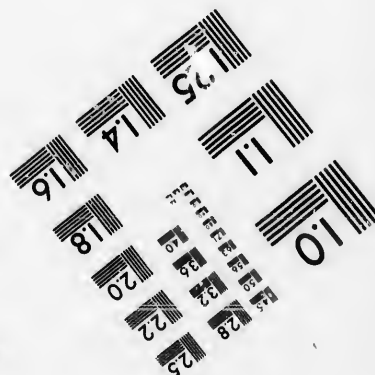
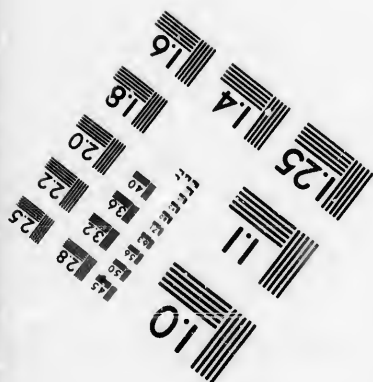
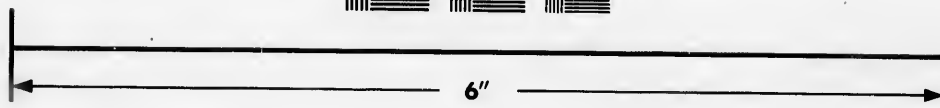
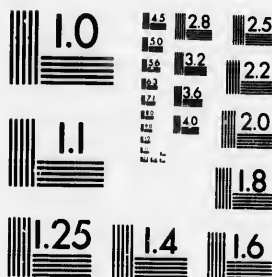


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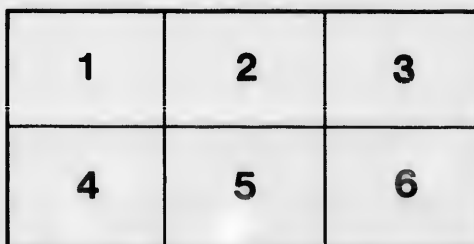
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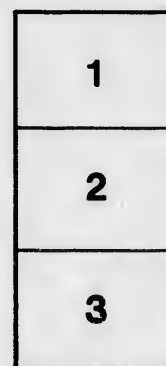
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THE TIMES OF OLD, AND THEIR HAPPY MEMORIES.

A DISCOURSE,

IN TWO PARTS,

Preached in St. Andrew's Church, Toronto,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES CONNECTED WITH

THE TRICENTENARY

OF THE

Scottish Reformation.

BY

JOHN BARCLAY, D. D.

23rd DECEMBER, 1860.

Toronto.

PRINTED AT THE LEADER STEAM-PRESS, 63 KING STREET EAST.

1861.

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TO
THE CONGREGATION
OF
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, TORONTO,
THIS DISCOURSE,
PREACHED TO THEM ON THE
TRICENTENARY OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION,
AND NOW
PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR.

121189

*At St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, the Thirtieth Day of
May, Eighteen Hundred and Sixty years ; which
day the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of
Canada, in connection with the Church of Scot-
land having met and been constituted,*

Inter alia,

“The report of the Committee on the celebration of the Tricentenary of the Scottish Reformation having been called for was read by the Clerk. The Committee recommend the Synod to instruct all the Ministers of this Church to direct the attention of their people to the character and results of the Scottish Reformation, by appropriate discourses to be delivered on the sixteenth day of December next, the Sabbath next preceding the day on which the First General Assembly was held at Edinburgh, three hundred years ago. The Synod adopt the report and instruct the Clerk to send a printed extract of the said recommendation to each Minister of the Church in sufficient time before the 16th of December next.”

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Owing to an appointment previously given him by the Presbytery of Toronto, of which he is a member, to preach in a distant part of the country on the 16th December, the Author was prevented by the necessary absence from his own pulpit, from complying with the Synod's instructions on the day named in the above extract. The first Sabbath thereafter—the 23rd December, was therefore substituted by him as a fit occasion on which to direct the minds of his People to the subject of the Scottish Reformation. The following Discourse, preached on the morning and continued in the evening of that day, is now printed at the request of many who heard it. Though written without any view to greater publicity than that implied in its being preached to his own Congregation, the Author does not feel at liberty to withhold it from publication, considering the urgent nature of the request made to him in the name of so many respected Friends to allow it to be printed. He now commits it to the press as a Memorial of the Religious Service in which, along with his People, he was privileged to engage in commemoration of the Tricentenary of the great Event which was the crowning glory of the Age that witnessed it and experienced its immediate benefits, and from which, even in the present day, there may be drawn wise and salutary lessons for our own admonition and guidance.

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DISCOURSE.

PSALM XLIV. 1.

“ We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their day, in the times of old.”

Novelty and change are more attractive to some minds than to others. There are individuals to be met with whose estimate of things is largely influenced by a regard to their antiquity—whose interest in objects and events appears to be excited, and their commendation bestowed thereon, almost in direct proportion to their own distance from them. With a profound veneration for what is old, and because it is so, they talk of the degeneracy of the present age, and moralize on the causes why “the former days were better than these.” It is distance that, to a large extent, in such a case lends enchantment to the scene, as they thus contemplate the Past with its hallowed memories of what are piously styled “the good old times of our Fathers.” It is evident, however, that the world is older now than it was then : and if age bring experience and improvement, the Present is entitled to be styled the world’s more advanced maturity.

There is on the other hand a class of persons to be found, whose prejudices are arrayed against whatever is old—who regard the past as a very *Nazareth* out of which can come no good thing ; and with whom novelty is improvement—who are ever ready to dis-

card old opinions, old principles, old beliefs, and old modes of action for the sake of the more attractive innovations that successively claim their regard.

To adopt either of these extremes, as a rule to be always followed, would manifestly be to err. The right and safe course, doubtless, lies between. Practical wisdom in such matters is just the proper discrimination betwixt their respective claims, and the happy selection of whatever is best, whether it be old or new.

In the present day there is an earnest and constant pressing onwards in the march of human discovery, as if the progress of the world were carrying us among the only things worth the having; and as if mankind had seen but little real good until now. Nor can it be denied that much substantial improvement, in all departments of human knowledge, has flowed from that mental activity which so greatly distinguishes the age in which we live. But with all that is good in tendency and beneficial in attainment in this exploration of new fields of thought and effort, there is one evil mixed up, which must be closely watched and carefully guarded against—that, amid the incessant struggles for success in the field of new discovery, all the old and beaten paths are apt to be entirely forsaken. Doubtless, from this ever restless search after new truths to supplant the old, much important benefit has been, and may yet be, secured, in many departments of mental application. It is thus that the domain of Science, of Literature, and of the Arts, has been widely and successfully explored, and is still being profitably cultivated. Hence, the wonderful advance, now to be witnessed, of the material pros-

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perity and general improvement that abound. For these triumphs the world is indebted to that freedom of thought and that mental activity which form a leading characteristic of these times. To that success however, previous generations have largely contributed, in the discoveries they made, in the principles they unfolded, and even by the very failures they met with in their efforts to build up the temple of human knowledge. Science has recorded her indebtedness to former workers in her cause ; and Literature and the Arts have likewise their great names of preceding successful seekers after knowledge, which have an honored place in the annals of the world.

