

## LECTURE VIII.

IN no country was the scheme of reformation, as drafted by the Reformers, more symmetrical and complete than in ours; in none was its accomplishment more hampered and thwarted by the mean rapacity and traitorous disloyalty of the governing class. Knox's statesmanlike idea of an apportionment of the ecclesiastical revenues between the proper support of the ministry, of the poor, and of a comprehensive system of graduated national education, was never realised, simply because the politicians who pretended to be zealous for Protestant truth and reformed principles were knaves and robbers, destitute alike of religion and of patriotism. It was the misfortune of the Episcopal form of government that it became first the tool, and then the ally, of their treachery and greed. First, as I have said, arose the "tulchan" episcopate, the channel through which the rents of the Church flowed

into the pockets of the spoilers. Next came the *quasi*-episcopate of Spottiswoode and the other Presbyterian ministers who, though without Episcopal ordination, and equally without any election by people or cathedral chapter, and simply at the mandate of the Crown, were illegitimately consecrated by three English bishops at London; and who imposed on the Church, at King James's bidding, the episcopate which, after an existence of barely thirty years, was abolished by the General Assembly of 1638. One evil of the introduction of these irregular overseers was that the orderly supervision of the Church by its own superintendents fell into abeyance, and the nominees of the Court usurped the offices of the elect of the Church, and yet never discharged them faithfully.

But though a kind of nominal episcopacy was thus created, the essentially Presbyterian character of the Church remained intact; and its courts, formally constituted and ratified as courts of the realm as they had been by the Acts of 1592, assumed the jurisdiction and the national position which they still retain. This reversion to, and chartered adoption of, a scheme of government founded on primitive principles, was accompanied by a notable change in the character of the ministry. The former inefficiency and immoralities disappeared. The ranks of the conforming priests and monks were carefully weeded, before any were

pronounced qualified for office in the remodelled Church. All other candidates were only admitted after anxious scrutiny. The result was the formation of a clerical body, whose purity of life and personal good fame even the mendacious tongue of sectarian slander did not venture to asperse. The satiric literature, which had nothing but the bitterest gibes for the priesthood, stopped its railing. It found no food for libel or lampoon among the Protestant clergy. Even had it found such material, the satirist would have been slow to use it. The clergy now held a place in the reverence of the people the priests had never gained. As time went on, and the party of the Court and the Episcopate assumed an attitude progressively hostile to popular rights and liberties, the defence of these and the assertion of the principles which lay under them were, with an ever-increasing reliance, intrusted to the ministers. They were the true leaders and champions of the people; and the people repaid the clergy's independence and patriotism with their own confidence and respect.

The clergy, no doubt, were too often ready to use the pulpit for purposes more polemical and political than became the house of God; but their excuse was the absence of a free press, and of any other available means of appealing to the general mass of their fellow-citizens, and of exposing before them the misdoings of the civil

rulers and ecclesiastical usurpers. No suspicion of time-serving or self-seeking impaired their honourable influence. They had a fair title to "stand so high in all the people's hearts." The name of Knox has a place of its own in the roll of the worthies of the reforming era; but Craig, Bruce, Durie, Douglas, and Andrew Melville are not unworthy compeers. Melville's name, in particular, is associated with the completer development of the Presbyterian polity and the construction of the Second Book of Discipline. The First Book was virtually the work of Knox, and laid down the polity of the Church on broad and liberal lines. It specified five offices (but only two orders) in the Church—minister, superintendent, elder, deacon, reader. It sketched out a large educational scheme. It directed that the Holy Communion should be celebrated at least four times in the year; that there should be two public services on Sundays—the second to include catechetical instruction of the young; that there was to be daily service (reading and prayers) in the towns. The service-book to be employed was the version of the Genevan liturgy which Knox had used abroad, and now introduced in Scotland as the 'Book of Common Order.' It demanded that "the whole rents of the Kirk" should be intrusted to the Kirk for the behoof of the ministry, of the poor, and of education.

This first Book of Discipline was accepted by the General Assembly of 1560, but not by the Parliament, where its generous ideal of the reconstructed Kirk was sneered at as a "devout imagination." The Second Book was accepted by the Assembly in 1581, and was virtually approved, though not formally sanctioned, by the Parliament of 1592 in the Acts known as "the Charter of the Church." It differs at some points from the First; and we note in it, specially, the more dogmatic tone; the strict injunction of the imposition of hands as a necessary element in ordination; the omission in the list of ecclesiastical offices of the superintendent and the reader, with the addition of the doctor or teacher as an ordinary function, distinct from the minister, pastor, or bishop; and also the definition of the eldership as "a spiritual office." The hand of Melville is easily recognisable in these two changes—the distinction between the doctor and the minister, and the assertion of the spirituality of the elder's office. His humanistic devotion to learning prompted the one; and possibly a desire to erect, over against the threefold ministry of the Episcopalians—bishop, priest, and deacon—a Presbyterian triad, minister, elder, and deacon, of equal validity, may have suggested the second. Each, however, was an error and innovation.

The office of the "doctor" never obtained

definite sanction in the Church; but Melville's theory of the eldership gained very common assent, and has injuriously affected the tenure of that office for three centuries. It has led to unfortunate confusion in the general conception of the primitive presbyter (elder, minister, bishop) and of the reformed representative of the brethren; and, engendering erroneous ideas of the position and duty of the latter, has often deterred excellent and eligible men from becoming members of the kirk-session. Melville's bitter experience of the character of the civil Government, and the dangers that beset the Church's relation to it, when wielded by such men as the Regent Morton, and of the insidious recrudescence of Prelacy under the covert of tulchanism, betrays itself in an elaborate article on the civil magistrate, and an absolute condemnation of the episcopal title and office, for neither of which the earlier manifesto afforded a precedent.

