 a "Book of Canons," ratified by the King, was sent down to Scotland for the guidance of the Church. Presbyterianism was ignored; Parliament and Assembly had never been consulted; and Scottish independence felt justly indignant. Worse was to follow. In 1637 Laud sent down his notorious Service-book. And then the storm burst. National sentiment, goaded and trampled on, rose in a passion of indignation. Priest, prayer-book, prerogative, went down before the people's wrath. Laud had not understood Scotland. He had refused to listen to those who did. He had underestimated the strength of the people's conviction. He had built himself a palace of bigotry, and a breath from the North had overthrown it. There was a certain grim humour in the situation, and it was reserved for Archie Armstrong, the King's fool, with the privilege of his class, to express it. When the news of the "National Covenant" reached London, Archie put the delicious question to Laud, "Wha's fule noo?" Laud was in no mood for humour, and the question almost cost the jester his life.

(2) Now, as we read the story of that thrilling time in Scotland, one name is always coming up. Round it seems to gather all the strength of Scotland's opposition; and as the story proceeds, it becomes more and more apparent that this man is the master-mind of the situation. So far as we know, Alexander Henderson was born about the year 1583. He had had a distinguished career at St. Andrews, and somewhere about 1615 had been appointed minister at Leuchars. The appointment had been unpopular. In fact, Henderson had been thrust on the parish, and the people resented it. At the time, his sympathies were with the prelatie party in Scotland; and he entered on his charge with comparatively little interest in the real work of a minister. His spiritual experience reminds us very much of that of Thomas Chalmers. By and by, a change came. It is understood that the instrument in the change was that eminent saint and preacher, Robert Bruce. The story is familiar. Henderson had gone secretly to hear Bruce, and had been immediately arrested by the words of his text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Henderson felt, as many have felt on such occasions, that this was a word from God for him.

Henderson soon made it apparent where his sympathies had come to lie; and, as a consequence, he fell under the suspicion of the prelates. As matters grew more and more serious in Scotland, Henderson's advice and guidance were ever more urgently sought. Finally came the crash of 1637, and then Henderson stepped forward to become the ecclesiastical and political genius of the hour. How important his position had become even in 1637 is apparent from a letter written to him by Rutherford in the beginning of that year: "As for your cause, my reverend and dearest brother, ye are the talk of the north and south; and looked to, so as if ye were all crystal glass. Your notes and dust would soon be proclaimed and trumpets blown at your slips. But I know that ye have laid

help upon One that is mighty. . . . God hath called you to Christ's side, and the wind is now in Christ's face in this land ; and seeing ye are with Him, ye cannot expect the lee-side, or the sunny side of the brae."<sup>1</sup>

It must not be supposed that Henderson had in any way forced himself to the front of the battle. Never was man more modest. What he felt was that these troubles had come on his Church and on himself ; and it was his urgent duty to help his countrymen. If he was dragged to the front of the battle, that was not his own choice : it was the Lord's doing.<sup>2</sup>

From the moment that the troubles began in Edinburgh in 1637, it may be confidently said that Henderson was the one indispensable factor in the situation. As his friend Robert Baillie said of him, "He was incomparably the ablest of them all." If any man in Scotland could be trusted to take a sane and masculine grip of the situation, it was Henderson. After the Liturgy riots in Edinburgh, Church and Government became paralysed. Baillie somewhere puts it in his quaint way that Scotland was "in a staggering state." But the people organised themselves. And the *Tables*, as the representatives of the people were called, were really the rulers of Scotland for the time. In the *Tables*, Henderson was a power ; and few were the documents, passing through this extemporised quasi-Parliament, which did not bear the mark of Henderson's pen.

<sup>1</sup> Rutherford's *Letters* (Bonar's edition), pp. 233 f.

<sup>2</sup> In the dedication to one of his sermons there is an interesting passage which throws some light on his thoughts at this moment : "When from my sense of myself and of my own thoughts and ways, I begin to remember how men who love to live obscurely and in the shadow are brought forth to light, to the view and talking of the world ; how men that love quietness are made to stir and to have a hand in public business ; how men that love soliloquies and contemplations are brought upon debates and controversies ; how men who love peace are made to war and to shed blood ; and generally, how men are brought to act the things which they never determine, nor so much as dreamed of before ; the words of the prophet Jeremiah came to my remembrance, 'O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps'" (*Life of Henderson*, McCrie, with Sermons, Edin. 1846, p. 72).

A strong step was taken in 1638. It was a master-stroke to propose that Scotland should be united in a National Covenant. The preparation of the Covenant was left largely to Henderson. On the last day of February the signing of it began in that ever-memorable scene at Greyfriars.<sup>1</sup>

First the Covenant, then the Assembly: the one was the natural consequence of the other. The men who had signed the Covenant could not rest till they had obtained the Assembly. Charles might protest or take refuge in prerogative: he might even suspend the threat of war. Nothing could retard or withstand the rush of a people born to be free. The Assembly met at Glasgow in November. Henderson was Moderator. Warriston, "the non-such," was Clerk. The King's Commissioner protested, obstructed, threatened; finally left the Assembly to its devices. Henderson was not to be browbeaten: and there is nothing more impressive in Scottish History or suggestive of statesman-like ability than the grave dignity with which he presided over this epoch-making Assembly, or the masterly skill with which he guided its deliberations, checking on the one hand the pretensions of royal prerogative, and curbing on the other the unbridled enthusiasm of his own followers. The Assembly continued its sittings till the 20th of December. The closing words, it is said, were Henderson's: "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite."

2. In the course of his account of the troubles we are dealing with, Thomas Fuller, that most entertaining historian, says: "Thus none seeing it now foul weather in Scotland could expect it fair sunshine in England." The remark is quaint and true: for, the connection between the sorrows of Scotland and the despair of England was of the closest character. We have already briefly referred to the troubles in England; and now it is in point simply to say that the two countries, having shared in common sorrows, came to share in a common deliverance. All the world

<sup>1</sup> See, further, D. Hay-Fleming, *The Story of the Scottish Covenants*.

knows how Charles I. was obliged to call together the representatives of the people, and that the *Long Parliament* began its sittings on the 3rd of November 1640.

A month or two later, Henderson was in London. He had been called there, along with other Commissioners from Scotland, to act with a Committee appointed to adjust differences. The Commissioners were very popular in London, and there Henderson was able to feel the pulse of English life. He threw himself with energy into ecclesiastical questions : it was a golden opportunity for expounding in England the ecclesiastical system established in Scotland. At the time the sympathies of leading Churchmen in London were Presbyterian. The Commissioners from Scotland attached themselves to the Radical party, known as "the Root and Branch party" ; and for once at least Henderson and John Milton fought side by side. It must have been while he was on this short visit to England that the idea began to establish itself in Henderson's mind,—the idea for which he was to spend so much of his life,—that the solution of Britain's ecclesiastical trouble was *a religious uniformity*, of which Presbyterianism should be the external embodiment and symbol.

In the Scottish Assembly of 1641, which met in July, and of which Henderson was Moderator, an opportunity was afforded him of doing something to realise his ideal of uniformity. Robert Baillie tells us, that on Wednesday July 28th, "the Moderator did fall on a notable motion, of drawing up a Confession of Faith, a Catechism, a Directorie for all the parts of the publick worship, and a Platforme of Government, wherein possible England and we might agree. All did approve the motion ; and thereafter the burden of that labour was laid on the back of the mover, with libertie to vake from preaching whenever he pleased, and to take help of whom he thought meet. He did declyne to undertake it, yet it will lie on him ; and readilie in this he may doe some good."<sup>1</sup> As we afterwards learn from Baillie, Henderson had done a little at the work laid on him ; but from a letter to

<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Journals*, i. p. 365.

Robert Baillie in April of the following year, we gather that Henderson had given the task up. Part of this letter is well worth quoting: "Although neither time nor weakness had hindered, I cannot think it expedient that anie such thing, whether Confession of Faith, Direction for Worshipe, Forme of Government, or Catechisme Less or more, should be agreed upon or authorised by our Kirk till we sie what the Lord will doe in England and Ireland, where I still wait for a reformation and uniformitie with us; but this must be brought to passe by common consent, and we are not to conceive that they will embrace our Forme; but a new Forme must be sett downe for us all, and in my opinion some men sett apairt sometime for that worke; and although we should never come to this unities in religion, and uniformitie in worship, yet my desire is to see what Forme England shall pitch upon before we publish ours."<sup>1</sup>

The course actually taken was very much what Henderson saw to be necessary. The idea of an Assembly had been formulated in the Grand Remonstrance of 1641, and in the following year the House of Commons acted on it. On the 1st of July 1643 the Westminster Assembly met. In the ordinance calling the Assembly, it is made perfectly clear that this Assembly was simply an advisory body, whose duty it was "to give their advice and counsel to both or either of the Houses of Parliament when and as often as they should be required." The matters to be discussed were indicated as mainly Liturgy, Discipline, and Church Government; and it is distinctly stated that the government to be settled should be such as might secure agreement with the Church of Scotland and the Reformed Churches abroad. The first part of the Assembly's programme was the revision of the Thirty-nine Articles.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile events were happening which were to widen the basis, constitution, and aims of the Westminster Assembly.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Journals*, ii. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, *Westminster Assembly*; Beveridge, *Westminster Assembly* (1904).

Parliament was at war with the King, and things were not going well with it. Hampden was dead, Fairfax and Sir William Waller beaten, and the South-West surging with a passion of loyalty. The time was dark, and some decisive measure had to be adopted. It was decided to appeal to Scotland. Commissioners were immediately sent down to the Assembly and the Convention of Estates: the result was the "Solemn League and Covenant," one of the most important documents which ever passed through Henderson's hands. "This," said Baillie at the time, with candour and truthfulness, "seems to be a new period and crise of the most great affaire which these hundred years hes exercised thir dominions."<sup>1</sup> And there can be no doubt that it was the prospect of uniformity in religion, that vision floating before Henderson's mind, which secured the support of Scotland. "We shall endeavour," the Covenant says, "to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church-government, directory for worship, and catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may as brethren live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us."

So much is perfectly clear. What Henderson dreamed of and struggled after was *uniformity*. At the same time, he was perfectly conscious that if uniformity was to be attained it must be by *legitimate and constitutional* methods, never by the suicidal policy of a Laud. Further, he saw that such a uniformity was to be secured only at the risk, in the first place, of national peace; and when he threw in his lot with the English Parliament, he did so knowing well that it meant for his country suffering and for himself travail. When remarks are made about Henderson's policy, and when it is said that he was as bad as Laud, and meant simply to coerce England into a uniformity which spelt Presbyterianism, it is forgotten that there was something more than policy in the "League and Covenant": there was heroism. And there is a passage in Robert Baillie's *Letters* which ought to

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, ii. p. 90.



be kept in mind : "Surelie, it was a great act of faith in God and hudge courage and unheard of compassion that moved our nation to hazard their own peace and venture their lives, and all for to save a people so irrecoverable ruined both in their owne and all the world's eyes."<sup>1</sup>

3. The Scottish Commissioners arrived in London in the autumn of 1643, and threw themselves immediately into the work of the Assembly. Henderson's leading colleagues were Rutherford, Gillespie, and Baillie ; and to them, more than to Henderson, fell the active work of debate, propaganda, and intrigue. Henderson, however, was the inspiring and controlling personality. Not a step was taken without his advice ; not a document was penned or printed but passed through his hands. In the Assembly itself he was in reality, though perhaps not in name, the sagacious leader of the Presbyterians. His balanced mind, sober reliable judgment, and intimate knowledge of men and affairs, fitted him to direct, perhaps the more effectively because not ostentatiously, the currents of thought within the Assembly. So far as the minutes of Assembly can carry us, the matters in which Henderson most interested himself, as apart from the general situation, and where he has left most traces of his hand, were the Directories of Worship and the questions of Church Government.

And yet the great idea for which Henderson had consecrated his splendid abilities was never realised : uniformity was a dismal failure. This divine institution, this cure for Britain's religious distemper, this Scottish Presbytery, England would not accept. The heart of the English people had never really craved it. So far, Green is right when he says, "It had been a clerical rather than a national creed." The genius of the people did not run that way. "The life and thought of the Church of England," to use some words of Dr. Rainy, "did not set in the mould which the Assembly strove to supply." It was, also, painfully true that Henderson could not compete with Cromwell's Ironsides. The

<sup>1</sup> Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ii. p. 99.

Assembly might deliberate, and might even defy Parliament itself. Outside, was a victorious army which was sweeping England to views of its own. Yet Henderson's failure lay deeper than that. It lay, on his own part, in a partial inability to read the spirit of the time; on the part of his colleagues, especially the Scottish ones, in a want of sympathy with toleration. Oliver Cromwell understood his England better.

Henderson's life had thus been at the very heart of English and Scottish thought and movement. One remarkable episode was to be in it before the end. The Civil War had dragged to a close when on the 5th of May 1646 Charles took refuge with the Scottish army. It was a daring move: the political horizon was changed in a moment. If Charles would accept the Covenant and convince himself that Presbyterianism was not altogether bad, who could tell what the future might hold? The Scottish Commissioners were in a fever of excitement. Henderson, sick and ill, was hurried north to Newcastle, to use his powers of persuasion with the King, and Robert Baillie sent after him the fervid prayer, "The great God help you to soften that man's heart." The prayer was vain. As we know, Henderson failed to soften the heart of Charles, though he succeeded in breaking his own. Charles was plausible, enjoyed much to talk with Henderson, initiated an animated correspondence; all the time he was writing amusing letters to the Queen, or intriguing for delay; in short, "very civil and very cunning," as he himself described the Marquis of Argyll. "My Lords," Charles once said at Strafford's trial, "I hope you know what a tender thing conscience is." The negotiations at Newcastle he described as "pressures on his conscience." It was a strangely constructed conscience which, on the one hand, obliged him to cling to Episcopacy, and, on the other, permitted him to hoodwink his truest subjects. No wonder that Baillie wrote, "Our great perplexity is for the King's disposition."

Anyhow, Henderson failed; and failure, in that great heart, took hope out of life. Writing on the 7th of August 1646,

Baillie says, "Mr. Henderson is dyeing, most of heart-break, at Newcastle." He was conveyed to Edinburgh,—back from the hopes and fears of England,—to die. "A truely pious and reallie publick man is a rare piece upon earth!" so writes Robert Baillie. One of the rarest died at Edinburgh on the 19th of August 1646, "as glad," to use his own words, "to be released as ever schoolboy was to return from school to his father's house."

*B.* In any estimate of the character and work of Alexander Henderson the first thing which must be noted is his *deep religious conviction*. We find it everywhere,—a profound religious sentiment which colours all he did and thought. It was not mere respect which animated his brethren in Scotland in electing him three times as Moderator: there was this also,—the conviction that there was no man among them whom they could look to with greater confidence to guide their religious Assembly and inspire the Church with loyalty to Christ. Robert Baillie, one of the shrewdest men of his day in Scotland, in his account of the first day of the Glasgow Assembly, says: "We ended that day with the Moderator's prayer. Among that man's other good parts that was one, a facultie of grave, good, and zealous prayer according to the matter in hand, which he exercised, without fagging, to the last day of our meeting."<sup>1</sup>

Through Henderson's life-work there ran a lambent fire of religious passion. Few leaders in Scotland's early Protestant days bore such a high character. Not so eloquent and masterful as Knox, perhaps not so learned and certainly not so vehement as Melville, he seems to us to-day to excel both in elements which go to the making of the finer sides of character. Knox's assertiveness was sometimes a weakness; Melville's vehemence bordered sometimes on arrogance; and it takes nothing from the greatness of these men, nor does it detract from the splendid quality of their work in Scotland, to recognise that, in breadth

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, i. p. 128.

of sympathy, in a charity which "hopeth all things," in a high-toned singleness of purpose, Alexander Henderson has a place apart. "The man died, as he lived, in great modestie, pietie, and faith" (Baillie).

If one were asked to indicate in a word Henderson's mental equipment, perhaps the best description would be "breadth of brow." Masson, who will not be regarded as prejudiced, has used words about him which ought to satisfy the most ardent Covenanter. He describes Henderson as "the man of super-eminent composure, comprehensiveness, and breadth of brow."<sup>1</sup> A sane, well-balanced intellect, which might be trusted generally to say the right thing at the right time, and to take a masculine grip of the situation, was the best contribution Scotland could have received for the solution of its ecclesiastical and political troubles. He had remarkable contemporaries. Rutherford had many gifts, notably a unique spiritual genius. Gillespie was more brilliant in debate. Warriston was more profoundly versed in law. But in breadth of brow Henderson was acknowledged their chief. When the country succeeded in emerging from the social paralysis of the Stuart reign, it was under a deep debt to Henderson. In England, Henderson joined issue with Laud, John Milton, Thomas Goodwin, and Oliver Cromwell; and if his projects there in a considerable degree failed, and if his great idea of uniformity "played nip-shot," to use a phrase from Robert Baillie, it was due largely to the logic of events and to the fact that England was unable constitutionally to absorb the ideal which floated constantly before Henderson's mind.

It is difficult to appreciate at its true worth the service rendered by the Covenanters in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was really a service for Scottish liberty, for the right of the people in government, and the independence of the Church in discipline and worship. Presbyterianism was democratic. It was the mould or channel in which the religious life of the people

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *Life of Milton*, iii. p. 16.

ran. And it was a great service for liberty to vindicate the right of the people to choose their Church government and to assert the inherent independence of the Church in regard to worship and discipline. Henceforth, all the world knew how the mind of Scotland had declared itself.

