FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

1843 1893

A JUBILEE STORY FOR THE YOUNG

By

THE REV JAMES WELLS M.A.

THE PROCESSION ON THE 18TH OF MAY 1843

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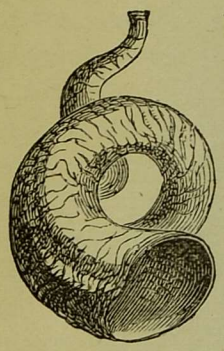
A JUBILEE STORY.

I. The Jubilee.



In olden times trumpets were made by adding a little mouthpiece to the tip of such a crumpled ram's horn as is pictured on this page. Home-made trumpets of this sort are still used in our Highlands. Blown by lusty lungs, they give a swelling sound, like *ee-oo-bel.* As a child finds his name for an animal or engine in the sound it makes, so the Jews (if we are to believe the Rabbis) called their rustic trumpet a *jeubel.* The name naturally passed over to the great festival ushered in every fifty years by the trumpet's joyful blast. The Jews counted from the day of their leaving Egypt 'seven Sabbaths of years,' or 'seven times seven years.' The fiftieth was thus their wonderful year. They then rehearsed to themselves and their children the romance of providence that had made them a nation. They hoped that this moving recital would help to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and their fathers' God. Leviticus xxv. discovers to us in the Jubilee of the Jews these five ideas—the celebration of the past, grateful joy, freedom for all, unusual generosity, and a fresh start in the service of Jehovah. Here is a good guide for all who wish a good Jubilee.

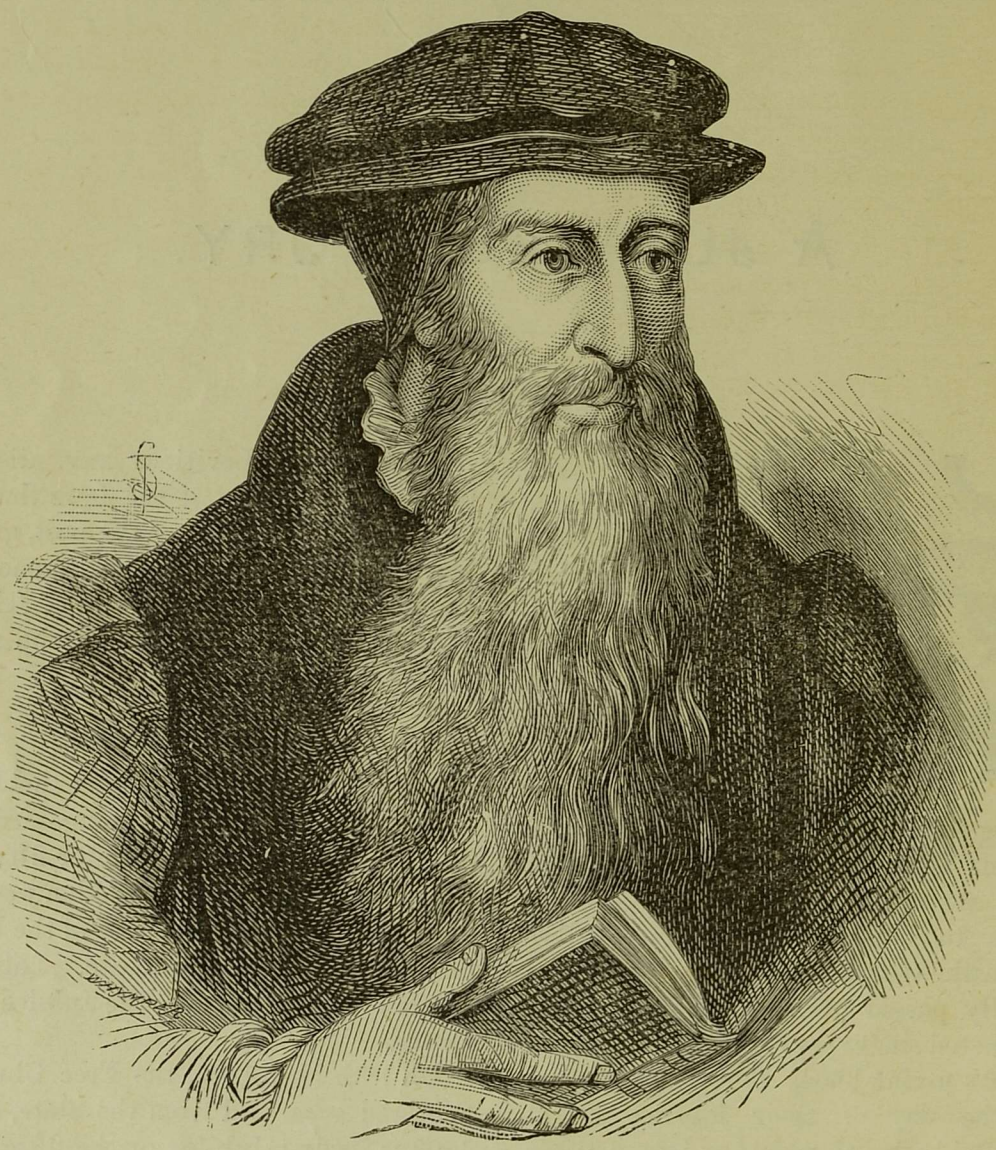
II. Our Jubilee.

We Gentiles have borrowed the Jubilee—both the name and the thing—from the Jews. Husband and wife, after fifty years of wedded life, hold their 'golden wedding.' We celebrate the fiftieth year of the history of a congregation or pastorate. Lately the whole empire celebrated the Jubilee of our Queen.

On 18th May 1843, the Free Church of Scotland separated from the State, so that 1893 is its first Jubilee, or the fiftieth year of its freedom. I wish to tell you the story of your Church as simply and fairly as I can.

He is a very poor Scotsman who does not dearly love his own country. I don't want you rudely to boast, as some schoolboys do, that ours is the grandest country

in the world, and that our soldiers have beat all the soldiers in Europe. That were mean and heathenish. But I wish you to think what a mighty boon it is to have been born and bred in Scotland. Men of many other nations envy you this high privilege. The study of Scotland's spirit-stirring history will nurse in you that love of liberty and resistance to oppression which are native to all noble hearts. And it will teach you to value your birthright, which to most people is like the air that counts for nothing, though they cannot live without it. Now, the biggest fact in our history is the Church of Christ. You can never understand your country until you know the history of the Kirk. Modern Scotland was born in the year of the Reformation, which, Carlyle says, was 'a resurrection as from death.' Great



JOHN KNOX.

historians tell us that the Scottish Kirk has made the Scottish nation, and done more for education than has been done in any other country in the world. From these heroic efforts 'old Scotia's grandeur springs.' The Kirk, led by John Knox, won freedom for Scotland—and, many say, for Europe also. In our land civil and religious liberty have been the twin daughters of the mother Church, though religious liberty was the first-born. I once travelled with an Italian doctor who hated the Church and priests of Rome. I told him that I was a minister of the gospel in Scotland. His face kindled like a fire new stirred. 'Ah,' said he, 'your Scotland has not priests, but pastors, and they have been heroes, and the best friends of the people. Had our priests been like your pastors, my Italy had not been crushed in the dust for ages.' Prize, then, the heroic struggles by which your sires won your freedom: for even savages are careful to keep in memory, and draw inspiration from, the brave deeds of their fathers; and, as one has said, they who will not commemorate the great achievements of their ancestors, shall achieve nothing worthy of commemoration

III. Our Clue.

Long ago, a visitor to the Catacombs of Rome carried in his hand a ball of thread, unwinding it as he ventured into the gloomy labyrinths. He was safe as long as he held the thread in his hand. He easily got back to the light of day by winding the thread upon the ball. There is a clue to guide us through all the labyrinths of our Church history. I shall now try to put that clue into your hand. Attention, then; for the moving thread may easily be lost or tangled.

For more than three hundred years Church and State have been struggling with each other in Scotland. Now what exactly is the Church? and what is the State? Unless we understand these two words, we shall, like the 'Babes in the Wood,' lose our way and never reach the open. By the State we mean all who make and carry out the laws of the land—the King, Parliament, the judges, and their officers. 'Cæsar,' the name of the first emperor, and the title of all the other emperors, of Rome, is a handy name for the whole of them. With us, as with our forefathers, the word 'Cæsar' shall stand for the whole State, as it is used by Christ in this sense. In the New Testament you read of 'the Church,' and 'the Churches;' that is, the one fold, and the several flocks. The Church, in its largest sense, embraces all who are, or shall yet be, Christ's; all who have found, or yet shall find, room in the Father's many mansions. This is 'the glorious Church,' 'the bride,' which Christ is to present to Himself in heaven (Eph. v. 27). This is 'the Church invisible,' for you cannot point to any visible society and say, 'There is the whole Church of Christ.' It is also called 'the one, holy, catholic Church,'—not, mark you, the Roman Catholic Church, which is a very different thing. You also read of 'the Churches of Asia,' 'the Church at Corinth,' etc. All these visible Churches were formed of professing Christians and their children. They tried to find out the will of Christ their King, and to do it; and they obeyed Cæsar in all things except the great things of the soul.

