

which he was a member, bore no proportion to the bond which unites Christians of every name in the fellowship of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

Although it was impossible that a mind like his could be indifferent to anything that concerned the well-being of his country, he took no public share in party politics. That he had decided views on all the important questions that divided the political world during the eventful period in which he lived, is certainly true; and that in private, or on any occasion in which his duty as a member of ecclesiastical courts called for the expression of his opinion, he was ready to express that opinion frankly and fearlessly, is equally true: but to his honor, it is to be recorded, that with a mind peculiarly awake to whatever involved the interests or the fame of his country, and with talents that peculiarly fitted him for maintaining the first place in all discussions of a public and exciting nature, so strong was his sense of the sacredness of the ministerial character, and so ready was he to sink all inferior or individual considerations in a regard to the solemn interests that were suspended on his relation to his flock, that he uniformly stood aloof from scenes of political contention, and bequeathed, in his example, an instructive illustration of the power of religious principle in enforcing self-denial, as to things in themselves lawful, but which in certain circumstances may not be expedient.

In addition to the interest which he felt and manifested in whatever was connected with his duty as a minister, he took upon him a large share of the management of the city charities and of those public institutions which have for their object the alleviation of the temporal wants or of the spiritual miseries of mankind. He was ever ready at the call of the public, either to act as a director of its various societies, or to plead their cause from the pulpit. And this co-operation on his part with all that was benevolent and useful, was rendered with a cordiality and a cheerfulness, that put the idea of obligation out of sight; and invited new and increasing demands on his leisure and attention.

From the commencement of the British and Foreign Bible Society, he entered warmly into its views. With the great body of the Christian public, he regarded its institution as an era in the history of the church of Christ; he saw in it a mighty instrument of enlightened philanthropy; and he hailed it as a presage of the predicted glory of the latter days.—When it was struggling for existence against the calumnies and attacks of mistaken and narrow-minded zeal he fought its battles: and with justice he was esteemed one of its warmest friends and ablest advocates. Unhappily, however, when war had ceased without, the elements of a more fatal convulsion began to gather and to show themselves within. To the astonishment of the confiding friends of the institution,

it was demonstrated, beyond the possibility of dispute, that while, according to the leading principle of the Society, the Bible, without note or comment, was the only book which its directors were empowered to circulate, its funds were applied to the printing and circulation of a Bible unknown to the protestants of this country—a Bible in which the writings known by the name of "the Apocrypha," were mixed up, and put on a level with those "Scriptures which are given by inspiration of God." It is not too much to say, that the discovery came upon the Christian public with the force of a thunderbolt. All confidence in men, or in the most solemn protestations and professions, seemed to be at an end; and the first impulse, on the part of all who gave the subject an unbiassed consideration, was to demand not only that there should be an immediate return to the primary principle of the Society, but that its management should no longer be committed to men who had shown themselves incapable of being bound by what appeared the strongest obligations of Christian principle and moral feeling. Here it had been well, if first impressions had been consulted. To many of the friends of the institution, however, the Bible Society had been so long identified with the Bible which it professed to circulate, that the idea of abandoning it, seemed fraught with hazard to the best interests and hopes of Christianity. When, therefore, the directors of the Society, instead of listening to the remonstrances that were addressed to them from all quarters, and especially from the friends of the Society in Edinburgh, attempted to justify their conduct, on the pretext of an alleged ambiguity in the terms in which the object of the institution was expressed, and even on the ground of expediency, many of those with whom Dr. Thomson had previously associated, withdrew their testimony against the proceedings in question, expressed satisfaction with certain half measures to which the directors pledged themselves for the future, and intimated an earnest anxiety that all farther allusion to the past should be dropped. To the ardent mind of Dr. Thomson, such a course, whether on the part of the directors in London, or of their friends in Edinburgh, seemed nothing short of a dereliction of the first duty which man owes to the gracious Being who, in giving us a revelation of his will, has entrusted us with a talent which we can never do enough to guard from injury, and to preserve untarnished and entire as it reached us from his hands. With his characteristic energy, he enlisted himself on the side of what he conceived, and rightly conceived, to be the cause both of God and man; and summoning the resources of his powerful mind to the task, he devoted many of the days and nights of the latter years of his life in following the misjudging adherents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, through the maze of misrepresentation and sophistry, into which their short-sighted policy or obsequious predilections had plunged them. In this labor, worthy of a mind devoted, in the face of good report and of bad report, to the service of God, but from which a mind