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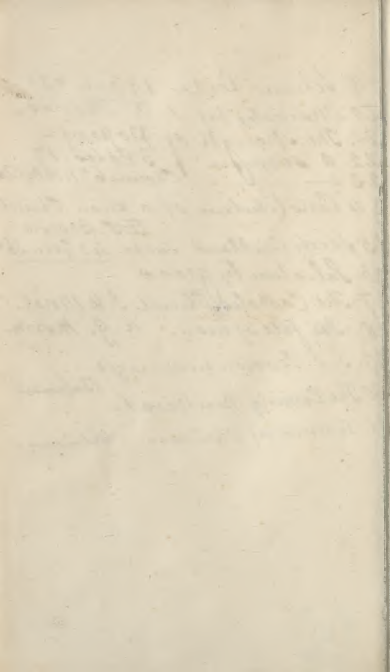
18th Dec 1841

The following is a list of the  
 names of the persons who  
 were present at the meeting  
 held on the 18th Dec 1841  
 at the house of Mr. James  
 Smith, Glasgow.

Mr. James Smith	1
Mr. John Brown	2
Mr. Robert White	3
Mr. Thomas Green	4
Mr. William Black	5
Mr. Henry Grey	6
Mr. George King	7
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Mr. Edward Clark	9
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Mr. Robert Young	12
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- 30 The Coming pentecost. Balman
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7.  
The Broad Theology tested by Scripture :

# A SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. J. M'LELLAN,

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS LEAVING CUPAR,

IN

PROVOST WYND CHAPEL,

ON THE EVENING OF

LORD'S-DAY, THE 29TH DECEMBER, 1872.

*(With Remarks by other Ministers.)*

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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CUPAR-FIFE: A. WESTWOOD.

PRICE THREEPENCE.





## SERMON.

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I. Cor. xv. 1--4—Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

“THE truth as it is in Jesus” has never yet attained to great popularity. From the time of its first promulgation until now, the Gospel has met with varied opposition at the hands of the men of this world. Their antagonism has sometimes manifested itself in the coarsest and most palpable forms. The ruthless persecutor has dogged the steps of the faithful witnesses of Jesus, casting them into prison—stoning them to death—nailing them to the cross, or burning them at the fiery stake. At other times the same spirit has sought to accomplish its fell designs by less palpable methods: having recourse to *intellectual* rather than to *material* weapons. By the insidious inculcation of error the enemies of the Gospel have laboured to sap the foundations of our “most holy faith:” and of both forms of opposition, this is incomparably

the more dangerous. The blood of the martyrs has, to a proverb, proved to be the seed of the church. But not so with error. Wherever this has obtained a footing, church history shows that a spiritual blight has invariably ensued, attended with more or less disastrous consequences, according to the comparative importance of the truth assailed.

At the time when this epistle was written, the persecutor and the false teacher were to be found side by side in constant activity; and against the latter the Apostle, in this glorious chapter, turns his keen dialectic. Certain persons in the Church at Corinth were teaching the ghastly doctrine "that there is no resurrection of the dead." The Apostle Paul was not the man to connive at doctrinal error. He knew full well how intimate was the connection between doctrine and practice; and, knowing this, by a masterly logic he pushed this error to its legitimate issues; shewing that it could not be accepted without abandoning, not only the hope of the Gospel but even the morality which it inculcates. Had Paul lived in our day, certain theologians would, doubtless, have taken him to task for attaching so much importance to dogma. He would have been informed that doctrines are a hindrance rather than a help to earnest students of Christianity: that it is Christ himself and not doctrines that men need. "Let us have 'sweetness and light'" would have been their querulous demand, "and we can dispense with orthodoxy." But, from what we know of the Apostle, it is not difficult to conceive what his estimate of this high-sounding talk would have been. To the broad-school theologian he would probably have said: "Thou fool; if we give up the *doctrines* of Christianity we

