

THE  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN.

---

---

VOL. III.

AUGUST, 1839.

No. VI.

---

---

THE DOMINION OF SIN.

(Continued from page 140.)

In a preceding number we considered the dominion of sin, *First* as it affected the exercise of love to God : and *Second* as it unfitted for the performance of duty. The latter topic was illustrated by reference to certain positive duties, for the neglect of which the dominion of sin is the only assignable reason. It is not to be understood, however, by our readers, that we designed to give an enumeration of the duties of religion ; or that those mentioned are the only ones affected by the prevalence of sin in the heart. So far from this, the dominion of sin exerts an evil influence in relation to every duty, whether it be a positive institution of christianity ; or an every day moral obligation. Duties of every class are, through the power of sin, neglected altogether, or partially performed, or performed from improper principles, which are esteemed of God no obedience to his authority. For "if they do not flow from that charity which predominates in the renewed heart, they are the works of one still 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and are properly denominated 'dead works.' They want the living principle which alone can render them good in the eye of him who searches the heart ; and however excellent in the outward performance, are earthly and immoral in their motive and design. They are corrupted in their source ; and if the root be rottenness, the blossom can be but dust."\* We proceed to consider,

3. The dominion of sin in relation to resolutions of refor-

---

\* Dods on the incarnation of the Eternal Word.

quence of the great diversity of sentiment which prevails in that country, and the tenacity with which the several denominations are disposed to hold their peculiar views, no such course of religious instruction as is common in the schools of Scotland, could be connected with a general system of education in England; nor do I suppose that the English could be easily induced to submit to those public "examinations," to which the Scotch are accustomed, and to which indeed, they are strongly attached. The other means which I have mentioned, however, might be brought into operation in England, and in this country also, by ministers and by the members of their respective churches, as easily and as effectually as in Scotland. I know not to what extent a regular system of family instruction, on religious subjects, is pursued by the members of Congregational churches, to whom God has committed the care of the souls of others: but certainly, so far as this means of usefulness may be neglected by any of them, their neglect must be exceedingly criminal. I am not able to say whether expository preaching is at all common in New-England, though my impressions is, that it is very rare. Perhaps it would not suit the taste of the people. But it may well be questioned, I think, whether the taste which does not relish this kind of preaching, is not wrong; and whether, consequently, instead of gratifying it, suitable means should not be employed for the purpose of correcting it. The testimony of all the ministers that have adopted this mode of preaching, and that have persevered in it for any considerable time, is, that they have found it to be more profitable to themselves, and to their people also, than the common method of discoursing from a detached passage of Scripture.

---

## OBITUARY OF THE REV. JAMES REID.

(From the *Scottish Presbyterian.*)

The late Rev. James Reid, was born in the Parish of Shotts, 12th August, 1750. He was licensed at Foulyet, in the Parish of Bothwell, 27th April, 1780, being then in his 30th year, and was appointed to preach his first sermon at Edinburgh, on the 7th May following. He appears to have been deeply impressed with the sacred nature of the work to which he was called, and while desirous to be found zealous and faithful in the cause of his Master, he likewise felt the need of

heavenly direction and assistance, in order that his services might be profitable to men, and glorifying to the exalted Redeemer. In a note referring to this occasion, he writes, "I immediately went to the Lord to ask a text, and that portion of holy writ was directly presented to me, Isaiah ix. 6. 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,' &c. I desired to begin my public preaching with *precious Christ*, who is the Alpha and Omega of all Gospel preaching, and so made choice of, or rather was directed to that very remarkable text, as full of precious Christ as any in the sacred record. I desired the Lord to instruct me in the knowledge of Christ, and him crucified. I wrote my sermon at length, and had considerable assistance in study, and sometimes sweet fellowship with my God in Christ." Such was the manner in which his labours in the public service of the Redeemer were commenced, and from this, we may gather an idea of his exercises and ministrations in the subsequent period of his life. Christ crucified was the grand theme of his preaching; the word of God the source whence doctrine, counsel, warning, and comfort were derived; and communion with his God and Father, through the one Mediator, the means by which heavenly enjoyment, light, strength, and steadfastness were obtained.