If, then, these were the issues involved in the struggles of the time, and if these are the gains to Scottish life and thought, shaped in the stress of conflict and purified in the fires of controversy, what place shall we give to Henderson, who was not only foremost in the conflict but a chief instrument in the victory? Perhaps we shall agree with these words of Robert Baillie, spoken to the Assembly of 1647, in appreciation of his friend, Alexander Henderson: "That glorious soul of blessed memory, who now is crowned with the reward of all his labours for God and for us, I wish his remembrance may be fragrant among us, so long as free and pure Assemblies remain in the land; which we hope shall be to the coming of our Lord. You know he spent his strength, and wore out his days; he breathed out his life in the service of God and of his Church. This binds it on our back, as we would not prove ungrateful, to pay him his due. If the thoughts of others be conform to my inmost sense, in duty and reason, he ought to be accounted by us and posterity the fairest ornament, after John Knox, of incomparable memory, that ever the Church of Scotland did enjoy."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—*Lives of Henderson* by McCrie and Aiton; Masson, *Life of Milton*; Gardiner, *History of England*; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*; Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*; Stevenson, *History of the Church of Scotland*; Row, *Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*; Baillie, *Letters and Journals*; Rothes, *Relation*, etc. (Ban. Club, 1830); Balfour, *Annals of Scotland*; Rushworth's *Historical Collections*; *Register of Privy Council of Scotland*; Mitchell, *Westminster Assembly*; Beveridge, *Westminster Assembly*; Shaw, *History of English Church* (1900); D. Hay-Fleming, *Scottish Covenants*, etc.

## CHAPTER X.

### SAMUEL RUTHERFURD.

*A.* Rutherford is certainly one of the most interesting and many-sided personalities in the whole record of the Scottish Church. Indeed, there are aspects of his personality in which he seems to stand alone in the roll of Scottish heroes.

Having surveyed the life of Henderson in the last chapter, we do not require to enter with detail into the general history of the time. Henderson and Rutherford played a part in Scotland at the same epoch-making time. They worked side by side in the same national events. They both signed the National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. They both worked together at the Westminster Assembly, helping in the preparation of the Confession of Faith and the ecclesiastical symbols of our Presbyterian Church. They both have a place at the heart of what is perhaps the most moving period of the history of the Church in Scotland. Rutherford was a younger man than Henderson, younger by about seventeen years; and in ecclesiastical matters he was glad to acknowledge Henderson as his leader. He outlived Henderson some fifteen years, dying, as we shall see, in 1661; but those years in which he missed the sagacious counsel of Henderson were not the most fruitful years of his life, and contained periods which were unhappy days for him; for he found himself out of sympathy with many of his old friends, and he

died just as the Church was entering on perhaps the most dismal and heart-breaking time we have seen in our Scottish Church.

Accordingly, it will not be necessary to enter with much detail into the external history of the Church during Rutherford's life : we have seen it already, at least the larger and more glorious part of it, in connection with the work of Alexander Henderson. We shall, however, try to follow the career of Rutherford, and see how he played his part in those national events in which Henderson was so distinguished a leader. At the same time, we shall find that the interests of the remarkable life which is our study now were not altogether, as Henderson's were, bound up in the ecclesiastical history of the Church.

1. It is very difficult to describe Samuel Rutherford as a man. In many respects he stands by himself in Scottish Church History. He was certainly what we call a many-sided personality ; and on all the sides of his personality he was *great*, as only an original force, shot up in the soil of the Scottish Church, could have been. If ever there was a paradox among the heroes of the Scottish Church, it was Rutherford. He has been described by one of the ablest of his critics as "an intellectual, theological, religious prodigy."<sup>1</sup> To analyse such a prodigy is almost impossible. He was a man of action, yet he had many of the instincts of a recluse : he was a profound scholar, as learned a man as walked in broad daylight in Scotland while he lived, and yet he was a mystic who saw visions and dreamt dreams : he was a saint, "the Saint of the Covenant," as he has been called, and yet this saint was one of the most combative of men, perhaps the most pugnacious theologian Scotland has known, a man of subtle wit, fine-drawn distinctions, hot-headed and hot-hearted in whatever appealed to him. "My mother," he once said, "hath born me a man of contention."

On one occasion, in writing to his contemporary David Dickson, Rutherford said of himself, "I am made of extremes." That is

<sup>1</sup> James Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 12.

the impression we gather when we think of Rutherford to-day. There were extremes in him. On the one side was the theologian, the scholar, the man of nice and endless distinctions, and of remorseless logic; on the other was the mystic who beheld the King in His beauty, and yearned that the souls of men might receive the vision which had ravished his own heart. Dr. Taylor Innes has said of Rutherford, "It looks sometimes as if there were two men in him. One was the man whom all know in his letters, ardent, aspiring, unworldly . . . rapt into the continual contemplation of one unseen Face. The other man was the intellectual gladiator, the rejoicing and remorseless logician, the divider of words, the distinguisher of thoughts, the hater of doubt . . . the scorner of compromise . . . the incessant and determined disputant, the passionate admirer of sequence and system and order, in small things as in great."<sup>1</sup>

And yet it may be said, and said truly, that there was one master-passion running through Rutherford's life. It was to see the King in His beauty; it was to behold and to commend the loveliness of Christ. We believe that from first to last this was the master-passion of his life. It is this which throbs in so many passages of his immortal letters: it is this which throbs in his work for Scotland: and it is this which has drawn men to Rutherford and given him such a place in the world's heart. No book lives to-day in the heart of Evangelical Christendom more really than the *Letters* of Rutherford, unless it be the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Certainly, no letters so old have a tenth part of the religious interest which Rutherford's have.

And it was this warm Evangelical feeling which made him the power that he was in the Scottish pulpit. A merchant of the day, returning from a visit to Scotland, tells us that in St. Andrews he heard "a little fair man who showed him the loveliness of Christ." Another says: "Many times I thought he would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Jesus Christ: he was never in his right element but when he was commending

<sup>1</sup> A. Taylor Innes, *Rutherford* (Evangelical Succession Lectures).



Him. He would have fallen asleep in bed speaking of Christ." It may be added that the following story is told: "Once, when preaching in Edinburgh, Rutherford, after dwelling on the controversy of the day, broke out with, 'Woe is unto us for these sad divisions, that make us lose the fair scent of the Rose of Sharon,' and then he went on commending Christ, going over all His precious styles and titles about a quarter of an hour; upon which the Laird of Glanderston called out, 'Ay, now you are right, hold you there.'"

This, as we believe, was the deepest passion of Rutherford's life, and it is the secret of his power over us to-day, as it must be the secret of any preaching and influence that is worth the name.

2. We pass on to the story of Rutherford's life, which was one of the fullest we have seen in the Church of Christ in Scotland. To his secretary he seemed to be "always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying." No wonder that a later writer spoke of him as that "Flower of the Church, famous, famous Mr. Samuel Rutherford."

(1) So far as can be known, Rutherford was born about the year 1600, at Nisbet, a village in Roxburghshire. His parents are described by Wodrow as "mean but honest."

There is a familiar story told of his childhood. Playing with a sister a little older, he fell into a deep well. The sister ran for help, but when friends came to the rescue, they found the child sitting on the grass beside the well. All that he was able to tell them was that "a bonnie white man" pulled him out by the hand. Many have seen in this incident a suggestion of the supernatural in which even at that age the child lived.

From Jedburgh, Rutherford passed to Edinburgh University, where he graduated in 1621. Two years after, he was appointed Regent or Professor of Humanity. This position he held for two years, after which he was obliged "to demit his charge,"—why, it is not known for certain. The reason, however, appears to have been in some way connected with his marriage. There may

have been some indiscretion or impropriety in connection with it; but all is uncertain. Some biographers point to passages in his letters in which there is apparent a deep feeling of penitence for sins of youth, and draw the conclusion that Rutherford wished to warn others from the pit into which he had himself fallen. This is, of course, mere conjecture: but we may be allowed to quote one or two of the passages referred to. They are in themselves deeply instructive, and they show us something of that "sappiness" and wealth of illustration which so distinguishes all Rutherford's writing. "Lose your time no longer," he writes to one friend; "flee the follies of youth; play the merchant, for ye cannot expect another market-day when this is done." To another he writes: "There is not such a glassy, icy, and slippery piece of way betwixt you and heaven as youth; the Devil findeth in youth dry sticks and dry coals and a hot hearthstone, and how soon can he with his flint cast fire and with his bellows blow it up." And to another he says: "It is easy to master an arrow and to set it right ere the string be drawn; but when once it is shot and in the air and the flight begun, then ye have no more power at all to command it. And therefore, oh what a sweet couple are Christ and a young man. This is a meeting not to be found in every town." To a young man he writes, from a sorrowful retrospect of his past: "I had stood sure if I had in my youth borrowed Christ to be my bottom: but he that beareth his own weight to heaven shall not fail to slip and sink."<sup>1</sup>

(2) After his marriage and the subsequent loss of the chair in Edinburgh University, Rutherford prepared for the ministry, and in 1627 became minister of Anwoth, in Kirkcudbright, with which his name will be for ever associated. To-day, the Kirk of Anwoth is "a quaint old ruin, ivy-mantled and roofless"; but there Rutherford exercised an immortal ministry, "content to fill a little place, if God was glorified"; content, spiritual genius that

<sup>1</sup> Cp., further, Bonar, *Letters of Rutherford*, p. 4; Gilmour, *Samuel Rutherford*, pp. 29 ff.

he was, to be "a common, rough, country barrow-man." There, he pursued an ideal ministry, "always praying, always preaching," trying, as he himself so graphically phrased it, "to put the people within grips of Christ." It was his first, and in a sense his last love. Anwoth was so dear to him that, when separated from it, "he counted the very sparrows happy that built their nests" in the old Kirk. He once wrote these words from Aberdeen: "When I think of the sparrows and swallows that build their nests in the Kirk of Anwoth, and of my dumb Sabbaths, my sorrowful, bleared eyes look asquint upon Christ and present Him as angry."

It is impossible to describe fully, or as it deserves to be described, Rutherford's ministry at Anwoth; his prayers and yearnings for the souls of the people; or his own personal sorrows and trials in those nine years; for, as he said himself, he knew "how hard it was to keep sight of God in a storm." Nor can we tell here of the friendships he made, or of those godly and immortal women to whom he sent so many of his letters, and to whom he poured out his heart in his aspirations after Christ. One of these, perhaps the foremost, was Marion McNaught, wife of the Provost of Kirkcudbright, and niece of Gordon of Lochinvar; and another was the wife of Gordon of Lochinvar, sister of the great Covenanting Argyll, and herself better known as Viscountess Kenmure. Rutherford's letters to these ladies are the most marvellous things he ever penned. Here, for instance, is an extract from a letter to Marion McNaught: it is part of a postscript about her daughter Grizzel: "I had not time," he says, "to give my advice to your daughter Grizzel: you shall carry my words therefore to her. Show her now, that in respect of her tender age, she is in a manner as clean paper, ready to receive either good or ill; and that it were a sweet and glorious thing for her to give herself up to Christ, that He may write upon her His Father's name, and His own new name." Or here is what he says to Viscountess Kenmure, to comfort her on the death of a child: "Ye have lost a child;

nay, she is not lost to you who is found to Christ. She is not sent away, but only sent before, like unto a star, which going out of our sight doth not die and evanish, but shineth in another hemisphere."

3. While Rutherford was thus faithfully carrying on his pastoral work at Anwoth, he was in the closest touch with the ecclesiastical troubles of his time. We know what these troubles were. We know how James I. wished to rule Scotland by a divine right, to overthrow Presbyterianism and to reimpose Episcopacy. We know, also, how the aims of James were faithfully and strenuously adhered to by Charles I. In Scotland Charles wished to have a Church subject to his beck and call. When he visited Scotland in 1633, along with Laud, he saw that much had to be done before the graceless, bare, and barbarian Scottish Church could be brought into line with the Church in England. A body of "Canons Ecclesiastical" was sent down in 1636, and then in 1637 came the notorious Prayer-book—and all without the people being consulted in Parliament or in Assembly.

(1) Early in the struggle Rutherford used these words: "It is our Lord's wisdom that His Kirk should ever hang by a thread; and yet the thread breaketh not, being hanged upon Him who is the sure Nail in David's house, upon whom all the vessels great and small do hang; and the Nail, God be thanked, neither crooketh nor can be broken." Rutherford was to see for himself how true these words were. After the King's visit to Scotland in 1633, a stringent effort was made to enforce Episcopacy, and a blow was certain to fall sooner or later on leading men in the Church, such as Rutherford. He at least was prepared. "I desire not," he said, "to go on the lee side or sunny side of religion, or to put truth betwixt me and a storm: my Saviour did not so for me who in His suffering took the windy side of the hill." He could not therefore expect "the sunny side of the brae." The blow was not long delayed. In January 1636 he writes: "I expect our new Prelate (Sydserff)

shall try my sitting : I hang by a thread, but it is (if I may speak so) of Christ's spinning." On a charge of nonconformity, Rutherford appeared before the Court of High Commission in Edinburgh. He was charged, not merely with nonconformity, but with writing a book, then newly published, in which with a wealth of learning unsuspected and sufficient, as Row puts it, to make the Arminian bishops "gnash their teeth," he exposed the fallacies of Arminianism as a scientific explanation of the way of salvation. The trial was a prolonged one, but Rutherford had at least one powerful friend in Lord Lorne, brother of his friend Viscountess Kenmure. The sentence passed on Rutherford was that he must cease preaching and be confined within the city of Aberdeen during the King's pleasure.

(2) It is one of the precious memories of Aberdeen that for some months it held as a prisoner Samuel Rutherford. Rutherford himself rejoiced in the fact that he was called on to suffer for Christ. On his way to Aberdeen, in August 1636, he wrote of himself as being on his journey to "Christ's Palace in Aberdeen"; not that he thought much of Aberdeen, but rather that he thought a great deal of suffering for Christ there. "Northern love is cold," he said. On another occasion he wrote of Aberdeen: "The town consists either of Papists or of men of Gallio's naughty faith." One does not know in which class he would have put the famous Doctors who "tempted him to disputations."

No doubt, Rutherford was sent to Aberdeen because in the seventeenth century it was somewhat Laodicean, and Presbyterianism did not flourish there so luxuriantly as in other parts. But his keenest sorrow in going to Aberdeen was that it separated him from Anwoth. Aberdeen might become to him "a garden of delight"; but how he longed for the sparrows and the twittering of the swallows at Anwoth! His exile in Aberdeen lasted for "six quarters of a year," as he puts it, *i.e.*, for a year and a half. It is from that period that most of his letters date. Out of 365 letters remaining to us from this "Saint of the

Covenant," 220 date from Aberdeen. The time was also filled up with a vast amount of study, and perhaps in God's providence the exile in Aberdeen was just what Rutherford needed in order that he might be fully equipped for the great work he was to do in Scotland and in England.

(3) The events which were happening in Scotland brought relief to Rutherford. In July 1637, the Prayer-book, concocted in England and bearing on it the ineffaceable mark of William Laud, was ordered to be used in Scotland. The people rose in angry revolt. In 1638 the National Covenant was signed in Edinburgh, and Rutherford was there to sign it. In November 1638, Rutherford had his place in the famous Glasgow Assembly. One result of that Assembly was that Rutherford was obliged to leave his happy little church at Anwoth and become Professor of Divinity in St. Andrews; and with St. Andrews the rest of his life is more or less identified. It was a great blow to him and to his people to leave Anwoth; but he was too loyal to Christ not to obey. "My removal from my flock," he wrote, "is so heavy to me that it maketh my life a burden to me; - I had never such a longing for death. The Lord help and hold up sad clay." While he consented in August 1639 to remove to St. Andrews, he made the express stipulation that he should be associated with his friend Robert Blair in ministering to the Church in St. Andrews. He could not endure "dumb Sabbaths." About his work as professor and preacher in St. Andrews it will be sufficient to quote these words of his friend and secretary McWard: "God did so signally second His servant's indefatigable pains both in teaching in the schools and in preaching in the congregation, that it became forthwith a Lebanon out of which were taken cedars for building the house of the Lord through the whole land."

4. After his appointment to the professorship in St. Andrews he came to occupy a position of the greatest importance in all the ecclesiastical affairs of the time. He had a place at the very heart of these. In particular, one must not omit to record that

he was a member of the Westminster Assembly, to which he went in 1643, and in the debates of which he took the most lively interest. It was an Assembly after his own heart, and in the debates he had a magnificent opportunity for the display of his subtle wit and keen logic. He took a part in the preparation of the Confession of Faith and of the Catechisms. He had always been deeply interested in catechising, and, as we shall see, he had drawn up an elaborate Catechism of his own. It is impossible to say if Rutherford's hand is manifest in the Catechisms as they are; and certainly there is nothing in the Shorter Catechism of the wealth of illustration so natural to him. It is likely that he had little or nothing to do with the preparation of the Shorter Catechism, as he left the Assembly on the day the Larger Catechism was completed, 9th November 1647. Before he left, the Assembly passed a vote of thanks to him "for the great assistance he had afforded to it in his constant attendance upon the debates."<sup>1</sup>

During the time of his attendance at the Westminster Assembly, Rutherford published his leading controversial works. Some of them dealt with Church government; but the most notable of all was *Lex Rex*, or the *Law and the Prince*, published in 1644. This was a book of marvellous learning and of subtle distinctions. It is a book which lives to-day, for Rutherford laid down in it the principles which underlie the constitution of our country. He showed, in an unanswerable argument, that the King is not above law, but is really its servant. He showed that the people, and not the King, are the real fount of power. The book has had a memorable and honourable history, and perhaps it has had no greater honour than this, that it was three times publicly burnt—in Edinburgh, London, and St. Andrews.

