

# THE LIFE

OF THE

3670.  
REV. JOHN MACDONALD, A.M.,

LATE MISSIONARY MINISTER FROM THE FREE CHURCH  
OF SCOTLAND AT CALCUTTA;

INCLUDING SELECTIONS FROM HIS

DIARY AND LETTERS.

BY THE  
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## PREFACE.

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THAT one hundred and fifty millions of the inhabitants of Asia should, for the present, be under the control, and many of them amenable to the laws, of our island, is one of the most remarkable facts that the history of the world contains. To the politician it gives scope for his wisdom—to the avaricious, for cupidity—to the ambitious, for fame; and to the philanthropist, it furnishes a noble arena for advancing the social amelioration of men.

But, if we may interpret the designs of the King of kings, India is subject to Britain for loftier purposes than these; and he who knows the grand system of the moral universe—the plan by which God is conducting many sons and daughters to glory—will at once discover

what the Overruler's purpose is. We are made the custodiers of the truth, not to monopolize, but to spread it; and, beyond all question, it is in order that India may receive that truth from our hands, that it is, to a large extent, made passively submissive to our rulers, or even ambitious of being subject to their sway. India has thus a day of merciful visitation, if we be faithful to our stewardship; and surely the Lord's remembrancers should be busily imploring the Ruler of the hearts of men to turn them to favour that cause. It admits, we think, of very conclusive proof, that were India won to Christ, the Christianization of the nations would not be remote: and the Churches should ponder that fact.

And what has Britain done to discharge her obligations and fulfil her high stewardship? In comparison, it was only yesterday that the truth was permitted to have free and unfettered course in that vast empire; and now, when freedom, under British protection, exists, the benefits and the blessings of Christianity are often counteracted by the conduct of professing Christians, or rendered unavailing by



the patronage still accorded to Hindu idolatry. The attempt to Christianize is left to a handful of humble men, who have to resist not merely the colossal mass of Indian superstitions, but, moreover, the frequent and flagrant ungodliness of many who profess to hold that truth which missionaries endeavour to teach.

To these antagonistic elements with which the truth has to conflict in India, as elsewhere, we must add the hostility of Popery as the ally of Hinduism in perpetuating idolatry. It is an instructive fact to know, that so baneful is the influence of Romanism in Bengal, that no fewer than three missionaries of our Church, in Calcutta alone, have had to assail it through the press. Dr Duff, by his noble and characteristic pamphlet against the Jesuits, Rev. W. S. Mackay, by his terse and classical publication on the same subject, and Rev. John Macdonald, in a pamphlet to be afterwards mentioned, have all been induced to challenge Popery, and oppose its progress in India; for it seeks to accomplish there what it has all but achieved in Tahiti, and will never cease to promote until the system be utterly uprooted.

And, at this juncture, what are the prospects of pure religion there? We can best reply from a glance at the past. There are between eighty and ninety societies in all evangelical Christendom spreading the light of the gospel. In the year 1846-7, it is computed that they raised £1,214,442 for that purpose. But, twenty-five years previous to that period, the societies then existing raised only £367,373; so that in about a quarter of a century the annual missionary income of the Christian Churches throughout the world has been trebled. Of the entire sum raised in 1846-7, the British Protestant societies raised nearly one million sterling; but with all this, it is computed that not more than one in ten of those who might contribute to the cause of missions actually does so. Yet still that cause is in progress; and, if India obtain its legitimate share, as we doubt not will be the case, then at least the dawn of its conversion, as far as that depends on the use of means, may be seen by the eye of faith. The nation may not be born in a day; but He whose right it is to rule is preparing to take actual possession of the

heathen there for his inheritance. Juggernaut and Durga-puja, Kali, with her necklace of human skulls, Brahm and Brahman, must all succumb at last before the God of the whole earth; for "with Him is the residue of the Spirit."

We do not scruple to place among the foremost grounds of hope for India, the system pursued in the General Assembly's Institution at Calcutta, designed as it is to raise up, by God's blessing, native preachers of the gospel. Speaking of it only as a human instrument, and remembering that such preaching is the grand means which God will bless for the conversion of the heathen, we rejoice over the Institution, just because it is preparing the way for preaching the gospel with effect. We know that its far-seeing founder, Dr Duff, regards the system as only like Adam when his material frame was just created, but not yet quickened by the breath of life—until the Spirit come all will be unavailing. But, as a means to an end, that system has already proved, and in coming times, if blessed of God, will prove yet more, a mighty engine for pulling down the strongholds of Satan in that land of death.

Were this the proper place, we would gladly dwell at length on the system thus pursued at the different missions of the Free Church of Scotland in India. The peculiarities of the Hindu mind and mythology—the subtlety of the one, and the enormous extent and ramifications of the other, as well as the exhausting, and often noxious, effects of the climate—all conspire, with other causes, to render the conversion of India by European agency less expeditious than Christian love would desire. The average of human life among missionaries is brief; and the frequent removals of many to Europe just when they had begun to be useful, operate most injuriously for the cause which the Churches of Christ have at heart. Among his own friends, Mr Macdonald says in one of his letters, he could enumerate ten missionaries who had left India in a single year; and while he deplores that necessity, he is indirectly proving that, if possible, some plan should be devised for bringing and keeping the truth in contact with men's minds, other than the precarious one which depends on the energies and life of European missionaries. With all his zeal and longing

for the work, though he made it at once a topic of earnest prayer and of frequent painstaking, Mr Macdonald had not been able to preach a single sermon in Bengali during his ten years' residence at Calcutta—an emphatic demonstration this of the need of some agency for preaching the gospel different from what has hitherto been commonly employed. Now, that agency is, by God's blessing, raised up at Calcutta and elsewhere; and in process of time, as the result of our faith and love, our prayers and our painstaking, a class of men will be prepared to perpetuate the gospel in India, though European missionaries were swept from its soil, as a fanatical idolatry has sometimes threatened to attempt. The other portions of the Church of Christ, labouring in the same cause, will help forward that desirable consummation, and in the fulness of time India will Christianize itself—that is, it will furnish the men whom the Spirit of the Lord will honour to proclaim the glad tidings of great joy, from Travancore to Jellalabad.\*

\* The following sentence, from a letter of Rev. John Anderson, one of the missionaries of the Free Church at Madras, will show that this

These, however, are far from being the only agencies for good that are now influencing India, nay, they form only a fragmentary part of the mighty moral powers that are concentrated on that land. What marvellous progress has been made since the days of Ward, and Marshman, and Carey, about the beginning of the present century, in bringing the Word of God to bear on the multitudinous mind of India! The Scriptures have been translated, in whole or in part, into nearly fifty dialects of the East. Some of these are spoken by many millions of people, so that the vast peninsula from the Himalaya Mountains to Cape Comorin, from the mouths of the Ganges to the borders of Affghanistan, nay, Affghanistan itself, may be said to be now supplied with the Word of God which endureth for ever. The entire Bible exists, at least, in Sanscrit, in Hindustani, in Bengali, in Orissa, in Hindui, in Punjabi, in

hope is not, what many suppose, illusory:—"For some Sabbaths our native preachers have preached at our Hall at Madras to 160 natives in their own tongues, Tamil and Telugu. In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." "My three sons in the bonds of the gospel continue to preach for me with great unction and acceptance every Sabbath evening." These are three converts now licensed to preach the gospel, and, like Saul of Tarsus, advancing the cause which they would once have maligned.

Canarese, in Mahratta, in Tamil, and Gujeratti. The entire New Testament is circulated in at least twenty provinces, in as many different dialects; and, besides these, various portions of the Scriptures are prepared in the languages of about twenty other portions of India. In preparing and circulating these, perhaps £200,000 have been expended; and yet, though many thousands of copies of the Scriptures have been distributed, and effects produced which clearly presage the coming of a spiritual emancipation for that country, still, all that has been done, viewed in connection with the vast extent yet to be overtaken, appears only like the feeble efforts of infancy coping with the energies of some gigantic power. By means of pilgrims, however, the seed of the kingdom is scattered far and wide, and many tell of the avidity with which all classes welcome that which contains the embryo of everlasting life, although they know it not. The very festivals where the heathen abominations are exhibited in forms so disgusting, supply facilities for thus circulating the Scriptures; and the appearance of those who distribute the word of truth often gives

rise to scenes of angry contention among parties who wish to possess, but cannot all obtain, the means of becoming wise unto salvation. From Juggernaut, Sagaur, and elsewhere, many thus carry over India, to its remotest corners, the gospel of salvation in its purest form—the form in which the God of truth revealed it.

Indeed, so manifest is the progress that is thus made in disseminating truth, that it scarcely comes within the domain of faith—it lies rather within the province of sight—to discern that a spiritual revolution is slowly in progress in that land. No doubt, we must beware lest too sanguine hopes be cherished, as if the anxiety to obtain the Scriptures were a real indication of a love of the truth, or any token at all of hungering and thirsting after salvation. Curiosity, and a hundred other causes, may be at work, stimulating to such anxiety; but all that conceded, it still remains a truth, that that Word is circulated which will not return void to its Author; and all is thus gradually put in train by Him who sees the end from the beginning, and calls things that



are not as though they were, for that period of promised glory, when the sons of God shall be brought from afar, and his daughters from the ends of the earth, and all shall rejoice in the liberty wherewith the Saviour makes free. The dreams of "ambrosial fruits and vegetable gold," with all the romance which has so long encircled the name of India, must anon give way to brighter visions still. The true "Lord of the world," and not the monstrous idol of Juggernaut,\* will be revealed even there, and in spite of the indifference of thousands who flock to that land from our island, instead of the counteractive influence of the lives of very many, and the countless inconsistencies of those who wear the Christian name, truth is preparing to take possession of Hindustan, which, when subdued to the King of kings, will prove the prelude to the conversion of the nations to God. India—we repeat it again and again—India once won to the Redeemer, and the work for which he died will touch, we think, its grand earthly consummation.

He whose life the following pages record

\* The real title, Jagat-nath, means *Lord of the World*.

rejoiced in the anticipation of the day when India would thus “flourish by the preaching of the Word,” and we cannot dismiss this volume without some explanatory remarks regarding it.

It is at the request of Mr Macdonald's be-reaved partner, of his valued friend J. A. F. Hawkins, Esq., of Calcutta, and others who knew his godliness and his worth, that this *LIFE* appears. We have no doubt that, as regards the character here presented, the manifestation of the grace of God which made that character what it was, and the spiritual beauty which adorned it, the Churches will sanction what those friends suggested. In preparing the volume, the compiler may be permitted to say, feelings of a deeply chequered kind were evolved at every stage. It was our happy privilege—and of all that is connected merely with man, we rank it among the happiest—to be associated with him as a co-presbyter and brother in the ministry for several years; and deep and rich as is the spiritual experience which this volume unfolds, we were perfectly prepared to expect it all. His close walk with God, his lowliness of spirit,

and his heavenly-mindedness, his deference to the will of the Supreme, and his unquenchable love to the Saviour of the lost, were so signal as actually to become a snare to those who shared his friendship—they tempted us to fix our affections on the man, and overlook the indwelling Spirit who made him what he was. Hence, in preparing his Memoir, it has been an act of self-denial to abstain, if possible, from the language of mere encomium—to turn attention rather to the beautifying grace than to the friend and brother, and leave the life and actions to pronounce a panegyric on the agent.

And another difficulty was felt. Mr Macdonald's Diary is so full and detailed, for several years of his life, that the work of selection was actually painful. To delineate his character, to magnify the grace of God in him, and exhibit him as a living epistle of the Lord Jesus, were the objects kept in view; and for promoting these ends the materials were so ample that two volumes might have been prepared more easily than one. The principle of selection was to give a continuous history of his mental and spiritual developments. In attempting that, care

was taken to exclude all matter that was not strictly *biographical*, or illustrative of Mr Macdonald's character as a man, a Christian, a minister, and a missionary. We are far from being sure that we have always made the best selection. Indeed, record after record brought out trait after trait, all of which one would have desired to present to the Churches, that the Father of lights might be more signally glorified in His regenerated child. We trust, however, that the flocks who knew the loving minister, the servants of Christ who prized the devoted missionary, the brethren who cherished the guileless friend and man, will find enough in the selection to preserve, in evergreen freshness, the endearing memory of one who rejoiced to lay himself, with all that he was, or all that he possessed, on the Saviour's altar—a holocaust to Him who died the just for the unjust, who loved us and gave himself for us, and who imparts all that is lovely to those whom the believer loves.

Many sensitive minds shrink from exposing, as publicity implies, such secret communings of the soul with its God as the following volume contains. It is deemed neither just to the de-

parted nor creditable to religion to lay bare all the workings of the mind, the anxious, the fitful or perhaps the morbid feelings which prompted the earnest soul to write bitter things against itself, which, it is supposed, were better concealed than made known.

We have two remarks to offer in connection with this opinion. First, from various expressions in the Diary of Mr Macdonald, it appears that he did not sympathize with the difficulty here referred to. Not a little of his inner life was fed and strengthened by studying the lives and experience of those who had gone before him in the heavenward journey which he so earnestly pursued; and sure we are that, had he deemed his Diary likely either to warn some thoughtless sinner or help some humble child of God along the narrow way, he would have rejoiced in its publicity, and appended his imprimatur.

But, secondly, apart altogether from any conjectural reasoning as to the views of the departed, it seems clearly due to those that come after us to tell them what God has done for our souls. We grant that much may be felt

and recorded by one just awaking from the stupor of nature, and emerging into the life and vigour of grace, which may not apply to the case of every other Christian; but where the Spirit has led a sinner from darkness to light, when that which began in legal terror has ended in evangelical joy, the glory of the Spirit who imparts such liberty seems to demand that the light should neither be extinguished nor obscured. All the way by which God has led the soul should be told, that others journeying in the same path may know the perils to avoid, or the consolations to expect—the errors committed by the anxious—and the joys imparted to those whom the Son makes free. That God has honoured such records, who that has felt the power of spiritual truth will question? and where He has honoured, shall we suppress or disown?

To Missionaries, how profound are the lessons which the life of this holy man teaches! What was the secret of his zeal, his energy, and success? He held out the hand of faith, and with that took hold of Omnipotence. He had a heart teeming with love to his Redeemer,

and that made every trial sweet. He was penetrated with the conviction that Christ would yet triumph in our fallen world, and he was thus "saved by hope" from faltering for a moment amid all that he was called to endure or to do.

To Ministers, no less touching is the appeal that comes from the banks of the Ganges, and the grave-yard of Calcutta. May we presume to ask the question—Lovest thou Jesus as this man loved? Watchest thou for souls as this man watched? Is eternity before thee as it was before the mind of the missionary Macdonald, when he pleaded for God with the souls of his fellow-sinners? Is there the passionate yearning for plucking brands from the burning which signalized this minister of Christ?

And to Students, this life may speak in language over which "the understanding heart" will ponder. A thorough conversion, entire consecration to Christ, love to souls, which no difficulty could repress, the ceaseless indwelling of the Spirit the sanctifier, and perfect distrust, or even contempt, for human agency apart from Him, were the presiding principles in this

missionary's mind. Moved by these, he forsook the pleasantness of home—denied himself to the regards of a flock that clung to him, in some cases, with more than earthly affection, and hastened across the great waters, to tell the perishing Hindus of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Are there many among the rising ministry of Christ's Church in this land cherishing these principles, and preparing, ere the world shall wrap its entanglements around them, to "follow the Lord fully," as this missionary did?