Having laboured as a preacher, for about the space of three years, he received a call from the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in the Counties of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright; and was ordained at Lead Mines, in the Parish of Monigaff, on the 10th July, 1783. Concerning this important and memorable event in his life, he has left the following note:—"I thought that I felt much of the effusion of the Holy Spirit of God, especially a little before the performance of the solemn action; and I thought that I enjoyed sweet fellowship with God at this time." His first sermon after ordination was delivered at Lead Mines, from 2 Cor. iv. 5. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." Concerning this occasion he writes, "I was considerably assisted on this day; and in the evening enjoyed sweet communion with God." To an individual unaccustomed to vigorous bodily exertion, the labour to which he was now called, and which for a long period he performed, may seem almost incredible.

But he was willing to spend and to be spent in the service of Christ, and he repined not at the labour which was laid upon him. When we reflect on the time which must necessarily have been occupied in his journeying from place to place, it appears astonishing that he should have been able to prosecute his studies, and to prepare his discourses for the pulpit. And in the case of one not habitually exercised to live by faith in Christ, to cherish a constant feeling of dependence on him for the supply of all necessities, and to maintain sweet intercourse with the Father of lights, it might reasonably be expected that his public ministrations would become unsatisfactory and common-place. But God sends none a warfare on his own charges: when He calls to more than ordinary labour, he likewise furnishes with more than ordinary strength. And such appears to have been the case with Mr.

Reid. Notwithstanding of his circumstances being apparently unfavourable for study, he was, from first to last, an acceptable and an edifying preacher; faithfully exhibiting the great truths of the gospel; furnishing comfort to the sorrowful, and encouragement to the weak; and not failing to raise the voice of warning against personal and public iniquities.

He was married to Helen, daughter of Mr. James Bland, farmer, Calside, parish of Anwoth, on the 26th December, 1786. Before this period, various congregations in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, had been formed in America; and a Presbytery had been constituted, professing to hold the same principles and Testimony, which had been maintained by their brethren in Scotland and Ireland. Another party, in connection with the Associate Presbytery, had likewise obtained a considerable footing in the New World; and at length a union between the two parties was proposed. This was at last effected, though not without concessions on both sides, and a court was constituted under the name of the Associate Reformed Presbytery. But though the ministers consented to this union, many of the more steadfast of the Covenanters refused to follow their example; and though deprived of public ordinances by the defection of their ministers, they continued firm in their attachment to the whole of the Reformation principles. In this emergency they applied to their brethren in this country, to supply them with the means of grace. The scarcity of ministers and preachers at that time rendered it impossible to send out permanent labourers, yet the earnest request of the destitute Americans, was not altogether disregarded. After much serious deliberation, Mr. Reid left Scotland for America, in August, 1789, leaving his family and flock to the care of his heavenly master. In his notes referring to this period of his life, he says, "I had great difficulty in parting with my dear wife; but betaking myself to prayer, I found great relief, and my call to go seemed still more and more clear. My affection for her was very great; but the love of Christ seemed to constrain me to go to America at this time, with a view to return as soon as possible." Respecting his labours and journeyings in America, we are unable to furnish any particular details: His stay in that country was occupied in visiting the followers of the Covenanted Testimony, in preaching to them the word of life, and dispensing the sacraments; and by his opportune visit, he was the means of comforting the Covenanters under the trying circumstances in which they were placed, and of inducing them to continue steadfast in their profession. Though this was a portion of his life which he delighted to remember and to speak of, in his later years, yet if he ever had committed any thing to writing respecting it, no papers relating to it can at present be discovered. He was accustomed to speak frequently of the number of children whom he baptized; whole families having remained without baptism, from the time that the church was left without a faithful pastor. He returned to Scotland in July, 1790, having been absent about eleven months.

