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ART. I.—THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL, DANIEL V.

THE interposition of the Most High recorded in this chapter, was designed to show that the overthrow of Babylon was by his appointment, and in accomplishment of the revelation he had made to Nebuchadnezzar, to demonstrate again the nothingness of idols, and to verify his fidelity to his people, and confirm them in their faith and allegiance.

Belshazzar made a feast to his nobles, in which he caused the golden vessels taken from the temple at Jerusalem to be used as wine cups, in the homage they paid to their idol gods, vs. 1-4. Immediately the king saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the wall of the apartment, vs. 5. Alarmed at the sight, he called the magicians to interpret the writing. But they could neither explain nor read it, vs. 6-8. The report of the king's agitation reaching the queen-mother, she entered the banquet-house, and advised that Daniel should be called to interpret the writing, vs. 9-12. Daniel was summoned to the king's presence and required to explain the mysterious words, vs. 13-16. He, reminding the king of the extraordinary manner in which Jehovah had punished the pride of his ancestor, Ne-

ART. II.—THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A. CARLISLE, D.D. By  
Rev. John Forsyth, D.D., Prof. Rutgers College.

*The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlisle, Minister of Inveresk*; containing Memorials of the Men and Events of his Times. Ticknor & Co. Boston, 1860.

ON various accounts this may be styled an extraordinary book. It relates to an extraordinary period. It is the production of an extraordinary man, and was written by him when four-score years old. And it may well be deemed an extraordinary circumstance that a volume which obtained a wide circulation the instant it issued from the press, should have been allowed to lie *perdu* for more than half a century. It is strange that a man who has been in his grave more than fifty years, and who died in an extreme old age, should at this late day become a literary celebrity. Dr. Carlisle was born in 1722; he was ordained Minister of Inveresk, a parish near Edinburgh, in 1748, where he died in 1805. These dates verify the observation already made that this autobiography covers an extraordinary period,—one marked by immense changes in church and state, in religion and science, in political and social institutions. The author was the contemporary of Robertson, Blair, Erskine, Witherspoon, of Hume, Adam Smith, Ferguson, Home, Smollet, Wilkes, Townshend, Wilkie, Col. Gardner, Macpherson (Ossian), Black, Gregory, of our own Franklin; he was personally acquainted with them all, and with most of them he lived on terms of intimate friendship. He was a man of very superior abilities, and of highly cultivated taste in all matters of literature and art, so much so, indeed, that even the most distinguished authors of that day relied implicitly on his judgment, and were guided by his advice.

In a simply literary point of view these Memoirs deserve the high encomiums which have been pronounced upon them both in Britain and our own country. Dr. Carlisle had been for many years a welcome habitué of the higher circles of society in Scotland and England; he had been brought into close contact with statesmen, politicians, scholars, writers, ecclesiastics; and with his ample opportunities

of seeing a great deal, he possessed great powers of observation, and of word-painting. His pictures of the scenes in which he mingled, and his personal portraits (except when his judgment was biased by religious prejudice) are very graphic. We get a nearer view of Robertson, Blair, Smollet, Home, Hume, and other notabilities of that day, of their personal appearance, their social habits, their little foibles as well as their better qualities, in a word, their individuality—in these recollections of their contemporary and companion, than is furnished by their more formal biographies.

The following notice of Franklin has a special interest for Americans:—"We supped one night in Edinburgh with the celebrated Dr. Franklin, at Dr. Robertson's house (1760). Dr. Franklin had his son with him (afterwards Governor Franklin, of New Jersey); and besides Wight and me, there were David Hume, Dr. Cullen, Adam Smith, and two or three more. Wight, who could talk at random on all sciences without being deeply skilled in any, took it into his head to be very eloquent on chemistry, a course of which he had attended at Dublin. Perceiving that he diverted Franklin, who was a silent man, he kept it up with Cullen, then professor of that science, who had imprudently committed himself with him, for the great part of the evening, to the infinite diversion of the company, who took great delight in seeing a great professor foiled in his own science by a novice. Franklin's son was open and communicative, and pleased the company better than his father; and some of us observed indications of that decided difference of opinion between father and son, which, in the American war, alienated them altogether."