But with regard to Religious principle ; to purity of Doctrine ; and to the influence of Christian truth in the hearts and lives of the community at large, a like pre-eminence can not be truly claimed for the present day—nor can there be asserted on its behalf, the exclusive possession of triumphs before unknown. Nay, are we not largely indebted to the deep thinkers of a former age—to the zealous, and learned and pious labours of previous workers in the field of religious meditation, and belief, and effort, for the invaluable privileges we enjoy, as those to whom a noble inheritance of religious and national blessings have descended ? They were at least the sowers of much of that rich harvest of good we are now permitted to reap.

It has been deemed a fit acknowledgment of a deep debt of gratitude we owe for our Spiritual Privileges, and even for our Civil Freedom, to commemorate the work of Reformation, which, three centuries ago was consummated, when, freed from the er-

rors and corruptions in doctrine that had gradually accumulated around the faith of the Christian Church, our Forefathers laid anew the foundations of our Scottish Zion on the truths which Apostles had preached, and for which martyrs had died—Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

What is claimed for the Reformers of Religion in the Sixteenth Century, was, not so much the discovery of new truths, as the revival and re-assertion of the old—the return to old paths that had been forsaken ; to old doctrines that had been renounced ; and to old principles that had been set at nought. It was no small service done to the cause of Truth, and yet a task of no easy accomplishment, thus, from the rubbish of human corruptions that had accumulated around the Temple of God's Worship ; and from the superstitions which had been the growth of ages ; from errors in doctrine that had well nigh entirely supplanted the Truth of God in the hearts of men ; and from delusions in practice, wherein its influence had been all but entirely lost, a purer faith was evolved and a more Scriptural system established. Directly from God's own Word were drawn those articles of belief, in accordance with which the lessons of true Religion were to be impressed on the fleshly tablets of the hearts of succeeding generations.

The subject, thus indicated, is manifestly too extensive to be disposed of within the limits of a single discourse. At present we may not be able to do more than glance hurriedly at a few of its leading facts and circumstances, whilst, in obedience to the injunction of the Synod of our Church, we direct your attention to the *character* and *results* of the

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Scottish Reformation. In one view it is only part of a subject with which, as thus enunciated, we have at present to deal : for the Reformation embraced other Countries as well as that from which so many of us have sprung ; and in other Churches besides the Church of Scotland, the Reformed Faith had its triumph. But if history is to be credited, it is doubtful whether, among all the daughters of the Reformation, there was a fairer than she : or whether the reformation-attainments of any Land equalled those which ere long covered our Father-land with a Bible-instructed and God-fearing people, whose praise for industry, intelligence, and Christian worth, has for many generations been among all kindreds of the world.

To a proper estimate of what the Reformation did for Scotland, it is necessary to look at the *state of Religion*, and the *abuses* that had long prevailed. Upon this topic let a few general observations suffice.

It is assuredly no congenial task to dilate upon the doctrinal errors ; the puerile superstitions ; the degrading ignorance ; the rank imposture ; the unblushing profligacy ; or the grasping extortion ;—all things the very opposite of what true Religion teaches, but which then usurped its name. Yet something on this point is requisite to prove the necessity, and vindicate the propriety, of that separation from Rome which was effected when the Church of the Reformation came forth from the conflict with the “ Man of sin,” to enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free to serve God in sincerity and truth.

Powerful, in a temporal sense, the Church, unreformed, had long been, in Scotland as elsewhere

throughout Christendom: with no lack of means at her command—for a large proportion of the wealth of the nation was in the hands of her Clergy, who also wielded the power, usurped the honors, and monopolized the chief offices of the State. Thus successfully rivaling in opulence, and influence in the conduct of public affairs, the ancient Nobility of the land, the natural leaders of the people; the Priesthood had raised an Ecclesiastical superstructure which bid fair to maintain its pre-eminence over all the interests, public and private, of the commonwealth. But with these ingredients of worldly greatness and stability there were mingled elements of weakness which tended to corrupt and destroy the fabric that had been so successfully upreared. Amid the pomp of secular power and the glitter of worldly glory, the main object of the Christian Church was overlooked, and the true interests of Religion set at nought. Superstitious mummeries usurped the place of enlightened devotion. Gospel truth, to a large extent, was discarded by the Clergy, or hidden from the people in what was to them the jargon of an unknown tongue in which the public religious services of the Church were rendered. The great cardinal doctrine of the One Mediator between God and Man was made to give place to the tenet of a multitude of intercessors. The efficacy of the One Sacrifice for sin was practically abandoned for the priestly sacrifices of the Mass, aided by the penances and pilgrimages by which their merit was supposed to be enhanced. Instead of the preaching of sound doctrine of Jesus and the resurrection, as Paul preached it; and, to a large extent, as a substitute for those exalted truths of the Bible,

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which should form the subject of every Gospel sermon ; history has had to tell us of unprofitable declamations on puerile legends ; of florid commendations of the efficacy of wealth devoted to the Church ; of masses for the repose of the souls of the dead ; of the virtues of holy water, and the highly-prized relics by whose influence pretended miracles were wrought ; and of the priestly power over the pains of purgatory, and in the release of the souls of the departed at their intercession !

For the growth and consolidation of such a system of error, ignorance on the part of the people was the best preparation ; and was encouraged and prescribed as the best rule : whilst blind submission to the priesthood was inculcated as the most binding of duties. People accustomed to be thus blindly led in matters spiritual, could not be expected to value any other kind of liberty. Hence, even Civil Freedom was but little known and less regarded. The Civil Power was prostrate at the feet of those who wielded the ghostly terrors of the other world, over which they claimed a familiar authority, for the accomplishment of their purposes in this—many of these ends being of the most questionable kind. As lords paramount over things sacred by virtue of their office, and over things civil as representing the spiritual Father who claimed as Christ's vice-gerent on earth to exercise absolute authority over Prince and people, the priesthood wielded a power which none might safely dispute : and in their hands all liberty had been laid in the dust, save the liberty they themselves claimed, and so sternly exercised, of maintaining their own usurped authority and influence as su-

preme in the land. Any one bold enough to doubt the propriety, or discredit the efficacy, of this counterfeit of Religion;—any, resolute enough to avow the conviction that surely Christianity was something different from this mere caricature of it;—and, be he of high or low degree, any one whose conscience responded to the truth, not as it had been vitiated by a corrupt priesthood, but as it had been uttered by Christ himself; upheld by His Apostles; and preserved in the record of God's Word; was certain to be branded with the odious name, and to incur the risk of the cruel fate, of the Heretic.