He resumed his labours among the people of his charge with all his former diligence and toil. The field of his exertions was, however, in the course of a few years somewhat lessened, by the members of the church in Stranraer and its vicinity being formed into a separate congregation. It was generally desired by this congregation that Mr. Reid should continue his pastoral labours among them, and leave the people of the other districts to provide for themselves another minister; and had he calculated upon following the dictates of personal ease, it might have been supposed that he would have acceded to their wishes. But the lessening of bodily toil seems to have been with him no ruling motive; and he preferred to continue the more laborious charge of the widely-scattered congregation of Newton-Stewart, Whithorn, and Castle Douglas. At a subsequent period, the congregation of Castle Douglas likewise obtained a distinct organization; and Mr. Reid again chose the more arduous field of labour, preferring to continue his charge of the congregation of Newton-Stewart, and Whithorn.

Nothing further remarkable in his history presents itself, till about the year 1825, when in consequence of a decision of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, erasing the particular mention of the Auchensaugh renovation of the Covenants from the terms of communion, Mr. Reid judged it his duty to separate from the main body of the Church. The reasons by which the Synod were led to adopt the above mentioned resolution, were, not that they deemed the Auchensaugh renovation of the Covenants improper in its general design, or not obligatory on posterity, but that it was unnecessary to introduce into the brief formula of the terms of communion, a specific mention of particular instances of Covenant renovation; and that there was at least no reason for condescending on this single instance, to the exclusion of others which were equally seasonable and faithful; and moreover, that notwithstanding the general faithfulness for which the Auchensaugh renovation was distinguished, there are some things particularly in the engagement to duties, which require explanation, and which, in the obvious meaning of the terms employed, seemed to impose obligations that were uncalled for, and irreconcilable with the avowed and universal practice of the Church. But such was not the light in which the matter was viewed by Mr. Reid. He considered the decision of the Synod as a departure from steadfast adherence to former testimonies for the truth, and as having a tendency to pave the way for further defections. He felt that he could not conscientiously conform to the resolution adopted by his brethren; while at the same time, the idea of separation filled his mind with perplexity and distress. He betook himself to God for direction and comfort; and after a protracted and painful mental struggle, he at last formed the resolution of continuing steadfast to what he judged the truth, and of withdrawing from the communion of the Synod. He maintained his separate standing till his death, a few in various parts of the country followed his example.— Although we do not approve of Mr. Reid's separation, yet candour re-

quires us to state that he never regretted the course which he had judged it his duty to pursue ; on the contrary, he often reflected with gratitude that he had been enabled to be faithful ; and only a short while before he was called to leave the scene of his earthly toils, he solemnly declared, that had he not dissented from the decision of the Synod, he could not in peace have laid his head upon a dying pillow.