This is only one indication of a process which went on throughout the closing years of the sixteenth, and, one might say, nearly the whole of the seventeenth century. The insane determination of the Stuarts to force their ecclesiastical crotchets upon a free people and a "stubborn Kirk"<sup>1</sup> begot a jealousy and resentment, and narrowness of view, which poisoned the general

<sup>1</sup> King James VI.'s own phrase.

stream of public life and thought. Time and energy, that might have occupied themselves in working out large schemes of educational progress, of civic and social reform, of commercial and industrial advancement, were taken up in withstanding the arbitrary aggressions of absolute power and defending the simplest rights of a civilised community. Instead of devoting themselves to theological investigation, to perfecting the "platform" of the Reformed Church, to fostering the general interests of humanity and religion, the clergy had to spend their lives in the bare effort to make good whatever advantage had accrued from the overthrow of Popery, to maintain the merest liberty of worship, and to secure the scantiest provision for their own daily sustenance. Intensity of irritated feeling—concentration of ill-will against "the troublers of Israel"—contraction of sympathies—exaggerated importance attributed to secondary causes of dispute—while the great primary verities and duties fell into the background,—all this was the natural result.

The ecclesiastical atmosphere had become somewhat calmer and the horizon clearer at the time of King James's death. The bishops were not given to intermeddling. The people were, on the whole, fairly quiescent. Compliance with the obnoxious Articles of Perth was not stringently insisted on; and of these the only one

that was thoroughly disliked was the kneeling at Holy Communion. Odium attached to this, because it suggested the false doctrine of the corporeal presence, and was utterly unlike the apostolic use. The other four—private baptism, private communion, confirmation of children when eight years old, and the observance of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsunday—were objects of comparative indifference, and generally disregarded. But with the accession of Charles everything went wrong. His gloomy fanaticism would be content with nothing short of the thorough suppression of Presbyterian principle, order, and usage, and the complete subjugation of the Scottish Church to the Anglican yoke and model. In the struggle which ensued, between royal absolutism and the freedom of the Church and the nation, the victory lay with the “stubborn Kirk”; but it was gained at a heavy price. The resistance to the policy of Charles and Laud, which found its ablest and most constitutional exponent in Alexander Henderson, the Moderator of the Assembly which in 1638 expelled the bishops, was not always under a control so sagacious and temperate as his. The enthusiasm of the Covenant passed, from a patriotic and public-spirited defiance of arbitrary encroachments on the liberty of the subject and the rights of the Church, into

a quixotic enterprise for extirpating Prelacy and propagating Presbytery beyond the bounds of Scotland, and enforcing a uniformity of creed, ritual, and Church government throughout the three kingdoms. This enterprise was the motive of the international compact known as "The Solemn League and Covenant," and of the deliberations of the famous Westminster "Assembly of Divines." Both were conspicuous illustrations of the apparently unalterable law, by which ill-regulated action is counterpoised by reaction, generally ending in the "madness of extremes." Both, as has been well said, "unfortunately were a copy *reversed* of the plan of James VI. in 1606, and of Charles in 1633, which had been so fruitful of misery, from the opposite side."<sup>1</sup> Subscription of this League and Covenant was demanded from all sorts and conditions of men, on pain not only of ecclesiastical censure but of civil penalty. Whoever objected to declare himself in favour of "the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, and schism," and to assist in "the discovery of all such as have been, or shall be, incendiaries, malignant, or evil instruments," because of their refusal to sign the portentous document, was regarded as himself a malignant.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Rankin, D.D., in 'Church of Scotland, Past and Present,' vol. ii. p. 520.

The Solemn League and Covenant was well received in most districts of the country, except in Aberdeen. That city was the seat of a school of divines whose theology was of a type which was only now trying to root itself in the Scottish soil. The general development of doctrine throughout the kingdom, up to the second decade of the seventeenth century, had been on distinctly Calvinistic lines. During that decade a reaction towards a freer and fuller Gospel set in, and it continued to advance till 1638; but the "Purging Committee," which was one embodiment of the zeal of the Assembly of that year, made short work of "the Aberdeen doctors," as these divines had come to be called. They were all deprived and deposed; and the theology of the Synod of Dort triumphed over the nascent efforts of native thought.

The very foremost of these victims of irrational sectarianism (for that policy deserves no other name which drove good and learned men out of their churches or chairs, simply because their theological system had more in common with that of Pelagius and Arminius than with that of Augustine and Calvin, and their ecclesiastical sympathies leant to Episcopacy rather than to Presbytery) was Dr John Forbes, son of Bishop Patrick Forbes. The bishop was one of King James's creations; but, unlike most of them, was

a man wise, earnest, and learned, who made it his aim to draw to the churches and University of Aberdeen the ablest scholars and clerics whom he could find. Amongst them was his second son. Like almost all the leading scholars and divines of Scotland, John Forbes completed his education on the Continent, Scottish intercourse with which was much more free and constant in those days than it has ever been since. He studied at Melanchthon's university as well as at others in Germany; and on one occasion at the Swedish university of Upsala, he maintained a public disputation against the Lutherans and their archbishop. Returning to his own country, he was appointed Professor of Divinity and Church History in King's College, an office he held until Covenanting fervour succeeded in ousting him from it, after which, his elder brother having died, he retired to the paternal estate of Corse, and occupied himself in completing his great work, '*Instructiones Historico-Theologicæ*,' which he published at Amsterdam in 1645, with a preface which contained a formal recommendation of the work by the theological faculties of Leyden, Franeker, and Utrecht.

In this book, as in his professorial lectures, Forbes strove to supply what he recognised as a pressing want of the time—the want of a historical treatment of theological questions. The

Roman Catholic reaction was in full swing on the Continent, and controversialists, subsidised from Rome, were busy, even in Scotland, appealing to the historical sentiment. They maintained that all Catholic antiquity was on the side of the ancient Church, and that the Reformed Confession and ritual were mushroom growths of the revolutionary sixteenth century, which could trace their descent no farther back than to Luther, Zwingli, or Calvin. This propaganda was not without its effect on the public mind; and Forbes felt it was inadequately met by the ordinary method of combating it, which was to make appeal to Scripture, as the main if not indeed the sole warrant of the reformed doctrine. He adopted the method of treating doctrine in its historical continuity, establishing it first from Scripture as its basis, and then tracing its history from age to age, marking where it maintained its purity, and where it became stained with Roman error or warped with heretical perversion. But he, and all such quiet and peace-loving workers in the field of religious speculation and research, were pushed aside and silenced by the heady disputants who involved the country in bitter quarrel over questions of government and order, and the intrigues and shibboleths of embittered parties, political and ecclesiastical.