must inevitably give up the *facts* also." For what, dear friends, are Scripture doctrines but developed facts? Facts are doctrines in germ. Or we may call them the *data* from which doctrinal conclusions are deduced. And, if the *doctrines* which the Heaven-taught writers of Scripture inculcated may be rejected, the corresponding *facts* to which the same writers bear witness, may be as legitimately called in question. For, at bottom, the doctrines and the facts rest upon a common foundation. Let the *facts* of Christianity be invalidated, and the *doctrines* deduced from them are rendered at once untenable: and, inversely, let apostolic *doctrine* be regarded with suspicion, and, of necessity, apostolic *testimony* must be similarly regarded. It may, I know, be said that it is one thing to testify to a fact, and quite a different thing to deduce a doctrine from that fact. A man may be unreliable as a logician, whilst he may be perfectly trust-worthy as an observer, and a reporter of facts: and "why," it may be asked, "should we not keep this distinction in view in dealing with the Scriptures?" I answer, that the rule which applies to ordinary men is not applicable to the writers of Scripture. *They* claim to occupy a unique position. They profess to teach in the name, and with the authority of the living God; and if their claim *as teachers* is not conceded, then they must be branded as knaves, or fools, or both; and the testimony of such men would be universally pronounced unreliable. Hence, we are shut in to one of two simple alternatives: we must either accept of their writings, in their entirety, as the Word of God, or else we must reject the whole of them. There is no reasonable middle course. If we therefore regard the Apostles as sane and truth-

ful men, we are bound to accept the *doctrines* which they teach, as implicitly as we accept the *facts* to which they testify. They stand or fall together.

That the Apostle Paul believed that the facts and doctrines of Christianity are inseparable, no intelligent reader of this chapter can fail to perceive; for it is upon this recognised oneness that the weight of his masterly argument mainly rests.

Having premised this much, let us now briefly glance at the verses which I have read. Underlying these words I find the two grand themes around which all the utterances of this Book cluster—SIN and SALVATION.

I. *Sin.* That man, viewed as a moral agent, is not by nature what he ought to be, is a truth to which the Bible throughout bears testimony, and which human consciousness universally corroborates. But if we ask for an explanation of this moral derangement—if we would obtain some light regarding its origin, and discover its issues, we find that men have always been, and still are loth to accept of the teachings of the Bible upon these points. In our own day there is a system of theology largely in vogue, based upon, what I do not hesitate to pronounce, *unscriptural conceptions of sin*. I refer to the well-known system whose key-note is the universal Fatherhood of God.

The advocates of the Broad theology start with the hypothesis that the primary, if not the sole, relation of God to man is the paternal. This, we are told, is necessarily involved in the fact that God is the Creator. It is admitted that sin exists, but it is regarded as the weakness of poor, ignorant, helpless children, who have, in some mysterious way, wandered from their

Father's house. They have dishonoured their Father and disgraced themselves; but, notwithstanding, He continues to regard them with profoundest love, unmingled with wrath. As to punishment for sin, we are informed that sin is its own punishment, and that the loving Father can never find it in His heart to consign His erring children to everlasting punishment. The doctrine of an eternal Hell is never referred to by these theologians, except to be held up to ridicule, as an exploded superstition—a relic of the dark ages. In a word, this theology finds it necessary at its starting-point, as well as at every stage of its development, to *make light of sin*. Such, as I apprehend it, is the drift of the teaching of the Broad school on this head.

But surely, friends, with this Book open before me, I need not hesitate to say that such is not the doctrine taught here. The Bible does, indeed teach that we are all “the offspring” of God, and that, as the Author of our being, He regards us, in the midst of all our waywardness and our wickedness, with deepest compassion. But He speaks of Himself in this Book, not merely as our benevolent Creator—He also claims to be our King and Lawgiver. It is true—indeed it is a truism, that before He can *govern* He must *create*; but in no other sense is it true that His Regal and Judicial relations to man are less of a primary and fundamental character than is His Paternal. He has a right to legislate for us because He is our Maker, and the Fountain-head of righteousness; and, in virtue of this right, He claims to be “our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King.” Hence, sin against Him is not merely to be viewed as disobedience to a parent's will; it is also rebellion against the righteous Law of the “King eternal.”