In the spring of 1828 he removed from Newton-Stewart to Glasgow, where he afterwards continued to reside with his daughter, Mrs. Stewart. The infirmities of age rendered him unable to sustain the fatigue of his usual pulpit labors, yet he continued for a considerable period to preach on a part of the Sabbath, to such as adhered to his views of the testimony of the Church. By degrees even this became too much for his weakened frame ; and with much reluctance he was forced to cease his public exertions in the cause of his Lord. This appeared to be the last thing which he could bring his mind calmly to resign ; and even when enjoying the most entire submission regarding every thing else in which he was himself concerned, he frequently expressed an anxiety to be again engaged in those services in which he had spent his life. But on this point also he was at length enabled to resign himself to his Master's will, to give up all anxiety respecting further employment in the church below, and to look forward with longing expectation and joyful hope, to the crown of glory in the heavens. During his residence in Glasgow, and even before he left Newton-Stewart, his eye-sight was so much impaired, that he could not read, yet he seemed fond of having his books beside him ; and might frequently have been seen with one in his hand, while he was listening to what was read to him, or was wrapt in his own meditations. It was his custom before retiring to rest, to cause a passage of scripture to be read to him, that he might be furnished with matter of meditation during the night ; and on the morrow he would frequently say to his friends, "Oh ! what a sweet feast I have had ;" or when the passage was read to him, he would exclaim, "What a rich feast this will be through the night." At other times a portion of Scripture having been presented to his mind, and having occupied his nightly meditations, he would relate in the morning what sweet enjoyment he had experienced, or desire that the passage might be sought out and read to him along with the opinions of commentators regarding it. He desired only a small portion of any book to be read to him at once, that he might have time to meditate upon it, and digest it in his own reflections.— The latter period of his life appeared to be spent in perfect contentment, and great spiritual enjoyment. Meditation and prayer, and praise were his employment ; and on one occasion, when his hearing was so affected that he could not derive any benefit from reading, and some expressions of sympathy with him under these circumstances were used, he replied, "I can meditate, and I can pray and praise, and these are incalculable blessings." The Psalms were his peculiar delight ; and toward the close of his life, those in the latter part of the book being usually sung in family worship, he sometimes exclaimed, "These

Psalms are all praise, they ravish my very soul." The state of the Church was the only thing which seemed to give him anxiety and uneasiness ; otherwise he was full of comfort and exultation, expressing his readiness to depart and to be with Christ, and looked forward with joyful anticipations, to "the judgment day, and *the glorious resurrection morn.*" On the morning of the day on which he was seized with his last illness, he appeared to be in his usual health, and conducted the devotional exercises of the family ; but immediately afterwards he was seized with a cold shivering over his whole body. Medical skill proved unavailing, and the disease continued to increase. One morning, his daughter, remarking to him how feeble he was become, he said, "Yes, I am frail and feeble, but my good Lord will send relief in his own time, and in his own way." These were almost the last words which he was heard to utter ; and after severe bodily suffering, he expired on the 4th November, 1837, in the 87th year of his age, and 54th of his ministry.

From his youth, Mr. Reid was distinguished for the gravity of his deportment ; and there was a politeness in his manners which is seldom equaled in the station of life which he occupied. He was universally beloved and respected, not only by the brethren and members of the church, but also by the respectable families in the district where he resided. One remarkable feature of his character was the regularity with which all his movements were conducted ; and this was particularly manifested respecting his family devotions. He was careful to have family worship performed at an early hour in the evening, accounting it the highest mockery to defer the worship of God, till body and mind were worn out with other cares and employments. He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith ; and much people was added to the Lord, through his instrumentality. The only works which he has left behind him, are, "The lives of the Westminster Divines," in 2 vols. ; and a Sermon on the Divinity of Christ, from Romans ix. 5, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

#### THE JEWS.

It may be interesting to our readers to know that the whole number of this people scattered throughout the world, is estimated at 2,700,000. They are distributed by those who have of late enquired most particularly into their state and condition, as follows ; Europe, 1,674,000 ; Asia, 542,000 ; Africa, 480,000 ; America, 32,000 ; Polynesia 2,000. They belong to different sects, such as the Rabbinists, the Caraites, the Samaritans &c. and are found in almost every country on earth. The above estimate can be regarded only as an approximation to accuracy and is probably below their actual number. The European Jews, by the same kind of estimate are divided among the states as follow. Austrian Dominions, 470,000 ; Russia and Russian Poland, 450,000 ; Turkey in Europe, 312,000 ; Prussia and Prussian Poland, 153,000 ; Netherlands, 80,000 ; France, 60,000 ; Bavaria, 55,000 ; Great Britain, 25,000 ; Denmark and Sweden, 6,500 ; the smaller German States, 32,500 ; Italian States, 30,000. It is stated on the authority of the *New-York Star*, edited by a Jew, that there are upwards of 40,000 of this people now in Palestine, and emigration increasing.