The Popish system had not been completed at once. Its progress had been gradual—the growth of ages; but its success had been great. In some respects it consisted of excrescences that had grown upon, or rather been engrafted by human hands into, the original stock of the tree of Scriptural knowledge. In other respects it comprised errors of the most dangerous kind, that were substituted for the pure and simple truth as it is in Jesus. At first, perhaps secretly insinuated, but at length openly avowed—believed—taught; an unscriptural system of erroneous doctrine had well nigh entirely supplanted the ancient Church of Christ. History has recorded how one corruption was added to another, until few traces remained visible of the bright original of that fair edifice of the Christian Church, which had been the glory of Apostolic times. A temple of superstitions seemed to occupy its place; and around it, and crouching within it, at the feet of a usurping priesthood, Scotland—Europe—Christendom—lay like a trembling slave, abject and in chains!

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Not unopposed had the tide of corruption swept over the visible Church. All along, here and there, were there awakening doubts, and opposing scruples and deepening convictions in the hearts of men; and sometimes these broke out into an open testimony against the prevailing errors and corrupting influences of the times. Prominent among those who thus regained or preserved the truth of former and better ages, may be named the Waldenses, who in their sub-Alpine homes maintained a constant opposition to Romish tyranny; and in whose opinions may be traced many of the leading principles of the Reformation which they thus anticipated. The still more ancient Culdees, in a remote island on the Atlantic coast of Scotland, had long maintained an opposing testimony to the false doctrines and debasing superstitions which so extensively prevailed. The steadfast conformity of that interesting people to the better system and purer faith of Apostolic times, served as a standing protest against the accumulating errors of Rome: and the ruins of Iona in a remote corner of our native land, still preserve the memory of those who there were witnesses for the truth in times of prevailing error and iniquity. The traveller who, at this day, visits that distant scene of their pious labours, beholds, in those now mouldered and moss-grown ruins of former temples, the traces of the existence of that singular community of learned and pious men, whose memory is precious as having retained the lamp of divine truth, trimmed with the pure oil of the Sanctuary, and shining with all the greater brilliance, because of the surrounding darkness, as a beacon to others and for their own guidance and

comfort in their remote island home. For ages before the Reformation these witnesses had lifted their testimony for the pure gospel, stript of the superstitions with which Rome had covered it. But, long ere that event we now commemorate, even their day was over ; their community dispersed ; their temples had fallen into decay ; and the night of spiritual darkness seemed blackest just before the dawn of the Reformation drew nigh.

Single and solitary witnesses had appeared, each with his own individual testimony, as the leadings of Providence, the convictions of their own mind, and the workings of the Holy Ghost within them had moved them thereto ; and by their earnest assertion of the truth which they had drawn in its purity directly from God's own Word, startled the public mind, and riveted the attention of interested observers, by the boldness of their opposition to the prevailing errors and iniquity of their times. On the continent of Europe that light from Heaven broke upon Luther in his Monkish cell at Wittemburg ; as it had previously dawned upon Wickliffe in England, whose works—especially his translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the vernacular of his country, helped, to some extent, to bring the truth to the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. Although it was reserved for Tindal, more than a century afterwards to employ the noble art of printing, which in the interval had been discovered, to send forth from the press the English version of the Scriptures which bears his name ; so that the blessed radiance of the Gospel in its purity and power, was thus made to enter the homes, and cheer the hearts, and enliven the fire-

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sides of the common people. Over the world, indeed, there were minds of more than ordinary vigour which caught the inspiration of that celestial truth, thus emerging from the dark clouds of Popish error which had so long obscured it. Like the lofty mountain peaks skirting their horizon, on which the earliest rays of light fall at the break of day, there were men of zealous minds and powerful intellects ; of tender consciences and warm hearts, who were raised up by Divine Providence to take an important part in the coming work of Reformation ; and who, being themselves enlightened with the truth in its simplicity and fulness, became in turn reflectors of its light for the benefit of the dark world in which they dwelt.

Among these may be mentioned the great Bohe-
 mian, John Huss, who in the cause of truth, to which under the influence of the works of Wickliffe he had himself been brought, had his brief day of opposi-
 tion to the errors and iniquities of Rome : and who for his fidelity to his convictions had paid the forfeit of his life. Jerome of Prague had followed him both in a like work and to a similar fate. And the Church which, in its corruptions of doctrine and practice, they had for a time startled from its indifference by their accusations ; and roused into fury by their ex-
 posures ; seemed as if about to fall back again into its former repose. But a cord had been struck whose vibrations were not thus to cease. The abuses by which the Popish system was characterized were too gross to be longer acquiesced in by men of in-
 quiring minds.

In the land of our Fathers that spirit of resistance

to long established error was kindled in the hearts of many of her sons; and developed itself ere long in the strong desire and resolute determination to know and avow, and maintain the Truth, notwithstanding whatsoever trouble or peril might arise. And Providence prepared its own instruments there for the accomplishment of its own work of reforming the Church. Names of imperishable renown start forth from the page of History to meet the inquiry into the character of the instrumentality employed in that work of Reformation, to deliver the land from the errors, the iniquities, the spiritual tyranny and degrading superstitions which had so long wasted its strength and defaced its beauty: and a host of martyrs to the cause of truth and of liberty of conscience proclaim, in the cruel fate that cut them off, the risk they so courageously ran, and the power they so fearlessly defied, in defence of religious truth and freedom!

Among those martyred pioneers of the Reformation in Scotland, the names of George Wishart, and Patrick Hamilton, a youth of royal lineage, have an honored place. They had many followers, who sympathized with them in their work, and of whom not a few shared their fate--testifying as effectually by their deaths as by their lives, against the evils they sought to remedy.

But, for the prosecution of the work of exposing abuses that had led men so long, and so far, astray, and had so greatly debased and perverted the religious sentiments of the people, living guides were needed to lead back the popular belief to the true faith of Christ: and such instruments God in his

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good Providence raised up for its accomplishment, and preserved them for its completion.

The very magnitude of the errors to be exposed, and of the abuses to be remedied, made it in one sense, an easy task, to show how far from the true path the unreformed Church had departed. But for the practical application of the remedy the difficulties were thereby increased—considering the number, the position, the influence of those whose worldly interests were involved in perpetuating the false system; and in view of the general ignorance in which the great body of the people had been so long kept.

