

Preface by the Editor.

The Rev. Hugh Binning entered upon his pastoral charge at a very eventful period. He was ordained in the interval between the death of Charles I. and the coronation of his son Charles II., which took place at Scone, on the first of January, 1651. In the first year of the incumbency of Binning, the fatal battle of Dunbar was fought in different parts of Scotland; three different armies, without concert with one another, subsequently took the field, to oppose the progress of the parliamentary forces. And it was not till after the death of Binning, that General Monk succeeded in reducing the country to a state of subjection. Meanwhile, the same jealousies and animosities prevailed, which had previously divided the Scottish nation. The nobility, as well as the clergy, were opposed to one another, and adopted different views of the national interests. And what tended not a little to increase the public divisions, the Anabaptists, Quakers, and other sectarians, connected with the English army, employed themselves wherever they went, in propagating with great industry, their peculiar opinions. By keeping these things in view, the reader will be better able to understand, in the writings of Binning, numerous allusions, more or less recondite, to the particular circumstances of the times.

It was on Saturday the nineteenth of April, 1651, that Cromwell came to Glasgow, with the principal part of his army. The next day he went to hear sermon in the High church. In the forenoon, he entered the Choir, or Inner church, as it was called, and, as Principal Baillie says, “quietly heard Mr. Robert Ramsay preach a very good honest sermon, pertinent for his case.”¹ He

¹ Baillie's Letters and Journals, vol. iii. pp. 286-288, MSS in Bib. Col. Glas.

appeared equally unexpectedly in the afternoon, in the Nave, or Outer church, when Mr. John Carstairs delivered in his presence a lecture, and Mr. James Durham, a sermon. Both of these discourses had, like the former one, a special reference to the existing posture of public affairs. But as might have been expected, Cromwell was offended at the plain dealing of all the three clergymen, who considered it to be their duty to condemn him and his army, for their invasion of Scotland, for the contempt they manifested for the religious institutions of the country, and likewise, for their persecution of the ministers of Ireland. On the following day, therefore, he summoned them, and the other clergymen of the city, to a meeting in his own lodgings, that he might vindicate himself and his confederates from the charges which had been brought against them, and at the same time hear what his accusers had to advance in their own behalf.

At this conference, which appears to have been conducted with good temper on both sides, they who spoke most on the part of the Scottish clergy, were Mr. Patrick Gillespie, Principal of the University of Glasgow, and Mr. James Guthrie, minister of Stirling, who forfeited his life at Edinburgh soon after the Restoration. On the other side, the principal speakers were Cromwell himself, and General Lambert,² who, like many

² "A Letter from Head Quarters in Scotland"

"SIR{FNS, We came hither on Saturday last, April 19th. The ministers and townsmen generally staid at home, and did not quit their habitations as formerly. These ministers that are here are those that have deserted from the proceedings beyond the water, yet they are equally dissatisfied with us. And though they preach against us in the pulpit to our forces, yet we permit them without disturbance, as willing to gain them by love. My Lord General sent to them to give us a friendly Christian meeting, to discourse of those things, which they rail against us for, that (if possible) all misunderstandings between us may be taken away, which accordingly they gave us on Wednesday last. There was no bitterness nor passion vented on either side, with all moderation and tenderness. My Lord General the Major-Gen. Lambert, for the most part maintained the discourse, and on their part, Mr. James Guthrie, and Mr. Patrick Gelaspy. We know not what satisfaction they have received. Sure I am, there

other of the parliamentary officers, was a preacher, as well as a soldier.³ Some of Cromwell's chaplains⁴ are also represented to have taken a share in the discussion, along with the Rev. Hugh Binning. Cromwell, it is said, was struck with the fearlessness and ability of so young a minister. "Who is that learned and bold young man?" said he. When he was told his name was Binning, he replied, "He has bound well. But," he added, putting his hand, at the same time, to his sword, "this will loose all again." [x]

In his *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. John Owen*, Mr. Orme adverts to this anecdote regarding Binning, simply on the authority of a note in the *Biographia Scoticana*. He does not seem to have been aware that, beyond this note, there was any evidence to produce, that such a meeting as has now been described, was ever actually held. But he observes, "There is nothing improbable in the meeting, and Cromwell's pun quite accords with other anecdotes of his conversation."⁵ The part which Mr. Binning is reported to have acted on this occasion, was no less characteristic of him. He was a very able disputant. But when giving utterance to his feelings, or expressing his sentiments, he was sometimes led to employ strong language.⁶

The following account of the object and result of the meeting at Glasgow is that which is given by Sir James Balfour—"Oliver Cromwell, with his army, being at this tyme in Glasgow, had a conference with 8 ministers, anent the lawfulness of his en-

was no such weight in their arguments, that might in the least discourage us from what we have undertaken, the chiefest thing on which they insisted being our invasion into Scotland"—*Sev. Proc. in Parl.* May 1, to 8 Cromwelliana, p. 102. See also *Durham's Comment on Revel. Life of the Author*, p. xi.

³ Nicoll's *Diary*, pp. 68, 94.

⁴ Along with Dr. John Owen, Joseph Caryl, John Oxenbridge, and Cuthbert Sydenham officiated as chaplains in the army of Cromwell in Scotland. Orme's *Memoirs of Dr. Owen*, p. 128. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, vol. iv. p. 490, Lond. 1822.

⁵ *Memoirs of Dr. Owen*, p. 127.

⁶ See note, p. 512.

gement against this countrey and kingdome. He gave them some papers, wich they anssuered extempore, and proued to his face his periurey and breach of couenant and leauge, and his sinfull rebellion and murther, contrair to [the] expresse word of God, and leauge and couenant suorne by himselue, and most of his complices. He toke the morrow at 3 in the afternoone to his further conference with them, and maney of his cheiffest officers did openly acknowledge, they were conuincid in reson, and neuer till now, did see the weekness of ther auen grounds. In place of keiping the appoynted meitting, (seing a fyre to begin to kindle amongst his auen,) about midnight, that same day, he commands all his arney presently to march, wnder the paine of death, backe towards Edinburghe, and empties all his garisons be west Linthgow, sends his horses towards the border, and with grate haist, with his footte returns to Edinburgh and Leith, and is now bussie in repairing the breaches of Edinburgh castle.”⁷

We are informed, that a Report of the whole proceedings which took place on this occasion, was drawn up by Principal Gillespie, and Mr. James Guthrie.⁸ But whether that Report is now in existence or not, or was ever printed, the writer has not been able to ascertain.

The invasion of Scotland, which was one of the charges brought against Cromwell, was condemned by Lord Fairfax, the commander in chief of the parliamentary forces. He looked upon it as an infraction of the Solemn League and Covenant, which had been very generally subscribed in England, as well as in Scotland. Feeling alarm at this, the Council of State appointed Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison, St John, and Whitelocke to converse with him, with a view, if possible, to overcome his scruples. But after a long interview, Fairfax remained unmoved by their arguments, and expressed his determination to resign his commission rather

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⁷ Annals of Scotland, vol. iv. p. 208.

⁸ Baillie's Letters, vol. iii. p. 200. MSS in Bib. Col. Glas.

than proceed to Scotland with the army, which was preparing to act against that part of the kingdom. As he adhered firmly to this resolution, he was deprived of his commission, and Cromwell was appointed to succeed him. Whitelock⁹ has furnished us with an account of what passed at the interview, which he and his friends had with Lord Fairfax. The views expressed by the different parties, therefore, as Whitelock has recorded them, will enable any one to form, it is conceived, a tolerably correct idea of the nature of the discussion which took place at Glasgow, when the same point was one of the questions at issue, and when two of the principal speakers were the very individuals who had previously argued the matter with Fairfax.

The letters which passed between Cromwell, and Colonel Dundas, the governor of Edinburgh Castle will likewise assist us to conjecture what may have been advanced on both sides on the occasion in question, at Glasgow. Some Scottish clergymen had taken refuge there after the battle of Dunbar. It was to them principally, through Colonel Dundas, that Cromwell addressed himself. The letters were printed at the time. On examining them, it will be perceived, that the invasion of Scotland, and the other offences with which Cromwell and his party were charged at Glasgow, formed in this instance likewise, grounds of accusation on the one hand, and called forth a vindication on the other. In Hume's opinion the letters written by the parliamentary general are "the best of Cromwell's wretched compositions that remain."¹⁰ But Mr. Orme says of them, "From their phraseology, I strongly suspect them to have been the production of Owen's pen."¹¹ One of the letters, dated September 9, 1630, addressed to "The Honourable the Governor of the Castle of Edinburgh," and signed by "O Cromwell," contains this passage—"The ministers

⁹ Memorials of English Affairs from the beginning of the Reign of Charles I. to the Restoration, pp. 444-446, Lond. 1682.

¹⁰ Hist. of Eng. vol. vi. pp. 180, Lond. 1825.

¹¹ Memoirs of Dr. Owen, p. 126.

in England are supported, and have liberty to preach the gospell, though not to raile, nor under pretence thereof to overtop the civill power, or debase it as they please. No man hath been troubled in England or Ireland for preaching the gospell, nor has any minister been molested in Scotland since the coming of the army hither. The speaking truth becomes the ministers of Christ. When ministers pretend to a glorious reformation, and lay the foundation thereof in getting to themselves worldly power, and can make worldly mixtures to accomplish the same, such as their late agreement with their king, and hopes by him to carry on their designe, [they] may know, that the Sion promised and hoped for will not be built with such untempered mortar. As for the unjust invasion they mention, time was, when an army of Scotland came into England, not called by the supream authority. We have said in our papers with what hearts and upon what accompt we came, and the Lord hath heard us, though you would not, upon as solemn an appeal as any experience can parallell. And although they seem to comfort themselves with being the sons of Jacob, from whom (they say) God hath hid his face for a time, yet it's no wonder, when the Lord hath lifted up his hand so eminently against a family, as he hath done so often against this, and men will not see his hand, if the Lord hide his face from such, putting them to shame, both for it, and their hatred at his people, as it is this day. When they purely trust to the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, which is powerfull to bring down strongholds and every imagination that exalts itself, which alone is able to square and fitt the stones for the new Jerusalem, then and not before, and by that meanes and no other, shall Jerusalem, (which is to be the praise of the whole earth,) the city of the Lord be built, the Sion of the Holy One of Israel.”¹²

This letter was answered on the same day, and in the following terms, by the Governor of the Castle. “My Lord,—Yours I have

¹² Thurlow's State Papers, vol. i. p. 189.