5. After the Westminster Assembly, Rutherford came back to Scotland to resume his work of teaching and preaching. Under the Protectorate of Cromwell, the Scottish Church might have had a most prosperous time, had it not been for the unhappy

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Westminster Assembly*, p. 488.

cleavage which came into it when it fell into two parts, known respectively as *Resolutioners* and *Protesters*. A certain section of the Church was willing to receive back to office those who might have acted against the Covenant: these were the Resolutioners. The Protesters, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with any Malignants (as they were called), whose hands were unclean, and who had not truly signed the Covenant. Among these Protesters was Rutherford, who gave way to considerable bitterness and bigotry. It was a period in Rutherford's career not the most pleasant, and the controversy alienated him from many of his old friends.

In 1660 came the Restoration, and with it Charles II. and reaction. Rutherford was at once marked down, and he knew well that there could be no escape. In truth, however, he longed to be able to glorify his Lord in testimony even unto death. But when the summons came to appear before the tribunal, Rutherford was too weak to be moved. For years he had been frail, often ill, "knocking at death's door." Often had he longed for "a pass from Christ." Friends near and dear to him had already passed within the veil, and, as he said in a pathetic letter to the dying Gillespie, he hoped to follow quickly. The Marquis of Argyll had already passed before him through martyrdom to glory. Rutherford was called to appear before another tribunal where "the Judge was his Friend." When the messengers sent from Parliament to summon him on a charge of high treason arrived, they found Rutherford on his deathbed. "Tell them," he said, "I have got a summons already before a Superior Judge and Judicatory, and it behoves me to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrives I shall be where few kings and great folk come."

Scottish people love to linger over death-scenes; and few are so precious as those of Rutherford. He spoke much of the hope before him. "I shall shine: I shall see Him as He is; I shall see Him reign, and all His fair company with Him: my eyes shall see my Redeemer, these very eyes of mine." When friends



came, he had something for each. To some members of his Presbytery he said, "Dear brethren, do all for Him: pray for Christ, preach for Christ . . . do all for Christ." When Robert Blair asked him, "What think ye now of Christ?" he replied, "I shall live and adore Him. Glory, glory to my Creator and to my Redeemer for ever! Glory shines in Immanuel's land!" On the afternoon of 28th March he said, "This night shall close the door and put my anchor within the veil, and I shall go away in a sleep by five o'clock in the morning." So, indeed, it was. When morning came, as an old record puts it, "It was said unto him, 'Come up hither'; and the renowned eagle took his flight into the Mountain of Spices."

*B.* We shall close this chapter by describing in a little more detail some of Rutherford's writings.

1. His works divide themselves into two distinct classes—the scholastic works on the one hand, and the practical works on the other. In the second class are included his *Letters*.

His scholastic works deal with some of the most abstruse problems that can exercise the mind of man. The Personality of God, Church Government, Political Science, all come alike to this fertile brain. For instance, he discusses such problems as, "What is the nature of God's permissive will?" "Is God the origin of possibles and impossibles?" "Is there anything impossible save as it has its original impossibility from God?" His theology was ultra-Calvinistic; and he carried his speculative imagination up to heights where it is difficult for ordinary men to breathe, especially when he taught the supra-lapsarian doctrine that sin was ordained by God for the manifestation of His glory.

2. In his practical works occur passages which the Church of Christ will not willingly let die. We have already quoted some of his striking sayings, more particularly from his *Letters*. Hundreds more might be quoted. Here, for instance, is one: "Be not discouraged at broken and spilled resolutions: but to

it and to it again." Or here is another : "No man hath a velvet cross." Or this to Robert Blair : "Suffering is the other half of our ministry, howbeit the hardest. It is folly to think to steal to heaven with a whole skin." Or this : "Our pride must have winter weather to rot in." Or this : "Faith's eyes can see through a millstone." "Losses for Christ are but goods given out in bank in Christ's hand." To John Livingstone he says : "I love a rumbling and raging Devil in the Kirk (since the Church militant cannot or may not want the Devil to trouble her) rather than a subtle or sleeping Devil. Christ never yet got a bride without stroke of sword." To Lady Kenmure he says : "Sense of death is a sib friend, and of kin and blood to life ; the more sense the more life ; the more sense of sin the less sin." Or to Marion McNaught he says : "In your temptations run to the promises : they be our Lord's branches hanging over the water, that our Lord's silly, half-drowned children may take a grip of them." In the letter to Mr. John Meine, which Halyburton declared contained "more practical religion than in a large volume," he says : "If ye would be a deep divine, I recommend to you Sanctification."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps, however, nothing is more remarkable about Rutherford than his marvellous power of consolation. This appears all through his *Letters*. For instance, his dear friend David Dickson had lost some children, and this is what Rutherford writes to him : "Your Lord may gather His roses and shake His apples at what season of the year He pleaseth. The child hath but changed a bed in the garden and is planted up higher, nearer to the sun, where he shall thrive better than in this outfield muir-ground." To a sorrowing mother he writes : "The good Husbandman may pluck His roses and gather His lilies at midsummer, and for aught I daresay in the beginning of the first summer month ; and He may transplant the young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun and a more free air, at any season of the year. What

<sup>1</sup> Letter LXXXI. in Bonar's edition.

is that to you or me? The goods are His own." To another he says: "There is somewhat of God and Heaven in the rod." Or to another he writes: "The losses that I wrote of to your Ladyship are but summer showers that will only wet your garments for an hour or two, and the sun of the New Jerusalem shall quickly dry the wet coat."

3. We mentioned already that Rutherford wrote a Catechism, and we close this chapter with a few extracts to show what his daily teaching must have been. It must certainly have been full of unction. For instance, to the question, "What are the works of conscience as a witness of our deeds?" the answer is, "It is as a watchdog in the soul that heareth a noise of thieves' feet, and as the eye that seeth what the hand doeth." To the question, "What moved God to make this Covenant of Grace?" the answer is, "His own free mercy and grace, for when He made it we were like forlorn bastards and half dead foundlings that were cast out in the open field to die in our own blood, when our Lord came by and made a covenant with us." Or to the question, "Wherefore call ye God our Father?" the answer is, "Because we are to come with reverence and faith and prayer, as bairns to their father's knee, with love to our brethren, and to speak to Him in a bairn's tongue, who has made us bairns in Christ." Or finally, in connection with the Sacrament of the Supper, there is this question, "How are we to try ourselves?" and the reply is, "We are to take the candle of God's Word and Spirit into the house of our souls, and to search our mind, will, affections, etc., and because Christ is to come in in the Sacrament, we must put all His enemies, our sins, to the door."

How true is the old exclamation, "That Flower of the Church, famous, famous Mr. Samuel Rutherford!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—To much of the literature mentioned at the close of the chapter on Henderson might be added, Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*; Walker, *Scottish Church History*; Muir, *The Church of Scotland*

(Guild Text-book); James Walker, *Scottish Theology and Theologians*; Macpherson, *The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology* (Chalmers Lecture); Mitchell, *Catechisms of the Second Reformation*; *Rutherford's Letters* (Bonar's edition); Gilmour, *Samuel Rutherford*; Dr. Whyte, *Samuel Rutherford and some of his Correspondents*; Taylor Innes, *Studies in Scottish History*, etc.

## CHAPTER XI.

RICHARD CAMERON.

*A.* Rutherford has been happily described as "the Saint of the Covenant." Perhaps it is not inappropriate that we should take as the subject of this study the life of Richard Cameron, who has been described, not inaptly, as "the Lion of the Covenant."

The period before us now was a time of struggle. It is known as "the Days of the Covenanters"; and it was a time of rich significance for Scotland. A battle for freedom was fought then which will never be forgotten, and which will never have to be fought again. Great issues were before the Church, and for these issues men gave their lives willingly. Scotland can never forget that these men bled and suffered for freedom; and the thoughts which were in the minds of the Scottish martyrs, the thoughts and the ideals which inspired them and for which they willingly gave their lives, have burned themselves into the nation's heart. The whole period was a thrilling stage in the struggle for freedom.

One might describe the Covenanters as a whole and the testimony which they gave for Christ both in the early and in the late period of the Covenanting struggle in Scotland; but it will prove more useful and illuminating to describe the earlier part of the struggle, so as to link it on to the period in which Rutherford was such a shining light. And, as principles are

best understood when they are presented concretely in the life of an individual, the story of Richard Cameron has been selected as an illustration, and as a commentary on the principles for which men in those days thought life itself not too great a price to pay.

1. As we have seen, Rutherford died in the spring of 1661, a few months after the Restoration, escaping by the kindness of death the fate which befell his tried friends, Argyll and James Guthrie. It is, of course, not difficult to understand how, at the Restoration, violent hands should have been laid on such eminent men; but it is pitiable that Scotland's best men should have been driven to exile or the scaffold at a time when they were so sorely needed. It will be necessary, therefore, to say something of what had been taking place during the years before the Restoration and the coming of Charles II. Happily, the situation is not difficult to understand.

(1) We shall take as a starting-point the execution of Charles I. in 1649. It may be said at once that Scotland, as a whole, did not approve of that act. Of course, there were two parties among the Presbyterians in Scotland; and it is with the Presbyterians that we have mainly to do. There are always two parties, more or less distinct, both in Church and in State. There were extreme men, and there were men not so extreme. The touchstone was the Covenant, that "Solemn League and Covenant" through which Scottish statesmen and Churchmen, such as Henderson and Robert Baillie, had hoped to secure a Covenanted Church and a Covenanted State. Now there were many who had no great fancy for the Covenant. There were such among the Presbyterians. Indeed, many Presbyterians were very lukewarm, some of them simply time-servers, and some little more than Episcopalians who had "ratted" for the sake of their livings. The Presbyterians who were less extreme did not care much for the Covenant, and while the extreme men were resolved to make the Covenant a term of office, so that no one should occupy a place in the Church, in

the State, or in the Army, unless he loyally subscribed to the Covenant, the moderate or less extreme section were prepared to allow men into office on terms not so stringent. It is important that this should be kept in view, because the distinction thus made and the relation to the Covenant which it implied is really at the root of a great part of the after-history of the Church. The two parties had a tendency to get more and more pronounced. Their disagreements became a source of profound weakness in Scotland; and we can trace the evolution of the parties right through the latter half of the seventeenth century. If we care to take a type of the Laodicean Presbyterian and watch his development in the stress of circumstances, we shall find one in James Sharp, who started as a boneless Presbyterian, ended after the Restoration as Archbishop of St. Andrews, and died shrieking for his life at Magus Moor. No better type of the more rigid Presbyterian could be found than Samuel Rutherford. As we shall see, there were other types, as, for instance, Richard Cameron himself, who started as a rather lax Presbyterian, and ended as the very strictest of the Covenant men.

(2) The execution of Charles I. in 1649 was not approved of in Scotland generally; though it ought to be frankly stated that, while many were aghast at the deed, and had difficulty in finding words strong enough to condemn it, there were others who regarded it with what one might call a modified disapproval.

But all were agreed on the next step, that his son Charles should be crowned King of Scotland, *on conditions*. The negotiations in this connection do not form pleasant reading. In truth, there is little pleasant about Charles II., and there have been few monarchs who stand on a lower scale. There is nothing pure or lofty about this Charles Stuart. He was a man who thought only of himself, and who was prepared to accept anything that would help his own interests. The conditions on which Scotland would accept Charles were that

he should sign and swear to the "League and Covenant," and that there should be a free Parliament and Assembly. Charles accepted everything. He was the type of man who would have swallowed a thousand Covenants and pretended that they were pleasant, if by so doing he could advance his interests. Accordingly, Charles came over to Scotland. "He wrought himself," says Burnet, "into as grave a deportment as he could, and he heard many prayers and sermons, some of great length;" and we may be pardoned adding that apparently the sermons did him little good. He was an insincere man, who even signed a declaration professing that he was deeply humbled because of his father's opposition to the Covenant and his mother's trafficking with idolatry. Such was the man who in after years made the blood of Scotland's bravest and best run like water.

(3) Scotland had now to deal with Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides. Cromwell carried everything before him, and the more easily because Scotland was not united. The Church, the State, and the Army were rent into factions. Many vowed that Charles was insincere; many refused to fight alongside men who had not signed the Covenant. Thousands declared that the taint of malignancy was corrupting the Church and the Army. "No Army of Malignants," they protested, "could stand against Cromwell. The Lord was not with them." The Commission of the Church in 1651 met and resolved that in the necessity of the time it would not be wise to refuse admittance into the Army for any except the notoriously wicked and those who were professed opposers of the Covenant and the cause of God. A section of the Church, in which was Rutherford, protested against this lowering of the flag of Puritanism. The Church was rent in twain, even the terrible instrument of excommunication being freely brought into play.

In 1653 Cromwell closed the doors of the General Assembly, and, so far at least as the highest Court was concerned, the



Church had peace. During the Protectorate, though the General Assembly did not meet, the work of the Church went on in its Kirk-Sessions and Presbyteries. Nevertheless, the cleavage, so marked, between the extreme and the moderate sections of Presbyterianism, did not disappear. It came to the front at once when the strong hand of Cromwell was removed. At the same time, the period of the Protectorate was a sort of breathing-space. A very bright picture is sometimes painted of that time in our Scottish Church, though it may be doubted if it was quite so bright as is sometimes said.<sup>1</sup>

(4) We can understand the position of things when Charles II. came to the throne at the Restoration in 1660. He was heartily welcomed in Scotland, and at first all seemed to be going well. Sharp, the future Archbishop,—“Sharp of that ilk,” as Cromwell described him,—had been sent to London to look after the interests of the Scottish Presbyterians. He came back to Edinburgh with a letter in which Charles used these words: “We do resolve to protect and preserve the Government of the Church of Scotland as it is settled by law, without violation.” No wonder that the Presbytery of Edinburgh were so delighted with the letter that they resolved to enshrine it in a silver box.

Yet the promises of Charles Stuart were very feeble reeds.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Kirkton, a contemporary historian, has said of that time: “Then was Scotland a heap of wheat set about with lilies uniform, or a palace of silver beautifully proportioned, and this seems to me to have been Scotland’s high noon. Every parish had a minister, every village a school, every family almost had a Bible, yea, in the most of the country all the children of age could read the Scriptures and were provided of Bibles either by the parents or their minister.” “I have lived many years,” he goes on to say, “in a parish where I never heard an oath, and you might have ridden many miles before you heard any; also, you could not for a great part of the country have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped by reading, singing, and public prayer. Nobody complained more of our Church government than our taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was, their trade was broken, people were become so sober.” It is delightful to read that. One wishes it were true in Scotland in the twentieth century.

The Scottish Parliament met early in 1661, and the notorious Middleton was Royal Commissioner. This is the Parliament known in Scottish history as the *Drunken Parliament*. By the Rescissory Act, Parliament swept away all the Scottish Legislation of the past twenty-seven years. Prelacy, therefore, came back once more, and this was done with the approval of a monarch who had promised in writing "to preserve the Government of the Church of Scotland," and who had professed himself "sensible of the mercies of Almighty God toward him and desirous to improve these mercies to the glory of God and honour of His great name." In the autumn of 1661 the Privy Council of Scotland received a letter from his Majesty in which he stated his resolution, *after mature deliberation*, "to restore the government by bishops." Afterwards it was resolved that all persons in public trust should abjure the Covenants, and that all ministers ordained between 1649 and 1660 should leave their churches, unless they sought and obtained re-institution in them from the bishops. The result was that about three hundred ministers went out penniless into the wilderness. Churches were deserted: the people would not tolerate the change. Many were presented to vacant churches who were "ignorant to a reproach." Kirkton says that these curates (as they were called) came chiefly from the North, and tells of a gentleman who complained that "it was impossible to get lads to keep the cows; they turn all ministers."

We shall understand the change which had come over Scotland when we read the following words from one of the last of Rutherford's Letters; indeed, death overtook him very shortly after the letter was written: "For me, I am now near to eternity; and for ten thousand worlds I dare not venture to pass from the protestation against the corruptions of the time nor go alongst with the shameless apostasy of the many silent and dumb watchmen of Scotland. But I think it my last duty to enter a protestation in Heaven before the righteous Judge, against the practical and legal breach of Covenant, and all oaths

imposed on the consciences of the Lord's people and all popish superstitions and idolatrous mandates of men. Know that the overthrow of the sworn Reformation, the introducing of Popery and the mystery of iniquity, is now set on foot in the three kingdoms, and whosoever would keep their garments clean are under the command, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.'" Such were some of the last words of "the Saint of the Covenant": his protestation was taken up by "the Lion of the Covenant," Richard Cameron.

2. The facts about the early part of Cameron's life are shrouded in obscurity. He was born about 1648, at Falkland, in Fife. Patrick Walker,<sup>1</sup> who was so fond of recording all he could gather about the Covenanters, tells us simply—and it will be enough for us here—that Richard Cameron "was born in Falkland, in Fife; his father was a merchant there. After he had passed his courses of learning, he was schoolmaster and precentor to the curate in Falkland, and sometimes heard the Indulged."

(1) It is certain, anyhow, that the influences which surrounded Cameron in his young days were those of a moderate Presbyterianism. Apparently, he grew up as a moderate Presbyterian, —a "Resolutioner," as he might have been called, in contrast to the party of the Protesters, of which Rutherford was such a distinguished ornament. This is confirmed from the fact that after his graduation in St. Andrews in 1665 he became a schoolmaster, holding office under an Episcopalian minister at Falkland.