In the very constitution of our nature we have unmistakable indications of the existence of this latter relationship. Conscience, which either accuses or excuses us, is the recognition on our part, however reluctantly avowed, of the indisputable claims of an unchanging Law of righteousness, every violation of which should fill the sinner with alarm: for conscience in pointing to a righteous Law points also to a righteous Law-giver. But we are not left to the witness of conscience on this matter. The eternal God has spoken to us. This Book is His Word. What then is the Biblical doctrine of sin? As to its entrance into this world we read that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners:" therefore it dates from the Fall in Eden. As to its prevalence we read that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" "there is none righteous, no not one." As to the attitude of God towards sin we read that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." To the man who "despises the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering," God says "After thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render unto every man according to his deeds. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile."

Who that listens to the solemn roll of these tremendous utterances can fail to perceive that they are the words of a Being who is capable of wrath, and who will one day, in the fierceness of His indignation, visit with condign punishment, yea, with irremediable destruction His inveterate foes?

Thus you see, dear friends, that the syren voices that whisper peace to the workers of iniquity, are found to be utterly false when tested by the Oracles of the living God. It was not thus that Christ addressed the ungodly. In words that almost burn upon the page, the Son of God spake of an eternal Hell as the portion of the wicked—a place where there shall be “wailing and gnashing of teeth,” “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched”—a place to which they shall one day “go away to everlasting punishment.” And, as we have seen, the Apostle Paul did not flatter human nature or speak of the deserts of sin with bated breath. No; like his Lord and Master, his first aim in dealing with men was to awaken in their bosoms a lively sense of their guilt and consequent danger, and *that* with a view to their appreciating the glad tidings of salvation which he delighted to proclaim. And this brings us to the second part of our subject:—

II. *Salvation.* It is evident that our views of salvation must correspond to our views of sin. That men need salvation is on all hands admitted; and that Jesus Christ is the Saviour is also admitted. But the questions arise—and they are crucial questions in the present enquiry—*What does Christ save from? and How does He effect the salvation?* To the former of these questions our Broad-school theologians reply—and quite scripturally reply—He saves from sin. But if we further ask whether salvation implies anything more than deliverance from the love and practice of sin, the response—the unscriptural response is No. There are no legal claims to be met—there is no justice to be satisfied—no curse to be removed—no wrath to come, to be delivered from. We are told that the idea

of a loving Father demanding a bloody sacrifice ere he will forgive his penitent son is simply barbarous—that it is degrading the Heavenly Father to the level of a blood-thirsty Moloch. The parable of the prodigal son, we are told, furnishes all the light that is required upon this question, and there we have not a word about a sacrifice for sin (and, it might be added, not a word about the work of the Spirit, or the intervention of Christ, either as a Teacher or an Exemplar).

To the latter question—that is, How does Christ effect the salvation?—the answer is, By His teaching and His example. He came, we are told, to reveal to men that God is their Father, that they are His children, and that, notwithstanding their sinfulness, they may safely calculate upon His clemency, if they will only return to Him. He, moreover, teaches men how they ought to comport themselves as the children of God—summing up all His doctrine in the one grand lesson of self-sacrifice; a lesson so gloriously exemplified by Himself, both in His life and in His death. Thus the work of Christ on men's behalf consists, according to this school, in His revealing unto them that God is their Father, in His teaching them a pure morality, and in His setting before them a perfect example.

And this is the theology that prides itself on its breadth, and that claims to be so deep that none but men of transcendent spiritual discernment can fathom it. If I found that the system was broad enough to embrace the whole teaching of the Bible, and deep enough to reach down to the low and lost condition of a perishing race, I should gladly concede its claims; but, inasmuch as I believe it is neither the one nor the other, I strongly suspect that its arrogant claims are



based upon nothing else than a vapid sentimentalism, and an over-weening intellectual conceit. — Let us, dear friends, come “to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” The Bible, as I understand it, teaches that ere a man can be saved from the *dominion* of sin, he must be saved from *guilt* and *condemnation*. The broad theology merges *justification* in *sanctification*. It insists upon the latter, to the utter ignoring of the former; or if the term *justification* is used, a meaning utterly foreign to it is foisted upon it. But can there be such a thing as real sanctification without justification? Let us try to grasp the scriptural idea of sanctification and it will enable us to detect the fallacy of the views which I am controverting. To be *holy* is to be what the law of God would have us be; and the requirements of that law are thus summed up by Christ:—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” The “first and great commandment,” then, requires perfect love to God. But the God whom we are to love must be the living and the true God; and we must love, not certain aspects of his adorable character, but each and all of them. As I understand it, the ultimate aim of the gospel, with regard to men, is to bring them into perfect sympathy with, and conformity to, the character of the God against whom the carnal mind is enmity. But what if a man should say: “I cannot love a God who will not connive at sin—a God who will not forgive my sins unless the righteous claims of