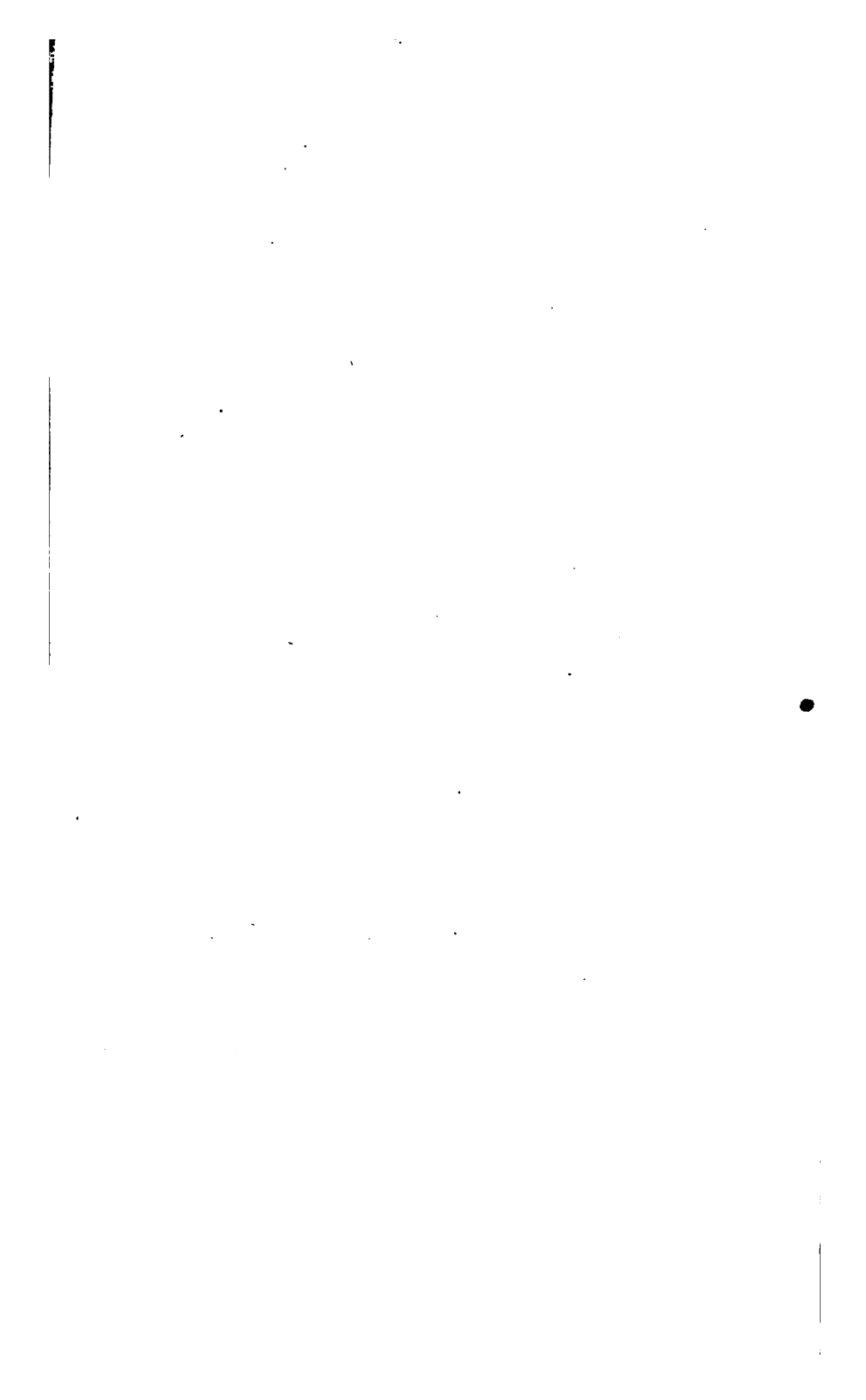
To all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, this volume may be blessed by the Spirit of God, as a source of refreshing and of joy. Are they jealous over their own souls?—see how this devoted missionary watched over his. Are they walking in darkness?—see in the Diary of this man of God where the light is, and how it may be seen. Are they rejoicing in hope of the glory of God?—see here how grace is praised for all—how the creature, even at the holiest, is laid in the dust, and Jehovah, our righteousness, exalted high above the highest.



And has such a record no lesson for the unconverted, who soothe themselves into tranquillity by the misappropriated name of Christ? Yes. The Diary of this missionary man proclaims from every page what it is to be a Christian indeed; it beseeches men to be reconciled unto God; and, if the departed could know at all what happens in the Church on earth, his spirit would rejoice did some wandering, sin-laden soul listen to the lessons which "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

● May the Eternal Spirit bless the Record for these end! As at the death of him whose life is here delineated, four Hindus gave themselves in covenant to Christ by baptism, may the Journal of his life, through the unction of the Holy One, promote the same spiritual result in many a soul, "to the praise of the glory of the grace of God!"

GEORGE SQUARE,  
EDINBURGH, Jan. 25, 1849.



# THE LIFE

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### CHAPTER I.

Introduction—John Macdonald's Birth—His Mother—Her Influence—"The Sacrament Burn"—Early Traits—The University—His Success at King's College—His Studies—A College Competition—Its Result—His Early Habits, and Conscientiousness—Examples—Takes his Degree—His Character at this period.

THE fountain of all perfection is found in God, and whatever excellence may appear in His creatures is only as a spark, or an emanation from Him. They may be just, but He is justice; they may be enlightened, but He is light; they may be merciful—He is mercy; they may be loving—God is love.

We accordingly see that the excellencies which constellate in the Divinity are reflected in detail, and in various measures, from the excellent of the earth. Is the Eternal a God of truth? Then one of His redeemed servants is found signalized by that grace—Cornelius Jansen, bishop of Ypres, as he traversed his garden, was often seen to pause, and, with his

eye directed to heaven, was heard exclaiming, "O truth! truth!" He loved it with the force of a passion, and pursued it often in places where it could not be found, but yet with earnest and intense desire. Or, is the Supreme characterised as a Father? is He guided by a father's pity, or invested with a father's authority? Then another, of large affection and most genial nature, was heard exclaiming, as he also traversed his garden amid the stillness of a Sabbath twilight—"O my Father, my heavenly Father!" Each renewed soul thus finds in the Eternal Spirit something congenial with the presiding principle in its own nature, to be at once an object of admiration or love to the creature, and a bond of union between the Creator and him.—We are about to delineate the life and character of one who, had the master-principle of his soul ever been embodied in such an exclamation, would, we believe, have exclaimed—"O love!—the love of God in Christ, which passeth knowledge!"

JOHN MACDONALD was born at Edinburgh, on the 17th day of February, in the year 1807, and was baptized on the 8th of the following month, by the Rev. Dr Campbell, of the Tolbooth Church, in that city. His father, now Rev. Dr Macdonald,\* was, at that period, the minister of the Gaelic Chapel in Edinburgh; and to those who are acquainted with the history of religion in Scotland for the past forty

\* It is melancholy to be obliged to add that the father has been called to follow the son, to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. If it be a token for good to the Church when one master in Israel is raised up after another to unfold and defend the truth, what shall we say when one after another is so suddenly summoned from the field to their rest?

years, it is superfluous to recount the benefits imparted by his apostolic labours. The revival in religion which had been commenced or promoted by the efforts of Whitefield, Dr Erskine, and others, was carried forward by his zeal and energy, after his translation from Edinburgh to the parish of Urquhart, in Ross-shire. Indeed, to perhaps none of her living sons does Scotland owe more than to him who has been appropriately styled the Apostle of the North. Not merely has soul after soul been born of the Spirit through his instrumentality, but revival after revival—those harvests of ministerial labour—have been produced, or promoted, by a blessing from on high on his devoted labours; and the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid bare alone can tell how many shall rise up to call him blessed, or be to him what the Thessalonians were to Paul—“his hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.” It is true that he did not proceed unmolested in this career of reclaiming the outcast, or disturbing the slumbers of the spiritually dead. The controversy which began between Cain and Abel, and which has been revived and perpetuated in every succeeding age, when the works that were righteous came into collision with the works that were evil,\* was renewed in his case. Worldliness could not brook the aggressions which were made on its dark territory, nor tolerate the zeal that was inspired by the blessing of God on the endeavours to which we allude. But the offence of the Cross was cheerfully

\* 1 John iii. 12.

borne: it was deemed enough if souls were awakened and saved.

Trained at the feet, and taught by the example, of such a father, it may readily be supposed that the son received impressions, in his earliest years, which were never effaced, and which his own maturity only developed and made indelible. His mind was peculiarly delicate and impressible, and when reverence was mixed with affection, it is easy to conceive the effects upon a mind so exquisitely formed, so loving and so lovely as his. It was long subsequent to this period that he became a child of God in spirit and in truth; but even in his earliest years those traits which constituted the peculiarity of his character were developed—affection and simplicity signalized him even in his childhood.

John Macdonald lost his mother by death soon after his father was translated from Edinburgh to Urquhart; and though his remembrance of her was faint, he often spoke of her with a degree of affection which evinced at once the tenderness and the depth of his juvenile impressions. It was from her that he learned his first lessons as to himself and his God; and it was in connection with her that he began to display those tendencies which grace subsequently sanctified, and consecrated to his Redeemer. His experience is, therefore, to be added to that of "the great cloud" comprehending Augustine, John Newton, Jonathan Edwards, Washington, Cuvier, Cecil, and others, whose first realizing impressions of the power and the preciousness of truth, are ascribed to the prayers and the painstaking of a mother. The strain of her instructions may be in-

ferred from the fact, that when only four years of age, as he was taken by her to church on a sacramental fast-day, which was kept like the Sabbath, he was anxious to learn the authority on which that was done, when his mother informed him that his father had appointed it. The child promptly replied, that, in that case, it was his father's Sabbath, not God's, and was to be kept for man's sake; and the man who takes his religion simply from the Bible, will notice the important principle involved in this distinction, unconsciously drawn by a child of four years of age—it was a presage of the principles on which he eventually acted through life. At a subsequent period he described, in verses more remarkable for their pathos than their poetry, the "pensive pleasure" which he felt as he dwelt on her remembered features and her warm affection, and recalled the lessons by which she had showed "the good man's happiness, and the bad man's fate." Unbounded reverence for his father's character, and affectionate regard for his mother's memory, tended largely to influence and form his sensitive mind.

As the labours of Dr Macdonald often called him to visit various parts of Scotland, especially the Highlands, his son sometimes accompanied him on his tours. He was thus familiarized with the labours of one who was instant in season and out of season in bringing souls to Christ, and taught to understand that religion must be important when men flocked in such crowds—often counted by thousands—to the preaching of the truth. But before he was enabled to form a right estimate of it for himself, he had many lessons still to learn, and much discipline to

undergo. His education, prior to his removing to the university, was conducted exclusively under his father's roof; and, perhaps, there are few instances on record of one who was never placed at any public seminary, ranking so high as a scholar when he at length measured his strength against those who had enjoyed that advantage. Though the first choice of a tutor for the future missionary was not such as to secure much progress, or successfully develop his powers, the evil was remedied by the next selection. In the month of April 1817, he was placed under the care of Rev. Alexander Macdonald, now minister of the Free Church at Urquhart, in Inverness-shire, who, for the period of six years, continued to superintend his education. It does not appear that he gave any evidence of very remarkable precocity as a student. The same characteristics which marked him as a preacher, appeared in his earliest attainments as a scholar. They were solid rather than brilliant, and durable rather than striking. Yet, by the system pursued in his studies, he soon acquired a large amount of knowledge and a creditable degree of scholarship, and we shall forthwith witness the proofs which he gave of his attainments.

About this period incidents were from time to time occurring, which He who sees the end from the beginning overruled for guiding the mind of the future minister and missionary of Christ to the clear light which the Gospel sheds. The Christian who has passed from death to life, after reaching the age at which we are capable of reflecting on our own mental transitions, can often discern the dealings of God hedging up his way, and guiding him to the appointed result,



at a time when he himself was heedless of such things. Now a heavy cross, and anon some signal blessing—to-day something that threatens to overwhelm—tomorrow, something that will spread a joy like sunlight through the soul—all conspire to guide it to the spot, or place it in the circumstances, in which old things shall pass away. Who that can reflect on his unconverted life, but must remember how, at one time, God in providence baffled, and at another prospered, the anxious mind, that the soul might be saved from itself, and the ruin which self would have wrought?

In some degree, it was thus with the subject of this memoir. From time to time incidents occurred which prompted the thought, that there was something far higher and deeper in the religion of Jesus than he had yet arrived at. Amiable he had ever been. Solemnized he sometimes was by the services of the sanctuary, and of his home. From his earliest years he was familiarly addressed as “The Minister.” But amiability is not grace. There were outbreaks of boyish levity. Seriousness is not necessarily conversion; and, in the providence of God, things must be put in order for that all-decisive change.

Near the parish church of Urquhart, in which Dr Macdonald so long proclaimed the glad tidings of great joy, there is a place called *The Burn*, much prized by the people on account of the hallowed associations connected with it. The Gaelic congregation assembles there when the Lord’s Supper is to be dispensed, and it is a scene which seems adapted to that sacred purpose by the constructive hand of Him who makes all nature subservient to the purposes of his grace. It forms a kind of glen or hol-

low, through which there flows a brook skirted by grassy levels for several hundred yards. The upper and sheltering banks are thickly wooded with oak-coppice, birch, hazel, and mountain-ash trees, interspersed with ivy and woodbine, and variegated by the peak of a projecting rock now and then rising up, as if for the sake of contrast, amid the wide-spread green. At the base of one of these crags, there wells up a fountain, giving both freshness and beauty to the scene. On a Wednesday, in the month of June, the elders of Urquhart, aided by other members of the flock, assembled at "The Sacrament Burn," to erect the tent and make other preparations for the services of their communion-day. The future missionary to India, then a strippling, was of the party; and as he rambled through the thickets, the catechist of the parish approached the fountain at the crag, unconscious of the nearness of any human being. That devout man was a disciple of Him who made the gift of a cup of cold water, in certain circumstances, more precious than the gift of a diadem; and ere he would drink, he must ask the blessing of the Author of every good and perfect gift. He did it. His broad blue bonnet was laid aside, and all that could betoken gratitude to God for even that simple draught was exhibited in his attitude. Unseen by him, the son of the minister witnessed the spectacle, and the sight went to his heart. On his return home, he mentioned the incident with mingled surprise and admiration; and he subsequently confessed, that it forced on him the reflection, that "there must be

something in the religion of those men to which he was still a stranger.”

During the summer recess of one of his early years at college, an incident took place which farther unfolded the natural religion of his soul. Returning from the university flushed with his successes and honours, as a youth of fourteen was likely to be, he found a cousin on her death-bed, and was startled from his boyish joy by the sight. When thus brought into contact with death, his mind began to stretch into the future, and anxiously or instinctively to inquire regarding its mysterious destinies. Of her whom he soon saw cut down, as he records, in the bloom of youth and beauty, he says:—“The soul has already rendered an account of all its actions. If good, it has gone to the place of bliss; if bad, it has gone—whither?” The pensive boy did not venture to answer the question; but the impressions which were made by that first remembered death, gave solemnity to thoughts naturally predisposed to such meditations, though, at this early age, no symptom appears of a distinct comprehension of the wondrous scheme by which life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel. Perhaps few impressions are more lasting in any mind than that made by the first sight of the dead, especially if the departed were one to whom affection clung; at least it was thus in the instance before us.

At the same time, there were cases in which the moral force and beauty of his natural character appeared even anterior to the period at which he became a subject of grace. A gentleman, by many

years his senior, was in the habit of taking the name of God in vain, when any thing that tended to excite him had occurred. The rank and years of the party rendered it difficult, at least for a stripling, to undertake the task of reproof or sentence, but a note, containing the following rebuke, was forwarded to him who was guilty of one of the most gratuitous of all transgressions:—" You wish me to be candid. I confess your frequent violation of God's holy name has been, and is, a source of great unhappiness to me. It is His to detect and avenge, but it is mine to tell you so." The firm yet gentle rebuke was parried by the ordinary palliations of the sin; but the man that committed it was forced to acknowledge both the truth and the kindness of the reproof.

It was in the last week of October, in the year 1820, that this conscientious youth removed from his father's roof to the University of Aberdeen. During the summer and autumn of that year he had been busy with his preparations, and sometimes spent nine hours in a day in that employment; and it was with very peculiar feelings that the inexperienced, gentle boy found himself, for the first time, among strangers, to enter on the cares and struggles which he knew as yet only by report. In the month of November, however, he entered as a student at King's College—the seat of learning to which a large proportion of the youth from the north of Scotland resort. At his enrolment, when he was only in the fourteenth year of his age, and though his training had been conducted exclusively in private, he competed for a bursary, in the manner established by the usages of

his college ; and although he stood against competitors most of whom were both his seniors in years, and had enjoyed the benefit of attending the public seminaries of Aberdeen, so high and accurate were his attainments, that he secured a bursary of the first class, which decided his standing for the year. The success mainly depended on the accuracy of certain compositions in the Latin language ; and those who know, on the one hand, how rarely that branch is cultivated in Scotland, and, on the other, the close attention that is paid to it in the grammar-school of Aberdeen, where it is made a matter of assiduous culture, will at once perceive that both the talents and the attainments of young Macdonald must have been high to insure such success. His own account of the effect produced by the announcement of it in college is as follows :—“ Every thing reeled around me,” he says ; “ my father, my teacher, my friends, myself, all rushed into my mind—it was the first overpowering, the first delicious moment of life.”

The eminence which he thus secured at the commencement of his university career, he sustained throughout his course in literature, science, and philosophy. He was reputed the best Latin scholar, and carried off the first prize in his class during each of the four years of his course at King's College.

Of his habits during these years he has left some brief notices in one of his earliest journals. Under the eye of his tutor, he says, all that might have proved injurious to his moral principles was repressed, “ while he kept up in their little circle that fear and worship of God which were his own delight, and distinguished their rooms from many others.”

His tasks were in general easily prepared, and then the playfulness of his disposition often sought vent among his less active fellows. After his first session at college, he was anxious to have delayed his return to the university for a year or two, that his mind might be better matured for the more advanced portion of his studies; but various considerations prevented him from carrying that wish into effect, and in the successive sessions of 1821-2, 1822-3, and 1823-4, he passed through the mathematical, the natural and moral philosophy classes. His habits as a student became more and more singularly exemplary; while his attention to his studies became so assiduous, that at one time it was feared he had fallen into consumption. Mathematics and algebra were his favourite studies; and though in his subsequent style as a preacher of the gospel there was little abstract reasoning, or not much to indicate that cast of mind which could master the difficulties of the higher mathematics, there was much that was better far—the *results* of a reason matured and invigorated by such exercises as those we have described.

