

No event in the ecclesiastical history of modern times has excited more intense interest than the Disruption in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. For two centuries that Church had been a model of Christian unanimity ; and the influence it had obtained over the conduct and feelings of the people, conjoined with the admirable system of its Schools, elevated the national character to the highest point, with those who thought that virtue and rational piety, conjoined with forethought, diligence, and integrity, were the highest attributes of the human mind.

The circumstances which led to the schism in the Church of Scotland, and to the secession from that Church of a body of its clergy and people, admit, as usual, of being viewed in various ways ; and while they are held, on the one hand, to be sufficient to induce a large party to leave the Establishment, are deemed, on the other, rather the consequences of imprudent proceedings and misdirected zeal, than as reasons for disengaging themselves from the Church into which they had been baptised. These conflicting views have had a powerful influence in Canada, where many of the people reside in remote settlements, and seldom hear the particulars of any case detailed except through prejudiced channels ; and the desire for more authentic details, and to hear the best reasons, from the mouths of the most eminent of their teachers, led to the following Discussion.

The Rev. Principal Liddell being on a visit to Galt, and having conducted Divine Worship in St. Andrew's Church, in that place, on Sabbath, the 18th of May, took occasion to deliver a short history of the events which had led to the disruption in the Synod. The congregation, which included some of the most eminent public characters in the Province, comprised also a number of those who had deemed it their duty to abandon the National Establishment and attach themselves to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. During the succeeding days, the reasons and evidence adduced by Dr. Liddell became the subjects of animated controversy ; and as most of these controversialists had only their own memories and judgments to fall back upon, either as to the precise course of reasoning and evidence Dr Liddell adopted, or for the fittest arguments and facts wherewith to combat them, they led rather to an increase of confusion than to the elucidation of the truth.

Under these circumstances it was suggested, that if Dr. Liddell and the Rev. John Bayne (formerly Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Galt, and now of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in the same place) would meet the people, and give a detail of the principal facts bearing on each side the question, such detail