

binets, and honourable renunciation of that connection, demonstrate that the reverse is the case. It is worthy of observation, too, that notwithstanding the most favourable opportunity for doing so, no sect of the Dissenters have ever attempted to relieve themselves of the restraints of a confession. Nay, from what is now taking place before our eyes, Churches which glory in their freedom from State regulations and independence of Act of Parliament, instead of relaxing, as some have asked them to do, are actually tightening what we are told are chains on thought. Certain it is, that those parties who are now struggling to effect a union among themselves, have not arrived, or do not think that they have arrived, at that pitch of wisdom and faithfulness at which it would be safe to send forth their ministers without demanding from them the usual securities for their orthodoxy. It is also remarkable as a sign of the times that each party is as eager as ever partisan was to uphold its own peculiar dogma. Neither of them will permit that dogma to be even treated as an open question. The new confession of the proposed united Church must pronounce concerning it, or, at all events, some method must be found out whereby, if the union be effected, their consciences will not be offended by the apparent surrender of it. Evidently that light has not dawned upon these men's minds in which dogmas in confessions are seen and felt to trench upon freedom of inquiry; and I confess that as to that matter I am still in the same predicament. In conclusion, Mr Stevenson exhorted the students to a vigorous and fearless use of all their powers in the discussion of all matters affected by the Confession. The Confession and its friends had nothing to fear from any liberty thus employed in discussing it. At the same time, he exhorted them to study Protestant confessions generally, and especially their own. It implies (he said) no disrespect to our own to say, that much may be learned from perusing other productions of a similar nature. Moreover, the effect of such a perusal will be to elevate in your estimation the undoubted excellence and superiority of our own over all others. For conciseness, for lucidness, for its order or method, for its fulness, and the soundness of its conclusions, it stands unrivalled. It was the work of great and good men—men who were also learned and pious, and who, as its history and its contents prove, spared no pains in its performance. For upwards of 200 years it has remained the standard of the faith of almost the whole people of Scotland; even those who, on three

successive occasions, have gone out from us, have retained it almost in its integrity as their "form of sound words," and press it to their bosoms, as we also do, with fond affection. It is, therefore, not to be despised, but revered. And that, we believe, will be a sad day for our country, if it ever comes, when through any rude handling—whether of friends within the pale of the Church, or of an enemy beyond it—it falls from that place of honour and influence which it has so long enjoyed.

A cordial vote of thanks was given to Mr. Stevenson for his address.

PULSATIONS OF THE AIR. The pulsations of the atmosphere, once set in motion by the human voice, cease not to exist with the sounds to which they gave rise. Strong and audible as they may be in the immediate neighbourhood of the speaker, and at the immediate moment of utterance, their attenuated force soon becomes inaudible to human ears. . . . The waves of air thus raised perambulate the earth and ocean's surface, and in less than twenty hours every atom of its atmosphere takes up the altered movement due to that infinite small portion of the primitive motion which has been conveyed to it through countless channels, and which must continue to influence its path throughout its future existence. . . . Thus considered, what a strange chaos is this wide atmosphere we breathe! Every atom, impressed with good and with ill, retains at once the motions which sages and philosophers have imparted to it, mixed and combined, in ten thousand ways, with all that is worthless and base. The air is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said, or woman whispered. There, in their mutable but unerring characters, mixed with the earliest as well as with the latest sighs of mortality, stand for ever recorded, vows unredeemed, promises unfulfilled—perpetuating, in the united movements of each particle, the testimony of man's changeable will.—*Babbage.*

KNOW THYSELF.—A Latin poet informs us that "Know thyself" descended from heaven. An apostle wrote: "What! know ye not your own selves." "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." How shall we do this? By the touchstone of Scripture. When I was a boy, good Mr. M—, in examining candidates for Church-fellowship, used to ask: "Have you a spiritual taste? Do you love to read the 119th Psalm?" David says, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Is such the language of our hearts? Then "we know that we have passed from death unto life."

HYPOCRISY.—Many who would not for the world utter a falsehood, are yet eternally scheming to produce false impressions on the minds of others respecting facts, characters, and opinions.

GRIEF AND JOY.—Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than joy ever can, and common sufferings are far stronger than common joys.