At the close of his fourth session, when only seventeen years of age, he gained the Huttonian prize, which is regarded as deciding the academical character of him that holds it. He is considered to be the Senior Wrangler of his year, and enters on his future course amid the high expectations of his professors and fellows. One of the former,\* while dwelling with affectionate remembrance on the merits of his lamented pupil, has said, that “with talents

\* Professor Tulloch of King's College, Aberdeen.

far above the ordinary caste of students, and with unvarying attention to every subject to which his mind was directed, he carried with him when, leaving college, an amount of knowledge which but few young men at so early an age possess." "He never showed any anxiety to win the suffrages of his class-fellows, by bringing his attainments prominently into their view; he never tried to gain votes by supplying his less gifted neighbour with copies of difficult exercises. His downright honesty would prevent his employing any of those means which less scrupulous young men never failed to employ; and yet, at the end of the fourth year of his course, only two of his class-fellows were found to contend with him for the possession of our highest prize, and these two, although they had frequently got prizes where he got none, were left far behind. He carried the prize triumphantly—that is, when talents and acquirements were the only resources on which the competitors could fall back, he left all behind him. This trial lasted a whole week, and the pieces of trial were in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Moral Philosophy." Professor Tulloch concludes his communication with a strong expression of hope, that John Macdonald's bright example may prompt many of our youth to walk in his footsteps. Few, at the age of seventeen, may have reached his eminence as a student; but where one has succeeded, others may, and the spirit of our age demands in every department, but specially in the ministry, the highest culture of the gifts which God has given us.

Regarding the Huttonian prize, already referred

to, we are able to furnish some curious particulars from early journals before us. It is competed for at the close of each session by students who have completed their fourth year at college, and the examinations extend to all the branches taught and studied during the entire previous period of attendance. Young Macdonald long hesitated as to competing, and his preparations appear to have been desultory and slight; but "urged on," he says, "by my friends, and encouraged by a number of circumstances," he at last entered the lists on the 15th of March 1824, when he had just completed his seventeenth year. So severe is the ordeal to which the candidates are exposed, that only three appeared to compete; and the following is his own account, half humorous and half grave, of the rivalry which ensued:—

"Like English boxers, we shook hands with each other; and, I am sure, with as little sincerity. The professors entered, and gave us a portion of Greek to be translated into Latin. As soon as they left us, we began to amuse ourselves; but, after spending a considerable portion of the evening in this way, we began to grow a little graver, for we found no small difficulty in our Greek. We had all, however, finished it by four o'clock on Tuesday morning, and all then set off home for bed in high spirits. I had observed all along, during this evening, that my fellow-competitors talked as if the prize were to be between them, and that I had no chance of it; this, however, was an additional encouragement to me instead of being otherwise.

"On Tuesday I had the pleasure of finding that my Greek exercise was correct; and I also found that it was not so with the others, for they had made several blunders.

"On Tuesday, at three P.M., we again met, and had some mathematical problems assigned us; two of them I wrought in a short time, and correctly, but the third cost me much



labour, and, after all, was incorrect. I here found of no small use to me the little acquaintance I had formed with the arithmetic of sines, and, if I had known more of it, I might have come on better. I left the room at eight on Wednesday morning, and went to bed immediately; the other competitors came away in the forenoon.

“ On Thursday, at three o'clock, we again met for the natural philosophy exercises. These were not particularly difficult; but, as I could not be so sure whether my solutions were right, as in the pure mathematics, they occupied a good deal of my time. I came away at eleven o'clock on Friday forenoon, and left my rivals, who did not move till six that evening. Before going away, I agreed, though quite unnecessarily, that on these accounts we should not meet again until eight at night, instead of three P.M. This interval I turned to my advantage by taking a long sleep, and was quite refreshed for commencing again. On Friday night we assembled for the fourth and last time, and had assigned us four exercises in moral philosophy. I pitied my fellows when they came, they were so done up for want of sleep, having got none for two days and nights. At six on Saturday morning we jointly petitioned the servant in attendance to let us all out for five minutes. We got out, and all three tried a race; we did not, however, allow each other out of sight. In the forenoon of Saturday I began to feel quite sluggish and heavy. I took a desperate pinch of strongly-scented snuff, which immediately made me quite sick; my stomach, however, by a spontaneous exertion, soon cleared itself in rather a rude manner. I sent out for some sherry wine, and in a short time was fresher than ever, and felt a new vigour infused into me. I wrote fourteen or fifteen large pages, and was out by nine on Saturday night. Thus ended these labours, of which I may say—

*' Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.'*

I left my companions in a truly pitiable condition. They had been three days and nights without sleep, in a constant

agitation and exhaustion of mind. They began to dread my success, of which they now seemed to have little doubt. They left the room at four on Sabbath morning, when one was found stretched on the floor quite stupid, and the other almost fainted on his chair. For a day or two after competition I felt a good deal exhausted, but felt no anxiety about the result—I knew that the die was cast, and that I could repair nothing now. At last I fell into the decided belief that I would not have it; sometimes a thrilling suggestion would agitate my breast, but I immediately expelled it as a cruel intruder. The eventful morning arrived when the decision was to be announced. I did feel a throb when I heard the morning bell ring, but it ceased with its peal. I did not go to the class, for I might perhaps not be able to conceal my disappointment when it came to the trial. The nine o'clock bell rung—a few moments would tell me all. Can I write how my heart bounded when I heard the sound of rapid running approach the house, ascend the stairs, and rush into my room! I knew none would run so fast to tell me of disappointment. One, and another, and another, of my class-fellows rushed into my room, and, stretching out their hands, wished me much joy. I could scarcely persuade myself that it was true, and my happiness seemed unwilling to acknowledge any true foundation. But what delighted me still more than obtaining the prize was the delight which so many of my class-fellows testified on the occasion."

It was by a training of such questionable severity on man's part, that God was preparing a minister and missionary of Christ for the toils and the crosses that awaited him; and the benefits that resulted from this competition followed the successful competitor all through his life. He has recorded with care the influence which it exerted, in stimulating him to maintain the position which he had gained; and he

adds, that perhaps nothing more than that prize, so intensely contended for, ever taught him the vanity of all earthly praise and honour:—"When I met with compliments," he says, "I found that they conveyed me no real pleasure; but I felt as if there was an indefinable something beyond what I obtained, which I sought after."

Towards the close of his career in the classes of literature and philosophy, his position of eminence had become so well established, that the securing of prizes had ceased to yield him any pleasure. His mind was gradually rising into that higher and purer region in which it was destined to move. In moral philosophy, however, which is studied during the session that immediately precedes the study of theology, his success was so highly rated, that the professor requested a copy of one of his essays "On the Difficulties attending the Study of Moral Science." But that he was kept from elation by success, and did not appreciate his own labours very highly, may be seen from his words when describing them:—"My labours," he records, "were rather those of the ant than of the bee. I heaped together things as I got them, without rather extracting their substances, and arranging them in an order which would afford both the beautiful and the useful."

But at our universities there are other modes of stimulating the intellect and developing mind, besides the ordinary routine of classes. Societies are formed among the young for free discussion, and the consequent furbishing of mental power. Few have passed through a course of training at any of the

universities without partaking in the stirring exercises of such an arena, and all must remember the eager, though friendly contests, which have often been displayed. Indeed, it has not seldom been amid such noisy warfare that the eloquence of the future orator, the subtlety of the future casuist, the argumentative power of the future analyst or philosopher, or the inanity of the future sciolist, has first appeared. But though he often entered, with the quiet zest which was peculiarly his own, into such exercises, it was rather as a spectator to enjoy and meditate, than as an orator to harangue, or a sophist to wrangle. His argumentative power was, indeed, considerable, and in private, among his friends, he gave it free scope; but that modesty which sat so gracefully on him through all his days, and formed one of the greatest charms of his society, prevented him from making any public display. His retentive memory supplied him with abundance of facts and data from which to argue, and his clear head enabled him skilfully to use them; yet it was among the friendly few, and not in the boisterous crowd, that he exerted his powers. But while this inborn modesty kept him aloof from much high debate, it led to more than counterbalancing benefits. Some of his companions, who loved and admired him while living, and who now deplore his departure, assure us that amid all his successes, he was not known to be an object of jealousy to any. Free from it himself, his mild and modest demeanour defended him from it on the part of others. His own generous nature, and the absence of all that was sordid, made him ever ready to do full justice to those who were his rival

competitors ; and if jealousy at all existed, that very generosity quashed or disarmed it. Even now, at the distance of a quarter of a century, they dwell on his retiring modesty with fond admiration ; and one who knew him well has said, that, lest he should be in any degree elated, he did not attend in the Common Hall when his success was to be declared, and scarcely appeared to reckon it a triumph when it was announced. The same friend, in harmony with all who knew him, declares that, youthful as Macdonald was, "he was, without doubt, the first scholar of his time at college."

But while thus generous and kind in his intercourse with others, he ever exhibited a very decided hostility, if not to the vain, at least to their vanity. He had a certain kind of pleasure in "teasing for their good," as he described it, those who had over-rated their own attainments, and trusted in themselves that they were wise. So far did he carry this, not in the spirit of malice, but of frolic, that one who keenly felt the edge of his ridicule, on one occasion, snatched up a table knife, and attempted to inflict a wound on the person whom he reckoned his tormentor. He who made that attempt is now a minister of the gospel, and soon after the incident, became the ardent and attached friend of the youth who had endeavoured, at such a risk, to reduce him to his proper level. The same inclination adhered to him through life ; and though he never mingled gall with his mirth, the very delicacy of his railery often made it penetrate the deeper. Withal, one of his early friends assures us, that "he never made an enemy for himself at college, while, at the same time, no one

had so many friends—friends that were ever warmly attached to him.”

Nor need we wonder at this, when we remark that his high conscientiousness adhered to him even amid his light-hearted mirth. One of his friends at college had become acquainted with some geologists, at a time when geology was more anti-scriptural than it has since become, in the hands of those men of highest science who have devoted themselves to that noble study, and he began to “hint a doubt and hesitate dislike” regarding the Mosaic account of the creation. An argument began ; and, though the geologist was out-argued, he could argue still. He refused to surrender his scepticism, all the more, no doubt, because it was the offspring of ignorance. But the discussion which had hitherto been rather in mirth, soon assumed a solemn tone, when John Macdonald appealed to his companion whether, with the views which he avowed, he could continue to study for the ministry. His own upright and conscientious mind recoiled from such a course, and he added that, at whatever sacrifice of feeling, he would be constrained to give publicity to his friend’s principles, among those appointed to preside over the training of candidates for the sacred office. It was the remonstrance of high principle against embryo latitudinarianism, and was in perfect keeping with the character of the future minister when fully unfolded in public life.

But without dwelling on such details, we proceed to remark, that, throughout his whole course at college, preparatory to entering the Hall as a student of theology, he was ever signalized by unwonted con-

sistency of conduct ; and one who had more than daily opportunities of judging has testified that, during those years, " he never heard him use an expression that John would be afraid of his father hearing." He was cautious and circumspect in all that regarded his moral conduct, and not merely escaped unscathed from the frequently deteriorating effects of youthful companionships, but acted, moreover, as a model or a check to others. Natural conscience, trained and made tender by the application of God's truth, occasioned a recoil from what would have polluted, and, amid the festive meetings which students at King's College were wont to hold, he took precautionary measures against even the semblance of excess in himself and his associates.

He has enabled us, however, by his own record, to form a sounder estimate of his moral state, during the first and most impressible period of his life, than partial and admiring friendship would dictate :—

"As to my principles," he writes, "at this time, I can say but little. My outward conduct was correct enough. I took care that we had prayers morning and evening. I regularly attended church, and was pretty strict on the Sabbath. But still my heart was hollow. I had little sincere regard for religion itself, though I had for its observances, and I always shuddered when I saw others disregard it. These were the effects of early education and example, which often, when they fail in the way of *principle*, still retain their influence in the way of *habit*."

We are far from having any disposition to modify or explain away these self-condemning words. No one ever knew better than he who wrote them, the

essential and eternal difference between the form and the power of godliness. One grand object of his converted life was to disabuse unthinking men of their folly in trusting to an hereditary creed, or a name to live; and we find him here applying the same standard to himself. Amid all his watchful strictness, he carefully records, that his actions were such as to indicate the absence of living principle within. Nay, such were the maxims which then ruled his conscientious mind, that the more he secured the esteem of others, the more did he sink in his own, because he felt and declared that he was not at heart what he appeared externally to be. His virtues, he argues, were based on a foundation which was in its very nature a false one. It had reference supremely to the approbation of man; and, in that character, it was destitute at once of the stability and the grandeur which should invest the character of the being who lives by God, and should live for Him. Often was the reflective youth convinced of what he called the hollowness of his high character. He says—

“ I writhed under the fear of having my tinsel virtues detected,” and “ was tortured until, in a praying agony, I have prayed to God to implant within me stable and unerring principles which might constantly direct and uphold me in the ways of piety. I have even pleaded with Him on the grounds that His cause in the world might in some degree be slandered by my falling away from the professions I had made, even though insincere; but I prayed in vain, for my prayers were selfish, and my feelings were but as the morning cloud and as the early dew, that passeth away.”



Such were the deep convictions of one whose contemporaries attest that they never knew him even utter a word which he might not have spoken in the presence of his father ! He tested his conduct not by the easy, ever-shifting standard of man, but by the criterion which the Holy One has assigned ; and then his hand was on his mouth, and his mouth in the dust. He that has read only the first pages of the life of David Brainerd ; or, better, he that draws his religion straight from the pure fountain-head, the Word of God, and not from the turbid streams of human example, will at once understand why one so correct as beheld by man, should exclaim—" Behold, I am vile," when confronted with Jehovah. And such was the state of mind in which he closed his career as a student, prior to formally deciding how he should serve his God in the world. He took his degree of A.M. in the year 1824 ; and we are next to trace the process by which he was led into the path in which he walked with such singular simplicity of faith, and such beautiful consistency of life, till his God took him. How many "refuges of lies" would crumble into ruins, and terrify those who had sought shelter there, were the principles upon which he acted applied to test men's conduct !

## CHAPTER II.

Choice of a Profession—Mr Macdonald's Reading—Westerton—His Religious Impressions deepening—Formality—Alarms—His Self-scrutiny—Intercourse with Rev. A. Gentle—His Instability, and return to the World—Conscientiousness more and more developed—His gradual discovery of the Heart's true condition, and Religion's true nature—Rev. Thomas Spencer—His views of Preaching—His love of Poetry—The Book of Providence intently studied—The value of Prayer—Inconsistencies—His training for Ministerial Usefulness—The objective and subjective in Religion—Premonition—The Great Change—Self-examination—Nature impotent till Grace work—The Sabbath School—Glimpses of Truth.

PRIOR to this period John Macdonald had not formally decided, or at least announced, what should be the business of his life. Mentally, he had undergone a strict and very thorough course of discipline, and the time had now arrived when such a choice should be made. A letter, received from his father in the month of February 1824, at once called forth and matured his determination. In that letter Dr Macdonald says—

“ It will also be requisite, my dear John, that you now think of the line of life which you mean to follow. You are soon to finish your course at the university; and besides, have come to a time of life to judge for yourself. I

pray the Lord may direct you to what He designs you for ; and may you be led to Him for light and guidance, and for a disposition to do his will, and to consult those things which make for his glory."

Before this letter reached him at Aberdeen, he was, in some degree, prepared to dedicate himself to the work of the ministry. From his earliest years his mind had been pointed by others, as well as by his own predilections, to that sphere, and as he advanced in life, he says that he grew more and more confirmed in his purpose. Indeed, he had never for a moment entertained the thought of any other profession, and though, like other imaginative boys, he was sometimes attracted, he says, by the gaud of uniforms and tinsel, it was to the ministry that his mind ever steadily pointed, as what he calls "the destiny of his life." Only when he began to think seriously of preparing for it, did doubts and misgivings arise; but various collateral considerations urged him forward. The expectations of friends whose regard he valued, as well as other prudential reasonings, swayed him, and though left to his own unbiassed choice, he could not be indifferent to the feelings of those whom he loved and revered. On a review of the whole, he wrote—"I cannot say that my choice of the clerical profession was the result of any close reasoning in my own mind—it was a determination which rather forced itself upon me spontaneously, and which I did not feel inclined to resist."

In an affectionate letter to his father, dispatched a few days after receiving that from which we have given an extract, he wrote to his parent as follows—

“ As I have now nearly completed my course at the university, and am entering upon my eighteenth year, it is but fair, and a duty which I owe to you, to answer your question, ‘ What line of life I intend to follow ?’ This subject I have often thought upon before, but the importance of it never appeared so great to me as since I received your letter. I cannot, my dear father, determine fully upon this query without consulting yourself, though you have been so kind as to leave it altogether to my own choice. If, however, I know any thing of my own mind, I am inclined to think that at present I would prefer divinity to any other study. I am fully aware that I am quite unfit for such an important office as the clerical ; but I hope that, if the Lord designs me for it, He will, by the influences of His Spirit, qualify me for the proper discharge of it. I am afraid that I have not looked to Him so much for guidance and direction as I ought to have done. I hope, however, my dear father, that you will pray for me, and seek that He will guide and direct me by His Holy Spirit : not that I think that your prayers will be accepted *instead of* my own ; but God himself assures us that ‘ the fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.’ You are, however, well acquainted with my nature and dispositions ; and, should you not altogether approve of my pursuing the study of divinity, the only other profession which I would at present make choice of is the medical.