communicate to those with me, whom it concerned, who desire me to return this answer, that their ingenuitie in prosecuting the ends of the covenant, according to then vocation and place, and adhering to then first principles, is well known, and one of their greatest regrates is, that they have not been met with the like, when ministers of the gospel have been imprisoned, deprived of their benefices, sequestrate, forced to flee from their dwellings, and bitterly threatned, for their faithful declareth the will of God against the godless and wicked proceedings of men that it cannot be accounted an imaginary fear of suffering in such, as are resolved to follow the like freedom and faithfulness in discharge of their master's message, that it savours not of ingenuitie to promise liberty of preaching the gospel, and to limit the preachers thereof, that they must not speak against the sins and enormities of civill powers, since their commission carryeth them to speak the word of the Lord unto, and to reprove the sins of persons of all ranks from the highest to the lowest, that to impose the name of railing upon such faithfull freedom was the old practice of malignants against the ministers of the gosspeil, who laid open to people the wickedness of their ways, that they should not be ensnared thereby; that their consciences bear them record, and all their hearers do know, that they meddle not with civill affairs further than to hold forth the rule of the word, by which the straightnes and crookednes of men's actions are made evident. But they are sorry, that they have just cause to regrate, that men of meer civill place and employment should usurp the calling and employment of the ministry, to the scandall of the reformed kirks, and particularly in Scotland, contrary to the government and discipline therein established, to the maintenance whereof, you are bound by the solemn league and covenant. Thus far they have thought fitt to vindicate their return to the offer in Colonell Whalley's letter. The other part of yours, which concerns the public as well as them, they conceive that all have been answered sufficiently in the public papers of the state and

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kirk. Onely, to that of the successe upon your solemn appeal, they say again, what was said to it before, that they have not so learned Christ, as to hang the equity of their cause upon events; but desire to have their hearts established in the love of the truth in all the tribulations that befall them.”¹³

Other letters followed these previous to the surrender of the Castle. From them, and the public papers of the time, we discover that the English army justified their invasion of Scotland and their oppressive treatment of their opponents, in Scotland and Ireland, by representing that their part of the kingdom had been previously invaded from Scotland; that the presbyterian party was friendly to monarchy; that that party had interfered with their attempts to reform the government of England, and declared against them as sectaries; and that a second invasion of England by the Scottish nation was known to have been contemplated. On the other hand, it was affirmed that the invasion of England, by the Marquis of Hamilton, had been always disapproved of, and opposed by those who were now in power in Scotland; that in taking up arms against the people of Scotland, the English were proclaiming themselves the enemies of those who had formed a covenant with them, and helped them in the day of their distress; and that although the necessity or lawfulness of a war with England, in present circumstances, had never been determined upon, nor been even discussed either in parliament or in the assembly, there could be no doubt a design was formed to overturn both the civil and ecclesiastical institutions of the northern part of the island, and make it a mere province of England.

Richard Baxter felt the warmest sympathy at this period with the Scottish people, and with his usual intrepidity and honesty, openly arraigned the conduct of his countrymen for invading Scotland. Binning, and the ablest of his friends, could not have pled their own cause in the presence of Cromwell, and

¹³ Thurlow's State Papers, vol. i. pp. 139, 160.

his officers, with greater power and eloquence, than he did for them, with the parliamentary soldiers and others, over whom he possessed any influence. “When the soldiers were going against the king and the Scots,” says he, “I wrote letters to some of them to tell them of their sin, and desired them at last to begin to know themselves. They were the same men who had boasted so much of love to all the godly, and pleaded for tender dealing with them, and condemned those that persecuted them, or restrained their liberty, who were now ready to imbrue their swords in the blood of such as they acknowledged to be godly; and all because they dared not be as perjured, or disloyal, as they were. Some of them were startled at these letters, and thought me an uncharitable censurer, who would say that they could kill the godly, even when they were on the march to do it; for how bad soever they spoke of the cavaliers (and not without too much desert as to their morals), they confessed, that abundance of the Scots were godly men. Afterwards, however, those that I wrote to better understood me.” [xiii]

“At the same time, the Rump, or Commonwealth, which so much abhorred persecution, and were for liberty of conscience, made an order that all ministers should keep certain days of humiliation, to fast and pray for their success in Scotland; and that we should keep days of thanksgiving for their victories; and this upon pain of sequestration so that we all expected to be turned out; but they did not execute it upon any, save one, in our parts. For myself, instead of praying and preaching for them, when any of the committee or soldiers were my hearers, I laboured to help them to understand what a crime it was to force men to pray for the success of those who were violating their covenant and loyalty, and going, in such a cause, to kill their brethren,—what it was to force men to give God thanks for all their bloodshed, and to make God's ministers and ordinances vile, and serviceable to such crimes, by forcing men to run to God on such errands of blood and ruin,—and what it is to be

such hypocrites as to persecute, and cast out those that preach the gospel, while they pretend the advancement of the gospel, and the liberty of tender consciences, and leave neither tenderness nor honesty in the world, when the guides of the flocks, and preachers of the gospel, shall be noted to swallow down such heinous sins. My own hearers were all satisfied with my doctrine, but the committee men looked sour, yet let me alone.”¹⁴

With regard to Binning's own opinion of those whom he calls “our enemies the invaders,” we find that expressed in his Case of Conscience. “They think themselves,” says he, “godly and righteous, yet are not purged from their filthiness. They are given up to strong delusions to believe lies; and there is no lie greater than this, that they are a godly party, in a godly cause and way. They wipe their mouth after all their bloodshed, and say, I have done no evil. They wash their hands, as Pilate, as if they were free of the blood of those just men, whose souls cry under the altar.”¹⁵

Like his friend Principal Gillespie, however, Binning appears to have kept up an amicable intercourse with some of the Independents in the army of the Commonwealth. He even gave the use of his church to the chaplain attached to Colonel Overtoun's regiment, and not only went himself to hear him preach, but exhorted his people likewise to do so. Such conduct, on his part, will be viewed differently by different people. It will be condemned by those who are servilely attached to their own particular communion, and disposed to extend the line of separation between themselves and others, even beyond the limits prescribed by their own canonical rules; but it will be approved of by all whose charity is not bounded by their own narrow pale; who, when they agree with others respecting the fundamental doctrines of religion, would grant to them, as to smaller matters, the toleration they claim for themselves; and who, withal, be-

¹⁴ Orme's Life and Times of Richard Baxter, vol. i. pp. 140, 141.

¹⁵ P. 520.

lieve, that much of that asperity and jealousy which disturb the peace, and sully the character of the Christian world, would in all likelihood be destroyed and prevented, were they, who unhappily are separated from one another by names and forms, to become better acquainted with each other's principles, and each other's feelings. Binning was blamed by some of his brethren for his liberality. The part he had acted was brought under the consideration of one of the inferior church courts. He endeavoured to justify himself, and to show that he had done nothing inconsistent either with his Christian or his ministerial character. But not succeeding in the attempt, with true Christian forbearance, he expressed his desire to avoid giving offence to his brethren, and intimated his willingness that his conduct in similar cases should henceforward be regulated by their wishes.¹⁶

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As a proof of the influence which, along with Cromwell, some of the independent chaplains in his army possessed over a number of the Scottish clergy, it has been asserted that it was owing to them that a change was effected in some of the forms of the presbyterian mode of worship. "It is very observable," it has been said, "that all the presbyterian ministers in Scotland made use of the Christian forms of the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Dox-

¹⁶ "At Cathcart Kirk, 19th Oct., 1652

"Mr. Robert Baylie renewed his protestation given in be him the last daye, against Mr. Hew Binner moderating of the Presbyterie, in his own name and in the name of so many as would adhere to that protestation; and that upon the additional reason that Mr. Hew Binner of his own accord, had gone in to hear an Englishman preach in his own kirk in the parish of Govan, who attended Colonel Overtoun's regiment, and that the said Mr. Hew, be his example and counsel, had moved the people to do the like, and did maintain the lawfulness of this his action, in the face of the presbyterie as if the abstaining from this should have been a needless separation upon his part, and the part of his people, though that having found that some took offence at it, he did no more countenance that man's preaching"—(Records of Presbytery of Glasgow). At the previous meeting Bailie had protested against Mr. Binning's appointment to the moderator's chair because he maintained, another member of the presbytery had a greater number of uncontraverted votes.—Id.

ology, until Oliver's army invaded Scotland, and the independent chaplains in that army thought their own dispensation was above that of Geneva. Upon this, such of the presbyterians as would recommend themselves to the Usurper, and such as had his ear, forbore those forms in the public worship, and by degrees they fell into desuetude."¹⁷

The friendship which thus subsisted between some of the English independent ministers, and some of the Scottish clergy, during the time that the parliamentary army was in Scotland, has been differently accounted for. It has been inferred that a number of the Protesters were "somewhat favourable to Independency, among the chief of whom was Mr Patrick Gillespie."¹⁸ On the other hand, it has been supposed, that some of the Independent clergy had no decided objection to presbyterianism, in the form in which that system of ecclesiastical polity existed in Scotland. Dr. Owen, in particular, has been said to have expressly declared this; nay, that he would have thought it an honour to sit as a member in one of her Assemblies.¹⁹ There can be no doubt that the differences betwixt some of the Presbyterians and the Independents, were not originally so great as these were afterwards discovered to be, between persons distinguished by the same names. They professed to believe the same great doctrines, and conscientiously preached them; and they differed only in regard to their mode of church government. But even in regard to this, some of the earlier Independents were far from differing widely from their presbyterian brethren. The Rev. Charles Herle, who, after the death of Dr. Twisse, was made prolocutor in the Westminster Assembly, has been represented to have said, "The difference between us, and our brethren who are for independency, is nothing so great as some may conceive; at most, it does but ruffle the

¹⁷ An Apology for the Clergy of Scotland, p. 45, London, 1692.

¹⁸ Orme's Mem. of Dr. Owen, p. 488.

¹⁹ Christian Instructor, vol. xxi. p. 547; Biog. Presb., vol. i. p. 131; Lorimer's Eldership, p. 155.

fringe, not any way rend the garment of Christ. It is so far from being a fundamental, that it is scarce a material difference.”²⁰ We are informed that Richard Baxter was likewise accustomed to observe, that “if all the Presbyterians had been like Mr. Marshall, and the Independents like Mr. Burroughs, their differences might easily have been compromised.”²¹ The only part of the country in which any ministers connected with the Church of Scotland appear to have separated from it, and joined themselves to the Independents was the town or county of Aberdeen. A small work on Independency, bearing the title of “A Little Stone out of the Mountain, or Church Order briefly opened,” which was written by Nicholas Lockyer, who accompanied the English army to Scotland, was printed at Leith in 1652. This was replied to, in a work from the pen of James Wood, professor of theology in St. Andrews, which was printed at Edinburgh in 1654. The title of Professor Wood's publication is, “A Little Stone pretended to be out of the Mountain, Tried, and Found to be a Counterfeit,” &c. In that work, Wood animadverts upon a letter from “the new Independents of Aberdene,” dated May 1652, and laments that “some of them had been for some years ministers” of the Established church.²² It is singular enough, that in a memoir of that unhappy man, Archbishop Sharp, which was published in his own lifetime, and dedicated to himself, it is stated that Provost Jaffrey, who afterwards became a Quaker, was known

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²⁰ Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. iii. p. 120.

