

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE OLD SCOTTISH COVENANTERS.

That the Covenanted contest, in fine, served to promote what is well called vital religion in Scotland, appears undoubted. That principle, previously feeble, drowned in formalisms, and too often held in deceit and unrighteousness, was, by a long persecution, driven into the heart of the nation, and has never yet been expelled. We grant, again, most distinctly, that there is a vast difference between the godliness of the seventeenth and that of the nineteenth centuries in our land. That in the first found but one channel—the prosecution of the cause of Covenanted reformation; the other has diverged into manifold and sometimes contradictory courses. It would not be well for any enthusiasts in the cause of the Covenant, whether from England or from abroad, to repair now to one of our rural districts, even on sacramental occasions, in order to judge of the calibre, or the sincerity, or the intelligence of Scotland's piety. Truly it is a winter sun that he must be prepared to see. The services of the "preliminary" days, as they are called, of the Communion, as well as of all the rest, are now conducted entirely in the church. The tent—once a remaining rag of the Covenanted banner—latterly, a tattered signal of distress, is extinct. The people flocked to the church with perfect punctuality, but with listless looks. They sit before the preacher not as hearers, not as partakers of the same burning enthusiasm, for there is little on either side, but either as formal worshippers or as meagre and captious critics. Some listen, some look, some sleep, some yawn, some note down objectionable and others favourite passages; the question with some is, at the end, "How long has he been?" and with others, "Has he not said something against the standards of our faith?" In the Covenanted days, one watchman on the hills kept the congregation, now a half of the congregation becomes a company of watchmen, to keep itself from imaginary and ridiculous danger. The old rote and routine of sentiment and of language still prevail. It is as if the earth had stood, and opinion been frozen up, for two hundred years. Not a word that recognises the new earth now below our feet, and the new heavens which now expand above, is ever heard or would be suffered were it heard. When you look, you see faces like those of the dead staring at you; and when you listen, you hear tones of the sepulchre reverberating on your ears. The worst of it is, that the men are often clever and conceited persons, imagining that their view of religion is the only one possible among the good at present—that all who do not preach it are heretics, and all who come not up to the very letter of its requirements are in imminent "danger of hell fire." At the close of the day, and as the multitudes return them to their homes, it is with deep sadness that you follow in their progress over hills and through inornate—some talking of "hullocks," others of the weather, others of politics—many comparing preachers with preachers, and giving almost uniformly the preference to the worst; and others indulging in a staleness of thought and language, which grieves you the more that you know that it has been purchased at the expense of much "tear and wear" of conscience, habitude, and heart.

Subtracting, however, all this, we see a certain thing called True Religion subsisting amongst us, and which, on the whole, may be traced rather to the influence of Covenanted days than to aught later in our land. There are still noble hearts among the peasantry, in spite of narrowness and vulgarity of views and feelings, and among the artisans, although infidelity has laid its withering grasp upon many of them. In the middle ranks again, here is a great, many and enlightened piety. A sober evening light of devotion prevades many portions of the country—the relic radiance of that Covenanted noon, and it is remarkable that it is found precisely in those districts which were most zealous in the Covenanted cause—in the south and west. The great centre of Scottish religion is the city of Glasgow. This is the mighty heart which supplies all the veins and supports all the pulsations of our spiritual life. Edinburgh, with all its intelligence, is a cold, sceptical, and heartless city. From the influence of David Hume's atheism, it has passed into the shadow of the modified materialism of Combe. Religion is indeed able to maintain its ground, but little more, and dwells too evidently in an enemy's country, sneered at by one species of philosophers, and ostentatiously patronized by another, finding many partisans in every quarter of the city, but not pervading it all like a transforming leaven. In Glasgow it is very different; it is, perhaps, the most Christian city on earth. A vast amount of wickedness of course, and infidelity there is in it, but the pulse of the town is true—its heart is sound—evangelical religion free from bigotry abounds, and in it, almost all Scottish schemes of protestant Christian philanthropy either take their rise or find their most efficient support. The spectacle of Glasgow on a Sabbath morning, is one of the most delightful kind; the streets are all in a flood, and are all pouring in the one direction of the house of God: masses of the middle class, grave parents leading perhaps their children by the hand; active, alert, intelligent young men; graceful and interesting females, mingled with multitudes of well-dressed working-men, all apparently seeking "the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward;" nor is there the slightest appearance of that starchy formalism and grim morosity of which the Scotch were once accused. It is a "cheerful godliness," that their countenances and their conversation discover; and while great is their faith and great their charity, yet to them the "greatest of these is Hope." It may be fairly admitted that the fashion of the town, use and wont, the influence of Chalmers and other causes may have combined in producing this state of things, and that with it, as with all outward displays of piety, much holiness and hypocrisy are mingled. But we attribute more still to the