Church and State have both been founded by God; they should both serve Him, and work to one another's hands; each is free in its own sphere; matters of conscience and religion are not under Cæsar's power; he should let men serve Christ in the way they think best. This is our clue. I

give you a text as our motto: 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

IV. Our Reformers.

In 1560 nearly all Scotland left the Church of Rome. The Pope claimed to be the head of the Church and Cæsar's Cæsar. The Reformation in England had brought about a change in the Pope, but not in the popedom. King Henry VIII. had become the head of the Church in place of the Pope, and our Scottish Cæsar wished to do the same in Scotland. John Knox and his comrades prevented him. They went up past all 'the puddles of human tradition' to the pure fountains of Holy Scripture. That, surely, was common sense. They wished the Kirk to come as near as possible to the Church of the apostles. Thus they would have no bishops but such as were chosen by the people in the early Church. As these *bishops* are usually called *presbyters* in the New Testament, our Reformers became Presbyterians. Our Parliament is presbyterial. It is a free, representative government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In this matter the Church has been nineteen hundred years before the State; for the State is now only approaching that model of free government with which the Church of Christ started. Our Reformers also held that, in the things pertaining to God, the Kirk should

THE TWO KINGDOMS IN SCOTLAND.

ANDREW MELVILLE BEFORE KING JAMES VI. AND COUNCIL, PERTH, JULY 6, 1582.

be as free to obey Christ as were the Churches founded by the apostles. To the Scottish Parliament they declared, 'We confess and avow Christ Jesus to be the only Head of His Kirk, our just Lawgiver, our only High Priest, Advocate, and Mediator.' These bold words show that the Church of Scotland was freeborn. One wonders how anybody can doubt this.

'No mortal man can be head of the Church,' declared John Knox. Andrew Melville, his successor, said to King James, 'Sire, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of the Commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus, whose subject James VI. is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member.' 'The Scottish Presbytery agreeth with monarchy as well as God and the devil,' said King James. Quite right, King James, if by monarchy you mean 'the right divine' to do what you like in all things secular and sacred. You think that the people of Scotland have been made for the uses of yourself and your shameless crew, and that, if they dare to differ from you in religion, they are criminals. But our Reformers spoiled your kingcraft by their hearty faith in the 'crown-rights' of Christ, in the God-given rights of the Christian people, and in the great doctrine that God alone is Lord of the conscience.

Noble thinkers in every age have taught that within every earthly kingdom there is a spiritual kingdom, of which conscience, and not Cæsar, is king; and that where the dominion of conscience begins, the dominion of Cæsar ends. Cæsar in Athens ordered Socrates to conform to the State religion. Socrates replied that, in teaching truth, he must obey God rather than man. He received for answer a cup of hemlock juice. Thus Socrates, in his own way, was a true Free Churchman.

The first battle, or rather war, between Cæsar and our Reformers, lasted for more than one hundred years (1560–1688), and it brought out 'the very fervid genius of the Scotch.' Two elephants, I should think, could scarcely carry a single copy of all the books and pamphlets written by Scotsmen upon this subject; but, with our clue in our hand, we can thread our way through, or *past*, them all into the light of day. Like all the men of their age, our Reformers had some mistaken views about toleration, yet they won both civil and religious freedom; for the gospel taught them to 'honour all men,' and thus to reverence the manhood and rights of the humblest. By firmly grasping their root-idea, you will lay without a twist the keel of the true doctrine of Church and State, and easily build up the vessel on its Cæsar-ward and Christ-ward sides.

What had for years been punished with death as treason, became in 1688 the law of our land. Not in vain had the muirs and mosses of Scotland been 'flowered with martyrs;' not in vain had the heather been dyed with the blood of Scotland's best sons. They were like the Swiss hero, Arnold of Winkelried, who, by gathering into his breast a sheaf of the enemy's spears, made an opening through which his comrades pressed on to victory

V. The Moderates.

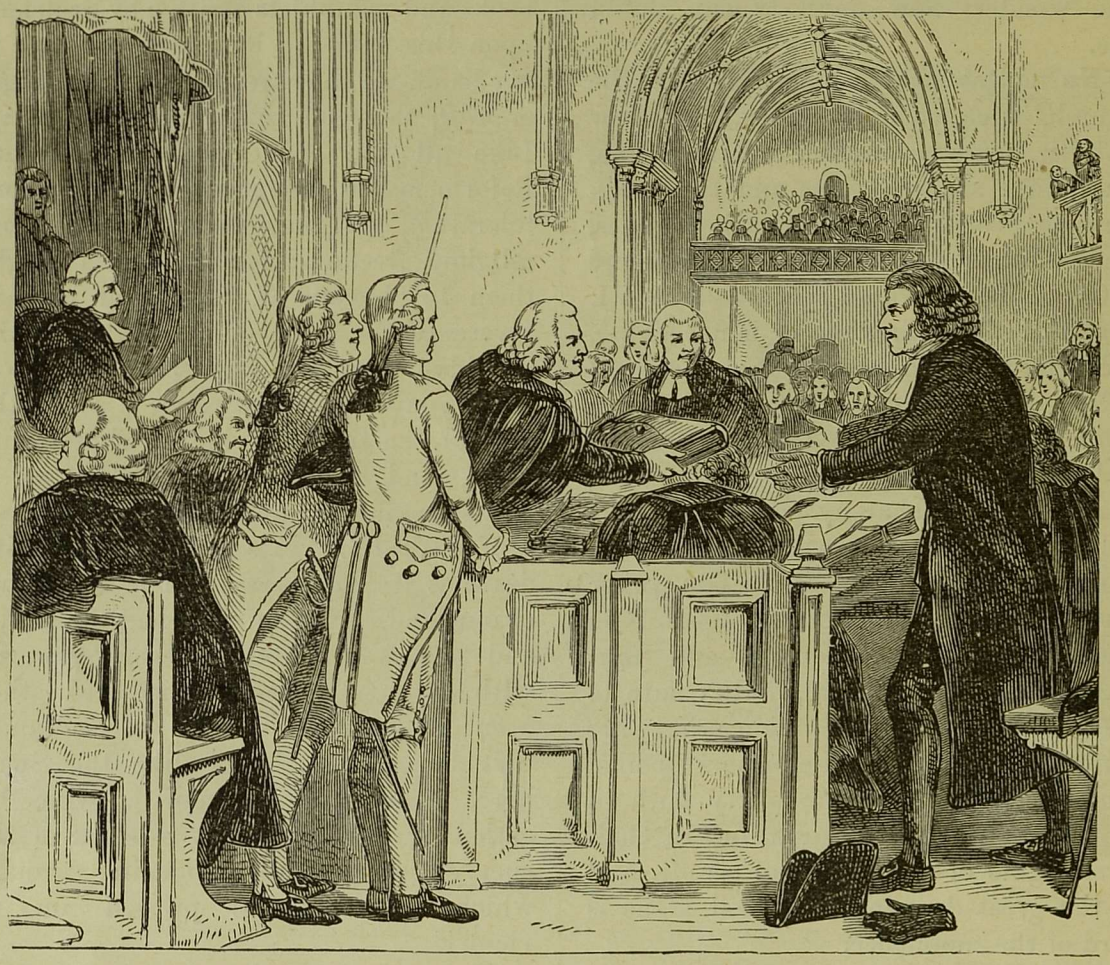
Of the two parties in the Church of Scotland, one willingly accepted the name of 'the Moderates.' They were the majority in the Church during the spiritual mid-winter of the eighteenth century.

Lord Cockburn thus defines the Moderate: 'His clay was perfectly im-

pervious to the deep and fervid spirit which is the soul of modern religion.'

Mr. Sage of Resolis has left it on record that he heard a three years' course of lectures on Christianity by the Principal of Aberdeen college—a Moderate—and that the name of Christ was never once mentioned by him. With much amazement I lately read the autobiography of Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk, one of the Moderate leaders. It showed me why earnest people have been so hard on the Moderates. It enables us to measure the great progress religion has made in our land during the last one hundred years, in spite of our many sad defects. When we compare Dr. Carlyle's days with our own, we may well thank God and take courage.