The Scots politicians of Charles I. and of the

Protectorate were no great improvement upon those who had preceded them. The Churchmen, with few exceptions, were men of narrower view and less commanding power. Between the "Resolutioners" and the "Protesters," as the two factions that divided the Church, after the Glasgow Assembly, were named, its higher life was all but strangled. The Church lost its intellectual freedom, as under the Roman priesthood it had lost its moral character.

One fatal effect of the constant wranglings was the dispersion of many of the finest elements in the national life, among foreign churches and universities. Men of free spirit and active mind would not stay at home, to be subjected to clerical inquisition and tyranny because of their opinions on religion or politics. So, to escape from the intestine turmoils of the Church, when under Cromwell Resolutioner and Protester were defying each other, and Puritanism was subverting the sound foundations on which the Reformed Church had been established; and afterwards when, under Charles II., "black Prelacy" was again for a time in the ascendant, refugees were constantly flying over-sea, to friendlier shores and less distracted societies than those of Scotland. (In the calendar of the University of Sedan alone we find, during the seventeenth century, the names of seven Scots professors.) Their native country was im-

poverished by its own feuds, while others were enriched. This depletion accounts in some degree for the decay of native influence in our domestic affairs at this disordered time. The controlling impulses came from England, as they had come in the days of Margaret and David, and found no coherent national sentiment and conviction to oppose them.

It was after James could issue his ukases from London, with the Anglican Church at his back, that his episcopal propaganda became really efficient. It was from Lambeth that the policy was dictated which, overshooting its mark, roused the Scots to their successful assault upon the Jacobean Prelacy. But, *en revanche*, it was in the Jerusalem Chamber that the scheme was hatched which deprived the Scots of their native Confession of Faith and 'Book of Common Order,' and foisted on the Kirk a Confession, a Catechism, a Directory for Worship, and a Psalm-Book, compiled by an English Assembly in which Scotland had only a fragmentary representation. This misfortune would have been impossible had not the nation, divided against itself, been debilitated by a constant and feverish recurrence of sectarian squabbles and rancorous jealousies, the blame of which must primarily rest on that party which had, from 1572 to 1638, been obstinately on the side of absolutism, and

had persistently done its best to crush the civil liberties and thwart the religious inclinations of the people. Over a country so rent and weakened Cromwell gained an easy mastery. As he had turned the English Parliament out of doors in April, so in July, 1653, he dismissed the General Assembly. Deprived of its governing body, the Church became more and more distracted and disunited, and, under the ægis of the Protector, that section of it acquired malign preponderance which had most in common with the principles, religious and political, of the English Independents. Another influence, whose advent this faction welcomed, travelled northward with the republicans, and changed some of the familiar features of Scottish religion. This was the influence of the grim and illiberal Puritanism of the southern sectaries. Theirs was no longer the noble love of pure worship and spiritual and civic freedom, which had animated their predecessors in the days of Elizabeth and James. Their spirit had deteriorated. They had grown rudely regardless of catholic usage; and, inflated with exaggerated conceptions of individual liberty, contemned the decent traditions of public worship, and the sober proprieties of ritual. The excesses in fervour of extempore prayer and controversial preaching, which they delighted in, were not native to Scotland.

The Scottish Church had from 1560 been accustomed to the ritual of the 'Book of Common Order,' and was, on the whole, contented with it, though some improvements in it had been contemplated, and no doubt would have been introduced, had not the whole question of the Church's worship been turned topsy-turvy by the reckless folly of Charles and Laud. The 'Westminster Directory' would never have been sought or desired by Scotland, had it not been pushed on for the sake of a visionary uniformity, under the pressure of the Assembly of Divines, in which English Presbyterianism, Independency, and Puritanism were in the ascendant. To that ascendancy is due, in the main, the gradual deterioration of the theory and practice of the Church's ritual, and the adoption of peculiarities ignorantly supposed, by those who know no better, to be of native growth. Thus the curious custom of reading out the verses of the psalms to be sung, line by line, was introduced, against the wishes of the Scots Commissioners in the Westminster Assembly, because the English considered it convenient where "many cannot read." A concession to English illiteracy. Again and again Baillie complains of the opposition offered by the Brownists to the use of the Lord's Prayer, the Doxology, and the minister's kneeling in the pulpit for private prayer. But the Brownists did

not stand alone in discarding pious usage. Henderson, in his sermon before the Glasgow Assembly called "The Bishops' Doom," specifies among the other transgressions of the prelates their "interdicting" the daily morning and evening prayers, and their private celebration of marriages—offensive departures from the more excellent way of the first Reformers.

When the General Assembly accepted the Directory, it did not set aside the national Prayer-Book; but that book was, as I have said elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> "virtually superseded by the Act of 1645, imposing the Directory. And this must have been felt as a grievous necessity by many of the best leaders of the Kirk. For these were men utterly opposed to Puritanic disregard of forms and usages in worship, however much their political sympathies might draw them towards the Puritans. The Assemblies of 1639, 1640, and 1641 passed Acts against innovations in public worship, directed not against prelatic but puritanic changes. Burnet speaks of a letter issued by one of these Assemblies, specially addressed to those who, 'in a spirit of innovation and hunting after popularity,' were trying to abolish such 'laudable practices,' hitherto in use, as the Lord's Prayer, the Doxology after the Psalms, and the minister's kneel-

<sup>1</sup> The Reformed Ritual in Scotland, p. 28.

ing for private devotion on entering the pulpit: and the great Henderson, on being invited by the Assembly to prepare new forms of worship 'wherein possibly England might agree,' declared that he could not take upon him to 'set down other forms of prayer than we have in our Psalm-Book, penned by our great and divine Reformers.' But 'uniformity' was the watchword; and in the Westminster Assembly the preponderating influence was that of English Presbyterianism and Independency, of a distinctly puritanic caste, and not that of the Scottish type of religion, which had retained much of the Catholic spirit and reverence for ecclesiastical usage, inherited from intercourse with the Reformed communions of the Continent.

