

THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1844.

DAVID.—Raised by the immediate intervention of the Almighty from the lowliness of pastoral life to the grandeur and dignity of a throne, the humble son of Jesse soon experienced, as King of Judah, all the cares and anxieties which commonly mingle wormwood and gall, with the wine of regal enjoyment. The path by which he arrived to eminence was thorny and dangerous; for, while his military achievements obtained for him the admiration of his countrymen, the monarchy for whose weal he displayed his prowess and hazarded his life, frequently conspired to destroy him. And although that Providence which called him from tending sheep in the plains of Bethlehem to occupy a distinguished station among the warriors of Israel, ultimately exalted him to the throne of his inflexible enemy,—still, though the legal successor of Saul, though wearing his diadem, and wielding his sceptre, it appears that in the same proportion as royalty bestowed its honours, so did it inflict its cares.

Surrounded by alien foes, and disturbed in his borders, he was obliged to live in the tented field, and endure many an arduous campaign. His children, violating the parental law of nature, rose up against his person and government; and, in order to uphold his crown and dignity, he had to suppress the sympathies of a parent, and contend in deadly strife with the offspring of his own bosom.

In short, the life of the Royal Bard was deeply chequered by all the varieties of sunshine and shade, storm and calm, that usually distinguish an eventful career. His course resembled the progress of the sun while tracing its brilliant path along the firmament.—In the morning its dawning glory faintly streaks the East, but, growing in beauty and in strength, every vapour and shadow retreat before it, as a vanquished enemy fleeth before a conqueror, and then it bursts upon the world, clothed in all the splendour and majesty of noon. Suddenly, however, the clouds, gathering blackness, try to veil its beauty and radiance; the fierce tempest rushing upon it, endeavours to disturb its tranquillity; the thunder bolt tries to plough up its even path; and the skies pour down torrents of rain, in order to quench its fires. But the assaulted luminary goes onward, walking up to his tabernacle with grace and majesty;—and then the even-tide comes, and a holy quietude reigns all round; and, as it sets, its orb expands, its rays brighten, and before it disappears, he stamps the shining impress of his mellowed light upon all around it.

So it was with David; his life and character shone resplendently among the nations. And, although vicissitudes marked the one, and crime degraded the other, yet the close of his life was crowned by a most felicitous consummation. Tranquillity pervaded his kingdom; Victory established her residence in his camp; the peace of God smoothed his

dying bed; his exulting soul breathed its last efforts in prayer and praise; and his happy spirit entered within the everlasting gates, playing on his harp of solemn sound, and singing, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

(From the Montreal Gazette.)

On Monday evening, at seven o'clock, a meeting, pursuant to public notice, was held in the American Presbyterian Church, St. James Street, for the purpose of listening to the statements of the Rev. Dr. Burns, a deputation from the Free Protestant Church of Scotland. At the hour appointed, this spacious and handsome edifice was completely filled with a highly respectable audience, numbering, probably, not less than fifteen hundred, of whom a large proportion were ladies. Dr. Burns made his appearance on a temporary platform, surrounded by many clergymen and active members of different evangelical congregations in this city, among whom were the following:—Rev. Messrs. Esson, Taylor, Wilkes, Lang, Strong, Cooney, Girdwood, and Dr. Carruthers. The laymen on the platform were Messrs. James Ferrier, J. Smith, J. De Witt, M.P.P., Dougall, Bruce, Ward, J. Savage, Court, Vennor, and J. R. Orr.