Allowance to some extent ought to be made for the influence of habit which had familiarized the people at large with the vices of a system that could not long bear the light of day. For errors, long accepted, come to look like truths; and habits, long indulged, become a second nature to mankind. But, if on the one hand allowances are to be made for the unfavorable circumstances which rendered it difficult to cast off the influence of habit and of the settled order of things: so, on the other hand, all the greater credit is due to those who did so—who, though trained under a system of error and superstition which deadened their sensibilities, had yet the penetration to detect, the courage to oppose, and the perseverance to renounce long-established abuses, and to desist not from their efforts until a better and purer system was erected in its room.

It is not often, perhaps not so frequently as it should be, that there are pronounced from Protestant pulpits, the names of those to whose exertions in the

cause of Truth and Liberty of Conscience the world owes so much. The excuse is, that the proper theme of the pulpit, in Protestant estimate, is not the servant however faithful, nor the instrument however honored, but the Great Master whose cause they promote—the One Name given among men whereby sinners are saved. Still it seems appropriate that in a special service, in which, by direction of the Church, we this day engage in commemoration of that Reformation which three centuries ago blessed our fatherland, and made it a blessing to so many other lands; we should give honour to whom honour is due, in that subordinate sense in which it may be rendered to human instruments, and yet in that high degree to which zealous and successful labourers are entitled, who in such an enterprise did their work so well. In that field of service in the cause of Truth and of a pure Faith, no name stands higher for great achievements in reforming the abuses of the Church—none assuredly was oftener pronounced with execration by his foes, and the opponents of his work—whilst by the friends of truth no name was uttered with greater respect for his great public services, than was the name of John Knox, who has been styled the Father of the Scottish Reformation: and with him, and after him, a noble band who contended for a Scriptural Church, a pure Faith and a Form of Worship founded on the Word of God, and adapted to the simplicity which is in Christ.

To the super-refinement of the present age, it might appear to have been too stern a heart and too rude a hand, that was employed in demolishing the fabric of superstition which had usurped the name of the

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Christian Church in Scotland. But much of that is to be ascribed to the general rudeness of those times. Moreover, it was just of such material and temper, that the weapon had to be forged for the successful demolition of so long-established a system of errors which had for ages held the minds of men in bondage. That work had to be carried on in opposition to power and authority in the land; and despite all the devices and doings of many interested opponents. But it was in the hands of those who never feared the face of man: whom neither courtly influences when they were tried; nor royal mandates, for they too were issued; nor priestly denunciations, then deemed so formidable; nor efforts of any and every kind, could turn from the great purpose of delivering the Nation from the incubus of a corrupt Form of Religion; and whom not even entreaties from royal lips, nor tears from royal eyes—albeit they were the fairest in the land, could divert from the onward march of a successful refutation of prevailing errors, or prevent the re-establishment of the Church on the ancient foundations of the Faith as delivered unto the Saints.

Time would fail us to trace, with all the minuteness that could be wished, the onward history of that remarkable change, which in the good Providence of God was in due time accomplished, when the Reformed Faith was at length firmly established in the land of our Fathers. That every step was wisely taken, or that every individual who contributed in any way by his efforts to its success, was actuated only by the purest and most disinterested motives, could not indeed be truly affirmed, and is more than

ought reasonably to be looked for. Nor would it be fair to require this ere admitting the greatness and glory of the work. In short, it would be to forget that those instruments were human, and *to err* is an attribute of humanity. Besides there were so many interests of the commonwealth involved in the change, that individuals of all classes in the community might well combine, when the way was thus opened up, to accomplish the overthrow of that gigantic system of error from which all suffered. Mainly, it was strictly a religious movement, and as such it was well and wisely carried on by those who had drunk from the pure fountain of the Water of Life, and who therefore sought, themselves, to avoid, and to lead others to forsake, the bitter waters of error and superstition that had so long flowed in such copious streams.

But then, as a system of tyranny, Popery had long lorded it, not only over the souls of men whom it kept in spiritual ignorance and degradation, but also over their natural rights and liberties, in all matters pertaining to the common weal. So that civil as well as social—secular as well as religious freedom had to be asserted. And accomplished at length the task fully and finally was, when the land rejoiced under the Reformed Faith, which not only gave liberty to conscience, but also laid the foundation of those social and political rights which have since been developed and consolidated.

On the whole it may be safely affirmed that no event in the history of the world, save the original introduction of Christianity itself by our Lord and his Apostles, has equalled in the magnitude of its

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blessings, the great Reformation in the sixteenth century, which witnessed the overthrow of a mighty system of error, under which the land had long groaned; and the introduction in its room, of that pure system of the Reformed Faith, which, if but true to itself, and true to its mission, will continue to be the bulwark of all that is worth guarding in the liberties of the world, and in the destiny of man.

If true to itself and to its mission, as we have said, such blessings may be expected to flow from that work of reformation, which in no land more thoroughly than in the land of our fathers was achieved. This consideration points to the *results* of the Reformation and the *responsibility* connected with that inheritance, which now exists, of a Pure Faith; a Scriptural Church; Liberty of Conscience, with its attendant benefits; and all the Religious and Social blessings that follow in their train.

To these topics we purpose to direct your attention in the evening. Meanwhile, from what has already been advanced respecting the great things our fathers have told us of this work of God in their day, let us learn to be ever duly grateful for our inestimable religious privileges—not more that we enjoy a freedom from Romish *tyranny*, than that the *truth* doth make us free from Romish *error*! Yet, what are principles however excellent, if they be not clung to and developed? What are privileges, however important, if they be not valued and acted up to? What is a noble heritage of spiritual achievements if not perpetuated in a yet nobler posterity of true Christians on whom the glory of those great things of which our fathers have told us may worthily de-

scend? That we may gracefully wear the honours thus won, and prove ourselves worthy of such an ancestry—the fit possessors of such an heir-loom; let us hold, let us imitate, let us rival in true christian spirit, their achievements in the faith; let us preserve the memory, yea the reality also of those great things which God did by them “in the days of old.” As the world advances in its progress, new opportunities arise for the application of the enduring and expansive principles of a pure Christianity; new claims spring out of new circumstances as they appear. The openings for the exercise of a large-hearted Christian benevolence are continually widening and multiplying throughout the world; the march of Christian enterprise is onward amid the wants of the human race; the call ever is to be up and doing in the work of the Lord. Shall we not then prove ourselves worthy of such a patrimony of spiritual freedom?