During one of his visits to Oxford in company with Robertson and Home, he stumbled upon an old acquaintance and compatriot (Douglass, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury and author of an able work on Miracles), preparing to take his Doctor's degree, and he thus describes part of the process:—"John Douglass, who knew we were coming, was passing trials for his degree of D.D., and that very day was in the act of one of his wall lectures, as they are called, for there is no audience. At that university, it seems, the trial is strict when one takes a Master's or Bachelor's, but slack when you come to a Doctor's Degree; and *vice versâ* at

Cambridge. However that be, we found Douglass sitting in a pulpit in one of the chapels, with not a soul to hear him but three old beggar-women, who came to try if they might get some charity. On seeing us four enter the chapel, he talked to us and wished us away, otherwise he would be obliged to lecture. We would not go away, we answered, as we wished a specimen of Oxford learning; on which he read two or three verses out of the Greek Testament, and began to expound it in Latin. We listened for five minutes, and then telling him where we were to dine, we left him to walk about." It must be owned that this was a very "slack" method of ascertaining the abilities and attainments of men who were ambitious of being numbered among the Doctors of Oxford.

We have already stated that our author was generally a sagacious observer of men, and that he handled a graphic pen when he undertook to paint their characters. Here is one of his portraits, viz. of Sir George Suttie, a lieutenant-colonel under the Duke of Cumberland, afterwards one of the members of Parliament from Scotland:—"This Sir George was much overrated. He was held to be a great officer, because he had a way of thinking of his own, and had learned from his kinsman, Marshal Stair, to draw the plan of a campaign. He was held to be a great patriot, because he wore a coarse coat and unpowdered hair, while he was looking for a post (under Government) with the utmost anxiety. He was reckoned a man of much sense, because he said so himself, and had such an embarrassed stuttering elocution that one was not sure but it was true. He was understood to be a great improver of land, because he was always talking of farming, and had invented a cheap method of fencing his fields by combining a low stone wall and a hedge together, which, on experiment, did not answer. For all these qualities he got credit for some time; but nobody ever questioned the real strength of his character, which was that of an uncommonly kind and indulgent brother to a large family of brothers and sisters, whom he allowed during his absence in a five years' war, to dilapidate his estate, and leave him less than half his income." This is exquisitely done, and is surpassed by nothing of the same sort even in the brilliant pages of Macaulay.

Dr. Carlisle testifies to the horror which the daring speculations of David Hume excited in the higher circles of Scottish society. "The Atheist" was the name by which he was commonly known; but our autobiographer, who lived on intimate terms with him, took a much more liberal view of his principles and character. "I was one of those," says he, "who never believed that David Hume's sceptical principles had laid fast hold on his mind, but proceeded rather from affectation of superiority, pride of understanding, and love of vainglory." He relates the following incident in confirmation of his notion that scepticism, after all, had not a very strong hold of Hume's mind. When his mother died, Mr. Boyle, a friend who lodged in the same house with him, went to his (Hume's) apartment, so soon as he had heard the news, and found him in the deepest affliction. After the usual topics of condolence, Mr. Boyle said to him, "My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to your having thrown off the principles of religion, for if you had not, you would have been consoled by the firm belief, that the good lady who was not only the best of mothers, but the most pious of Christians, was now completely happy." To which Hume replied, "Though I throw out my speculations to entertain and employ the metaphysical world, yet in other things I do not think so differently from the rest of mankind as you imagine." Dr. Carlisle evidently deemed this a most important confession, but it seems to us, that when he persuaded himself that David Hume might be in some sort a Christian notwithstanding he scattered firebrands, arrows, and death, saying 'am I not in sport?' he drew a very large conclusion from a very narrow premiss.

Hume, it appears, took much to the company of "the younger clergy," viz. Robertson, Blair, Home, Carlisle, Jardine, and others of their stamp, "not from any wish to bring them over to his opinions," but for the sake of literary conversation. This intimacy "enraged the zealots, who little knew how impossible it was for him (Hume), had he been willing, to shake their principles." It is not surprising that to such "young clergy" as those just named, the suppers of the sceptical philosopher proved so attractive. "He was," says our author, "a man of great knowledge, of a social and benevolent temper, and truly the best-natured man in the

world. His conversation was truly irresistible, for while it was enlightened, it was naïve almost to puerility. For innocent mirth and agreeable raillery, I never knew his match. Jardine, who sometimes bore hard upon him, could never overturn his temper." With these high social qualities, Hume, like Adam Smith, appears to have had no discernment of character, for the only two clergymen whose interests he espoused, and for one of whom he provided out of his own estate, "were the silliest fellows in the church." Hume used to relate that the club in Paris (Baron Holbach's) to which he belonged during his residence abroad, were of opinion *that Christianity would be abolished in Europe by the end of the 18th century*; and that they laughed at Andrew Stuart who contended for the doctrine of a future state, styling him in derision *L'Âme immortelle*; a relation, by the way, which hardly agrees with the incident before mentioned, on which our charitable Doctor based his judgment of Hume's religious views.

