

P R E F A C E.

THE task of preparing these Lectures for publication has been sadly broken in upon by an overwhelming domestic bereavement. It was my purpose to append to them such an array of authorities in support of the views expressed both on Voluntaryism and pauperism, as might have served to rebut the force of the adverse criticism to which I have no doubt these views will be subjected. I have no time or heart to do this now ; and apart from this, I am content to let my opinions stand on their own footing believing that they are just and sound, and that nothing but the principles of Knox and Melville, embodied in a system of endowed territorial work, commensurate with the area and population of the country, will rectify the wrongs or remedy the evils, under which we now groan being burdened. As respects the language sometimes used in the course of the Lectures in speaking of Voluntaryism, and

which I have been led to understand offended some of my Voluntary brethren who honoured me by their presence at their delivery, I beg it to be distinctly understood that it is the system of Voluntaryism, and not its honest supporters, I venture to condemn. No man can admire more than I do the learning, worth, and devotedness of many Voluntary ministers. I number some of them among my esteemed personal friends. But the best of them are, I firmly believe, such as they are, not in consequence, but in spite of the system with which they are connected ; and I feel persuaded that their usefulness would be a thousandfold increased if they laboured territorially instead of congregationally, as ministers of a national, as contradistinguished from a sectarian, Church.

With regard to the subject-matter of the Lectures, some who hold firmly the principle of endowed territorialism may desiderate a fuller exposition of the method according to which that principle may be practically worked out in any parish, with a detailed account of the different agencies which experience has proved to be most successful in applying it beneficially to all classes and conditions of life. I could not but feel that this, if properly done, was fitted to be useful to many earnest workers in the

junior ranks of the ministry. In a limited course of lectures, however, it was not possible to compass every point of the subject; and in the present state of public opinion, I considered it to be of primary importance to vindicate the principle of national religion, and the grounds on which it can be triumphantly maintained and worked. The argument in the first Lecture, which some may deem to be superfluous, I regard as of essential consequence. On the common priesthood of all believers in Jesus Christ, as the grand basis of all ecclesiastical organisation, the whole matter of Church-work, as well as of Christian doctrine, cardinally rests; and it is the clear conception and firm establishment of this which more than anything else is calculated to preserve the Church from the influences of priestcraft, and to unite all Christians as one man in the service of their only Lord and Master. I trust and pray that on this ground all the genuine Presbyterians of Scotland may yet, by God's grace, be brought to join in the formation of a grand national Church, which shall be "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth."

MANSE OF NORTH LEITH,
25th March 1875.