The Moderates showed little zeal in religion, except in opposing the zealous defenders of the principles of their own Church. They drove out of the Church the Erskines (in 1733) and Gillespie (in 1752), who are now represented by the United Presbyterian Church, which has over 560 congregations in Scotland, and many successful missions in foreign lands.



DR. JOHN ERSKINE AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1796. 'RAX ME THAT BIBLE.'

In 1796 the General Assembly considered Foreign Missions. The Moderates, ministers and elders, opposed the scheme as 'highly preposterous,' 'romantic and vision-

ary,' and 'highly dangerous to society,' and declared it to be 'the bounden duty of the house to give the overtures . . . our most serious disapprobation, and our immediate, most decisive opposition.' The Moderates had 58 votes against 44. Think of that, and less than a hundred years ago! The minister who made the motion was soon rewarded with the highest honour his Church could bestow.

No doubt the Church policy of the Moderates, especially in later times, was supported by many who did not hold their religious views. Dr. Inglis, the first convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, was of this number. Shortly before his death, however, he declared, 'The kingdom of Christ is not only spiritual, but independent; no earthly Government has a right to overrule or control it;'—an admirable statement of the Free Church doctrine. Then there are Moderates in all Churches; and, indeed, there is a Moderate in every Christian in some of his moods.

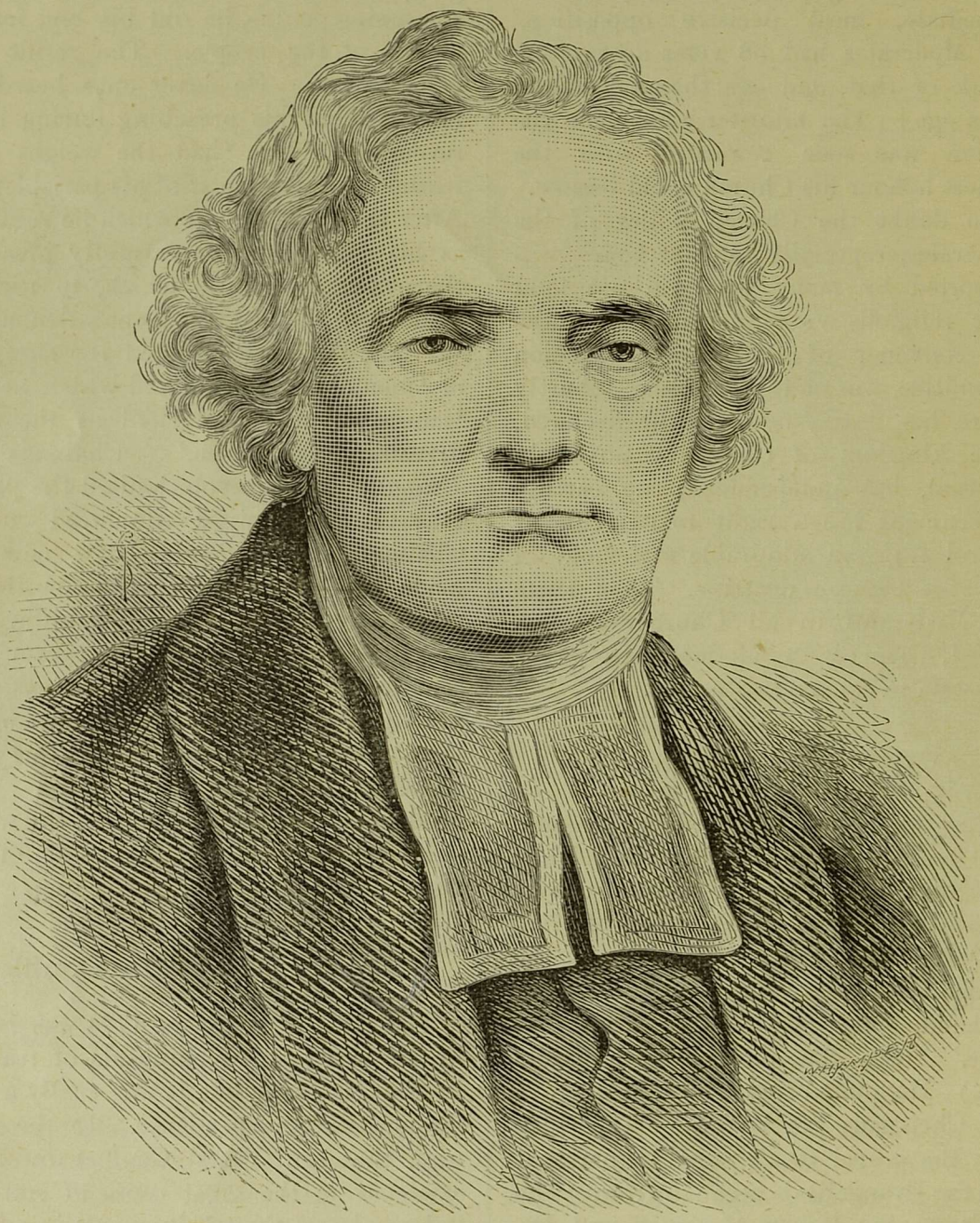
VI. The Evangelicals.

They took their name from *Evangel*, the Greek word for the Gospel. They heartily believed in its saving power. In the Anti-Missionary Assembly of 1796, Dr. John Erskine, the then leader of the Evangelicals, rose, and, stretching forth his hand, said, 'Moderator, rax me that Bible.' (See the picture on opposite page.) He quoted text after text to prove that Christians are bound by Christ to carry the gospel to all men. From that time the Evangelicals began to grow. The Haldanes, Sir Henry Moncreiff, and Dr. Andrew Thomson helped them greatly. But the man who did most to turn the tide was Thomas Chalmers. During twelve years he was minister of Kilmany, a small inland parish in Fife. During seven of these years he was a manly, cultured, high-souled Moderate. With all the aids of youthful enthusiasm, rare scholarship, and surpassing genius, he did his best for the morals of the people. The result was utter failure. He never once heard, he tells us, that his preaching during these seven years had 'had the weight of a feather on the morals' of his parishioners. After the great change which he regarded as his conversion, he earnestly preached the evangelical faith, which, to use his own words, he had vehemently denounced 'as dark and mystical,' and the sure sign of 'mental imbecility,' and which he had 'nauseated and repudiated as the most drivelling fanaticism.' Chalmers the *Evangelical* soon revolutionised the parish that had remained unmoved under Chalmers the *Moderate*. His new life made him the chief of the apostles of modern evangelism and philanthropy, and also a prince of men. He became the founder of Scottish Home Missions, and roused many to build new churches where they were sorely needed, and to carry the gospel to the homes of the poor. This good work was the occasion, as the weary strife with Cæsar was the cause, of the Disruption.

VII. The Ten Years' Conflict.

The American war in 1774 was begun by throwing a few shiploads of tea into Boston Harbour, but it was really a war for national independence. In the same way, the Ten Years' Conflict owed its existence to the great cause of spiritual independence, though it was set in motion by the comparatively small cause of patronage. This is how it began. Patronage was the plan by which one man, who was usually the biggest landowner in

the parish, chose the parish minister. The patron, as this minister-maker was called, might sometimes not care a rush for religion. He often chose a minister whom the people would not have, and now and again the minister of his choice was forced on the people by the help of the soldiers. No one questioned the patron's right to choose the factor and the gamekeeper; but the Evangelicals did not see why he should also choose the minister. By 1833 they had become



THOMAS CHALMERS.

the majority in the Church; and they decided that, at the very least, the Christian people should have a *veto*—that is, a right to say "No"—in the choice of their own ministers. The Moderates were quite willing to give Cæsar and the patron all the power they wished, but the Evangelicals held that the Church should use the freedom Christ had given her, and which the law of the land had often recognised as hers. They would not ordain ministers to whom the people objected. The Moderates and the patrons took their quarrel into the Law Courts, and the State then solemnly laid down the law that the Established Church must obey Cæsar in all things. The judges had no doubt about it. One of them said, 'I cannot admit that an Establishment can ever possess an independent jurisdiction.' Another of them declared that any other view was 'an absurdity,' and asked, 'What makes the Church of Scotland but the law?' 'It is necessary to put an extinguisher for ever upon such pretensions,' said a third; and Lord Brougham declared, in his scorn, that the objections of the Christian people to the patron's minister mattered as little as the kicking of a horse in the procession at the Queen's coronation. Except in the matter of patronage, the decision of these judges is still law. It did not leave any guarantee for permanent liberty to the State-bound Church, whatever 'liberties' might be granted as a favour that could be recalled. The Scottish judges positively commanded the ministers of the majority not to preach in some parishes, not even under the open canopy of heaven; and they threatened to put them in jail if they disobeyed. They summoned Scotland's most venerated ministers to their bar, and rebuked them as if they had been common criminals. These ministers did exactly what Peter and John did when a similar interdict was served upon them (Acts iv.). Taking their marching orders from Christ, not from Cæsar, they disobeyed a law of man which was plainly at strife with the law of God. They were guided in such high matters, not by Acts of Parliament, but by the Acts of the Apostles.

