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O F  
D A V I D D I C K S O N .

BY THE EDITOR.

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Mr DAVID DICKSON, or Dick, (for the family seems to have used either name indifferently,) was the son of Mr John Dick, merchant in Glasgow, a man of religious character, and possessed of considerable wealth. John, and his partner in life, had been several years married without having offspring, a circumstance that grieved them deeply; and they not only prayed themselves, but stirred up others to pray for them, that they might have a son—vowing, that if their petition was granted, they would devote him to the service of the Lord. Their prayers were heard, and David was given to them, like a second Samuel, to comfort them in their old age. The precise date of his birth cannot be ascertained, but it is supposed to have been in 1583. In proper time the boy was sent to school; but after he had learned some Latin, his parents forgot their vow, and sent him to sea in the capacity of a supercargo, intending thus to train him up to mer-

chandise. But several losses they sustained at sea after David had entered upon his charge, and subsequently, a severe sickness with which he was visited, admonished them sharply of their dereliction. They bewailed their forgetfulness, and sent him to the University of Glasgow, where his proficiency soon showed that he had at last got into his proper element.

To explain the high attainments in learning which Dickson and his illustrious cotemporaries possessed, it may be necessary to advert to the Scottish education of this period, more especially, as it is so frequently misunderstood, and so grossly misrepresented. Andrew Melville had returned from the Continent, not only richly furnished with all the learning of the age, but a complete acquaintanceship with the most effectual methods of imparting it; and such was the admirable system which he had organized for the Universities of St Andrews and Glasgow, that in literary reputation they were inferior to no Colleges in Europe. The *curriculum* of education for the ministry especially, was such, as might justly put to the blush the superficial acquirements of many of their modern representatives. The young pupil, at his admission, was expected to be a thorough proficient in Latin, otherwise he could not understand the prelections, which were generally delivered in that tongue. In addition to the higher Latin classics with which the course commenced, the students were initiated into the Greek grammar, and carried through the ample routine of the Greek poets and historians. To

these literary acquirements succeeded the study of rhetoric, logic, ethics, physics, geometry, and history; after which the *alumni* were introduced to their more important work of studying Theology as a science in all its departments, and the Eastern languages with which it is connected. This course continued for six years, and without those long vacations which have crept into modern education. This rigid training also by no means terminated with a six years' course in the case of the most eminent of our Scottish divines. Such as had most highly distinguished themselves by talents and acquirements during that period, were appointed professors, or regents as they were then called, and in this capacity they had ample opportunities of maturing what they had already learned, as well as enlarging the bounds of their knowledge;—and after regenting for eight years, they were then admitted into the ministry. It was in this way, that the illustrious champions of our church were trained for the conflict which they had to wage against Episcopacy. English doctors and right reverend bishops, who had been trained in the thought-inspiring stained-glass shades, and amidst the rich intellectual stores of the halls and libraries of Cambridge and Oxford, had been wont to look with solemn disdain upon the lank unendowed literature of Scotland; and when they advanced to establish the divine right of Prelacy, they hoped to bear down all presbyterian resistance, by recondite arguments drawn from antiquity, and by copious quotations from the Fathers. But they were

astounded to find a whole host emerging from the dingy class-rooms and rough-hewn benches of our Scottish colleges, as completely equipped for the combat as themselves—men every whit their equals in historical, classical, and patriotic learning, and withal, endowed with a strength and springiness of dialectic nerve, that made them more than a match for their less hardily trained antagonists. Such were the eminent divines of Scotland in the earlier part of the seventeenth century; and such was David Dickson, who was afterwards to bear so prominent a part in the list of our Scottish worthies.

After he had completed a six years' course, Dickson was found so well qualified for the duties of an instructor, that he was appointed Professor of Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. In this important charge, he was eminently successful in training the youths not only in learning, but sound religious principles. Having continued in the professorship for eight years, he was appointed Minister of Irvine, in the year 1618, when he had reached the mature age of thirty-five.

It was only six months after the minister of Irvine had entered on his charge, that an event occurred, through which he was afterwards to suffer considerable molestation. In the preceding year, the prelates of Scotland had transmitted to the king such flattering accounts of their success in the advancement of Episcopacy, that James fully believed that a personal visit only was necessary to accomplish its permanent

establishment. Inspired, therefore, as he assured his good people of Scotland, by a "salmon-like affection" he revisited his native country; but there he found the tide of presbyterianism so strong and stormy, that he was glad to hasten back to the still waters of England, after having railed at the prelates for their overcharged statements, and called them "dolts and deceivers." Goaded by the spur of royal indignation, they strained every nerve to accomplish his favourite measure; and accordingly a General Assembly was convoked at Perth, on the 25th of August, 1618. Never had such a singular conclave represented the Church of Scotland! Bishops, doctors, and deans were the prime agents; courtiers and their led-gentlemen were the lay commissioners: those ministers who were tolerant of the claims of the bishops, were pressed into the service, while the most distinguished opponents to episcopacy were excluded. As if to show also to the eye, that presbyterian parity was a delusion, there was a long table, with forms, for the nobles, prelates, and their supporters, while the ministers were left to stand behind, like mere spectators. The voting which followed was a mockery, for Archbishop Spottiswood told the meeting roundly, that the articles should be passed, gainsay them who would; and when the names of the voters were called, whosoever demurred, had these menaces thundered in his ears, "Have the king in your mind!"—"Remember the king!"—"Look to the king." The articles, five in number, commonly called the Articles of Perth, were

accordingly driven through the Assembly as a matter of course. These were, 1. Kneeling at the Communion; 2. Observance of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension-day, and Pentecost; 3. Episcopal Confirmation; 4. Private Baptism; 5. Private Communion. In a few weeks they were ratified by the Privy Council, and in July 1621, they were confirmed by Parliament. A thundercloud that hung over the city and enveloped it as with a shroud, exploded over the parliament-house, just as the touch of the royal sceptre had established these articles, while such flashes of lightning continued, with deluges of rain and hail, that in this age, so observant of omens, the most stout-hearted trembled at their own work. But the deed was done—and they soon rallied to enforce obedience. | During the stir of these important events, Dickson was diligently labouring at his charge in Irvine; and probably it was owing to the closeness of attention which he bestowed upon his ministerial duties, that he had taken no share in the general resistance to these innovations. Indeed, it appears, that hitherto he had bestowed little or no study upon Episcopacy, although that was the all-absorbing topic of the day. But now, that the subject was brought home to his personal attention, he was compelled to investigate and decide. “I studied the matter,” he says, “as I should answer to God, yet for two years’ time I held myself quiet, till being overtaken with sickness, and dying in my own apprehension, I resolved to give my testimony to the truths which were oppressed. This