²¹ Id. p. 318. Mr. Herle, who came to Scotland with the Earl of Nottingham and the Earl of Stanford preached in the High church of Edinburgh on Sunday the 27th of February, 1648. Mr. Stephen Marshall not long after, at the request of Mr. George Gillespie one of the ministers of Edinburgh, preached in the same church, “he,” says Bishop Guthry “who being here four years ago professed to be a presbyterian, but since turned independent.”—(Memoirs of Bishop Guthry, &c., pp. 256-258, second edition). Fuller however says of Mr. Marshall that he died a presbyterian.—(Fuller's Worthies, book 2, p. 53; apud. Neal's Hist. vol. iv. p. 134). And Baillie represents him to have been the best preacher in England.—(Letters and Journal, vol. i. p. 440.

²² Pp. 360, 362.

to declare that Sharp “was the first man who had confirmed him in the way of Independency.”²³

Along with other circumstances, the disunion which prevailed throughout the church, and the causes which gave rise to it, must have had a tendency to mitigate the hostility with which the Protestant clergy regarded the army of Cromwell in general, and the effect, at the same time, of recommending them to him, and his adherents. The Protesters doubted the sincerity of Charles. Though he had subscribed their covenant, they were persuaded he had no real attachment to their church. They were of opinion, that, were he once firmly seated on the throne, their civil and religious liberties would be alike endangered. So far, therefore, could they sympathize with the parliamentary general, and the soldiers whom he commanded, in their opposition to their monarch. The Protesters drew off from the army, which after the battle of Dunbar was embodied, with the concurrence of the king, the parliament, and the commission of the church, for the defence of the monarchy, and the liberation of Scotland. This army was recruited with men of every description. Numerous commissions in it were given to known malignants. The success of an army so constituted, the Protesters thought, was to be dreaded rather than wished for. Binning and others declared they could not even pray for its success.²⁴ Here was another point, in regard to which they and the invading army must have felt sympathy with one another, and which must have materially altered their relative position, leading them to assume such an equivocal attitude, that it must have been difficult, even for themselves, to determine whether they were more the friends or the foes of each other.

Injustice, however, has been done to the Protesters, by representing them to have been republicans. This was by no means their character as a body, whatever may have been the opinions of individuals among them. One of the most active and able

²³ *Miscellanea Scotica*, vol. ii. p. 32.

²⁴ See p. 497 *note*.

of them, was the unfortunate Mr. James Guthrie, minister of Stirling. Though he was executed after the Restoration, for his conceived disloyalty, in opposition, it is believed, to the personal wishes of the king, he never abjured his lawful prince. He wished the royal prerogative to be limited by law, as it afterwards was at the Revolution, but he did not wish it to be abolished. At great personal hazard, Guthrie maintained a public disputation on the subject of the royal authority, in the church of Stirling, with the noted Hugh Peters one of Cromwell's chaplains, and in the presence of a number of the parliamentary officers. And in the same place, and near the same period, he showed himself to be a staunch presbyterian, by engaging in a public discussion²⁵ with Mr. J. Brown, an Anabaptist, who was chaplain to Colonel Fairfax's regiment. In his speech at his trial, he declared his loyalty in the strongest possible terms, and made the following touching, though unavailing, appeal to his judges.—“Albeit, it does become me to adore God in the holiness and wisdom of his dispensations, yet I can hardly refrain from expressing some grief of spirit, that my house and family should not only be so many months together cessed, by a number of English soldiers, and myself kept from the pulpit, for preaching and speaking against the Tender, and incorporating this nation in one commonwealth with England, and that I should thereafter, in time of Oliver Cromwell his usurping the government to himself, under the name of Protector, be delated by some, and challenged by sundry of his council in this nation, for a paper published by me, wherein he was declared to be an usurper, and his government to be usurpation, that I should have been threatened to have been sent to the court, for writing a paper against Oliver Cromwell his usurping the crown of these kingdoms, that I should have been

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²⁵ This was followed by a written controversy between the parties (Wodrow MSS. vol. ix. in 13th Ad.). The same person disputed publicly in the church of Cupar on two successive days, in 1652, with Mr. James Wood, professor of theology at St. Andrews.—Lamont's Diary, p. 48.

threatened with banishment for concurring in offering a large testimony, against the evil of the times, to Richard Cromwell his council, immediately after his usurping the government, I say, my lord, it grieves me, that, notwithstanding of all those things, I should now stand indicted before your lordships as intending the eradicating and subverting of the ancient civil government of this nation, and being subservient to that usurper in his designs. The God of heaven knows that I am free of this charge, and I do defy all the world, allowing me justice and fair proceeding, which I hope your lordships will, to make out the same against me.”²⁶

From the Case of Conscience and from some expressions which Binning uttered under strong excitement, and which were repeated to Principal Baillie,²⁷ it would appear that his loyalty was somewhat shaken by the passing of the public resolutions, after the battle of Dunbar if not before that time, by a conviction of the dissimulation of the king. He probably thought, with the framers of the western remonstrance,²⁸ in which he seems to have concurred, that they would not be justifiable in fighting for Charles, without some additional security being provided for the maintenance of their religious privileges, and unless some adequate restraint were imposed upon the exercise of the royal authority. His dread of arbitrary power is strongly expressed in the Case of Conscience “The plea of necessity,” says he,²⁹ “is but a pretence to cover some design, that under its specious and plausible covering, the power of the land may be engrossed in the hands of malignants, and so by this means, all power and trust may return, as the rivers to the sea or fountain, as they judge the king, that so, in his person, there may be established an unlimited and arbitrary power.”

²⁶ Wodrow's Hist. of the Suf. of Ch. of Scot. vol. i. p. 165. Glas. 1829.

²⁷ See note, p. 512.

²⁸ Balfour's Annals vol. iv. pp. 141-160. Brown's Hist. of Glas. vol. i. p. 109. Peterkin's Rec. of Kirk of Scot. p. 672.

²⁹ P. 489.

That Binning was the author of the Case of Conscience cannot reasonably be doubted.

I. It was published, in 1693,³⁰ under the name of “Mr. Hugh Binning, sometime Professor of Philosophie in the Universitie of Glasgow, and thereafter minister of God's word at Goven.” Nor, so far as can be ascertained, was it denied to be his by any person, at the time of its publication. It was printed in Holland, and although, as has been objected to it, it has not attached to it the name of the printer, nor the name of the place where it was printed, neither have “The Apologeticall Relation,” “The True Non Conformist,” “The Apology for, or Vindication of, Oppressed Persecuted Ministers,” “The History of the Indulgence,” “Rectius Instruendum,” “The Hind Let Loose,” and various other works by Scottish writers, which, for obvious reasons were printed abroad, after the Restoration. In his dying Testimony, however, it is declared by Mr. Robert Smith, a graduate of Groningen, that the Rev. James Kid, who was subsequently minister of Queensferry, was sent to Holland by the Society people to superintend the printing of the Sanquhar Declaration of 1692, and “Mr. Hugh Binning's piece against association,” that Mr. Kid was imprisoned for this for a considerable time in Holland, and that after he obtained his liberty, he and Kid studied for one session together at the University of Utrecht.³¹

II. It seems almost certain that the manuscript must have been obtained from the widow of the author, or from his son, both of whom were living when the pamphlet first appeared, and both of whom were intimately connected with the Society people. At a general meeting of the Society people at Edinburgh, 28th May, 1683, “It was resolved that *Mr. John Binning* should be desired to wait upon a school, for teaching some young men, and for his pains he was to have twenty five pounds Scots per

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³⁰ Small quarto, pp. 51.

³¹ Shields Faithful Contendings pp. 485-488. Faithful Witness Bearing Exemplified, *preface*, p. iv.

Quarter. According to this resolution, Mr. Binning did teach Latin to some of these young men for some time.”³² And in a letter from the Rev. James Renwick, to Sir Robert Hamilton of Preston, dated Sept 26th, 1683, and printed from the original, he says, “Likeways, according to your direction, I challenged Mrs. Binning upon her intimacie with your sister, but she says there is noe ground for it, and I think not such as your honour apprehends. As also I challenged her upon the commendation she gave Jo Wilson, in her letter unto you, but she says she had not then seen his testimonie, and was sorrie when she saw it, it was so contrary both to her thoughts, and to her commendation of him.”³³ This letter is curtailed in the printed collection of Renwick's Letters,³⁴ and the passage in it, which refers to Mrs. Binning, is only partially quoted by John Howie of Lochgoin, in a note to Shields' Faithful Contendings.³⁵

III. A copy of the original manuscript is at present in my possession, belonging to David Laing, Esq., Edinburgh, which, so far as one can judge from the orthography and hand writing, must have been written near the time of the author. It formed part of a collection of papers chiefly of that period, of which some are docketed by Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston. It is entitled “The Tractat, proving that there is still a Malig^l Party, and that wee should not associate with them, written in Januar 1651”. The writer of the Life of Binning was of opinion that as “Mr. Binning died in the year 1653, and the pamphlet was not published till the year 1693”, some of the Protesters would have published it, in the course of that period, “had they known that Mr Binning was the author of it.” But various circumstances may have occurred to prevent its being made public at an earlier period. And although

³² Faithful Contendings, p. 66.

³³ Memoirs of the First Years of James Nisbet, one of the Scottish Covenanters, written by himself, Append. p. 287. Edin. 1827.

³⁴ Pp. 54-58.

³⁵ P. 486. See also Life of the Author, p. xliii. *note*.

it was not printed, it may have been read by many in manuscript. I cannot but think, though he has mistaken the Christian name of the author, that it is to Hugh Binning's Case of Conscience, that Samuel Colvill, the ungodly son of a pious mother, alludes, in that mass of ribaldry and indecency, "The Whigs Supplication," when describing the library of the Covenanters, he says,

"Some reads the cases of Richard Binning"³⁶

This mock poem of Colvill was printed for the first time in the year 1681, but according to the poet's own statement, it was circulated in MS previous to this.³⁷

IV. The views of Binning are known to have accorded with the general strain of the Case of Conscience. The object of his tractate was to expose and counteract the purposes and proceedings of the Resolutioners. This was likewise Binning's object in the part he acted, on different occasions, in the presbytery of Glasgow. In the Minutes of that ecclesiastical court, he is always found opposed to the Resolutioners, and co operating with Principal Gillespie, and the other Protesters. This will account for the tone in which Baillie speaks of him. "Behold," says he in a letter from Perth, 2d January, 1651, "the next presbytery day, when I am absent, Mr. Patrick [Gillespie] causes read again the Commission's letter, and had led it so, that by the elders' votes, the men of greatest experience and wisdom of our presbytery were the two youngest we had, Mr. Hugh Binning and Mr. Andrew Morton."³⁸ The following fact proves that the opponents, as well as the friends, of Binning in the presbytery,

³⁶ Verse 1193.