I shall now tell you two stories about patronage. A well-known rector of the Church of England, who had a warm side to our Church, told me that in London he met two young Scottish ladies, with whom he had the following conversation:—

'What Church do you belong to?'

'We belong to the Free Church of Scotland.

'Ay, ay, a strange Church that: the sheep there choose their own shepherd.'

After a pause, one of the young ladies quietly replied, 'Mr. ——, don't you think that it is better for the sheep to choose their own shepherd than to fetch the wolf into the fold to choose the shepherd for them?

'What did you say to that?' I asked.

'I could say nothing: the retort was too true.'

Here is my only mite of a Disruption memory. That great day in a boy's life, the first day at school, came to me after the Disruption. On the playground in front of me gathered a half circle of boys and girls, bending forward like a point of interrogation. One big girl, with a (to me) terrifying gesture, shouted, 'Gang awa' hame wi' ye! We dinna want ony o' the *Nons* at oor schule.' I had no idea who the *Nons* were, but it was plain that they were among the wickedest people in the world, and I wondered how I had strayed in among them. The *Nons* were the 'Non-Intrusionists,' who held that the patron's man should not be

intruded—that is, *thrust in upon* a congregation that did not want him. Their opponents had no desire then that the people should choose their own ministers.

I should tell you that of the thirteen Scottish judges, five, and these not the least distinguished, sided with the Evangelicals in their main contention, while twenty-five Scottish Members of Parliament voted for them, and only twelve against them. Had Scotland's wishes been allowed to settle Scotland's affairs, as most people now think that they should, Scotland's Church had not been again rent in twain. You will understand the subject better if I give you—

VIII. A Royal Object Lesson.

On the Queen's birthday, about the 18th of May, Edinburgh enjoys a bright gleam of royalty. With martial music, the Lord High Commissioner, who represents the Queen, then marches from the old Palace of Holyrood. He has with him many gaily-dressed servants, and many soldiers on prancing horses. He enters the Hall in which the General Assembly of the Established Church is held. There, under a purple canopy, he sits on a throne, high and large. Two or three officers, girt with swords, wait on him. Far down below, and dwarfed by the overshadowing throne, sits the Moderator, in gown and bands, with the Bible before him. Nothing can be done till the Commissioner has opened the Assembly in the name and by the authority of the Queen. No other country in the world to-day witnesses such a spectacle at the opening of a Church Court.

This practice seems to be three hundred and thirteen years old. But it carries us back to 325 A.D., when the Emperor Constantine opened the Council of Nice. He approached it 'in refulgent state,' and 'amid the tramp of armed men;' all present rose as he entered; he sat on 'a gilded seat' in the end of the hall; and he seemed to be 'the bishop of bishops.'

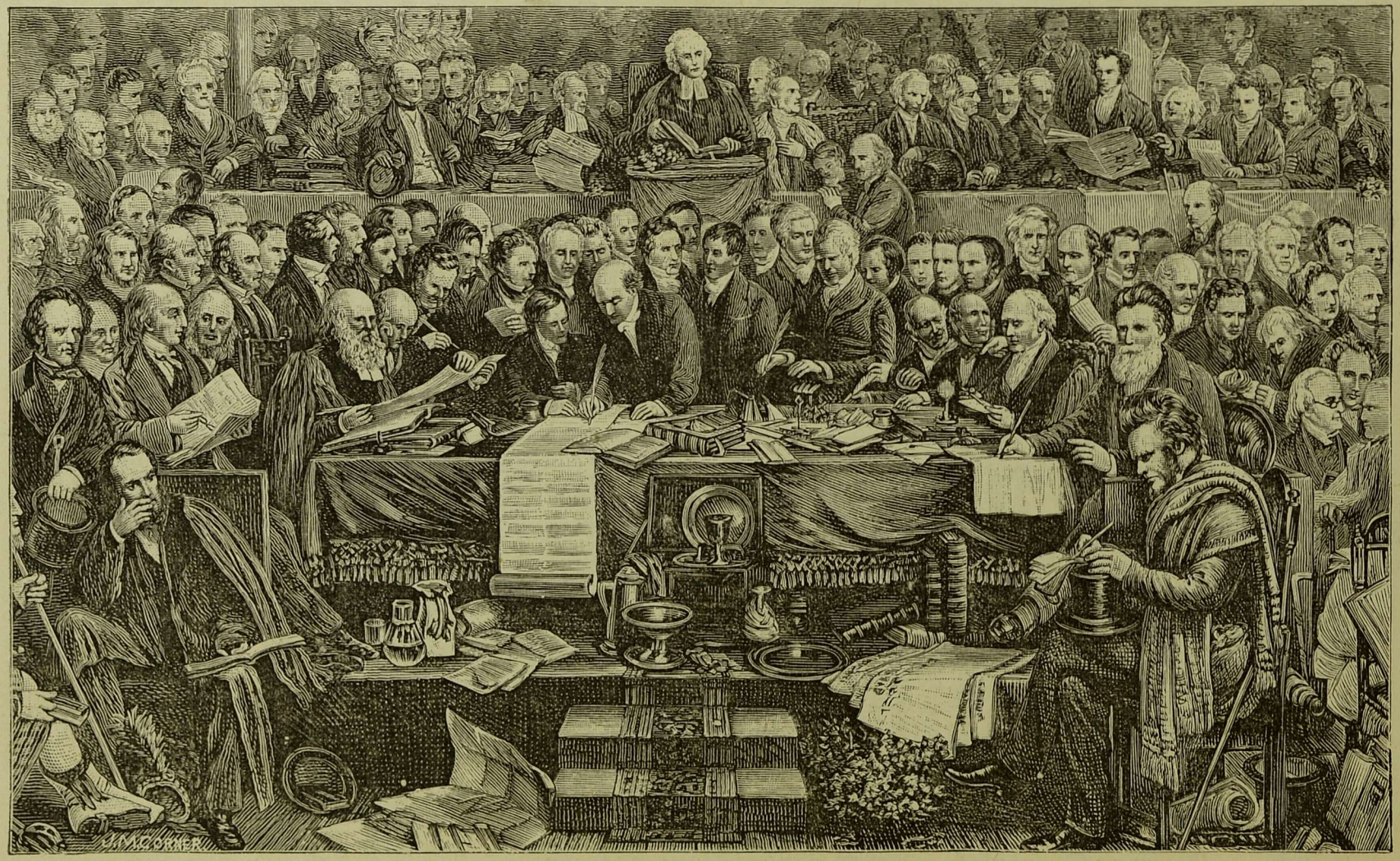
That fine sight in Edinburgh is like the bright picture which a lecturer throws by a magic lantern upon the great screen to illustrate his subject. Cæsar is both the exhibitor and the exhibited. That lofty throne and that lowly chair make plain to the eye Cæsar's idea of the proper relation between Church and State. Your fathers in '43 believed that the doings of the State in their day had given a new meaning to that royal object-lesson. They were sure that new interpretations of old laws had reclothed Cæsar with all the power he had claimed over the Church in the days when he used his sword, and the right of presiding over the General Assembly, for the purpose of destroying all religious freedom. Thus this splendid ceremony came to remind them not of the homage which Cæsar pays to the Church, but of the homage he demands from the Church, and the affront he had offered to her. If the Commissioner sat in the body of the Hall, or by the side of the Moderator, the scene might then be accepted as the symbol of a Church and State equally free in their own spheres, and working side by side for the weal of the nation. You may ask why the statesman sits above while the churchman sits below, why the sword of the soldier is so close to the sword of the Spirit, and why the Assembly can do nothing till the Commissioner has given them leave to begin. It is easy for you to ask these questions, but it is not easy rightly to answer them.

The Evangelicals had to choose State support without Scriptural freedom, or Scriptural freedom without State support.