It is interesting to trace the progress in Cameron's ideas. As we have said, he began as a moderate Presbyterian, and with that side of the national Church he apparently sympathised. But it is clear that he soon became restless and dissatisfied. Perhaps his religious life had become awakened, and in moderate Presbyterianism he had come to miss the spiritual nourishment which his soul desired. Anyhow, we hear of him

<sup>1</sup> In his *Biographia Presbyteriana*.

attending the ministry of what were known as "the Indulged Clergy." This name requires a brief explanation. As we have seen, the people would not attend the ministry of the curates who came to take the place of their own beloved ministers. The consequence was that meetings began to be held everywhere, in private houses, in barns, sometimes out in the fields. Under the repressive policy of Archbishop Sharp every effort was made to put a stop to these meetings, with the result, of course, that they grew in number and in importance. Accordingly, Turner was let loose in Galloway; and afterwards, Dalziel, like a sleuth-hound, was turned adrift on the persecuted Presbyterians in the West. In 1669 it was proposed to extend an Indulgence to certain ministers. They were to be allowed to preach and receive their stipends if they accepted collation from a bishop: if they would not accept collation, they were to be allowed to preach, occupying only the manse and glebe. Not many accepted the Indulgence, something over forty altogether. The rigid men of the Presbyterian party scorned the idea of such an Indulgence; and they did so on this unassailable ground, that no Government had a right to interfere with the spiritual affairs of a Church. The Church in spiritual affairs had only one Head. No self-respecting minister of the Gospel would accept a spiritual charge from the State. To make a King supreme over the Church was to do insult to the alone supremacy of Jesus Christ. For this belief the Covenanters lived and died. In 1669 the Assertory Act was passed which declared that "His Majesty hath the supreme authority over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastical within this Kingdom." It was against this extraordinary assumption that Cameron in after years took such a noble stand.

(2) We hear, then, of Cameron going to listen to the preaching of some of the Indulged Clergy. Perhaps he hoped that there he might find something better for his spiritual life than among the Episcopalian curates. The next step was inevitable. Cameron had got dissatisfied with "dumb dogs"; and now

we hear of him being present at the field conventicles. He had got, as the author of *The Scots Worthies* says, "a lively discovery of the sin of prelacy, and he deserted the curates altogether." Immense crowds attended these conventicles, and they were the means of great good. "In that sun-blink day of power," says Patrick Walker, "when the net of the Gospel was let down at the right side of the ship, then a great draught of perishing souls was effectually caught."

A further step was taken when Cameron began to speak out. The object of his invective was the Indulgence. Apparently, an opportunity to speak was given him about this time through his appointment as private chaplain to Sir William Scott of Harden, in Selkirkshire. He was obliged to leave this situation soon, because of his outspoken condemnation of Indulgences, as an insult on the Headship of Christ and the spiritual independence of the Church. For the five or six years more left him of life, Cameron never wavered in his testimony for "the Divine right of the Church of Christ."

After leaving Harden, he attached himself to the greatest of the field preachers, John Welch of Irongray, the great-grandson of John Knox. Lauderdale was now at the head of the Government in Scotland, and no measure was left unpassed to harass, and if possible to exterminate, the preachers and their followers. For instance, in 1677, the Highland host, numbering some six or eight thousand men, were let loose on the Covenanting Lowlands; and the mischief and sorrow and ruin they caused can be well imagined.

In the beginning of 1678, yielding to the solicitations of Welch and others, Cameron was licensed as a preacher, declaring at the same time that "he would be a bone of contention among them, for if ever he preached against a national sin in Scotland, it should be against the Indulgence, and separation from the Indulged." After being licensed, he was sent to preach in Annandale. "Go your way, Richie," said Welch, "set the fire of hell to their tail." The text of his first

sermon was Jer. iii. 19, "How shall I put thee among the children?" Patrick Walker tells us something about that sermon. "Many," he says, "have heard of Annandale thieves. Some of them who got a merciful cast that day told it afterwards that it was the first field preaching that ever they heard, and that they went out of curiosity to see how a minister would preach in a tent and people sit on the ground. But if many of them went without an errand, they got one that day."

(3) It is needless to suppose that Cameron's outspoken and scathing denunciation of the Indulgence escaped the notice of his brother ministers. Many of them were very angry. Cameron was libelled and tried, though the trial apparently came to nothing. But it is clear that Cameron fretted against the caution and lukewarmness of older ministers, and for a time he sought relief for his spirit in Holland. This was in the spring of 1679, probably before the murder of Sharp on the 3rd of May 1679. One of the distinguished Scottish ministers in Holland at the time has left us his impressions of Cameron. "I crave leave to tell you," he says, "that the common report of poor Mr. Cameron was that not only he did preach nothing but babble against the Indulgence, but that he could do no other thing. But, sir, by his coming hither the reporters have lost their credit of being so easily believed for the future; for here he was found a man of a savoury Gospel spirit, the bias of his heart lying towards the *proposing of Christ* and persuading to a closing with Him." This is remarkable testimony, and it is evident from it that Richard Cameron was no mere fanatic. It was in Holland—in the Scots Church in Rotterdam—and at the hands of McWard that Cameron was ordained to the ministry. At the ordination ceremony McWard is reported to have used these remarkable words: "Behold all ye beholders, here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of Jesus Christ, who shall lose the same for his Master's interest and shall be set up before sun and moon in the public view of the world." In July of the following year the prophecy came true.

3. In the autumn of 1679 Cameron returned to Scotland, and at once threw himself into the Covenanting struggle. Terrible events had been happening. After the murder of Sharp in May of 1679, the furnace had been made ten times hotter for the Covenanters. Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge had been fought ; and the scourge of Graham of Claverhouse had been falling with merciless severity on the brave Presbyterians. Can we wonder if men's hearts burned within them? Can we wonder if they began to question whether after all they were bound to recognise or obey Charles Stuart, when he was heaping such insult on their sole King, Jesus Christ?

Cameron at least knew his own mind, and he was determined to speak out. He had been driven from place to place, hunted as a beast, persecuted morning, noon, and even. Can we wonder, therefore, if his words were hot and strong? "I will tell you where our help is," he cried on one occasion. "It is in Him who delivered our fathers from Popery in the days of Queen Mary and her tyranny. Our help is in Him who delivered them from the subtlety and cruelty of that fox, James VI. Though dead, we may justly call him so ; Christ called Herod a fox. He delivered us too from the yoke wreathed] on our necks by Charles I. In Him is our help. And oh, that He would help us from the tyranny of this man upon the throne!" Certainly there is scant respect for kings in such words as these.

Sir Walter Scott has used one of Cameron's sermons for a harangue by Kettledrummle ; but in the original of the sermon, which is a fine plea for liberty, Cameron uses even stronger words about his allegiance to the man Charles Stuart. "I desire not," he said, "to reflect upon our fathers for bringing home Charles Stuart. Yet his actions since and the connivance of those who had his favour or any power under him, declare it to be impossible to manifest the royal prerogative of Jesus Christ. . . . And since it is so declared we must either quit him as King or quit Jesus Christ, I am for this, to have no King but Christ, since they will have none but Cæsar." These were strong words, but they had been

preceded by a strong deed, a deed of far-reaching significance, for it was the first note of the coming Revolution and the death-knell of the Stuarts in Scotland. In June 1680 Richard Cameron with twenty men had entered the Market Square of Sanquhar, and there they had affixed to the Market Cross their famous declaration disowning Charles as King. Twenty-one men did it: in a few years a whole nation was with them. It is a great document, and is in itself a title to immortality. The heart of it is in these words: "Therefore do we, by this present, disown Charles Stuart, as having any right, title to, or interest in the said crown of Scotland."

*B.* Little wonder that the troops of King Charles and his Government were hard on the heels of such a man. At last they overtook him in the valley of the Ayr at a place called Airmoss. Some sixty-three of the Covenanters were together, and Cameron was amongst them. Patrick Walker tells us that when Cameron saw the troops, he gathered the men around him for prayer. Three times he cried, "Lord, spare the green and take the ripe." Afterwards he said to his brother Michael, "Michael, come, let us fight it out to the last: for this is the day that I have longed for, and the death that I have prayed for, to die fighting against our Lord's enemies; and this is the day that we will get our crown." To the rest of the men with him he cried, "Be encouraged all of you, to fight it out valiantly; for all of you that shall fall this day I see Heaven's gates cast wide open to receive you." So Richard Cameron died. His body was buried at Airmoss; the head and hands were taken to Edinburgh. His old father was then a prisoner for Christ; and when he saw the hands and the head, the old man kissed them and cried, "I know them, I know them: they are my son's, my dear son's. It is the Lord; good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days."

Cameron had died a noble death, and had received the martyr's crown. One day, when old Alexander Peden sat by Cameron's



grave, he cried out, "Oh, to be wi' Richie!" No one could cherish a better wish.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—Kirkton, *The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*; Burnet, *History of his Own Time*; Wodrow's *History*; *Lauderdale Papers*; Patrick Walker, *Biographia Presbyteriana*; Howie, *Scots Worthies*; Dodds, *The Scottish Covenanters*; Herkless, *Richard Cameron* (Famous Scots Series); Beveridge, *The Covenanters* (Bible Class Primer); Smellie, *Men of the Covenant*; Hewison, *The Covenanters* (1908); and general Histories of the Church in the Covenanting period.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WILLIAM CARSTARES.

A. The name of Carstares is not so familiar as most of the names which have come before us in this work. Yet William Carstares undoubtedly deserves a place in the roll of the Makers of the Scottish Church. He has left his mark deep on the Church, and the Church of Scotland at one of the most anxious and critical periods of her history—though perhaps not one of the most heroic—owed much to his calm sagacity and ecclesiastical statesmanship.

Carlyle writes of a certain “gloomy, spasmodic, shrieking fanatic.” No one would apply terms such as these to a Church statesman like William Carstares. Above all things he was no fanatic. He was a Church leader, a minister who had himself passed through torture,—as much, however, for State reasons as for ecclesiastical,—but he was more: he was a man of a calm, equable temperament, who was able to see Church life whole, and whose judgments were always the outcome of a sound mind and a sound heart. He was a man of the world who had seen much and had travelled much; but his heart, far-travelled, always came back to Scotland, the land of his fathers, whose Church was his constant thought and care.

As all the world knows, the Revolution Settlement was an epoch in Scottish Church life. To it we owe the establishment of our national Presbyterian system, for which, not perhaps in

the matter of establishment so much as in the matter of Presbyterianism, we must ever be grateful. Perhaps, when we think over the Revolution settlement and what our country owes to it, we are apt to forget the really great Churchman and statesman whose hand was very deep in the matter, and to whom we owe so much.

1. Richard Cameron was a very different man from William Carstares ; so different, indeed, that it is not easy to find points of agreement, except perhaps in their common love of Presbyterianism and of country, and in their common loyalty to Christ, the Church's Head. The two men were really contemporaries, Cameron being born only a year ahead of Carstares, though Carstares was destined to outlive for more than thirty years the "Lion of the Covenant." But the two men were very unlike. Cameron was a man of fire and of action : there was something of the fanatic in his build : he was no courtier or lover of kings, specially not a lover of the man Charles Stuart. He was what we call in modern speech a Radical, who had abandoned what Carlyle calls the "hide-bound formula of a covenanted Charles Stuart." Carstares, on the other hand, was a man of court and of intrigue, a diplomat and a politician. But both Cameron and Carstares were men of iron courage and resolution, who did much and suffered greatly for the cause so dear to their hearts.

In connection with the life of Richard Cameron we have already had before us the history of the time up to 1680. It will not be necessary, therefore, to retell that story. For thirty years, up to his death at Airsmoss, the life of Richard Cameron was contemporaneous with that of William Carstares.

(1) Carstares was born on the 11th of February 1649. The family was a Fifeshire one. His father, John Carstares, was a notable Presbyterian minister in his day. Among the Presbyterians he belonged to the party known as the Protesters, of whom, as we have already said, Samuel Rutherford was the most conspicuous member. John Carstares was one of the saints of

his day. He was a man of deep piety. And his prayers were exceptionally notable. Wodrow says about him : "When he first entered on his Sabbath's work, he ordinarily prayed ane hour, for he took in all the publick things in that prayer. . . . His band in the Sabbath would have been all wet as if it had been douked with tears, before he was done with his first prayer. . . . He used to have that expression and petition in many of his excellent prayers, 'O that we may never outlive our integrity nor die undesired !'" (*Analecta*, iii. p. 48). The following anecdote is recorded of him. A friend who was lying on his deathbed said to him, "There is but one promise in all the Scripture that I dare look to, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary.' May I venture my salvation upon it?" "Yes," replied Carstares, "if you had a thousand souls, you might venture them upon it." Such a man was John Carstares. It is interesting to know the type of man who was the father of William Carstares ; to know especially that he was a most earnest Presbyterian, who suffered time and again for his faith, and who had no great liking for the political leanings which he discerned in his son William.

As for the mother of William Carstares, we see the kind of woman she was from the following letter to her husband, John Carstares. When that honest Presbyterian did not fall in with the ways of Archbishop Sharp, who, as Baillie puts it, "trepanned the Presbyterians," he had to flee ; and when wandering from place to place, he got such letters as the following : "My dear," she says, "I had reason always to bless the Lord that I knew you ; and this day I desire to bless Him more than ever . . . that I have a husband wandering and suffering for the truth." One may be sure that John Carstares kept a letter like that very near his heart ; as who indeed would not ? In a subsequent letter, referring to the death of a child born during her husband's wanderings, she says, "There are many things sadder in our lot than the death of a child, yet I had my own heaviness for him."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Story, *William Carstares*, p. 20.

Of such parents was William Carstares born. Can it be wondered at that Presbyterianism, so bred in the bone, was very dear to him, or that his heart went out to his suffering brethren in the yearning to do something for them—perhaps, like Moses, to be the leader out of bondage into liberty?

It is unnecessary to linger over the earlier years of William Carstares. He was a member of a large family, and one of the endearing features about William, the eldest son, was his constant affection and helpfulness to his brothers and sisters. He was educated at Edinburgh University, where he graduated in 1667. His father sent him to Holland to finish his education, and graduate in theology. Holland was the home of liberty in those days, and its theologians were the first in the world. How deeply Carstares drank at their fountains the after-years show. From Utrecht he was in constant communication with home. Apparently, his favourite in the home circle was Sarah, the eldest of his sisters. In after years she became the wife of William Dunlop, Principal of Glasgow University, where in recent years presided his great-great-great-grandson, Principal Story, the biographer of William Carstares. One of his letters to his sister Sarah ought to be quoted. "Dear Sister," he says, "I take this opportunity of saluting you and assuring you that notwithstanding of my silence in not writing to you, yet my affection to you as a sister is not in the least cooled, neither am I forgetful of you nor of the rest of the children, but often beg of God that you may all of you be blessed with spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ, whom if you have for yours it is not much matter what be your condition in the world. It is His favour that is better than life; it is the enjoyment of Him that makes a sweet and comfortable life. If we knew Him, sister, and had a discovery of the beauty and excellency that is in Him, other things would be so far from bulking in our eyes that they would vanish and disappear. . . . O when shall the desires of our souls be towards Him and to the remembrance of His name. . . . But who can speak aright of Him? For my own part, I am so conscious of

my own unfitness to do it in the least measure suitably that I must be silent ; but I hope you have seen *that* in Him that makes you ready to sell all and buy this soul-enriching, infinitely precious pearl. Now, sister, being in haste, I must break off, and recommend you to the guiding of His Spirit which leadeth into all truth." There is not much in this letter of what we look for in modern days, the little nothings which make a letter from one at a distance so interesting and so longed for. But the letter is of value to us who see in it the way in which the theologian was being made. There is a fine old saying, *Pectus facit theologum* ; and surely, if the heart makes the theologian, William Carstares was on the way to becoming a real theologian.

(2) It was in Holland that Carstares first met William of Orange, his master and lifelong friend. Dr. Story says that William "was at once impressed by his large and discriminating knowledge of parties and affairs in Britain and pleased with his courtier-like manner and address" (pp. 29 ff.). During William's life his confidence in Carstares remained unshaken ; and Carstares, more than any Scotsman at least, was in closest touch with the King's views and wishes.

Though Carstares was an ordained minister of the Gospel, it does not appear that, in the first instance at any rate, he exercised his profession in Holland. Very early he got mixed up in politics and in the intrigues which were continually going on in Holland. In 1672 he left Holland with certain letters "written in white ink." The letters never reached their destination, for the ship was seized. Though Carstares escaped, and though the letters were unintelligible without his commentary, it became clear to the Government that plots were going on. Carstares became a marked man to the Government of Charles Stuart. For his connection with these plots, Carstares, after another journey to Holland and return to England, was arrested and imprisoned. This was in 1675. He was, also, suspected of being concerned in the authorship of what was known as *The Accompt*—an

account of the grievances under which the nation had suffered during Lauderdale's mismanagement and severity. His imprisonment lasted four years ; he was released in 1679.

It is not necessary to give in detail any account of the wanderings of Carstares. He flitted like a shadow between Scotland, England, and Holland ; and, no doubt, in that time of anxiety and intrigue, many secrets were locked in his breast.

After his first imprisonment he went to Holland : from there he went to reside for a time in England : finally, we find him in 1682 residing in Utrecht. Then we find him in Britain in 1683, and concerned in the rebellion against the King which was headed by Monmouth in England and Argyll in Scotland. Again Carstares went back to Holland, from which he was at last sent, as the safest medium of communication, to London. All this intrigue and plotting does not make very pleasant reading ; but we must remember that those who took part in it were patriots who were eager to deliver their country from the intolerable oppression of the Stuarts.

As is well known, the great plot failed ; and among those who suffered in its failure was Carstares, who was taken prisoner and sent down to Edinburgh, along with other prisoners. They were sent to Scotland to be tortured, so that those in authority might know the full details of the plots against the throne. The torture was fiendish. Certain instruments were used which have become historic, such as the boot and the thumbscrew.