Dr. Burns said he had at first had reason to think that since the commencement of the present contest it had been viewed in Montreal rather as a thing not to be wished for, than any representative of the Free Church should enter the city for the purpose of giving information as to its views, or of seeking sympathy with it. But when he looked on the respectable audience before him, a different feeling rose in his mind, and he was persuaded that such an assemblage indicated a desire to be instructed on the merits of the question, and all that he had felt and heard since he entered the Province had confirmed him in the conviction which he then began to entertain, and convinced him that so far from being adverse to the reception of a representative of the Free Church, they were ready to hail one with friendship and sincere cordiality; and that though totally removed from the strife now agitating Scotland, they did not consider the great agitation which prevailed there, and the disruption which had followed, as foreign to their own interest, or at variance with their feelings. They considered no event of the kind, attended as it was with such noble instances of self denial, as foreign to them, but rather considered what took place in a land endeared to them by so many associations as worthy of their peculiar notice, and viewed it as an important evidence of the Christian hope, and encouraging to all who entertained that truth and hope to be ready to make every sacrifice to preserve either. He could not believe that such a feeling as indifference prevailed among them, but he felt that he was addressing an audience deeply interested and thirsting for information relative to the position and prospects of the Free Church of Scotland. He would, in that behalf, in the first place, proceed to give them some information as to the statistics of the secession, indicating its extent and quality, and showing that it must be viewed not as merely connected with feelings likely to pass away, but with great and endearing principles, and an endless chain of succeeding events. The secession was to an extent that had rarely been witnessed in these latter ages of expediency and of selfish policy. Four hundred and seventy ordained ministers, the largest portion of them in possession of immunities and endowments from the state, and the others from the people, felt it their duty, under the impressions of conscience, to renounce all their actual possessions and all their worldly prospect; to cut asunder cherished associations and ties dear to their hearts. And these thirty missionaries, all ordained ministers

possessing the confidence of the church, some of high attainments, and all of trusty and tried fidelity, felt it their duty to join. They, far from the scene of strife, with no intercourse one with the other, and with many circumstances in the situation of each which rendered it not unlikely that they would desire to retain their former position in connexion with the Established Church of their country, motives which might prevail with men of less excellence of principle and boldness of resolution. But these excellent men, divided from each other, dispersed over different latitudes of the earth, on the grounds stated by themselves, distinctly and pointedly gave in their adhesion—though involving a loss of not less than from forty to fifty thousand pounds a year—distinctly gave in their adhesion to the Free Church of Scotland. In connection with the Ministers, from two to three hundred young men promptly gave in their adhesion, and also three hundred students of Theology, under the special charge of Chalmers, Black and others, eminent in their respective departments, adhered to the course marked out for them by their seniors, rallied round the standard of the Free Church, and were now in a course of hearing for its Ministry. In connection with these, the Elders of the Church, the most valuable class of men, who, without fee or reward, conferred on it most valuable benefits by their labours for its discipline—between two and three thousand of these valuable men, distinguished by ardent piety and indefatigable zeal, rallied round the standard of the Free Church and assisted in displaying the banner of the truth. And though last, not least, the great body of the people, eight hundred thousand in number—they had been rated much higher, but he wished to overstate nothing—the great body of the people went along with their Elders. Embracing the same great principles, studying the same great principles carefully, they went along with those Pastors whose instructions they had studied and benefited by. From these facts they might form some conception of the magnitude of the secession and of the materials of which it was composed. There was another class also, not directly associated with the Clergy, but well worthy of being so, the General Assembly Teachers of whom one hundred had joined the Free Church, and were forthwith dismissed, the Assembly in their case exhibiting a promptness of resolution and a determination which would have done honour to a nobler cause. It was on the eighteenth of May that the session took place. Not having himself joined it until some few days after the event, he could speak with some freedom of the magnitude and Christian sublimity of the spectacle. The eyes of many Christian observers were on it, and the movement was hailed by not a few interested in it by sympathy with its principles, admiration of the conduct of its authors, and deep-toned expectation of the results which must follow from it; and who felt no doubt that God, in his inscrutable designs, had put that in the order of means by which great good was to be accomplished, and great changes effected in the external state of the Church.—He did not desire, in detailing the sacrifice made, that they should view the movement merely as it related to pounds, shillings and pence; he did not desire to harrow up their minds by details of suffering, or to demand their charitable contributions solely on the ground of necessity and privations. But he came to them to ask their approbation of the course pursued, and to appeal to them on great principles dear to all, and to shew that their common Christianity was greatly involved in this movement. There was one feature by which this secession was distinguished from that of former days—he did not speak of such a secession as that which took place from internal abuses of the Church above a century ago, but of such a one as that of 1662, when four hundred of the ablest Ministers of the country were compelled to retire, in consequence of ecclesiastical tyranny; for, as it is always the case, ecclesiastical then went hand in hand with civil oppression. That secession took place in consequence of the attempt to introduce Episcopacy into Scotland. A day was fixed when two particulars, one of them the proof of Episcopal ordination, must be complied with, otherwise a forfeiture of temporalities would follow. Then, as now, it was not expected that so large a number of Ministers as four hundred would retire.—But they did so, and their sufferings form the most interesting chapter in the history of those