The question filled them with sorrow, for the Queen had no more loyal subjects than they. They were most unwilling to be opposed to those in authority, and they all dearly loved their country and their Church. They saw that they must prepare for—

IX. The Disruption Day.

On 18th May 1843 the General Assembly met in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh. All felt that the time for discussion was over, and that the hour for action had arrived. After devotional exercises, Dr. Welsh, the Moderator, read a statement, called a 'Protest,' which was signed by 203 ministers and elders, who formed the majority of the duly-elected members of the General Assembly. This 'Protest' explained that they held the creed of the Church, not as it was then, for the first time, interpreted, but as it had been understood for nearly three hundred years by their fathers; that they had done their utmost to prevent the breaking up of the Church; and that they must now leave the Establishment, as they could no longer preserve within it the freedom wherewith Christ had made His Church free. Dr. Welsh then handed the Protest to the Clerk, bowed to the Commissioner (who returned the farewell with marked courtesy and emotion), quitted the Moderator's chair, and amid perfect silence walked down the passage. How many would follow? Their opponents had boasted that only a mere handful would. 'Five must, ten may, but twenty never,' one of their leaders had said. They could not believe that sensible men would give up their good stipends, their glebes, their manses, and their honoured social position for the principles at stake. Many of the foremost members in the Assembly lifted their hats and quietly made for the door, and seat after seat was emptied. The streets, the windows, the balconies, and the outside stairs were crowded. The afternoon was grey and clouded, as if Nature sympathised with the sorrow in many hearts. The sea of eager faces proved that Scotland's heart had been stirred to its depths. There was no hurry or disorder —the hour was too solemn for that. The hushed spectators of their own accord parted, and formed a narrow lane; and the outgoing men, in order to make the most of the space, had to form into a procession, three or four deep, headed by the Moderator in his robes, with Chalmers and Gordon by his side. (See picture on the cover.) For a few minutes they were greeted with respectful silence and tears; but, as the stream kept pouring out of the church door, and the onlookers gained some idea of the numbers in the procession, a deafening cheer arose, and ran on before them, amid a forest of waving handkerchiefs. Many in the crowd bade them God-speed with deep emotion, while about 300 ministers and many other adherents joined the procession. The outgoing members of Assembly, amid a whirlwind of enthusiasm, moved down Hanover Street to the Valley of Water of Leith, where a big shed, called Tanfield Hall, or Canonmills Hall, had been made ready for them. From an early hour many hundreds had been waiting in the hall. Indescribable was their excitement as they saw Scotland's spiritual leaders filling the empty seats in the centre. Dr. Chalmers was elected Moderator, and thus was constituted, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and without Cæsar's smile, the first General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. It was called 'Free' because it had none of the fetters which



THE FIRST FREE CHURCH ASSEMBLY—SIGNING THE DEED OF DEMISSION.

the State imposed as the condition of State support.

This separation from the State was held to be legally the act of the General Assembly of the undivided Church; for only a minority of its members was left with the Queen's Commissioner, and those who formed the Free Church had been the majority in the Assembly during ten years.

This deed has been sufficiently praised by all sorts of people. When Lord Jeffrey, on the Disruption day, heard how many had come out, he flung aside his book, sprang to his feet, and exclaimed, 'I am proud of my country! There is not another country on earth where such a deed could be done.' 'The judge was right,' said Dean Stanley. 'This is a great day for the Church of Christ and for the world,' exclaimed Dr. John Brown. 'The Disruption,' writes Lord Cockburn, 'is the most honourable fact for Scotland that its whole history supplies.' Justin MacCarthy, a Roman Catholic, in his *History of our Times*, writes that no deed in the history of Scotland 'surpasses it' (the Disruption) 'in dignity, and in moral grandeur.' Mr. Gladstone said lately that the Disruption had 'made the ecclesiastical history of Scotland memorable for ever.' He has also said that 'the light of it flashed all through Christendom.'

X. The First Assembly.

It was marked by wonderful brotherly love, Christian enthusiasm, and joyousness. Its members were glad to have done with wasting and unwelcome strife, and to be freed from a disabling alliance with unsympathetic yoke-fellows; they had the approbation of conscience, and they were inspired by a great enterprise. Lord Cockburn has recorded his surprise at their 'gentleness and gaiety' of heart. True, they had sacrificed their livings; but, for the selfsame cause, their predecessors had sacrificed both their livings and their lives; and, so far as their support was concerned, they were in the same position as the Church of the first three centuries, during which she hurled paganism from its throne, and won her marvellous triumphs among both the lettered Romans and the rude barbarians.

The Deed of Demission was signed on 23rd May. By this Act, 474 ministers signed away, besides their glebes and manses, over £100,000 of yearly income. The pencil of the artist has left a record of this scene, from which we have borrowed the illustration on the opposite page. All the faces in it are life-like portraits.

Deputies from the Irish Presbyterian Church to the Church of Scotland arrived in Edinburgh. Where would they go? They found their mother Church in Tanfield Hall. Nearly all the English Presbyterians, the Presbyterian Churches in America, and very many of the Presbyterians in the Colonies, followed this example. All the Non-Established Churches in the kingdom, and the Churches of the Reformation on the Continent, gladly reached forth to the Free Church the hand of brotherly recognition. In a year or two our Assembly was attended by more deputies from foreign Churches than had ever gathered before around the court of any Church in Christendom. One of the deputies said that his Church had sent him to see the bush that was burning, and yet unburnt. The Tanfield Hall, which held 3000 people, was daily crammed to the bare rafters. The Assembly in the Moderate days used to be a mere skeleton.

Many wondered what the foreign missionaries would do. They were men of

renown; and, at a serene distance from the heats of controversy, they had quietly thought out the question for themselves. Without delay, and without hesitation, every missionary of the Church of Scotland to Jew and Gentile joined the Free Church as the Church of his fathers.

Of the many young men who made the cause of the Free Church their own, none behaved more nobly than the 192 probationers who placed their services at the disposal of the Free Assembly. They were not pledged in any way, and they knew that, had they only tarried at home, they would have divided the spoil of 474 pastorless parishes. They chivalrously preferred to join what seemed a forlorn hope. The Disruption made many men ministers; for 103 students of divinity at once joined the Free Church, 76 of whom were first-year students. Many then gave up good worldly prospects that they might study for the ministry.

XI. Leaving the Manse.

It was easy for the ministers to be of good courage amid the thrill and glow of the General Assembly, where they seemed to be carrying everything before them. When they went down to their country parishes, they were like sailors who have to quit the genial Gulf Stream and the favouring trade-winds, and contend with contrary currents and wintry tempests. They did not cower before the coming calamity; but, like men, quietly turned the prow to the huge wave that broke over them, and swept away their worldly all. On the first Sabbath after the Assembly they had the farewell service in the parish church. It was indeed a farewell service; for a law was soon passed to prevent the outgoing ministers—men like Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Candlish, Dr. Guthrie, etc.—from entering the pulpits of the Established Church. A few days afterwards they had to leave the manse. You know that the manse is usually one of the most beautiful homes in the parish. To that manse many an outgoing minister had brought his young bride; there his happy children had grown up around him; thence had he carried all that was mortal of those he loved best to the family grave; and there he had hoped to end his days in peace. But he had to gather the Bibles out of the manse pew, to pack up his furniture and books, to quench the fire on his own hearth, to lock the door against himself and give up the key, and to go forth with his wife and little ones, not knowing whither. To all his earthly goods he said farewell, but myriads of echoes in many lands gave back the word 'well.'

XII. On the Threshold.

The name 'Disruption' was well chosen, for it means a violent severing of things formerly united. Some old people will call it 'the Eruption,'—a more energetic, but scarcely less fitting phrase, as my story must now prove.

Many of our great landlords really believed in 1843 that Free Churchmen were ringleaders of rebellion—you may well laugh as you read. Hence they resolved to crush the Free Church by setting up a reign of terror on their estates. Some of them would not allow their tenants, who were tenants-at-will,—there was no Crofters' Act then,—to give shelter to a Free Church minister. The decree went forth that no house in the parish could be 'a lodging-place for Dissenters,' and that no work would be given to those who

harboured or encouraged them. I have seen a little bit of moor near the Solway, on which the gipsies used to encamp, but from which the Duke, by the aid of the law, drove his own tenants when they met to worship God. I have seen the 'bend' in the highway where, for a whole winter, a large congregation met for public worship. I have seen an upland village where, for five years, in all weathers, the Free Church congregation were compelled to worship in the open air. I have seen a large floating church moored near a Highland shore, because the owner of the parish would not grant his own tenants standing-room for worship outside the tide-mark. I have heard the story of the Disruption from the lips of the Rev. William Swanson, who in '43 was minister of 'the Small Isles,' out in the wild Atlantic. Fame has shone upon his sequestered path of self - sacrifice. Hugh Miller, whose genius nobly served the Free Church,—he sits with his plaid in the right-hand corner of the picture on page 12,—tells, in the opening pages of *The Cruise of The Betsy*, how the little yacht *The Betsy* was the only home which the proprietor of the islands would permit to the islanders' minister, while his family could not find a shelter nearer than the distant Isle Ornsay. 'The Floating Manse,' anchored amid the billows, Hugh Miller writes, 'lay at least beyond the reach of man's intolerance, and not beyond the protecting care of the Almighty.'

