

fore any of these dates, Zuingle was faithfully preaching the gospel in Switzerland. The Reformation, then, is considerably more than three hundred years old.

But we celebrate the Tri-Centenary of the Reformation in Scotland. It is upwards of three centuries, however, since the Reformation was introduced into that kingdom. Patrick Hamilton, of Royal lineage, was burnt at St. Andrews, in 1528; Wishart of Dundee, in 1546. In the same year, Cardinal Beaton, their persecutor, came by his death. In 1547, John Knox received his Call as a Protestant Minister. The monastery at Perth, and other ecclesiastical edifices, in St. Andrews and other places, were demolished in 1559,—all facts shewing that the Reformation in Scotland had made no small progress prior to 1560.

Why, then, is that year signalised? Two remarkable events occurred in the course of it. First: on the 17th day of August, the Parliament ratified the Confession of Faith, which had been drawn up; and this, in the estimation of multitudes, was a grand religious triumph, never to be forgotten. My sentiments, however, I must confess, are widely different. Never can I celebrate Church and State connection. Let it be observed, that I seek to commit no one. My Fathers and Brethren think, and can speak, for themselves; but one humble individual is urged by conscience to enter his most solemn protest against a Parliamentary Creed. To the Articles of Religion, the words of an Apostle, on a different subject, may be applied:—"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Truth—Divine Truth—is great, and will prevail. Is it not profanity for puny mortals to be adding their "Be it enacted" to "Thus saith the Lord?" The other great Scottish Ecclesiastical event of the year was, that on the 20th of December, the first meeting of the General Assembly was held at Edinburgh. This seems to have been a small and homely gathering. It consisted of forty members, only six of whom were ministers, and, like the six succeeding Assemblies, it was entirely without a Moderator, or Chairman. Still no Presbyterian Protestant can contemplate it without a deep and lively interest. It met, we believe, without any appointment of Parliament or Privy Council. So far well; but there was one grievous drawback. Its entire procedure was based on that State-sanctioned Creed to which reference has just been made, and that went far to vitiate the whole. It may now be asked, Are persons holding these views quite consistent in taking part in this celebration? Our conduct, we hope, admits of vindication. Apart from the two events themselves, there is one great and glorious truth implied in them. The Reformation may be regarded as having reached a sort of culmination in the country. In the fourth century, Constantine gave a civil sanction to Christianity. Of that we strongly disapprove; but the fact may be exultingly referred to as demonstration of the progress which the gospel had made in the empire. The Christians had become so numerous and influential, that it was no longer prudent or safe to proscribe them. Expediency and good policy required that they should henceforth be recognised. Even so the triumph of Protestantism in Scotland was evinced by the lamentable fact that it was espoused by the State. What we desire, joyfully and devoutly to commemorate, then, is the growth and maturity of the reformed religion, striving, for the nonce, to forget her impure and debasing alliance with the kingdoms of this world.

The particular subject on which the Committee have done me the honour of requesting that I should briefly address you, is "The Reformation itself, and what it accomplished." It is evident that on such topics,