Adam Smith is described as Hume's equal in learning and ingenuity, but as greatly inferior to him in colloquial power. His voice was harsh, his utterance thick and stammering, and in company his talk was more like lecturing than conversation. He was, besides, much inclined to be absent-minded even in society, and if he happened to be roused from his reverie and forced to attend to the matter in hand, he was apt to go off into a harangue, in which he would explain with philosophic ingenuity all that he knew on the subject. Though Smith was of a somewhat jealous temper, he gave many proofs that he was also a man of generous heart, and of real honor. His devotion to his mother was most exemplary. "His *Wealth of Nations*, from which he was judged to be an inventive genius of the first order, *is tedious and full of repetition.*" Strange to say, this brief sentence contains all that Dr. Carlisle had to tell us of the volumes which form the basis on which Adam Smith's fame rests, and such is his judgment of a work, regarded by many as the ablest production of that century, and which may be said to have created the science of Political Economy.

Before he entered upon this *opus maximum* of his life, Smith had resided on the continent for several years, as

tutor of the young Duke of Buccleuch, and as such he had access to the most brilliant coteries of Parisian society. He enjoyed the most intimate intercourse with Turgot, Necker, Quesnay, D'Alembert, but, though Political Economy was then beginning to take rank among the sciences in France, Smith was not indebted to the French philosophers for the germs of the theory which he afterwards so successfully developed. Many years before his visit to Paris he had drawn up a sketch of the principles embodied in his *Wealth of Nations*. But the discussions then rife in France, no doubt, stimulated his inquiries, enlarged his views, and probably helped to concentrate his studies upon this subject. At all events, on his return to Scotland in 1766, to the great amazement of his friends, he shut himself up in his library at Kirkcaldy; and though so near Edinburgh, even the charms of its society could not, for ten years, draw him from his solitude. At the end of the tenth year, in 1776, the mystery which had so long puzzled his acquaintance, was explained by the publication of his *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*.

His *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1759, was long one of the most popular books in ethical philosophy, and its history has a melancholy interest as it shows that Adam Smith's infidelity grew out of his intimacy with David Hume. The *first* edition of the *Theory* contains a most striking argument on the necessity of Atonement in order to open the door of mercy, and to secure pardon to a guilty sinner. Smith, at this time, was unacquainted with Hume, and while he discusses his subject after the fashion of a philosopher who has no other light than that of Nature to guide him, yet various passages of his book prove that when he wrote it, he was under the influence of his Scottish religious education. Before the *second* edition appeared, he and Hume had met, and one of the first fruits of their friendship was the careful expurgation of the *Moral Sentiments* of every sentence that had the least savor of the Christian faith.

Among "the younger clergy" whose intimacy with David Hume gave so much offence to serious people, were Robertson and Blair, two names which are much more familiar to men of letters than to pious Christians. Robert-

son "was truly a very great master of conversation," but like another famous talker of more recent times, Coleridge, he was rather given to monologue than dialogue, and somewhat addicted to translating other people's thoughts instead of giving his own. His brother Patrick once excused himself for not inviting the Principal to dinner, saying: "I have not invited him to day, for I have a very good company, and he'll let nobody speak but himself." Robertson's talk had a stately, dissertational air, and a sort of mannerism which made it easy of imitation by any one capable of playing the mimic. He is said to have been one of "the best tempered men in the world." The young gentlemen who resided in his family testified that they never once saw him ruffled, yet his excessive eagerness to shine in company, sometimes made him impatient of others who had the same weakness. He had a bold and ambitious mind, and thus naturally fell into the place which he held for twenty years or more, as the leader of the dominant party in the church of Scotland. Blair was in many respects the opposite both of Robertson and Carlisle. He had no tincture of humor, and hardly any relish for it. He was of a timid disposition, and without the least ambition to take part in the public business of the church. His chief wish was to be admired as a preacher, especially by the ladies. "His conversation was so infantine that many people thought it impossible, at first sight, that he could be a man of sense or genius, yet he was capable of the most profound conversation. For a vain man, he was the least envious of any one I ever knew. Though Robertson was never ruffled, he had more animosity in his nature than Blair."