“ In the mean time I should have no objection to accept of an eligible situation in summer, should any such present itself. I would prefer *one near you*, as private tutor ; should such however, not occur, I would willingly take a parish school.”

Such was the process by which the future missionary was led to decide regarding his path and occupation through life. Left to his own deliberate choice, he trembled lest he should make “ a presumptuous approach to the sacred office.” He felt,

or feared, that he was destitute of "true piety;" but when he remembered that the life-giving Spirit had quickened some whom he knew to be labouring devotedly in the work of the Lord, he went forward, as his heart beckoned him, dreading, on the one hand, lest he should run unsest, but hoping, on the other, that He who had given the desire would also give fitness for the work. Was not He who sees the end from the beginning operating in the soul of that youth? Did He not bring the blind by a way which he did not know? As the acorn becomes an oak, and the little brook a mighty river, did not these small beginnings lead to great results? The secret is, that God was in them, and then all became vast and grand.\*

Anterior to his entering on the study of theology, or finally deciding on a profession, he had read no limited portion of our standard theological works. And even then, some of his friends who were not well assured of the conformity of their views with the accredited standards of the Church in which they proposed to minister, sometimes applied to him for guidance, so that he frequently revised their pro-

\* Even at this early period of his life, John Macdonald frequently gave utterance to his meditations in verse. We have specimens before us, dated in 1824, all of a pensive and moral character. Some of these are headed as follows:—"On the Fall of the Leaf"—"*Reflections in the Churchyard of Urquhart*;" and, at a latter date, "*To my little Brothers and Sisters*"—"On Death"—"*On a Summer Evening*;" and, to name no more, "*On Rev. C. Calder*," a well-remembered minister of the gospel in the north, in whose ministry, he says—

"The saint has often felt truth's genial power,  
While careless sinners slept the tedious hour."

The poem "*On Death*," amid its rude versification, contains some

ductions before they were exposed to the scrutiny of the professors. Nay, he has been known to prepare the very prayer which a student in divinity was to repeat as part of his trials in the hall. When his judgment was matured, and his sense of duty more perfect, he would have declined to render such deceptive assistance; but, on the one hand, his reputation as a young theologian, and, on the other, his ever-gladdening benevolence, exposed him to such applications. There were some who were disposed to look on the son with suspicion for the father's sake. As Ross-shire was deemed the focus of fanaticism, and the minister of Urquhart the central point of the whole, those who had no sympathy with earnest religion, such as the Word of God describes, and His Spirit produces, could not easily tolerate the spread of such tenets within the walls of a college. But soon after he had entered on the study of theology, which he did in the month of December 1824, these feelings gradually melted away, and both his fellow-students and professors solemn and startling thoughts. On the 18th of August 1825, he wrote as follows:—

#### ON LIFE.

Oh! what is life? Too oft a dream,  
Unheeded, fleet, and vain;  
Awaking when we come to die,  
We cannot sleep again.

In life's bright morn, our death too oft  
Some distant slumber seems;  
Of endless joys and pains we think  
As of some future dreams.

The scene is changed—death now is come;  
Truth flashes on our eyes;  
The long neglected soul escapes,  
Midst hopeless groans—and dies.

discovered in the son of the minister of Urquhart an amiability that gave grace, and a vigour that gave something like moral grandeur, to his character, and signalized him above most of his fellows. The soothing effects of a consistent walk disarmed hostility, if it existed, and spread a conciliating influence in many quarters, of which proofs will meet us at future stages of his history.

In the month of May, in the year 1825, after his first session of attendance at the hall as a student in theology, he went to reside as tutor in the family of Colonel Hay of Westerton, near Elgin; a residence which was destined to be remarkable in his history, as the place where his soul first became really alive to God and the power of spiritual truth. It continued to be his home till the year 1830, except when his studies called him to college; and his venerable parent thus alludes to the decisive event which befell at that place:—"It was there that his mind underwent a decided change. The means which the Lord employed to render effectual the instructions of early years, were of a nature which himself only could appreciate. Previous to this great change, his amiable disposition, his promising talents, and whole conduct from his earliest years, were such as to secure the love and esteem of all connected with him, and awakened in the breasts of the pious people of Urquhart the hope that he was destined for future usefulness. It is known," Dr Macdonald adds, "that those people offered up for him many an earnest prayer—prayers which he highly prized at a future period of his life."

It was at Westerton that he first began systema-

tically to record his thoughts in a Diary. The first entry was made on the 8th of August 1825. He meant it to be a faithful transcript of his mind, "to retain till a future period the present fleeting impressions of the heart," and recorded a solemn prayer for "the blessing of God on his undertaking, that His glory and the writer's religious improvement might be the great end of all his actions." Here, therefore, John Macdonald becomes himself our guide in this narrative; or, rather, he is henceforth to be his own biographer. It was his insulation from the friends whom he loved that prompted the desire to record his feelings and opinions; and it is illustrative of his ruling principle in life, to hear him say, in his very first entry, "What consolation does it afford to the Christian to know that his Saviour, his Intercessor, He who is to be his judge at last, is one who was once clothed in our nature, and in all points tempted like as we are!" He had begun, perhaps unconsciously, to long for a closer connection, and a deeper sympathy, with the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, than any he had yet experienced. It was the soul seeking back to its source—the gravitating body which could find rest nowhere but at the centre—instinct, perhaps, rather than believing intelligence, exclaiming, "Whom have I in the heavens but Thee?"

It may here be noticed, once for all, that towards his pupils at Westerton he was ever gentle and indulgent. As their companion during the hours of relaxation, he entered into all their sports, and enjoyed their amusements along with them; yet his authority never was relaxed, and the bond of affec-



tion that united them to him appears to have been a beautiful combination of the filial and fraternal. Some of his earliest letters indicate his profound estimate of the importance that attaches to the young, and the need of moulding them, while impressive, for God ; and in no respect did he walk more like the Shepherd of Israel than in thus carrying the lambs in his bosom. This continued one of his characteristics through life, insomuch that children instinctively discovered that he loved them, and loved him in return.

But while engaged in training the youth of his charge, he was not regardless of his own soul. His interest in it waxed perceptibly deeper and deeper ; and he now began a system of rigid self-scrutiny, with a view to advance his spiritual welfare. He was averse at first to the close dealing which this implied ; but “ as the knowledge of the disease is the first step towards the remedy,” he persisted in searching it out, and in one of his earliest entries he records this earnest petition :—

“ Do thou, O Lord ! cause light to arise out of darkness—make the crooked places of my heart plain unto me ! Convince me that it is the great distance at which I stand from thee, which prevents me from seeing more clearly the state of my heart, which, to my sad continual experience, I know to be ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.’”

—He felt as if his interest in religion were only the effects of habit, or of hereditary convictions—such as parent may impart to child, or brother to brother, but not such as the Spirit plants in the soul ; and for this he laboured more and more. Though there

is ample reason to believe that his efforts at first were those of one who would fit himself by assiduities, instead of coming as a sinner to be at once, and for ever, made "complete in Christ," for the favour of his God, yet he asked, as we are commanded, and he received—he sought, and he found that the Saviour has "received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also." He was sternly jealous over himself—he feared lest nature should be substituted for grace, and he was delivered at length from that wasting delusion. The dead are never heard bewailing; and those who begin to mourn in their complaint and make a noise, have at least the spirit of conviction in the soul. "I feel no true delight in religious exercises"—"I am haunted by coldness of spirit"—"It would seem as if it were only to satisfy conscience that I at all enter on them"—"My contentment with the formal fulfilling of duty is the index of a heartless state of mind"—these, and similar remarks, will prove to the experienced Christian that the day was, at least, dawning, and the shadows beginning to flee away, while such searchings and anxieties of soul might sound as a knell in the ear of those whose self-complacency no fear ever disturbs, who have no bands even in their death, and who are the victims of the law and its death at the very moment that they dream of the gospel and its life.

As his mind grew more and more earnest, his fears were augmented, not by any morbid or self-consuming spiritualism, but by an intelligent and exact analysis of his state of mind. Conscience, he felt, had been lulled to sleep by his formality, whereas, had he been less of a formalist, it might have

spoken in a voice like thunder. While exhibiting a degree of earnestness which might have yielded intense gratification and a false peace to a self-righteous soul, he was writing bitter things against himself, and living in the daily dread of trusting to his religious training, as if that could supersede the power and demonstration of the Spirit, or be a substitute for the finished work of Christ, or render it unnecessary to make sure of a personal interest in Him.

The following extract, which leads us into the very shadow of Sinai, will show the workings of this exercised, though still unrenewed, soul. It should be remembered that he who wrote it was only eighteen years of age:—

“*August 14.*—What a world is this! How awfully depraved! How replete with crime and rebellion against God! Whether we look to the page of history, or to the records of daily observation, what do we find continually taking place but wars, and rumours of wars, insurrections, massacres, murders, thefts, and all manner of unnatural and abominable crimes? Is not justice continually taking its course of punishment on thousands of offenders? and yet is the complaint common that the strictest measures avail nothing to repress vice. Am I surprised at all this? Need I wonder that sin, collectively, is so strong, so obstinate? Is not the root of all in my own breast? Do I not there feel all those principles which exhibit themselves, in so many malignant forms, in the surrounding field of the world? ‘From whence come wars and fightings?—come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?’ Is there a command of God which I have not broken in thought, word, and deed? Have I not suffered earthly objects to become my gods, by giving them the prerogatives which belong only to God? Have I not bent the

knee to such false representations of God in my mind as were as unlike Him as are the very images of the heathen? Have I not positively used God's name in vain, and am I not always withholding from it that honour and love which are its due? The Sabbath-day in how many ways have I broken; and how have I taken pleasure in those who did so! Did I ever render honour to my parents and superiors from right motives? and have I not often done what, if known, would have grieved and offended them? I have not killed; but have I not often been under the influence of motives and passions which differed only *in degree* from murder itself? Have I not too often cherished impurity and licentiousness, and listened with complacency to the words of the unclean? Have I always been careful to speak truth between man and man, and to maintain my neighbour's good name, without envy and without jealousy? Have I not coveted many things that were my neighbour's? Have I not always felt, as it were, a wish or inclination to do evil and not good? Was it not amongst my earliest conscious exercises of reason to lie and to deceive others? Have I not since then acted the hypocrite in religion—acting beyond my feelings—seeming to be what I was not? But it is needless to continue the list, else I might set down every action of my life, every thought of my breast, for they have been all evil, and that continually, before God. My sin has indeed been *original* sin, birth sin. From Adam downwards have we been defiled, and I with the rest! O Lord! look on me in mercy—remove the source of my depravity—change my heart—give me a right spirit—and then, at last, ‘the desert shall blossom as the rose!’”

When we remember the reasonings—somewhat superficial, as might have been expected in a youth of seventeen—by which this young inquirer was swayed in deciding on the ministry as his profession, it will not surprise us to hear that, when his mind was at length concentrated on that subject, it be-

came very deeply moved. Shall a blessing be granted, or a brand attached by God, to my choice? became the absorbing inquiry, which added to the exercise of his soul. He says—

“*August 18.*—And yet I cannot think seriously of the important office of the ministry without shuddering. O God! wilt thou not give me correct and clear views of the office to which I am, perhaps presumptuously, aspiring? Enable me to view it unconnected with any earthly object whatever—to look on it merely as a medium of merciful communication between thee, oh, thrice holy God! and thy sinful, offending creatures—to look upon myself as aspiring to be thy servant, thy ambassador, thy representative among men. Can I think of all this without being deeply sensible of my own unfitness for such an office? I am, indeed, O Lord! ‘a man of unclean lips,’ and of a ‘heart deceitful and desperately wicked;’ but do thou apply a coal from the altar to my lips, and give me a new heart. And may I always bear in mind the fate of Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire unto the Lord, and of Uzzah, who sacrilegiously touched the ark. Grant, O Lord! that if ever I obtain a place in thy sanctuary as thy unworthy servant, I may remember that I am not to accommodate myself to the etiquette and ceremonies of the great court of this world, but that I have matters of eternal moment to transact between thee and man, for my fidelity and heartiness in the discharge of which I shall have to answer to my Lord in the great day of account. What an overwhelming thought!—Who is sufficient for these things? Not man, nor the son of man, without thine effectual aid.”

—If Moses was trained in Egypt to be the future lawgiver of Israel, and Paul, at Gamaliel’s feet, to be the future antagonist of all the Judaizing—or, to contemplate other spheres, if the future conqueror of Europe was nursed for war amid the

mimic battles and sieges of his school-fellows, and the discoverer of the new world schooled for his toils amid vexations unsurpassed—may we not trace, in the training of this youth, an ulterior design to prepare him for achievements which are spiritually great? Had we commonly such solemn searchings of the soul, and such earnest breathings after that preparation for winning sinners to Christ which only grace can impart, the ministry would be less barren than it is, and times of refreshing more copious and frequent.

In the autumn of the year 1825, Dr Macdonald paid a visit to Westerton; and the following record will suggest crowding thoughts to the spiritual mind:—

“*August 23.*— . . . . Walked with my father to the top of a hill above the Priory, to enjoy the view. He prayed on the top of the hill, and I thought I never felt so much impressed as I did there. Oh! what an enviable state of mind, always to find pleasure in addressing our Maker! This is true filial affection. O Lord! do thou give me that spirit of adoption whereby I may say unto thee, Abba, Father.”

But amid all these aspirations, and this growing earnestness, the conviction continued to haunt him that he was not safe. In fact, he still halted between two opinions, and had, as yet, advanced only so far as to be unsatisfied with the world, without having learned to glory only in the Lord. As the autumn advanced, and the voice of the reapers was heard in the field, he feared “lest the sickle of death should cut him down, uncertain as he was whether he would be found among the wheat or the tares.”

At the close of each day, he dreaded that he had a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in; and, while he mourned over the depravity of his heart, he continued to sigh and cry out for that Spirit whose omnipotence alone could counteract it. It is the spirit of adoption that forms the burden of many a petition. He could not brook the feeling of alienation from God, for the large affections of his heart were seeking an object on which they might fasten, and where they would find satisfaction to the full for ever. "Ye have taken away my gods, . . . . and what have I more?" was the complaint of old, and it explains the wretchedness of all who are not reconciled to the Father by the Priest on the throne.

Nor was he left without aid by Him whom he thus earnestly sought, though little yet appears to show that he clearly understood the mediatorial scheme. The heat had come before the light appeared, but means were supplied for remedying the defect; and in the society of the Rev. Alexander Gentle of Alves, he now passed many hours which were blessed to develop and expand the principles and feelings which had already begun to influence and mould his mind. Through life he retained a warm recollection of the benefits thus enjoyed, for he felt that the words of the wise are as goads, and in this case a word fitly spoken spread in its effects even to the plains of India. How rarely are the ministers of Christ alive to the fact, that their words are charged with either life or death, when they speak in his authority and name!

We cannot but notice here, however, that ming-

ling of the solemn with the frivolous which the mind of man in its unconverted state frequently displays. At one time he who was in training for the ministry was busily preparing his lectures for his professor in theology—or apparently pouring out his heart in earnest supplication to God—or discovering “the number of ideas which any passage of Scripture will suggest when accurately examined and pondered;” while, at another, we find him engaging in scenes to which the following extract alludes:—

“*Thursday, December 1.*—Last night was at the *Mason Ball*, given in the Lodge here. How much the mind is influenced by present circumstances in forming an opinion! For instance, when I was in the ball-room, had I been asked my opinion of such a meeting, I am sure it would have been most favourable. I dare say I would have thought nothing more rational or delightful than a ball. But, when I returned home at night, and threw myself on my bed, I began to reflect on how I had spent the evening. The excitation of spirits was then gone. The verdict was most *unfavourable*.”

—Like the saintly M'Cheyne, and many more, he was seeking his God in the world, even after he had heard that the world was godless; and the scenes in which he thus mingled often caused him, when memory recalled them in other days, to record deep censures against himself. It was going to Egypt or Assyria for help, instead of the Rock that is higher than we; and the results were like the apples of Sodom, deceptive to the soul, though pleasant to the eye. After following such phantoms, man can only lie down in sorrow, confessing that all is vanity.\*

\* About this period some of his letters to his younger sisters, which



Nor was this a solitary instance. While engaged in studies which had for their tendency the detection of what is spurious in religion,\* and the complete unmasking of the worldly mind, he could yet yield to temptations to frivolity, which caused only sorrow in the retrospect. Regarding these he makes the following record :—

“ *December 8.*—Continued reading ‘Edwards.’ Was out at a party last night till pretty late. Often does my mind dwell on how vain and unsatisfactory are the pleasures of this world! ’Tis but a short moment of enjoyment, and they are over—’tis but a moment of excitation, and depression follows. Surely that cannot be pleasure which is followed by dissatisfaction, nor can that be true enjoyment which bears not reflection. Often will the thought intrude, What are these pleasures to those now on a death-bed—what are they to those now in their cold graves? This often strikes me when my spirits are at the highest. Surely that enjoyment which is alloyed by the least mixture of uneasiness or dissatisfaction cannot be the enjoyment for which God created man.”