His law, broken by me, are fully met and satisfied?" Why, such a man, if he continue in that state of mind, can never attain to sanctification; because he is not in sympathy with the character of God. He may, indeed, form to himself a God whom he can love; and that without bowing his knee to an idol of wood or of stone. He may, in his imagination, invest God with a character which pleases his own fancy, and then fall in love with his idol—for, at bottom, it is only a refined idolatry. If we are to attain to sanctification we must be brought into sympathy—not with a God of our own making—but with the God of the Bible; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And He declares in this Book that "without shedding of blood is no remission."

As to the universal Fatherhood of God, it appears to me that Jesus most emphatically denies it. To carnal men who claimed an interest in God as their Father, He said "If God were your Father ye would love me . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do . . . He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." "As many as received Him," we read, "to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Universal Fatherhood implies universal son-ship, and universal son-ship, according to the reasoning of the Apostle Paul, must involve universal salvation. "If children," he argues, "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Are then all men to be saved? The broad theology, by implication, says Yes. God says No. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Further, son-ship implies the possession of the Spirit of Christ. Thus we

read, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Have the enemies of God, then, this witness? Moreover, we read that "as many as are led by the Spirit are the sons of God." Are, then, the impure, the unrighteous, the despisers of Christ, led by the Spirit of God? The very thought is blasphemous. No: in the evangelical acceptance of the terms, God is *not* the Father of all men, neither are all men His children.

We have already seen that the God whom Jesus reveals is a sin-hating God: and, seeing all have sinned, all are by nature obnoxious to his wrath. God says "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them:" and "the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent." The sentence of condemnation has been pronounced by Him whom Jesus calls His "holy" and "righteous Father;" and until that sentence is revoked, there can be no loving communion between Him and us. If you ask, What is the ground on which the sins of believers are forgiven? the Apostle Paul, addressing the children of God, replies, "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If you ask what Christ has done to procure for believers the forgiveness of their sins, He Himself replies that His blood was "shed for many for the remission of sins." In Him "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." At the 3d verse of this chapter the Apostle says that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," and at the 17th

verse he makes a statement which, read in connection with the 3d verse, to my mind conclusively proves that he regards the death of Christ as the ground of our deliverance from the just deserts of our sins. "If Christ be not raised," he says, "your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Upon the supposition that it is only from the dominion of sin that Christ saves, and that He does so by His teaching and His example alone, where, I ask, is the cogency of this reasoning? The Apostle is addressing people whom—notwithstanding their many shortcomings—he regards as "brethren" who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus; called to be saints." They had already been made new creatures in Christ Jesus; and, whether Christ rose or not, they were not "yet in their sins," if the phrase refers to their sanctification. The morality taught by Christ, and the example which He left—if these constituted the whole of His saving work—were still theirs to save them from their sins, even though He had not risen. The inevitable inference therefore is, that the deliverance from sin here referred to is deliverance from guilt and condemnation: the result of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus—His resurrection being the proof that God had accepted His sacrifice.

Let it, further, be observed that justification has a positive as well as a negative aspect—that is to say, it means not only the forgiveness, the non-imputation of sin, it also means the imputation of righteousness. Thus we read, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It is true that both these bless-

ings are conferred at the same time, and that the one is spoken of in Scripture as implying the other; yet, in idea, they are separable, and the distinction between them deserves attention. Forgiveness has respect to deliverance from merited punishment; the imputation of righteousness has respect to our acceptance before God. How, then, can God regard us as if we had perfectly obeyed His law? The answer of Scripture is, "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of One (*i.e.*, of Christ) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Christ is the believer's substitute in His life as well as in His death; and trusting in Him we are "accepted in the Beloved."

Thus, realising "the things which are freely given unto us of God," we can triumphantly say, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

I am well aware, dear friends, that our new-school theologians have pronounced these doctrines utterly unreasonable. Be it so. Their quarrel is not with me, but with the Bible. If these doctrines are taught in the Bible—and I think I have proved that they are—I am content to prostrate my reason before the majesty of God's blessed Word, even though for so doing I should be called a fool.