³⁷ Mr. Alexander Peterkin, the annotator of the Records of the Kirk of Scotland, before presenting his readers with a long extract from the "Whigs Supplication," (ver 94-113) describing an armed body of Covenanters, gravely declares, it was "taken from a MS copy of a doggrel poem (by Cleland it is thought), which the editor presented some years ago to the Library of the Antiquarian Society of Edinburgh." See Rec. of Kirk of Scot. p. 533.

³⁸ Baillie's Letters, vol. ii. p. 360.

knew him to be decidedly averse to the public resolutions. On the 28th of May, 1651, Mr. Patrick Gillespie, Mr. John Carstairs, and Mr. Hugh Binning were chosen by the presbytery to be their representatives at the ensuing General Assembly. But Mr. Robert Ramsay, and the other Resolutioners who were present, protested against their election, on the ground that they had not received notice of what was intended to be done, that Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Binning were opposed to the public resolutions in Church and State, and that the commission of the Church might yet give them some directions as to this matter. Accordingly, when the Assembly met at St Andrews, from protesting against which as an illegal Assembly, the Protesters derived their name, among the numerous commissions which were objected to on that occasion, were those of Mr. Patrick Gillespie and Mr. Hugh Binning the Resolutioners in the presbytery having, it appears, made a different appointment of commissioners, at a meeting of their own.³⁹ So much opposed, indeed, was Binning to the public resolutions that we find him, on the 20th of June 1651, protesting against the insertion of a letter, from the Commission of the Church regarding them, in the presbytery Minutes. And on the 20th of August, we in like manner perceive him voting against the registration, in the Minutes of the presbytery, of various Acts of the Assembly, which had met at St. Andrews and Dundee, in July, 1651 “because yet were sinful in themselves, and came from an unlawful and null assemblie.”⁴⁰

But this is not all Binning wrote. “Some ammadversions upon a paper entituled, *no separation from the armie, &c.*” These, it is believed, were never printed. The manuscript copy, which I have perused, is in the hand writing of Mr. David Anderson, the clerk, or amanuensis of Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston, who has written on it with his own hand, “Mr H Binny his reply to M D Dickson.” The title itself of the manuscript indicates the views

³⁹ Rec. of Kirk of Scot. pp. 627-633.

⁴⁰ Records of Presbyters of Glasgow.

of the author. But the summary of its style and reasoning, and those of the Case of Conscience, is very evident. Although he was thus led under an imperative sense of duty, to enter the lists of controversy with Mr. David Dickson, who was now Professor of Theology in the University of Edinburgh, but who at the time of the induction of the author, being a member of the presbytery, had presided at his ordination, it is pleasant to observe, that even when expressing himself most strongly, Binning treats his former colleague in the University of Glasgow, with uniform courtesy and respect. In one place he says, "If I knew not the integritie of the writter, I could hardlie spare a hard censure of him, either for dissembling what he knowes, or not reading what he condemns. But I will think neither, but rather that he is too confident of his own assertion." In another place he exclaims, "Alas! should a divine speak so? If a carnall polititian had said it, I had not thought it strange, but a godlie tender man to speake in these terms." Should it be asked how this manuscript has not formed a part of the present collection of the works of the Author, the reason is simply this: It was not conceived that the degree of interest felt at this distant period, in the controversy to which it relates, would warrant its publication, and more particularly as any one, wishing to obtain a knowledge of the principles and the policy which it advocates, may be gratified, by consulting some of the numerous pamphlets and manifestoes, which were printed at the time.

Along with the Case of Conscience, the present edition of the works of the Author includes the "Treatise of Christian Love," first printed at Edinburgh in 1743, and "Several Sermons upon the most Important Subjects of Practical Religion," which were printed for the first time at Glasgow in 1760. Neither of these is contained in the quarto edition of Binning's works that was published in 1768, at Glasgow. That was a mere reprint of the edition of 1735, which issued from the Edinburgh press. In his Address to the Reader, the publisher of the Treatise on Christian Love

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says, "This treatise, with a great number of excellent sermons, preached by this able minister of the gospel, many of which have never been printed, in a manuscript in folio, was found in the late Reverend Mr. Robert Woodrow, minister of Eastwood, his library." The editor of the Practical Sermons, however, informs us, in his preface, that the manuscript from which the "elegant and judicious treatise of Christian Love was first printed," *was in his hand*.⁴¹ And he adds, "As Mr. Wodrow wrote large collections upon the lives of our most eminent Reformers, which he designed to publish if he had lived longer, so the Lives and Letters of Mr. John Knox, who was commonly styled the Reformer, is now preparing for the press, to which will be added some of his essays on religious subjects, never before printed. If the publication of Mr. Knox's life be duly encouraged, some more lives of other ministers in that period will be transcribed and revised, for the benefit of the public, who desire to have them printed."⁴² Hence we are led to conclude, that those additional works of Binning found their way to the press through the Rev. Robert Wodrow, minister of Eastwood, the son and successor of the historian. The preface to the Practical Sermons is dated "Brousterland, Sept 12th, 1760." This is the name of a place in the parish of Kilbride, in the county of Lanark, to which it has been ascertained the son of the historian retired, for a short time, after resigning his cure in the year 1758. I observe, likewise, that a letter now before me, written in the year 1806, by the Rev. Dr. James Wodrow, minister of Stevenston, the youngest son of the historian, and addressed to the Rev. Dr. Robert Finlay, of the University of Glasgow, contains a statement, which, in the absence of more direct evidence, may be referred to, as furnishing us with some other grounds for believing that the anonymous writer of the "Brousterland" preface was the retired minister of Eastwood. The statement is, that the writer of the letter, who was

⁴¹ P. xvii.

⁴² Pp xxv, xxvi.

much younger than his two brothers, the ministers of Tarbolton and Eastwood, had “heard” that they “had some thoughts of publishing Buchanan and Knox's Lives,” written by their father.

It is to be regretted that none of Binning's writings were published by himself, or in his own lifetime. The indulgence of the reader is on this account justly claimed for them. We cannot be certain that the author's meaning has been always correctly expressed. And every one accustomed to composition must be aware, that in transcribing, or revising what has been previously written, even with some degree of care, the change of a single expression, or the insertion of an additional word, or the transposition of a solitary clause in a sentence, often makes the meaning of the writer infinitely clearer, and gives a new character altogether to his style. But we ought also to bear in mind, that the following sermons were prepared for a country audience, and that they were the ordinary weekly production of a very young clergyman, struggling with bad health, and burdened with the performance of various other arduous duties. Many, I have no doubt, will think this apology for the author unnecessary. The facts now stated, however, when taken into consideration, must increase their admiration of Binning, his copiousness, his variety, both in regard to matter and style, the beauty of his imagery, the grandeur of his conceptions, his felicitous application of the language of scripture, being all the more wonderful, when viewed in connexion with the unfavourable circumstances in which his sermons were composed.

The discourses of Binning are unquestionably a very favourable specimen of the talents and learning, as well as of the piety of the clergy of Scotland in his day. At the same time, that class of men have not had justice done to them. Adopting the tone of their persecutors, it was long the practice of court sycophants, and others, to ridicule and calumniate them. Their sermons were burlesqued, sometimes through ignorance, and sometimes through malice. Many of them were printed from the

notes, or imperfect recollections of pious but illiterate persons. And if a minister was known to possess any portion of eccentricity, absurd sayings were invented for him, and when, at any time, a singular statement, or an uncouth expression, was heard to proceed from him, it was seized upon with avidity, treasured up, and repeated as an illustration of the kind of preaching that was common among the ministers of his church. It is almost inconceivable, therefore, how many, even among the intelligent classes of society, in the present day, have been led, most unwarrantably, to form their estimate of the literary qualifications of the ministers of Scotland, in the seventeenth century, from the grotesque “Pockmanty Sermon” of the Rev. James Row, minister at Monnivairst and Strowan, from Hobbes's Behemoth, from the unpolished, unauthenticated⁴³ discourses of some of the field preachers, or from that collection of profanity and obscenity

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⁴³ “The sermons preached at conventicles, which are ordinarily circulated, are a very unsafe rule by which to judge of the talents of the preachers, and the quality of the discourses which they actually delivered. We have never been able to ascertain that one of these was published during the lifetime of the author, or from notes written by himself. They were printed from notes taken by the hearers, and we may easily conceive how imperfect and inaccurate these must often have been. We have now before us two sermons by Mr. Welsh, printed at different times; and upon reading them, no person could suppose that they were preached by the same individual.... We have no doubt that the memory of Mr. Peden has been injured in the same way. The collection of prophecies that goes under his name is not authentic; and we have before us some of his letters, which place his talents in a very different light from the idea given of them in what are called his sermons and his life.” (Review of Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of my Landlord* written by Dr. McCrie, *Christian Instructor*, vol. xiv. pp. 127, 128)—We are cautioned not to judge of the talents of Samuel Rutherford as a preacher “from the sermons printed after his death, and of which it is probable he never composed a single sentence.” (Murray's *Life of Rutherford* pp. 221-223)—And says Patrick Walker, the simple compiler of the “*Life and Death of Mr. Daniel Cargill*,” “I have seen some of Mr. Cargill's sermons in writ, but I never saw none as he spake them; and I have been much pressed to publish them, and other old sermons, which I dare not

entitled “Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd.”⁴⁴

Bishop Hall bears honourable testimony to the character and professional accomplishments of the ministers of Scotland, in the early part of the seventeenth century. In a sermon preached by him in London, on Easter Monday, 1618, he says, “For the northern part of our land, beyond the Tweed, we saw not, we heard not, of a congregation without a preaching minister, and though their maintenance generally hath been small, yet their pains have been great, and their success answerable. As for the learning and sufficiency of those preachers, whether prelates or presbyters, our ears were for some of them sufficient witnesses; and we are not worthy of our ears, if our tongues do not thankfully proclaim it to the world.”

When we approach somewhat nearer the time of Binning, we can point, in the Church of Scotland, to such men as Robert Leighton, who was then the Presbyterian minister of the parish of

do, upon several considerations; knowing that sermons would have past then, and very edifying, which will not pass now, in this critic and censorious age, without reflections; not knowing how they were taken from their mouth, nor what hands they have come through since.” *Biographia Presbyteriana*, vol. ii. p. 53.