I did," he adds, "in as modest terms as I could, purely for my own exoneration." The result of this investigation, was a resolution to suffer, rather than comply with the articles of Perth. His refusal was noted, and the pains and penalties were to be enforced. Scarcely had he been four years a minister, when a summons was served upon him at the manse of Irvine, and on opening the missive, he found, that instead of commencing with the usual preamble of, "James, by the grace of God, King," &c., it began in the name of "John, by the mercy of God, Archbishop of St Andrews; and James, by the mercy of God, Archbishop of Glasgow,"—commanding him to compare at the Court of High Commission, to answer for his non-compliance. He resolved at once to decline the authority of the court, and endure its inflictions. At his entrance upon his pastoral charge, he had preached on the first part of 2 Cor. v. 11, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men;" and now, with the prospect of suspension or deprivation before him, he preached on the Sabbath before his departure, on the latter part of the verse, in these words, "But we are made manifest to God." The discourse was delivered under all the solemn circumstances of a ministerial farewell, and it was attended with extraordinary power in the souls of his hearers. "During the whole time of the sermon," says Calderwood, "there was weeping and lamentation; scarce one within the doors could hold up his head. That whole day, the women were going up and down the kirk-yaird, and

under stairs, greeting,\* as if their husbands had been newly buried. The like weeping was upon the morn, when Mr David was leaping upon his horse." The provost, magistrates, and town council of Irvine, and the people at large, addressed an earnest petition to the High Commission, attesting the faithful labours and holy conversation of their minister, and showing the injury which his removal would occasion to God and their own souls; and eight or nine of his principal parishioners accompanied him to Edinburgh. The opposite party were now in a dilemma: they wished to procure his submission, and thus escape the odium of persecution, which they would incur by enforcing the articles;—even a partial submission would content them,—let him only *seem* to submit. When he had reached Linlithgow, a post came from Archbishop Spottiswood, offering to continue him in his charge, if he would only request continuance until he were better advised; threatening, that otherwise he (the Archbishop) would "put him an hundred miles from the doors." The answer of Dickson was brief and decisive: "Continuance with my flock I am not that man that will refuse, if either mine own, or the request of others may procure it; but to crave continuance for further advisement, I cannot, except I would dissemble, for I am fully resolved in that matter."

On appearing before the Court of High Commission, Spottiswood, still unwilling to precipitate matters,

\* Weeping.

had recourse to gentle language and flattery. He began to remind the minister of the literary distinction he had acquired when regent in the University of Glasgow; and of the high hopes that had been entertained of him; and protested his own personal satisfaction at the esteem in which he had been held ever since he had been settled in Irvine. After this soothing exordium, the examination commenced; but Dickson forthwith took the written declinature from his pocket, and laid it on the table. At this unwelcome movement, there was a bustle among the members, and the bishops gathering round him, whispered in his ear, as if in friendly solicitude, "Take it up! take it up!"—to which he calmly replied, "I laid it not down to that end, to take it up again." The clerk was then commanded to read the declinature, which was also signed by George Dunbar, a fellow-sufferer of Dickson, and expressed in the following terms:

"Forasmeikle as the assemblies of this kirk standing in force, are ratified by the laws of this kingdom; have respective and properly belonging to them, only lawful power and liberty to try, admit, and ordain qualified persons to the service of the ministry, and to suspend and remove therefrom such as shall be found faulty and insufficient; and to exerce the whole jurisdiction and discipline of the kirk, according to the order established: By virtue whereof, and by reason of the solemn oath of God astricting the whole kingdom, and specially the ministry thereinto, the

lawful General Assemblies, Provincials, and Presbyteries, have lawful power and liberty in matters of admission and deprivation to or from ecclesiastical functions: Nevertheless, we have received a copy of a libel, whereby we are summoned to answer at your instance, in the cause of deprivation, contrary to the privileges and liberties of the kirk, laws of the country, and commendable course and practice hitherto observed within this kirk and kingdom. Therefore, we most earnestly and humbly desire you, that ye would wisely consider, and cease to trouble us with such commandments as may intend prejudice, or prove hurtful to the kirk and kingdom of Christ within this realm. Otherwise, for the obliged respect and duty we carry to the kirk, and lawful assemblies thereof, we will be forced to decline you, as judges no ways competent in the cause libelled. Like as we, being most willing to eschew the meanest degree and imputation of contempt, have disposed ourselves to come in your presence, to declare unto you the necessity of our subjection to the judges and judicatories before specified; and in that respect do testify our declining from you, as incompetent judges in the cause libelled. And by these presents, we *simpliciter* decline you, offering ourselves most willingly to a lawful and ordinary judgment, appointed and established by the laws of our kingdom, concerning us and our affairs; and that for the reasons following, and others to be alleged in time and place:

“1. Because the right of our trial, cognition, and

giving of sentence in the cause expressed in the libel, stands in the power and privilege of the Assemblies lawful, respective above-written, which by no law nor canon of the kirk as yet extant are cancelled, annulled, or declared expired; much less translated or devolved in your persons, to try, cognosce, appoint punishments, and execute sentence at your pleasure.

“2. Because this form of judicatory is mixed of civil and ecclesiastical persons, for the inflicting of civil and ecclesiastical censures upon the parties convened before you, to the prejudice of that distinction which should be betwixt civil and ecclesiastical judicatories, according to the word of God, and established order of this kingdom; whereby it is out of all question, that no civil person can sit, or cognosce upon the deprivation of a minister; as also, that no minister or ecclesiastic person may inflict any civil punishment, nor yet any such ecclesiastic censures as belong to a whole Assembly; meikle less, in their own name libel edicts, summon parties, impose diets of comparence, lead process, give out sentences not only different, but in many respects contrary to the forms of proceeding received and practised in the kirk’s affairs, as the libel whereby we are summoned imports.”

The Archbishop, writhing under the sting of disappointment, threw off the mask of gentleness he had hitherto exhibited. Scarcely had four lines of the declinature been read, when he burst forth in a volley of “banning” and abuse. “These men,” he sneeringly said, eyeing Dickson askance, “will

speak of humility and meekness, and talk of the Spirit of God! The Spirit of God is the spirit of humility and meekness, but ye are led with the spirit of the devil. There is more pride in you, than in all the bishops of Scotland, I dare say. I hanged a Jesuit in Glasgow, for the like fault.”\* “I am not a rebel,” replied the other; “I stand here as the king’s subject. I offer myself, in my declinature, to the ordinary judicatory established already by the king’s laws. Grant me the benefit of the law, and of a subject; I crave no more.” The Archbishop, instead of answering this appeal, continued to rail. On Dickson being removed, his brother-in-law, and several of those who had accompanied him from Irvine, were sent to persuade him to take up his declinature; but they knew his mind too well to make the attempt. On being again called in, the Archbishop addressed him in a style of eloquence worthy of King James himself. “Thou art a rebel,” he said, “a breaker of

\* This was scarcely an exploit for Spottiswood to boast of. The Jesuit Ogilvie was apprehended in Glasgow, in October 1614; and when the Archbishop examined him he was so incensed at his answers, that he pummelled the poor prisoner with his fists. The unfortunate wretch was also fearfully tortured, by being kept from sleep for several days and nights together, until he was driven frantic, in the hope of making him name the persons who had sheltered and protected him. His chief crime was a declinature of the authority of the king and council in things ecclesiastical; and for this he was hanged at Glasgow, on February 28. 1615. It was suspected, that this execution was merely intended as a warning to those faithful ministers of the Scottish Church, who might adopt a similar course in opposing the tyranny of the bishops,—a suspicion, which Spottiswood’s threat on Dickson’s trial goes far to confirm.