When Carstares was brought to trial, nothing could be elicited from him. Then the thumbkins were brought. Still Carstares was silent. Then the boot was brought ; but somehow it would not fit. Another screw was therefore given to the thumbkins. The torture lasted about an hour and a half. Still Carstares would not speak. So, his inquisitioners desisted for a night, and Carstares was sent back to prison to lie all night in a fever. He was prepared to meet the ordeal next day, but a friend persuaded him to come to terms with the Privy Council, which Carstares

did, knowing that the Council already possessed most of the information he would impart, and on the distinct understanding that anything he might say should not be used "at the bar of any judicature against any person whatsoever." On these conditions, Carstares answered the questions put to him. It is clear that Carstares unfolded nothing that he did not think known already, or that would injure anyone. Unfortunately, and to their undying shame, the Privy Council broke faith with Carstares and used his depositions.

(3) Anyhow, Carstares was ultimately released, the greatest of his State secrets still in his bosom. In 1685 we find him again in Holland, where ultimately he was appointed chaplain to William of Orange, a position which he held till the King's death. In 1686, during his stay in Holland, Carstares drew up a Rule for his mental guidance, which gives us some insight into his character. Parts of the Rule are most interesting, and it is all instructive. "A digested method," he says, "of spending of time, contributing much to the redeeming and right improving of it, I desire . . . for three months to endeavour to take the following course in study. I would not willingly be diverted in the morning by company, but would reserve that time for myself. Besides time spent in reading of Scripture and duties of God's worship, I would spend at least an hour in acquiring the French language, being because of its universality so very necessary for converse. I would read a particular portion every day of my compends of philosophy and theology. . . . I would be careful of giving offence in the use of recreations. I would endeavour to moderate my passions upon all occasions. I would guard against evil speaking, being so very unbecoming in a Christian. I would endeavour to commit myself unto God in well-doing, without giving way to sinful anxiety on the one hand, or indiscreet managing of my affairs on the other. I would endeavour to acknowledge God in providences of one kind and another. I would endeavour to be meek and lowly, and yet labour in a prudent way to keep up the respect and authority of my



ministerial station, and so much the more that it is under such contempt both with good and bad."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the Rule of William Carstares, and his earnest and strenuous life is a proof that he tried to observe it.

2. We return, now, to Scotland, and ask what had been doing there during these years. The Covenanters had been relieved of Charles Stuart in 1685, when death overtook him; but they certainly did not get a better man when James VII. of Scotland mounted the throne. His was a cold, sinister nature; and the furnace in which the Covenanters were placed grew hotter under his reign.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the story of James' reign. He tried to get on without a Parliament, thereby insulting the free institutions of Britain; and he tried to legislate in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, thus arousing the hereditary dislike of the country for Popery. Laws against the Catholics were abrogated, and indulgences were actually extended to Presbyterians, though it was clearly enough seen that they were meant for Roman Catholics. In Scotland terrible things had been happening. Who can ever recall without a shudder of horror those "killing times" in Scottish history? Men were banished; estates were confiscated; women were drowned; men and women were huddled together into one foul reeking dungeon at Dunnottar! The calculation has been made that altogether some eighteen thousand had suffered, in one form or other, in Scotland for their religious beliefs. Whether that be true or not, it is certain that Scotland was in a dangerous state and ripe for revolution.

3. The Revolution took place in 1688, and William of Orange became King. Through the whole story of the Revolution there shines out one honest and incorruptible figure, that of William Carstares, who, though officially a Court chaplain simply, was in reality the King's confidential adviser and private Scottish Secretary.

<sup>1</sup> Story, *William Carstares*, p. 131.

It was well that such an honest man was with King William. Carstares knew Scotland, and Scottish feeling. As for William himself, he had no prejudice toward one form of worship more than another in his dominions. His personal desire was to have uniformity ; and he knew that if he could establish an Episcopalian Church in Scotland, it would please the Church in England. But apparently that was not to be, and therefore his policy was to accept the Church which would be most loyal to his Government. He found at last that he was able to rely on the Presbyterians. He found that the Scottish bishops were thirled to the Stuarts ; for the bishops were as they were and where they were, not because of the will of the Scottish people, who have never taken to Episcopacy, and have been all along essentially democratic and Presbyterian, but simply because of the wish of the Stuart kings. Naturally, therefore, the bishops were staunch supporters of the Stuarts, and prayed for the restoration of the Stuart line. All this was made clear to the King by Carstares, who was at the same time the best friend Scotland and the Presbyterians had. King William trusted him. He had found him, in a prolonged experience, an honest man.

Ultimately, the Revolution Settlement was given to Scotland in 1690, by which Presbyterianism was recognised as the religion to be supported by the State. The Cameronian ministers were received into the Church, though many of the people refused to enter. In 1693 an Act was passed through which the Episcopalian ministers would also be received, if they took the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of Assurance, and if they acknowledged the Presbyterian Government.

In all these affairs Carstares took a leading part, and on one occasion at least a dramatic part, of which many tales are told : how the Presbyterians in Scotland would not accept the Oath of Assurance ; how William was determined that they should ; how he sent North imperative despatches ; how Carstares, warned in time, intercepted them, went at once to the King, found him gone to bed and asleep, wakened him and fell on his knees,

begging his life. William was angry, but listened to the pleadings of Carstares, who pointed out that the Presbyterians were his loyal subjects in the North, and he could not offend them without great risk to his throne. In the end, the despatches were thrown into the fire, and to the great joy of Scotland new despatches were sent, conceding the demands of the Presbyterians.

4. Thus Scotland became Presbyterian in the matter of a State Church, and has remained so. How much of the result we owe to Carstares, how much of the policy under which the Revolution Church was built up, we cannot definitely know, but we can guess; for his was essentially a statesman-like mind, and his counsels were always on the side of peace and moderation. At the time of the Revolution Settlement Carstares was little more than forty, and much work yet lay before him. So long as King William lived, his place was at the English Court. But William died in 1702, and Queen Anne came to the throne. On her accession, Carstares, who was not in the same complete sympathy with her as he had been with William, sought a place in Scotland, and became Principal of Edinburgh University, a position for which his scholarship and abilities and vast influence fitted him eminently. Along with his work as Principal and Professor, he filled the position of preacher, ultimately in St. Giles. "His habits of work," says Dr. Story, "his equable temper, and his great capacity for work enabled him to overtake the calls of each office with regularity and perfect success" (*Life of Carstares*, p. 279).<sup>1</sup>

We can well understand the power Carstares was in the Church and in the State. During the perplexing times of the negotiations

<sup>1</sup> It may be of interest to notice some of the College laws he laid down for his students. "The College meetings begin with October. In the winter season, the students are to meet in their classes before seven in the morning. . . . The students are obliged to discourse always in Latin; as also to speak modestly, chastely, courteously. . . . Everyone is to show good examples to others by his piety, goodness, modesty, and diligence in learning as becomes the disciple of Christ. . . . Let all shun bad company, as a corrupting plague. . . . No one in the evening may walk the streets. . . . Those who neglect to go to church shall forfeit sixpence each time."

for the union of the Parliaments, Carstares was a true friend to Scotland and a moderating influence. During the Jacobite plots, which came later and were meant to destroy the influence of the Scottish Church and to break it up, the Church had a real and tried leader in Carstares, and no one sorrowed more deeply than he over the restoration of Patronage in 1712. Had Carstares foreseen all that Patronage was to do, how it was to make havoc of the Church, breaking it asunder time and again, he would have grieved even more deeply than he did. But the Act was passed, and the Scottish Church has rarely seen a blacker day.

So his days passed in work, in influence, in prayer, and in teaching. At last the end drew near. In the autumn of 1715 he was seized with apoplexy. Though he recovered somewhat, he could not throw off the trouble, and when it returned in December he knew that his hour was come. Among his last words were these: "I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He died on 28th December 1715, in the sixty-seventh year of his life. He was buried in the tomb of his father, John Carstares, and next to that of Alexander Henderson. "When his body was laid in the dust," says McCormick, his first biographer, "two men were observed to turn aside from the rest of the company, and bursting into tears bewail their mutual loss. Upon inquiry, it was found that they were two non-jurant clergymen (Episcopal) whose families for a considerable time had been supported by his benefactions."

*B.* Thus died William Carstares, "a man," as a contemporary journal says, "of great worth, piety, and learning, and very charitable to the poor."

Perhaps no words could better sum up the work and character of Carstares than those of Macaulay: "William had one Scottish adviser, who deserved and who possessed more influence than any of the ostensible Ministers. This was Carstares, one of the most remarkable men of that age. He united great scholastic

attainments with great aptitude for civil business, and the firm faith and ardent zeal of a martyr with the shrewdness and suppleness of a consummate politician. In courage and fidelity he resembled Burnet; but he had what Burnet wanted—judgment, self-command, and a singular power of keeping secrets.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*; Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*; R. H. Story, *William Carstares*; *State Papers and Letters addressed to William Carstares*, edited by J. McCormick.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ERSKINES.

A. In October 1900 there was consummated in Scotland one of the great ecclesiastical movements in its history.<sup>1</sup> We have seen in these chapters how rich Scotland has been in Church episode ; but it may be doubted if Scotland has seen anything richer, both in its own significance and in the results which are certain to flow from it, than the Union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church in 1900. There may be something more dramatic in separation,—and the separations and divisions which we have seen in Scottish Church History have been accompanied with an intensity of feeling which it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to realise, but there can be no doubt that union is the will of God ; and in union there are possibilities of Christian work, of Christian influence, and of Christian concentration in work, such as are impossible in separation. The feeling in the Scottish Churches of the twentieth century is that, if apologies are required, they are needed not for union but for separation.

The greatest movement for union which has been seen in Scottish Church History came to a crowning end in October 1900. The movement was not a thing of a day : it was really an old one. To think of this union movement as a matter of a year or two is a mistake. The truth is that thoughts of union and of close co-operation in Christian work came into men's minds

<sup>1</sup> See, further, Chapter XV., on " Robert Rainy."

shortly after the Disruption of the Scottish Church in 1843. The words of Dr. Chalmers are conclusive on that point. They are words which cannot be too often quoted. As Moderator of the first Assembly of the Free Church, Dr. Chalmers had used words about Voluntaryism capable of misconstruction. Two days after, in explaining what he really meant, he used these memorable words: "Agreeably to the excellent distinction that there is a difference between co-operation and incorporation, we are perhaps not yet come the length of incorporation; but in the meanwhile there may be the most cordial, the most entire co-operation." Again, in connection with the Bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly, six weeks only after the Disruption, Dr. Chalmers said: "Between the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Dissenters of this country there is no difference of government, and no difference of theology that I am aware of; or, in other words, no insuperable bar, I will not say in the way of an immediate, but in the way of an eventual, and I do hope, of a speedy incorporation." Words could not be clearer; and we may take it that in the wisest and most far-seeing minds of the Church of the Disruption there was a feeling that the day must come when the energies of the Scottish dissenting Presbyterian bodies would run in one channel. That feeling grew more and more after the Disruption. The Free Church was a spiritual organisation, wholly dependent on its material side upon the free-will offerings of its people. So, also, were the Secession Churches; and when the United Presbyterian Church was formed by a Union in 1847, the thought of another possible Union between two Presbyterian bodies, alike in doctrine, alike in discipline, alike in government, and alike in absolute dependence on the Christian and enlightened liberality of their members, was not far away. The Union movement came into distinct notice about 1863, and for ten years was agitated throughout the Churches. And though the movement died away in 1873, it was recognised by everyone that it was only for a time: by and by the forces of union would rise within the Church, and the

two Presbyterian Churches, which were in so many essentials and in inner spirit one, would become outwardly one Church. That consummation was reached in 1900; but it ought not to be forgotten that the movement which led on to union was not a thing of a day, but was an object which thoughtful minds, both in the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church, had had before them for well-nigh two generations.

I. In 1900 there was formed an organisation which might be compared with a river—a river with vast possibilities to refresh and to fertilise the life of Scotland. In this study we do not propose to enlarge further on the formation of the United Free Church in Scotland, or on the influence it may prove in the life of Scotland, or on the cherished prophecy that is in it of a Union broader and more comprehensive in the future. Nor do we propose to enlarge on the obstacles that have already met the United Church, like rocks which have fallen unexpectedly, and threaten to check the flow of the Church's living work and influence. We wish to describe one of those streams which joined with the Free Church to form the United Free Church, to narrate how that stream began, to take the mind in imagination back to the time when the Secession Church was only a tiny rivulet springing up in the dry and barren soil of the eighteenth century. We wish to show something of the great and strong men in whose hearts the Secession movement had such a supreme place; and we propose, also, to try to show something of what that Secession movement meant for Scotland, and something of the contribution which the Church of the Erskines brought with it to the stream of life and energy and thought which we call the Church of Christ in Scotland.

When one's mind goes away back to the first days of the Secession Church, one is arrested by a little meeting which took place on December 5th, 1733, at a place in Kinross-shire called Gairney Bridge. It was a historic little gathering. The four ministers who met there did not know that they were in truth making history. It was an out-of-the-way place, and the little



inn where the meeting was held has vanished ; but the deeds of these four ministers remain. There were only four ministers who met there, yet these four had the courage to form themselves into a Presbytery. What a power is faith in God ! These four men felt assured that they were carrying out the mind of God, and their faith made them strong to do a great thing for Him at Gairney Bridge.

Who were these four ministers ? They were all able and notable men in the Church of Scotland. One of them has a name which his fellow-Scotsmen will not let die, Ebenezer Erskine : the other three are not so well known to-day, but the student of Church History knows them to have been men of power and ability,—Wilson of Perth, Moncrieff of Abernethy, and Fisher of Kinclaven. There was another that day at Gairney Bridge, Ralph Erskine ; but he had not at that time decided to cast in his lot with his brother Ebenezer. Afterwards he joined them, and became one of the fathers of the Secession and one of the most eminent of Scottish preachers. The four who met at Gairney Bridge were men of strong, robust faith, who counted no sacrifice too great for the truth they loved and for the freedom of the Gospel. At Gairney Bridge the four constituted themselves into a Presbytery, and elected Ebenezer Erskine as their Moderator, and Fisher of Kinclaven as their Clerk. They claimed to belong to the historic Scottish Church ; they claimed to be part and parcel of that Church. They claimed to possess every power which a Presbytery could have, and, though they refrained for a time from exercising the powers which they claimed, they knew that the time would come when they must exercise these powers.

2. We have seen who the four ministers were, and we proceed to ask, What brought these men to Gairney Bridge ? What made them associate themselves as a Presbytery ? What was it which made them feel that they could no longer remain in the Scottish Church—the Church, at least, of the Revolution Settlement ? What was it which made them feel that they must lift up a

standard for Christ in a Church of their own in Scotland? It was, as one of them put it, "because up and down the land the Bride of Christ was outraged."

(1) In connection with the life of Carstares, we saw how the Revolution Settlement was effected. By the Revolution Settlement Scotland became Presbyterian. King William had hoped to make the Church of Scotland comprehensive of all shades of religious thought; but Scotland had resolved to be Presbyterian, and Presbyterian Scotland became. The Revolution Settlement established the Presbyterian Church in all the parishes of Scotland, and gave the people the privilege of choosing and calling their own ministers. Many of the parishes of Scotland had been filled by ministers of the Episcopalian Church, and some of these took an oath of allegiance to William, and remained in their churches. There can be little doubt that to some extent this was a source of weakness in the Revolution Church in Scotland. Apart from that, however, the Church in Scotland became the centre of seething intrigue. Its own affairs were carelessly led, more especially after the death of the ecclesiastical statesman, William Carstares. From his death, in 1715, to the day when Robertson took the leadership of the Church in 1751, the Scottish Church was most inefficiently led. The feeling of the outlying parts of the Church was scarcely known at ecclesiastical headquarters; and the Church itself was the object of ceaseless intrigue, many trying to get back power, and Episcopalian influence trying through the Church to unsettle the power of the dynasty and bring back the Stuarts.

In addition to this intrigue on the one side, and inefficient leading—what, indeed, we might describe as opportunism—on the other, there had come upon the Church, as so often comes, a period of reaction. The Church when in the wilderness had been strong: there had never been grander days in the Scottish Church than when her ministers and people glorified God in the Grassmarket. That day was over; and now there had come a reaction of spiritual deadness. The Church which had

Government at its back was coming to depend more on social influence and the power of wealth than on Christ, its living Head.

(2) What was the result of this? The result was seen in 1712, when an Act was passed restoring Patronage—that is, giving to the patron in the parish the power of choosing a minister and withdrawing from the people their inalienable right. That was one evidence of the deadness of the Church, which ought never to have permitted such an act of spoliation.

Another evidence was in the neglect or indifference which came over the Church in regard to the central truths of religion. For one thing, there came an indifference to the freeness of the Gospel; and for another, there came a certain indifference to matters of doctrine affecting some of the deepest problems of religion, such as the Person of Christ. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century there were many discussions on doctrine throughout the Church. There was the famous Simson case. Simson was a Professor of Theology in Glasgow, not a man of great ability or of courage. He was charged, first, with teaching Arminian doctrine, by which the place of God in salvation was stripped of that supreme position which Calvin and Knox had given it, and next with teaching Arianism, by which the Person of Christ was reduced to the level of a subordinate being and the honour taken from the Redeemer's crown. The Simson case dragged its slow length through the Church Courts, and the impression which was given to many loyal friends of the Church was that the leaders of the Church were indifferent to doctrine and had no high sense of the injury done to religion through the propagation of such views.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, there was the famous "Marrow" controversy. It is associated with the honoured name of Thomas Boston. Boston had found a copy of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, written by an Englishman in 1646, and published

<sup>1</sup> See, further, H. F. Henderson, *Religious Controversies of Scotland* (Edin., T. & T. Clark).

during the sittings of the Westminster Assembly.<sup>1</sup> Through Boston's influence the *Marrow* was republished. It was a thoroughly Evangelical statement of religion, and in its teaching there was embodied the free offer of the Gospel. The republication of the *Marrow* in 1718 created no small stir in Scotland. Unhappily, the majority of the Church did not like the book. It was condemned by the Assembly of 1720. The "Marrow men," as they were called, who had made themselves the champions of its teaching, became suspect. Among the twelve "Marrow men" who handed in a representation to the Assembly of 1720, asking it to reconsider the decision about the "Marrow" doctrine, were Ebenezer Erskine of Portmoak and Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline.