To the Christian reader this volume has a special interest for the light it casts upon the spiritual condition of the church of Scotland during the last century. Dr. Carlisle's admission to the ministry was nearly contemporary with the commencement of that dismal period in the religious history of his native country, during which the Scottish church (like the Gallican, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes), "drew the curtains and retired to rest." It was the hour and power of Moderation, falsely so called. And if one wishes to know how dark and cold an age it was, how barren of all those fruits which the church of Christ is intended to



yield, he has only to peruse this autobiography. The precise point of time at which this period of declension began, it is not possible to fix, but the evidences that the process had begun, revealed themselves early in the eighteenth century. The revival, in the last years of Queen Anne, of the old mediæval law of patronage, which had been in abeyance for more than a century, was a powerful means of paralysing the spiritual energies of the church, by preparing the way for men utterly destitute of the power of godliness, to assume the obligations of the pastoral office. It seems almost incredible that any man who had a conscience not completely seared, could deliberately make the solemn professions and promises demanded of all who aspired to the sacred office, such as, that "zeal for the glory of God and a desire to be instrumental in edifying his church, were the principal motives that induced him to accept" a pastoral charge, and that he "had used no undue means to obtain the call to it." Yet the number of such men was lamentably great, men who regarded the ministry as essentially a secular profession, and who entered it just as they would have entered the army, *i. e.* simply to obtain a comfortable living, or for the sake of the social position which it secured them. How rapidly this class of clergymen increased, may be inferred from the "compliment" which David Hume paid the church of Scotland, *viz.* "that she was more favorable to the cause of Deism than any other religious establishment."

We violate no law of charity when we say that Dr. Carlisle was a minister of this stamp, for he avowed it himself, and every page of this volume confirms the truth of the avowal. He belonged to the party just now described, he gloried in his connexion with it, and for many years he was one of its recognised and most unscrupulous leaders.\*

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\* This was the party against which Witherspoon (1760), and Rowland Hill (1798), hurled the shafts of their exquisite irony. The former, in his *Mystery of Moderation*, lays down various maxims to form a Moderate man. In illustrating the 7th, *viz.* that "as much as he handsomely can, he must endeavor to put off any appearance of devotion;" he adds, "sometimes, indeed, it may happen that one of us may at bedtime be unequally yoked with an orthodox brother, who may propose a little unseasonable devotion between ourselves, before we lie down to sleep. But there are twenty ways of throwing cold water upon such a motion; or, if it should be insisted on, I could recommend

When this autobiography was written, the author was near the close of a long life. He had been more than half a century minister of Inveresk, and yet from the beginning to the end of the volume there is hardly one Christian sentiment in it; there is not the most distant reference to the conversion of sinners, or the edification of saints on one of its pages. Indeed Dr. Carlisle scouts and scorns the idea of conversion. The evangelical ministers of the church of Scotland, the Bostons, Erskines, Witherspoons, and others of like spirit, who contended so earnestly for the faith during the long and dismal night of Moderatism, are uniformly styled by him, "wild men," "high flyers," "fanatics." Speaking of Witherspoon, who had been a fellow student, he says: "I always considered the austerity of manners and aversion to social joy, which he afterwards affected, *as the arts of hypocrisy and ambition.*" When the time came to choose a profession, our author tells us that he had thoughts of the army, of law, then of surgery, but "for the convenience of a family of eight children, I yielded to the influence of parental wishes, which in those days swayed the minds of young men more than they do now, and consented that my name should be enrolled in the list of the students of divinity."

So he decided to become a minister. The following winter he attended the Divinity Hall, and was required to deliver a discourse *on Saving Faith*, "a very improper subject for so young a student." After spending a year in Holland, at the University of Leyden, where he lived a strange sort of life for a theological student, he returned to Scotland, was licensed, and presented to the church of Cockburnspath, which, as his father and grandfather "were

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a moderate way of complying with it, from the example of one of our friends, who, on a like occasion, yielded so far, that he stood up at the back of a chair, and said, 'O Lord, we thank thee for Mr. Bayle's Dictionary. Amen.'"

"I fear," said Rowland Hill, who made a preaching tour through Scotland, in 1798, "that the Scots, the best educated and best behaved people in the British dominions, will soon be no better than their neighbors. Like their ministers they will all become *Moderates*; first, that they will be *Moderate* in religion; they will have a *Moderate* notion of Jesus Christ and the gospel salvation; they will be content with a *Moderate* share of love to God, of prayer, and of repentance, and this will lead them to be *Moderates* in morality, till they become *immoderately* wicked."