the fifth command; disobedient to the king, and us, who may be your fathers both one way and other. Ye shall ride with a thicker back, before ye ding\* the king's crown off his head." "Far may such a thought be from me," replied Dickson modestly; "I am so far from that, that by God's grace, there shall not a stroke come from the king's hands, that shall divert my affection from him." "It is puritan tail!" cried the Archbishop; "ye call the king, *your* king, but he must be ruled by you." The Bishop of Aberdeen then put to Dickson the question, "Will you obey the king, or not?" The other answered, "I will obey him in all things in the Lord." The Bishop then proceeded to another query, which was rather a startling one: "May not the king give this authority that we have, to as many souters or tailors of Edinburgh, to sit and see whether ye be doing your duty or not?" "My declination answers that," said Dickson. Spottiswood again broke forth in a tempest of abuse, calling him "knave," "swinger," "young lad," and declaring that he ought still to be teaching bairns in the school; and observing that he withheld from him, that title so rich, from its novelty, to the ears of these Scottish bishops, and only called him "Sir," the Archbishop gnashed his teeth, and exclaimed, "Ye might have called me, My Lord, Sir. Langsyne, when I was in Glasgow, ye called me, My Lord; but I cannot tell how, you are become a Puritan now." Dickson silently lifted up his eyes to heaven, but this,

\* Drive.

the Archbishop called a proud look. At length the former said, "I have been eight years a regent in the College of Glasgow, and four years a minister: those amongst whom I have lived, know I am not the man ye call me. Say to my person what ye please; by God's grace, it shall not touch me." After a few more sneers and misrepresentations from the primate, the sentence of the court was announced in these words, "We deprive you of your ministry at Irvine, and ordain you to enter in Turref, in the north, within twenty days." To this, Dickson submissively replied, "The will of the Lord be done. Though ye cast me off, yet the Lord will take me up. Send me where ye please, I hope my Master will go with me; and as he hath been with me heretofore, he shall be with me still, as with his own weak servant." "Swith, away!" cried Spottiswood, as if he had been hooting a cur out of the council-chamber,—“pack, you swinger!” and turning to the door-keeper, he added, “Shoot\* him out!” As they were about to depart, the town-clerk of Irvine exclaimed in a tone of deep sorrow, “Is that doleful sentence of divorcement pronounced? As for you, Mr David, the Lord strengthen you to suffer; but as for you, Sirs, (speaking to the council), God turn all your hearts.” “Who is that?” shouted the Archbishop,—“I shall take order with you, Sir!” Thus ended this singular travesty of an ecclesiastical court. The absence of all decent and established forms in its proceedings, was as remarkable as the

\* Thrust, shove.

lack of common equity and legal justice. The meeting neither began nor ended with prayer; no formal process had been used against the pannel, for the Procurator at whose instance he was summoned, did not appear; and so far from being formally accused and convicted, Dickson was not even asked, whether he would yield obedience to the articles of Perth or not. And yet, he was sentenced to deprivation and banishment! After the trial, the bishops began to bethink themselves wherefore they had condemned him, since no cause had been assigned. But the solution of this difficulty brought them to a dead pause. They carefully scanned and weighed his words, but were obliged to confess, that he had said nothing offensive. At last, they fastened upon his answer to the first question proposed by the Bishop of Aberdeen, in which he declared, that he would obey the king in all things, "in the Lord." From this they absurdly deduced Dickson's meaning to be,—that the king did *not* command in the fear of the Lord!

On his return to Irvine, the denounced minister continued to preach until the twenty days had expired; and because he had merely declined the authority of the bishops, and not that of the king, he took instruments to this effect, and of his willingness to obey the king in temporalities. This he did, to refute an allegation becoming stale even at that early period,—that Presbyterian ministers claimed an authority paramount to that of the king and civil courts, and exemption from their jurisdiction,—that in fact, they

wished, like the Romish priests of old, to establish over all things the tribunal of an infallible Church, from which there should be no appeal. When the time had expired, he went to the residence of the Earl of Eglinton, where he preached weekly in the great hall, and sometimes in the open air. But this permission, which the Earl had obtained for him, was soon thought too much by the Prelatic party, in consequence of the crowds that repaired to these ministrations, from Irvine and the neighbouring parishes; and although they had pledged themselves to that nobleman, and forty ministers who had joined in the petition, that Dickson should remain unmolested at Eglinton, they ordered him to his place of banishment;—and as if this punishment had not been enough, they aggravated it by several restrictions that were not contained in the original sentence. And still he obeyed, that he might shew his submission in matters purely civil.

On arriving at Turref, a desolate and secluded parish in the north, which was thenceforth, as it appeared, to be his place of residence, Dickson obtained permission from the minister of the parish to preach to the people. And truly, this labour of love which he undertook was no easy task. His course had hitherto been a smooth one, in consequence of the high standard of religious character that prevailed in Ayrshire; but now, he found a people so ignorant and degraded, that he was obliged to adopt a new style of ministration. To him, the preaching of a sermon

was nothing, unless it was fitted for the hearts and consciences of those who heard it; and therefore, he had to subject himself to a laborious course of preparation, that he might *come down* to his hearers, in order to draw them upward. On this account he was afterwards wont to observe, that the devils in the north were much worse than the devils in the west; for studying one day would have served him at Irvine, but it required two days of study for preaching at Turref.

While Dickson was thus employed in the service of his Master, the affectionate friends whom he had left behind, were incessant for his recal; and in consequence of petitions from the Earl of Eglinton and the town of Irvine, the High Commission gave him liberty to repair to Glasgow within three months, and there, either to satisfy the Archbishop, or return to his place of ward. And this satisfaction was to be an easy matter—it was nothing more than to clear himself from the charge of having declined the king's authority. He accordingly repaired to Glasgow, but on his arrival, he found that something more was expected and required. It was not enough that he wrote a gentle apology for his declinature, in which every offensive word was softened—he must take up his declinature! Nobles, gentlemen, clergymen of his own party, his personal friends, all urged him to this step, with every form of argument and entreaty; and to make the act as trivial as possible, it was arranged, that he should merely repair, with any friend he

pleased, to the Archbishop's residence, and without seeing the Prelate at all, should just lift up the paper, which would be lying ready upon the hall table, or cause his friend to take it in his stead. But to this contemptible legerdemain he would not listen for a moment. That paper contained the transcript of his devout convictions; it was copied in the records of his conscience—and there let it lie in the sight of earth and heaven! Although his own Irvine was so nigh, toward which his heart yearned with paternal fondness, he called for his horse, and rode away towards his desolate Patmos. Twenty days had the well-meant but harassing solicitations of his friends continued, and during all this time, he declared, that he went in spiritual bonds, and could not get access to God in prayer as formerly: all which remained, was the light of the word and Spirit, that commanded him not to forsake his testimony—and that however they urged, he used to keep all day by that light he had got by prayer in the morning, till he took it and their reasoning before God at night. He added, that he had hardly rode a mile out of Glasgow, on his return to Turref, when his soul was filled with such joy, and approbation from God on account of his faithfulness, that he scarcely ever felt the like before. He returned to his place of exile, but his trial had expired. God who had a great work reserved for him, so controlled the hearts of his persecutors, that the solicitations of his friends were at last effective, and he was permitted to return to his charge, with the promise,

that he should not be molested unless the king interfered. This event occurred about the end of July 1623.