Thus it becomes clear that there had been growing up in the Scottish Church a coldness and indifference which soon became felt in matters of doctrine and of Church government. On the other hand, there had been growing up a strenuous minority. This minority insisted on the freeness of the Gospel. Along with that, they insisted on the rights of the Christian people, the equal rights of all Christian men, whether they were rich or poor; especially, *the right of the people to select and call their ministers.*

3. Of this minority Ebenezer Erskine was the recognised leader. He was born in the year 1680, his brother Ralph being born in 1685. They were sons of a distinguished preacher, Henry Erskine, who had been honoured to suffer for the sake of Christ, and who had obtained, as one of the seals of his ministry, the famous Scotsman, Thomas Boston.

The two brothers, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, are the greatest names at the beginning of the Secession Church. Ralph was the younger brother, and on the occasion of his

<sup>1</sup> The little work was written by Edward Fisher, and published in 1646. The Author's edition is the fifth published in 1647, and has prefixed to it a "commendatory epistle of divers Divines of great esteem in the City of London."

death Ebenezer said, "Ralph had twice got the start of him : he was first in Christ, and now he was first in glory." The brothers had much in common,—a common faith in the gracious and free Gospel, a common belief in the freedom which Christ had given to His people, and a common passion to see that freedom recognised in the Church, where all men were on a common level. Yet in temperament they were much unlike. Ralph was a poet, as well as an ardent musician. There was more sentiment in his nature ; in Ebenezer the fibre was harder. Ralph was a keen controversialist ; but in the beginning of the Secession movement he had grave doubts as to the path of duty so plain to his brother Ebenezer. For instance, in his diary, under January 18, 1737, he writes : "I wrote to Mr. Mair my thoughts, and laid down some arguments and reasons that weighed with me against a present Secession ;" and on February 14 he writes : "Mr. Mair came and was fully resolved to make a direct, absolute sort of Secession. I was not his length. I was at this time much in darkness and confusion, yet desiring to follow all the light and freedom I had, namely, to join the brethren in their adherence to the Testimony, and to disjoin from the judicatories of the Church, so far as my joining with the former made joining with the latter inconsistent." It is clear, therefore, that it was a very great wrench to Ralph Erskine to fall out of association with the Church of the Revolution. Rarely has there been given to the Scottish Church a finer, more poetic, or more devotional soul than that of Ralph Erskine, with his keen sense of God's nearness and God's kindness.<sup>1</sup>

In 1702, Ebenezer Erskine was called to be minister at Portmoak, and in 1704 he married Alison Turpie, who brought the best influences into his life. To his wife he owed a deeper

<sup>1</sup> "I remember," he says, on one occasion, "the many instances of the Lord's favour to me. He pitied me yonder at the hillside, and yonder on the top of the mountain, and yonder in the valley, and yonder in the East-room, and yonder in the West-room, and yonder in the low room, when He made my heart to go after Him."

conception of Christ than had as yet come to him. In a letter to his sister, after his wife's death, he says, about her: "But the Lord chose well for me, and led me in the way I knew not, and made her a happy instrument not only of building my family and planting it with young olives, but also of much good and edification to my soul, she being the particular mean and instrument of my being brought to an acquaintance with religion."<sup>1</sup> There was one day in his life on which Erskine looked back with undying thankfulness. It was the 26th of August 1708. In his diary in October of that year he says: "My soul once a day said unto the Lord, He is my Lord. I think I am sure of it, as sure of it as ever I was of anything, that He brought my heart to give a consent to Him, on the 26th of August last." Some years after, on January 27th, 1711, he makes this entry: "I was made with some delight and satisfaction of soul to call to remembrance the expressions I had of the Lord's love, Wednesday, August 26th, 1708, when my soul was made to leap within me, with the sweet views I got of Christ, and of His covenant and of nearness to God, and interest in Him as my God." Then it was that "the Lord gave him a glimmering view of salvation which made his soul to acquiesce in Christ as the new and living way to Glory." Then it was, as he puts it in another place, that "he got his head out of time into eternity." "O Glory, glory, glory, glory unto the Lord my God for the riches and freedom of His love and mercy. . . . How sweet is His name to my soul: it is sweeter than ointment poured forth." "O He is wonderful, and I admire His love, and adore Him, and shall adore Him through an endless eternity. I find a coal of red love in my heart towards this lovely One." From these days to his death in 1754, "the coal of red love" kept burning brightly in his heart. It was "the coal of red love" to His Lord and Saviour about Whom he writes on December 14th, 1713, "I embrace Him as my King, to reign and rule within me. I take a whole

<sup>1</sup> Fraser, *The Life of Ebenezer Erskine*, p. 83.

Christ, with all His laws, and all His crosses and afflictions. I except against none of them. I will live to Him, I will die to Him ; I will quit with all I have in the world for His cause and truth."<sup>1</sup>

*B.* We may be able now to realise something of the circumstances which led to the Secession in the Revolution Church. The more immediate cause was the passing of an Act in 1731 in connection with the vexed question of Patronage. In a letter to his sister, after the passing of the Act restoring Patronage in 1712, Ebenezer Erskine had used these words : "What a bold stroke is thus given to the fundamental constitution of the Church of Scotland!"<sup>2</sup> The sequel proved the truth of these words. By its Act in 1731, the Assembly declared that, in those cases which fell to a Presbytery to settle, the elders and Protestant heritors should elect and call a minister.

Ebenezer Erskine regarded this Act as a gross interference with the rights of Christian members of congregations. He held, also, that the Act had not been rightly passed by the Church. In his famous Synod sermon at Perth, on October 10, 1732, Erskine sounded the note of revolt. How could heritors choose "builders of God's house"? "Shall we suppose," he cried, "that ever God granted a power to any set of men, patrons or heritors or whatever they be, to impose

<sup>1</sup> In Erskine's diary of these years he has bared his heart to us. He has told us of his burdens, of his sorrows, and of his consolations. Of sorrows he had a full share. Children and a dearly loved wife, one after another, were called away from him ; yet his sorely stricken heart was not without its consolations. "I take it kindly," he says in one passage, "that the Lord comes to my family to gather lilies, wherewith to garnish the upper sanctuary, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And, Oh! it sometimes affords me a pleasing prospect, to think that I have so much plenishin in Heaven before me, and that, when I enter the gates of glory, I shall not only be welcomed by the whole General Assembly of saints and angels, but my wife and four pleasant babes will in a particular manner welcome me to those regions."

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, *op. cit.* p. 164.

servants on His family without their consent, they being the freest society in the world? . . . How are the rights of the Lord's people invaded and trode upon by violent settlements up and down the land! A cry is gone up into heaven against the builders. . . . And seeing the reverend Synod has put me in this place, where I am in Christ's stead, I must be allowed to say that by this act the corner stone is receded from, He is rejected in His poor members, and the rich of this world are put in their room." From such sentences as these we see the nature of Erskine's protest. The sermon gave deep offence. From the Synod the matter went to the Assembly, which resolved to rebuke and suspend both Erskine and those who agreed with him.

The Church afterwards repented of its harsh treatment of Erskine, and in a measure humbled itself: but Erskine and his friends would not return. They held that in four matters the Church was proving unfaithful: first, in acquiescing in the interference of the State with the affairs of the Church; secondly, in the working of Patronage as accepted by the Assembly; thirdly, in allowing unchecked the growth of erroneous doctrine; and fourthly, in suppressing individual liberty within the Church. And because the Church would not reform these abuses, would not protest against State interference, would not deal firmly with erroneous doctrine, would not respect the liberties and rights of all Christian men,—for these reasons, Erskine and his friends would not return to the Church of their fathers. The Church was slow to part with them, and it was not till 1740 that they were declared to be no longer in the Church of Scotland as established.

Thus Ebenezer Erskine and his three friends, Wilson, Moncrieff, and Fisher, left the Established Church. They protested, however, that "they still held communion with all and everyone who desired, with them, to adhere to the principles of the true Presbyterian covenanted Church of Scotland, in her doctrine, worship, government, and discipline." They protested, also, that



it should be lawful and warrantable for them to exercise the keys of doctrine, discipline, and government, according to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the principles and constitutions of the covenanted Church of Scotland ;” and they appealed “unto the first free faithful and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.”

In February 1737 the name of Ralph Erskine was added to the roll of the Secession Presbytery. As we have seen, he had been in much doubt about his course of action ; but at last he had seen clearly where his duty lay. In the Declaration of Secession, which he laid before the Dunfermline Presbytery on February 16, 1737, he stated his position very clearly and said : “Though I am sensible what a bad tendency division naturally has, yet the safest way for pursuing peace being to cleave unto Jesus Christ, who is the centre of all true and holy union, and to advance the truth as it is in Him, I therefore think myself obliged, leaving events to the Lord, to take the present opportunity of joining with other brethren in what I reckon a faithful testimony.”

Ebenezer Erskine left his church in Stirling (where he had been settled, after a ministry of twenty-eight years at Portmoak), and the building stood empty for seventy-seven years. A new church was provided for him, and there he continued his ministry till 1754. The Secession Church grew rapidly. In 1742 it had within it 20 ministers and 36 congregations. In 1766 it had 120 churches and 100,000 worshippers.

It is not necessary here to dwell further on its history : how it grew and expanded ; how troubles came into it ; how it failed to keep Whitefield within it in his mission to Scotland ; how it broke up in 1747 over the Burgess oath into Burghers and Anti-burghers ; how these ceased to have fellowship with one another ; how they in turn divided, towards the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, over the question of the Church’s relation to the State ; or how the main portions came together again in 1820 to form the United Secession ; or how

the United Secession and the Relief Church came together in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church; and how that Church in turn came, in 1900, to unite with the Free Church to form the United Free Church—a Union probably as far reaching in moment as any that we have seen in the history of the Church of Christ.

In 1752 Ralph Erskine passed to the Church of the first-born above. His last words are memorable: "I shall be forever a debtor to free grace. Victory, victory, victory!"

Two years later, his brother Ebenezer joined him in the glory beyond. In his last illness he showed a beautiful composure and a deep quiet faith. "I have always," he said, "found my times of severe affliction my best times. Many blasts I have endured through life; but I had this comfort under them—a good God, a good conscience, a good cause." One of his elders said to him, "Sir, you have given us many good advices; may I ask what you are now doing with your own soul?" "I am just doing with it," he replied, "what I did forty years ago; I am resting on that word 'I am the Lord thy God.'" "Oh, sirs," he said to friends round his deathbed, "my body is now become a very disagreeable habitation for my soul; but when my soul goes out of my body, it will as naturally fly to the bosom of Jesus as a stone will fall to the centre," or, as he is reported to have said, "as naturally to my Saviour's bosom as the bird to its beloved nest." To his children he said, "Though I die, the Lord liveth. I have known more of God since I came to this bed than through all my life." He died with "the promise in his hand," "I am the Lord thy God," and with "the coal of red love" burning in his heart.

So passed Ebenezer Erskine. No one in Scottish Church History has had or has shown a greater love for liberty—liberty in the free proclamation of the Gospel, liberty in the exercise of Christian right. The Secession Church for which he did so much was the home of that liberty. Few will deny the part which it played, more especially in the eighteenth century, in

keeping alive the conception of the liberty which is the Church's inherent right. In a dark age it kept "a coal of red love" in the nation's heart; and if some were scarcely faithful to the Gospel of free grace in the Church of the eighteenth century, that cannot be said of the Secession fathers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—The literature of the Secession is abundant, and only a few of the more helpful and accessible books need be mentioned: Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*; Struthers, *History of Scotland*; McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*; Henderson, *Religious Controversies of Scotland*; McCrie, *The Church of Scotland, her Divisions and Unions*; Harper, *Memoir of Ebenezer Erskine*; Fraser, *Life of Ebenezer Erskine*; Fraser, *Life of Ralph Erskine*; Boston's *Memoirs*; MacEwen, *The Erskines*.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THOMAS CHALMERS.

A. The latter half of the Church's history in Scotland in the eighteenth century has received a name which is sufficiently descriptive and accurate : it is known as the *Age of Moderatism*. Not that Moderatism appeared then for the first time, or by any means for the last time ; but because the majority of the Church, as established, its leaders and its people, had adopted a distinctively moderate policy. It was a dye in which the Church was steeped to the finger-tips.

When life is low in a Church, it always happens that neither Christ, who is the Head of the Church, nor the people, who are its members, receive their due place. The way in which the Church in Scotland acquiesced in *Patronage* is a proof that in the Moderate age neither Christ nor the people obtained their rightful place. When life beats strong within the Church of Christ there is no privilege more firmly held to or more jealously cherished than the Church's spiritual independence. Men are jealous for their Church with a holy jealousy, jealous for their Church's right in sacred matters to be ruled only by Jesus Christ. Spiritual independence, in its simplest terms, means the Church's right to obey her own laws, which are the laws of Christ in sacred matters. When the life beats strong in the Church, no outside interference with spiritual concerns can be tolerated. How different was the Church in

the days of Knox, battling with Queen Mary ; of Melville, bearding King James ; of Henderson, protesting in a National Covenant ; or of the Covenanters, staining heath and glen with their life-blood ! How different these times from the age when the Church, through her leaders, counselled a quiet acquiescence in her shame, a quiet reception of the injury done to Christ, the Head of the Church, and to the Christian people, whose right it was to call their ministers !

1. But as one studies the History of Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century, signs appear that life is flowing back. It was due to the Secessions that the people of Scotland had never been without the old Evangel. Hundreds of Secession churches were dotted here and there over the country. By the end of the eighteenth century, signs were appearing in the horizon, no bigger, some of them, than a man's hand. Subtle currents were crossing and recrossing in men's minds. It was a time of upheaval and of unsettlement. That appeared in the French Revolution. It was made apparent, also, in British struggles for Reform. It appeared in the eagerness with which men were turning to religion. A breath of new life seemed sweeping over Europe. It affected the Scottish Church. The Gospel obtained a fresh meaning. Men began afresh to look to Christ, the Church's living Head, for help and guidance. As the life rose, men began more and more to think of spiritual independence. It seemed to many of them intolerable that the Church should be gagged and fettered with Patronage. Slowly the life rose in the Church. As it rose, the feeling grew that the Church must be free in her choice of spiritual teachers. No State enactments could be allowed to fetter the Church of the living Christ. Gradually the life asserted itself, until it came to have a prevailing weight and energy in the Church. The struggle was intense between the old and the new, between the State representing the world and the life which was the spirit of Christ. For ten long years the struggle lasted. At last there came a severance. The life

could not brook its fetters. It could not run in the channels men had made for it; it could not accept the conditions men would impose on it. Therefore, it tore itself free from its old bed, and found an outlet in a new stream, the *Free Church of Scotland*.

2. In vivid illustration of all that we have been describing, we propose to tell again the oft-told tale of the life of Thomas Chalmers, the greatest spiritual force Scotland saw in the nineteenth century. No man for a time resisted more the inrush of the new life in the Scottish Church, and no man helped more its enlargement when once he had been caught by it himself. Thomas Chalmers was a man of whom all Scotsmen may speak with gratitude. He belongs not to one Church only, but to all the Churches of Christ in Scotland; and not to Scotland only, but to the world. He belongs to the true Apostolic succession; and in Scottish Church History he takes his place alongside Knox, Melville, and Alexander Henderson.

(1) Thomas Chalmers, as all the world knows, was born in the Fifeshire town of Anstruther in the year 1780, the year in which Principal Robertson retired from the leadership of the Moderate party, whose policy he had done so much to frame and consolidate. As a boy, he was frank, bright, and frolicsome, a lover of nature and of outdoor life. Neither at school nor at College was he particularly distinguished for ability. It was not till the spell of mathematics was laid upon him that his intellect awoke. He was licensed to preach in 1799, when only nineteen years old. His heart, as yet, was not in preaching. His ambitions really did not lie in the line of Church work. His heart was set on a scientific career, and, if possible, a chair of mathematics. The year he was licensed his brother wrote of him in these words: "His mathematical studies seem to occupy more of his time than the religious."