Let us seek in the grace of Christ our Lord and Master, to follow him in all things—obeying *His* voice who, as the Good Shepherd, gave his life for the sheep. In so far as those, whose faith and patience we admire, followed Christ, let us walk in their footsteps and not be weary in well-doing. The life on earth is but the preparation for the life hereafter. If in view of that hereafter you wish to enter at last on a happy and glorious immortality, remember that that inheritance is Heaven—the holy heaven where “angels ever bright and fair” do serve their glorious King: and that the *rest* there is neither slumber nor superannuation; but the ever active service of hearts, then made perfect in love, that have learned to re-

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pose themselves in God—dwelling ever in the light of His countenance. The work there ought to direct and regulate the work here, which is the preparation for it. We may be zealous for our own peculiar forms of Worship and church-organization. It may be—it is very right that this should be the case: for where these are scriptural, as I firmly believe ours to be, it would be wrong for us to be indifferent to them. But after all, the main value of these things is a value that is reflected upon them from the spiritual glory of the inner life of faith, with which as its instrumentality they are associated. In one sense they are but the scaffold for the building—yet even the form of the scaffold is important: or they are but as an outer court to the holy temple of the Church invisible. It may be—it is well to have all these accessories to the true worship of God as near as may be to the pattern of a close conformity to God's Word. But let us not rest contented with a place on the scaffold, upon which the materials are laid for the erection of the holy edifice of the Church of God: let it be our highest ambition to have a place in the temple itself, which God is erecting, of renewed hearts, to his own praise and to the glory of his great Name—that as living stones we all may be built up into a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God by Jesus Christ. Thus learning the language of the heavenly country, while yet on the way to it, we may at last, in the temple above, sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb—to whom be glory for ever and ever.

PART II.

PSALM XLIV., 1.

“We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou did'st in their day in the times of old.”

In addressing you from these words in the forenoon, and using the text by way of accommodation to our own circumstances in the Commemorative service to which this day is more especially devoted, we traced the history of that great reformation from Popery, which was the crowning fact of the Sixteenth Century of the Christian era. In a rapid sketch of those times of which “our fathers have told us,” we glanced at the condition of affairs previous to that work of reformation, which has made the date of its occurrence memorable in the world's history as an Epoch second in importance to scarcely any other. We saw that the Church needed reformation; not as reformation may be needed now, or at other and ordinary times, when the professors of religion have to be stirred up to greater zeal in their masters work,—for what times have ever witnessed such perfection as to admit of no improvement in this respect?—but as *that* needs to be reformed which had well nigh entirely departed from the Truth, and lost almost the very semblance of pure religion, amid the errors, the superstitions, and the ignorance that occupied its place. And as reformation was needed so God in His Providence raised up fitting instruments for its accomplishment. The truth, not as an unfaithful priesthood had presented it, in combination with the alloy of human errors, but as it came once more in its purity and power, directly

from its divine source, reached the hearts of men of the right stamp, here and there throughout the land. Their own minds were fired by it to the holy purpose of casting off errors that had long enslaved them, and of receiving and holding the truth of God, purified from the glosses, the superstitions, and follies that had obscured it; and the lamp of truth, in its bright and beautiful radiance, they held up for the guidance of their fellow-men. The attempt to smother the flame of that light now struggling into life, by striking down the hands that held it, only served to draw attention to the grossness of the darkness which prevailed around. The fires of persecution that were lighted up to consume the rising testimony, by silencing the witnesses who lifted it, served as beacons to attract the notice of observers from afar; and thus to attentive ears that other class of witnesses spake, such as Luther and Melancthon, Zwingli and Calvin, in other lands; and Knox and his able coadjutors, men of kindred spirit and ardent minds in Scotland, who exposed in burning words the doctrinal errors, the unscriptural teachings, and the degrading practices that had so long prevailed there under the name of religion, but from which its spirit and reality had all but entirely been abstracted. Thus the beacon-flame of truth, which was kindled on the Continent of Europe, shone into other Lands; answering lights started into brightness, disclosing more effectually the surrounding gloom; and ere long did it appear that the spark had gained such warmth and brilliancy as to become a fire that could not be extinguished.

We have contemplated the spectacle which our father-land presented, ere the Reformation dawned upon it; we have seen the need there was for the change, and we have glanced at the instruments that were employed in its accomplishment. We proceed now to consider the *result* of their labours in establishing the Reformed Faith and the manifold *blessings* that attended it,—deducing therefrom, as we proceed, such lessons as may suggest themselves, of gratitude, of obligation, of responsibility as to our own treatment of that noble inheritance of faith and freedom,—the Church reformed, the Nation enlightened, Religion, pure and undefiled, triumphant, from which so many blessings have flowed to ourselves and to the world at large.

I. A leading result of the Reformation—a fundamental object had in view in it, was the correction of the errors, the delusions, the deceits with which the Truth of God had been obscured, and Religion perverted in its character and aims.

In saying this we say much in its praise: for surely nothing is more requisite in a guide, than that he should be true to his mission and trustworthy in his directions. The Gospel, instead of having been suffered to lift its own testimony in purity and fullness, had long been shorn of some of its leading truths; and was then, as held forth to the people, at best but as a light under a bushel—unknown, unproclaimed, unrealized in its freeness and genuineness as the Truth which sanctifies and saves. The doctrine of the justification of the sinner by the faith of Jesus, and other kindred doctrines, which had long been kept in the back ground, or utterly ignored,

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were now restored to their true place in the Christian system as expounded to the people. True, it was but an opinion or a system of opinions that was thus recovered—a tenet, or article of faith, that was thus resuscitated from the tomb of ages where unbelief and practical irreligion had buried it. But it is by opinion that the world is now mainly governed—it is by what men know, and believe, and truly avow as their convictions and sentiments, that their lives are regulated and their hopes sustained. Of mightiest importance then it is that the light that is in men should not be darkness—that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as God has revealed it, should be their guide. In this respect the Reformation was but a return to the fountain-head for the pure Water of Life, instead of drinking at the polluted streams of human admixture. It was a dispersion of the mists that obscured—the clouds that concealed the bright rays of that Sun of Righteousness, whose light was intended by its great Author for the spiritual illumination of man; but which purpose had for ages been thwarted by the dark covering of error that concealed its brightness from the view. In stripping off the false glosses, the erroneous interpretations, the substituted errors which deformed the true “analogy of faith,” the Reformation laid fresh hold of the great central truths of Divine Revelation, by which alone the world can be truly Christianized; and it held them forth, in their pristine purity, for the spiritual enlightenment and the moral guidance of man. Thus the Gospel could once more be preached in all its extent, and in all its power, as the source of unnumbered blessings to sinners—to whom