always against resisting Providence," he was forced to accept it. But from this obscure place "without amenity, comfort, or society," where he "would most probably have fallen into idleness and dissipation," he "was relieved by great good luck," viz. a presentation to the parish of Inveresk. However, his settlement was not to be accomplished without difficulty. "There arose much murmuring in the parish against me as too young, too full of levity, and too much addicted to the company of my superiors, together with many doubts about *my having the grace of God, an occult quality which the people cannot define*, but which surely is in full opposition to the defects they saw in me." But the murmuring of the people availed nothing, and in due time (2d Aug. 1748) he was ordained and installed minister of the church and parish of Inveresk. The good people of this place were not the only persons who had the doubts above-mentioned. An uncle of Dr. Robertson, says Dr. C., "a rigid Presbyterian, and a severe old bachelor, whose humor diverted us much, was at first very fond of me, because he said I had common sense, but he doubted I had but little of the grace of God in me." How could such a man preach? Of the kind of sermon which he did preach we may form an idea from an incident which he himself relates. "Being at Gilmanton, when David Hume was on a visit, Sir David Kinloch made him go to Athelstaneford church, where I preached for John Home. When we met before dinner, 'what did you mean,' says he to me, 'by treating John's congregation to day with one of Cicero's academics? I did not think that such heathen morality would have passed in East Lothian."

Dr. Carlisle had a strong relish for church politics, and his talents, energy, and zeal soon gave him a prominent position among the leaders of the dominant party. He owed his own place in the church to the law of Patronage, and he was ever afterwards a cordial advocate of the Patrons' "right," even when carried to a tyrannical excess. No man supported the most extreme measures of Moderatism with more thorough heartiness than Dr. Carlisle, the "Jupiter tonans" of his party, as he was styled by the wits of Edinburgh. Ministers were forced on reclaiming congregations, literally at the point of the bayonet;

they were installed in the pastoral charge of empty seats and naked walls; and when godly men like Gillespie, though willing to endure such scenes, declined to take part in them, they were denounced as rebels against the authority of the Assembly, were deposed from the ministry, ejected from their manses, and cast adrift upon the world. The following incident strikingly illustrates the length to which Dr. Carlisle sometimes allowed his unscrupulous zeal as a party leader to carry him. In the Assembly of 1766 "was the last grand effort of our opponents to carry their Schism overture." This was a proposal to inquire into the causes and growth of Schism, or in other words, the causes which had driven so many thousands into Secession from the Established Church. The Moderates felt—reasonable as the overture seemed—that the investigation, if made, would reveal the terrible fruits of their policy, and they accordingly resolved to stifle all inquiry. "The day before it came before the Assembly," says Dr. C., "we (the Moderate leaders) dined at Nicholson's. Before we parted, Jardine told me he had examined the list of Assembly, and that we should carry the question. I mention this on account of what happened next day.—There was a long debate, so that the vote was not called till past 7 P.M. Jardine, who had complained of breathlessness, had seated himself on a high bench near the door. The calling of the roll began, and when it passed the Presbytery of Lochmaben, he gave me a significant look, as much as to say, 'now the day is ours.' I had turned to whisper to John Home who was next to me, the sign I had got; before I could look around again, Jardine had tumbled from his seat, and being a man of six feet two inches, had borne down all those on the benches below him. He was immediately carried out to the passage and the *roll calling stopped*. Various reports came from the door, but anxious to know the truth, I with difficulty made to the door through a very crowded house. When I came there I found him stretched on the pavement, with many people about him, among them James Russell, the surgeon. I got near him and whispered was it not a faint? 'No, no,' replied he, 'it is all over.' *I returned to the house, and gave out that there was hope of his recovery.* This composed the house, and the calling of the roll went on, when

it was carried to reject the overture. This was a deadly blow to the enemies of presentations." Even in the presence of a death so sudden and solemn, he was the partisan eager only for party victory.

We cannot follow Dr. Carlisle through his long career, but there were two scenes in which he was a prominent actor, and which we must not pass over as they cast a flood of light on the character of the man, and the condition of the church of Scotland, during the latter part of the last century.

The first occurred in 1757, in the early part of his ministry, and was occasioned by the exhibition of the tragedy of Douglas in the theatre of Edinburgh. Home, the author of this tragedy, was at that time minister of the parish of Athelstaneford. The affair, as may well be supposed, made an immense sensation; it was speedily brought before the church courts, and led to Home's abandonment both of his parish, and of the ministry. Dr. Carlisle, who from his student days had been in the habit of indulging his theatrical tastes, very naturally felt a lively interest in the success of his friend Home. The tradition is, that the tragedy was rehearsed in the house of an Edinburgh actress, by a batch of Moderate divines, before its presentation to the public, on which occasion Dr. Carlisle performed to admiration the part of *Old Norval*, Dr. Robertson shone as *Lord Randolph*, Home himself enacted *the Lady*, Dr. Blair the faithful *Anna*, while David Hume, the only layman of the party, modestly appeared as the villain *Glenalvon*.