"The nursing-mother of the extempore harangues which took the place of prayers of the old liturgical model, of the interminable discourses, of the graceless practices which began to deform the decent order of public worship, was English Independency. From it, and not from our Scottish ancestors, descended to us the ungainly heritage of meagre rite and unseemly negligence in the conduct of the public worship of God.

"Already, in Scotland, the tendency to subordinate the devotional to the intellectual element in divine service, and to allow the individual

minister to colour the whole with the hues of his own prejudice or passion, had asserted itself with an emphasis distasteful to men of the wide culture and sober piety of Henderson and Baillie; but no Scotch Presbyterian had as yet exhibited this characteristic in the abnormal extremes witnessed in England. The tendency must, however, have been infectious, for we find Baillie thus complacently recording his experiences of a day with the brethren at Westminster: 'We spent from nine to five very graciously. After Dr Twiss had begun with a brief prayer, Mr Marshall prayed large two hours, most divinely confessing the sins of the members of the Assembly, in a wonderful pathetic and prudent way. Afterwards Mr Arrowsmith preached an hour; then a psalm; thereafter Mr Vines prayed near two hours, and Mr Palmer preached an hour, and Mr Seaman prayed near two hours. After Mr Henderson had brought us to a sweet conference of faults to be remedied, Dr Twiss closed with a short prayer and blessing.' This interminable prolixity was not an exceptional exuberance. Dr Calamy tells us that on the days of public fasting, which were frequent, Mr Howe would go on from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, with only an interval of about a quarter of an hour, during which he took some material refreshment, and the people allowed

themselves the more spiritual restorative of psalmody. The spirit which prompted religious services of this type grew with the growth of Independency in England, and spread northwards with the advance of the principles of the Commonwealth. By slow but sure degrees the old constitutional party in the Scottish Church lost their hold on the people, and the fervid and fanatical 'Protesters' gained theirs. Internal strifes tended to develop the loose practices and rhapsodical utterances, to which all forms and rubrics were an Egyptian bondage; and the vagaries of the preacher were deferred to as the irrestrainable movements of the free spirit."

These tendencies, impairing the Church's unity, marring her worship, sapping her strength, and denationalising her character, gathered force as the crisis of the Restoration approached, and secured an easy triumph for the low treachery and breach of faith which reintroduced the bishops, fortified—on this occasion—with Anglican ordination as well as consecration. But their reign was short. They were set up in 1662, and in 1689 the Scots Parliament finally abolished them; and in 1690 it re-established the Presbytery, which had been established after the accomplishment of the Reformation of 1560, by the Parliament of 1567. Then the land had rest from the gross oppression under which it had

groaned during the despotism of the second Charles and his brother; and the Church, firmly secured in its constitutional liberties and prerogatives, began to repair its desolations, to fill its waste places, and gather together the flocks which persecution had scattered. The "glorious Revolution" of 1688, which delivered the nation from its political thralldom, rendered this restoration of the Reformed Church's original constitution and government possible, and secured its permanency. The displacement of the bishops was all that, in point of fact, was necessary. Their presence had not interfered with the Presbyterian administration of the Church, in all its subordinate departments. Their absence, and the consequent recall of the General Assembly, removed an inconvenient and objectionable anomaly, and reinstated the supreme court in its proper position and authority. No other change was required. The Caroline Episcopate had introduced no novelties, save the novelty of an unrelenting persecution for conscience' sake; in comparison with which the intolerance of the Covenanters appears but a misdirected excess of zeal.

The ritual of the Church had not been purged of the elements which had begun to infect it during the Protectorate, and remained substantially on the Puritanic level. "We," says Sir George Mackenzie—"the bloody Mackenzie"—"had no

ceremonies, surplice, altars, cross in baptism, nor the meanest of those things which would be allowed in England, by the dissenters, in way of accommodation." The old Catholic features of the worship—the regular repetition of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed—the responsive Amen—and the attitude of kneeling at prayer, had dropped out of use along with the 'Book of Common Order'; and the Caroline bishops and curates did nothing to raise the character of the public services of the Church. Even the kneeling at Communion, about which King James had made such a pother, was not renewed. Nothing marks the Episcopate of this time so distinctly as being the mere creature of a court, and a party indifferent to religion if only they could enforce a form of Church government amenable to the designs of absolutism, than its misuse of its rare opportunity of imparting a higher tone to the national ritual. Had the bishops had the true interests of religion at heart, they could not have let it slip from their hands. The old liturgy was laid aside. A fresh attempt to introduce the Anglican was hopeless; but they might have drawn up and gained acceptance for an order which would have commended itself to the minds of the devout, by providing services at once less elaborate and less tinged with Romish alloy than those of the English Prayer-Book, and less con-

troversial, dogmatic, and vehement in substance and style than those of Knox's compilation.