it offers salvation without money and without price. Assuredly, if ought has since marred the progress of that Truth as it is in Jesus, in its influence over the minds and hearts of men, it must have arisen from the unfaithful use of the privilege of a free Gospel preached amongst us; and not from any insufficiency in that Gospel itself as an instrument of Divine appointment; nor from any lack of liberty, now, fully and freely to proclaim it. If any truth may move human hearts in the right direction, of the fear and service of God, it must be the truth which God has revealed for that end, presented in its entirety as a perfect system of faith and manners. In that shape it *was* presented as embodied in the Articles of our Reformed Church, which offer Christ to the poor sinner, that by faith in that only Saviour, he might be accepted of God and obtain the inheritance of Eternal Life. It is to the enduring credit of the great and good men, who were the instruments of accomplishing the Scottish Reformation, which on this day we are called specially to commemorate; that they glorified not themselves, but their Lord and Master; that they preached, not *Churchism* but *Christ*; and that to lead the sinner to the only Saviour, the one Mediator between God and man, was their high aim and acknowledged duty. This has continued until now one of our stereotyped privileges, thus received at the period of the Reformation, which threw down the barriers that kept the people apart from Christ, and in ignorance of the saving knowledge he imparts.

Grateful then assuredly we ought to be for this privilege of a pure Gospel, preached nowhere in

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greater purity than in the land of our Fathers; and carried with us, a blessed patrimony, to this new region of the globe, as the channel of unnumbered blessings to yourselves and your children. If you know aught of the saving change wrought by that Gospel when duly received into the heart, you will prize the inestimable privilege of its possession—praising God for his mercy, and honouring those who were the instruments of securing it. Better than all the inheritances of this world, which parcel out its properties to earth's favoured ones, is the birth-right of a pure Faith—a free Gospel—and an unfettered Pulpit from which the Truth of God may be fearlessly and reverently proclaimed. How should you shew your gratitude for this, better than by yourselves holding fast the truth as a precious treasure in your hearts, and seeking to disseminate it around you; that its influence may prevail over ignorance, error, superstition, and all forms of irreligion, until “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea?” A pure gospel demands a pure faith in those who hold it—the response of hearts pervaded by its principles and open to its calls;—of minds guided by its instructions and animated with its hopes;—and of lives that are indeed epistles of all the Christian graces it inculcates, to be seen and read of all men.

II. Besides the preaching of the cross of Christ in the freeness of its offers and the fulness of its blessings to the children of men, another leading result of the Reformation, closely allied therewith, is *the possession of an open Bible*—the word of God made free to all. Little as some who are unfaithful to their

principles may regard this right to search the Scriptures, yet it was one which, before the Reformation, was practically denied to the people at large. Shut up from the public eye as the Word of God had long been, by its careful retention under the seal of a language unknown to the common people—its perusal forbidden even to those who understood the Greek or Hebrew originals—the very priesthood themselves but poorly versed in the contents of the sacred volume; that blessed Book had long been kept as far as possible from the observation and perusal of those for whose benefit it was revealed from Heaven. Treated by the Romish Priesthood in the pre-reformation period, almost like the Eleusinian mysteries, which were carefully guarded from the profane gaze—or like the responses of the Oracles of Heathen Mythology, that were purposely made equivocal and ambiguous, so as the better to uphold a system of fraud and imposture. So was the Word of God treated, in perverting its meaning to suit the ends of the priesthood, and in the careful exclusion of the people from its perusal that they might be the better deceived; until at the Reformation the sacred pages of the Inspired Volume were made free to every inquirer; and, as at the first, when it was said by our blessed Lord himself, “Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of me,” so now the Bible became practically the property of all, to be searched and known, as the charter of the hopes, and the guide to the footsteps of mankind in their pilgrimage to another and a better world.

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The poor captive of Satan may now read its blessed announcements, and have the chains of his spiritual captivity stricken off! The anxious inquirer may read for himself, and find Jesus in the words which Jesus spake for such as he; and thus the way may be made plain in which he should walk, even as Christ also walked! The sceptic may read that Word and have his doubts resolved or his disbelief dissipated, by that light of Divine Truth which can penetrate even the darkest recesses of the human heart, and expose the follies that brood there; and substitute in their room the gladdening influence of faith and hope in God, and in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent! The worldly-minded may read—it is open to their inspection, that they may learn how poor is the exchange which gains the world with the loss of the soul! The troubled, the tried, the afflicted may have recourse to the same blessed Word, and draw from what is written there, of the grace and love of the Lord, all that is needed for their comfort and consolation—enabling them even to derive benefit from their manifold distresses: for it is the Word of Him “who giveth beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” and who can cause all things to work together for good to those that love him! The erring and backsliding may read God’s Holy Word, and, admonished of their wanderings, be brought back to the path from which they had strayed—to the fold they had forsaken! The true and faithful disciple of Christ may read—it is his privilege and delight to do so, that he may have his spirit refreshed with the blessed words of the Lord Jesus,

and his heart animated to be steadfast unto the end, knowing that in due season he shall reap if he faint not! The dying believer may read, or recall with rapture the blessed truths he so oft had pored over, of the grace and blessedness pertaining to the Christian pilgrimage and the heavenly rest—so that strengthened by the promises and cheered by the hopes of the Gospel in which he stands; and thus refreshed by blessed memories of the Saviour's words of kindness and of comfort, which seem to speak in articulate utterance from the sacred page; he goes down trustfully to the dark valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil, for in faith he sees by his side, that Saviour who saith to every follower of His, "Lo I am with you, alway, even unto the end of the world," and whose "rod and staff shall comfort him!"

Had the Reformation done no more than open the Sacred Volume by the firesides, and in the closets of the people, as well as in the pews from which it had been long excluded, it would have done enough to vindicate its title to be regarded as a blessing of no ordinary kind. Show your gratitude then for this inherited blessing, by the recognition of the duty—the privilege rather—of consulting the record of the Mind and Will of Christ—of reading the *letter* from your absent Lord, which reminds you of his love, and embodies in so touching language, the instructions, the counsels, the consolations he yet desires to administer to you, that you be not weary in well-doing, but continue steadfast in the faith, unto every good word and work, that you may thus at length enter on the inheritance of life everlasting.

