

THE GUARDIAN.

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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LITERATURE.

ORDINATION OF CHARLES DOUGLAS.

There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
It's thunders; and by him, in strains, as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart;
And armed himself in panoply complete,
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trams by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect;

COWPER.

We bid thee welcome in the name
Of Jesus, our exalted Head;—

Come as a teacher sent from God,
Charged his whole counsel to declare;
Lift o'er our ranks the prophet's rod,
While we uphold thy hands with prayer.

Come as a Messenger of peace,
Filled with the Spirit, fired with love;
Live, to behold our large increase,
And die, to meet us all above.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

No sooner was Charles left alone than he threw himself on his knees, and adored that unseen but ever gracious God, whose hand had led him hitherto, by ways which he knew not,—seeking, with his whole heart, and soul, and strength, the guidance and support of the same wise and gracious Providence during the preliminary steps next to be taken; and, with perfect sincerity, expressing his wish that he might not yet obtain the charge, unless it should be so over-ruled and blessed, that it might be the best for the interests of true Christianity, and of the Christian flock in that parish, for him to become their pastor. Having thus made an entire surrender of himself, of his wishes, his prospects and his hopes, into the hands of the Ruler of the universe, he rose from his knees, calmed and strengthened, and prepared, with characteristic energy and activity, for his new sphere of action and duty.

His first act, after receiving the presentation, had been one of devotion; his next were of filial and fraternal duty, in writing to his mother and his sister Mary. To his friend, Mr. Stewart, he also wrote, transmitting the presentation, and requesting him to transact whatever required to be immediately attended to, and to communicate to him whatever instructions or commands the Presbytery should issue. In a short time, he received intimation that the presentation had been sustained, and that he was appointed to preach in the vacant church on a Sabbath specifically appointed, that the people might have an opportunity of hearing him, previous to their giving him a Call to be their pastor.

On the appointed Sabbath, which happened to be about the end of summer, the people collected in great numbers to hear him, whom they already regarded as their new minister. Many of them had previously heard him in the neighbouring church of his friend, Mr. Stewart, and all, or nearly so, were well acquainted with his character and reputation. When he entered the church-yard, in which nearly the whole congregation were waiting to see him as he approached, every eye was directed towards him; and many of the aged were busily engaged in prayer on his behalf, that his mind might be strengthened and his heart encouraged suitably to the trying circumstances in which he was placed. As he drew near the church-door, his eye encountered the venerable form of John Gordon, the elder, who had been so long the faithful and confidential friend of his father. Charles instantly recognised the old man, stopped, held forth his hand, and enquired kindly and warmly after his welfare. John Gordon grasped the hand of Charles with both his own, while a tear of joy rolled down his furrowed cheek.

"May the blessing of God, both now and ever, rest upon and keep you Mr. Charles!" said the old man, in accents tremulous from emotion. "Did not I say that God would never leave nor forsake the family of my late beloved minister? I thank and

praise Him that I am spared to see this day; and there is but one more I long to see—the day of your Ordination! But I must not detain you on the threshold of the house of prayer!"

With these words the old man, again fondly pressing the hand which he had continued holding fast locked in his, retired a step back, and allowed Charles to pass along. Having heard of the events above narrated, John Gordon had resolved to witness the first appearance of Charles in the parish church, which he hoped soon to be his own, and had come from a considerable distance the day before, stopping all night in the house of a friend in the parish.

"He is his father's son!" said John Gordon to his friend, when Charles had passed him a few yards; "I never doubted that he would follow the steps of him that has gone to his rest; and a better preacher, or a kinder hearted man, never mounted the pulpit, or prayed beside a dying sinner."

This little incident, trifling perhaps in itself, produced a strong effect on all by whom it was witnessed, exciting a very strong feeling of respect to Charles on account of the kind attention shown by him to the respectable old man, and the deep affection manifested by John Gordon to him.

Notwithstanding the peculiarly exciting and embarrassing circumstances by which Charles was surrounded,—circumstances which seldom fail to operate injuriously, and to prevent the preacher from appearing to advantage,—his manner of discharging his various sacred duties gave universal satisfaction. Acutely indeed, did he feel his position, for his nervous temperament was of an extremely sensitive order, and his mental sensibilities not less so; but he also felt, that he had a message of transcendent grandeur, and infinite importance to declare, in which the glory of God and the welfare of perishing sinners, were both involved; and when he gazed around him on the numbers that crowded the church to overflowing, and thought on the transient nature of human life, rendering it almost certain, that to some present it was the last opportunity they should ever have of listening to the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, this solemn consideration overmastered all merely personal feelings, and he addressed them in the fulness of his heart, freely, fervently, affectionately, and most earnestly, as fellow-mortals, fellow-sinners, and Christian brethren. As the congregation were returning to their own homes, conversing on the sermons to which they had been listening, the sentiment was found to be universally prevalent, that if they had been empowered to make their choice from among all the preachers throughout the kingdom, Mr. Douglas was the man they would have chosen.