In the mind of the author of the 'Book of Common Order' the dread of retaining any form, or phrase, or ceremony, which had been in any degree a covert of Romish superstition, overbore the due sense of what was reverend and devout in the ancient usages, and an impartial estimate of the measure of beauty and solemnity proper in the various offices of public worship. Antagonism to Rome was with Knox the absorbing principle—we might almost say, the mastering passion. I do not call the antagonism unreasonable; but its manifestations were exaggerated and excessive. It stamped on the religion which he helped, more than any other man, to mould, a character of combative intensity, of negation and protest, which had more in common with the mental attitude of Joshua at Jericho than with that of S. Paul on the Areopagus. It specially marked the ritual of the Church with a note of harshness in form and sectarianism in feeling, which were unfavourable to the development of a devotional and catholic spirit in the people—nay, tended to repress it,—a repressive tendency which was not counteracted, but increased, by the undue prominence given to "the preaching of the Word." The clergy of the Restoration, who failed to improve

the prayers of the Church, were little able to give any higher qualities to its preaching.<sup>1</sup>

Strange, that with the restoration of the three-fold order of ministers, and the creation of a staff of bishops regularly consecrated (which the Kirk had never possessed since its reformation a hundred years before), there should be no unmistakable renewal and invigoration of her life, no palpable elevation of the standard of ministerial character and efficiency, no emanation of more gracious influence from every function of the rehabilitated priesthood, under the paternal care of the apostolic episcopate. Strange, that the signs of apostolicity—the lips touched with fire from the altar, the self-forgotten devotion, the ardent zeal, the cheerful endurance of labour and travail, the hardy encounter of perils on every side, the courage nothing could daunt, the faith that never failed—were not to be seen among the men who let no revolutions shake the tenacity of their hold on manse and glebe and teind, nor those who stepped into the places which others had vacated for conscience' sake, nor those who

<sup>1</sup> Of those here referred to (the men who took the places of the ministers who refused to conform to Episcopacy) Bishop Burnet says: "They were generally very mean and despicable in all respects; the worst preachers I ever heard, ignorant to a reproach, and many of them openly vicious. They were a disgrace to their order, and were indeed the dregs and refuse of the northern parts."—*History of His own Time*, i. 260.

from the hand of a profligate king had accepted the bishop's mitre, but among those whom loyalty to the principles of their Reformed Church exposed, some to exile, some to the dungeon, and some to the scaffold—all to persecution. Again the threefold ministry failed to vindicate its claim to special validity and sanctity. It was no more holy in character, catholic in spirit, and apostolic in powers and gifts under Charles II. and James VII., than it had been under James V. and Mary.

The one outstanding personality in the dreary years between the Restoration and the Revolution is Leighton's. And Leighton had written those works which keep his memory green, whose intellectual breadth and spiritual philosophy had such a charm for Coleridge, while he was the Presbyterian minister of Newbattle and the Principal of the College of Edinburgh. The Episcopal office, which he accepted in the vain hope of healing wounds and promoting peace, he resigned in wearied heartsickness, after twelve years' discouraging experiment, to die in voluntary exile.

The General Assembly met in 1690, for the first time since Colonel Cotterel's dragoons had escorted it out of Edinburgh in 1653. Its clerical members were the survivors of the clergy outed in 1662, for refusing to own the authority of the bishops. There were only about sixty of

them: by Act of Parliament of the same year they had been restored to their former charges. Parliament had already ratified the Confession of Faith, and confirmed the Presbyterian government, now finally reinstated in its entirety. The original Scots' Confession was thus at last definitely set aside, and its place legally given to that of Westminster. This was matter of great regret—the old Confession being less exactly Calvinistic, less complex and particular, more Catholic in spirit and temperate in statement, than the new, which exaggerates the doctrine of the divine sovereignty, disparages that of human responsibility, and conceals the truth of God's universal fatherhood and goodwill to men behind its dogma of an arbitrary election. But the puritanic impetus of the Protectorate had pushed the Westminster symbol into a position from which no one now thought of dislodging it.

Its effect upon Scottish theology has been repressive, reinforced as adherence to it was by stringent formulas of subscription, invented originally not so much in the interests of rigid Calvinism as of anti-Jacobite fidelity to the Revolution Settlement. It was supposed that Episcopalians would refuse such formulas. Possibly at a later date, and when the connection between Episcopacy and Jacobitism had displayed itself more unmistakably, such a supposi-

tion was correct; but at the date of the Revolution Settlement, the Episcopalians showed no aversion from pledging themselves to subscribe the Confession. Before the revolutionary storm the bishops fled like their predecessors in 1638—they became “the Kirk invisible,” as Claverhouse said, with disdainful sarcasm, deserting their flocks—but they left behind them a large contingent of the clergy who were content to remain in the Church under its altered conditions. A hundred and eighty of them, with Dr Canaries—a prominent divine of somewhat dubious reputation—at their head, appealed to the General Assembly to be allowed to sign the Confession and an engagement to submit to the Presbyterian government, on the ground that they desired to be “permitted to act as presbyters in presbyteries, synods, and General Assemblies, in concurrence with the Presbyterian ministers, in the government of the Church as now by law established.”

Grave suspicions of the motives of some of these conformists, and of their loyalty to the reigning sovereigns, required the exaction of stricter declarations; and for some time commissions of the Assembly had much to do in deciding upon claims of recognition, cases of desertion, and of illegal retention, of benefices. In every case the Church took care that no unlicensed or irregularly ordained person should

take advantage of a time of confusion and urgency to make his way into the ministry.<sup>1</sup>

As for the Episcopal clergy, the treatment of all who were doing their ministerial duty well, and who honestly agreed to behave as loyal subjects, was fair, and in many instances generous,—many men being left undisturbed in their manse who yet had never taken the oaths to Government. That this lenity was often ill returned—especially in districts of the Highlands where Jacobite feeling was strong and sectarian passion took the place of religious principle—appears from several scenes of uproarious, and even

<sup>1</sup> “We have an unbroken ministerial succession from the ancient Scottish Church. The latest blunder in connection with this subject which I have noticed is one made by the Rev. Cosmo G. Lang. In a pamphlet recently published, on ‘The Future of the Church in Scotland,’ by way of throwing doubts on our succession, he says: ‘One of the first Acts of the first General Assembly, after the Revolution, was to admit to their communion, without any ordination, three Cameronian preachers.’ . . . It is pathetic to think of how the ‘persecuted remnant,’ who, according to their lights, were loyal at all costs to the King of Zion, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, amid almost insuperable difficulties and not without scruples of conscience, because of the festival days of the Dutch Church, sent their most promising youths from the moorlands of Galloway and Dumfries, to study in the universities of Holland, and to be ordained by Dutch ‘classes’ (*i.e.*, presbyteries), rather than that men without a lawful commission should minister to them in holy things; and of how, after they were cut off from this stream of succession, they remained for more than twenty years without a ministry at all, rather than violate the holy order of God’s house.”—Rev. G. W. Spratt, D.D., in ‘Scottish Church Society Conferences,’ 2d series, vol. ii. p. 64.