—There is here at least a glimpse of the soul’s chief good, though *Sursum corda!* must still be the maxim of this earnest inquirer. His own remark, after reading Dr Paley’s work on Natural Theology, is applicable here. He asked, “Can a man be an Atheist after reading this?” and replied, “Ah! yes; I am afraid that a *perverted will* can hold out against a convinced understanding.” Experience, however, was warning him that in vain do men seek

have been preserved, indicate how admirably he could adapt himself to the youngest mind, and how well he was fitted to be an instructor of youth.

\* For example, “Edwards on Religious Affections,” a work which always continued a favourite with him.

to gather grapes from thorns, or hope to find a blessing where He who is Love has pronounced a curse. When believers reject such sources of pleasure, it is because they have found a purer and a better, which forbids them any longer to put bitter for sweet; and it was towards that rare discovery that he was now conducted by Him who sees the sinner while yet a great way off, and graciously guides him back to his Father's house and heart.

It appears that the treatise of President Edwards on the Affections, was the means of preparing his mind for the great change which was gradually coming over him. Its exact discriminations, and its searching analysis, at least convinced his intellect; and he says of it—

“*January 11, 1826.*— . . . . . What a masterly production it is! I never read a religious book before which, I may say, made me reluctant to go to bed but it. I pray God it may practically change my views of things, as I think it has speculatively in some degree. Never before had I such a view of the state of the human heart; and never had I such a view of Christian experience, and the difficulty of attaining to it. 'Tis in the Christian, beyond all others, that the wickedness and deceitfulness of the human heart are most exhibited. Even after he has undergone a thorough change—after new dispositions, desires, and affections, have been implanted in his heart—still, through the agency of Satan, these very exercises of his heart may be turned into instruments of deceit and pride, so that the Christian can never, for a moment, be off his guard, nor lay the very slightest stress on these holy exercises.”

Quiet as the tenor of his life at this period was, incidents were from time to time occurring which

were overruled to deepen his impressions and keep his mind from settling down in the world's delusions. The poetry of Wordsworth has been said to delineate only feeling—his adventures are exclusively those of the heart; and a similar remark applies to the whole history of this youth. Even the fall of a leaf was turned by him to some solemn account, while such an event as attendance at a funeral served to evoke some of the deepest emotions that can sway or agitate the mind of man.

“ When I saw the little boy,” he says, referring to such a procession, “ walking by his father's coffin, I recollected the time when I also walked by the coffin of my mother, and at the same time of life; yet, I could not help thinking him far worse off in losing a *father* than I in losing a mother. To me now, the one seems the strongest tie, the other the tenderest; for the former, I could feel more; for the latter, weep more.”

As Mr Macdonald had been distinguished at college while studying philosophy, he displayed the same ability followed by similar success, in the study of theology. But as he attended for only a short period during each session, in accordance with the system very common at that time, he had not the same opportunities for signalizing himself. His exercises, however, as a student in divinity, received encomiums in quarters not much accustomed to eulogize such productions; and, while thus engaged in commanding the approbation of grave and reverend men, he was not less occupied with the young to whom he had access. He composed hymns for the use of his little sisters, full of deep and solemn feeling, though not yet purely evangelical in their

tone. He told them of "the earth teeming at every pore" with the awakened dead, and warned them to prepare for the coming hour when little children like those whom he addressed would be at home on high. But beyond all other feelings, his intense regard for his father appears to have strengthened with his years; and, when he thought of the home whose happiness and attractions he so vividly remembered, his "heart sometimes felt full, as if it would discharge itself in tears." On the day of the communion at Urquhart, for example, he says—

"So many sweet associations, so many rich recollections, have I to feast upon, that it seems to me I hear Dr M—— \* pouring forth all the riches of the gospel, its loveliness, its enticements—Mr F—— of K—— † exhibiting its exalted character, its rationality, and strict consistency—and *my father* displaying its close connection, its admirable adaptation, with all its sweet promises and awful threatenings. Methinks I see these three together showing forth, in one radiant blaze, the whole moral character of God—now reasoning, now threatening, now enticing sinners to come and see this great thing."

It was amid lessons such as these, learned at the feet of such teachers, that the truth had been deposited in his mind. It lay there, more or less dormant, for a season, but the set time for its full expansion is approaching; and, as that period draws near, there is a perceptible, though gradual, irradiation of his religious views. Nothing appears to show that they were, at any time, speculatively opposed to "the form of sound words;" but they were devoid of that inner life and that mellowing unction which

\* The late Dr Macintosh of Tain, whose praise is in all the north.

† The late Mr Fraser of Kirkhill, perhaps not less gifted and gracious.

prove that our tenets are learned at the feet of Jesus. These, however, now begin to appear, and on Sabbath, July 30, he records—

“I have just been spending an hour or two in the religious instruction of my pupils, and I do not know when I experienced more real pleasure or satisfaction. My instructions, I hope and trust, were accordant with the revealed will of God; and I sincerely hope He may sanctify them, however weak and sinful the instrument may be. Never do I feel such light, or acquire such clear views of these subjects myself, as when I endeavour to explain them to my pupils. Perhaps God may at times assist me by his Spirit, for the good of others, though, like Saul and others, I may derive no benefit from it myself, nor feel any of His saving influences: alas! this is a reflection that but too often has reason to occur to me.”

Again—

“August 7.— . . . . Upon the whole, then, I have every reason to be satisfied with my present situation, and learn, from every thing in my lot, meekness and humility. What am I, that I should enjoy the least of all the comforts I possess? How unworthy of having one in the world to love or befriend me! O that I had a heavenly principle within me to subdue vanity, to mortify pride, and overcome every offspring of a *carnal* heart, which alone can be the source of any unhappiness.”

And yet again—

“August 12.—Preaching is not the only, nor is it the most difficult, duty of a clergyman, as many think—that is *comparatively* an easy task. But to make it the professed business of his life to advance the glory of God, and the salvation of his fellow-creatures, is the true spirit of his office. Ah, sin! sin! thou hast cast a veil of blindness over the heart that entertains thee; for, could any son of

Adam see thee as thou art, for one moment, soon wouldst thou have to betake thee to thy father's house. May I learn, from viewing the sins of others, to think of the deformity of my own !”

About this period, his attention was directed to the Life of Rev. Thomas Spencer, a minister of the gospel, of remarkable gifts, who was drowned in his twenty-first year, while bathing in the Mersey, near Liverpool, the scene of his brief but brilliant ministry. In not a few particulars, a close parallel might be drawn between Spencer and Macdonald. In all, indeed, except eloquence (we mean the eloquence of words, not of truth), they were remarkably similar; and the eulogy pronounced by a competent authority on the young English divine, might have been applied to the young Scottish student: “I must confess I should have found great difficulty in giving fallen nature credit for the excellencies which, from the closest inspection, I saw resident in that truly illustrious and holy youth.”\* After admiring the life of that minister, he exclaims—

“August 16.— . . . . Would to God I were like Spencer! Never did I read the life of one who so absolutely enchanted me, or who made me mentally exclaim at every paragraph of his history—‘O that I were like him!’ so much as this. Truly did Hall say of him—‘He was one of those rare specimens of human nature which the great Author of it produces now and then, or at distant intervals, and exhibits for a moment, as He is *hastening to make them up among His jewels.*’ Whilst reading his life, at times I felt my heart burn within me at the recital of his fervent and youthful piety. He was but an exotic here,

\* See Memoirs of the Life and Ministry of Rev. Thomas Spencer, by Dr Raffles.

and was transplanted to 'a far better, even a heavenly country,' where he has long ere now expanded into the full beauty of perfection. As his age was much the same with mine, I could not help, as I went along, comparing myself with him, and endeavouring to find some resemblance between us ; but, no ! when all was done, I found all, instead of being a comparison, was a complete *contrast*, and that Satan himself could not have drawn a greater to so holy and so lovely a youth than *I am*. O why should there be such a difference between two young hearts ? Is there not the same God in heaven—the same Saviour at his right hand—the same Holy Spirit proceeding from Him—the same balm in Gilead, and the same physician there—the same fountain for sin and for uncleanness—and the same live coal on the altar for me as there were for him ? Why, then, am I thus ? ”

It has been remarked, that his views of the plan of redemption were gradually becoming clearer. His anxious eye was now more and more eagerly straining to descry the Hope of Israel, the Sun of Righteousness tipping the mountains with light ; and the sentences which follow will exhibit the change that was slowly passing upon one who, a few months ago, was seeking enjoyment at a Masonic Ball, where he found he had been grasping at shadows. His heart's desire and “ prayer now was, that the Holy Spirit would take of the things that are Christ's, and show them unto him.” He earnestly prays—

“ *Sabbath, October 30.*—O God ! give me thy Spirit, that He may enlighten, direct, and uphold me. O give me that faith which, resting constantly upon thee, will always keep me steadfast and immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord. Enable me to see my need of Christ Jesus,

of an interest in His blood, and that without that I am under thy wrath and curse. O enable me to see the condition of my own soul, and not to rest until I have secured everlasting happiness for it, by the pardon of my sins, and sanctification of my nature."

And then, more anxiously still, like one above measure perplexed:—"November 23.—What am I to do? Oh! Almighty God, enable me to strive to enter in at the strait gate—give me faith in thy dear Son, and true repentance."

At the time when he studied theology, the system of attendance at the hall was marked, as we have hinted, by defects which are still too far from being remedied. The practice of partial attendance, or merely enrolling as a student of theology, and then proceeding to prosecute other callings than that of preparation for the ministry, however convenient for the student, was often disastrous to the minister. Its manifest and its actual tendency was to perpetuate a low standard of theological attainment; for, except in the case of men remarkably gifted, the system could send forth only half-trained theologians, and half-furnished preachers of the gospel. Even while adopting, from the pressure of circumstances, the plan of partial attendance, Mr Macdonald felt and lamented the results of so defective a method of study, and his remarks connected with preparation for the ministry, in the following extract from a letter of this period, addressed to one of his most intimate friends, Mr James Macdonald, now minister of the Free Church at Urray, deserve to be carefully pondered, at once by students and those who are charged with their training:—



“*Westerton, November 27.*— . . . . . Besides, my dear friend, is not your experience the same as mine, that we have hitherto taken too little to heart the preparation necessary for the office to which we aspire? It seems strange that, if we had pitched on any other profession, we should devote all our time and attention to preparing ourselves for it—for instance, law or medicine; but when we have in view to present ourselves as ambassadors for the mighty God, we think it almost unnecessary to make ourselves acquainted with the message we are to deliver. Is it not on this account that we feel so little interested in many of our young preachers? They can give a *fine* discourse, they have good styles and composition, pretty ideas, some acute reasonings, and perhaps an excellent arrangement, but how little of the gospel, of the leading and fundamental doctrines of redemption, do they bring forward! How little of *real divinity* have they in their discourses! If they do bring forward these, do they so like men convinced of their supreme importance, pressing, nay forcing them, on their hearers? I am sure, my dear James, you must have observed and felt this as well as I. Let us, then, strive to make ourselves better acquainted with what we hope hereafter to declare to others.”

At the close of the year 1826, he paid a visit to his father's manse at Urquhart, which he appeared to enjoy more than he had ever done before, owing to the spiritual benefits which were there imparted. That season of festivity was not spent in the idle merriment which, he graphically says, is often “frothed up for the occasion;” but “the buoyancy of youth and the gravity of age mingled their feelings,” so that “a sober joy and a joyful soberness was the result.” He returned to his post and his duties at Westerton, refreshed and invigorated by this recess; and how scrupulously he watched over

his conduct and his feelings there, appears from his remarks connected with one of his discourses prepared at this time for the hall. After referring to the self-complacency which his studies sometimes occasioned, he writes—

“Often when I felt a glow of conceit, I have almost invariably, when this was the case, bent down my head and offered up a short prayer to God to repress my vanity, and to give me some humbling views of myself; and I generally felt the better for this. I may also add, I never sat down to compose any part of this discourse (unless once or twice) without asking the blessing of God upon it, that it might tend to His glory, to the good of others, and that I might be led to feel from the heart what I was doing. But though all this, doubtless, had a favourable effect on my mind when I sat down to write, yet God knows how little sincerity there was in these addresses. I am astonished at myself what lengths I can go, and yet *feel* no sincerity. In reflection and religious duties, I seem to myself sometimes not far from the kingdom of heaven; but, alas! such approaches are only hardening me more and more.”

—Nor was his cry to be humbled unheard. After arriving at Aberdeen, through a violent storm, which detained him about four days on a journey of sixty or seventy miles, he records—

“On Monday Dr Mearns sent me word to come and read my discourse to him, as, by indisposition, he was confined to his room. This, I must confess, to my shame, was no small disappointment to me, for several individuals had expressed so high an opinion of my discourse, that I was anxious to deliver it publicly—however, this was a most suitable punishment, and I do not now regret it.”

Though more than the usual degree of approbation was expressed on the occasion, it did not satisfy his

longing desires, nor abate his aspirations after something higher than the praise of man. Unconsciously, he was coveting earnestly the best gifts, and the sentences that follow embody his views:—

“*March 28, 1827.*—I shall never excel. When I compare myself with others, it is impossible I can; but *if* I were, I can never, as a linguist, a mathematician, a profound thinker, or a close reasoner—it would rather be in the philosophy of the heart, in portraying the feelings; yet, if sanctified by *divine grace*, how useful might even this be! But this I want, and without it nothing can avail. O that I could take this into more serious consideration, seeing it involves my *eternal all*.”

While Mr Macdonald's mind was gradually drawn out towards theology, till it became his absorbing and much-loved study, he neither neglected nor disrelished other sources of improvement. Like Henry Martyn, he felt that a heart purified by the Spirit of God is prepared to enjoy all His gifts with a keener relish than while the mind is polluted and unpardoned. For some time he had discontinued the study of the classics, but on resuming it about this period he writes—

“On reading the first page or two of Virgil, my attention was quite riveted, and I felt almost enchanted. When I read it last, it was as a school-boy of thirteen and a half years old at most; *then* I had to labour at my lexicon and prosody, and had no idea of the beautiful in any thing that was a *task*. Now, I was struck with the beauties of this sweet poet, and it seemed as if I had before been nibbling at the shell of the nut, but had now tasted the sweets of the kernel.” \*

\* About the same period he commenced the study of botany, which he cultivated with great assiduity and corresponding delight.

The readiness with which he sought and found lessons in the various events of providence, was not the least remarkable among his characteristics. Not a letter reached him—not a sermon was heard—not an incident occurred even in his quiet life, from which he did not deduce instruction so as to add some truth to those already treasured up, or some new impression to those already received. "Let me be religiously observant of events, whether they be the events of personal or of public history"—"O that I could discern His hand and will in every thing, and deal with all occurrences as the exponents of that power and those purposes which are given forth from above"—was the prayer of the aged Chalmers: it was the maxim of young Macdonald.\* Does he hear that his untiring parent had gone to St Kilda

\* We can scarcely help regarding the *HORE BIBLICE SABBATICÆ* of Dr Chalmers as the book of our age. How different its healthy tone of profoundly experimental, as well as thoroughly practical religion from the ephemeral and baseless theorizings of the Germans, or the pantheistic sentiments of the school of Carlyle! In no respect are the volumes more admirable than as showing how the gifted man, who has gone to the heaven for which he so devoutly prepared, marked the operations of God's hand, in providence as well as in grace. "What reality," he says, "does it give to religion, when one can read the finger of the unseen Governor of all things in the familiar movements and occurrences of one's journey through the world, and thus be a learner in the Book of Providence as well as in the Book of Revelation."—"Let me exercise myself more than I have ever yet done in the former of these volumes, assured as I am that both volumes will throw light on each other, and that both will be found to harmonize."—"Let me ever be looking, and that beyond the secondary and the sensible, to God, so as in every thing to see his hand—in every thing to make known my requests—in every thing to recognise, and trust, and adore him."—"Strengthen, O Lord! the habit within me of referring all to Thee, and of recognising Thee in all things." These extracts embody the very wisdom of David, who said, "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

to preach the gospel there, and that other relations have left the manse for a season?—He ruminates on the time when, as a wayfairer, he might have to pass that pleasant home, a stranger to those that dwelt there—a foreboding which must have been gloomily realized had he ever visited Urquhart after the memorable Disruption. Does he read a sermon which stirs and solemnizes his soul?—He turns the impression into poetry—he translates the discourse into a hymn, and tries to give a local habitation to the feelings, pungent though fleeting, which, he says,

“ So often flash through the heart  
Convictions of guilt and sin.”

—Amid all this, the fact that he was the subject of many prayers, and had often been “blessed by the aged Christian and the hoary saint,” was not forgotten, and the remembrance stimulated his mind in the pursuit of the better portion which he now enjoys to the full. His exclamation is—“How much better for me that I should be what they wished, than that, within my own breast, I should hold concentrated all the great, and mighty, and splendid talents that have emblazoned all the names that are glowing in the annals of fame!” The influence of prayer has thus been often recognised even by men whose lives outraged both conscience and the Word of God. Pharaoh, we know, once and again appealed to Moses, to “Entreat for him;” and when Lord Byron learned that a Christian lady, prior to her death, had recorded a touching prayer for his welfare, he exclaimed, “I would not exchange this prayer for the united glory of Homer, Cæsar, and Napoleon, could such be accumulated upon a living

head." Such is the power of superstition, even when God is defied.