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III. In perfecting the system of the Reformed Faith in Scotland, the good and great men who were instrumental in its restoration to the pristine purity that of right belonged to it, after much prayerful deliberation, gave to the external organization of the Church which emerged from the struggle, the distinctive form of what they held to be a scriptural *Presbyterianism*. Discarding what they regarded as human additions to the order of God's House, they completed, on what they were convinced was the primitive model, that which they had so well begun. We do not claim for them the attribute of infallibility: but they were, notwithstanding, men of no common order of intellect, and by that time were deeply read in Bible-truth—mighty in the Scriptures. They were men who felt the deepest reverence for the Word of God, and paid the fullest respect to even the faintest intimation of His will. They adopted this ancient framework of a Presbyterian Church, because they regarded that form of constitution and government as "founded on God's Word and agreeable thereto." It is not affirmed that they must necessarily have been right, and all others wrong who differed from them in that respect. But in contrast with the plan and polity adopted in other Churches of the Reformation, in which a different system prevailed; let theirs be judged of by the circumstances and manner of its adoption. No doubt there was a similarity in the mode in which, in all countries, the errors of the Popish system were exposed, and the truth thus freed from the manifold delusions that marred, and, to so great an extent, had supplanted it. Similar were the struggles; similar too the sufferings

with which the Reformed Faith was introduced: and similar in many respects was the success that attended it. But in the mode of its completion—in the final steps that led to its adoption, there was a marked distinction and difference.

In England, the Reformed doctrine had an equally glorious, perhaps even an earlier start; and God forbid that on such a day as this, in such a service, commemorative of the work of Reformation, in our own Father-land, aught derogatory should be uttered here respecting the things in which others differed from our Scottish Zion. The Church of Cranmer and of Latimer, and of other English worthies who consummated their noble efforts in the cause of truth, and sealed their testimony with their blood, shall not be lightly spoken of by me. The Church which has furnished such defenders of our common Protestantism, as those whose great names adorn her annals, has done too good service to the cause of Scriptural truth in many periods since, to be referred to otherwise than with the greatest respect. And may God grant that the evil may be stayed which so lately began to threaten her, of a turning back to, or towards Rome, on the part of some of her faithless sons, whose Romanizing tendencies do even still trouble the land. But I am speaking of competing systems of Church polity, and of the mode of their adoption; and history has recorded how, although the Reformation in England was carried on, as in other lands, by the self-denying zeal of her Reformers, down almost to the eve of the reformed Church in that realm, taking its place as the Church of England; yet in the steps by which it was finally consummated, and in

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moulding the Church for that purpose, other influences were at work. The Royal hand which had aided, and to some purpose too, in severing the old ties which still knit together the tottering fabric of the falling Hierarchy of Rome in the realm of England, claimed also to adjust the proportions of that reformed Church which was then being upreared in its room. Therefore, although I do not say that on that account it was necessarily wrong, in the introduction of different ranks and orders among its Clergy, and in the peculiar position and work, and authority assigned to each: yet I do say that with such influences controlling its origin, there was less likelihood of its being right to the exclusion of those who adopted a different system:—especially since, as was the case, almost all other reformed Churches, then emerging from the ruins of that which had apostatized from the truth, concurred in adopting a different system. With them the *overseeing*—that is the Episcopal function, or the office of the Bishop; and the *teaching*—that is the Ministerial office, were regarded in one—the common right of all the Ministers of the Church. The decision of the Scottish Reformers on this point was—and here we quote from the history of the Church, that “the name of Bishop is common to all who are appointed to take charge of a particular flock, in preaching the Word, administering the Sacraments, and exercising discipline with consent of their Elders, and that this is their chief function.”

In Scotland the Reformers of the Church in the Sixteenth Century—the men of learning and zeal, who had laboured for accomplishing the substitution

of the reformed doctrines, were also those who *completed* the entire system in accordance with what they could gather from God's Word; and regarded as the mind of Christ—the Church's great living Head. The Throne was at first, and for long, hostile to the entire movement towards the Reformed Faith; and strenuously was that opposition maintained. Afterwards, when in more favourable circumstances the Civil Power was invoked to give its sanction to the new state of things, it was not to mould nor even to modify the system of the Reformed Faith; but to accept a system already completed to its hand; that within its own department it might confirm and establish the same. Thus the Church of Scotland came forth in its integrity from the process of its re-construction on the perfected model of its own Reformers--the living embodiment of what they read as the mind of Christ in apostolic precept and primitive example. And, in the results which it soon achieved in all the requisites of a Church of Christ, it ere long became the very glory of the land. The historian has recorded what reformation of manners it wrought; what amelioration of evils it effected; and what leaven of truth it infused into the hearts of the general community: so that ere long a Bible-read, an intelligent, a virtuous, and a God-fearing peasantry became the eloquent epistle of its success in turning, by God's blessing, into a very garden of the Lord, what was before but little better than a moral wilderness.

It is not our purpose here, when our main object is the commemoration of the work of Reformation in Scotland at this distance of three centuries from

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its occurrence, to follow the history of the subsequent trials and sufferings of our Scottish Zion through a period of persecution afterwards, which drove her for a time to the refuge of the hills and glens, and among the mists and moorlands, where her persecuted children sought the shelter, the safety, or the life that were denied to them by the myrmidons of tyrannical power! The record of these things is still to be found on many a moss-grown stone in quiet country church-yards, where the victims of cruel persecutors lie: and other names there were which added lustre to those times, and which, though now unknown, are written in heaven—even those who came out of great tribulation—whose services and whose sufferings will be impressed indelibly on the great heart of the nation, for generations yet to come, who shall benefit largely by the result of their exertions. In the enjoyment of the privileges thus regained and left as an heir-loom to their children by a noble spiritual ancestry, surely the inheritors of these blessings ever shall do honor to their memory.

We may not speak of subsequent lukewarmness, which for a time prevailed in an age which to a large extent forgot those examples of zeal and devotion to the truth; for that is a common thing to find among men. There is alas! “a tide in the affairs of men” that may pass over individuals and Churches for a time, when old truths are not cherished so warmly, and old influences prevail not so fully as before. But in God’s good Providence a few years brought about, for the Church of our Fathers, a return to her first love—a better appreciation of her privi-

leges—a truer conformity to her standards—a fuller acting up to her obligations as a Church of Christ.

Nor shall we be tempted here to do more than simply to advert to the separation of friends in more recent times; and the withdrawal of those who once were her children, who left the family mansion (so to speak,) and, though adhering to the same old standards of belief, set up separate communions for themselves. We know not for what inscrutable purpose in his holy providence, God hath permitted such an experience to the Church and the Land of our Fathers—an event apparently to be deplored, in view of the distracting influence of divisions among the followers of the same Lord. We desire not to judge any man. Where worthy and good and pious-minded men differ, to the accomplishment of a walking no longer together by the same rule, we would deal tenderly with convictions different from our own in such matters, and with a procedure that we might think unnecessary, or which might have been avoided. But, true to our own convictions of duty—while conceding to others the right to act for themselves; and while ready to accord to them the honours of a common spiritual ancestry with ourselves; and a share in the inherited glories of the Reformation, in which they glory as well as we—whether their secession from the Church of Scotland have been of the past or of the present century; and while regarding as brethren still those who retain the same Standards, the Confession and Catechisms in which our common Presbyterianism is symbolically embodied; yet whilst willingly conceding all this, we claim for the Church of our Fathers, after all her

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trials, and all her afflictions, the possession still of the ancient glory of her great lineage ; and for ourselves the right, the privilege, the duty of maintaining that filial attachment we owe to her, as our Parent Church, —still worthy of our reverence and love, and of the relation in which we stand to her.