murderous, violence, attending the settlement of Presbyterian ministers, in parishes where the Episcopal incumbents had been left during their life in unmolested possession. Thus—to take an example—in the parish of Knockbain, in the year 1711, after the appointment of Mr John Grant, —the new minister, on the following Sunday, accompanied by one of his heritors, went by a boat to church, “and when at a small distance from the boat they were surrounded by a great many men and women (about two hundred), who lay in ambush. Some of them had their faces blackened, and a few were in women’s clothes, some armed with swords (durks) and heavy battons; all the women had battons. Mr G. had his hat knocked off and torn in pieces, his head sadly cut, and was dragged by his cravats till almost choked, the mob still pursuing in back, sides, &c., with their staves, to get them to travel harder (more nimbly). The mob also tore a suit of fine clothes to rags; his outer coat, black coat and vest, with all his linens (were likewise) stole out of his pocket, and after a terrible effusion of his blood, and casting cold water upon his wounds, they carried him to the top of a hill, and resolved to have killed him, had not some, more tender-hearted, opposed this, and rescued him. Mr John M’Kenzie, who preached in the Episcopal meeting (-house) for that and neighbouring

parishes, stood on a rising ground, feeding his eyes with their barbarous usage, and thereafter preached to the mob, most of them having pieces of Mr Grant's clothes tied or pinned to the most open parts of their bodies as trophies of victory."<sup>1</sup>

Scenes of a similar kind have been witnessed in more than one district of the country since the close of the revolutionary epoch, but originating in a different cause than the substitution of a Presbyterian for an Episcopal incumbent. These arose from the operation of the law of patronage. The Reformers had asserted the principle, which they traced to the apostolic era, of the Christian people's right to "call" their ministers. "It appertaineth," said the First Book of Discipline, "to the people, and to every several congregation, to elect their ministers." But, like some other points in that book, this was not included in the Church's legal constitution. By the Act of Parliament of 1567, which established the Church on its reformed basis, it was "statute and ordained" that while the examination and induction of ministers belonged only to "the Kirk now openly and publicly professed," the "presentation of laic patronages" should be reserved for "the just and ancient patrons." "Knox and the other Reformers accepted establishment on these terms; and

<sup>1</sup> *Fasti*, v. 283.

we cannot for a moment fancy they would have done so had they considered it anti-Scriptural.”<sup>1</sup>

Up to the Reformation the patronage was vested in the landowners, in the Crown, in the bishop or the abbat, never in the people. After the Reformation it was clearly understood, as a principle, that no minister should be intruded on an unwilling congregation; but it did not necessarily follow that the people should choose him. The strong position, taken up in the First Book of Discipline, was not maintained in the Second, which gave the initiative to the “eldership,” not to the congregation. It defines a minister’s election as consisting in the choosing of a person “most able” for the vacant office, “by the judgment of the eldership and consent of the congregation.” By the Revolution Settlement patronage is conferred on the (Protestant) heritors and the elders, who are “to name and propose a person to the whole congregation, to be either approved or disapproved by them”—the presbytery to decide, if objections be made, as to their validity, and to ordain and induct, or forbear, as they think proper. For the call of the congregation was thus substituted the right of offering objection only, to which, if reasonable, the presbytery

<sup>1</sup> Our National Church, p. 52—a remarkably able little work—“an Appeal against Disestablishment addressed to the common-sense and Christian spirit of lay Presbyterians in Scotland.” 5th ed.

must give effect. As compensation for the loss of their right of patronage, the patrons were to receive from the heritors and liferenters of each parish a sum of 600 merks, or in sterling money £33, 6s. 8d. After the lapse of twenty years it was found that only four parishes had produced this compensation.<sup>1</sup> Seeing that the right of patronage was so little valued by those to whom it had been transferred, and that the new way of appointing ministers had "occasioned great heats and divisions," it was resolved that in all parishes in which the 600 merks had not been paid the patronage should be placed on its old footing; and this was accordingly done by the Act of 1712.

This restoration, though in one aspect an act of justice to the patrons, was undoubtedly alien to the ideas of the Scottish people, inconsistent, in its virtual annulment of the popular call, with apostolic precedent, and, in the general opinion, a violation of the sacred international stipulations of the Act of Union. It did not put an end to "heats and divisions," but rather increased them, and became the parent of not a few demonstrations, as discreditable to religion as that which occurred at Knockbain in 1711. "Disputed settlements," where no call approved the patron's choice, and all objections were set aside by the

<sup>1</sup> Cadder, Old Monkland, New Monkland, Strathblane.

presbytery, were too frequent, and often attended with riot and violence. The policy of the Church in regarding the call as of no account, and enforcing the appointment of the patron's presentee—a policy of which Robertson the historian was the strenuous and consistent assertor—tended to weaken the Church's hold upon the people during a long period of the eighteenth century, and was the cause of the two considerable secessions of that century, as it may be said to have been of the still larger one of 1843. The wisdom of waiting for the growth of opinion and development of events, and the unwisdom of seeking the remedy of ecclesiastical grievances in schism, are illustrated by the fact that patronage (relief from which was the motive of these three secessions), having been legally abolished, no longer exists within the Church; and the theory of the first reformers, after the uncertainties and delays of three centuries, has at last been realised.