Scotland then had many such site-refusers, the milk of whose human kindness had been quite soured by the thunder of controversy, and who thought that the imagined rights of property should prevail over the rights of conscience. I have seen a beautiful Free Church manse that had been spoiled by a neighbouring proprietor building alongside of it a wall high enough to shut out the eyesore. This was not the only case of the kind. You may find it easier to wonder at than to believe these statements; but hundreds of pages in Parliamentary Reports, *The Annals of the Disruption*, and Scottish Biographies, will give you chapter and verse for all I have hinted at, and a great deal more.

Before '43, 222 new churches (*quoad sacra*, as they were called) had been built, at a cost of over £300,000, almost entirely by those who joined the Free Church. All these churches, with a very few exceptions, were taken from them, and they had to build new churches for themselves. The money for the *quoad sacra* churches had been given on condition that the ministers of them should have the position which the Evangelicals claimed for them, but their opponents evaded that express condition, and yet claimed the property. Many of these churches stood empty for years, with doors locked and windows broken. The *Memoir of David Stow* (of Glasgow) tells that, with the aid of his friends, he had built the first Normal School in the kingdom, for the training of teachers of all denominations. He was ordered to quit the school because he had become a Free Churchman. One May morning, after prayer and praise, he went forth, taking with him the debt of £5677 (the law in his case was hardened into the highest injustice), all the directors and teachers, every one of the fifty students and seven hundred pupils, and the old janitor and his wife: he took with him every shilling of debt on the building, and every soul in it except the music-master. The genius of silence likewise took possession of every corner in the Edinburgh Normal School and its playground. The foreign mission-

aries had to give up all the property which they had collected around their mission stations, and not a penny of compensation was offered to them or their friends. They had to comfort themselves with the reflection that if they had not got the buildings, they had got nearly all the builders. For the single fault that they belonged to the Free Church, nearly four hundred teachers, many of them with wives and little children, were deprived of their daily bread and their homes, and turned adrift on the wide world. New schools and homes were soon built for them, and the Government discovered by examinations that their scholars were the best taught in the kingdom. When Board Schools were established,

THE FREE CHURCH CONGREGATION AT DUTHIL IN 1843.

the Free Church had 598 schools in Scotland.

Right glad were the ousted ministers to fling away the sword and ply only the trowel. They worshipped often in granaries, barns, mills, herring stores, saw-pits, woods, caverns, cart-sheds, cow-sheds, sheep-cots, tents, on the leeward side of stackyards, etc. Religion had not withered during the Ten Years' Conflict. The Free Church 'was nursed in the bosom of religious revival.' Before '43 a great impression had been made in the North by Dr. Macdonald ('the Apostle of the North') and many other great Gaelic preachers, who were the real chiefs of the Highlands. Many parts of the South had experienced a similar work of grace under the preaching of William Burns, M'Cheyne, and other great evangelists. The Disruption time was a converting time to many. The Disruption itself was worth numberless sermons, for it was a convincing proof of the reality and power of the Christian faith. In a foreign land I met a lady who volunteered to me a large sum for the schemes of the Free Church. 'At the Disruption,' she said, 'religion was little more than a name to me. The Disruption startled me, for it made me feel that there was a power in Christianity to which I was a stranger. I owe my Christian life to the Disruption.' Very many have made a similar confession.

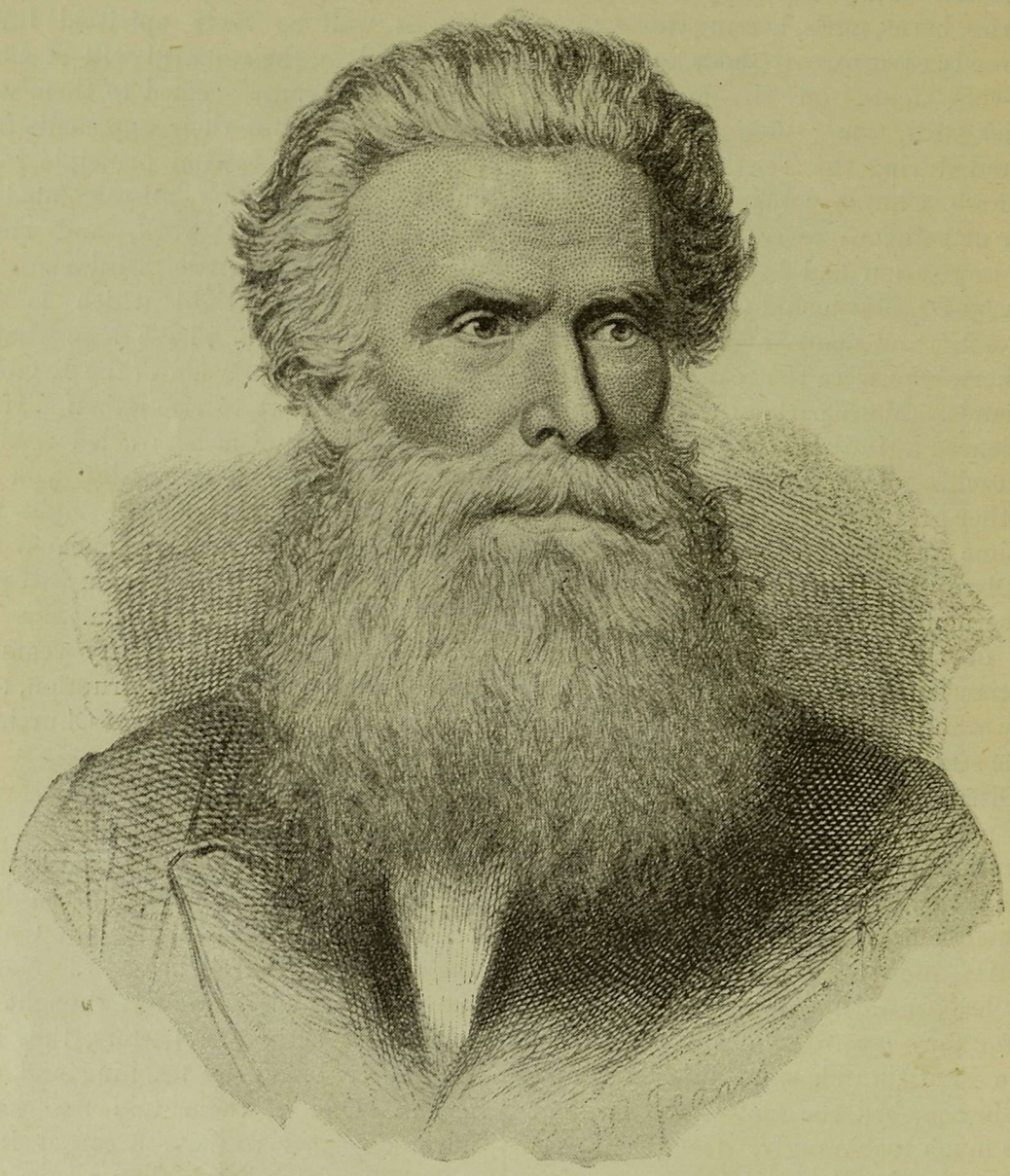
Some may say to you, that the leaders of the Free Church were mistaken, and that they pushed the matter too far, and spoke much too strongly. Hear their case before you judge them. Of their sincerity there can be no doubt, and they were as likely to understand the debate as any men of their day. 'The best and greatest men I have ever known,' the present Duke of Argyle has said of them. Like their martyr-forefathers, they could not separate the ecclesiastical from the spiritual Headship of Christ. They dug down to the root of their Church questions, and found there some of the great truths of the faith. They wished all their Church life, as well as their spiritual life, to be shaped by the revealed will of Christ. Hence their cause seemed to them worth suffering for. But their opponents failed to discover any essential principle in the question. They thus miscalculated the spiritual forces at work, and steered their ship with little wisdom. Had they had that insight which is foresight, they would not have done what has shaken every foundation of the Establishment they meant to strengthen. If you believe that your fathers acted nobly in their self-sacrificing struggles, you will do what yet can be done to right their wrongs, and to shield their memory from causeless reproach, and so you will pay a part of the debt you owe them.