When the eventful evening arrived on which the tragedy was to be acted in public, Robertson, Blair, and some other clerical friends of Home, eager to witness the result, but afraid to be seen in the boxes, were safely bestowed in some part of the theatre where they could be invisible spectators; a circumstance that gave point to a witty stanza of the day—

"Hid close in the greenroom some clergymen lay,  
Good actors themselves—their whole lives a play."

Their bolder friend Carlisle scorned such a subterfuge. He appeared openly among the audience, armed with a formidable stick, which, as the event proved, he had occasion to use before the play was over. Two reckless young fellows

attempted to force themselves into the box which he occupied, when for once in his life he assumed the character of a non-intrusionist, and, to the delight of those in the gallery, ejected the intruders. The conduct of these play-loving clergymen gave great offence to their brethren, and at the first meeting of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, measures were taken for calling such of them as were members of this body to account, and a circular letter on the subject was addressed to several other Presbyteries. Mr. White, of Liberton (on the outskirts of Edinburgh), admitted the charge brought against him of having been in the play-house, but pleaded by way of alleviation that he had gone only once, and had endeavored to conceal himself in a corner to avoid giving offence; he expressed his deep sorrow for what he had done, promising to be more circumspect in future. He was accordingly let off with a suspension for the space of two weeks.

In due time Dr. Carlisle was summoned by the Presbytery of Dalkeith to answer for his conduct. He had to meet the complex charge of frequenting the company of players, of being on too intimate terms with a certain Mrs. Ward, an actress, at whose house the rehearsal had taken place, his open appearance in the play-house, and his taking possession of a box in a disorderly manner. At first, the Doctor, with his usual frankness, seemed disposed to save the Presbytery the trouble of looking into the business, by admitting that he had occasionally heard Mrs. Ward rehearse parts of the tragedy, but that on no occasion had he ever eat or drunk with the lady, or conversed with her further than agreeing or disagreeing to what was said about the play. This should have been satisfactory, for who could so well know what he had done as Dr. C. himself? In dealing with the latter part of the charge, the Presbytery seemed to evince a little "wild," "highflying" tendency, and even threatened to "libel" their play-loving member. The affair had a serious look; and at this stage of it, the unflinching courage which Dr. C. had exhibited in the theatre rather failed him before the church court. Though the fact charged was notorious, the Presbytery might have had a good deal of difficulty in getting legal proof of it. The Doctor knew this very well, and therefore he would not

admit his presence in the theatre, nor his sorrow for having scandalized his brethren. He took refuge in legal technicalities, insisting that the Presbytery of Edinburgh should become his libellers, which he had good reason to know they could not be, and then when a libel was framed in due form, he protested and appealed to Synod. This body "declared their high displeasure with Mr. Carlisle for the step he had taken in going to the theatre, and strictly enjoin him to abstain therefrom in time coming." This sentence did not satisfy the parties, and so it was carried up to the Assembly; but after some discussion it was virtually confirmed. When the sentence was formally announced to Dr. C., he said that he "received the admonition and injunction of the Synod with respect, was sorry for the offence he had given, and hoped never to give the Synod, or any other judicatory of the church, occasion to call him before them again for such a piece of conduct."

The Doctor's account of this part of the business, in his Autobiography, though not precisely agreeing with the official record of the time, reveals the temper of the man: "I took a firm resolution not to submit to what I saw the Presbytery intended, but to stand my ground on a firm opinion that my offence was not a foundation for libel, but, if anything at all, a mere impropriety. This ground I never departed from; but at the same time I resolved to mount my horse, and visit every member of Presbytery, especially my opponents, and, *by a free confession*, endeavor to bring them over to my opinion. I saw that no submission of mine would turn them from their purpose. This confirmed my resolution not to yield, but to run every risk rather than furnish an example of tame submission, not merely to a *fanatical*, but an illegal exercise of power, which would have stamped disgrace upon the Church of Scotland, kept the younger clergy for half a century longer in the trammels of bigotry or hypocrisy, and debarred every generous spirit from entering into orders." The heroic tone of this passage only shows how sore was the memory of the solemn rebuke of the Synod, even after the lapse of so many years. The "younger clergy," to whom Dr. C. refers, were, during the ensuing half century, abundantly free of what he deemed fanaticism; but how his

“stand” in the matter of theatre-going saved them from the “trammels of bigotry,” it would be difficult to explain.