But at every stage of his training, Mr Macdonald was destined to know how difficult it is to be a Christian indeed, and to make the transition that is implied in becoming a new creature. His life is a solemn appeal to those who are Christians at random, or by accident. He writes—

" *Westerton, July 8—Sabbath.*—Oh! with what reluctance can I get my mind to apply itself to divine things, and with what difficulty can I retain it in this exercise if begun! I feel as if an insuperable barrier were placed before me whenever I approach this region of thought. My thoughts, when they approach it, disobey; one goes one way, another the opposite; they become bewildered in inextricable confusion, and I am left alone in the midst of the most trying dissatisfaction and remorse. I feel a degree of self-contempt at such moments, on account of my own weakness, which makes me despise all my other acquirements, and causes me heartily to contemn the good opinion, the praise of the world, or the respect and esteem of those around me. O why should I thus be the prey of *sin*? Why should my soul thus be under the constant tyranny of Satan? Why is it that, when I would lead forth my thoughts beyond time and sense, they will not advance?—that they which were all obedience in exploring the paths of earthly science and learning, revolt from that which is divine, noble, and worthy of their pursuit?—that they which ran eagerly on after every temporal and temporary enjoyment, shudder at that pure and heavenly gratification, which yet, though unknown to themselves, they are panting after? Why is it that, when I substitute eternity for time, heaven for earth, spirit for flesh, unseen things for things seen, my whole inner man should display a scene so inconsistent with its first creation, with its

Creator, and with the end for which it was created? O that I had that spiritual Teacher, who is above all! O that my eyes were opened—that I were born again into a new world of vision! O God! grant that these faint convictions may be fanned into a flame! O break not thy bruised reed!”

It will be seen that he was now haunted by the fear or the conviction that his heart was not right with God; and on July 16th he says—

“ This Sabbath I have felt pass off more happily than any for a long time back; and for this reason—I am alone with my pupils, so that I have not been a witness to Sabbath-breaking, nor a sharer in any of that inconsistent conversation which I am doomed bitterly to see and hear on that day. I know I am not become more pious, more devoted to God, more enlightened in divine things; but I know and feel my mind is more inclined to serious reflection. I feel that I have more pleasure in contemplating divine things—that glimpses of a God, of the folly of my life, of the misery of it also, often flash before me, although they pass off without any abiding or salutary impression—that I take a great delight in talking of divine things, and so on; yet all that is without any sincere love to God, without any principles that can stand the test of great temptation, without any happiness or satisfaction of soul. Sometimes I hope that this superficial improvement is preparatory to something better—something more substantial and internal, and unintermitting. O why do I not use every diligence to make such a hope sure ?”

Nor were such fears hushed or allayed when he read of the devoted zeal of others, as contrasted with what he supposed to be his own lukewarmness. The *Life of Knox*, by Dr M'Crie, was a work which at this stage of his history at once humbled and stimulated his mind—it led him first to despair re-

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garding himself, and then to cry for help to Him who chooses weak things to confound the mighty. At the same time, his feelings of ministerial responsibility were deepening to an extent that was painful; and he recoiled at the thought of ever presenting a censor which contained only unhallowed fire. Amid all this, however, there are incidents recorded which render it all too plain that old things had not yet passed away. The love of the world enters so radically into the heart of man, that only Omnipotence can overcome it. As if it circulated with our blood, and formed a portion of our essential being, mortal power cannot eradicate the bane; and it were difficult to say how far we must advance in the very process of dying, before the love of what is seen and temporal be fully overcome. It was thus at least with John Macdonald. He says, that "he endeavoured to check himself when beginning to feed on fond anticipations;" he envied "the happiness of the true Christian, who might, with the highest possible certainty, dwell on the rich portion of glory and joy which he is hereafter to share;" he adds—"The hopes of that Christian are as rich as they are sure, and as sure as they are rich, and both in an infinite degree;" he then exclaims—"O may I strive to have this portion and this hope of the gospel," and yet, amid all that is thus theoretically sound, or intellectually clear, the following entry occurs:—

"*January 8, 1828.*—I left this on Friday the 21st, and in the evening went to the Academy BALL at Elgin, but never enjoyed any thing less. I was sick of it—sick of all the silliness I saw, and was forced to act in it. I feel my mind becoming more and more dissatisfied with such



things. I have no enjoyment in them. A flash of another world will sometimes strike upon me in the midst of the gay dissipation, and my thoughts go off a-moralizing. The greatest pleasure I enjoyed that evening was sitting looking at how beautifully the prismatic colours were displayed in the cut crystals appended to a chandelier." \*

—Had it not been for the honesty of his own record, it might have appeared that he was now one of those of whom is the kingdom of heaven; but he had still much to unlearn. The pride of life was not yet mortified—and all amiable and eulogized as he was, it is obvious that the transition from darkness to light had not been thoroughly effected. It was only the grey glimmering of twilight, which, for aught that has yet taken place, might have darkened into everlasting night; and it was the saddening remembrance of this real worldliness amid seeming religion, that made him through life exercise a holy jealousy and caution, in deeming men believers merely because they appeared to be so.

It will hereafter appear that he was much engaged in the Popish controversy towards the close of his pilgrimage; and it deserves to be noticed that, during his early studies in divinity, his attention was closely turned to the rank which the Scriptures hold in the religion of God, in opposition to the Anti-christian views. From the very commencement of his career, inspired truth thus obtained that paramount place in his regards which is utterly subver-

\* "*Monday 26.*—I went to Drury Lane in the evening. I must own I was extremely disappointed: to be sure the house is grand and dazzling; but I had no other feeling whilst there than that of wishing it over."—*MRS FRY'S Diary.*

sive of the claims of Romanism. Yet, while thus busily putting on the armour which was to fit him in future years for the good fight of faith, he was not rash or precipitate in employing it. On the contrary, during one of his visits to Aberdeen, he lamented what he deemed an excess or intemperance of zeal among some of his former associates. The revolution of sentiment, he says, that had taken place regarding religion in the Divinity Hall of that city was amazing, insomuch that "he found himself there somewhat like a stray Moderate." Evangelical truth had begun to take possession of those strongholds, and the change was so perceptible, even after a brief absence, that Mr Macdonald was amazed at the transition. Scotland had then awaked from a dreary period of spiritual torpor. Many causes had combined to produce that result; and though the zeal with which it was accompanied appeared to him in some measure unwise, yet, contrasted with the former apathy, it was like life from the dead. While he rejoiced in this progress, he marvelled at it, especially when he thought of the dangerous tendency of studies in theology as they are often conducted. The objective too frequently supersedes the subjective. Religion is treated as a science rather than a life; it is viewed as a subject of contemplation without, rather than a reign, the very reign of God, within; and while thus employed in studying or analyzing the very means which God has appointed at once to develop and invigorate the inner life, men may be sealing up their souls in hopeless spiritual death. At the early stage in his career which we have now reached, he had felt and lamented this tendency, and

regarding it he says, in language to which every minister of Christ who has the unction from the Holy One will respond—

“*Sabbath, March 23.*—It seems to me a dangerous thing to be a mere student of divinity, and to be much among those who are merely such, for the mind becomes habituated to a mere external and speculative acquaintance with the grand doctrines of Christianity; it is so much accustomed to treat them as subjects of exercise for the mind, and for rational discussion, that it comes at length to view them in no other light, and to pass by or forget that practical and personal application without which we make them; as far as we are concerned, mere sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. This I feel an increasing danger. But how am I to avoid it? It is my duty to study such important subjects, to discuss them, and to attain to such a knowledge of them as may satisfy my own mind regarding them, and enable me to explain and defend them to others. Am I sincere in my endeavours? Am I persevering? Am I determined? Am I all these to the utmost of my power? I am afraid I cannot say so—and yet I seem to myself at times as if I were endeavouring to be so, but cannot attain unto it. I know that I cannot be successful without the assistance of God; but here again I feel the same obstacle before me. I cannot pray aright; I cannot read the Word aright; I am perplexed, and what am I to do? Oh! where is now my pride of intellect? where the clearness of my mind in solving a difficulty which my friends give me credit for? where my systematic arrangement—my general principles? False comforters are ye all! O Lord! make me as a little child, knowing nothing; humble me, and show me that as yet I know nothing as I should know. Has a particle of my knowledge any bearing on my eternal existence in a future world?” . . . . .

These very struggles, however, were overruled for good. In searching the Scriptures, as he was now

forced to do, and in comparing spiritual things with spiritual, he was led to entertain those profound convictions regarding the need of the Spirit's teaching, which eventually signalized him among preachers, and formed the explanation of his success in winning souls. He discovered that he was indeed a babe when left to his own resources ; but it happened in his case as in that of other servants of God—" when he was weak then was he strong," and had ample reason " to glory in infirmities." Difficulties gradually disappeared ; his doubts were cleared away ; and we see shall him emerging anon into that pure and steady light which radiates only from Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory. He writes—

" *April 8.*—I am now engaged in reading ' Edwards on Original Sin,' a work in which I feel much interested, and which peculiarly gratifies my turn of mind. The subject is one on which I formerly felt at a loss, particularly with regard to the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and our being all born into the world sinful. This doctrine I have fully *believed* from Scripture, because it is made plain there ; but I was not fully convinced regarding its consistency with the attributes of God, and human notions of justice. From what I have read of ' Edwards' my cavils have been silenced."

Nor was it with light and trivial things that he occupied even his leisure hours at this period of his life, for he now commenced a paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans, with a view to master the grand argument which it contains, and fathom some of the depths which he knew lay hidden there. He had read of the self-evidencing power of the Scriptures, and understood that, like the sun, they are to

be seen and known by their own light poured into the soul ; but he had not hitherto learned who it is that sheds abroad that light. Like multitudes before him, he expected it from the study of the letter, v the connection, and the scope, and did not know that “ the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”\* But the study on which he now entered became the means of convincing him that some higher power than man’s must be put forth ere we can discover the richness and the fulness of the Word of God ; the paralysis and feebleness which he felt were among his most profitable lessons, and he learned, as every child of God has done, that “ the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”† His own words, however, will tell how the way was prepared for that conviction :

“ *April 23.*—I think it strange that I am unable to discern in the Scriptures that divine authority which yet is in them—in other words, that I cannot, when perusing, or even examining them, see any thing more than human in them. I see nothing peculiar there, farther than in the peculiar nature of the subjects they treat of, or the peculiar manner in which they treat of them. Sometimes a sudden thought, as it were, flashes through my mind, that they are not like any other production, but that there is something most transcendently different in them ; but it is no permanent conviction, and when I endeavour, on close inspection, to recover some such idea, I find that I cannot force it. Truly, I see I must have some new and spiritual sense ere I can discover in my Bible that which it is intended to convey.”

\* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

—Nothing ever more distinctly recognised the line of separation between the mind guided only by literature or unaided reason, and the mind illumined, taught, and made to understand the deep things of God, by that “unction from the Holy One by which all things are known.” While thus groping his way to the truth, he was led to mature his views regarding the Christian Sabbath, and adopted conclusions from the Word of God which he held till his dying hour with a tenacity that indicated the depth of his convictions. He felt that if there had been no Sabbath, he would have sunk far deeper into sin than he had done ; and then he clung to the hope that, as he had hitherto in some degree respected that divine institution, he might regard that as a token that God had not forsaken him. Restraining grace, at least, had been at work, while he felt that “if a sinner proceed so far as to profane the Sabbath openly and carelessly, it seems as if the last medium were destroyed through which religious feeling may be maintained.” Let ruined fortunes—let foodless families—let broken hearts—let premature deaths—let the murderer’s cell, his scaffold, and unhonoured grave, all proclaim the truth of the conclusion.

The vexing changes of feeling to which his mind now became subject regarding religion, gave premonition of the decisive struggle that was at hand. It was like the barge shooting the rapids, and feeling the suction of the current before it entered the rush of waters. It was like the mysterious and awing sounds often heard in the deep valleys of the Swiss, which presage to the experienced ear the descent of

the avalanche or landslip ; but it requires a minute acquaintance with that religion which is the fruit of the Spirit in the soul, to be able to distinguish between the effects of grace and the workings of natural conscience in such a mind. Already we have often felt, in tracing the past years of Mr Macdonald, as if he were in the act of taking up his position in the kingdom of grace ; the line of separation between the natural and the gracious appears to be passed, and the soul promises to be soon radiant with the beauties of holiness ; if it be not the Sun of Righteousness that is beheld, it is at least the bow in the cloud—that loveliest of nature's objects, consecrated, like much besides, as a symbol of good-will to man. But then, incidents occur which tempt us to pause ere we welcome him as indeed a member of the family which is named after Christ. His own graphic delineations of the hidden man of the heart enable us to judge in such cases. On the 11th of May he makes this entry, after hearing a sermon on Acts iv. 13—

“ My mind was employed, not in making an application of the discourse to myself in the manner I ought to do, but in thinking how some others might make a favourable application of it to me, and might recognise in some of the virtues enumerated, some that were mine. Oh ! how mean, and detestable, and impious, was such conduct—while the servant of God was delineating the true Christian, so that I might see that, indeed, I was not one, there was I, endeavouring to pick up all my superficial, unmeaning acts of a tinsel virtue, in order to present a counter picture totally opposed to the message of the Most High God unto me ! At the very moment when listening to the ambassador of God, I was giving him the lie in his teeth ;

and while he was exhibiting me yet a sinner, I was exhibiting myself a Christian. None that is not a subject of divine grace can know speculatively better than I do the distinction between a professed and a real Christian—and well do I know that I am not the latter. But why is it that in this, knowledge has no effect on practice, when it is so vitally connected with it? At times, I feel as if I had two wills—one to do good, and another to do evil; but I soon find I have only one, and that the seeming acting of the former is but a temporary slackness of the latter. Sometimes I feel as if *I cannot*, but it is immediately succeeded by the remorseful conviction that *I will not*—and this is a bitterer despair than the other.”

He had now, then, for some time felt that his future conduct must resemble that of Penelope, unweaving at one period what had been elaborately woven before. The past was peopled with many regrets; the future stretched out before him in the dimness that enshrouds it from every eye but One; and in his hours of anxious foreboding, he would fain have penetrated the darkness that he might know the portion of his soul. As often, however, as that desire arose, he strove to hush it as a sinful wish to intrude into the province of Him to whom all existence is but one eternal *present*. He felt that the trust which leads the sinner to repose implicitly on God brings to the mind a more soothing sense of safety, than if he could trace by anticipation all the windings of his own career through life. Yet he who could reason so soundly had occasion to record, regarding a visit to a Christian minister—

“Knowing that he cannot be any time without conversing on the glorious truths of the gospel, and that in the most practical, and particular, and searching manner, I felt



a sort of dread of spending a whole Sabbath afternoon and night with him ; and yet I felt an anxious wish to do it, hoping that it might be attended with beneficial consequences to me. Sometimes I almost shrunk at the thought of my wicked heart coming in contact with his piety and holy devotion ; then again, I resolved to make a full disclosure to him of my sentiments, and unbosom to him the state of my mind, and so on. But I have passed through all this perplexity, and the interview is over—and my heart is more hardened, and my conscience more burdened with remorse. I could almost be vain, were it not an awful symptom of impending danger, of how I came off. Oh ! are not my talents a curse to me, as they now are—and is not every advantage that ever I have had also a curse ? I could talk with this holy saint of God on the gospel, its truths, its experience, with a degree of readiness which, whilst it astonished myself, made me also at times the prey of remorse and shame ! My heart seemed to cling to the servant of God, and I hung on every word he spoke ; and he breathed so much benevolence, and zeal, and Christian love and simplicity, that my heart seemed dark as hell. O what shall I have to render to God for such an opportunity as I had yesterday of knowing his will ! How true what Mr Gentle said of another : ‘ A true subject of the gospel can never rest satisfied with *generals*, he must always be entering into *particulars*.’ Here, then, I betrayed myself ; and how much must he despise me—and how much must every true servant of God despise me, who sees through my hypocrisy. But no ; they will rather pity me and pray for me. O may their prayers be heard ! and may I also be taught to pray. For, though of late I have been more frequent, and, in some degree, more fervent, in my prayers, yet I dread lest such should only be one of the many possible variations that may, and must, take place in the feelings of almost every individual.”

—He was, however, already hungering and thirst-

ing to bring sinners to the Saviour. He would have been far from using the words of David—“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul;” \* or even of the woman of Samaria—“Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did;” † but he experienced that irresistible longing which every child of God has felt, to make others partakers of the unspeakable gift. Of such an opportunity lost he says—“If my heart were under the influence of the gospel, what a noble field would this open up to me! I might thus, under the blessing of God, have an opportunity of leading the soul of a fellow-creature to its salvation. But, oh! I feel not these things myself, and how can I, then, lead others? O what a miserable thing it is to be a sinner!”