I hold, then, that justification by faith alone is one of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Christ. But in doing so, far be it from me

to teach that the salvation which Christ bestows stops short there. No; the sanctification of the Spirit, the teaching and the example of Christ, are, I trust, as dear to me as to any man living. The Bible teaches, and experience proves, that "if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The cross of Christ not only pacifies the conscience, but it also subdues the heart. It is the weapon which the Holy Spirit wields when He slays the enmity of the carnal mind towards God. It is the key wherewith He unlocks the door of the human heart, so that gladly we throw it wide open, "that the King of glory may enter in." No man can stand at the foot of Calvary's cross, and accept of the Divine mercy through the agonizing death of Emmanuel, with a heart unmoved. He cannot look up to the face of the gentle, holy Sufferer—there with the thorny crown piercing His blessed brow—His hands and feet nailed to the bitter cross—His soul in untold agonies under the hidings of His Father's face, and say, with other than a melting heart, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." O then "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,"—then the teaching of Christ becomes the law of a man's life, and the example of Christ his pattern. Sanctification evermore springs from justification.

The believer's *justification* is as complete the moment he closes with Christ as it will be on the day of judgment. His *sanctification* is, on the other hand, a gradual process; "the path of the just" being "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But before he can mingle with "the spirits of just men made perfect" "the earthly house of

this tabernacle" must be "dissolved." A day is coming, however, when, in virtue of Christ's triumph over death, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality," and "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The salvation which Christ bestows will not, therefore, be enjoyed in its fulness until the trumpet of the archangel shall sound. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Such, then, I believe, was the gospel which the Apostle Paul preached to the Corinthians; and I have, in this my farewell address to you, dear friends, endeavoured to present to you its grand outlines, in justification—if such be needed—of the tenor of my preaching in this pulpit during the period of my sojourn amongst you. You will bear me witness that, whatever themes I may have overlooked in the course of my ministry here, I have not lost sight of the Cross of Christ; and to me, on this solemn occasion, I assure you this is a reflection fraught with inexpressible joy. Sad indeed would my heart be this evening, in bidding you adieu, were my conscience secretly whispering that, at the bar of God, where we shall yet meet, you could witness against me that I had been unfaithful to your souls. But, whatever my shortcomings may have been—and God knows they have been many—that, I believe, you can never testify. I believe that not one of my hearers can perish through my not having faithfully proclaimed

the sinner's danger, and the only way of escape from "the wrath that is to come." I have told you, my unconverted hearers, and I tell you once again, that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" and that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Oh, make no delay. "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation;" "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

And to you who are members of this Church, I would say, as my parting counsel to you, *hold fast the truth of the gospel*. We live in perilous times. The enemy is coming in like a flood on every hand. Be specially on your guard against the proud Rationalism which, with ever-increasing confidence, is striving to establish itself, not only in the denomination to which we belong, but throughout the various Churches of our land. Do not suffer yourselves to be led astray by the enemies of the Cross of Christ; but be "valiant for the truth," and "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints." "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "The Lord be with you all." Farewell.

The Rev. Mr RANKINE then engaged in prayer, after which,

The Rev. Dr. COCHRANE said he had much pleasure in rising to express sympathy with his excellent friend Mr M'Lellan, in the circumstances in which he was then placed. He could assure those present that no member of Mr

