

Reminiscences of a Scottish Country Parish.

BY AN OCTAGENARIAN.

II.—THE OLD MINISTER.

For the Review

We have no remembrance of our first appearance at church. It must have been as soon as we were able to walk the two miles, between it and our home. At that time the minister was well advanced in life. We can see him in memory ascending the pulpit stairs, entering it, and hanging his hat on a large brass pin over his head, then sitting down for a few moments, before giving out the first psalm; or until the third askings of marriage banns had been ended. For the minister had to be present in the church before it was considered lawful to close the calls for objections to purposes of marriage.

He was always accompanied by his little terrier dog which took its place on the upper step of the pulpit stair. There it remained an apparently attentive listener, unless some other dog should srew himself inside the door, when he would descend to charge the intruder, and it would take the long staff of daft Willie B—to quell the disturbance. This he usually accomplished in language sufficiently loud to be heard all over the Church, but not always in words sufficiently refined for ears polite.

The service began at twelve and the Kirk sealed at two. One service on the Sabbath, summer and winter, was all that was expected, and any departure from that, would have been resented as a serious innovation. There were then no Sabbath schools, or mid week meetings for prayer, and we question if such were general even in the cities, in the beginning of the second quarter of the century. Of the preaching we have no remembrance but from all we could gather in after years, it was of the style common at that time throughout the county, and which we once heard summed up in the words "Do as well as you can, and there is no fear of you."

Moderatism, as it was called, was almost universal at that time and everything within and without the church was cold and formal. Spiritual life in the Established Church in the district was low and the only evidence of it was to be found among the small and scattered congregations of the "Seceders," towards whom our old ministers had no very warm feelings, being especially careful, that they should get no foothold in the parish. It used to be told, how on one occasion, a secession minister had procured the use of a barn near the manse, and had made an appointment to hold a week day service, for the benefit of the people of the Kirk-towns, but that as soon as the old man heard of it, he went to the owner of the barn, demanded the key, locked the door, put the key in his pocket and walked home. Whether any of the others in the place ventured to give the use of their barn or kitchen, or whether any service was held, we do not know, but this we do know, that during the whole of our residence in the parish, till the disruption in 1843 no dissenting service (except the Episcopal) was attempted, or encouraged within its bounds, so deeply attached were the people to their national Church, and so little desire did they manifest for any change. In the course of some twenty years, however, a change came and came in a way no one expected, so little can man with all his care foresee or prevent the fulfilment of the Divine purposes.

Whether in the earlier years of his ministry, he had been attentive to his pastoral work among his people, we cannot say, or whether he visited the sick, and dying, or when they died, attended their funerals we cannot say. But we do not remember to have ever seen him in our fathers house, and there were sickness and death in our home, during his incumbency. That he was not altogether inattentive to the religious instruction of his young people, was shewn, in his preparing, and publishing a Catechism for their use which, together with the Mothers, and Shorter Catechisms they were directed to commit to memory, and he prepared to repeat at the public catechisings which were common at that time. Nor do we know what

training he gave to the young communicants for we were not a communicant in his day, but we used to hear that he would become very earnest, and even deeply affected in his closing address on the Communion Sabbath; but that he would invariably take it all back by saying, "But I am persuaded better things of you, brethren, though I thus speak."

A Meditation on the Lord's Supper:

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT.

BY THE REV. D. PATERSON D.D., ST. ANDREWS, P.Q.

For the Review.

Our Blessed Lord, on the night in which He was betrayed, while observing the last memorial feast of the old dispensation, instituted and observed, for the first time, the memorial feast of the new dispensation. He took bread, and breaking it, gave it to the disciples, saying Take, eat; this is My Body. He gave the cup also, saying, Drink ye all, of it, for this is My Blood of the Covenant, shed for many unto remission of sins. And again, This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood which is poured out for you.

These are the most solemn and the most significant words spoken by the Lord on that sacred occasion. To the disciples doubtless, they were strange and mystical, and but dimly comprehended. But to us they are, as they soon were to them, words full of light, and shining with the radiance of Heaven. They carry our thoughts back to the eternal past, when the Almighty Father, foreseeing the fall and ruin of His children, through the failure of the Covenant of Works, by reason of the weakness of man, made provision for their deliverance.

In the counsels of eternity, God, purposing the frustration of Satan's malignity, and the salvation of an innumerable multitude "did enter into a Covenant of Grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." Who was that Redeemer? It was He with whom the everlasting Covenant was made on man's behalf, even the promised seed of the woman, no mere fallible creature like Adam, but the Son of God as well as the Son of man, "the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven," mighty to save.

And now the hour is come, the Redeemer is here; the Redemption is about to be fulfilled. And he portrays before them the manner of its accomplishment. He breaks the bread and gives it to them, saying, This is My Body broken for you. And He gives them the cup also, saying, This is My Blood of the Covenant. It shows forth that, without which the Covenant could not be fulfilled, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. Eternal justice must be vindicated; sin must be punished, and therefore the Redeemer of man must die, or else man must perish in his sin.

He with his whole posterity must die
The law of justice must, unless for him
Some other, able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death

And therefore the Lord Jesus poured out His soul unto death. Having loved His own from the beginning, and loving them unto the end, He went forward to the bitter cross, and there He gave up His life for them. And thus

—"by His sacred blood,
Confirmed and sealed for evermore,
The eternal Covenant stood"

The benefits of this Covenant, made with the Redeemer in eternity, are brought within the reach of sinners of mankind by means of a subordinate covenant, viz., the Covenant which is made between Christ and His people, and into which all men are invited to enter. Ho! every one that thirsteth is His call to us, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy and eat. . . . Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. And, to know something of those "sure mercies," read David's Psalms; particularly the xviii. 23, 32 and 51, also Ps. lxxxix. 14-37.

This Covenant is entered into by all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and come to Him for salvation. And here at the Lord's Table, it is sealed