And now, he was replaced in his beloved duties, and among his own people. On returning to Irvine, Dickson resumed his pastoral labours with fresh ardour—and well was he rewarded as a minister, for having been a confessor of Christ and his cause. From his previous trial, he was a distinguished mark which the eyes of men were compelled to behold; and now, that he had returned without a jot of compromisement, he was a recognised and proven ambassador of his glorious Master. The crowds that repaired to his ministry increased; they came not only from the adjacent parishes, but from the more remote districts of Scotland, and even from England; and many families settled themselves in Irvine, that they might enjoy the benefits of his regular ministry. And in addition to his Sabbath sermons, he also preached on the Mondays, which were then held as market-days in Irvine, so timing however the hour of meeting, that the sermon ended before the market commenced. This was a change in the established usage of parish preaching—the little change of a country minister—an assembling of a rural population together upon a week day, to hear the word of God. And yet, here was the commencement of an important era in the church of Christ. We allude to what is commonly termed the Stewarton Revival, which lasted from 1625 to 1630. At this time, the parish of Stewarton was under the

pastoral care of Mr Castlelaw, a man who appears to have been in earnest about the spiritual welfare of his people, and he encouraged them to attend those heart-stirring discourses that were delivered every Monday in Irvine. They did so, and the result that followed was wonderful : like an electric flash, the spirit of religion went from heart to heart, breaking, softening, vivifying with an irresistible power ; and for many miles on both sides of the Water of Stewarton, the influence went onward. Scarcely did a Sabbath pass, without proof of some being converted, or brought evidently under the power of the word ; many were so thrilled or paralysed with convictions of sin, with terror and remorse, that they fell down, and had to be carried out of the church. Crowds of inquirers also, after the lecture had ended, were wont to repair to the manse, anxious about the state of their souls, or to join in the devotional exercises that were continued there, after public worship had ended. A stupendous change was visible upon a whole people, and the event had many excited on-lookers ; but while the thoughtful were awe-struck and silent at the spectacle, and devout hearts kindled into praise and gratitude, there were many who sneered and derided. They called it the “ Stewarton sickness,” and spoke in contemptuous terms of the “ daft folks of Stewarton.” Unfortunately, too, it happened, as in similar cases, that there were sometimes extravagances exhibited both at church and private meetings, that were calculated to throw discredit upon the cause. But here, the

sound practical judgment and experience of Dickson and his coadjutors were employed successfully, in restraining these overflows of feeling, and giving them their proper direction; and happily, these cases were comparatively few. In by far the majority of instances, the result evinced, that the work was no delusion; and it not only pervaded a whole district for the time, but impressed a permanence of character, by which future generations were made wiser and better. It is gratifying to read the attestations that were given to this effect, by men of different minds and habits, but each in his own sphere well qualified to judge correctly. At this time, Robert Blair was a regent in the University of Glasgow; and as he sometimes preached at Stewarton, he had opportunities of much private intercourse with the people; on which occasions, he declared, that he had profited more by them, than they did by him. Boyd of Trochrig also was there, regarding these wonderful events with his calm, thoughtful, inquiring eyes, and cool sagacious intellect; and after much conversation both with men and women, he blessed God for the grace that was vouchsafed to them. And the Earl of Eglinton, whom his lady had induced to forego his field-sports for a season, and converse with these poor people, was compelled to wonder at the wisdom they manifested in their speech. It is gratifying also to find, that although he had been made the honoured instrument of such signal success, the heart of Dickson showed no worldly elation, but referred all the glory to its proper source, and acknowledged his

own inferiority; so that even in the full spring-tide of his usefulness he was wont to declare, that the vintage of Irvine was not equal to the gleanings, and not once to be compared to the harvest at Ayr, in the time of Mr John Welch.

It was not always however, and upon every occasion, that this highly-favoured divine found such enlargement in preaching; and an event befel him, to hinder him, it may be, from being exalted above measure. He had always been reluctant to preach in the metropolis, and on this account he stedfastly refused every invitation to officiate in an Edinburgh pulpit. But at last, during his absence, he was appointed to preach before the General Assembly. The fame of the wonderful effects that had attended his ministry at Irvine had spread over Scotland, so that at the time appointed, the church was not only filled, but the doors, and even the street, were thronged with expecting multitudes. He went to the pulpit in his usual state of preparation, commenced the public services, and afterwards announced his text. But as soon as he endeavoured to open upon it, he became dumb—the whole subject had departed from him, so that he could not remember a single thought. At last, in faltering and humble accents he thus addressed his wonder-stricken audience: “I see God will not suffer any mean clay instrument to be put in his room—he will not give his glory to another—there is too much looking to man, and too little to God.” After a few more broken sentences to the same purpose, he prayed,

and dismissed the congregation. A minister like this so suddenly struck dumb and helpless—what a sermon was that! And how impressively did it rebuke the carnality of those who feverishly hunt after mere talent and excitement, and who are more anxious to be regaled with an eloquent sermon, than to be enlightened by the simple oracles of God!

But it was in the calm seclusion of Irvine, and among the heart-awakened, sincere, inquiring rustics by whom he was surrounded, that the pulpit talents of David Dickson, and their effectiveness, were the most powerfully and genuinely elicited. Above all, he was distinguished by the happy skill with which he appealed to dead or half-wakened consciences, and the tact which he displayed in solving their difficulties, soothing their terrors, and directing them upon the way of life—and hence the eagerness with which, as in the case of the Stewarton Revival, inquiring multitudes repaired to the manse, to consult him, after the services were over. When he was transferred to higher spheres in the church, we learn accordingly without much surprise, that the same amount of pulpit reputation did not follow him. He was indeed the same profound reasoner, the same earnest eloquent speaker as before—but he had no longer those crowds of expressive countenances before him, those eager questioning eyes fixed upon him, from which the speaker catches such fervour and strength; nor the incessant many-voiced question that followed, “What shall I do to be saved?” Instead of these,

he had a congregation of quiet formal citizens,—and a cathedral. On being questioned as to the causes of this apparent inferiority, after he had been removed successively to the Divinity Chairs of Glasgow and Edinburgh, he answered, that he *wanted his books*. He meant the inquirers—those living volumes in which he had perused and studied the best of all theology—and the fervent prayers they were wont to offer in his behalf. Sir Hugh Campbell of Cessnock gave the following quaint account of the several stages of Dickson's pulpit excellence: "The professor of Divinity at Edinburgh is truly a great man; the professor of Divinity at Glasgow was a still greater man; but the minister of Irvine was the greatest man of all."

