

visit to this country of the Rev. Mr Forrest, their pastor.

Dr GRANT thought that Mr Forrest, who was present, should be allowed an opportunity of addressing the Presbytery.

Mr FORREST said that the church, over which he had the honour to preside at Charleston, was formed in 1729, and was among the oldest, if not the oldest Presbyterian Church in America. It held its charter from the State of South Carolina in virtue of its adherence to the doctrines and discipline of the Established Church of Scotland, from which it had received ministers since its formation. He himself had been ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh in 1832, since which time he had laboured there successfully. The congregation had considerably increased. The female part of his audience had contributed to the erection of a lecture-room, adjoining the church, in which he gave weekly lectures, and held Sabbath-school meetings; and generally the church was in a vigorous and healthy state.

Dr GRANT referred with great satisfaction to the fact that Mr Forrest should have been spared after 22 years' labour in a distant land to visit the Presbytery which had ordained him; and moved the appointment of a committee to draw-up a reply to the letter of the Charleston church.

Dr CLARK also expressed the pleasure he experienced, as having been connected so long with the Colonial Scheme, at meeting with Mr Forrest after such a protracted absence from his native land, seconded the motion, which was agreed to, the letter of the congregation at the suggestion of Dr Steven being recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery.

The trial discourses, prior to ordination, of the Rev. Hugh Drennan, appointed by the War Office as one of the chaplains to the army in the East, were then heard, and the rev. gentleman was duly ordained and designated by the Presbytery.

The meeting then separated.

## COMMUNICATIONS.

[The conductors of "*The Presbyterian*" do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions expressed in the communications that may from time to time appear under this head.]

### CHRIST'S LOVE AND ITS GREATNESS.

(Concluded.)

*Fourthly*:—The Love of Christ passeth knowledge in respect of *its objects*.

Love in the heart of man is produced by the contemplation of excellence; and we must see in a person some real or apparent excellence of one kind or another before it be possible to love that person. This may be regarded as a universal principle, applicable to every instance of love that occurs among the children of men. Accordingly, if you ask an individual, who loves another whom he calls his friend, why it is that he does so, he will tell you promptly that it is because he has discovered in him a certain number of qualities which recommend him to his esteem and confidence. And, if you are able to convince him that this supposed friend actually possesses none of the properties he ascribed to him, he will love him no longer. He may feel some slight hankering of mind after his company for a time, arising from a mere habit of having been on terms of intimacy with him; but, so soon as he is made to see that his friend possesses none of those excellencies which he supposed him to

have, every thing that can properly be called love to him is extinguished at once, and he probably begins to be ashamed that he was so unwise as to bestow his heart on so unworthy an object. Such is the law of love as it operates in the hearts of men; and it is always according to this law, that we are accustomed to judge of it. But, if we proceed in this way to estimate the love of Christ, we find ourselves again involved in a mystery that is as really inexplicable by us as any of the former. For who were the objects upon whom He bestowed His heart?—They were the children of the dust, it is true; and, had they been no more than this, we could have accounted for His love to them, for children of the dust are His creatures; and reason herself can inform us that it is dignified, that it is Godlike in the Great Creator to have respect to the works of His hands. But they were sinful dust and ashes, perishing under the curse of a righteous law. And what had they to recommend them to His love? They had nothing but hearts that were debased by every vile and loathsome affection: they were children of wrath even as others, and justly the objects of abhorrence to every virtuous and holy intelligence; creatures so insignificant in themselves, and so abominable in their sins, that, though by an act of omnipotence they had been annihilated in a moment, or shut up in the place of retribution—the dark and tremendous abode of hell—the prison of the universe—to an endless despair,—the happiness and joy of the Son of God would have suffered no abatement. Such were the objects upon whom He set His love. And that He could delight in such objects, after they were purified by His grace, is no mystery whatever; for then they were made comely by virtue of His comeliness being put upon them. And, if He is pleased with the works of His material world, much more may we expect Him to look with complacency on that which cost Him so much in the world of grace. But, that He should choose to love them when they had no comeliness, when their very hearts were unmingled enmity against Him, and when they were every day provoking His indignation by their unrighteous deeds,—is something passing all created knowledge. We may think of it—we may speak of it—we may wonder at it—we may adore it; and the excellent ones of the Earth have done so in all their generations. And what is adoration? Is it not that state of mind in which a man feels himself lost and overwhelmed in contemplating the incomprehensible magnitude of an object of religious worship? so that the very first truth in religion—the grand primary principle that there is a God—must necessarily be an incomprehensible principle. A man may admire a system of religious doctrines, which is level to his capacity; he may discover

in it much beauty and excellence;—but he must rise to an object which infinitely outmeasures his powers, and fills him with amazement, before he can begin to adore. He must see himself encompassed with truths which are to him impenetrably mysterious, and yet indisputably certain, before he can be sure that there is a supreme Spirit above (the only absolutely unmixed Spirit,) who has a claim upon the homage of his heart. And hence it comes out as a universal truth that, in a system of belief where there is no mystery, there can be no God, and, therefore, no real religion. Christianity, then, is a rational system; not as some, calling themselves Christians, would teach because all its doctrines are obvious to reason; but because many of them are mysterious and infinitely above reason. And, if this were not the case, it would be unreasonable—nay—it would be absurd to regard it as Divine. Accordingly the very Pagan, who cutteth down an ash-tree in the forest, burneth part thereof in the fire, and maketh the residue an abomination, cannot be prevailed with to bow the knee before it, till in the height of delusion he has in imagination invested it with all the mysterious attributes of a God. If, then, it be true that there must be in the religion of the Bible a certain portion of mystery, in order to convince us that it is really from Heaven, what right has a creature, who is but of yesterday and knows nothing, to say how much or how little, that exceeds our comprehension, such a religion ought to contain? It is God, all-wise and majestic, who is speaking; let us keep silence before Him, and listen with the profoundest humility and deference to the words of His mouth. But after all it still remains what it was from the beginning, one of the deep things of God, with which a sinful creature is not allowed to intermeddle. Let us be persuaded, then, to approach the awfully interesting and sublime mysteries of the Gospel, and especially the one now before us, with all that humility and prostration of soul, with which it becomes those who know so extremely little of the character, plans and government of the Great Eternal. God forbid that we should ever attempt (like proud German Neologists) to bring the Bible to the level of Reason, or to sit it at Reason's Tribunal, and to believe it no further than we can comprehend it. Rather let us come to the Bible with all the humility and docility of little children, and believe, admire and adore what we may and will in the lapse of ages more enlargedly see, but shall never be able fully to understand. Occupying this humble and suitable moral ground in relation to the lofty mysteries of the Gospel, we will bow to its dictates, believe in its doctrines, repose unlimited confidence in its promises, rejoice in the Saviour whom it propounds, and count all things but loss for the sublime and peerless excel-