

**EARLY PROGRESS OF
CHRISTIANITY IN BUCHAN,
BEING TWO PAPERS READ
BEFORE THE CLUB OF DEIR**

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Early Progress of Christianity in Buchan, Being Two Papers Read Before the Club of Deir by
George Ogilvie

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GEORGE OGILVIE

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*Early Progress of Christianity
in Buchan,*

BEING TWO PAPERS READ BEFORE
THE CLUB OF DEIR,

BY

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PREFACE.

THE Club of Deir is a small society of gentlemen resident in the Northern part of Buchan, which, for certain civil and ecclesiastical purposes, is designated the District of Deir—the solitary reminiscence, in our day, of the extensive supremacy once attached to the celebrated abbey of that name. The Club was founded in 1868, for the discussion of scientific, literary, and other subjects of general interest, with the view also of following out, where expedient, the conclusions arrived at, to practical effect. A list is subjoined of the members at this date.

The Communications hitherto made to the Club have had a bearing, more or less direct, on the history, social condition, and physical capabilities of the country, and comprise papers on "The Volunteer Service, as a means of culture" (Mr Mitchell), on "Cottage Hospitals" (Dr. Jamieson), on "Some points in the Chemistry of Agriculture" (Mr. Hay), on "The Condition of the Agricultural Labourer" (Dr. Gavin), on "The Tenure of Land" (Mr. Wilson), and on "The Poor Laws" (Mr Milne)—and some of these topics have been so ably handled by the authors, that in allowing his own communications to be put forth by the Club as their first publication,—though that on "Cottage Hospitals" also has appeared in another

Preface.

form—the remark is, in a measure, forced on the writer, that the selection is due, not to any special merit of composition, but simply to the local interest connected with some of the points involved, and to the previous direction of public attention towards them by a much abler hand, whose recent work, the *Preface to the Book of Deer*, has been so largely drawn upon.

Since the paper was read, he has had the opportunity of verifying some points, and adding a few others, from the notices of our local saints and worthies in the concluding part of the *Collection of Scottish Calendars*, just published by Dr. Forbes, Bishop of Brechin—the fullest account, taken as a whole, that has yet appeared of these lights of a dark age. Thanks are also due to Mr. Mitchell of St. Fergus for his trouble in searching out the occasional references to the rebuilding of our parish churches, in the *Minutes of the Presbytery of Deer*.

BOYNDLIE, *October 9, 1872.*



THE CLUB OF DEIR.

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*Notes Bearing on the Early Progress of
Christianity in Buchan.*

PART I.

ALTHOUGH by the rules of our Club, what may be called controversial subjects—whether in religion or politics—are judiciously excluded, yet as social questions—though bearing on politics—are not considered objectionable, but rather, on the contrary, seem generally to be the most favoured topics, as coming home so closely to our personal interests, so there are certain questions similarly related to our religious belief, which, while on this account they take a strong hold of our affections, are yet so far removed from all direct points of controversy as to be free from the risk of endangering the harmony of our meetings, and so appear to me very eligible for bringing under your consideration, both as important in themselves, and as enlarging the range of subjects coming before us, which, in so limited a circle of contributors, must else tend to become too much of the same character.

Whatever differences, unfortunately, now prevail among Christians—differences cropping out all the more prominently by reason of the freedom of expression distinguishing our age and country—still I am persuaded all earnest minded men amongst us look back with

sentiments of affectionate respect to those early pioneers of the Gospel, who—though rude, it may be, as were the times in which they lived—yet with a devotion which has never been surpassed, succeeded in planting, among our forefathers, that system of faith which is the real source of our existing civilization, and of the high position we now hold among the nations of the world.

The subject, moreover, is one which has an additional relish to ourselves, in having been so much worked up by Aberdeenshire men, or those at least connected with our county; for without disparagement of the labours of Dr. Reeves, Count Montalembert, and others, I think I may fairly say that it is mainly to the exertions, in a former generation, of Thomas Innes, the real founder of correct views on the old Celtic History of Scotland, and in our own day, of the late Dr. Joseph Robertson, Professor Innes, Dr. Stuart, Mr. J. H. Burton, Dr. Grub, and Mr Skene, that we are indebted for whatever rational and reliable information we have as to the introduction of Christianity, and the general condition of the country and its inhabitants in the fifth and succeeding ages—and the few notices now to be brought forward are little more than a sort of resumé of their statements on the subject.

Archæological researches in most parts of the world where such have been made, have discovered evidence more or less conclusive, of the prior existence of races so different from the later population, as to preclude the idea of their ancestral connection, and suggest the probability of the aborigines having been supplanted by succeeding occupants either in the shock of their first collision, or by some such gradual process of extinction as we still see going on with the natives