As an illustration of his distinctive style of preaching, compared with that of his illustrious cotemporaries, the following anecdote may be interesting to the reader. A London merchant, a native of England, having come down to Scotland, in the course of business, repaired to St Andrews, where he heard Robert Blair preach. He afterwards heard Samuel Rutherford. On the Sabbath following, he went to Irvine, where he heard David Dickson. When he returned to London, his friends asked him, What news from Scotland? to whom he replied, that he had great and good news to tell them. They little suspected what these tidings might be, as hitherto he had been careless about religion. He told them, that at St Andrews he had heard one Mr Blair preach—and after describing his features and stature, he added, "That man

showed me the majesty of God. I afterwards heard," continued he, "a little fair man preach (Mr Rutherford), and that man showed me the loveliness of Christ. Then I came, and heard at Irvine a well-favoured proper old man with a long beard, and that man *showed me all my heart.*"

Several short but interesting accounts of Dickson's preaching can be gathered from the declarations of those who enjoyed his personal acquaintanceship. He always endeavoured, we are told, to lead people to throw all their trust and dependence upon Christ's imputed righteousness, and not to rest upon any thing of their own. In preaching, unlike those who were in the habit of exhausting a text and their hearers by a series of twenty or thirty discourses, he generally took three or four verses for a single discourse, observing, that "God's bairns should get a good blaud\* of his own bread." On another occasion, he declared, that a man's addressing himself to study a text, was like his coming to a tree: he shook the tree, and the fruit that was ripest fell, while the green remained: thus, a man should not take from a text all it contained at once. The arrangement of his ideas and style of preaching were also so winning upon the hearts of his hearers, and drew them along by such pleasing imperceptible steps, that a minister declared, he never read these words "I caught you with guile," but he remembered David Dickson. Indeed, one of Dickson's own sayings upon this subject was, "We

\* A large slice.

that are ministers should make the door as wide and broad as we can, to get poor sinners once gained and brought in to Christ ; and when they are in, to close the door, and lay on them as good a load of duties as we can : for ‘ if I be a father, where is my honour ? if I be a master, where is my fear ? ’ ”

An apostolic brevity and simplicity in preaching was what this good man not only cultivated in himself, but cordially recommended to others, and that, too, in a style which they were not likely to forget. That parade of extensive reading, therefore, which indulges itself in showing all the different meanings of the text before coming to the true one, he justly condemned. This, he said, was just like a cook bringing up a piece of meat to the table, and saying, “ This is a good piece of meat, but you must not taste it ; ” and then, he brings another, and says the same. “ The cook,” he added, “ should bring them no meat, but what they are to eat.” In the same strain of honest-hearted humour, he condemned the use of Latin sentences and scholastic phraseology, before a simple auditory. “ It is,” he said, “ as if a cook should bring up the spit and raxes to the table : these are fit to be kept in the kitchen, to make ready the meat, but they are not to be brought to the table.”

One amiable trait in his character, was the paternal interest which he felt for young students who were in training for the ministry, and the anxiety with which he laboured, not only to further their literary, but their spiritual improvement. While he was

minister of Irvine, he understood that a young lad, named John Stirling, then attending the parish school, was under deep religious impressions, and on whom, therefore, he bestowed much attention. The poor youth, who intended to study for the Church, found an insuperable difficulty, as he thought, at the outset,—he felt as if the necessary study of Latin was not only a too arduous task, but that it marred his religious exercises, and therefore must be abandoned. The minister dealt with this over-tender conscience in the language of affectionate simplicity: “Do you think, John, that there is religion and serving of God in nothing but prayer, reading, meditation, and hearing of sermons? Do you not think, that when a webster is sitting on his loom, and working busily at his trade, he may be serving God as well as when praying and reading?” This argument the stripling could not gainsay: but still the temptation continued, and at last became so intolerable, that he resolved to abandon the school, and return home. He accordingly stole away from Irvine, but had not got far from the town, when he saw the minister, who had been visiting in that part of the parish, and was returning by the same path. He tried to hide himself; but Dickson detected the fugitive, and made him come forth and answer. The old excuse was still urged; to which the other replied with that passage of Scripture, “No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven;” and then added, “John, if you can answer

that, you may go your way where you please ;” and immediately left him. John was so moved with this conclusive appeal, that he instantly returned to school, where, in course of time, he surmounted all his difficulties ; after which, he went to college and laured, and Dickson obtained for him a chaplaincy. When Stirling had passed the usual trials, and been ordained to the ministry, his judicious monitor gave him many excellent advices, among which were these : that he should remain unmarried four years, in order to give himself wholly to his new work ; and that in prayer and preaching, he should be as succinet as possible, so as not to weary his hearers. He then ended all with that simple but impressive admonition so necessary for every minister, “ Oh, study God well, and your own heart !”

The following adventure possesses not only a lively dramatic interest, but shows, how unexpectedly a word fitly spoken may be attended with a blessing. One day, Dickson was travelling in company with a young man, whom he little suspected to be a robber, until the stranger turned upon him at a convenient part of the road, and demanded his purse. Dickson complied, but said to him, “ This is a very bad way of living you are now following. Take my advice ; if you will needs take my money from me, go and trade with it. Follow some lawful trade of merchandizing, and leave off this woful course of yours.” The young desperado took the purse and departed ; years elapsed, and the event was forgot. After Dickson had been appointed

Professor of Theology at Edinburgh, there was brought one day a hogshead of wine to his house in the college, at which he and his family were surprised ; but thinking that there must be some mistake in the delivery, they allowed it to remain, till the rightful owner should appear. Some hours after, a gentleman called ; and as he was a stranger, the Professor received him with his wonted courtesy, and treated him to a glass of his best ale. The visitor praised the liquor, but asked if there was any wine in the house. Dickson replied, that a hogshead had come that day, but it must have been sent by mistake, as he had not ordered it, and knew nothing about it. "It was I who sent it," replied the gentleman. He then reminded the wondering Professor of the circumstances under which he had been robbed of a purse containing four or five hundred merks, and confessed, that it was himself who had done the deed. The advices delivered on that occasion had sunk so deeply into his mind, that he abandoned all his evil courses, and betook himself to business ; and Providence so prospered his repentance and reformation, that he had grown rich, so that now he was come to refund the sum, both principal and interest.

It will be recollected, that when Dickson was replaced in his charge in 1623, it was with certain restrictions, that made him liable every moment to a fresh ejection. With most persons, this would have proved a strong motive for avoiding any overt act of resistance, except in the case of some very urgent

emergency, and when it could not be avoided. But such calculations of selfish prudence were not congenial to a heart like his, and he resolved to do his duty, be the consequences what they might. An opportunity soon occurred that tested his sincerity. When the Scottish ministers who were settled about the Six-mile Water in the north of Ireland, were silenced and ejected by the Irish prelates, at the instigation of their Scottish brethren, they returned to their native country; upon which occasion, the minister of Irvine employed three of the most eminent of their number, Blair, Livingston, and Cunningham, to assist at his communion. The Archbishop of Glasgow was indignant at this act, while the friends of Dickson trembled. But the storm was already gathering to a head, before which the crazy fabric of Scottish prelacy was dashed in pieces; and the Archbishop who now feared for his own safety, was no longer able to persecute.

