

however laborious, to accomplish, by their single and unaided efforts, the desiderated change. Hand must join in hand; and the public teaching of the pastor must be supplemented, not only by his own visitations from house to house but by similar visitations on the part of the confirmed among his flock,—all assiduously prosecuted in the spirit of faith and love that knows not to yield; if, in the circumstances supposed, the work of the ministry is indeed to be accomplished and the wanderers about the hedges and in the by-ways to be compelled to come in. Not otherwise will it be found practicable really to educate the young in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, impressively to warn the adult, and, in the case of all, to make the Gospel, through its professing disciples, a sweet-smelling savour of Christ unto God. If a less perfect Christian organization be aimed at, your Committee, looking to the actual circumstances of the case, would appeal to any man of common intelligence, who will only reflect upon the subject, whether, unless by the intervention of miracle, the work must not be pronounced to be hopeless. It is the development, then, of such an organization as has been now pointed out, which, in humble dependence on her Great Head, is the appropriate task of the Church. If to this task, in the same dependence she consecrate all her powers, she has the assurance of the Divine Word itself, that her labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. In such a case, relying on the controlling influence of an all-pervading and superintending Providence, she may reasonably cherish a well assured hope, that a cordial and heartfelt co-operation will spring up to her in every quarter of the land, and from every order of its inhabitants. Indeed, in the circumstances supposed, co-operation with her in her high and holy aim will even be coveted as an inestimable privilege; and it will be universally felt that a glory is yet in reserve for our age and country, in the splendour of which all the improvements and triumphs, hitherto achieved by us, must fade and become dim. Yes, the glory of being instrumental in rolling back the tide of ignorance, and infidelity, and vice,—the glory of being instrumental in quickening the dead, and calling the things that be not as though they were,—and the glory, in fine, of aiding in promoting the moral and spiritual improvement of man, so as to re-impress him with the image of his Maker, is a glory, the effulgence of which can never be impaired a glory which has all things in inheritance, having the promise both of the life which now is, and of that which is to come; and a glory, moreover, that shall be waxing only brighter and brighter, when all that is of earth and earthly shall have perished for ever. Now, and to latest generations, may this be the glory of the Church of our fathers!

In name and by appointment of the
Committee,
JAMES ROBERTSON, D.D., *Convener*.

The Presbyterian.

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

In the contests between the first Preachers of Christianity and the various heathen nations, with which in the fulfilling of their mission they came in contact, the question between them assumed the form of one religion against other religions, equally with itself laying claim to a Divine original. They found every people to whom they came professing a religion of some kind or other, handed down to them by tradition from their fathers, the rites, ordinances, and precepts of which were believed by its professors, at some remote unknown period, to have begun to be communicated by the Gods to men

through special interpreters of their will, and through a succession of whom they had continued to hold intercourse with their worshippers. Everywhere the kingdom of darkness seemed to have imitated or anticipated the economy of the kingdom of light. Everywhere there were the claims of religions, supposed to be Divine, to set in opposition to Christianity, claiming to be the only true revelation, derived from the One only living and True God, the Creator of all the ends of the earth, whom all men ought to worship, and declaring at the same time that all the supposed Gods of the nations were no Gods, but dumb idols, to be utterly rejected, as being able neither to do good nor to do evil, alike powerless to inflict plagues or bestow blessings on their blinded worshippers.

But, though these religions were all vain, and their Gods nothing at all in the world, the imaginations of men concerning them were sad spiritual realities. The belief of the worshipper was not a vain thing, though his worship was; and it was with the reality, not with the vain thing, that the missionaries of Christianity had to contend. It was not the Gods of the heathen whom they had to cast down from heaven to earth, but the belief in them, which they had to expel from the human heart. There was Satan's seat, there the prince of evil had erected his throne, there a true kingdom of darkness was established, and iniquity and lies reigned triumphant. Yet to those, who were under the power of these delusions, it seemed not so. Their trust in their imaginary Deities was real, their fears of them were real, and so also was their belief in them a mournful reality. They opposed therefore to the faith of Christianity another faith, a faith, too, which in their own eyes rested on an authority which was superhuman and Divine. They did not suspect that they were trusting in mere human speculations, and setting up the dictates of the wisdom of man in opposition to the authority of a revelation communicated from God. This was reserved for more modern times, when every other refuge of lies was found to have failed. The wisest philosophers of antiquity did not attempt to overturn even what they believed to be lies, when resting on a supposed Divine authority, by claiming for the dictates of their own wisdom a higher respect. The genuine dictates of such wisdom were, no doubt, every way better and more worthy of acceptance than the vain dreams of a dotting superstition; but it was not one of the dictates of this wisdom, to teach, that there was no higher rule of life to be sought or desired, than the speculations of uninspired men. It was long, very long before any considerable number of one race could be brought to adopt this presumptuous maxim of ungodly pride.

The Emperor Julian in many things

resembled our modern infidels. He was learned and clever, and of untiring activity. The sword or the pen was seldom out of his hand. How to keep back Christianity was the constant theme of his thoughts. In peace or in war he never lost sight of this object. At the council-board, or in the camp at the head of his legions, or in the midst of the philosophers and men of letters, whom he delighted to draw around him, and who never failed to flock to an Emperor who could appreciate their talents, enjoy their conversation, and whose praise, as well as the more substantial marks of favours he was able to bestow, formed attractions, which few could resist, in every city where the affairs of the municipality or the necessary preparations for his warlike expeditions induced him to remain for a day. In all these situations it was the subject of his conversation, and the object of his measures to check the progress of Christianity, and finally banish it from the world. If a professor was to be appointed to a chair of rhetoric, philosophy or law, he was selected for the zeal and ability with which he would be likely to oppose the hated religion. The whole education of youth was to be wrested from the Church, and into every Seminary of public Instruction, so many heathen observances were to be introduced by authority as would effectually prevent either Christian teachers or the children of Christians from entering their doors. Yet on some occasions he professed himself the patron of liberty of opinion; but with him it only meant liberty for the professors of Christianity to deny Christ without being charged with the guilt of apostacy, which by that time had ceased to be honourable in the eyes of the heathen themselves. It is not the least instructive page in the general history of the Church, which records the attempt of this accomplished apostate, armed with all the power of the Roman Empire, to bring back the world to Faith in its old delusions, and build up again what Christianity had cast down. It proves that this religion owes far less for its reception even as a profession of Faith to the favour of Constantine and other secular princes than is generally supposed. It established itself while persecuted, and maintained its ground without any sensible loss against the allurements of princely patronage, as it had made increase in defiance of its frowns. The pleasures and the pomps of this world might corrupt the professors of Christianity and lead them to betray their own hopes in it, and prove false to their own souls, but induced very few to take the monstrous step of openly denying Christ, and returning to the worship of Jupiter and Juno with their rabble rout of demi-gods and divinities. Constantine never appears to have been so zealous in the cause of even outward Christianity as was Julian in behalf of Paganism.