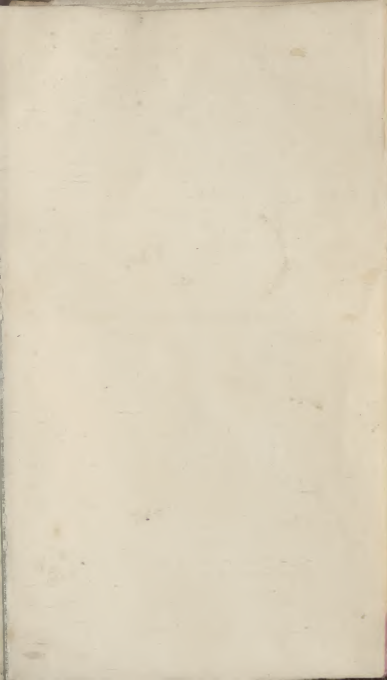


M'Lellan's congregation regretted more deeply than he did, that gentleman's departure from amongst them. With Mr M'Lellan he had cherished a most intimate acquaintance. He had often listened to his exposition of Scripture, his views of Bible doctrines, and other topics, with intense satisfaction and with some improvement. All that he had seen of that gentleman, and all that he knew of him, had given him (Dr Cochrane) a very deep impression indeed of his Christian character and faith; and if anything had been necessary to add to the opinion which he had formed, it would have been the excellent discourse they had listened to that night. The circumstances in which they were then placed were not such that they could have comprehended so important a subject by the mere oral delivery of the preacher. They would require to study every paragraph, every sentence, of that superior sermon. He therefore trusted that it would appear in another form. If it was a specimen of the addresses Mr M'Lellan had been all along delivering in that church, he could assure them, the Baptist congregation had been very highly favoured indeed. The views expounded in that sermon were sound and scriptural, and he would go farther and say they were the only views on the subject which were likely to impress the conscience or awaken the hearer. Yes: the glorious doctrines which had been announced that evening were of all-importance. They lay at the very foundation of the gospel scheme. He begged to express his great satisfaction in listening to Mr M'Lellan, whose departure he deeply regretted.

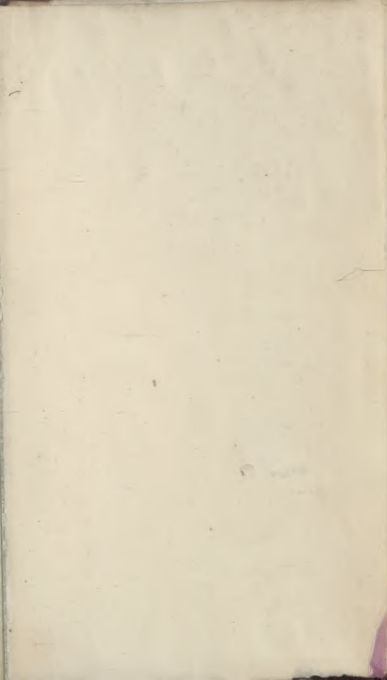
The Rev. Mr RANKINE said he fully concurred in the estimation of Mr M'Lellan as expressed by

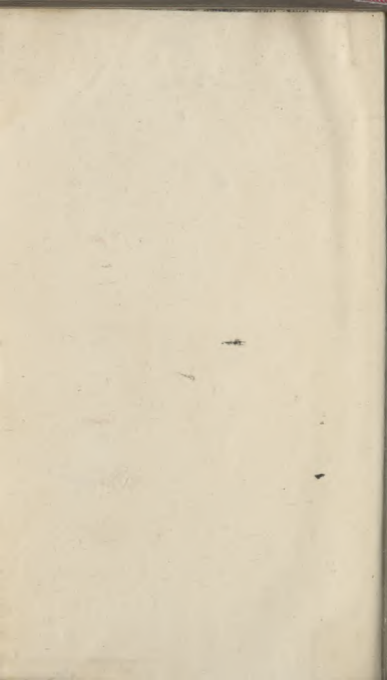
Dr Cochrane. He had known him since he came to Cupar, and he did not remember of ever hearing him express one idea of which he did not fully approve. He had never heard Mr M'Lellan preach before, but he had often had private conversations with him. Of course, on the points of church government, and on one of the ordinances, they differed, but these points were comparatively insignificant when compared with the great foundation doctrines, on which, he believed, they were fully agreed. He regretted exceedingly, therefore, that Mr M'Lellan was about to be separated from them. He had been a very blameless man in the town, and he had no doubt of his success as a theologian, especially after what they had heard that evening; and it would give him great satisfaction to have that sermon printed as being very seasonable in the times in which they lived. A note sounded by its publication would be serviceable to the truth.

The Rev. Mr ALLISON said he had been acquainted with Mr M'Lellan very shortly, but he rejoiced that that acquaintanceship had been sweet, and he was very sorry that such a minister was going from their midst. These things, however, would happen; and he was glad Mr M'Lellan had left such a good testimony behind him—that he had told them what a glorious gospel he had been preaching.









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