And now came on a memorable year in the history of the Church of Scotland—that of 1638—when the force of public events drew the country minister from his retirement, and precipitated him into the struggle of a great national revolution. Concussed by the pestilent counsels of Laud, and his own egotistic obstinacy, Charles I. resolved to inflict the Service-book upon Scotland, at whatever hazard. The experiment had been tried—the stool of Janet Geddes had taken wing, and like a thrown-up truncheon, had given signal of onset—when Dickson proposed to the Pres-

bytery of Irvine, that they should be up and doing. They were allowed by proclamation a certain day, beyond which their refusal would not be tolerated; but he advised them not to wait silent until that day, lest they might be condemned for what would seem a criminal indifference. His advice was unanimously adopted; and a petition was drawn up by the Presbytery, addressed to the Privy Council, in which a suspension of proceedings in the matter of the Liturgy was craved, with a plain statement of the consequences of refusal. Other Presbyteries followed the example; and it was noticed as a token of encouragement, that when the Irvine petition was carried to the door of the Council-house, three others arrived at the same moment, from different quarters. Such was the commencement of that universal remonstrance which ended in the downfall of the Liturgy. His pen was now in active requisition for the service of the Church, and accordingly we find him, soon after (September 20), employed with Henderson and Ker, in drawing up an overture for a public fast, and stating the grounds on which it should be observed. And subsequently, when a formal complaint and petition to the king, against the bishops, as the authors of all the disturbances in Scotland was to be written, two draughts were to be penned on the occasion, the best of which was to be selected as the model. For the one, Alexander Henderson and Lord Balmerino were chosen; for the other, David Dickson and the Earl of Loudon; and the sketch of the latter was adopted, as the one

most fitly expressing the sentiments of the Church and nation.

It was not, however, by petitions that Charles and Laud were to be influenced, and after a scornful refusal, events hurried onward to the crisis. The four Tables were formed in Edinburgh; and when the ancient national covenant was to be renewed, the nobles called Dickson, along with Henderson, to assist them. The solemn events attending the signature of that holy bond, and the importance attached to it, are sufficiently known, we trust, to every reader. Upon this momentous occasion, it was perceived with regret, that no commissioners had been sent from the burgh of Aberdeen, and therefore Dickson, Henderson, and Cant were sent, to remonstrate with the people, and induce them to join their countrymen. Such, however, was the obstinacy of this town, that the deputation were excluded from the pulpits, and obliged to preach in the hall of Marischal College, or in the close, as the weather permitted. But, although they reasoned with the learned doctors of Aberdeen, and refuted all their arguments and cavils, their labours were without avail. Unfortunately for themselves, the people of Aberdeen continued obstinate—and the curse of Meroz followed their refusal.

The voice of the nation was now too loud and ominous to be disregarded, and a “Free General Assembly” was summoned by royal authority to meet at Glasgow, November 21, 1638. The proclamation gave full authority to this Assembly to inquire into

the prevailing evils and redress them; and as if such had been verily intended, the bishops were ordered to submit to its censures. But nothing of the kind was meant. Instead of this, the king secretly instructed the Marquis of Hamilton, who was royal Commissioner, to divide the Assembly, to stir up jealousy and division between the clerical and lay members, and on no account to allow the bishops to be censured; and if all this failed, to protest against all their proceedings. An explosion was inevitable from such left-handed policy. The bishops, knowing they would be protected, refused to appear or to submit; and on the Assembly proclaiming themselves competent judges of the recusants, Hamilton, who had fought for the bishops step by step, at last declared, that he must dissolve the meeting and retire. Amidst the entreaties and deprecating tears of the members he put his threat into execution, in the hope that he had involved them in an inextricable difficulty. If they continued to sit and act, they might be accused as rebels to the king—but they also felt, that if they retired, they would be traitors to their God. They sate in their places like immoveable rocks, and the Moderator, after a short speech, desired the minister of Irvine, there present as a member, to address the Assembly.

The behaviour of Dickson on this occasion was admirable. After a few preliminary remarks, he said, “We thought the matter desperate, when we were charged to buy the Service-book and Book of Ca-

nons, under the pain of horning ; yet we gave in supplications to the Council, desiring them to hear us speak against such proceedings. And when we knew not what to do next, God led us on step by step, and hath kept us still within the compass of his word and the laws of this kingdom, for aught we know ; for we have only followed our cause with humble supplications to our king, and protestations against what we could not obey ; and it is evident, that God hath accepted our testimony, for his hands are about us still." He then with admirable tact deduced an argument for the Assembly's continuance, from the example of the Marquis himself. " God is now to crave," he said, " a solemn testimony of the Church of Scotland ; and we have clearly represented to us an example of fidelity to our Lord and Master, by my Lord Commissioner. He hath stood punctually to the least jot of his commission ; and it becometh *us* to be as zealous and loyal towards our God." Afterwards he proceeded, with a bold and manly logic, to justify the position in which they now stood : " Seeing this court is granted to us of God under our king, and with his allowance, and a parliament indicted to warrant all the conclusions of it, let us go on as we may answer to both ; and though his majesty hath withdrawn his granted warrant, shall we, for this, be disloyal to our God, and let go that power which he hath granted ? If we go not on, we shall prove traitors both to God and to our king ; or if we be silent, and pass from this Assembly, how shall the will of God be

demonstrated to our king in things controverted? There is not a mean to inform his majesty fully and clearly, but the determinations of this Assembly; therefore we must now proceed, and so proceed, as all our actings may answer for themselves, and it may be seen, that our behaviour is as becometh good subjects to God and the king." He then shewed that all means of retreat were cut off, and that their only prudence was to go boldly forward. "We must either go on," he said, "or take upon us all the imputations of scandalous and turbulent persons, and grant that there have been as many wrongs, as there have been false imputations laid out against us; and this were to sin more deeply, and to quit those glorious privileges which Christ hath granted to us, above all our sister churches. Seeing then that there is not a mean left whereby to clear ourselves before the Christian world but this, let us go on in putting over the matter upon our Lord and Master; and he shall answer for us at the court of heaven, and justify us in the eyes of all that are wise."

This admirable speech, which was long remembered, and often adverted to, sounded the key-note to the Assembly's proceedings: they sat and acted as a court having independent power to legislate for the church of Christ. During thirty days of stern deliberation and decision, they pronounced the six Assemblies invalid which had been held since James's accession to the English throne, including those from 1606 to 1618, at all of which the innovations upon

our church had been gradually introduced—censured fourteen Prelates, of whom, two Archbishops and six Bishops were excommunicated, four deposed, and two suspended—condemned the Service-book, the Canons, the High Commission, and the Five Articles—and declared Prelacy to be abjured by the National Covenant, and contrary to the principles of the Church of Scotland. In this manner, and in so short a period, the work of thirty years, during which James I. and his unhappy successor had toiled so painfully and sinned so deeply, was thrown down, and nothing remained of it but an unshapely ruin, or rather a confused heap of rubbish, to proclaim the completeness of the overthrow.