When he accepted his first charge at Kilmany, in 1802, he was confessedly ignorant of the saving truth of the Gospel. He was

a Moderate. His deepest religious view was an absorbing conception of God's infinite majesty and power. Writing of this time in after years, he confessed that the thought of God's wisdom and power *possessed* him. The Chalmers who went to Kilmany was a very different man from the Chalmers who left it twelve years later. The study of the growth of his soul is one of the most interesting in religious history. When he went he was a pronounced Moderate. It was only a bit of his life that he gave to Kilmany; for, his most absorbing interests were not in his sacred work, but in the scientific classes which he conducted during the week at St. Andrews, or the mathematical studies which he carried on at home. When surprise was expressed that, though a minister, he should give so little of himself to his work, Chalmers wrote a pamphlet in defence. It was in this pamphlet that the remark occurred, which afterwards Chalmers repented of so deeply: "The author of this pamphlet can assert from what to him is the highest possible authority, the authority of his own experience, that, after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties, a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage." What a gulf there is between such a statement and the one which he penned in his private journal some seven years afterwards: "A minister, if he gives his whole heart to his business, finds employment for every moment of his existence; and I am every day getting more in love with my professional duties and more penetrated with a sense of their importance!" His whispered prayer a month or two later is, "O God, may Thy work be my delight!" There is a spiritual history between these two statements. Wonderfully impressive were the steps through which God led Thomas Chalmers to the truth. Chalmers had been at Kilmany some seven years before the change came. His preaching was even then interesting and powerful. His personality was deeply attractive: his nature was sympathetic and loving; but there was something lacking. In 1809 illness attacked him:

he was brought face to face with the truths of the unseen and eternity. "My confinement," he wrote at the time, "has fixed on my heart a very strong impression of the insignificance of time, an impression which I trust will not abandon me, though I again reach the heyday of health and vigour. This should be the first step to another impression, still more salutary, the magnitude of eternity." Illness made Thomas Chalmers think. It brought him to a profound sense of sin: finally, it led him to the knowledge of an atoning Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Gradually there rose in Chalmers' life the passion of a new affection, loyalty to a personal Christ. The ministry of affliction was confirmed by the reading of Wilberforce's *Practical View of Christianity*. A letter written some years afterwards to one of his brothers tells us the effect on his mind of the reading of that book. The letter is of so much interest that part of it must be quoted: "The effect of a very long confinement upon myself was to inspire me with a set of very strenuous resolutions under which I wrote a Journal and made many a laborious effort to elevate my practice to the standard of the Divine requirements. During this course, however, I got little satisfaction, and felt no repose. I remember that somewhere about the year 1811, I had Wilberforce's *View* put into my hands, and, as I got on in reading it, felt myself on the eve of a great revolution in all my opinions about Christianity. I am now most thoroughly of opinion, and it is an opinion founded on experience, that in the system of 'Do this and live' no peace, and even no true and worthy obedience, can ever be attained. It is, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' When this belief enters the heart, joy and

<sup>1</sup> The story is told in his journal for the year 1810. From it such passages as the following may be quoted, and they show the bent of his soul in that year of trial:—"O God! may the powers of Thy Son's atonement be to me the effectual instrument both of comfort and of righteousness" (May 25th). "O God! may all this send home to our feelings the vanity of time; and may the prayers of a broken spirit, for consolation and acceptance, find grace in Thy sight" (June 5th). "Let me give my main efforts to religion" (Aug. 21st).



confidence enter along with it. The righteousness which we try to work out for ourselves eludes our impotent grasp, and never can a soul arrive at true or permanent rest in the pursuit of this object. The righteousness which by faith we put on secures our acceptance with God, and secures our interest in His promises, and gives us a part in those sanctifying influences by which we are enabled to do with aid from on high what we never can do without it. We look to God in a new light: we see Him as a reconciled Father: that love to Him which terror scares away re-enters the heart, and with a new principle and a new power we become new creatures in Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the awakening of Thomas Chalmers. The Moderate was transformed into the burning Evangelical, consumed with a passion for the salvation of men. The story is one which moves us deeply still; for God has given few greater gifts to Scotland than the passionate eloquence of Chalmers, kindled at the Cross of his living Lord.

(2) It became evident straightway that the minister of Kilmany was a changed man. His humble hearers felt the electric thrill of a soul charged with a message. What Kilmany felt, Scotland also began to feel. There had come an ambassador for Christ. It was impossible that such a spiritual force should be kept long in Kilmany. In 1814 Glasgow called him to her help—called him to labour among her perishing thousands. Chalmers felt it his duty to go. For five years he laboured in the Tron Church. In 1819 he was called to St. John's Parish, in the same city. He gave of his best to the city. It was in Glasgow that he delivered those wonderful "Astronomical Discourses" which opened up the minds of the people to thoughts that trembled into infinitude. And it was in Glasgow that he began to develop and work his ideas in social reformation of which he is Scotland's first, and, perhaps, greatest exponent. Chalmers was a political economist. Questions of population and pauperism had a singular fascination for him. In his

<sup>1</sup> Hanna, *Memoirs of Chalmers*, vol. i. p. 138

city charge in Glasgow he had every facility for developing his plans.

As a working minister, his central conception was that of the parish. Before he came to Glasgow there had been little of that intimate life between pastor and people which is developed in a small parish. Chalmers determined that the reproach should not rest on him. He set himself to visit his parish. The ideal city parish with Chalmers was one where there should be something of the same intimate and close relations between pastor and people as there had been at Kilmany.

There were two great social problems which Chalmers set about solving: the first was ignorance, the second poverty. The first problem was solved by the establishment of schools connected with his church. The second problem was much more intricate, and Chalmers' solution is of the most interesting character. What he aimed at in his dealings with pauperism was to foster the spirit of independence which has always been found congenial with Scotsmen. Cases of real necessity he would always assist. He divided the parish among deacons: each district was in charge of a deacon, who made personal investigation into cases of pauperism as they occurred. If the case was genuine, immediate relief was given from the church funds. The system had a marvellous success; and the best feature of it was that it was the means of rescuing many of the deserving poor, fostering their spirit of independence, and raising them out of their misfortunes. Chalmers' successor at St. John's said about it: "With an income from collections not much exceeding £300, we kept down the pauperism of a parish containing a population of ten thousand: and I know from actual observation that the poor were in better condition, and excepting the worthless and profligate who applied for and were refused assistance, were more contented and happy than the poor in the other parishes of Scotland." The system was abandoned when the Poor Law was passed.

In 1823 Chalmers was appointed Professor of Moral

Philosophy in St. Andrews. He felt that he was needing the change; and it was a wisely ordered breathing-time before he entered on the greater work of his life. He remained at St. Andrews four years. A vacancy then occurred in the Professorship of Theology at Edinburgh, and Chalmers was appointed. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of his position in Edinburgh. He was now at the centre of things, and more than ever a voice in the counsels of the Church. Young ministers had to pass through his hands, and none left his class without the impress of Thomas Chalmers. His personality as a teacher was inspiring; his teaching was Evangelical; his loyalty to Christ was unbounded. It was no wonder that the Church was filling with a race of young, enthusiastic, and intensely Evangelical ministers.

(3) Meanwhile the level of religious life had been rising in the Church. The Church with Chalmers at its head could not harbour the abuses which the Moderates had accepted. To Chalmers there was nothing more valuable than the Church's spiritual independence, the right of the Church to manage her own affairs in sacred matters. An infringement of the Church's liberties was to him intolerable, and there were many of the same mind. In 1841 Chalmers expressed himself on the subject of spiritual independence in noteworthy words. They occur in a letter to Sir George Sinclair. "You speak," Chalmers says, "of my former avowed preference for a National Establishment, reminding me of what you call my own theory. Now, in my London lectures, in my Church Extension addresses, in all my controversies with the Voluntaries, in my numerous writings for twenty years back, the spiritual independence of the Church has been ever brought prominently forward as an indispensable part of that theory, and I have uniformly stated that the least violation of that independence in return for a State endowment was enough to convert a Church Establishment into a moral nuisance."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hanna, *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, vol. ii. p. 565 (1854).

Now, there had been going on in the Church for years one gross abuse of Spiritual Independence, viz. *Patronage*. As we have seen, Patronage had been restored under Queen Anne in 1712. The Moderate policy had been to acquiesce in it. If the patron presented a candidate to a vacant charge, the Church had to ordain him, no matter what the people thought. Chalmers and the Evangelical party in the Church contended that this was wrong, and that the Church was spiritually free to elect and call her own ministers, to manage her own affairs, and to take measures as she saw fit for her extension.

Accordingly, in 1834 the Church passed the well-known Veto Act which, while not abolishing Patronage, provided a salutary check. The Veto Act declared substantially, that if, on the presentation by the patron, a majority of male heads in a congregation being members objected, then the Presbytery should not proceed to ordination. It was thought that an Act, such as this, was within the Church's spiritual jurisdiction, and would prove an effective check on the abuse of patronage.

Another Act was passed the same year. It was the Chapel Act, which declared that ministers of Chapels of Ease should have *quoad sacra* parishes assigned to them, with seats in Church Courts.

Both these Acts were symptomatic of the Church's living energy. The Church was now aroused to a sense of her mission at home and abroad. Abroad, Dr. Duff was performing miracles in India: at home, Dr. Chalmers was advancing in his Church Extension schemes. Government would not help him to build new churches for the increasing population. So he resolved to cast Governments aside and appeal to the people. Thousands responded to his eloquence. Money flowed in, and a sum of over £300,000 was speedily raised. Within seven years over 220 churches were added to Scotland! It was a striking achievement. The idea had scarcely dawned on the Church before, that such a mine of wealth was within her reach in the Christian enthusiasm of her people. A new era seemed at hand

in the Church's work. A grand ideal kept hovering before Dr. Chalmers—churches to meet the needs of all the population, and from these churches the living stream of Evangelical truth flowing through Scotland.

(4) But suddenly an arresting hand was laid on his schemes. His energies were crippled. His Church was declared not free, not spiritually independent. One after another the Civil Courts declared that the patrons must have their way: the Church had no right to pass a Veto Act; still less had the ministers of Chapels of Ease any right to vote in Church Courts and interfere with the interests of legally placed parish ministers. The cases on which the Civil Courts decided began with Auchterarder; after which followed Lethendy, Stewarton, and Marnoch. It was made painfully clear by the decisions in these cases that from a legal point of view the Church had no spiritual independence; and at Marnoch the spectacle was presented of an ordination, a spiritual act, taking place at the hands of men whom their own Church had deposed, and taking place solely at the command of a Civil Court!

Such a state of matters could not last. The spiritual independence of the Church could not be abandoned, and no sacrifice was too great for such a truth, involving as it did the Headship of Christ and the rights of the Christian people. On the other hand, the State would not yield, except on conditions which seemed to involve the humiliation of the Church's one and living Lord. Finally, the Church drew up a Claim of Right; and on the 18th of May 1843 the Moderator of the General Assembly handed in the Church's Protest, and left the Church so dear to himself and his fathers. Is it to be wondered at that Scotland thrilled from end to end, as the scene was realised,—the procession to Canonmills, headed by the Moderator and the venerable Chalmers, Scotland's biggest-hearted son; 474 ministers giving up church, manse, and living; facing trial, suffering, and uncertainty? And all for what? A sentiment? Yes, but a sentiment involving the honour of the

Church's living Head, and inseparable from the rights of the Christian people and from the freedom of the Church to legislate for herself in spiritual concerns. For such a sentiment the children of the Reformation and of the Covenant thought no sacrifice too great.

3. In the thick of this Ten Years' Conflict was the inspiring figure of Thomas Chalmers. In itself it brought no little prestige to the Free Church that the most commanding figure in the Church life of the day was her leader. It had been a wrench to Chalmers to leave the Establishment; but much as he loved it, he loved the Church's spiritual rights more. His affection was transferred to the Free Church. He became a teacher of her ministry, and he set himself to carry out his great idea of ministerial support in a Church practically disestablished. All the world knows the scheme which Chalmers got ready and produced when the Disruption took place. He called it the *Sustentation Fund*. Out of pennies, those littles in whose power he so firmly believed, Chalmers set himself to raise a fund for the support of an Evangelical ministry in the whole of Scotland. His scheme was a phenomenal success. "The power of littles," he said in the General Assembly of 1844, "is wonderful. I began with pennies: I now come down to pinches, and say that if we get but a tenth of the snuff used by Highlanders—every tenth pinch—it would enable us to support our whole ecclesiastical system in the Highlands. It is astonishing the power of infinitesimals. The mass of the planet Jupiter is made up of infinitesimals; and surely, after that, it is in the power of infinitesimals to make up a stipend for the minister of Ballachulish!"

The years that followed the Disruption were used by Chalmers in helping to build up and consolidate the Free Church. His *Sustentation Fund* occupied much of his time. He had, also, his work among his students. Writing books, travelling, preaching, kept him always busy. One memorable bit of work was in the West Port of Edinburgh, where he established and

organised a Home Mission Church—here again proving himself the pioneer in some of the Church's noblest enterprises.

In 1847 he was called to London to give evidence before a Committee on the subject of sites for Free churches. It was his last public work, but characteristic of all his work, inasmuch as it meant labour for others. After an enjoyable visit to London, Dr. Chalmers returned in the end of May (Friday, May 28th). His biographer tells us that he bore "no peculiar marks of fatigue or exhaustion." On Saturday he worked at a Report which he intended to lay before the Assembly on the following Monday. On Sabbath he went to church. "During the whole of the evening," says Dr. Hanna, "as if he had kept his brightest smiles and fondest utterances to the last, and for his own, he was peculiarly bland and benignant. 'I had seen him frequently,' says Mr. Gemmel, 'at Fairlie, and in his most happy moods, but I never saw him happier. Christian benevolence beamed from his countenance, sparkled in his eye, and played upon his lips. Immediately after prayers he withdrew, and bidding his family remember that they must be early tomorrow, he waved his hand, saying, 'A general Good-night.'"

"Next morning," continues Dr. Hanna, "before eight o'clock Professor McDougall, who lived in the house adjoining, sent to enquire about a packet of papers which he had expected to receive at an earlier hour. The housekeeper, who had been long in the family, knocked at the door of Dr. Chalmers' room, but received no answer. Concluding that he was asleep, and unwilling to disturb him, she waited till another party called with a second message; she then entered the room—it was in darkness; she spoke, but there was no response. At last she threw open the window-shutters, and drew aside the curtains of the bed. He sat there, half erect, his head reclining gently on the pillow; the expression of his countenance that of fixed and majestic repose. She took his hand—she touched his brow; he had been dead for hours; very shortly after that parting salute to his family he had entered the eternal

world. It must have been wholly without pain or conflict. The expression of the face undisturbed by a single trace of suffering, the position of the body so easy that the least struggle would have disturbed it, the very posture of arms and hands and fingers known to his family as that into which they fell naturally in the moments of entire repose,—conspired to show that, saved all strife with the last enemy, his spirit had passed to its place of blessedness and glory in the Heavens.”

B. Thomas Chalmers had served his generation and fallen on sleep. All Scotland mourned its big-hearted leader, its eloquent preacher, its generous thinker. All Scotland mourned him in the consciousness that such men as he are rare in the world's history, and come only in the crises of a Church's or a Nation's life. Hugh Miller closed his account of the funeral in these touching words: “It was the dust of a Presbyterian minister which the coffin contained; and yet they were burying him amid the tears of a nation, and with more than kingly honours.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LITERATURE.—Grub, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, vol. iv.; Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*, vol. ii.; Alex. Carlyle, *Autobiography*; Bryce, *Ten Years of the Church*; Buchanan, *Ten Years' Conflict*; *Annals of the Disruption*; P. Bayne, *Free Church of Scotland*; N. L. Walker, *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland*; R. Logan, *The United Free Church* (1906); Hanna, *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers*; Dodds, *Thomas Chalmers, a Biographical Study*; Mrs. Oliphant, *Thomas Chalmers*; Blaikie, *Thomas Chalmers* (Famous Scots Series), etc.



## CHAPTER XV.

### ROBERT RAINY.

*A.* When the history of the Scottish Church in the nineteenth century comes to be written, it is certain that the name of Robert Rainy will take a place by itself, as undoubtedly that of a real Maker of the Church. His name will stand beside those of Knox, Henderson, and Carstares. Rainy belonged to the same succession. He had the far-seeing intuition of Knox: he had the spirituality, breadth of brow, and idealism of Henderson: he had the caution, diplomacy, and statesmanship of Carstares. What he was to Scotland and to the Scottish Church will not be accurately seen until it becomes possible to look back on his work from the standpoint of a future generation. It is not possible to do it now, when the Church of Christ in Scotland is still feeling keenly his loss. But no account of the Makers of the Scottish Church could be complete without some appreciation, however slight, of Principal Rainy.

1. The problems which faced an ecclesiastical statesman such as Principal Rainy were the compelling problems of an age of readjustment. They were not, of course, the problems of the centuries of the past. They were not the problems of Church government with which Henderson and Melville and Carstares had to wrestle. Nor were they the problems of State domination which had been fought out by the Secession fathers and the mer of 1843. But the problems of an age of readjustment went back

fundamentally to the same old problems of Liberty, and there was involved in them the same time-old question of the Church's Spiritual Independence. The problems involved in readjustment were crystallised in questions such as these : Was the Church of Christ free to follow what she thought to be the mind of Christ? Was she free to follow, in doctrine as in ecclesiastical polity, where she thought her living Lord was leading her? Was she free to follow the mind of Christ?

For, undoubtedly, the last fifty years of the nineteenth century was a time of readjustment. An epoch-making conflict had been fought to an issue in 1843, and one half of the Scottish Church had gone out from the connection of the State under the belief that in so doing it was following the mind of Christ. The enthusiasms of an age of conflict sent the men of 1843 forward to consecrated work for Scotland ; while the pain of disruption and the fire of separation made the body which remained in connection with the State more eager to go forward in what was conceived to be its work for Scotland.

Very quickly after 1843 it began to be felt that readjustment must come. If a Church was free, she must follow a living Christ ; and if a Church was living and free, she must grow. The Church could not stand still. The last word on the mind of Christ was not said in 1843, any more than two hundred years before. The men of 1647 acknowledged that the Church could not stand still, and George Gillespie in his *Treatise of Miscellany Questions* stated a truth which requires to be emphasised to-day as much as in the seventeenth century. "It ought," he said, "to be our desire and endeavour to grow in the knowledge of the mind of Christ, to follow on to know the Lord, to seek after more and more light."<sup>1</sup> How was it possible for the Church of 1843 to stand still? Everywhere light was streaming in. Knowledge had broadened immensely. Science gave new interpretations of life. Scientific theories were propounded which gave new views of the universe, and made men revise their thought in almost all

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise of Miscellany Questions*, Edin. 1649, pp. 124 f.

departments of knowledge. Those fifty years were years of advance and progress. Under the compelling and dominating thought of the century, which was assuredly that of development, readjustments in the Church's creed and outlook became inevitable. Fundamental articles of faith came under a fresh review. The Being and Personality of God ; the plan of Salvation ; the place and character and origins of Holy Scripture ; the nature of Man ; the fact of sin and the fact of Christ ; all came under a fresh and vitalising criticism, a criticism which the urgent scientific thought of the age had made inevitable.

