

laws, as an original branch of the Church of Scotland, was subscription to the Westminster Confession. They had entered it willingly. No man had forced them to enter: no man forced them to remain. They knew its constitution, and they had freely vowed to maintain it. Yet now, when the question was mooted, they refused to acknowledge the Confession: they even refused to tell the Church Courts what doctrines they held, or what they rejected."

This "New Light" party formed themselves, in 1705, into an association, called the "*Belfast Society*." This was the germ that became afterwards a poisonous tree of great size; a tree that threatened for a time to overspread the north of Ireland with its baneful shadow.

The man to lay the axe to the root of this tree must be made, qualified, and directed by God. Every true apostle of God is, like him of the Gentiles, "separated from the mother's womb, as well as called by his grace," to the life-work to which God appoints him. Dr. Cooke's mother was a woman of remarkable energy and decision of character; "she was tall in stature, masculine in carriage, fluent in speech, keen and unsparing in sarcasm; she had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and a memory of extraordinary tenacity." Meet nurse, one would say, for him whose task it was to go out with his sling and five stones from the brook, to do battle with the proud, boastful, contemptuous Arianism that, in his early days, lorded it in the Synod of Ulster. To him God gave also, in a high degree, a strong intellect and trenchant wit, with pungent satire, without which the highest talent would be of little avail among his keen-witted countrymen, in the debates with the clever and unscrupulous Arian leaders. But above all, God gave him the *truth*, warm from a

mother's lips and heart. "She taught me," he says, "that man is naturally corrupt; that Divine grace alone can quicken and renew; that the Spirit of God reigning in the heart and mind is the only source of right principles, and pure, practical morality." God gave him, also, a finished University education, as he gave Moses, Paul, Luther, Knox, Wesley, Whitefield, and as he *generally*, though not without some exceptions, gives to the men he appoints to difficult work.

To write of how the work was *accomplished*, would far transcend our limits. That it was accomplished, and that (mainly through him) Presbyterianism in Ireland was saved from sinking, as it did in England the century before, into Unitarianism, is evidenced, not only in this Life, which we commend to our readers, but in the present position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, an orthodox Church, strongly attached to the "*old paths*," and full of zeal and good deeds, having on its rolls over 100,000 communicants, 634 ministers, 37 Presbyteries (one of these in India), and contributing last year to the cause of God over 700,000 dollars. What would be the position of Presbyterianism in Ireland to-day, if Arianism and Rationalism had been allowed to reign in Ulster?

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The eternal destiny of man is a subject fraught with deep interest to every one. It is well to see many inquiring what Reason and Revela-