It is, however, on no narrow and isolated ground of strict denominationalism that we would stand on this great occasion of services, this day rendered, in commemoration of our common Protestantism ! On ground common to us all, we take our place in honor of that reformed Doctrine, which is the secret of our strength—the source of our confidence in the stability and enlightenment of our race. We desire to swell, in our hearts and with our voices, the chorus of that hallelujah, so many now are lifting to the praise of Him, who did such great things for our common Faith in the days of old. And our prayer is that, one in heart, and one in spirit, if still it must needs be from different stand-points, and in separated communions, we may continue to lift the same testimony against Popish error, and in honor of Protestantism—especially in the Presbyterian type of it, which forms still a leading glory of our Father-land. Here, where in different circumstances, we do find ourselves in a mixed community of various Creeds, let our endeavour be to provoke one another to love and to good works, whereby the common good may be advanced, the glory of God promoted, and the Kingdom of His Son be the more widely extended, and the more firmly established and perpetuated—and thus “His will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.”

IV. To make one other selection, worthy of special notice, from among the results of the Reformation, and from which, benefits of no insignificant kind were secured to Scotland, and through it to other lands; we would point to the great *designs*, and, if less extensive than was aimed at, still the important *doings* in the previously neglected duty of the Education of the People. It was a noble object—all the more to be admired, because the public voice had not commended it in those early times, as now is the case, for the Church, just reformed, and still struggling into existence, to devise so complete a scheme of Education for all classes of the people:—that, side by side with every Parish Church, there should also be the Parish School for the instruction and godly up-bringing of the young; that each considerable Town was to have its more advanced Seminary of Education, and the more important Cities were to be Seats of Academical and Collegiate instruction!

But though it was thus a mighty step in advance of the times in which it was made, yet it is after all not surprising that it should have been a prominent object with the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, thus to attend to the education of the common people of the land. The Reformers had seen, in the condition of affairs before the introduction of the Reformed Faith, the evils of popular ignorance. They had themselves tasted the sweets of knowledge—regulated as theirs had been by the controlling influence of true Religion. *That* from which they so greatly benefited themselves, they sought to extend so as to embrace the nation at large; and to perpetuate it as the source of blessings that might flow

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down the stream of time to the latest generations. This was their high ambition, and their not unsuccessful aim. How solid that education was intended to be, and to a great extent actually was; and how duly it was blended with the leaven of the truth as it is in Jesus—which was meant to sanctify it for the highest good to individuals, and thus render it truly conducive to the stability of the best interests of the nation—we may gather from what history has told us of its actual accomplishment, notwithstanding a somewhat stinted provision for its support. Still, for ages the Parish Schools of Scotland sent forth her Sons fitly furnished for the successful prosecution of the duties of almost any calling in any of the walks of life.

That increased facilities were not afforded, and extended means were not provided, for the greater requirements of an expanding population in after times, is not the fault of those who founded the Scottish Parochial system, nor can it properly be regarded as a reproach to those who have since administered it with the slender means at their command; and now the mixed character of the community there renders the task of extending the system, to meet the increased wants of the times, more difficult—perhaps impossible of realization to the extent required by the existing necessities of the case. Still the Educational Institute which was engrafted, at the outset, on the Church of Scotland at the period of the Reformation, will ever stand, on the page of history, as a noble monument to the enlightened zeal of the founders of the Church—an honor we may not be able fully to appreciate, when we regard it

from our actual stand-point in the present day, when knowledge so extensively abounds, and its streams are turned over the length and breadth, even of this new Land ; but an honor, notwithstanding, to the enlightened minds that conceived it, and a blessing to the age which saw its introduction and first reaped the fruits of its establishment. Let us be constrained to glorify God, for this among other "great things of which our fathers have told us," as done by them for our country and our race in the days of old !


Some may assume that in dealing thus with these old memories of other days, we are occupying your minds with things which have become obsolete, and should no longer be spoken about. But surely when thus recounted, even as memories of old things, they are precious because of the influences for good that have descended from them even to this our day. But they are more than the mere memories of past events. For involved in these things are the germ, and in many cases the developement, of the valuable blessings, temporal and spiritual, we now enjoy.

There is a vitality about principle, wherever enunciated, that entitles it to challenge the attention of the world, and renders truth omnipotent and eternal. To that undying truth the universe itself pays homage ! Why make an ado about an event that happened so long ago, and in so obscure, and at that time so rude a land as Scotland—so small a speck on the surface of this great globe ? It is because principles were there asserted which would distinguish any land where they were proclaimed, and ennoble any class of men who gave them utterance ! With a

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clearness, and to an extent not so fully realized elsewhere, the pure principles of God's Word—the right precepts of eternal truth, were once more laid hold of: with an earnest yet with no irreverent hand, they were drawn forth from the rubbish of an apostate Church, by which they had been concealed—or rather, they were brought directly from the Bible itself, which that Church had so long all but entirely ignored in its public teaching: and again the perfect system of faith and manners, as in apostolic times, was held up for the instruction, the admiration, and belief of a people then perishing for lack of knowledge. *That* is the work of Reformation which we this day commemorate, though three centuries separate us now from the time when it was achieved! It is a duty we owe to those who then laboured and suffered for its accomplishment, thus to show that we hold their labours and sufferings not to have been in vain, but worthy to be kept in grateful remembrance! It is a duty we owe to the Land of our Fathers, that we should thus be alive to what constitutes her high renown, and has given her so great a name among the Nations of the Earth! It is a duty we owe to ourselves, that by such happy memories of “those times of old” we may be quickened to a greater appreciation of the privileges under which our youthful hopes were nurtured, and on which our maturer life has been staid! It is a duty we owe to this Land of our adoption, thus to testify in scenes far distant from those where the struggles, the successes, the blessings of the Great Reformation were achieved; that the triumphs of Truth, and of a pure Gospel, though obtained on a narrow field, and in a distant age, were

accomplished for all lands and all times—for which they remain as an enduring heritage of blessings! It is a duty which above all we owe to our God, who by the leadings of his holy Providence prepared his own instruments for the great work he so signally owned and blessed, of delivering the Church from the reign of error, and of emancipating the nation from a degrading spiritual bondage! That tribute we freely and gratefully render. We desire ever to give thee O God the glory of what “we have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us—the work thou didst in their day, in the times of old.”



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