

With the great Disruption of 1843, Dr. Guthrie's name is intimately connected. That grand moral movement whereby five hundred ministers gave up manse and church and stipend, sacrificing an annual income of £100,000, going forth, like Abraham, not knowing whither they went, has no parallel in modern times, since that St. Bartholomew's day in 1662, when two thousand of their spiritual kinsmen forsook their livings rather than stain their consciences.

As in the old covenanting days, congregations assembled to hear the Word, in wind and rain, upon the bleak brae-side. But an impulse of popular sympathy was stirred, and during the very first year of its existence the sum of £363,871 was raised by the Free Church. Like a perennial fountain are the free-will gifts of an earnest people, as compared with the niggard doles of a State Church. The first Sunday after the disruption, Dr. Guthrie with his congregation found shelter in the Methodist church, and there he preached till his own new church was built. The sympathy of all the nonconformist Churches was warmly manifested, and thousands of pounds were contributed by them to the funds of the Free Church. As the result of his personal advocacy, Dr. Guthrie collected in one year the sum of £116,374 to provide manses for the expelled ministers.

This is how the Doctor became a total abstainer :

"He was travelling in Ireland on a wet and stormy day. According to the custom of the times the car drew up to a tavern door, and the party alighted to warm up with hot whisky. The ragged driver was charitably included in the invitation, but he would not taste the drink. Said he, 'Plaze your riv'rence, I'm a teetotaller, and I won't taste a drop of it.' The Dr. proceeds: 'Well, that stuck in my throat, and it went to my heart, and to my head. Here was an humble, uncultivated, uneducated Roman Catholic carman; and I said, If that man can deny himself this indulgence, why should not I, a Christian minister. I remembered that; and I have ever remembered it to the honour of Ireland. That circumstance, along with the scenes in which I was called to labour daily for years, made me a teetotaller.'"

And a valiant and vigorous advocate of Temperance he became. Some of his tracts circulated to the extent of half a million copies