If we have been taught by the Spirit of God to study man's character in the light of the Scriptures, it will appear from these extracts that the decisive crisis in his history now approaches. The rays of the truth are converging. The heart will soon be in the focus, there to be melted and moulded anew. On Sabbath the 25th of May, he writes:—

. . . . . “Whilst reading the 3d chapter of John, I began to think, ‘These are the words of the Son of God. Whatever proceeds from Him, *must* have infinite glory and excellency in it.’ These words of His, then, possess that glory and excellency; but do I see the least degree of these? I read, and I think I see, that some of these things are true. I take it for granted that they are; I am not inclined to deny them. I feel a general, listless assent of my understanding to them, but *no* degree of pleasure or relish

\* Ps. lxxvi. 16.

† John iv. 29.

in the contemplation of them. I perceive them at a distance, but my heart gives no *reception* to them. In short, I feel an inexplicable sort of sensation, as if there were nothing in common between the things there revealed and my heart—as if there were a sort of determining principle in them not to mingle together, nor even come in contact together, to try the experiment. And is this case hopeless? I feel as if there were an impossibility in the matter; but then, a feeling of remorse and dissatisfaction arises, which could not follow if the thing were in itself impossible—besides, I feel it far more at times than at other times. When my mind has been for some time in a serious frame, after reading, perhaps, some religious work, or perhaps thinking on important subjects, or resisting some temptations, or any thing that has excited some degree of humiliation, I then feel a much greater degree of relish for my Bible, and think that I see a little more into its truth. But all this is only comparatively; my soul is still cold and dark, and seems the grave of every thing connected with God. And what can be effectual? If any one could, through any human agency of whatever kind, be brought to see any importance, excellence, or glory in divine things, I surely might. My taste has been so far influenced by all that I have gone through, that it has become what some would call a religious taste—that is, I have more pleasure in talking, in reading, in writing, and even in feeling, in connection with what is generally called religion, than on any other; and I even feel dissatisfied when I have been much engaged in a contrary course; but yet all this is without any spiritual discernment of any thing supremely worthy, or morally beautiful, in these things. I know that I must pray for God's Spirit; but then I can't pray—I don't know how to pray—for if I did, God would not have rejected the many prayers I have offered up to Him. This is a sure proof of it. And what am I to do? Must I still persevere? Yes; for it is sure destruction to desist. O may God direct and save me!"

Perhaps the struggle on man's part to penetrate "the secret of the Lord," by main effort, was never more accurately described. This earnest spirit had done his utmost, and yet he felt as if he might despair. Again and again he seemed on the eve of grasping the key which would unlock the mysteries which he scrutinized with such anxiety, but it as often eluded his grasp, and left him baffled and perplexed. He exhibits another glimpse, however, of the way of peace, in the following passage of his Journal:—

"*Night.*—I was particularly struck this evening, whilst reading and explaining to my pupils the 13th of Matthew, with the beautiful simplicity and plainness of our Saviour's instructions. Oh! to think that the noblest soul that ever filled a human breast, that had all the perfection of intellect and genius which was possible for human nature, should yet have condescended to make himself perfectly on a level with the lowest capacity hearing him! O what marvellous condescension! I thought I had a glimpse of it, but it is gone. O may God make me first feel, and then teach, with this simplicity! Altogether, this Sabbath has been one of the happiest I have for a long time enjoyed. O may God sanctify every thing to me!"

It was about this period that Mr Macdonald first became a teacher in a Sabbath school. Colonel Hay had proposed to him to open such a seminary for the benefit of the neighbourhood; and, though some difficulties at first occurred, they were soon surmounted, and all was put in train for what was then, in that district, rather a novel undertaking. It is interesting to notice his feelings as he entered on a work in which he was signally honoured and

blessed. His motives for engaging in it, he feared, were not such as the Heart-searcher would approve, and in connection with that he writes :—

“*May 28.*— . . . . . I fear there is a great proportion of vanity—of the love of the praise of men—of making myself some great one. Oh! every day I live affords some additional argument for the necessity of the regenerating influences of that Spirit who can take away these vile, tinsel principles of action that are within me, and give me a heart that will lead me to perform actions, seemingly the same externally, from far nobler motives, and also lead me to press on zealously in whatever might advance the glory of God. Without this, my best actions leave me miserable; the praise and esteem of men make me despise and abhor myself, and I have the constant conviction, that God will not honour that with success which does not proceed from a love to His glory, nor a true love to my neighbour.”

While these matters were in progress, he learned that his father was about to pass through Elgin, and he hastened to meet him with a joy that could scarcely have been surpassed, though he could have foreseen that the anticipated interview was to constitute some important era in his life. Indeed, it proved to be so. After travelling with his parent from Elgin to Nairn, an opportunity there occurred for partaking of the sacrament of the supper, an ordinance in which he had never yet engaged. He declined, however, and in explanation of his declination, he says :—

“I stated that I had reason to doubt whether I could partake aright, but that my scruples had been much increased by seeing the promiscuous manner in which men were admitted to that holy ordinance in this country, and

the conduct of many who were partakers. In the course of our conversation, I also said, that I could wish to have some conversation with my father ere venturing upon it, for that I had but little confidence in the sentiments of most of the clergy around me. . . . . He spoke with the utmost delicacy, and even, as I thought and felt, with too much charity to me. . . . . With regard to the passage 'eating and drinking damnation' to one's self, he believed it to refer to temporal judgments." \*

But it had now become his habit to embrace every opportunity that occurred for doing good. His letters, especially, are fraught with counsels and admonitions, not less remarkable for their solidity than their affection; and on the 23d of May 1828, he wrote to a friend as follows:—

"You express your feelings, my dear friend, on one subject on which I am afraid I can give you but little, very little, relief. There are cases in which a degree of *speculative* knowledge may enable a man perhaps to solve some of the *speculative* difficulties of his friends; but there are cases of conscience in which experience alone could assist him in giving any advice or direction. But glad am I, J——, to see that your thoughts have taken the turn they have; for you will remember, that the first years we were together we had both of us less of that seriousness, and more of that levity of heart, than became us. But it is needless to recapitulate that—'twere well if each of us now recriminated to his own heart, and that such recrimi-

\* The estimate in which he held his father appears to have been enhanced by their intercourse at this time. He says—"My father did not seem in the least fatigued by all the labours of that day—nay, such service seems, indeed, his meat and his drink, and I am sure it is his highest earthly enjoyment. He seeks every opportunity of addressing perishing sinners, and he generally has a good deal more than a just share bestowed upon him by his more indolent or less zealous brethren. How different his idea of the matter from that of another clergyman, who called *preaching* time '*hanging* time!'"

nation led us to what might be the death to every source of recrimination for the future.” . . . . .

“ There may not be much that is striking for its originality or depth of thought in these views ; but what are these in the gospel ?—too often are they but rocks on which preachers make shipwreck. What must the greatest mind that the world ever saw do in embracing the gospel ? He must embrace it as a little weaned child. And how must the most splendid talents offer the same gospel to the acceptance [of men] ? They must humble and abase the aspirings of their nature, and, standing at the foot of the cross, simply point to it, and preach it—nay, they must preach ‘ the foolishness of God,’ in order to become the ‘ wisdom and mighty power of God.’ Here then, J——, your talents and mine, and of all of us (considered simply in themselves), must come to a level ; and here the publican, and the fisherman, and the man mightily versed in the law from his youth, may be all employed as the apostles of Jesus Christ. Other qualifications are necessary to fit us for this office ; and the due exercise of our talents, and extending of our knowledge in all that is connected with the gospel, or that may tend to enforce or illustrate it, is one, as well as a still more spiritual one : these we may attain to, but to greater talents we cannot. I have spoken with the plainness of a friend, as I know you would wish. My remarks may appear short and inapplicable, but they are sincere : nor would I have touched upon it, but that I had not an opportunity of stating my mind upon it before. Oh ! J——, far more depends upon our *hearts* in this business : if they are rightly influenced and directed by a higher power—if they are zealous for God and for his glory, then may we go forth in the strength of an arm not our own. I can suggest no other answer to some of your doubts than to pray earnestly to God for his teaching and instruction : he can make you a faithful servant, and remove all doubts as to your calling.”

—He who is made wisdom to the believer was mani-

festly guiding the mind of this youth to that condition where he would be kept in perfect peace. It would not be easy to over-estimate the importance of the truth, wellnigh unconsciously announced in the following passage:—

*Thursday, June 5.*— . . . . . I feel in my mind too great a tendency to set all the value on external means, on living in the full and rich enjoyment of them, instead of looking up to Him who is the source of all that benefit which can be derived from them, even without whom the greatest possible external religious advantages can prove little else than the greatest sources of hardening and condemnation. Let me ask myself, When have I felt my mind the most seriously impressed? Was it not when I endeavoured most to think of spiritual concerns, to pray to God, and to read His Word, and the works of His eminent servants? When do I feel my mind most hardened? Is it not when enjoying, or for a short time after enjoying, some high religious advantages, from which I expected that I should be highly benefited? This is, indeed, awful; but is it less true than lamentable? And why? Because I had trusted to these means as every thing, and as if they had virtue in them to effect what I should have prayed to God alone to grant me.”

—It is this resting on the external and the visible that constitutes the bane of modern religionists; and it appears difficult or impossible to account for the limited growth in grace which results from all our appliances in any other way than by supposing, that the means are put in the place of God, and man in the place of the Spirit.

The extracts that follow are long, but, as presenting a very picture of his mind, we cannot withhold them:—

*Monday, June 9.*—Yesterday I went over to Alves, as



there was no preaching here, and heard a most excellent discourse from Mr Gentle, on the institution and nature of the Sabbath. Indeed, he had some beautiful and touching ideas in it, and I felt so that I could not take my eye off him while he preached. In the evening, I derived much benefit from his conversation. O how spiritually-minded he is—how I seem to loath myself when with him! and yet I feel hardened when conversing with him—my heart seems determined to steel itself when there is any chance of an impression being made upon it. I had resolved to speak to Mr Gentle about my communicating soon, and I had hoped, and yet was much afraid, that it would lead to a full disclosure of all my feelings; but the former seemed uppermost.” . . . . . “I stated the insensibility of my heart as to divine things—that I felt a dark veil, a something impenetrable upon my mind—saw no excellency, no divine authority, in the Scriptures, and, in consequence, could not say that I could approach to the table with worthy feelings. He said that, in his opinion, humility was the true spirit in which that ordinance should be received—that feelings such as I have described were designed to bring me to the test—‘Lovest thou me?’” . . . . . “But my heart remained hard; and it was not softened by finding that Mr Gentle took my feelings to be some of the trying exercises of a mind that was under the influence of divine truth, and endeavoured to console me accordingly. I endeavoured indirectly to undeceive him. I spoke of the dreadful advantages of a high religious education, and several other things; but I fear that my unintended hypocrisy before had deceived him. . . . . Never shall I forget last night; never did I display my heart to a human being before as I did to him, and that face to face. O may God bless it to me! I lay down with peculiar emotions, and I awoke often in a most strange state of dreaming about the subject of conversation. I arose; but all *seemed*—must I say *seems*?—gone; my mind to-day, however, is more serious than it has been for some time.”

“ *Thursday, June 12.*—For a day or two of this week my mind was a good deal impressed, in consequence of a small tract which Mr Gentle gave me, called ‘Brief Thoughts.’\* I met one feeling, or indeed hindrance, to the reception of the gospel, which I entertained. ‘I feel I cannot believe—it seems an impossibility; how then can I receive the offers of the gospel, which I acknowledge to be perfectly *free*?’ The author insists that the mind is here taken up with examining its own feelings, not in looking to the object—that this is virtually denying the freeness of the gospel offer, as it makes our consciousness of possessing faith the condition on which we will accept the gospel offer, instead of at once laying hold of this. I must indeed acknowledge this to be true. I have been all along looking too much into the state of my own feelings, and examining whether I had faith, and lamenting the want of it, instead of contemplating the glorious object Himself, or of endeavouring to bring my own mind to bear upon the unconditional freeness of the gospel, and its suitability to my needs. Instead of ‘coming unto Christ,’ by fixing my eye on *Him*, that so I might be drawn to Him, I have been engaging myself in ascertaining *how* to come. I think I see the error and inconsistency of all this; but, alas! I know not how to rectify it. I have now endeavoured to think of Christ alone, to consider myself as shut up to this alone point. But my soul is dark, blind, and infatuated; I can see nothing to look at; I seem, or rather feel, like one groping through a narrow, dark passage, to reach a light which he knows to exist before him. I have prayed earnestly to God to show me this light—to bring me to it; I have been pleading with Him on the ground of that promise, ‘Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ I am in some measure

\* The title of this tract is “BRIEF THOUGHTS—Part I. Concerning the Gospel, and the hindrances to believe it—Part II. Concerning the way in which a Christian obtains true satisfaction regarding his state towards God.”

weary of sin ; I feel it in some degree a burden, for it occasions me much uneasiness and restlessness : may He make it more ! But surely He will regard even a small degree of it : may I not, then, urge the fulfilment of His promise ? O may He enlighten my dark, bewildered soul !”

We have here the right action of the believing mind at least described. It would be difficult to tell how widely the Saviour is robbed of his glory as the Prince of Peace, and man of his happiness as a believer, by the tendency to look into our own mind for encouragement or hope, instead of “ looking unto Jesus.” In many cases that error becomes at last a morbid mental disease, which eats into the soul so as to consume its spiritual vigour ; and not a few, like Haliburton, for example, and Brainerd, have hung down the head like a bulrush for many restless years, instead of beholding at once and steadily, “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It is the simple act of coming to Him as a sinner that leads to peace ; and till that be done, the soul is like one that labours in the fire, or that seeks the living among the dead—instead of finding rest, it can find only labour and sorrow.

### CHAPTER III.

Low state of Religion in many parts of Scotland—Pluscarden—Spiritual discipline—Joy in believing increases—The Day-star arising—Conversion—The idolatry of Intellect—Progress—The Christian warfare—Counsels for it—Dr Andrew Thomson—Spiritual vicissitudes and aspirations—Mr Macdonald's view of Faith—Nature and Grace contrasted—Infant Salvation—Aberdeen revisited—A Covenant—Temptations—His Missionary longings recur—Modern Religion described—Intercessory Prayer—Catholic Emancipation—His standard of attainment—The paradox, the most advanced Believer necessarily deems himself the chief of Sinners—“THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR”—True humility—A tour—Prepares for license—Is licensed.

It is reserved for the redeemed in glory to review all the way by which their Father led them through the wilderness of earth to their appointed home. The felicities of eternity will be thereby augmented. The tribulation that assailed us here will give intensity to our blessedness there. But even on earth, the believer's happiness is often enhanced by reviewing “the loving-kindness of the Lord,” in the vicissitudes of our pilgrimage. Not a tear too many was shed. Not a pang too acute was felt. Not a cross too heavy was borne. “He hath done all things well” is often the conviction uttered in the spirit of adoption, by the people of God, amid the privations and sorrows

of this world. In regard to him whose spiritual history we are unfolding, this was signally the case.

On the 15th of June 1828, Mr Macdonald opened that Sabbath school which was destined, as we shall hereafter see, to be the first scene of his success in turning sinners from darkness to light.

In the county where he resided, as in many other districts in Scotland, the religion of the Bible had long been to a large extent obscured. Many causes had operated in producing that result, and a form of Christianity such as man could have devised, or at least such as the carnal mind could tolerate, had superseded those developments of truth which came charged with omnipotence from the bosom of Jehovah. No doubt, God did not leave himself without a witness there. He had his hidden ones. There were seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal; but they were often like the men of old who were hidden in the cave, and were obliged to worship God away from what had been the Church of their fathers, exposed to the sneers or persecution of godless men.\*

In the neighbourhood of Westerton, about six miles from the town of Elgin, lies the village of Pluscarden, situated on the banks of a rivulet which falls into the Lossie. In former times it was the seat of a priory, and formed one of three institutions in Scotland inhabited by monks of the austere order

\* See for illustrations, "Memoirs of Isobel Hood"—especially the Appendix, a work published by Mr Macdonald in 1843, and to be subsequently referred to. Some parts of the correspondence in the Appendix are as humbling as they are touching; and it was amid scenes like those there described that he first felt his soul drawn out to them that were ready to perish.

of Vallis-caudium. It was founded in 1230, by Alexander II., but the vicious lives of the monks eventually caused the suppression of that house, when the priory of Pluscarden became a cell of Dunfermline. In what had thus been formerly the scene of proceedings too gross to be connived at, he entered on his duties with eternity fully present to his mind; and, conscious as he felt that his efforts must prove either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, to himself and others, much prayer accompanied the undertaking. His cry was, "O for one view of the cross, to humble my proud, vain spirit!" and that cry was not unheard. His trouble of soul still continued, however—he became more and more absorbed in the pursuit of the one thing needful; yet it is not difficult to perceive that he still unconsciously hoped to achieve his object by efforts or by prayer, instead of simply believing on the Son of God. He says—

"*Tuesday, June 17.*— . . . . I pray more frequently, and with more fervency of expression at least. I dwell more on the atonement, and plead more with God on the ground of his promises. I strive so as if possible, in some way, to get my mental eye fixed on the great object of faith—on the freeness of the gospel offers; but still I feel no relief, no progress. Sometimes I ask, 'What reason have I to think that God will at once listen to me, when I have so long slighted Him?' then I remember, that His ways are not as my ways. That I am led to believe that I have not the proper conviction of these things—that I am not approaching in a right manner—that I am not coming to Him through Christ, for then only He will not cast me out: this makes me take up my Bible to discover what I should do. But there, again, I feel blinded, and there is a

veil upon my eyes. Where, then, lies the great error on my part? Do I really believe any thing in coming to God? I fear not. This is what I want Him to work in me. Here am I puzzled: no conditions are necessary for believing in Christ, and yet I feel some one is necessary, for I cannot see what I am to believe, unless it be shown to me by God. I am bewildered."