I will now review these fifty years that lie between us and the Disruption, starting from the circumference of Church life, and moving towards its centre.

XIII. Liberality.

In '43 'poor Scotland' had probably not one-half of the wealth, nor one-tenth of the liberality, that it has now. Many of the ministers who came out thought that, while still acting as pastors, they must earn their bread by teaching and other means. One of them told me that he never expected to have a carpet in his manse, or a kirk better than a barn. But the Disruption was the birth-time of new ideas and impulses in Church life. The leaders of the Free Church were like the successful well-digger, who, touching a deep hidden spring, is surprised by, and drenched with, the water rushing up

responsive to his search. Still, many were fearful that the liberality that flowed like the Solway would ebb like its tide. Some of the rich gave up their carriages and big houses, and many of the poor stinted themselves to help the good cause. It was soon proved that true liberality works 'by fermentation, not exhaustion.' 'The Lord loveth a *hilarious* giver;' that is the very word used by Paul (2 Cor. ix. 7). Many in '43 seem to have been *hilarious* givers. 'Our beloved Church,' was a frequent phrase in those days. Many of its members could then truly say that they belonged to the Free Church; for a good deal of them did belong to it. During



ALEXANDER DUFF, THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

its first year the people gave more to the Free Church than both the State and the people had ever given in one year to the undivided Church of Scotland. The yearly average contribution to missions in the United Church was £16,000; in the Free Church, during the seven years after the Disruption, it was £35,000 a year. 'The lifeboat,' one said, 'promised to be better than the ship.' The Sustentation Fund is the best known of the financial schemes of the Free Church, and it is a happy illustration of Christian brotherhood. All the congregations give to this central fund as much as they can. Their yearly contributions to it vary from £23 to £4600. With some slight exceptions, the whole sum—about £175,000—is divided equally among all the ministers. Dr. Chalmers spoke of the freewill offerings coming in 'like a set rain at the rate of £1000 a day.' The rain-gauge in Edinburgh shows that the genial rainfall has now risen to nearly £2000 a day. The sum-total of the offerings of the Free Church during *these fifty years* is more than £22,000,000.

XIV. Organisation.

Like Robinson Crusoe on his island, the Free Church—made houseless and penniless in a day—had to begin at the very beginning with everything. The 474 ordained ministers in '43 have now grown to 1122. There are now 1047 Free Church congregations in Scotland, besides 52 mission stations. (The number of original parishes in Scotland was 880.) There are also 76 Free Church congregations and several stations in various parts of the world. The 20 foreign missionaries of '43 are now represented by 548 missionaries, of whom 64 are ordained, and 24 are medical missionaries. It is expected that '93 will be a Jubilee Year in this happy sense, that nearly all our churches and mission stations will be freed from debt. Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives us a very good hint, for he says that all debts were wiped out in the year of Jubilee.

You might fancy that our Church would, like costly shops, follow the wealthy, and desert the poor. You will not think so if you visit the poorest parts of Scotland. In the Highlands and Islands you will find everywhere good manses and well-filled churches, for very few of the natives in these parts are dissenters from the Free Church. There are 222 Highland charges in our Church, besides mission stations, though only 38 of them are self-supporting. The far St. Kilda has a Free Church sanctuary, and manse, and minister. You will also find many—sometimes too many—Free Churches in the poorest parts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and in our towns and mining villages. Since '43 the Free Church has planted about 460 mission churches in the poorest localities. In 1846, Dr. Chalmers laid aside his public work that he might devote himself to the well-being of the poorest folks he could find in Edinburgh. To the work in the West Port he gave the last three years of his life. The elevation of the poor occupied his mind and heart more than any other question ever did, and his comrades shared his spirit. All the noble efforts of our day to brighten the lot of our humblest neighbours owe very much to him.

XV. Union.

The Seceders joined the Free Church in 1852, and the Reformed Presbyterians (popularly known as the Cameronians), in 1876. In 1870 the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church were almost

united, and surely these two will soon become one. Very strange it is that they who differ so little should disagree or stand apart. We should earnestly labour and pray that hindrances to larger unions may soon be swept away, for our forefathers taught that there should be only one visible Church in Scotland, and that it should embrace all in the land who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was a cold day when the two halves of the central girder of the Forth Bridge were first placed in their position. It was then found that the gap between them was three-eighths of an inch. A pressure of 130 tons was brought to bear upon them, but all was in vain. The next morning the temperature of the weather had risen from fifty-two to fifty-eight degrees, and the iron had so expanded that the joining holes of the two halves of the girder were exactly opposite each other. The rivets were at once easily driven home, and the two sections of the bridge were united without any pressure whatever. We may hope that a warmer Christian temperature all round will thus bring together by spiritual expansion the separated parts of Christ's Church in Scotland, so that they may be happily united by the rivets of a common faith and service.

The reasons for union among all Christians were never greater than now, and they should make us heart-sick of our divisions. You should love your Church, but your love of it should neither be clannish, nor soiled by any littleness. Accept as your ideal a United Scottish Church, national, established, and endowed: *national*, because bringing the gospel to every home in the nation, and striving to secure that every act of and in the nation shall be agreeable to the will of Christ; *established* in the hearts of all Christians, and in every way that can help Christ's cause; and *endowed* with the freewill offerings of the living and the departed. To such a Church the promise belongs, 'And the Highest Himself shall establish her.'

> 'Heal Thy divided Zion, Lord,
> Strike once again the glorious chord—
> One Scottish Church—and let it ring
> A tuneful and triumphant thing.'

XVI. Our Students.

Our Church has always had many sons willing to serve her as ministers and missionaries, though it is said that no other Church in the world requires candidates for the ministry to be students for eight annual sessions. We have three Divinity Halls, one of which is quoted, I notice, as the most fully equipped and most frequented in Scotland; fifteen professors of divinity, besides two lecturers and two tutors; and about three hundred students of divinity. Probably other three hundred students in the Universities are preparing for the ministry of the Free Church. The sum spent yearly in support of sacred learning is £14,180.

XVII. Foreign Missions.

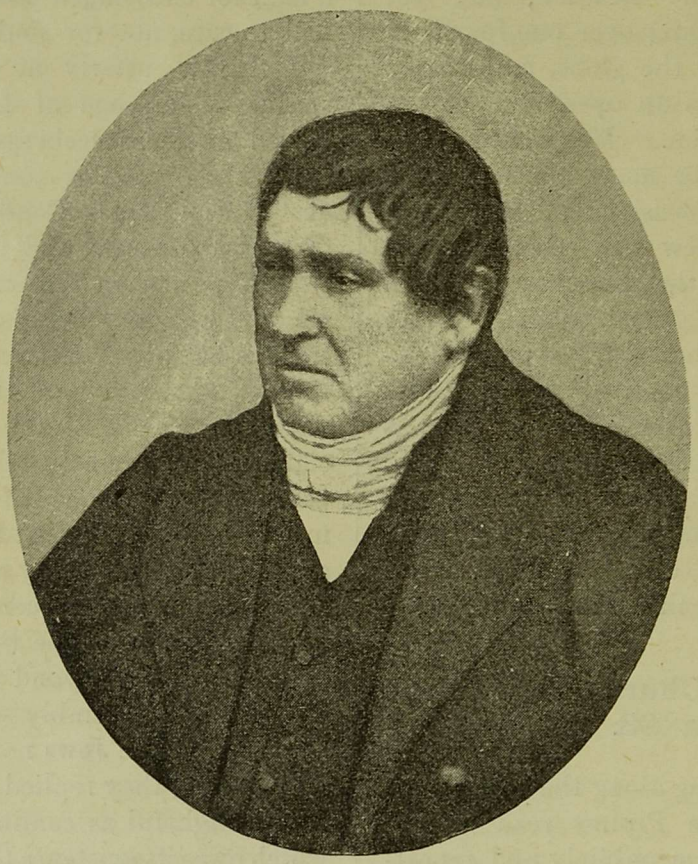
Our sympathies are not to be limited to this little bit of our little planet. At our last General Assembly, sixty-three divinity and medical students, many of them distinguished for scholarship, volunteered for foreign missions. In this field our Church used to be lame in both feet; both men and money were wanting. It is limping now only on its left foot. Good progress, you see, has been made since the day when Dr. Erskine said, 'Moderator, rax me that Bible.' For all that, we have scarcely got beyond the ABC of missions. The other day I

read that America is spending as much money on cigarettes as on foreign missions. Government statistics prove that Great Britain is spending about the same sum on fox-hunting as on foreign missions: a few of our rich people are giving as much for one of their many pleasures—the collecting of fox-tails—as all the Christians of Britain are giving to send the gospel to the heathen, and yet Britain is now ruling over one-fourth of the population of the globe, and nearly the whole world is an open door to the heralds of salvation. Many hope that this Jubilee shall be made memorable by a fresh start in missions at home and abroad, among Jew and Gentile; for Christ has told us that His chosen Jubilee is 'to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised' (Luke iv. 18). Christ has work for His people, wherever a sinning or sorrowing man, woman, or child can be found. The parish of His Church is humankind.