⁴⁴ The presbyterian clergy in Scotland were much offended when this silly yet mischievous book made its appearance, as they justly looked upon it as calculated not only to blacken their reputations, but to inflict a serious injury upon religion. (See “A Just and Modest Reproof of a pamphlet called *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*,” pp. 36, 38. Edin. 1693.)—No one is more perseveringly held up to ridicule in it than the Rev. James Kirkton, whose character as a man of talents, and possessing a sound judgment, has been since sufficiently vindicated by the publication of his “*Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*.” Kirkton takes notice of the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, and informs us that its reputed authors were “Mr. Gilbert Crockett and Mr. John Munroe,” adding “Truly one would think, a thinking man who reads this piece may wonder first, what conscience governs these men, who publish, to abuse the world, such stories, which they themselves know to be lies, as well as they whom they believe. Next, what wisdom is among them, who knew well enough there are thousands of honest people to refute their calumnies!” (p. 194)—Provoked by an insulting reference to the book under

Newbottle, and to Alexander Henderson, minister of the parish of Leuchars, in the county of Fife, men who would have done honour to any Protestant church in Europe. Nothing need be said of the piety and eloquence of Leighton, whose name has been preserved from obscurity, by his subsequent elevation to the episcopal chair, and the publication of his admirable writings. The name of Henderson may not be so familiar to some. But what says an English historian of him? “Alexander Henderson, the chief of the Scottish clergy in this reign, was learned, eloquent, and polite, and perfectly well versed in the knowledge of mankind. He was at the helm of affairs in the General Assemblies in Scotland, and was sent into England in the double capacity of a divine and plenipotentiary. He knew how to rouse the people to war, or negotiate a peace. Whenever he preached, it was to a crowded audience, and when he pleaded or argued, he was regarded with mute attention.”⁴⁵ Mr. William Guthrie, minister of Fenwick in the county of Ayr, was another of Binning's contemporaries. His memory, like that of other Scottish ministers of that century, has suffered from his name having been attached to sermons falsely said to be his, at least in the form in which they have been printed. Let any person, however, of unsophisticated taste and true piety read “The Christian's Great Interest,” which

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review, an able controversial writer of that period says “Thou hast, by the bye, mentioned the Presbyterian Eloquence. Every body knows that book to be a forgery out of the curates shop. But to give the world a true test both of the Presbyterian and the Episcopal eloquence, let us appeal to the printed sermons on both sides. Do thou take the printed sermons of the Presbyterians, and pick out of them all the ridiculous things thou ever canst. And if I don't make a larger collection of more impious and ridiculous things out of the printed sermons of the Episcopalians, citing book and page for them, I shall lose the cause.” (Curate Calder Whipt, p. 11.)—In such a contest as is here proposed, religion must suffer, and truth be sacrificed. Lord Woodhouselee therefore, does not hesitate to pronounce both the *Presbyterian Eloquence Displayed*, and the *Answer to it*, to be “equally infamous and disgraceful libels.” *Life of Lord Kames*, vol. i. Append., p. 10.

⁴⁵ Granger's *Biog. Hist. of Eng.* vol. i. part ii. p. 416. London 1769.

was the only work published by Guthrie himself, and it will not surprise him that a church, which had many such village pastors, should have fixed itself in the affections of the nation at large, and that instructed by such men, the humblest classes of the community should have had so much religious knowledge, as Bishop Burnet⁴⁶ somewhat reluctantly admits they possessed. The wife of Wodrow the historian was the granddaughter of William Guthrie.⁴⁷ In his *Analecta*, Wodrow says, it was well ordered that Mr. Guthrie died in Angus, “for his congregation would have idolized his grave had he died among them.” He also mentions that his *Treatise* was highly valued by Queen Mary, who caused it to be translated into the French language, and to whom it had been presented by Mr. William Carstares, chaplain to William III, and afterwards Principal of the University of Edinburgh, that Archbishop Tillotson commended it as one of the best written books in the language, and that Dr John Owen declared, he valued it so highly, he had made it his *vade mecum*.⁴⁸ Contrary to the general belief, the ministers of Scotland, in Binning's time, not only included among them many individuals, who were highly esteemed on account of their talents, literature, and piety, but a great number of them “were related to the chief families in the country, either by blood or marriage.”⁴⁹ Binning himself, and Mr. William Guthrie minister of Fenwick, were the sons of respectable landed proprietors. Mr. Gabriel Semple, minister of Kirkpatrick of the Muir, was the son of Sir Bryce Semple of Cathcart, Mr. James Hamilton, minister of Dumfries, was the nephew of Lord Clanebo, afterwards Earl of Clanbrassil, Mr. David Fletcher, minister of Melrose, was the brother of Sir John Fletcher, King's Advocate, Mr. Patrick

⁴⁶ Burnet's *Hist. of his own Times* vol. i. p. 280. Oxford 1833.

⁴⁷ *Life of Professor Wodrow*, p. 61.

⁴⁸ *Analecta*, at present printing by Maitland Club, vol. i. pp. 277, 300. *Biog. Presby.* vol. i. pp. 236, 237.

⁴⁹ *Burnet's Hist. of his Own Times* vol. i. p. 279.

Scougal, minister of Saltoun, was the son of Sir John Scougal of that ilk, Mr. John Nevoy, minister of Newmills, was the brother of Sir David Nevoy of that ilk, Mr. James Hamilton, minister of Cambusnethan, was the son of Sir John Hamilton of Broomhill, and brother of the first Lord Belhaven, and to mention no others, Mr. Robert Melvil, minister at Culross, was the son of Sir James Melvil of Halhill.

One of the distinguishing peculiarities of Binning is his rejection of the endless divisions and subdivisions which, along with their subtle distinctions, were borrowed from the schoolmen, and which disfigured and incumbered the sermons of that age. In Scotland, as well as in England, before his time, sermons were formed as Dr. Watts expresses it, “upon the model of doctrine, reason, and use.”⁵⁰ Those sermons often contained much excellent theology, which was faithfully and aptly applied to the heart and life. But the numerous parts into which they were divided, must have marred their effect, and operated as a restraint upon the eloquence of the preacher. This was plainly the opinion of Binning. “Paul speaks,” says he, “of a right dividing of the word of truth, (2 Tim ii. 15) not that ordinary way of cutting it all in parcels, and dismembering it, by manifold divisions, which I judge makes it lose much of its virtue, which consists in union. Though some have pleasure in it, and think it profitable, yet I do not see that this was the apostolic way.”⁵¹ Binning, accordingly, had the courage and the good taste to adopt in conjunction with Leighton, a more simple and natural manner of preaching. After a building was completed, he did not think it added either to its beauty or convenience, to retain the scaffolding. For this, he was censured at the time, by Robert Baillie. But whoever will read the sermon of that learned divine, entitled “Errors and Induration,” which was preached by him in Westminster Abbey, in the month of July, 1645, will not be astonished to find, that Baillie

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⁵⁰ Watts Works vol. v. 350.

⁵¹ P. 213.

disapproved of a mode of preaching, which was so completely at variance with his own. "He has the new guise of preaching," said Baillie, speaking of Mr. Andrew Gray, who was the son of Sir James Gray, and one of the ministers of the High Church of Glasgow, "which Mr. Hugh Binning and Mr. Robert Leighton began, [not] containing the ordinary way of expounding and dividing a text, of raising doctrines and uses, but runs out on a discourse on some common head, in a high, romancing, and unscriptural style, tickling the ear for the present, and moving the affections in some, but leaving, as he confesses, little or nought to the memory and understanding. This we must misken, for we cannot help it."⁵²

It has been said that Binning himself, when on his death bed, regretted to one of his friends, that his sermons had been framed after a different model from that to which his countrymen had been accustomed, and had he lived, that "he was fully resolved to have followed that way of preaching by doctrine, reasons, and uses, and he declared he was then best pleased with."⁵³ We can easily believe this. The faithful Christian minister is not a man that is likely to be pleased with his own performances, in any circumstances, and more particularly, when he sees the hour approaching, when he expects to be called upon, to render an account of his stewardship and should his hopes of usefulness have been disappointed, he will be more disposed, even than others, to blame the teacher. Binning, it is not improbable, thought he had done wrong, in discarding from many of his sermons formal divisions altogether, and, like many English preachers who came after him, that in passing from one extreme, he had sometimes proceeded to another. He may likewise have discovered, when catechizing some of his simple parishioners, that from want of the usual landmarks to guide them, they were not always able to follow him, when addressing them from the pulpit, or to give

⁵² Journals and Letters vol. ii. p. 385.

⁵³ *Analecta*, vol. iv. p. 171, vol. v. p. 342 MSS in Bib. Ad.

such a good account of his sermons, as of the discourses of some other ministers, who in preaching adhered to the rules and method of the period.⁵⁴

A small volume, having for its title “Evangelical Beauties of the late Rev. Hugh Binning,” was prepared for the press, by the Rev. John Brown of Whitburn, and published at Edinburgh, in the year 1828. Along with this interesting little work, a letter from the late Dr M’Crie was printed, in which that judicious and popular writer says, “I am fond of Binning, he is thoroughly evangelical, is always in earnest and full of his subject, abounds in new and striking thoughts, and has many natural and unaffected beauties in his style and manner of writing. Had he paid a little more attention to order and method, and lived to correct his sermons for the press, he would, in my opinion, have carried every point of a good and great preacher. As it is, very few writers please me more. I will rejoice if the plan you propose shall be the means of producing a new edition of his works, which are far less known than they deserve to be, and have hitherto been chiefly in the hands of that class of persons least qualified for relishing some of his distinguishing excellencies.” There can be little doubt, as Dr. M’Crie has here hinted, that in Binning’s discourses, there is occasionally an apparent neglect of order and method, and that we could have wished, for the sake of his hearers particularly, or with a view to attract attention and

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⁵⁴ “Their ministers generally brought then about them on the Sunday nights where the sermons were talked over, and every one women as well as men, were desired to speak their sense and their experience, and by these means they had a comprehension of matters of religion, greater than I have seen among people of that sort anywhere. The preachers went all in one track, of raising observations on points of doctrine out of their text, and proving these by reasons, and then of applying those, and shewing the use that was to be made of such a point of doctrine, both for instruction and terror, for exhortation and comfort, for trial of themselves upon it, and for furnishing them with proper directions and helps, and this was so methodical that the people grew to follow a sermon quite through every branch of it.” *Barnet’s History of his own Times* vol. i. p. 2.

assist the memory, he had more frequently stated the outlines of his plan in two or three general heads. But few surely will feel sorry that his eloquent periods are not broken down into detached fragments, or will wish that he had substituted a dry detail of disjointed particulars for his powerful and impassioned appeals to the understanding and feelings of his auditors. Few will wish that he had discussed all his texts in the way he has handled 1 Tim. i. 5.⁵⁵ The presbytery of Glasgow prescribed to him this text as the subject of one of his probationary discourses. That is the reason, probably, that his sermons upon it are composed upon a different plan from his others, and more in accordance with the conventional mode of the day.

