

this branch of the subject by showing that many of the Popish traditions refer to doctrines or practices which began to be followed or believed five, six and seven centuries after Apostolic times. In these cases the Protestant is entitled to ask, What had become of this tradition for 500 years? Had the infallible Church mistaken its meaning? Or had she understood, and at the same time, resolved to disbelieve or disobey? In entering on the second proposition, he quoted from decrees, &c., of the Popish Church, which include the Apocryphal books in the Scripture canon. He showed from internal and external evidence that these books could not have been inspired; referring more especially to the fact, that they were not admitted to the canon by the Jewish Church, which would gladly in its corrupt days have acknowledged these books, many of which countenanced its corruptions. Secondly, that they were not written in Hebrew, showing that they were written after the days of Malachi, who declares that, after him, *no prophet should arise till the days of John*. Thirdly, to the fact, that the authors of some of these books lay no claim to inspiration—see prologue to Ecclesiasticus, also I Maccabees ix. 27. Fourthly, they were not included in the canon till the sixteenth century and were not till the fourth century allowed even to be read in the churches. While, lastly, they contain statements opposed to those of the Bible. In illustrating the third proposition, the lecturer showed, from the decrees of the Council of Trent, from the persecutions by the Popish Church, extending over many centuries, from bulls lately from Rome, and from events which have occurred within the last few years, that the Romish Church has always been, and still is, opposed to the free circulation of the Word of God, alluding to the case of the Madiai at Florence, and to the burning of Bibles in Popish lands. He then referred to the arguments Papists advance in support of such opposition, showing that 2 Peter iii. 16 not only does not support but opposes such a course, by proving that the Word was circulated in Apostolic times, and then quoting from the Bible itself passages to show that God intends the Bible to be perused by all; and concluded this branch of the subject by an *argumentum ad absurdum*, showing that a man must, at least, read his Bible, once before he can know that he has no right to do so. In connection with the fourth Protestant proposition, Mr Thompson quoted from the creed of Pius IV., indicating that a Christian must accept the interpretation of the Word given by the Church, showing the worthlessness of arguments attempted to be derived from Scripture in support of this view; and then proved, from the history of the Romish Church, how often different interpretations have been given, and different views have been held. If the Church is infallible, all such opposing views must be correct. (The Church has, at the same time, expressed different sentiments regarding the channel through which this infallible interpretation is to be derived. Sometimes this was to be sought for in Councils, at other times in Popes, at other times in both conjointly. While, lastly, from 1 Cor. ii. 15, and 1 Thess., v. 21, &c., he showed that the Bible authorised every man, with Divine help, to interpret Divine statements for himself. The lecture was concluded by an exhortation to thank God for our cheap and free Protestant Bibles—by a warning

against the least departure from the Word, as our only Rule of Faith, and by counsel, addressed to all, and especially to the young, to study the controversy—to be armed against danger of perversion, and fitted for the work, through God's blessing, of converting Romanists, and so bringing them to the knowledge of pure Christian truths.

ST PETER'S CONGREGATIONAL SOIREE.

A soiree of the members and adherents of St. Peter's Church was held last evening in the City Hall, which was well filled in every part by a most respectable company. The Rev. McCoehrane, A.M., minister of the congregation presided, and on the platform were the Rev. Drs Hill, Jamieson and Napier; Rev. Messrs. Norman M'Leod, R. Stewart, A. M'Lean, W. D Henderson, Ross, and J. Thomson; Messrs. William Aitken, John Donaldson, Geo. Mathieson, William Young, James Pearson, David M'Lure, James Coverly, Archd. Morrison, James Buchanan, John Meason, and other gentleman.

Tea having been served,

Mr HINSHAW, treasurer of the church, on the part of the session, read an interesting and gratifying report. Every available seat in the church had been let; the number of communicants on the roll was 700, and at last communion 598 had joined in the ordinance. The Sabbath schools connected with the congregation were in a flourishing condition. They were conducted in the large room beneath the church, one being composed entirely of boys, and the other of girls. The number of teachers was 28, and of scholars 250, with an average attendance of 220. These numbers were exclusive of a large advanced class taught by Mr Cochrane. There were 70 in this class, the average attendance being 60. There were thus in all 320 scholars on the roll, with an average attendance of 280. There was likewise a Tract Distribution Society connected with the congregation. The parish was divided into districts, in each of which there were two distributors. The Sabbath School Society and Tract Distribution Society were supported by the voluntary collections of the congregation.