One good thing resulted from this memorable affair of the tragedy of Douglas, viz. the publication of Dr. Wither-  
 spoon’s “*Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage.*” This masterly treatise, as its author mentions, was immediately occasioned by the “very new and extraordinary event of a minister of the Church of Scotland employing his time in writing for the stage.” Bad as were the Moderate clergy of that day, and bad as they continued to be for many years afterwards, none of them ever ventured, openly at least, to follow the ill example of John Home, and employ their time in writing dramas instead of discourses; and when they visited the theatre, as many of them did not scruple to do, they were compelled so far to do homage to the moral sentiment of Scotland, as to keep out of sight, and secrete themselves in some obscure corner, like John White of Liberton.

The second scene in which Dr. Carlisle appeared as a prominent actor was separated from the first, already described, by the long interval of forty years. The youthful defender of the stage was now a patriarch of three score and ten. Great as may have been the changes which advancing years brought to Dr. Carlisle, there was one respect in which the old man was unaltered—he was the same keen partisan, as “fierce for Moderation” as ever. The scene to which we now refer, and shall very briefly describe, was the memorable debate in the General Assembly of 1798, on the subject of Missions to the Heathen. The British churches were just beginning to comprehend the woful condition of the Pagan world, and to recognise the obligation resting upon them to publish the glad tidings of redemption to every creature. In every aspect the times were extraordinary. The storm of revolution then sweeping over France was at its height; and in many other countries it might be said that men’s hearts were failing them, for fear of what was coming on the earth. The London Missionary Society had been lately founded on a broad, catholic platform; and its first detachment of evangelists was on its way to the distant islands of the South Pacific. All over Scotland this missionary



movement awakened a lively interest, the result of which was, that overtures were sent to the Assembly by sundry Synods, some of them urging the general subject of missions upon the attention of the church, while others asked that a collection should be made for this truly Christian scheme.

The debate which these overtures occasioned may well be styled "memorable," whether we consider the subject of it, or the light it casts upon the character and spirit of the two great parties which then divided the Church of Scotland. Among the eminent persons who took part in it were Robert Heron, the historian of Scotland; Dr. Johnston, of Leith, the expositor of the Apocalypse; the venerable Dr. John Erskine, the friend and correspondent of President Edwards; Principal Hill (author of the System of Divinity), who had succeeded Dr. Robertson as the leader of the Moderates; Dr. Carlisle, and other prominent members of the same party. Fortunately, a tolerably full report of the discussion has been preserved.

The debate was opened by Mr. Robert Heron, who sat in the Assembly as a ruling elder, and on the Moderate side of the house. His name is introduced in one of the minor poems of Burns in a manner that precludes the idea of his having been a man of serious religion, though his talents and learning were unquestionable. On this occasion, however, his conduct was every way becoming, and his speech, in which he urged the Assembly to accede to the overtures, was characterized by sound views admirably expressed. He was followed by a Moderate of another stamp, the Rev. Mr. Hamilton of Gladsmuir, who began his address thus:

"I should blush to rise in this venerable Assembly for the purpose of opposing so beneficent a design in its first aspect as the present, did not mature reflection convince me that *its principles* (the cause of missions) *are not really good, but merely specious*. I cannot otherwise consider *the enthusiasm on this subject* than as *the effect of sanguine and illusive views, the more dangerous because the object is plausible*." He next proceeded to develop *his* theory of missions: "To spread the knowledge of the gospel among barbarous and heathen nations *seems to me highly preposterous, as it anticipates, nay reverses, the order of nature*. Men must be polished and refined in manners, before they

can be properly enlightened in religious truth. *Philosophy and learning must, in the nature of things, take the precedence.*" Warming with his argument against the "enthusiasm" of the friends of missions, he insisted that the heathen could be in no such danger as to render such efforts necessary to save them—"that the gracious declarations of Scripture ought to liberate from groundless anxiety the minds of those who stated in such moving terms the condition of the heathen." Not content with this, the Moderate orator took still higher ground, and maintained that the heathen are a great deal better without the gospel than they would be with it; "when told that a man is saved not by good works, but by faith, the wild inhabitants of uncivilized regions *would use it as a handle for the most flagrant violation of justice and morality!*" Mr. Hamilton closed his curious speech by saying: "On the whole, while we pray for the propagation of the gospel, and patiently await its period, *let us resolutely unite in rejecting these overtures.*"

The instant he sat down, the venerable Dr. Erskine rose, and pointing to the table on which lay the Bible and Confession of Faith, uttered in his broad Doric Scotch, that brief but ever memorable sentence, "*Moderator, rax (reach) me that Bible.*" It was the text of a speech which Mr. Hamilton never forgot to his dying day. He was one of those bland, courtly gentlemen of the old school, who deemed it a solecism in politeness to lose temper in company. But the story goes that if any one wished to see Mr. Hamilton blush and get silent in his gayest moods in society, he had only to whisper in his ear those four little words—*Rax me that Bible.*

