

This Associate Synod were all along at particular pains in training their students for being useful and acceptable preachers of the Gospel. They had not a Philosophical Class, like the other branch of the Secession; but they were equally careful to guard the youth rearing for the ministry against pernicious errors in philosophy, as taught in some of the Universities, and they were very particular in providing for their theological instruction. "A variety of regulations were adopted by them from time to time, designed to promote the respectability and efficiency of those whom they licensed to preach the Gospel. In May, 1786, the Synod gave an injunction to all the Presbyteries to make particular enquiry, whether the young men who applied for admission to the Divinity Hall had gone through a regular course of study at any of the Universities. None were to be admitted to the study of Divinity who had not attended the Literary and Philosophical Classes, at one of the Scottish Colleges, for a period of at least three years. Presbyteries were further enjoined to enquire concerning the prudence, as well as the literature and piety, of the candidates for the ministry; and the young men were required to visit the ministers residing in their neighbourhood, to give them an opportunity of judging of their qualifications." (Dr. McKerrow's History)

This Church was likewise careful to guard its young preachers against "that affectation of philosophical refinement which at this period prevailed extensively among the ministers of the Establishment, and rendered their discourses sapless and unprofitable." The Glasgow Presbytery introduced an overture on this subject, which the Synod sanctioned, and from which the following is extracted:—

"As it is a concern of great importance to the Church of Christ, that the doctrines of the Gospel be preserved in their purity, and transmitted in this form to succeeding generations, it is necessary that every proper means be employed for securing this object, and for preventing the introduction of everything that might affect it. Therefore the Presbytery, taking into their serious consideration how much the interests of religion are involved in these objects, and from an apprehension of a growing fondness for false refinement and abstract reasoning in handling the truths of the Gospel, among some of our entrants into the ministry, humbly solicit the interference of the reverend Synod, and their united attention to an object of so great magnitude."

"In order, therefore, the more effectually to accomplish this end, they would humbly overture to the Reverend Synod, that they give particular instructions to the several Presbyteries, not only to examine with care the young men who apply to them for admission to the Professor of Divinity, as to their knowledge of the languages and other branches of literature, but that they make enquiry into such other circumstances about them as are necessary to be known, in order to their being admitted with the prospect of future usefulness in the Church: likewise, that the Committee appointed to converse with the probationers should have it recommended to them to guard the preachers against this evil which is dreaded, and propose such antidotes as they think may be most successful; that the probationers be ordered to deliver discourses before the Presbytery in whose bounds they are, that the Presbytery may have an opportunity of judging of their manner and proficiency, and may correct and encourage them as they shall see cause; that our Professor of Divinity be made acquainted with the design of this overture, in order to add the greater weight to his theological instructions, and to encourage his watchfulness over the students in this important particular; and that it be recommended to every minister who may have Students of Divinity under his pastoral charge, to concur in seconding these means, by directing them in their study of Divinity, and recommending such books as are calculated to store their minds with useful knowledge."

The Venerable Professor of Divinity, the Rev. John Brown of Haddington, died on the 19th of June, 1787. For some time previous to this he felt the infirmities of age coming on him, which induced him to request the Synod to relieve him from his charge of the students. In consequence, the Rev. George Lawson of Selkirk was requested, in the meantime, to superintend the Divinity Hall. But at the meeting of Synod in autumn this year, which was after the death of Mr. Brown, Mr. Lawson was formally elected to the Professor's Chair, and the Theological Seminary was in consequence removed from Haddington to Selkirk.

"The character of Mr. Brown," says Dr. McKerrow, "for piety, diligence, and theological knowledge, and fidelity in his master's service, was

highly honorable. The literary advantages which he enjoyed in early life were scanty; but there have been few individuals who, with such limited means of improvement, have risen to higher eminence in the Church, both as a theologian and an author. The fame which he has acquired, by his useful practical writings, and especially by his Self-interpreting Bible, has been most extensive, and bids fair to be lasting. He is an encouraging example of what may be effected, by dint of industry and perseverance, in the acquisition of knowledge. The Synod, on receiving intelligence of his death, paid a just tribute to his memory, by making honourable mention of him in their record, as a person whose eminent piety, fervent zeal, extensive charity, and unwearied diligence in promoting the interests of religion, will be long remembered by this Court, especially by those members of it who had the happiness of studying divinity under his inspection. They also agreed to insert in their minutes the following Postscript, which was appended to a letter written by Mr. Brown a short while before his death, and which was addressed to the Members of Synod:— "As many of you have been my students, and most of you my younger in years, permit me to beseech you all to do all in your power to transmit Christ's truths as faithfully and diligently to posterity as possible. His truths and cause shall shine on earth, and especially in heaven forever, be they now as low as they will in Britain."

When Mr. Lawson was chosen Professor, it was thought by many that it would be expedient to meet the Divinity Hall in Edinburgh, and make that its permanent seat, and to relieve the Professor from his pastoral charge, that he might give his undivided attention to the students. But, although the various Presbyteries were consulted on this subject, the Synod found that it would as yet be impracticable to carry it into effect.

In the year 1788, the Associate Synod had two objects of importance before them. The one was the celebration of the centenary of the Revolution. With this view, they appointed their congregations to meet, for thanksgiving to God, on the 5th of November; and an Address was prepared to be read to their people on that occasion, of which the following is the tenour:—

"The Associate Synod, deeply impressed with the unmerited goodness of God to us as a nation, Church, and individuals, judge it a duty to appoint a day of solemn thanksgiving for his abundant mercies. Recollecting in particular, that on the 5th of November next a century will have elapsed since the memorable Revolution, in 1688, they are desirous to testify their gratitude to God for the very signal blessings, both of a civil and sacred kind, which that interesting period brought along with it. With grateful sensibility the Synod call to remembrance, that then the nation was rescued from tyrannical exertions of power, proper bounds were set to the prerogatives of the crown, the liberties of the subject were established on a sure and permanent basis, the land was delivered from the dread, and secured against the re-establishment of Popery, a way paved for the illustrious House of Hanover to succeed in future times to the government of these realms, and a foundation laid for our empire to rise, under an indulgent Providence, to its present pitch of happiness and glory. With emotions of gratitude no less strong and lively, the Synod remark the many national favors which have succeeded that glorious era; of which the continuance of the Gospel, though in some places resisted and obscured—the delivering us from the repeated attempts of a Pretender to the British Throne, to disturb our peace and comfort, and overturn the valuable system which was then established—the preserving safe to us our religious liberties, notwithstanding of reiterated machinations against them—and the raising of able, zealous, and successful defenders of the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, so often as they have been insidiously attacked—are not the least inconsiderable and important."

The other object of importance before the Synod this year was the publication of a pamphlet entitled, "A Warning against Socialism." This arose from the publication of an Essay, by Dr. McGill of Ayr, on the Faith of Jesus Christ, in which very erroneous sentiments were brought forward, and which occasioned a process in the Courts of the Establishment, by which the deplorable state of religion among them was discovered. But on this subject we cannot enter at present.

(To be continued.)

THE USE OF HYMNS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Mankind have, from the earliest ages, celebrated the praises of God with hymns and spiritual songs. The most ancient nations, such as the