

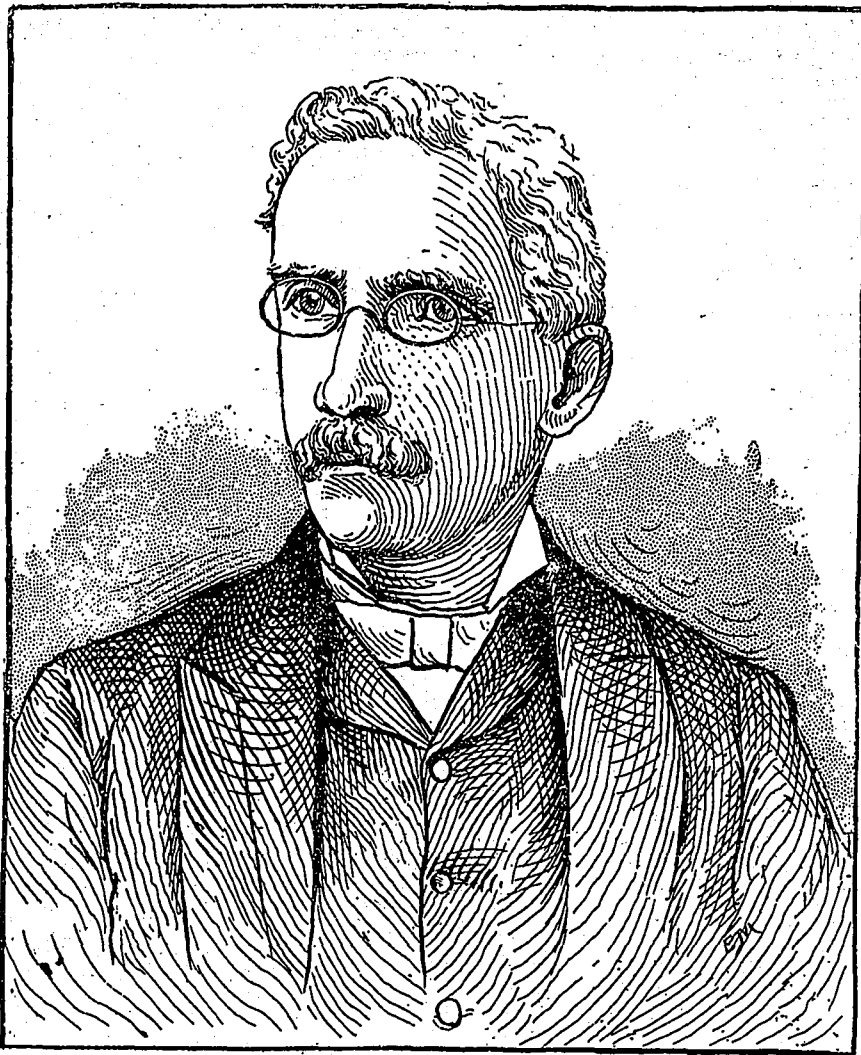
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DR. JAMES STALKER.

DR. STALKER AT HOME.

The mantles which fell from the shoulders of the men who pioneered the Free Church of Scotland through its early struggles, have found a fit resting-place on the shoulders of their successors in the ministry. Chalmers and Guthrie and Candlish have passed into the land of the hereafter, but the work which they began has been carried on by able and zealous men, and the Church which they founded has increased in power and usefulness as the years have rolled on. The ministry of the Free Church of to-day includes divines of the very highest eminence. Among the foremost of these is the Rev. James Stalker, D.D. He is the representative minister of his church in Glasgow, as Dr. Whyte is in Edinburgh, and strangers visit St. Matthew's as they do St. George's. Dr. Stalker is an eloquent preacher, but his fame is not that of the pulpit only. He is a theological writer of world-wide repute, a popular lecturer, an effective platform speaker, and an energetic worker in schemes for the moral and social elevation of his humbler fellow-citizens. Dr. Stalker is a man of wide sympathies, enthusiastic but not impulsive, pondering well a course of action or a line of thought before he adopts it. His manner, as becomes a typical Scotchman, is undemonstrative, but the

warmth of his heart is none the less genuine, and the kindest of natures is hidden beneath a calm exterior. Like most men gifted with distinguished mental endowment, he is exceedingly modest. He speaks freely of his Church and of her work, but with diffidence of himself and his own doing. His stature is small, but no one can look into his thoughtful eyes, or listen to the well-weighed words that fall from his lips, without being impressed by the capacity of the unseen mind. His black hair is tinged with grey, the result of hard mental work. It is not the silvering of age, for Dr. Stalker is still in the full vigor of manhood. Born in the year 1848 in the town of Crieff, whose salubrious situation on the hill slopes of Perthshire evoked the admiration of William Cullen Bryant, young Stalker went south in due time to begin his college career in Edinburgh. After qualifying for his M.A. degree at the ancient University, he had the privilege of studying under Dorner at Berlin, and under Tholuck at Halle, and when he finished his curriculum at the New College of Edinburgh in 1874, he had secured the Cunningham Fellowship, which is given to the student who stands first in the exit examination at leaving the Divinity Hall of the Free Church. Soon afterwards he was ordained to his first charge, in 'the lang