Questions of patronage could in no way involve that of the orders of the clergy. Everything connected with orders lay within the Church's sphere of purely spiritual jurisdiction. The State, which secured the Church in her patrimonial rights, and protected the independence of her courts, only stipulated that no one should be admitted to the ministry except after due examination, and by the solemn ordination of his presbytery. The

attempt of a party in the Church to strip presbyteries of this right, by enacting, in the "Veto Law" of 1834, that the judgment of a majority of the "male heads of families being communicants" was to supersede that of the presbytery as to the fitness of a presentee to a parish, was defeated by the decision of the House of Lords that such a radical change in the ecclesiastical constitution could not be effected, by the General Assembly, without the concurrence of Parliament.

The exercise of patronage, however, had much to do with the people's loyalty to the Church, and reverence for her government; and these were undoubtedly strained by the way in which the so-called "Moderate" party ruled the Church, postponing, as was commonly thought, the rights of congregations to the pleasure of patrons. There was among this party a good deal of that easy compliance with the ways of the world, that lack of spiritual-mindedness, and that philosophical indifference to deep religious questions, which were popularly summed up in the one word "Moderatism." This tended to make their ministerial labours unfruitful. It rendered their Church policy unnecessarily provocative of opposition, because suggesting that it was careless of the religious sentiments of the people.

The period when this Moderatism was at its height was one in which theology, as a science

or a literature, was, in Scotland, absolutely silent and barren. It kept strictly within its statutory limits. As far as preaching was concerned, if on the Moderate side there was a good deal of adust morality, there was on the Evangelical side a compensating quantity of equally dry Calvinistic orthodoxy. But this was the very time when the Scottish Church, as represented both by her clergy and her laity, came forward to occupy a field in which they felt no fetters cramp their freedom, and to hold a foremost rank in British literature. Robertson himself, the Moderate leader, took a place second only to Gibbon's as a historian. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric caused the foundation of the Chair of English Language and Literature in the University of Edinburgh; and his sermons—though in no sense a contribution to theology—were so famous that they were translated into almost every European language; and, what is perhaps more remarkable, earned their author a pension from royalty of £200 a-year. Principal Campbell of Aberdeen, author of 'The Philosophy of Rhetoric,' gained an almost equal reputation by his reply to Hume's essay on 'Miracles.' John Home's tragedy of 'Douglas' acquired an immense contemporary renown. Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson, Dugald Stewart, and Adam Smith forced men to listen to the voice of Scottish Philosophy.

The influences under which Scottish intellect now began to devote itself to letters were not those of any new revival of learning throughout Europe, such as had marked the period of the Renaissance. They were not the product of any immigration of foreign scholars, such as had followed the fall of Constantinople. They were mainly two: the repressive tendency of the statutory Calvinism on the one hand, and the liberalising stimulus of the larger intercourse with England, which resulted from the Union, on the other. These combined to produce a non-theological literature of great power and brilliancy.

Another fact tended in the same direction. The development of the Church, in the eighteenth century, differed entirely from that in all previous epochs since the Reformation, in this respect—that it was dissociated from any question connected, directly or indirectly, with Episcopacy. *That*, as a factor in Scottish ecclesiastical affairs, as an influence on Scottish theological thought, disappears before the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and does not reappear again. When this fruitful source of ecclesiastical contention and theological discussion vanished, no other arose to take its place, or to engross the intellectual energies which, throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, we may say, had expended themselves in

the strifes of presbyter and prelate. It was when Episcopacy was thus shelved that the narcotic influence of the Westminster Confession, backed by its exacting formula, made itself acutely felt. Theology had no room within its narrow barriers for speculative movement. Thus all mental energy and expanding genius turned from the strait enclosure, strictly guarded by the Confession, to wider and more open arenas. But the day of a revived theology was sure to come. The preaching of the post-Revolution period continued to be of the same type as that of Samuel Rutherford and the zealots of the Covenant,—a harsh and stolid Calvinism. Thomas Boston exhibits a fair specimen of its characteristics in his 'Fourfold State': life not an education, but a severe probation, on which depend irrevocable issues of eternal bliss or eternal torment; an iron "decree" absolutely determining who shall be saved, and who damned; a view of the worthlessness of "works" which could only benumb all moral instincts and sense of personal responsibility.

The inevitable reaction from teaching of this sort was the preaching of morality rather than of doctrine. But the Moderate discoursing on morality was not nutritive. It beget no spiritual enthusiasm, no glow of religious sentiment, no energy of religious life. It was certain to retreat into the background, or to find its oracles de-

served, as soon as any stronger and more passionate force should press forward, startling the general conscience—arresting the general attention—awakening the inner consciousness which had been more than half asleep. And this force came into the sleepy hollow of the Kirk, in the shape of the resolute Calvinism and warm evangelical fervour which marked the preaching of Rowland Hill and the brothers Haldane. Hill was an English clergyman, the Haldanes were Scottish laymen; but all three had their share in breaking up the dull and not always decorous stagnation of religious thought and life in Scotland.

What has been called the “Evangelical Revival” began, Calvinistic,—but without the inhuman extremes and limitations of predestinarianism which had marked the theology of Rutherford, Halyburton, and Boston. But this Evangelicalism, though warm and earnest, was not to some minds more sufficient as a basis of reasonable faith than the Moderatism which it displaced. It tended to foster the growth of a religion which dealt in severe and curious self-inspection, and search for “assurance of salvation” in its own frames and feelings, and lacked broad and healthy sympathy. It begot a selfish individualism, and obscured the great central fact of God’s fatherly relation to all, by teaching

an austere limited atonement, and formally forensic explanations of its relation to mankind. A more direct and personal application of the Gospel than the ordinary preaching commonly offered, and — as the only true warrant and source of this—an exposition of the Atonement which should evolve a deeper moral and spiritual meaning than that of the ordinary doctrine, became a felt necessity. Neither the scheme of “satisfaction,” which was the favourite Puritan theory; nor the “rectoral” hypothesis, which regarded Christ’s sufferings and death as, in the main, an exhibition of divine justice and vindication of God’s character as the moral governor of the world, met the needs of the deepening spiritual consciousness which Evangelicalism failed to satisfy, and which could not accept, as a veracious theory of the Atonement, one which excluded from its scope the vast majority of human beings. The earliest, and in some respects the most deeply spiritual and original, representative of this unrest and wider outlook was a layman, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen.