influence of the seventeenth century. Glasgow has been peopled, in a great measure, from the surrounding counties, all of which saturated with the Covenanted spirit and soaked with the martyr's blood; and their descendants have not, even amid the crowded thoroughfares of the town, forgotten the glorious solitudes where their fathers worshipped and died; and, after deducting the necessary amount of pretence and affectation of piety, there remains an ample and a pure residuum. A gentleman of a sceptical turn, once enquired of a Scottish minister, "Do you know any one who believe in Christianity?—of course every body admits it to be the best thing we have got; but do you know any who believe in its peculiar claims as one divine religion?—I, for my part, meet with none." The reply was, waving the personal affront implied in the question, that not only did he know many individuals of high intelligence who did believe in the highest pretensions of the Christian religion, but that there was Glasgow, a city pervaded and penetrated by living, moving, and having its being in a profound belief of evangelical religion.

How long this may continue is an enquiry which suggests fears and gloomy forebodings in consequence of that cloud of scepticism which has covered the continent with its gross darkness, which has crept like a mist over a large community both in Scotland and England, at last folding its fearful mantle round the country of the Covenant, and changing the character of Glasgow, till it becomes worse than one of our English large towns; but the certainty is not more manifest than is the temporariness of this eclipse. Whatever may be the case with other countries, Scotland can never long part with the blessed faith of Jesus. Were infidelity or were popery becoming rampant in it, it were enough to move the ashes of the dead; the tomb of Knox might be disturbed; the bones of Bothwell Moor might come together, bone to his bone, once more an exceeding great army; Cameron might spring from his mossy grave; the German ocean might render back Burley and the rest of the brave dead which were in it; and on the grim Grassmarket might reappear the array of the men who had thence ascended, amid execrations and agonies, the nearest way to the Celestial gate. At all the events, the slumbering embers of the spirit and the fire of the martyrs would be blown up in a blaze; and, even were the church once more driven into a wilderness, she would keep her post and maintain her quarrel there till the time came when, on the wings of a great eagle, she should again emerge, and endowed with new life, and purified from old error, shine forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

No easy thing, verily, can it be to root out a religion, which, apart from its own transcendent claims, has interwoven itself around the heartstrings of a nation, mingled with its earliest and dearest associations, coloured the thought, the feeling, the very blood of the land, become a source of innumerable traditions, brought the national character to its culminating point and been baptized, again and again, in holy blood. It is true that a "thing of beauty is a joy for ever," but it is still more so, that a thing once believed on good evidence to be divine, and which has surrounded itself with divine trophies, is independent of time, may be darkened, but cannot be destroyed, may even set like the sun, but like the sun can only set to rise again in greater splendour than before, and shall remain a joy, a power, a truth, and a terror for evermore. Honour, again, to those men whose efforts have tended to cement and to strengthen such a system; and in reference to whose sufferings, and to the results which have already and shall yet more richly spring from them, may be applied to the poet's line—

"How that red rain has made the harvest grow!"  
—*Heroes and Martyrs of the Scottish Covenant.*

## WHITE SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS.

At this time, when the attention of so large a portion of the Christian world is directed to questions about black slavery in America and white slavery in England, it may be of interest to state some facts concerning white slavery in New England two centuries ago. The people in the colony of Massachusetts Bay had negro slaves, and, until the adoption of the State Constitution in 1780, slavery was legalized in our State.

About two hundred years ago, many natives of England, Ireland and Scotland, were in a state of servitude in Massachusetts. After the battle of Dunbar, and also after the defeat of the followers of Charles Stuart, at Worcester, by the army of Cromwell, Parliament ordered the prisoners, whose rank was too low to entitle them to the honor of being beheaded, to be transported to the plantations. They were sold to pay for the passage money; masters of vessels took them as freight, which could be disposed of in remuneration for both trouble and expense. The Protector executed this execrable policy, and large numbers of the prisoners taken in civil war were shipped to the West Indies, where they soon perished by the climate. Others were taken on board ships and brought to Massachusetts. The ship *John & Sarah*, Capt. Greene, brought two hundred and seventy to Massachusetts, consigned to John Kemble, of Charlestown, to be disposed of by him for the account of J. Beer and Robert Rich. The invoice of these persons, with the instructions of their owners, and the names of the prisoners, are recorded in the Suffolk County records for the year 1652.

The living cargo of the *John & Sarah* was sold to the colonists. They were not sold to perpetual servitude like the Africans, but for a term of years. Some of these persons had kind masters, who only required but one half of their time, and allowed them an opportunity to redeem themselves by the repayment of their original cost. The object of recording the names of this cargo in full upon the records, doubtless was to identify