Although Binning held the doctrine of predestination, in what the enemies of that scriptural doctrine consider its most repulsive form, being, like Samuel Rutherford, and David Dickson, the author of *Therapeutica Sacra*, and many other eminent divines of that time, a supralapsarian, he was far from exacting in others a rigid conformity to his particular opinions. It is impossible not to admire the Christian spirit that dictated the following passage in one of his sermons, "If we search the scriptures, we shall find that they do not entertain us with many and subtile discourses of God's nature, and decrees, and properties, nor do they insist upon the many perplexed questions that are made concerning Christ and his offices, about which so many volumes are spun out, to the infinite distinction of the Christian world. They do not pretend to satisfy your curiosity, but to edify your souls, and therefore they hold out God in Christ, as clothed with all his relations to mankind, in all those plain and easy properties, that concern us everlastingly,—his justice, mercy, grace, patience, love, holiness, and such like. Now, hence I gather, that the true knowledge of God consists not in the comprehension of all the conclusions that are deduced, and controversies that are

⁵⁵ P. 600.

discussed anent these things, but rather, in the serious and solid apprehension of God, as he hath relation to us, and consequently in order and reference to the moving of our hearts, to love, and adore, and reverence him, for he is holden out only in those garments that are fit to move and affect our hearts. A man may know all these things, and yet not know God himself, for to know him, cannot be abstracted from loving him.”⁵⁶

The practical character of the theology of Binning is not less remarkable. He never lost sight of the connection between truth and the conscience. All who are acquainted with his writings must be aware, that from the consideration of the more profound doctrines of Divine Revelation, he did not permit himself to be deterred by any false humility, or any mistaken idea of the incompetency of the human mind to follow in the track of the sacred writers. In the works of no author of the period, or of the theological school to which he belonged, shall we find more frequent references to the high and sacred mysteries of revealed truth. Yet are we unable to perceive, in his discourses, any symptoms of the paralyzing influence, which the discussion of such topics has not unfrequently exerted, on the compositions of other equally sound, but less skilful and comprehensive writers. His divinity was drawn immediately from the sacred scriptures, and finding it there, not only in its sublime, and often mysterious relations to the mind, and purposes of the Almighty, but also in its application to the conscience and affections of the finite creature, for whose use it was revealed,—he presented it to his hearers in all its native majesty, and at the same in all its practical simplicity.

In dealing with the consciences of sinners, in particular, this peculiarity of Binning is displayed in a manner that is singularly striking. In the sermons of those who are most opposed to the doctrines which he was at such pains to inculcate, we shall

⁵⁶ P. 356.

search in vain for more pungent addresses to the consciences of mankind, or more unfettered exhibitions of the gospel as a remedial scheme, in which all the descendants of Adam are warranted to regard themselves as having an interest. Some of his contemporaries were evidently shackled by their conceptions of the place which the doctrine of the divine decrees holds in the system of revealed truth. They hesitated to proclaim a free salvation and a willing Saviour to all man kind, simply on the ground of their common destitution as sinners, and they sought to extricate themselves from the difficulties, arising out of the doctrine of election on the one hand, and the common offers of the gospel on the other, by the chilling hypothesis, that these offers were made in reality, whatever might be their form, to convinced, or in the language of the period, “sensible” sinners only. Binning, spurning at such systematic trammels, took his stand upon the clear testimony of God in the gospel. He not only taught that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, but pressed upon every sinner the offer of the Saviour. Instead of requiring those whom he addressed, to accept of salvation, by the discovery of convictions, or feelings, or any thing else in themselves, constructive of an initial work of grace, he simply and unreservedly taught them that sinners, as such, are addressed in the gospel, and that all who are sinners have an equal warrant to accept freely that which is thus so freely proffered. “I think,” he says, “a man should seek nothing in himself whereupon to build his coming to Christ. Though it be true, no man can come to a Saviour, till he be convinced of sin and misery, yet no man should seek convictions, as a warrant to come to Christ for salvation. He that is in earnest about this question, how shall I be saved?—I think he should not spend the time in reflecting on, and examination of himself, till he find some thing promising in himself, but, from discovered sin and misery, pass straightway over to the grace and mercy of Christ, without any intervening search of something in himself to warrant him to come. There should be nothing before the eye

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of the soul but sin and misery and absolute necessity, compared with superabounding grace and righteousness in Christ, and thus it singly devolves itself over upon Christ, and receives him as offered freely, 'without money and without price.' I know it is not possible that a soul can receive Christ, till there be some preparatory convincing work of the law, to discover sin and misery. But I hold, that to look to any such preparation, and fetch an encouragement or motive therefrom, to believe in Christ, is really to give him a price for his free waters and wine, it is to mix in together, Christ and the law, in the point of our acceptation. And for souls to go about to seek preparations for a time, resolving not at all to consider the promise of the gospel, till they have found them, and satisfaction in them, is nothing else but to go about to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ."⁵⁷

Binning, however, it will be found, did not give his sanction to the views of those who confounded faith in Christ and the assurance of salvation. This was one of the numerous errors of the day. It was prevalent in England, and along with other heresies, it had no doubt insinuated itself, by means of the parliamentary soldiers, into some parts of Scotland. So far from the assurance of salvation being of the essence of faith, or a constant attendant upon it, there are some sincere Christians, we have reason to believe, who are all their lifetime strangers to it; while they who have attained to it, from discovering in themselves the fruits and evidences of faith, have it oftentimes clouded and suspended. This is consistent with the personal experience of many humble and pious persons, and with what we read in the Diaries of many, whose life when upon the earth was the best of all proofs that the Spirit of God dwelt in them. It is likewise confirmed by the recorded experience of the man according to God's own heart. If he was at one time elevated with hope, he was at another time

⁵⁷ P. 131. See also p. 576.

depressed by fear. If, when meditating upon the divine love and mercy, he was on some occasions filled with peace and joy, he was on other occasions, when contemplating his own guilt and unworthiness, a prey to grief and perplexity. If he was heard to exclaim, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work, I will triumph in the works of thy hands," he was also heard to cry out, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" A man who believes Christ to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, if he has searched the scriptures, has been made acquainted with the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the devices of our great adversary. It is on this account he does not always feel assured of his salvation. He is afraid that he may be deceiving himself, and be thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think. He has learned, from the parable of the sower, that some "receive the word with joy," and "for a while believe," but as they have "no root," they "in time of temptation fall away." This leads him to examine himself, and to prove himself, whether he be in the faith. This indeed is what the apostle has enjoined us all to do, thereby showing that a man may be in Christ Jesus, and yet be doubtful of his salvation; and, on the other hand, that a man may have a complete assurance of his salvation, and yet be still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." It is from the fruits of the Spirit, therefore, that in himself as well as in others, the believer discovers the presence of the Spirit. "Both in philosophy and divinity, yea, in common sense, it is allowed to reason from the effects to the causes. Here is burning, therefore here is fire. Here is the blossoming of trees and flowers, therefore it is spring, and the sun is turning again in his course. Here is perfect day light, therefore the sun is risen. Here is good fruit growing; therefore here is a good tree. 'Tis a consequence no less sure and infallible, here is unfeigned love to the brethren, therefore here

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is regeneration. Here are spiritual motions, affections, desires, acts, and operations, therefore here is spiritual life.”⁵⁸

These were plainly the sentiments of Binning. He distinguished, with logical precision, between faith in Christ and its consequences. In regard to the doctrine of the Antinomians, he says, “That every man is bound to persuade himself at the first, that God hath loved him, and Christ redeemed him, is the hope of the hypocrite,—like a spider's web, which, when leaned to, shall not stand. That man's expectation shall perish, he hath kindled sparks of his own,—a wild fire, and walketh not in the true light of the word, and so must lie down in sorrow.”⁵⁹ Employing language very similar to that of Gillespie, which it would almost seem he had before him at the moment, he also says, “If the question be, as it is indeed, about the grounds of our assurance, and knowledge of our own faith, certainly it is clear as the noonday, that as the good tree is known by the fruits thereof, and the fire by the heat thereof, so the indwelling of faith in the heart is known by its purifying of the heart and working by love. It makes a man a new creature, so that he and others may see the difference. Neither is this any derogation to the free grace of Christ, or any establishing of our own righteousness, except men be so afraid to establish their own righteousness, that they will have no holiness at all, but abandon it quite, for fear of trusting in it, which is a remedy worse than the disease, because I make it not a ground of my acceptance before God, but only a naked evidence of my believing in Christ, and being accepted of God, it being known that these have a necessary connexion together in the scriptures, and it being also known that the one is more obvious and easy to be discerned than the other.”⁶⁰

It will be thought that the Latin quotations, which the author has introduced into his sermons, might have been spared. These

⁵⁸ Gillespie's Miscellany questions, p. 247. Edin. 1649.

⁵⁹ P. 135.

⁶⁰ P. 133.

show a mind richly stored with classical learning. They are not forced or unnatural. All of them are appropriate, and many of them singularly felicitous. Still it will be conceived that they would have appeared with more propriety and better effect, in an academical disquisition, or a *concio ad clerum*, than in sermons preached in a country church. But in justice to Binning, it is proper to observe, he did nothing more than follow the example of the most celebrated preachers who had preceded him. Bishop Burnet remarks with considerable severity of the English divines, who appeared before Tillotson, Lloyd, and Stillingfleet, that their sermons were “both long and heavy, when all was pye balled, full of many sayings of different languages.”⁶¹ The sermons of the learned Joseph Mede, who died in 1638, are filled not only with Greek and Latin quotations, but with Hebrew, and Chaldee, and Syriac. But his biographer very ingenuously admits, that when he had occasion to quote from a work written in any of the Eastern languages, if the testimonies were long, Mede usually gave a Latin version of them, “as judging it perhaps more fit and useful to quote them in a language which might be understood by all that heard him, even by the younger students, than to make an astonishing clatter, with many words of a strange sound, and of an unknown sense to some in the auditory.”⁶² In the discourses of Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down, who outlived Binning we likewise meet with innumerable quotations, both in Greek and Latin, from the classics and from the fathers. And though we might be disposed to infer the contrary, those discourses were not composed for the benefit of the learned members of a university. As the author himself has informed us they were all preached at Golden Grove, to the family and domestics of his patron and perhaps in addition to these, to a few of their neighbours and as many of the peasantry on the estate as could understand English.⁶³ The

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⁶¹ Hist. of his Own Times, vol. i. p. 348.

⁶² Mede's Works, *General Preface*.