We cannot enter now on an examination of Erskine’s teaching, and of that of his friend and fellow-labourer in the field of a deeper and freer theology, John Macleod Campbell. I name them here as the pioneers of the movement, which has ultimately broken the gloomy dominion of the

theology that had been so cramped in its growth by the shackles of Westminster that its continued influence would have, sooner or later, extinguished the spiritual and intellectual liberty without which an apostolic ministry becomes impossible. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This liberty, too, like that won at Marathon or Leuctra, has its martyrs and confessors. Campbell's deposition was the price which had to be paid to the spirit of purblind bigotry, dominant in the General Assembly of his day, for his assertion of the freedom of the Gospel. The Church has long repented of its act of narrow-minded injustice, and has recognised the truth of the teaching which, sixty years ago, it branded as unsound. Thus the thoughts of Churches widen with the process of the suns, and the "heresy" of one generation becomes the accepted dogma of another, which does not always remember whose conflict displaced the error, or through whose sacrifice the advance was gained.

"Thus it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands  
aside,

Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,  
And the multitude makes virtue of the faith they had denied."

The liberty of prophesying, of which Campbell was the pioneer, is now the Church's secure possession.

In other departments of her life we can mark a similar enfranchisement from time-worn bonds. Till within living memory her discipline proceeded upon principles and methods in many particulars not far removed from those of her Roman period. An inquisitive scrutiny of morals was conducted by kirk-sessions; and penalties, little differing from penances, were prescribed to delinquents, with the intention of "satisfying the Kirk." The practical benefit of all this was very questionable. In as far as it might engender in the minds both of ministers and people a keener sense of the obligation of pure morality, it would do good. But it was more likely, in most cases, to foster a system of spying and informing on the one hand, and of deception and pietistic pretension on the other—alike fatal to the practice of Christian charity and to the growth of a salutary and manly public opinion. It is open to debate whether the confessional of the Popish priest, or the surveillance of the Protestant minister and kirk-session, was the more injurious to that self-respect and spirit of personal liberty which are inseparable from all true morality. The exercise of discipline still requires reform on the lines of definite principle and uniform application; but the disuse of the former devices of secret investigation and public penance is a distinct deliverance from an oppressive system.

The ritual of the Church, during the eighteenth and the earlier part of the nineteenth century, was bald and unimpressive in the extreme, disfigured by many of the roughest features of the irreverent Puritanism of the Protectorate. The spirit of enlightened and liberal progress has to a large extent transformed it, so that it has now regained some, at least, of the catholic usages and proprieties in which, three hundred years ago, it was at one with all the Reformed Churches.

The Church's conception of her duty, as a national institution, has also expanded in breadth and comprehensiveness. Sectarian sentiment, engendered by long periods of party strife and quarrel over secondary questions, has given place to a healthy conviction, at once devout and patriotic, of the primary necessity of caring for the nation as a whole, and holding her establishment, with all its privileges and endowments, in trust for the general good—moral, intellectual, social—of all the people. To realise this great conception of her position and duty, the Church needs all the self-devotion and power her ministry can supply. Nothing could help her more, in so worthy a work, than the restoration to their proper places of an order and an office, which have not held these places since the Reformation.

The order is the Diaconate. Well known and expressly recognised then, as the second order in

the apostolic ministry, it has been partly superseded by the eldership (invested, through the ill-starred definition of the Second Book of Discipline, with a character not its own), and partly disused, through a strange and unpardonable laxity. Never wholly dormant, it has been of late revived in several parishes. In others it is still in abeyance. It ought to be revived in all in which it has been allowed to lapse, and the apostolic ministry thus restored to its original completeness.

The office is the Superintendency. Without this in well-organised operation there can be no thorough, impartial, and effective supervision of parochial and presbyterial functions, and no responsible guarantee of adequate discharge of duty. It is fortunate for the Church that, in again choosing, from the ranks of her ministry, men able to exercise this office, she would be introducing no innovation, but simply reverting to the wise practice of the fathers of the Reformation.

The Church has a noble future before her. She will best adapt herself to its necessities by the reverent study of a noble Past. We have seen, as we have reviewed a history full of vicissitudes of war and peace, of storm and calm, of conflict and of victory, many a passage that records the temporary triumph of autocratic tyranny over popular rights, of superstition over the power

of love and of a sound mind, of knavish statecraft over unselfish patriotism; the disastrous results of irrational devotion to wrong principles, and of the maintenance of just principles upon untenable grounds; the loss of spiritual power consequent on the base enjoyment of carnal security and ease; but at no point in that history have we failed to mark—even amid its deepest gloom and confusion—some clear sign of the presence of that Divine Spirit which the Church's Head has promised shall abide with her for ever. He has never left Himself without a witness. In the unworldly simplicity and flaming zeal of the Celtic apostles—in the pious lives of the best of the Roman clergy—in the martyrs and confessors of the Reformation and of the Covenant—in the faithful remnant who began to rebuild the battered walls after the deliverance from the bondage of the Stuarts—in the prolonged array of faithful men who until now have preserved unimpaired the succession of the ministry, the testimony of the Christian creed, the sacred line of that life of which the Cross is the inspiration, we see sufficient evidence that this Church is a true plant of the divine husbandman's planting, and that "the holy seed is the substance thereof." Should the day again come, as it has come often in the past, when she shall find herself deserted by false friends, assailed by envious foes, "fallen on evil

tongues and evil times, and compassed round with darkness and with danger," the consciousness of this will be her strength and stay; will encourage her people to uphold, and to hand on to generations yet unborn, her righteous claim to the title of the National Church of Scotland; and will nerve her pastors and teachers to make full proof of their Apostolic Ministry.