XVIII. Free Church Principles in '93.

They are winning along the whole line. An answer to the Protest read on the Disruption day was publicly and repeatedly promised, and at once begun; but they have not finished it yet, and some of the learned in that lore do not wonder at the time they are taking. In '43 some four hundred teachers were driven out of their situations and homes for the one crime of siding with the Free Church. Are such evictions possible now? Those who 'stayed in' at once yielded to Cæsar everything he asked, and hasted to undo all that the outgoing men had done to secure the freedom of the Church; but in 1874 Church patronage was swept out of Scotland by the very men who in '43 defended it at all hazards. Probably you could not now get three Scotsmen who would try to restore it, should you advertise for them in all the newspapers, and offer a handsome reward. The idea that nothing but a large share of earth can fit a man for choosing a pastor, as if a pastor had to care, not for souls, but for acres! All this is utterly at strife with the genius of an age of freedom; it has passed away as icebergs do when they float into a warmer zone. A large part of the Ten Years' Conflict has perished of its very success, and the rest may soon follow. As when the sun melts morning mists, the victory here is so complete that little is left by which to measure it. Why, the Ex-Moderator of the last General Assembly of the Established Church declared that they held 'the absolute independence of the courts of the Church in all matters ecclesiastical and spiritual;' and an English bishop lately said, 'It is intolerable that secular officers should control spiritual affairs.' The Free Church never dreamt of going beyond that. When our last General Assembly sent a message of sympathy to the Jews now under religious persecution, they replied that the message was 'delightful as coming from a Church which owes its existence to the undue interference of the State in spiritual affairs.' Most nations, except Russia and Darkest Africa, are now cutting their wisdom teeth on this subject, and have proclaimed 'full and entire liberty of religion and conscience.' A history of the Disruption has been written in Norsk, to encourage the many Norwegians who are now striving for the freedom of their Church. Free Churches have been planted in France, in Switzerland, in Belgium, and in Hol-

land. Bismarck found out that 'you cannot meet a soul with a musket.' 'A free Church in a free State' is now the motto, even in Rome. The world must be coming round to Free Church principles when the Pope sees all Italy flooded with them, and trembles lest they should overflow his little islet. The stars in their courses are now fighting for spiritual freedom, for self-government in the State must bring with it self-government in the Church. All parties now vie with one another in deploring the grievous blunders of the Government and their Scottish advisers in '43. It has now grown quite plain that your fathers were 'martyrs by mistake,'—by the confessed 'mistake' of those who, without one sacrifice of principle, might easily have granted their just claims. But I must give you—



DR. MACDONALD, 'THE APOSTLE OF THE NORTH.'

XIX. Two Cautions.

1. You must not run away with the idea that spiritual freedom is the exclusive property of your Church. It was firmly held by every Church during the first four centuries, and it has been the favourite camping-ground of all the Protestant Non-Established Churches in the world. The Free Church is that regiment in the great army which was called out in our day to fight for this principle, and its behaviour in the day of battle touched the heart and imagination of all its generous allies.

2. I beseech you to remember that very few people now living had any share in the unhappy things done in '43. It can do no good to cherish bitter feelings about the past; for to revenge is not to remedy. In controversy we must try, like William Tell, to send our arrow through the heart of the opposing error, without touching a hair of our opponent's head. Several of the statesmen who brought about the Disruption bitterly regretted their mistake, and nobly atoned for it, so far as they could; and many of the site-refusers followed their example. With extremely few exceptions, the present members of the Established Church are no more responsible for the past than you are; and I know that very many of them deplore as much as you can the harsh things done to the outgoing ministers and people, and are more than willing to heal the sad divisions of bygone days.

XX. Christian Life.

Without earnest Christian life Churches not supported by the State can scarcely survive. Sensible men will not give the money they value for objects they do not value. But for a real and widespread revival of religion, the Disruption had not been. This was the reason why nearly all the Highlanders came over to the Free Church; for all their spiritual chiefs, many of whom wielded an apostolic power, heartily supported the rights of the Christian people. The Disruption was followed by a great revival of religion, which many aged people regard as the most fruitful that has visited Scotland in their day. Many believe that the doctrine of the freedom of the Church rises naturally out of a fresh Christian life.

The early Free Churchmen were afraid that they might be spoiled by the over-praise that came to them from many quarters. Several of them still with us have touchingly confessed that their Church has not yet fulfilled the wonderful promise of her youth, and that some of the high hopes of '43 have been disappointed. When they look back to the infancy of their Church, they feel like a great man who said, 'I often wonder that so glorious a bud of humanity as a child is, should become so poor a being as the average man.' Thankful we certainly should be for what our fathers did; but pride and boasting will spoil everything. In our Jubilee there should be no room for jubilation. A friend once found Thorwaldsen, the great sculptor, weeping in front of his famous statue of Christ. 'Why are you weeping?' the friend asked. 'For the first time in my life,' was the reply, 'I have felt satisfied with my work. That is a sure proof that my genius has decayed, and that I shall never do any worthy work again.' The aim of the Church, as of the sculptor, is fairly to represent Christ; and there is little hope for those who are proud of their poor representations of Him. Grace comes only to the humble-hearted, who are always seeking higher things than they have yet reached.

XXI. The Future of Your Church.

It is in your hands: what will you make it? 'What are you boys good for?' a teacher once asked his class. 'For making men of, sir,' a little fellow replied. Yes, and for making Churches and States too. In this high work the girls have at least as honourable a place as the boys. You should be thankful that you belong to a heroic Church, and that you are called to a heroic life. But to live on the past is to have a poverty-stricken future. Woe betide our Church if she

anchors over the Disruption, or fancies that she can live on an income hoarded up in bygone days. As the proverb runs, 'The mill cannot grind with the water that has flowed past.' Your forefathers hand down their banner to you across the centuries, and charge you to hand it down to children's children. The heirs and trustees of a great past, you are to be, I hope, the makers of a greater future. Some folks tell us that the former days were better than these: don't believe a word of it. Neither great Nature nor greater Grace is yet exhausted, and it is likely that you will see greater things done for God and man than any Scotland has yet witnessed. Scotland may yet rank among her sons as great men as John Knox, or Andrew Melville, or Thomas Chalmers, and the average Scottish Christian may grow more Christ-like than he yet has been. By heartily giving yourself to Christ you will give yourself to all great ideas and causes. Pray that you may not be mastered by selfishness and the greed of gold, but that you may imitate the noble spirit of the men you justly admire, and serve your generation as they served theirs. May all the best appeals that come to you from Scottish story find your heart as responsive as the echo was to the thrill of the trumpet on the morning of the Jubilee. Be it yours, with Jubilee joy in your heart, to help your Church to do the varied work of Christ in our land.

XXII. A Parting Word.

Where Christ is, there is the Church; and where Christ is not, the outward Church is one of the emptiest things in the world. The real history of the Church is not in its strifes, but in believing hearts and holy homes. Hear how Alexander Peden, the martyr, once began a sermon in 'the killing time:'—'Where is the Kirk of God in Scotland the day? It is not among the great clergie folk. Sirs, I'll tell you where the Kirk of Scotland is—wherever there is a praying lad or lass at a dyke-side in Scotland.' And Christ's flock is like the flocks on our hills: if it has no lambs it must soon pass away. The Church is therefore a failure unless it brings its children to the Saviour. Boys and girls in whose veins the blood of martyrs flows, and who have every religious advantage, may, when they grow older, sever every tie binding them to the Church of Christ. Even the sons of Eli may choose to be the sons of Belial. You may—for you have a will of your own—resolve that the God of Scotland shall not be your God, and that the Saviour of your mother shall never be your Saviour. You may find a way of breaking through the mystic net of holy influences that the Hand of infinite mercy has woven around you. But you will surely never do that? As in many a sense you are Christ's own without your consent, make yourself His by your own glad choice. You are living in the Jubilee of the world's history; for Christ came to proclaim 'the acceptable year of the Lord.' That year of grace is still running its course, and the boon that turns slaves into freemen is yours for the taking.

This grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen.

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