These bold decisions required to be corroborated by deeds as bold, for in a short time “Canterbury’s Knight,” as Charles was derisively called, had raised an army, and commenced a crusade against Scotland, for the restoration of his beloved Episcopacy. But in every district there was such arming and mustering, that the hearts of the royalists waxed cold. It was evident, that a people so zealous for their spiritual rights, might be crushed but not conquered. Each parish sent forth its hardy peasantry fully accoutred for battle, officered by their lairds and nobles, and accompanied by their ministers as chaplains; and on this occasion, twelve hundred horse and foot, who came out of Ayrshire under the command of the Earl of Loudon, had Dickson for their chaplain. At this period also, he must have seen some service, as the

division to which he belonged, took in rapid succession the castles of Strathaven, Douglas, and Tantallan, which were strongholds of the royalist nobles, before they joined the encampment at Dunse-law. The hollow truce which afterwards took place released the ministers from such unprofessional scenes, and Dickson returned home.

On the 12th of August in the following year (1639) a General Assembly was held, of which Dickson was chosen Moderator; and in the trying difficulties of the period by which he was surrounded, he conducted himself with such prudence, firmness, and suavity, as met with universal approbation. A portion of his closing address to the Assembly, is so happily illustrative of his own character and conduct as a minister, that we cannot refrain from quoting it: "To you of the ministry I would say, let us be faithful to our Master, and love one another fervently. Strive not one with another, neither insult those who have been of a different judgment about ceremonies, and the government of the church; but let us make a perpetual act of oblivion of such things in all our memories, and lay aside all disputes, that have taken up much time which might have been better spent. And if ministers will do thus, I will adventure to prophesy unto you, it shall come to pass, that if you will keep yourselves at your book and your closet, and study to be spiritual in doctrine, and diligent in your calling, ye shall have more credit, than if ye ran to court ten thousand times; and your parish-

ioners, who it may be opposed you formerly, shall then travel cheerfully on your errand."

Among other measures discussed at this Assembly, it was proposed to transport the Moderator from Irvine to Glasgow, in consequence of a call from the inhabitants of that city; but such was the reluctance of Dickson to leave his flock, and so urgent were the disclamations of his people and the Earl of Eglinton, that the purpose was abandoned. But in 1642, the troubles and divisions of Glasgow were so numerous, owing to the predominance of the royalists in that quarter, that it was thought necessary to place a man of eminence there, in the hope of allaying the ferment. The situation chosen for him was one of the highest importance,—that of the Theological chair of the University,—and Baillie was joined with him as Professor of Oriental Languages. On entering upon his charge, Dickson was so involved and justled amidst the brawl of civic politics on the one hand, and college envy and jealousy on the other, that his peace-loving heart often sighed when he remembered the "sandy hillocks of Irvine." These minute circumstances that look so trivial in a biography, are yet the briers and thorns of man's pilgrimage that afflict the most; and though they cannot kill, they continually tear and irritate. But he conducted himself through these annoyances with his wonted prudence and gentleness, and had influence to obtain that Patrick Gillespie should be settled as one of the additional ministers of Glasgow. Although now a

professor, and therefore discharged from clerical duties, yet such was the affection he bore to them, and his desire to do good, that he preached every Sabbath forenoon in the High Church of Glasgow. On the following year, he was chosen commissioner to the General Assembly, notwithstanding the opposition of Principal Spang, who alleged, that the College Faculty alone had the right to elect him a member. This matter was laid to rest by an enactment, that Professors of Divinity being ministers, might be chosen either from the Presbytery or University. At this Assembly, Dickson, in conjunction with the celebrated Calderwood and Henderson, was appointed to prepare a new Directory for Public Worship. This was urgently required, from the want of uniformity which then prevailed in church-service, and from the contentions about repeating the Doxology and *Gloria.Patri*, and kneeling at prayer.

While Dickson was employed in his arduous duties at Glasgow, the plague, then a frequent visitor of our Scotch towns, broke out, on which occasion, he prevailed upon the masters and students to retire with him to Irvine, till the visitation had abated. In this comfortable country retirement the lectures and studies were continued; and it was here also that one of his young students was licensed, afterwards well known as the accomplished and pious Durham. The teacher and pupil became so endeared to each other, and so thoroughly of one mind, that they afterwards produced in conjunction that admirable work

entitled the "Sum of Saving Knowledge," which has been so often printed with the Confession of Faith. The circumstances under which this treatise was composed, are worthy of notice. The old experienced Professor and the young highly-talented minister used to walk and converse together upon the different compartments of the subjects ; after which, the result was dictated to a clerical friend in the year 1650. Their place of stroll on these occasions, was the height that overlooks the cathedral, now well known to the lovers of the solemn and the picturesque as the Glasgow Necropolis.

After having been Professor of Theology in Glasgow for about nine years, Dickson was translated to the same charge in the College of Edinburgh. It was about the same period (1650-1) that we find him drawn into that unfortunate controversy which rent the Church of Scotland into two parties, under the titles of Resolutioners and Protesters. A very short explanation only of this matter can be given here. Charles II. had subscribed the Covenant, and been crowned King of Scotland ; and as oaths and promises cost him nothing, he managed to persuade the wisest of his sincerity, so that the best blood of the land flowed cheerfully for his cause. But after the fatal defeat of the Scottish army at Dunbar, and while Cromwell was pressing forward with lion-like steps to the full conquest of Scotland, the alarm occasioned by his progress was so great, that a desperate remedy was proposed. This was, to rescind the Act of Classes,

by which royalists and malignants who had been excommunicated by the church, were rendered unfit by act of parliament to serve in any public capacity whatever. By restoring these men to the army, it was hoped that the fearful gaps in the ranks would be filled up, and a more formidable front than ever presented to the English sectaries. The parliament assented to this measure; but as the excommunication was an ecclesiastical penalty, the concurrence of the church had to be obtained also. And this was procured by a most unfair manœuvre. A scanty meeting was packed of those of the Commission of Assembly who were favourable to the measure; the more scrupulous were excluded; and having met at Perth, they passed through it that act of absolution, by which men guilty of all excesses, and whose hands had been most heavy against the church, were converted into hollow friends and treacherous auxiliaries. The Resolutioners, who were the prevailing party, had Dickson for their principal leader; while the Protesters were headed by Patrick Gillespie, his former colleague in the High Church of Glasgow, Guthrie of Stirling, and James Simson of Airth. Thus were friendships hallowed by the spirit of piety rent asunder, and men banded in hostile array against each other, who were all equally ready to die in behalf of the truth. It was one of those painful spectacles, in which we behold Religion, like Rachel, "weeping for her children." Upon this mournful occasion, as might be expected, hostile pamphlets and

manifestoes were in plentiful circulation, and most of those on the side of the Resolutioners were from the pen of David Dickson.