Further, within the Scottish Churches themselves it was soon apparent that readjustment was called for. We are not concerned here with movements inside the State Church, for these movements affect us only indirectly in a study of the life-work of Principal Rainy. In the Nonconformist or Free Churches it soon became apparent, after 1843, that movements deeply affecting their government and polity were looming in the future. Four years after the Disruption of 1843, the Secession Churches in Scotland practically all united to form a United Presbyterian Church. Questions almost immediately arose about the relations between the Free Church of 1843 and the United Presbyterian Church of 1847. Were these Churches, with so many points of agreement and so few points of difference, to stand apart, contenting themselves with a union of co-operation? Or were they to look forward to something more, something higher and more in touch with the mind of Christ, a union of incorporation? That was the problem which began to bear with insistent pressure on the Free Churches of Scotland. More and more it became visible that some readjustment was inevitable. As the sense of the Church's mission bore in upon her ; as the Churches themselves realised that their energies must be concentrated, not only in facing the evil at home, but in facing a vaster problem in heathenism abroad ; as the Churches began to see more clearly in what direction the mind of Christ lay, the cry for an incorporating union grew louder, and forces began to work in men's

minds which sooner or later had to result in readjustment. It became clear that among Churches where differences were trivial in comparison with agreements, it was a duty to concentrate forces. And the same inward compulsion had an outflow beyond the Nonconformist Churches in Scotland. The question persistently arose in men's minds: What of the future of the whole Presbyterian Church in Scotland? What of the ultimate relation between the State Church and the Free Churches? What of the future and reconstructed Scottish Church?

2. These, then, are some of the problems of the last fifty years of Scottish Church History. They are problems which have to a considerable extent been solved. Where they have not been solved, we have been privileged to see some glimpse of the solution. One thing at least has become clear, that the path of the Church's future in Scotland lies along the line of Spiritual Independence. The Church can go forward safely only as she keeps before her the steady light of the mind of Christ. Only in loyalty to that mind and in the freedom which loyalty brings, can the Church go forward safely and surely in the work assigned her of bringing in the kingdom of God in Scotland.

*B.* Now, it may be confidently said that Scotland has received few greater gifts in helping her to solve the problems, made so inevitable by forces working toward readjustment, than the subtle intellect, fine faith, and consecrated statesmanship of Principal Rainy.

1. Though the outstanding facts of Dr. Rainy's life have been familiar to the Scotland of his own generation, yet they may be re-stated here, however briefly. He was born in Glasgow on January 1st, 1826. His father was one of the best known physicians of Glasgow, holding for long the chair of Medical Jurisprudence in Glasgow University. In 1844 Dr. Rainy began to study for the Church. He had come fully under the inspiring influences of the Disruption, and to the end he carried in his heart "the coal of red love" to the living Christ, the Head of

His own Body, the Church. His first charge was at Huntly, to which he was ordained on January 22, 1851. He was called from Huntly to the High Church, Edinburgh, in 1854. Some words from his farewell sermon, on June 25th, 1854, may be quoted, as illustrative of the Evangelical intensity which characterised his life: "Now, then, for the last time I testify to you the salvation of Christ Jesus. I testify to those who have believed that this is the grace of God, wherein ye stand, by which ye shall be saved, if ye keep in memory that which has been delivered to you, unless ye have believed in vain. For the last time, I testify to all that there is no name under heaven but the name of Christ by which ye can be saved."<sup>1</sup>

After a little more than eight years of a ministry in the High Church, Edinburgh, Dr. Rainy was appointed to the chair of Church History in the New College; and with the New College, first as Professor, and then as Principal, Dr. Rainy was identified to the day of his death. In the work of the College, in its up-building and development, he took a full and leading part. It is difficult to estimate the gift he was to the Church and the ministry of Scotland; for the quickening influences of such a broad and fine mind and of such a lofty faith must have been incalculable.

The Free Church soon began to realise that in Dr. Rainy there was a spirit of wisdom and of understanding. As the leaders of 1843 began to pass away, the Church found cause to thank God that the mantle of Chalmers, of Cunningham, and of Candlish was to fall on worthy shoulders. Dr. Rainy's first appearance in the General Assembly of the Church has been often described. It came about in connection with a case affecting the soundness in the faith of a few Glasgow students. The case came before the Assembly of 1859, and the champions of orthodoxy, Dr. Gibson and Dr. Begg, were much perturbed. Dr. Peter Bayne has so graphically described the appearance of Dr. Rainy on the floor of the Assembly that his words, though often quoted, may be

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in *Expository Times*, March 1907.

once again referred to : "A young man, with light golden hair, like a figure out of a Daniel vision, appeared on the scene, and in a speech of remarkable clearness suggested that the two venerable fathers in the panoply of their mature orthodoxy had been unable to sympathise with the eccentricities of growing minds. The speaker was Mr. Rainy, who had suddenly become famous in the Church as the successor of Dr. Gordon. I have the most vivid recollection of the change, visible as the illumination that follows in the wake of a cloud-shadow moving across a landscape, which accompanied his words. The darkness went, the light came, the gloom rose from every brow, the difficulty had vanished, and from that hour the young mind of the Church put its trust in the new leader."

From the time of that first appearance in the Church's debates it was impossible for Dr. Rainy to remain a mere onlooker. More and more he was driven forward as a leader, and there were few movements in Scottish religious thought and enterprise which failed to find in him an eager helper. His life seemed to touch in every vital point the best life of his generation. In his own Church, more especially after the death of Dr. Candlish in 1873, his influence as a leader was undisputed. His experience was so vast, his vision so clear, his power of seeing things from all points of view so remarkable, and his aims so disinterested, that his Church was glad and proud to follow where he led. No one who has not seen him in the deliberations of a General Assembly will ever understand the power which he exercised. His was the last word, and it was final. He seemed to gather into his wonderful mind all the elements in a question ; and when he gave his opinion or stated his case, it seemed to most so lucid and reasonable that nothing more was to be said.

2. To describe in full the life of Principal Rainy as an ecclesiastical statesman would be to write the history of the Scottish Church from 1850 to 1906. Here one can select only certain movements, and those more especially which bear on the Church's liberty to follow the mind of Christ.

(1) One of the first movements to emerge in the Church of the Disruption was a movement toward Union with the United Presbyterian Church. This movement came prominently before the Church in 1863. In the ten years between 1863 and 1873, Union was keenly discussed. In 1873 it was resolved in the General Assembly of the Free Church that for the time at least negotiations should cease. Ten years of agitation had made it abundantly clear that there was no insuperable barrier to Union ; that in Creed, as well as in Worship, Government, and Discipline, the agreements between the two Churches were in such overwhelming preponderance that the differences ought to be ignored. Further, as Dr. Rainy graphically put it in 1867, the negotiations had "completely extricated the whole Presbyterianism of Scotland from all voluntarism that was mere political voluntarism, or that was of the nature of irreligious and infidel voluntarism." While the negotiations had been of far-reaching, and, indeed, prophetic character, they had made it abundantly clear that from a practical point of view the time was not fully ripe for Union. Yet there was much to justify Dr. Candlish's words in 1873, "Our prayer will be for the speedy revival of the Union movement. I do not expect to see it, but I do venture to predict that you will not all be in your graves before that day comes. We cannot stem the tide of Christian opinion and Christian feeling. That tide of Christian opinion and Christian feeling will grow and swell and accumulate till every barrier shall be thrown down, and all shall be of one mind to unite in the Lord." In October 1900, Dr. Candlish's prophecy was in a large measure realised. No one did more to realise it than the leader who so loyally supported Dr. Candlish in 1873 ; and when the Union was consummated in 1900, the sense of the Church's indebtedness to Dr. Rainy was expressed when he was appointed first Moderator of the United Free Church.

(2) Closely allied to the question of Union in Dr. Rainy's career as an ecclesiastical statesman was the question of Disestablishment. Of the policy of Disestablishment Principal Rainy was a

convinced exponent. He urged the policy on his own Church and on the people of Scotland with untiring zeal. It is certain that his own motives in urging it were of the loftiest. It is scarcely conceivable that petty motives could have actuated the consistent and self-denying activities of a lifetime, nor is it conceivable that mean jealousies towards a sister Scottish Church could have reposed in such a fine and noble nature. He carried on an agitation for Disestablishment, not simply because he was convinced that Disestablishment would be an act of political justice, but because he believed that the interests of the Kingdom of God in Scotland were bound up with such a policy. He conceived that the severing of the tie between Church and State would be a gain to the religious life of Scotland, a gain to the present Established Church of Scotland, and a gain to the people whose highest interests were close to his heart. He had a further motive. So far as he could see, the scattered branches of Presbyterianism in Scotland could be reunited only on the basis of a complete liberty, a liberty which in his judgment was not possible so long as the tie between Church and State was retained. From these motives Dr. Rainy strenuously advocated Disestablishment, and in his views he carried with him a large number of the members of his Church, certainly the vast majority of his ministerial brethren. In the last speech which he made on the subject in the General Assembly of the United Free Church, Dr. Rainy spoke very clearly of what had been his lifelong attitude on Disestablishment. The speech was made on May 31, 1906, the year of his death, and may be regarded as his last word on the whole question. Referring to the position which the question had occupied in the case of the Free Church, Dr. Rainy said: "This Church and State Committee originated somewhere in the seventies; and the view which was in his own mind at the time, for he had a good deal to do with it, as to the necessity of giving this subject what they might call a standing-place in the proceedings and life of the Church, was this—that it was quite plain that the relation in which they stood to the



Established Church, as a sister Presbyterian Church, and the relations in which Presbyterianism was placed generally in Scotland, would continually raise the question of the possibility of reuniting Presbyterianism in Scotland. . . . He made up his mind, as many of them did at the time, that it was essentially due to the public, especially to their own people, due to the Established Church itself, that they should steadily and constantly make it plain that in their view reunion should not take place on the basis of Establishment."

(3) If we turn from questions of Government to questions of Doctrine, we shall find Dr. Rainy's place at the centre of his Church's life. No study of Principal Rainy could be complete without a reference to his action in the Robertson-Smith controversy. This controversy, which came definitely before the General Assembly in 1877, arose in connection with the publication by the Hebrew Professor in Aberdeen of certain articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, notably the article "Bible." Professor Robertson Smith was the most brilliant scholar in Scotland of his generation : he was a reverent critic of Scripture, Evangelical, and Calvinistic in his religious thinking : and it is acknowledged that many of the best minds in Scotland owed to him a high intellectual and spiritual impulse. Principal Rainy's own mind was deeply in sympathy with progress, and nothing was distasteful to him which could bring light on the mind of the Spirit as revealed in Holy Scripture. He was exceedingly unwilling that the Church should be brought to judge categorically on the questions of Higher Criticism brought before it. He saw very clearly that the mind of the Church was not ready for a categorical judgment, and it seemed to him that the processes of discussion were of much more value to the Church, as a discipline and preparation for progress, than any hard and fast judgment on the questions discussed by Professor Robertson Smith. He saw, also, clearly that if these questions of criticism were forced to a decision, there was the gravest risk of the peace of the Church being broken ; and when the peace of the Church

was broken, then the work for which the Church was set apart in Scotland would be greatly hindered. The Church's zeal ran a danger of becoming emasculated in controversy.

It is clear that Principal Rainy's action in this famous case was dictated from motives such as those just mentioned. The case was finally settled in 1881, when on Dr. Rainy's motion it was decided that Professor Robertson Smith should discontinue his teaching in the College of Aberdeen.

It is difficult to pass judgment on the action of Dr. Rainy in this case. It is difficult to realise all the considerations that appealed to an ecclesiastical statesman, such as Dr. Rainy was. Yet no one to-day will deny that his action was based on the highest motives and on a single desire to maintain the peace and unity and progress of the Church. He was certainly no obscurantist; and he would be a bold man, or an ignorant, who would describe Dr. Rainy as an opportunist. As for his own attitude on the critical questions affecting Scripture, no better statement of these could be found than in connection with the agitation about Professor G. A. Smith, which came before the Assembly in Glasgow in 1902. On that occasion Dr. Rainy delivered a speech which will probably take rank among the noblest of his utterances. His contention in that speech was that the Church must face facts and that the Bible would be the richer to them for all the facts that could be gathered. "If," he said, "the [alleged] facts turned out to be facts, the discovery to them would very likely involve pain; but if the facts were facts, the ascertainment of them would be pure gain, so far as they were facts, to everyone." "They would find themselves acquiring a new way of understanding the mind of God." "The peculiarity of the Bible was that it lived through all revelations of unexpected facts." "If they asked him what his outlook on the subject was, he should say that he did not believe that this long scrutiny, this critical scrutiny, had accomplished nothing. . . . He believed there would be—at least he thought it very likely—facts to be recognised and consequences of the

facts that would require to be admitted into their minds. . . . The Bible would live triumphantly through all facts which were facts established, and through all consequences that followed from them." In his closing address as Moderator in 1905, Dr. Rainy referred in memorable words to the same matter of Biblical Criticism. Speaking of the controversies of Criticism, he said: "The Bible is to us what it has always been. We go to it to learn the ways of God with man, and of man with God; we go to it that we may hear God speaking and may answer to Him again; we go to learn what the kingdom of God is, what the way of salvation is, what Christ is and does, how great is our need of Him, and how great His fulness to supply our need. . . . Of the great mass of matter which goes by the name of criticism, much will perish in the fire of criticism itself, and many a new theory which presents itself as settled will have to withdraw itself again into the region of the questionable and the unknown. But what if the Scriptures are a more wonderful vehicle of revelation even than we had thought them to be,—more adequate to the wants of each succeeding age, more fitted to bring the Divine mind and the human into saving fellowship than we had supposed? And what if this tumult of criticism is the needful discipline through which we must pass that we may eventually see more clearly and catch the Divine meaning more sensitively?"

(4) If we pass now from problems of readjustment in doctrine once more to problems of Church government, we may rest assured that the verdict of History will acclaim the Union of 1900 as at least the most memorable achievement of Principal Rainy's ecclesiastical statesmanship. The Union of 1900 and the events which followed it revealed to Scotland not merely the constructive statesmanship of a great Church leader but the faith and the steadfastness of a great man. The Union itself is so recent an event in Scottish Church History that one may be excused from enlarging on it here. Nor need we describe in detail the events which followed it with startling,

almost tragic, rapidity. A small minority of the old Free Church refused to enter the Union, and appealed to the Law Courts. The Scottish Law Courts, knowing the Church to be a living Body, decided in favour of the majority and of the Union. The case was appealed to the House of Lords, and on August 1st, 1904, the notorious judgment was given, declaring that the minority represented the Church of 1843, and that the property of the Free Church was theirs. No one will forget the wave of indignant surprise which swept over Scotland, or the calmness and faith with which the United Free Church, under the leadership of Dr. Rainy, faced the crisis. It was clearly recognised by the people that the judgment was inequitable, and Parliament in 1905 passed a Churches' (Scotland) Act, appointing also a Commission, through whose labours the practical effects of the judgment of 1904 have to a large extent been nullified.

The Union of 1900 was a moving incident in Scottish Church History. In itself it was no colourless event. In respect of the loyalty with which the Church in a day of keen trial clung to it, it was momentous. The United Free Church was convinced that in clinging to Union she was following the mind of Christ and the pathway of liberty. That truth was graphically expressed by Principal Rainy in 1905. "Our faith as a Church," he said, "is not grounded in the wisdom of our fathers: no human councils authoritatively bind it. Our orthodoxy is not guaranteed by civil restraints. We are as a Church subject to the Church's Head; we receive His revelation in the Word; and looking for the promised grace of His Holy Spirit, we are free because we must hold ourselves ready to obey One only."

But the Union was great, also, because it was prophetic. It was prophetic of a larger Union, which must come when "the tides of Christian opinion and Christian feeling" shall have so accumulated that no barrier shall withstand them. How or when that Union shall be consummated no one knows; yet one

need not hesitate to express one's conviction that it can come only in the line of freedom, only on the basis of separation between Church and State. That future is the hope and ideal of Evangelical Christendom in Scotland. Out of struggle and persecution and seeming defeat, out of secessions and disruptions, there is being evolved—shall we say?—another Scottish Church, holding all that was best in what the Fathers held, holding still to the great traditions of the past, the Headship of Christ, the priesthood of the believer, the supremacy of Scripture, the Spiritual Independence of the Church ; holding, therefore, all that was worthiest and best in the past, and yet, as we believe, a Church higher, more consecrated, and nearer to the loving mind of Christ, the Church's living Lord.

One of Dr. Rainy's achievements in Scottish Church History is that he was the means of bringing the realisation of that ideal nearer. He himself was not privileged to see that larger Union, except afar off.

C. We may close this chapter on the most recent of the Makers of the Scottish Church by telling the few brief facts of his death. In 1906 illness had laid its hand on Dr. Rainy, and on October 24th he left for Melbourne, in the hope that a sea-voyage might strengthen him. He reached Melbourne only to die, and on December 22nd, 1906, he fell on sleep. On Thursday, March 7th, 1907, he was buried in the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh ; and in the hush of that day Scotland realised that one of her biggest and bravest sons was being laid to rest.

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