⁶³ Heber's Life of Bishop Taylor, p. 171.

common people in England were so much accustomed in those days to hear Latin spoken in the pulpit, that they were sometimes led to undervalue a preacher who did not make some use of it. When Dr. Pollock, the celebrated orientalist, was presented to the rectory of Childry, near Oxford, he considered it to be his duty to adapt his instructions to what he thought to be the capacity of his rustic parishioners. This made some of them lament to one of his friends that he was “no Latiner.”⁶⁴ An unseasonable display of learning by Dr. Manton, on the other hand, when preaching in St. Paul's, on some public occasion, instead of awakening admiration, subjected him to a reproof which he felt very keenly. On returning home in the evening, a poor man following him, gently pulled him by the sleeve of his gown, and asked him if he were the gentleman who had preached that day before my Lord Mayor. He answered he was “Sir,” said he, “I came with earnest desires after the word of God, and hopes of getting some good to my soul, but I was greatly disappointed, for I could not understand a great deal of what you said,—you were quite above me.” The Doctor replied, with tears in his eyes, “Friend, if I did not give you a sermon, you have given me one.”⁶⁵ Massillon was one of the first French preachers who abstained, in the pulpit, from the use of citations from profane authors. In the first sermon of his “Petit Careme,” he has a quotation from Sallust. But he does not name the author, nor does he give the words in the original. He merely gives the meaning of them, introducing his quotation in this manner, *as one of the ancients says*, “comme dit un ancien.” This, it is believed, is the only instance of the kind that is to be found in the sermons of that eloquent preacher.⁶⁶

Some may be desirous to know how it was that a practice so different from ours, and so much opposed to the good sense and

⁶⁴ Pecock's Works, vol. i., Life of the Author, p. 22.

⁶⁵ Manton's Sermons, Life of the Author, p. v.

⁶⁶ Œuvres De Massillon, tome vi. p. 4; Essai Sur L'Eloquence de la Chaire, par le Cardinal Maury, tome ii. p. 231.

the good taste of modern times, was formerly so common, or by what arguments it was attempted to be defended. Abraham Wright, one of the Fellows of St John the Baptist's College, Oxford, undertook this task. He published a book in 1656, under this title, "Five Sermons in Five several Styles, or Waies of Preaching." These different ways of preaching were what he characterized as Bishop Andrews' way, Bishop Hall's way, Dr. Maine and Mr. Cartwright's way, the Presbyterian way, and the Independent way. All of the sermons, with the exception of the last, contain specimens of the "Babylonish dialect" of the age. But this, in the estimation of Abraham Wright, was not their least recommendation. "You are also taught from these leaves," says he,⁶⁷ "that secular learning is not so heathenish, but it may be made Christian. Plato, and Socrates, and Seneca, were not of such a reprobate sense, as to stand wholly excommunicate. The same man may be both a poet and a prophet, a philosopher and an apostle. Virgil's fancie was as high as the Magi's star, and might lead wise men in the West as clearly to their Saviour, as that light did those Eastern sages. And so, likewise, Seneca's positions may become Saint Paul's text; Aristotle's metaphysicks convince an atheist of a God, and his demonstrations prove Shiloes advent to a Jew. That great apostle of the Gentiles had never converted those nations, without the help of their own learning. It was the Gentiles oratorie, yet not without the Holy Ghost's rhetorick, that did almost perswade Agrippa to be a Christian; and it was the Gentiles poetrie, but not without a Deitie in the verse, that taught the Athenians to know an unknown God. By which you see it is possible that Gamaliel's feet may be a step to an apostleship." This failed to convince the pious editor of the Works of the ever-memorable John Hales of Eaton, if ever he chanced to see it. The learned prebendary, for the purpose of enforcing his arguments against intemperance, chose to quote the concluding words of the

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⁶⁷ Address to the Christian Reader.

Symposium of Xenophon. Lord Hailes was of opinion that this was "improper in a popular discourse," and therefore he used the liberty to leave out the quotation in his edition of the works of the author.

But this much may likewise be stated in behalf of Binning. He did not engage, like some other preachers, his contemporaries, in nice critical discussions, which could be appreciated, or understood, by none but scholars like himself; and when he brought forth a classical quotation in his sermons, if a literal translation did not accompany it, he took care at least to put all who heard him in possession of the sentiment which it contained. In this way, none of his hearers were left ignorant of what he said, while the varied and attractive form in which the important truths he inculcated were exhibited, may have recommended them to that portion of his audience whose minds were more highly cultivated, among whom it is not unlikely were some, who, on account of his fame, may have come to hear him, more or less frequently, from the contiguous city and university.

When Binning quotes the sacred scriptures, it will be perceived he does not always make use of the authorized version. In the Case of Conscience, he appears to do this; but we find from the old manuscript already referred to, that he sometimes contented himself with mentioning the chapter and verse to which he wished to direct attention, without giving the words. These, therefore, we may suppose, were added by the transcriber, when the work was about to be printed. It was not till after the death of the author that the nation generally can be said to have adopted the translation of the scriptures which was completed in the reign of King James, and which is now in common use. Before the introduction into Scotland of what is called the Geneva Bible, the translation of Tyndale and Coverdale was employed. This was superseded in a great measure by the Geneva Bible, which was an English version of the scriptures that was executed in Geneva in the year 1560, by Protestant refugees from England. In the year

1575, the General Assembly required that every parish kirk in Scotland should be provided with a copy of Bassandyne's edition of the Geneva Bible. The first edition of the present authorized version was published in 1611. But as many preferred the Geneva Bible to it, the former continued to maintain its place in Scotland for some time longer. In Boyd's "Last Battle of the Soul," printed at Edinburgh in 1629, the Geneva translation is used. It was likewise used by Dr. Balcanquhall in a sermon which was preached by him in the presence of Charles the First, in the year 1632, and published under the title of "The Honour of Christian Churches, and the Necessitie of frequenting Divine Service, and Publike Prayers in them." And we learn from Dr. Lee, that so late as the year 1639, the celebrated Alexander Henderson, in preaching before the General Assembly at Edinburgh, read a long text from the Geneva Bible, which, he tells us, appears from the proceedings of that Assembly still extant in manuscript.⁶⁸ About the time, however, when Binning began to preach, the version now universally adopted seems to have become much more common. Binning generally employs it. But he occasionally quotes from the Geneva translation, and sometimes from memory. It is easy to conceive that, in this transition state of the two versions, he may have been nearly equally familiar with both, and unable from his recollection at the moment to distinguish the words of the one from those of the other. We therefore find, in point of fact, that when trusting to his memory, he quotes a passage of scripture, he sometimes gives it, partly in the language of the one, and partly in the language of the other translation. One of the texts of his first sermon is Rom. xi. 36. The English reading of that text, according to the Geneva version is, "For of him, and through him, and *for* him are all things;" but according to the authorized version, it is, "For of him, and through him, and *to* him are all things." Any person, however, who reads the sermon

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⁶⁸ Memorial for the Bible Societies in Scotland, p. 91. See also pp. 30, 90, 112.

attentively, will be convinced, that when the author wrote it, he must have had before him at the time, the Geneva version, and not the other. “ ‘All things,’ says he⁶⁹ are of him, and *for* him; but man in a peculiar and proper way. As God in making of man, was pleased of his goodness to stamp him with a character of his own image—and in this he puts a difference between man and other creatures, that he should have more plain and distinct engravings of divine majesty upon him, which might show the glory of the workman,—so it appears that he is in a singular way made *for* God, as his last end. As he is set nearer God, as the beginning and cause, than other creatures, so he is placed nearer God as the end. All creatures are made *ultimo*, lastly, *for* God, yet they are all made *proxime*, nextly *for* man.”

The sacred scriptures are the Christian teacher's treasury. The knowledge of these evinced by the young and interesting author, apprizes us that he had carefully studied them, as his rule of faith and manners. But his beautiful and appropriate illustrations were not derived from the Bible alone. The stores of profane history, philosophy, and science, the apologues and mythology of the ancients, were all made tributary to him. His scholastic habits evidently gave a tinge to his discourses. When perusing some of these, we could almost imagine we are listening to the youthful Regent, while delivering, within the walls of the University of Glasgow, his dictates to a class of admiring and enthusiastic students. We are at once reminded of the “Professor of Philosophy,” for instance, when we find him borrowing from Plato, and other ancient philosophers, such names as these, applied by them “to the unknown God” *αυτο ον*,⁷⁰ *αυτο πνευμα*,⁷¹ and *primum intelligibile, et primum intelligens*,⁷² when he makes mention of “the astronomers” who “do cut and carve in their imagination

⁶⁹ P. 5.

⁷⁰ Pp. 42, 48.

⁷¹ P. 55.

⁷² P. 303.

cycles, orbs, and epicycles, in the heavens, because of the various and different appearances and motions of stars in them, whereas it may be, really, there is but one celestial body in which all these various lights and motions do appear,"⁷³ and when he tells us, that "if two superficies were exactly plain and smooth, they could join so closely together, that no air could come between them, and then they could hardly be pulled asunder."⁷⁴ All the while, however, it is evident that the knowledge of the philosopher is made subservient to the nobler purposes of the divine. The idea never occurs to us, that his secular learning is produced for display, and not to give interest to a sacred subject, or to furnish him with the means of explaining it.

The following extract will show the holy use to which the pious author consecrated his knowledge of "physiology," which, when a Regent he was bound to teach, by the foundation charter of the University—"We can do nothing except we have some pattern or copy before us, but now, upon this ground which God hath laid man may fancy many superstructures. But when he stretched out the heaven, and laid the foundation of the earth, 'who, being his counsellor taught him?' At whom did his Spirit take counsel? Certainly, none of all these things would have entered into the heart of man to consider or contrive, Isa. xl. 12, 13. Some ruder spirits do gaze upon the huge and prodigious pieces of the creation, as whales and elephants, &c., but a wise Solomon will go to the school of the ant to learn the wisdom of God, and choose out such a simple and mean creature for the object of his admiration. Certainly there are wonders in the smallest and most inconsiderable creatures which faith can contemplate. O the curious ingenuity and draught of the finger of God, in the composition of flies, bees, flowers, &c. Men ordinarily admire more some extraordinary things, but the truth is, the whole course of nature is one continued wonder, and that

⁷³ P. 80.

⁷⁴ P. 279.

