

the means of doing incalculable service in many ways, to the cause of Christianity. As a monument of Dr. Thomson's indefatigable activity, the work has no parallel. For many years, not only did the task of editorship fall exclusively upon Dr. Thomson, but to him it was indebted for a large proportion of the best articles, whether in the miscellaneous or critical department, which, in the face of circumstances that tended to obstruct its circulation, and injure its popularity, continued to extort for it, from the religious public, a great share of favorable regard.

The charge of the *Christian Instructor* was not, however, his sole literary undertaking. To the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, conducted by Dr. Brewster, he contributed many articles, some of them of considerable interest, and all of them indicative of the patience of his research, the soundness of his judgment, and the unaffected vigor of his style.

In the year 1814, St. George's church, which had been for some years building, was ready for public worship, and was opened on Sunday, the 5th of June, of that year, by the late Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart., who preached from *Ecclesiastes* v. 1. As the individual best qualified to fill a very large structure, situated, at that time, at the extremity of the city, Dr. Thomson was fixed upon as its minister, and to this charge he was admitted on Thursday, the 16th of June, 1814. Here the more public and brilliant part of his course commenced. He had difficulties to encounter, both in collecting and in retaining a congregation, which would have had a depressing effect on the mind of most men. To Dr. Thomson, however, who of all men was formed to contend with, and to master difficulties, these only gave interest to his new situation.

Over a description of persons, by many of whom, at the commencement of his ministry in St. George's, the peculiar doctrines and obligations of the gospel were little known or relished, Dr. Thomson speedily acquired an influence scarcely ever possessed by any preacher. Nor is it necessary to say, that he owed this enviable ascendancy to no compromise of principle—to no unworthy accommodation of divine truth to the prejudices of his audience. In addressing himself to a congregation, peculiarly exclusive and sensitive, he stood upon the high ground of his office as an ambassador for Christ; and with the apostle of the Gentiles, to whose bold, unfearing character, his own, in many points, bore a striking resemblance, he determined to know nothing, as the subject of his ministry, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. How fully, effectively, and perseveringly, he adhered to his system, the recollection of his hearers, as well as the strain of his published discourses amply testify. The peculiar qualifications which he brought to his task are, at the same time, not to be overlooked. To a manner of great animation and fire, yet restrained and dignified, he added a style of uncommon simplicity and spirit,

which nature enabled him to set off to advantage by the tones of a voice remarkable for compass and harmony. He delighted in argument, but his arguments were of that direct, palpable, practical character, which stimulate attention, and admit of being appreciated and followed by the most ordinary understanding; while the truths he labored to establish, were all of acknowledged importance, bore so intimate a relation to the system which, as a Christian minister, it was his province to illustrate and enforce, and came so closely and powerfully home to every man's heart and conscience, that nothing could appear more natural than the pains he took to explain and defend them.

But Dr. Thomson was not satisfied with merely preaching the gospel. For many years after his appointment to St. George's, he employed the interval between the forenoon and afternoon services, in catechising the young belonging to the congregation: and this exercise he performed in a manner that had the effect, in an uncommon degree, of uniting to him the hearts both of parents and children.

Among the excellent practices recommended by the standards of the Church of Scotland, and by the example of the best of her ministers in the purest times, is that of week-day meetings in the church, for the purpose of instruction in the principles of religion, as these are taught in the *Shorter Catechism*. To attendance on such meetings in a city like Edinburgh some practical objections have been raised; and with a view to obviate these, Dr. Thomson instituted a lecture, in which, without placing any one in the trying situation of a catechumen, he made use of a question in the catechism by way of text; and explaining and illustrating it in a manner adapted to all capacities, he went over the ground usually traversed in the exercises. For several years he continued these week-day expositions, during a limited period of the summer months, and was only induced to relinquish them, in consequence of repeated and alarming attacks of indisposition, which taught him the necessity of imposing a restraint upon the otherwise unwearied zeal of his active and benevolent mind.

In the youth of his congregation, Dr. Thomson, as we have observed, took a warm and affectionate interest. In his parish, he found there were many of this class whom his Sabbath instructions could not reach—young persons who either did not attend his church, or whose circumstances and those of the parents rendered a greater degree of tuition necessary, than it was possible to afford them on the Lord's day. To meet their case, accordingly, Dr. Thomson projected a week-day school. As his experience in the task of instructing the young of his congregation had shown him how much could be done with young people, by adding their understanding and their affections, he undertook at once to compile suitable books for the different classes into which the school was divided, and for a time to act as teacher and superintendent in the