Dr. Erskine was followed by Dr. Carlisle. As his speech was both short and pointed, we quote it entire:—

"Moderator, my reverend brother (Dr. E.), whose universal charity is so well known to me, has just been giving a new and extraordinary instance of it—no less than proposing as a model for our imitation the zeal for propagating the Christian religion displayed by Roman Catholics! When we see the tide of infidelity and licentiousness so great and so constantly increasing in our own land, it would be indeed highly preposterous to carry our zeal to another

and a far distant one. When our religion requires the most unremitting and strenuous defence against internal invasion, it would be highly absurd to think of making distant converts by external missionaries. This is indeed beginning where we should end. I have, on various occasions, *during a period of almost half a century, had the honor of being a member of the General Assembly, yet this is the first time I remember to have ever heard such a proposal made*, and I cannot help thinking it the worst time. As clergymen let us pray that Christ's kingdom may come, as we are assured it shall come in the course of Providence. Let us as clergymen also instruct our people in their duty; and both as clergymen and Christians, let our light so shine before men, that seeing our good works they may be led to glorify our Father in heaven. This is the true mode of propagating the gospel: this is far preferable to giving countenance to a plan which has been well styled visionary. I therefore do heartily second the motion made some time ago by my young friend, Mr. Hamilton—"That the overtures be immediately dismissed." Of course the overtures *were* dismissed by a decisive majority.

The ironical compliment to Dr. Erskine in the outset of his speech reminds us that Dr. Carlisle was somewhat famed for his wit, which with all his gifts was zealously employed in the cause of Moderation. In the Assembly he frequently succeeded in raising the laugh against evangelism by his witty account of the opinions on doctrine and polity which obtained among the fishermen of his parish. Some Janet Skatereels, or Donald Mucklebacket, had come, he found, to the same conclusion on a debated point, with his reverend friends the Erskines and Witherspoons. He rarely failed in convulsing the house by his ludicrous representation of the evangelic prejudices of Janet and Donald. There were cases, however, in which the laugh was very decidedly turned against himself. All his life he had been one of the keenest of Tories, supporting the policy of Pitt and Dundas with the utmost zeal, even at the risk of "destroying his usefulness as a pastor," as one of his friends said. He had taken a deep interest in a bill which had been introduced into Parliament for the increase of ministers' stipends, but which, to his signal mortification, had

been set aside by his Tory friends. In the ensuing Assembly, Dr. Carlisle could not conceal his chagrin, and in a speech, more lacrymose than pathetic in style, charged the Ministry with "ingratitude to their best friends." His complaint was answered by Dr. Johnston of Leith, in a strain of exquisite ridicule, and wittily paraphrased in the words of Balaam's ass—"Am I not thine ass, on whom thou hast ridden ever since I was thine until this day?" The hint was caught by the eccentric artist Kay, and soon the town was convulsed by his caricature of "Faithful Service Rewarded;" in which a neatly drawn head of Dr. C. was attached to a long-bodied, crocodile-looking ass bestridden by Lord Melville.

Into the hands of such "clergymen and Christians" as Dr. Carlisle, Burns unfortunately fell when he electrified Scotland by the sudden revelation of his poetic genius. By them, and not by any proclivities of his own, was he stimulated to compose and publish "The Holy Fair," "The Ordination," "The Address to the Unco' Guid," and other effusions of the same stamp, which, dying he would gladly have blotted out, and the memory of which darkened his latter days.

Such was Dr. Alexander Carlisle as a clergyman and a churchman. We do not mean to intimate that all those who were known as Moderates in the church of Scotland, were men of precisely similar character. Doubtless there were some among them, who, while heartily supporting the policy of Moderatism, were evangelical in their theological views. And with reference to Dr. Carlisle, we know that though his party gladly availed themselves of his talents, his energy, his uncompromising zeal, and fearless disregard of consequences, he was himself looked upon as somewhat extreme. But he was not a solitary extremist. During the whole of his protracted career, he was supported and countenanced by a large band of Moderates as extreme as himself. And as we consider what must have been the condition of the church of Scotland, when many of her pulpits were filled with such men, and contrast it with what it now is, we cannot but be struck with the singular appropriateness of the symbol chosen for her by her Reformers, of the Burning Bush, and of the legend beneath it—*Nec tamen consumebatur.*