Charles returned to the mansion of Sir James, where he had consented to remain till after the signing of the call. In due time he received official information from the Presbytery clerk, that after sermon in the parish church, the people had been invited to come forward and sign a Call to him to be their pastor, and that it had been eagerly signed by every member of the church present in a very full congregation. The days were also specified for his own appearance before the Presbytery to pass the necessary trials, previous to the appointment of a day for his Ordination.

He now took leave of the family of Sir James Cathcart, where he had resided upwards of three years, beloved and esteemed by all, and in the enjoyment of as much happiness and comfort as can be enjoyed in any such situation, receiving some presents as memorials of their affection and regard. Callous must have been his heart if he could have bid farewell to friends so honoured and pupils so dear, without feelings of sadness; but his heart was not so callous. And though his eyes were moistened with the dew of genuine affection, the consciousness of arduous duties well performed, and friendly regards fairly won and firmly established, filled them with the mellow radiance of beaming hope.

He met the Presbytery, and passed every examination, as had been expected, with honour and applause. An early day was appointed for his Ordination! and he proceeded to Glenshian, to make preparations for the removal of his mother from that scene of the many trials which her widowhood had undergone. On his arrival, his mother cast herself into his arms, and leaning on his heaving bosom, pressed him warmly to her heart.

"My own Charles!" said she, while she gazed fondly on, and repeatedly kissed that cheek, wet with his tears and her own; "shall we indeed be

again united, never more to part, till it be to rejoice, your father? I am so happy!—O God, make me duly grateful to thee for all thy unspeakable goodness!"

A few hours afterwards, information was sent to Andrew Guthrie of Charles's arrival, inviting him to spend the evening with them; and he reached Glenshian within a shorter period of time, after receiving the message, than he had ever traversed the distance in before. Warmly did he congratulate Charles on the successful issue of his long and arduous exertions indulging, at the same time, in a very slight degree of self-complacency, on account of the fulfilment of his own predictions of success.

And now that I'm on that subject, I must and will say, that your father's death, the sorrows of his widow, the struggles of his family, and the manner in which they have borne their trials, have done more good to the country-side where they have been seen and known, than tongue can tell. For my own part I am perfectly convinced, that there could not be a better method of successfully promoting the true welfare of the kingdom, than just to settle a minister in every district of the country, at the rate of at least one to every thousand, that every man, and every family, might have before their eyes the beautiful sight of Christian principles embodied in the Christian family,—performing life's common duties, tried by life's common trials, bearing life's keenest afflictions, and growing up trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to spread around, by their example, a widening circle of refining and hallowing influence. Yes, sir!" continued he, with growing warmth and energy, as the thought filled and elevated his mind; "a minister and his family form a centre of good to all among whom they dwell. Happy and blessed will be that government, or that kingdom, which will consecrate so much of the public property to the holy use of thus leavening the heart of the people throughout the length and breadth of the land, according to the plans and wishes of the great and wise Reformers of our Church; and woe, woe to the nation, if ever the support of the labourers in the Redeemer's vineyard come to be considered a burden too grievous to be borne!—it may then be written on all its high places, "Thy glory hath departed!" Before a day come, so dark with the dishonour, and the ruin of my native country, I trust my head may be at rest beneath the green turf,—that it may rest in peace!"

"Such fears, Andrew, I cannot entertain. The lives and the deaths of our martyred forefathers are not so entirely forgotten;—their blood yet hallows our heaths, and glens, and mountain solitudes;—and their heavenly words still live in the warm hearts of their true descendants, inspiring thoughts and feelings that would yet prompt to kindred deeds. God will not forget and cast off Scotland, until Scotland forget and cast off her allegiance to her God. And while such men as my excellent friend survive among us I cannot fear for my country. They are the salt of the earth, the vital power in the bosom of the community; and to the prayers of these faithful men may be granted the preservation of those high principles by which we have been so long distinguished, and which have earned for Scotland a name and character of such lofty and far renown."

About a week before the day appointed for the Ordination, Charles enjoyed the pure and high delight of taking his mother by the hand, assisting her out of the carriage in which she and Margaret had accompanied him from Glenshian, and conducting her into the manse, of which he bade her take possession, and regard it as her home so long as it should be his. Placing her gently in an arm-chair, beside the parlour fire, he stepped a couple of paces back, and gazed on her with looks of the deepest respect, reverence, and filial love:—

"Now, dearest mother, I am more than repaid for all my labours and all my privations. I had but one earthly recompense to seek, and God has graciously granted it—that I might enjoy the blessed privilege of contributing to the comfort of my mother! May the Father of Mercies and God of Love long preserve to me this precious boon! Let us kneel together, and consecrate this, our new home, by prayer and thanksgiving to Him, in whom we live and move and have our being!"

The heart of Mrs. Douglas was too full, and her mind too busily occupied with the remembrance of former times and scenes, when her husband had brought her to a similar situation, for her to be able to speak; but she knelt beside her affectionate son,