

Potterrow, Edinburgh; and for many years he was known to his own people, and to others whom his retiring modesty did not prevent from discovering his worth, chiefly as an able and faithful minister of Christ. Well do we recollect our first opportunity of hearing him preach in his own pulpit, thirty-three years ago. Accident and curiosity, rather than any thing else, led us to his place of worship. He discoursed on a theme interesting to young inquirers—the principles and the spirit which ought to guide in the search of religious truth. While we retain the particulars of the discourse, both in our text-book and in memory, the calm and simple dignity of his appearance, and the sterling sense and scripturality of his illustrations, are still present to our view with all the freshness of a first impression.

It was about this period that those ecclesiastical differences which had raged in the Associate body for years before, ended in an open separation of parties. We of the Establishment were looking with philosophic indifference on those supposed antiquated squabbles of sectarianism. We did not perceive then, as we do now, that in these very squabbles were involved the essential elements of the Church Establishment controversy. Dr. M'Crie stood forth at the head of a small but determined band, as the able advocate of the Christian magistrate's duty and right, not only to tolerate and protect, but to support, encourage, and maintain the church of God. The work which he then published on the point at issue, is still a standard in the controversy. To its principles he steadily adhered, with no prospect, assuredly, of worldly advantage by doing so; and later events only tended to strengthen his attachment to those thoroughly matured opinions, which, while they were productive of no secular benefit to him, were in his view associated with the progress of truth, and the universal establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom among men.

It is as the Biographer of Knox and Melville, that Dr. M'Crie has been best known and esteemed. Twenty-six years ago, the former of these works was given to the world, and its appearance formed a new era in public sentiment. "Knox and his Scottish Reformation" had been spoken of with contempt, and even their best friends were afraid to commit themselves in their favour. The "Life of Knox" effected a change in public opinion. The character of the reformer was found to be much more amiable and estimable than we had supposed. Even the proud admirers of a literature merely secular, found to their amazement that the Reformation in Scotland involved in it interests more valuable than the mere "battles of churchmen;" while the high-minded Episcopalians of England were taught to set some bounds to their hereditary contumely of the Reformer of the North.

The "Life of Melville," if, from its subject and the character of those struggles which it records, less popular than that of Knox, is not less interesting and

valuable to the lovers of literature and of the Church. From the era of the death of Knox, to the commencement of the seventeenth century, it embraced a period of deep interest to the church, and the views which it exhibited of the noble contests of our fathers against prelatical ascendancy and arbitrary power, could not fail to interest and edify every true lover of our Zion.

It is perhaps to be regretted that Dr. M'Crie did not see meet to prosecute his historical researches into the later events of the Church, and to have given us, in the shape of a Life of Henderson, the third of Scotland's sacred champions, a just view of a much-contested, but in our view, signally glorious period of our history. The "Assembly of Divines at Westminster," too, the illustrious authors of our Confession and Catechisms, would have come forth from the trial of his independent and sifting search, in their true characters and in their just dimensions. Nevertheless, we have to bless God for those valuable services which he rendered to the same cause, in his "Memoirs of Veitch and Brysson," and in his triumphant Vindication of the Covenants of Scotland. We have also to record, with gratitude, his services to the cause of our common Christianity, in those truly original works on Spain and Italy, in which the rise, the progress, and the fall of the Reformation in those countries, were for the first time brought before the eye of the English reader.

Dr. M'Crie was not a merely literary man—his spirit was large and philanthropic. He took a deep and active interest in those great questions which have of late years engaged the public mind. The progress of civil and religious liberty; the state of Christianity on the Continent; the persecution of the Protestants in France; the cause of slave emancipation; the improvement of Ireland; the Reformation of the Church of Scotland, particularly in the abolition of the system of Patronage—did severally engage his attention, and call forth his energies and eloquence.

Dr. M'Crie was not a public man only—he was faithful as a pastor; he was truly amiable as a private friend; he was admirably consistent in all the relations of private and social life.

"Like Elijah of old, he has been translated from our view; and his friends, his family, his congregation, and the universal Church, mourn their loss. But the great Shepherd reigns; and with 'Him is the residue of the spirit.' May his Spirit descend to sanctify the trial; and may the word of the Lord have free course and be glorified.