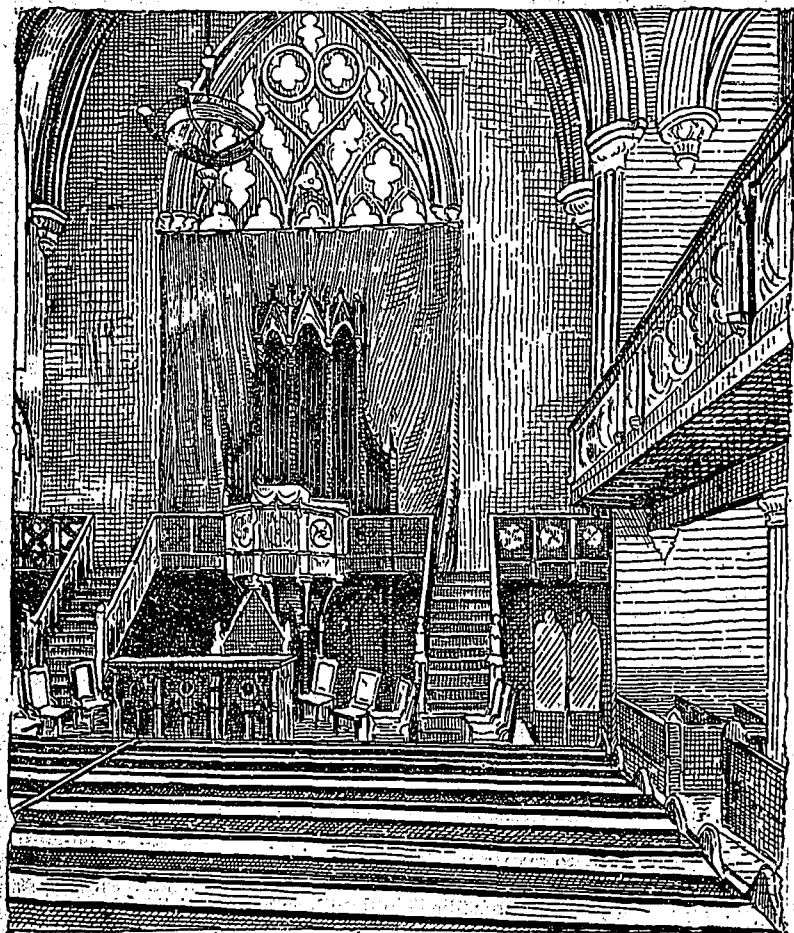
toun o' Kirkcaldy,' on the opposite shore of the Firth o' Forth. During his ministry there St. Brycedale church was erected by his flock at the cost of £20,000, and when he was translated to Glasgow in 1887, he left behind him a congregation of over eight hundred and fifty members. During his six years' ministry in St. Matthew's church, the membership has grown rapidly, until now there are well-nigh one thousand one hundred communicants enrolled.

It was the evening after the Great Jubilee Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland had come to a close that the writer visited Dr. Stalker. Standing on the threshold of his dwelling in the west end of Glasgow, the outlook presents a pleasant aspect of city life. The garden in front is separated but by a strip of roadway from Kelvingrove Park, whose winding paths by the riverside recall one of the sweetest of Scottish lovesongs, and whose heights are crowned by the stately pile of the University; while on the rising ground, overlooking Dr. Stalker's house, is the square tower of the Free Church College, a familiar landmark for miles around. Seated in the Doctor's study, the eye of the visitor notes, as the most conspicuous object there, a portrait on an easel. It is that of the Rev. Mr. Barbour of Bonskaid, by whose death, two years ago, the Free Church lost one of her most brilliant young ministers, and whom Dr. Stalker mourns as a dear friend. Over the fireplace there are other portraits. Prominent among them is that of the Rev.

Dr. Wilson of the Barclay Church, Edinburgh, to whom Dr. Stalker, in his early days, acted as assistant. In the brief interval of waiting, the visitor takes a glance along the well-stocked book-shelves, and notices copies of Dr. Stalker's own works. Their names are familiar to readers in many lands: the 'Life of Christ' (1879), 'The New Song' (1883), the 'Life of St. Paul' (1884), 'Imago Christi' (1889), 'The Preacher and his Models' (1891), and 'The Four Men' (1892). The sight of translations of the best known of these books in such diverse languages as German, Norwegian, Spanish, Bulgarian, Chinese, and Japanese, gives some idea of their wide-spread circulation.

Fresh from the great annual May meeting of his Church in Edinburgh, his heart overflowing with pleasant memories of all that had been said and done there, it was natural that, when Dr. Stalker seated himself in his study chair and entered into conversation, that topic should be uppermost in the mind.

'The attendances,' he said, 'were unusually large throughout the sittings, and the enthusiastic response to the proposal to celebrate the Jubilee of the Disruption testified for the firm hold which the principles of fifty years ago still have on the minds of the people. The deputies' speeches showed that the most kindly feelings exist on the part of the other Churches towards the Free Church. Specially notable were the addresses of Dr. MacLaren and Prin-



INTERIOR AND PULPIT OF ST. MATTHEW'S, GLASGOW.