The CHAIRMAN then delivered an address. He expressed the pleasure he felt at witnessing such a large assemblage of people, notwithstanding so many of the congregation were ill at this season. He explained why they had met in the City Hall rather than in any other place. The principal reason was simply this, that they might be comfortably accommodated, and he was not aware of any other hall in the city which could comfortably accommodate the congregation of St. Peter's, seated as they were at present at these tables. It might be asked, What was the use of a soiree? Why, from the same principles it be said, What was the use of anything—the use of a tea party, of a dinner party?—just that they might spend a social hour together, and cultivate those friendly feelings and sympathies which made life pass so smoothly. Those Christian feelings and sympathies were much required in this city. There were in this city hundreds of people who sat for years in the same church, or in the same pew, and who might never have exchanged words together. This was not as it should be. As Christians, it was their duty to cultivate those feelings. They met Sabbath after Sabbath in the same church, listened to the same discourse, joined in the same prayer, mingled their voices in the same praises, and were all looking towards the same eternal home at last. Why not, then, begin to cultivate on earth those feelings they wished to experience in Heaven. Abstractly he had no great liking to soirees himself, probably, perhaps, because he had no great talent for speaking at them; but, if this soiree had any tendency to cement them more closely in

bonds of fellowship, his dislike, he confessed, would be very much diminished. He then referred to what the church was doing in respect to education and spread of the Gospel. He stated that it was now 7½ years since he entered on his ministerial labours in connection with that church, and in looking back on these 7½ years he was compelled to acknowledge, with gratitude to God, the success with which these labours had been attended. He could assure them that 7½ years ago a much smaller hall than that in which they were now assembled could have accommodated the congregation of St. Peter's. At that time their numbers were not above 40 or 50; now they numbered nearly 1000, or, at least, as many as the church could accommodate. For this success they were not indebted to any adventitious circumstances. He did not come among them with a name; he had no opportunity of establishing a character in another sphere of labour, for his previous public life had been spent in this city in what some considered the humble capacity of a teacher. They were not indebted to fashion—which had much to do to the formation of congregations—their congregation was now a fair representation of what a congregation ought to be—it consisted of rich and poor. He laid no claim to superior sanctity, nor was he indebted to any graces of oratory. To the Lord alone was the glory due—“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto God be all the praise.” After gathering the congregation and setting the usual machinery to work for the edification of the young, their next object was to establish the whole on a proper and permanent footing. They tried to get the chapel erected into a parish, availing themselves of the Act for this purpose in 1851. As much as possible of the necessary money was raised by subscriptions, the rest was borrowed, and every shilling obtained thus for the purchase of that endowment had been swept away. The church was now free of debt, they were free to elect their own minister, and their minister was free to preach the gospel to its fullest extent, and over and above all that they had “the wee bit endowment”—(a laugh)—which had been contended for by Dr. Chalmers, they had a large and numerous attended day-school, at which the children of the locality received good education at a merely nominal fee, and those who were unable to pay were taught gratis. It was the wish of the kirk-session that every child in the parish should be educated, and they never asked to what religious denomination the parents of the children belonged. They had applied to Government some time ago, and got their teacher examined by her Majesty's inspector. The examination had passed off successfully, and the teacher had obtained a certificate entitling him to £17 a year, with assistant and pupil teachers. After some additional remarks, the chairman resumed his seat amid applause, his address having been well received.

Able and appropriate addresses were afterwards delivered by the Rev. N.M'Leod, Rev. Dr Hill, and others. During the evening a number of choruses, &c., were executed in first-rate style by St Peter's Harmonic Union, and at intervals Mr Lambeth played several fine pieces of sacred music on the organ. Services of fruit were distributed on the occasion, and the proceedings were brought to a close with the benediction.

PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH.

The ordinary monthly meeting of the Presbytery was held on Wednesday at twelve o'clock, the Rev. Dr Simpson, Kirknewton, Moderator.

Dr Muir said he was sorry to inform the Presbytery that his excellent friend, Dr. Macfarlane, was severely indisposed, and he trusted that would be a sufficient apology for his not being here to take up the motion, of which he had given notice, relative to an overture for rescinding