To us of the present day, who can look back with a dispassionate eye upon the events of that age, and detect the blunders of which the several actors were guilty, it seems marvellous, that men so heavenly-minded, and withal so shrewd and experienced, should have admitted such instruments into so holy a cause. The majority of the Resolutioners were certainly not the persons who would do evil that good might come; or so weak or wicked, as to believe, that the end sanctifies the means. We are rather to judge, that it arose from an excess of charity, or hope fostered into undue growth from the circumstances of the period—or from weariness of strife and bloodshed, and impatience to bring them to a close. It is melancholy also to observe, that the mere fact of Charles having subscribed the Covenant, was the main argument of their hope: upon that wretched reed or bulrush they leaned, as if it had been the oak or the rock. An instance of this credulity occurs in the life of Dickson. On one occasion, he was answering the objections of the Protesters in the General Assembly, when he told a story to the following effect:—A stranger, who was a thief, came to the house of a simple muirland farmer, whilst the goodwife was from home, and asked the loan of a large iron pot. The farmer demurred, but the other removed his scruples, by pledging as surety, the “Bor-

row of God"—a pledge equal to the most solemn oath—tha the would make honest restitution. When the goodwife came home, she was angry with her husband; but he assured her that the vessel would come safely back, because he had the Borrow of God to that effect. And truly it came back—for the man after trudging over the muir for a whole day in a deep fog, and being unable to find the highway, at last returned at evening unwittingly to the farmer's door, exhausted, foot-sore, and penitent, with the iron pot upon his head. "Thus," said Dickson, "the king has taken the Covenant, and so, has given us a good and sufficient cautioner." But he lived to exclaim, "Alas! he took away a great pot indeed—the glorious covenanted work of Reformation—but he did not bring it back!"

Notwithstanding the diversities of opinion between the two parties, there was one subject upon which they cordially agreed; this was, the restoration of Charles to the throne of his ancestors, an event for which they prayed and laboured, although their loyal services were afterwards so shamefully requited. Accordingly, when Monk prepared for his march into England, Dickson, in conjunction with Robert Douglas, appears to have had frequent conferences with him on the subject of the king's restoration. And when the general was in England, they wrote to him a letter, dated January 10, 1660, in which they signified their entire confidence in him as to the affairs of Scotland, and requested a pass

for their brother, James Sharpe, to repair to him, for the purpose of reminding him of what was necessary to be done, and to inform them from time to time of the state of proceedings. Monk, who probably knew the man better than they did, and recognised in him a convenient tool, had already invited Sharpe to England, and transmitted the necessary pass. He also wrote to the two anxious divines, assuring them, that the welfare of the Scottish church should be the chief object of his care.

Mournful days were now at hand, and the grey hairs of this venerable servant of God were to descend in sorrow to the grave. Charles II. was restored, and this event was followed by every treacherous and despotic measure that might tend to the re-establishment of Episcopacy in Scotland. And first, our national parliament was packed with the underlings of royalty, men who, even in that sycophant age, were marvelled at for their lack of conscience, and their crawling servility; and then followed the Act of Supremacy, by which the king was declared supreme judge in Church and State—and the Oath of Allegiance, which compelled every subject to acknowledge the king as such, and declared a refusal, high treason—and finally, weary of condemning former acts of parliament *seriatim*, the members passed a sweeping vote, by which they condemned parliaments themselves, declaring all those that had been held from 1638 to 1650, to be unlawful and rebellious, while the Glasgow Assembly of 1638 was denounced as a seditious meet-

ing. Even Charles himself was astonished at this rabid, anti-presbyterian, and ultra-loyalist zeal; and he declared, that their proceedings were either those of madmen, or men who were drunk. But he continued them in office, and became partaker in their guilt. The Act of Supremacy un-chaired the venerable Professor; and he retired into solitude, mourning over the downfall of his hopes, and the dark deepening prospects of rapidly advancing calamities. And even then, his enemies would not let him rest, for while he wept and prayed for Scotland and the Church, he might hear in the streets, or under his chamber-window, a scoffing ballad, which they caused to be cried or carolled through the city, of which the burden was,

“The work goes bonnily on :

Good morrow to you, greybeard !”

In December 1662, only seven months after the retirement of Dickson into private life, he was attacked with his last illness. Other noble hearts had been already broken by the coming of the evil day, and had descended to that dwelling where the weary are at rest; and now, it was his turn to swell the list of victims. His last hours were embittered by the recollection of his short-sightedness in adopting the views of the Resolutioners; and to a lady who visited him, he said, “Madam, I must confess, the Protesters have been truer prophets than we were.”

A beloved friend of his, Mr Livingstone, with whom he had been on terms of affectionate intimacy nearly

forty years, was at this time under sentence of banishment, and was allowed only two days to remain in Edinburgh : but still, he found time to visit his dying fellow-sufferer. Livingstone asked him, what he thought of the present state of affairs ? Dickson's answer was, that he was sure Jesus Christ would not tolerate the indignities inflicted upon His work and people. "As for myself," he added, "I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and have cast them together in a heap before the Lord ; and have fled from both to Jesus Christ, and in him I have sweet peace."

A few moments before he died, he called his family together, and after having affectionately addressed himself to each, he pronounced over them, with great solemnity, the apostolic benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." He then closed his eyelids with his own hand, and expired in the arms of one of his sons, without a struggle, and apparently without pain.

In presenting a volume of Dickson's writings to the public, we are happy to state, that the whole, with the exception of the small portion of the *Therapeutica Sacra*, is from a manuscript never before published, in the possession of the Rev. Dr Traill of Panbride. The MS. in question consists of a small volume written in remarkably beautiful characters, and bears date 1635—having been probably written during that year by some devoted hearer of Dickson, who excelled

in calligraphy; and we are happy to state, that the respected owner of this choice antiquarian gem, placed it at the disposal of the Publication Committee, in the same spirit of frank, generous kindness with which he formerly transmitted to them the remains of his eminent ancestor, Robert Traill of London. We find, that Dickson had preached repeatedly on the book of Job—perhaps had expounded the whole, or at least the greater part of it,—and that his discourses were so much admired, that one of his people, on hearing another distinguished divine preaching on the same portion of Scripture, observed, that he had heard a sermon on Job, but not the Job of Irvine. In giving also a specimen of Dickson's sermons, we feel peculiar pleasure in having been able to present some of his sacramental ones; for these were usually in such request, that during the period of communion, his parish was thronged from every quarter, so that an "Irvine sacrament crowd" became a proverbial expression. In perusing these discourses, the reader cannot fail to be struck with the combined simplicity and earnestness with which they are pervaded. Were discourses such as these the means of producing such wonderful effects,—such a powerful revival? They were even so. The humble instrument was content to be nothing, that his Master might be everything: instead of preaching himself, he preached "Christ crucified;" and though so accomplished a scholar, and possessed of the power of eloquence, yet he allowed the word to go forth in its own simplicity, for the ac-

complishment of its own work. Happy would it be for the Church of our land, if the same simplicity and self-denial were cultivated! We should then hear of fewer schisms, and more revivals.

The republication of the *Therapeutica Sacra* has also been deemed advisable, not only on account of its scarceness, but its intrinsic value. As will be seen by the preface written by his son, it was the work of Dickson's old age, and written originally in Latin, but afterwards translated by himself into English, for general use. Of his skill in dealing with diseases of the conscience, we have sufficiently spoken in the preceding pages. The rest of this valuable work will be presented to our readers at a future period.

Besides those works which we have already mentioned, Dickson was author of the following:—

1. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.
2. .... on the Gospel of Matthew.
3. .... on the Psalms.
4. .... on the Epistles, in Latin and English.
5. Truth's Victory over Error.
6. A Treatise on the Promises.
7. True Christian Love, a Poem; and the Christian Sacrifice, also in Verse.