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greater than any of the Lord's works without the line. The straight and regular line of the wisdom of God, who, in one constant course and tenor, hath ordained the actions of all his creatures, comprehends more wonders and mysteries, as the course of the sun, the motion of the sea, the hanging of the earth in the empty place upon nothing. These, we say, are the wonders indeed, and comprehend something in them which all the wonders of Egypt and the wilderness cannot parallel. But it is the stupid security of men, that are only awakened by some new and unusual passages of God's works beyond that straight line of nature."⁷⁵

From an eloquent passage in his sermon on the text (1 John i. 5,) "God is light," it will likewise be seen that if Binning spoke, like a philosopher, of the properties of light, his was the language of a Christian philosopher—"The light is, as it were, a visible appearance of the invisible God. He hath covered his invisible nature with this glorious garment, to make himself in a manner visible to man. It is true, that light is but, as it were, a shadow of that inaccessible light, *umbra Dei*. It is the dark shadow of God, who is himself infinitely more beautiful and glorious. But yet, as to us, it hath greater glory and majesty in it, than any creature besides. It is the chief of the works of God, without which the world would be without form and void. It is the very beauty of the creation, that which gives lustre and amiableness to all that is in it, without which the pleasantest paradise would become a wilderness, and this beautiful structure, and adorned palace of the world, a loathsome dungeon. Besides the admirable beauty of it, it hath a wonderful swift conveyance throughout the whole world, the upper and lower, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It is carried from the one end of heaven to the other in a moment, and who can say by what way the light is parted? Job xxxviii. 24. Moreover, it carries alongst with it a beautiful influence, and a refreshing heat and warmness,

⁷⁵ P. 90.

which is the very life and subsistence of all the creatures below. And so, as there is nothing so beautiful, so nothing so universally and highly profitable. And to all this, add that singular property of it, that it is not capable of infection, it is of such absolute purity, that it can communicate itself to the dunghill, as well as to the garden, without receiving any mixture from it. In all the impurities it meets withal, it remains unmixed and untainted, and preserves its own nature entire. Now you may perceive, that there is nothing visible that is fitter to resemble the invisible God, than this glorious, beautiful, pure, and universally communicable creature, light....

“Then add unto this, to make up the resemblance fuller, the bounty and benignity of his influence upon the world, the flowings forth of his infinite goodness, that enrich the whole earth. Look, as the sun is the greatest and most universal benefactor,—his influence and heat is the very renovation of the world. It makes all new, and green, and flourishing; it puts a youth upon the world, and so is the very spring and fountain of life to all sublunary things. How much is that true of the true light, of the substantial, of whom this sun is but a shadow!...

“And to complete the resemblance more, there may be something of the infallibility and incomprehensibility of the divine majesty here represented. For though nothing be clearer than the light, yet there is nothing in its own nature darker than light, that which is so manifest to the eyes, how obscure is it to the understanding. Many debates and inquiries have been about it, but yet it is not known what that is by which we know all things. Certainly such is the divine light. It is inconceivable and inexpressible, therefore is he said to dwell in light inaccessible and full of glory, 1 Tim. vi. 16. There is a twofold darkness that hinders us to see God, a darkness of ignorance in us, and a darkness of inaccessible light in him. The one is a veil upon our hearts, which blinds and darkens the souls of men, that they do not see that which is manifest of God even in his works. O that

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cloud of unbelief that is spread over our souls, which hinders the glorious rays of that divine light to shine into them. This darkness Satan contributes much to, who is the prince of darkness, 2 Cor. iv. 4. This makes the most part of souls like dungeons within, when the glorious light of the gospel surrounds them without. This earthliness and carnality of our hearts makes them like the earth, receive only the light in the upper and outward superface, and not suffer it to be transmitted into our hearts to change them. But when it pleaseth him, who at the first, by a word of power, commanded light to shine out of darkness, he can scatter that cloud of ignorance, and draw away the vail of unbelief, and can by his power and art, so transform the soul, as to remove its earthly quality, and make it transparent and pure, and then the light will shine into the heart, and get free access into the soul. But though this darkness were wholly removed, there is another darkness, that ariseth not from the want of light, but from the excessive superabundance of light,—*caligo lucis nimia*, that is, a divine darkness, a darkness of glory, such an infinite excess and superplus of light and glory above all created capacities, that it dazzles and confounds all mortal or created understandings. We see some shadows of this, if we look up to the clear sun. We are able to see nothing for too much light. There is such an infinite disproportion here between the eye of our mind, and this divine light of glory, that if we curiously pry into it, it is rather confounding and astonishing, and therefore it fills the souls of saints with continual silent admiration and adoration.”⁷⁶

The comparisons, employed by Binning, have sometimes a degree of quaintness in them which is far from being displeasing, if it does not heighten their effect, as when he observes of that Great Being, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, that he “speaks in our terms, and *like nurses with their children*, uses our own dialect.”⁷⁷ He employs an equally vivid, though

⁷⁶ Pp. 301-303.

⁷⁷ P. 74.

somewhat quaint comparison, when he observes, that “the best way to behold the sun, is to look at it *in a pail of water*, and the surest way to know God by, is to take him up in a state of humiliation and condescension, as the sun in the rainbow, in his words and works, which are mirrors of the divine power and goodness, and do reflect upon the hearts and eyes of all men the beams of that uncreated light.”⁷⁸ We are offended, however, with the homeliness of such expressions as these, “sin's ugly face,”⁷⁹ “our legs are cut off by sin,”⁸⁰ “the legs of the soul,”⁸¹ men opposing God are “like dogs barking at the moon,”⁸² “the pull of the Father's arm,”⁸³ the Christian is “on speaking terms with God,”⁸⁴ “he drives a trade with heaven,”⁸⁵ Christ “took up a shop, as it were, in our flesh, that he might work in us.”⁸⁶ Nevertheless, an obvious excuse suggests itself to us for the employment, by the author, of these, and such like familiar expressions, which are besides of singularly rare occurrence in his writings. The great object which a Christian minister, like Binning, will constantly propose to himself, when addressing his people, will be, to make himself useful to them. But he knows he cannot be useful, without being intelligible to his audience. He is thus led sometimes to lower his style, as well as to simplify his ideas, that he may reach the understandings and hearts of the youngest and the most illiterate among his hearers. This was evidently Binning's case. To the least intelligent of those whom he addressed, he sometimes spoke in their own dialect, or, to adopt his own comparison, “like nurses with their children.”

⁷⁸ P. 36.

⁷⁹ P. 46.

⁸⁰ P. 165.

⁸¹ P. 216.

⁸² P. 76.

⁸³ P. 248.

⁸⁴ P. 657.

⁸⁵ P. 619.

⁸⁶ P. 217.

In so far as he did this, he followed the maxim of the great German Reformer. *Hi sunt optimi ad populum concionatores*, said Luther, *qui pueriliter, populariter, et quam simplicis sime docent*. "They are the best preachers to the people, who teach them in a plain, familiar, and perfectly simple way."

A preacher, however, who is desirous to make his instructions exceedingly simple, is in danger of bringing his language too low, or of expressing himself in a manner which may not please persons of refined taste. His own good sense will teach him to avoid this if possible. But in the hurry of writing or speaking, he may not always succeed. When this happens, the fault into which he has been betrayed ought to be overlooked by those who are aware, that the business of a minister of Christ is not to interest merely, but to convince, not to afford pleasure, but to enlighten, reclaim, and admonish, "rightly dividing the word of truth."

It is right that the reader should know what changes have in the present edition been made upon the text of the author. To make the work as perfect as possible, it has been carefully collated with the earliest editions which could be procured of his different writings. From his style being so much in advance of that of his countrymen in general, at the time he lived, it may be supposed that his language has been modernised to a considerable extent. But such is not the fact. The orthography has been altered. Greater attention than formerly has been paid to the punctuation. This was so defective in many places, as completely to obscure and pervert the meaning of the author. The references to scripture have also been corrected in numerous instances. But beyond this, nothing almost whatever has been done, with the exception of the occasional emendation of what, according to existing rules, would now be considered an ungrammatical expression, or the substitution of a modern word for one that was obsolete or provincial. The text itself, however, will show that very few changes indeed of this description have been ventured upon. It was thought better, for various reasons, that

the author should be allowed to speak in his own familiar tongue, than that he should be transformed into a modern preacher. The remodelling of his style might have made it more agreeable to some readers, but it would no longer have been the style of Binning, nor characteristic of his age and country. His language, moreover, would have lost much of its raciness in the attempt to mellow it.

An explanation of such words as have been employed by Binning, and are not now in common use, or generally understood beyond the limits of Scotland, has been given in the Notes. Many of his Latin quotations, when not translated by himself, have likewise been explained, and verified, and their authors pointed out. This, it is confessed, has been a very irksome and laborious undertaking. As the classical quotations of the author, like his quotations from scripture, have not unfrequently been made from memory, the difficulty of tracing them to their proper sources was thereby much increased. The necessary books were not always at hand to consult, and even when these were obtained, it was sometimes found to be impossible, after the most patient research, to discover the place where the saying of some ancient writer was concealed. There are few notes comparatively attached to the first part of the work, as the printing of it commenced sooner than was expected. To supply this defect, some *Notanda* have been inserted after the Life of the Author.

But in addition to some of the classical quotations of the author, various historical allusions required to be elucidated, along with certain obscure references to passing events, and the opinions and proceedings of different sects and parties. It is not pretended that every thing of this kind has had light thrown upon it. But I can say this much with confidence, that it has been my constant endeavour to discover the latent or partially disclosed meaning of the author, and to give to the candid reader the benefit of my researches, and of any knowledge, which, in consequence of my position, I possessed, of a minister of the

Church of Scotland, of whom I deem it no small honour to have been a successor.

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When this edition of the works of the Rev. Hugh Binning had nearly passed through the press, the Editor had unexpectedly put into his hands a manuscript volume of the sermons of the author. About fifty of these, he finds, on examination, have never been printed, most of which have been transcribed by the Rev. Robert Macward, whose handwriting is perfectly well known. The remaining part of the volume contains the forty sermons on the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, entitled "The Sinner's Sanctuary." These are believed to be in the handwriting of Binning himself. There can be no doubt whatever that this is the manuscript volume in folio, which is described in the preface to "Several Sermons upon the most important Subjects of Practical Religion," dated "Brousterland, Sept. 12th, 1760." It is there said to have been for "many years concealed in the library of John Graham, a pious and learned man, much abstracted from the world, who was a near relation of Mr. M'Ward's, with a large collection of Mr. M'Ward's own papers, which are yet among the curious and large collection of manuscripts, that were left by Mr. Wodrow, the author of the History of the Sufferings of this Church, to his sons" (Pp. xix, xx.). The writer of that preface also tells us, that he had in his possession a "quarto volume" of manuscript sermons, belonging to Binning. The Editor has not been able to ascertain what has become of this latter volume; nor can any thing be learned of the "Course of Philosophy," which the author of Binning's Life, states, he was assured was in the hands of a gentleman in Edinburgh, at the time he wrote that Life, which was about the year 1735. (See Life of the Author, p. liv.) The sermons which have not hitherto been printed, and which are contained in the manuscript volume now brought to

light, may be expected to be given to the world at no distant period.