The strain of the next extract reminds us of the Confessions of Augustine and the struggles of Brainerd. The exclamation which it contains—"A thought strikes me, that to the reception of the free grace of Christ, all this working is not necessary"—contains the truth which might have emancipated him at once and for ever:—

"*Thursday, June 19.*—I am not happy; I cannot make myself so. I say this in sincerity, and from the experience of a much agitated heart. And what makes me unhappy? I can scarcely tell what; it is a tumult of sensations. I want something, and I cannot get it. I have an indefinable, indistinct notion about salvation—that I much need it—that it is to be got freely from God, for the sake of Jesus Christ—and that I must earnestly seek it from Him. I believe that the way in which I can obtain it from Him is by faith—by believing that Jesus Christ died for sinners, and that salvation is offered freely to all who will believe this. I have a tolerable speculative knowledge of all the great doctrines of the Bible, and their connection with each other, and with man's salvation; but I feel all this knowledge utterly fail me in the moment of need. I can say to myself, 'It should be so and so;' but I cannot get myself to feel this—I cannot get my heart, my thoughts, to be in any degree influenced by it. I can read my Bible, and see there gracious promises, and my understanding says at once, 'That applies to me;' but I cannot get myself to feel that I am in reality such as that promise is addressed to, nor

can I produce in my mind any thing like a conviction of confidence that it will be fulfilled to me if I urge it. If, then, I change the scene, and bend my knees to God, and endeavour to confess to Him the weakness that I think I feel, and supplicate Him to do all those necessary things in me which I cannot do for myself—my prayers are but one continued scene of striving and confusion, my vain and wicked heart resisting to the utmost every good attempt, or rather attempt after good—sending out its baneful influences in trifling and sinful thoughts, and I struggling with these unsuccessfully—at one time ready to give up in despondency—then remembering the necessity of perseverance, I renew the exertion—again am I foiled, and so on. I address myself again to God's own Word—need I repeat that I am still unhappy? A thought strikes me, that to the reception of the free grace of Christ all this working is not necessary. I believe that; but when I endeavour to turn my mind to the simple offer of the gospel alone, I can see nothing, but am necessarily led into all this. And yet I cannot understand all this. Am I going on aright? This is a question I cannot answer, for I need the enlightening from on high in order to know it. But do I search the Scriptures as I ought—am I diligent, earnest, persevering enough in this first of duties? Surely God will give me, then, every direction for my salvation. O God! give me greater concern, relish, and enlightenment for this matter. Oh! open my mind to understand thy Word, and make it my delight day and night!”

And more deeply instructive still:—

“*Saturday.*—What am I to do with this stubborn, careless heart of mine! I cannot, cannot keep it to the point—in spite of me it wanders away. I may for a moment force it into some serious thought, but it is escaped immediately, and I feel a bitter disappointment, as if my only chance were for ever gone. O may God grant that it may not be so; for if all this were now to depart, I dread the



thought of what might follow. I have read a good deal of my Bible to-day, chiefly in St John's Gospel, and about our Saviour's interview with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. But, oh! with what apathy have I read. Sometimes I would feel a little glow of emotion, but it was momentary as well as little. When I lifted my thoughts, as well as my eyes, they rested upon the world. I am, indeed, unhappy; and yet I can scarcely tell what makes me so unhappy. I do not feel aware of the danger I know I am in. I am not sad for sin. Is it not the working of a proud spirit, because it cannot command itself? I fear it is. And is there any cure for this? None, but such a view of Christ crucified as will effectually *draw* me, for I cannot *go*. O let me pray earnestly for this!"

His heart was now too full to retain its emotions. It speaks out of that fulness in the following extract from a letter to a friend, dated Westerton, June 23, 1828:—

"I have come in some degree to feel that all my knowledge regarding the plan of salvation, however orthodox, and minute, and logical, is yet perfectly useless to me in practice. I find that it will not lead me one step to the attainment of this grand point. And why? Not so much that it is not extensive enough, but because it is perfectly powerless. The little I do know of what is truly practical, I feel to be powerless; and then I know my resources are exhausted, because, however much more I may learn, I cannot but be certain that it will prove [equally unavailing.] I had long thought that I was so well acquainted with the gospel plan, that it would only need a little perseverance in the practical application of it, whenever I chose to set about it, to make me a believer; but of late, when I brought myself to the trial, I have found, to my bitter experience, that I have in my own *heart* an opposing force which is perfectly impregnable to any self-formed attempts. I feel within me a complete disunion of all that

was surely intended to act in unison. My conscience sounds an alarm, sometimes in vain ; at other times, my reason may take it up and prosecute inquiries : but when it comes with the result of them, I feel my heart, or whatever is the fountain of action, still stubborn ; in short, I may go further and say, that I often feel within me the miseries of civil dissension or war. But why should I thus go about the bush ?—this is but another indication of the state of my mind, that it always flies away from being brought directly to the point : to be plain, I find, as it were, an impossibility to give the belief of conviction to the offers of the gospel. I have a belief in these things, but yet it is not the belief of *faith*. How am I to account for this ? It must be either that I do not believe *aright*, or do not believe to the proper *degree*, or do not fix my belief on the proper *thing*. The first cannot be the case, for there can only be one way of believing ; between the second and third I am kept hovering. Sometimes I feel I do not believe in the *degree* that is necessary—not to the extent of *conviction* ; it is but a part of my soul, the merely intellectual part, that seems to give in ; and this seems to me as if securing the instruments without the moving, the actuating part, the heart itself. Then I begin to be in doubts whether I am believing the *right thing*. This seems simple ; and yet when I bring my mind to the various truths of the gospel, I feel as if no one of them were in the least calculated to move or have any effect upon me ; if I bring it to the one which alone makes the gospel glad tidings, and which Paul held out to the convicted jailer of Philippi, I can take no hold of it to my own mind, though in theory I have a conviction how it ought to act. In a review of such feelings, it strikes me as if they were all the workings of a proud, self-righteous spirit—a spirit which looks more to the *exercise* of the mind itself, than the *object* to which this exercise is to be directed, which, while it acknowledges that every thing must proceed from God, yet desires the *merit* of compelling itself to go to Him. I am brought,

then, to this conclusion, that it is the extreme simplicity, and the unconditional freeness of the gospel offer, as presented to, and viewed by, a proud and legal spirit, that occasions the whole difficulty; and that again comes down to this—nothing can be done without a change of *heart*.” ✓

It is not difficult to see “the loving-kindness of the Lord” in leading this anxious inquirer, just at this period, to open a Sabbath school. He there found an outlet for all his zeal, and relief from some of his sorrow of soul. Indeed, it proved to be a scene in which God was instructing the teacher, and taking him by the hand as He did Ephraim of old; while the very vicissitudes of his spirit, the wave-like condition of his mind, inured him to simpler and steadier dependence on the Rock. In his own strong language, “he was deifying himself;” but, if that was true, the Dagon was tottering to its fall at the approach of the living God. He drags it forth into daylight, however, and says:—

“*June 25.*— . . . . I feel where my vanity comes in, intercepting between God and my soul—where it feeds itself, out of the very exertions which I make to subdue it—where it exalts itself, on the discoveries I make; so that it is the grand barrier between me and eternal salvation. Oh! pride was the first cause of a downfall; it is what keeps man down; it is what cleaves closest to him after he is upraised; and it is but just, that what he first grasped at should be made his bitterest foe. Are not all my faculties from God?—are not the means of improvement His gift?—has He not also formed the connection of cause and effect between the application of these means and their result? and is not, therefore, every thing from Him? and ought they not therefore to have been directed exclusively with a view to Him? But such reflections as these,

though they seem sincere for the moment, and though they frequently recur, yet possess no manner of influence over me. This is what I feel in every thing I think or say. There is still wanting some one power to unite and direct, and lead irresistibly forward, all that exists in, or passes through, my soul—something that I cannot possibly find in myself. O that I could get my eye fixed directly on the glorious Sufferer for the sins of the world! But my soul goes forth in every *other* direction but that alone."

None ever discovered more clearly that the cold flame that sometimes flits over graves, and in the charnel-house, is but the phantom mimicry of the blaze that warms us. As God can restrain the burning of the furnace without quenching it, or bid the sun stand still without setting, or congeal the waters into a wall, though they be waters still, so by the force of mere natural conscience much may be done in religion. But John Macdonald was in the act of passing away from that state, in which natural conscience is our only guide or monitor, though it was through a season of protracted agitation. Hope sometimes dawned, indeed, but he hastened to extinguish it, and in his paroxysm he says:—

"June 28.— . . . . A man of God would at once ask me, 'Why do you not lay hold of the atonement, and make it your own without delay? and *that* would conquer every thing.' So I see and admit, for I feel that something which is not now in me must be put in; but it is when I endeavour to bring my mind to *this*, that I feel all this rearing and plunging. I could be calm enough, if I did not endeavour to lead my thoughts to Christ Jesus? but the carnal mind has such an enmity to Him and the vitals of the gospel, that this is a probe to show the soreness of my wound."

After a season of self-scrutiny which has perhaps never been surpassed in strictness, as well as in the acuteness with which the various feelings of the heart are analyzed, he writes:—

“*Monday, June 30.*—Two or three things occur to me for which especially I ought to thank God.

“I. That He has not implanted in me any great taste for classical, literary, or philosophical pursuits, so as to induce me to prosecute these departments of worldly science enthusiastically. I have a taste for them, and a competent knowledge, but no more; and more would be dangerous.

“II. For the early religious advantages I have had; also, that He has been pleased to remove me from these at the time when my heart was becoming most hardened under them; for I verily believe that if I had remained at home till this day, I should be tenfold more hardened than I am.

“III.

“IV. That He has sent me into an amiable and retired family, and to an easy and pleasant charge, where I have much time for retirement and improvement; that, while I regret having no religious society, I have no other society of any kind around me which I might be led to associate with, and which might have a distracting and counteracting tendency.

“V. That, in consequence of this, I have also been led to delight in solitude, retirement, and meditation; that a degree of low spirits, proceeding occasionally from these causes, has led me oftener to have recourse to my Bible and my knees.

“VI.

But, by his own acknowledgment, he now began to enjoy what “seemed a little foretaste of the joys of a Christian.” On the Sabbath he “regretted that the morrow would be Monday,” to drag him back to

the world ; yet it was only a glimpse, and the law, under whose power he was dying,\* regained for a season its power. He still distrusted all that he could excite in his own mind, and yet he strove to excite it. But his own language is the most descriptive:—

“*Thursday, July 3.*— . . . . I have been this week the subject of various and contrary temptations ; at one time a strong flush of hope, that perhaps I have believed in a degree, and was therefore justified in the sight of God—when I began to think of all my good feelings, and asked, Could they have proceeded from any other source ? But these were but the dreams of a moment ; for when I asked for any decided change of *soul*, confidence in Christ, or love to Him, they were all wanting, so that this delusion gave way. But a benumbing one succeeded. I have felt for moments the dishonourable thought, ‘ What if God be determined to reject me ? ’ but I am afraid even to express it. To think that He would give His own Son for sinners, and yet not receive one ! Impious unbelief ! But let me remember the importunate widow, and this — ‘ Be not weary in well-doing, for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not.’ ”

—O how much is required to exhume the soul of man from the grave in which sin has laid it ! How much must be unlearned, repudiated, and disowned, ere Christ be indeed “ made wisdom unto us ” ! In referring to his former folly in seeking out and studying the tragedies which man composes, to the neglect of the tragedy of the Redeemer’s death, he says:—

“ I have no pleasure in any book that I used to like,

\* Gal. ii. 19.

not even in those merely theological or critical. . . . .  
My heart, my heart ! I want something to affect my heart —it is it that gives me the misery. O Lord, ‘sanctify it by thy truth, for thy Word is truth.’ I am every moment receiving this lesson from it, that I cannot do one thing by myself. I read with some degree of comfort, last night, 2 Chron. xx., a chapter which opened to me by chance. There Jehoshaphat prays, ‘We have no might against this great company, neither know ye what to do ; but our eyes are upon thee!’ And what answers God? ‘Be not afraid nor dismayed—the battle is not yours but God’s. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, and stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord your God with you, O Judah and Jerusalem ! To-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you.’ Our cases are similar—oh ! could I make their confidence also mine.”

He was, however, gradually approaching the moment of his full deliverance. It is true, that no sooner had he driven out one spiritual enemy, than another took possession of his heart. The attention which he had paid to mere mental training, without seeking to have all his attainments consecrated to God, became more and more a burden to his spirit. But, side by side with these convictions, there were springing up evangelical perceptions, both as regards the simplicity and the freeness of the gospel. After a struggle, he exclaims—“ Ah ! here lies my grand enemy—my want of faith in the mercy and grace of Christ, and his atoning sacrifice ;” and in harmony with that conviction, he was preparing to cast in his lot among God’s peculiar people, by resorting to the Lord’s table. His feelings then were both various and intense ; \* but, in the providence of God, he was

\* See Appendix, No. I., for a narrative of his preparation and state of

permitted to pay a visit to Urquhart, for which he had longed as for a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, and his mind settled down in a measure of tranquillity. He writes—and the experienced believer will perceive that this pilgrim has now one foot at least on the sure and tried foundation :—

“*Saturday, July 19.*—This week has now come to a close ; and, when I consider it, it seems on the whole the happiest week which I have yet spent. It has not been without its fears and anxieties, and even pains ; it has not been without much recrimination and remorse ; but I have felt more of a staid tranquillity, and on a different foundation from what I have hitherto done. And yet, what if it be a false one ? I cannot examine it well—it is so faint ; and when I attempt analyzing my feelings I am so miserably dissatisfied, I see so many things wanting, that all my hope seems to disappear until I again turn to contemplate that from which it first seemed to have sprung. And what is this that seems to give me comfort ? It is a *trust* in the *faithfulness* of God’s promises in general—a belief that he is sincere in what He addresses to me, as a sinner, in His Word, urging me to repent and believe, and that He will forgive all that is past for the sake of what Jesus Christ has done and suffered ; whilst, after the late struggle I had with myself, I have resigned, or desire to resign, myself altogether to Him who has promised to do all for those who come to Him in this spirit. I feel at the same time a faint (O how faint !) conviction that He is *able* and *willing*, and that He *will* do all that I need for me, *in his own way*—not in the exact way which I may point out. These seem the grounds on which the degree of comfort I have

mind on the occasion of his first communion, fully drawn up by himself at the time. We need not scruple to say, that it is one of the most exact delineations and instructive records of the kind ever left by a departed saint. It should be studied and prayed over by every communicant whose soul is exercised to make its calling and election sure.



appears to rest ; but feeble are their influences on my mind, and indistinctly do they stand out before it, so that I am often tempted to think that they do not at all exist, and that I am labouring under a gross self-deception. But then I feel as if I were dishonouring God by such unbelief, because He does not all at once give me what I want, and make me, like Thomas, exclaim, ' My Lord, my God !'— I feel a change, a decided change, in my mind ; and sometimes I feel inclined to revel in it, to rejoice in the liberty which, in some measure, I have to think and act as I could not formerly do ; and when this is a joy of gratitude to God for his having wrought this in me, then, indeed, it is not dangerous ; but O how little of this do I feel ! It is more ready to become a rejoicing in the thing itself, in the state of mind, without any reference to the source ; and it is after I have felt this dwelling on and rejoicing in my own frames and feelings, that my mind becomes most miserable, and fears most, lest all I have attained, or seem to have attained to, be indeed a miserable deception. And yet how merciful is it that such a miserable feeling does thus flow from my endeavouring to rest my mind on my feelings, instead of the only true foundation, even the mercy offered me through Jesus Christ in the gospel ; it is a warning to me that all cannot be right—that I have not, at that moment, the *hope of the gospel*. At other times I am tried by a contrary temptation—' that I have no clear, deep, nor abiding impression on my mind of the atonement made for sinners, nor of my interest in it—that I have no *firm conviction* of my salvation through the belief of these things.' I admit this, and it is sometimes a source of anxiety and sorrow to me that I have not ; but I have been comforted by these words of the great apostle—' We are saved by *hope*.' It is a confident hope, a well grounded hope, and an abiding hope ; but still it was by *hope* that he was saved. It was not by a clear representation of these things to the eye of the mind, but a strong exercise of hope in them, perhaps indistinctly seen. A strong hope is all

that I feel—O may God, who begins every good work, also carry it through, and strengthen it more and more ! May He give me more heartfelt views of my own sinfulness, inability, and unworthiness. I am ashamed how little I feel of this, when He has done so much for me ; and, oh ! forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, may I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus !”

No one can doubt that the soul of a child of God may pass from death to life without knowing the moment of transition. It *may* be known, but it is not the fixing of the period—it is determining the fact, so as to render it unquestionable, that should be our unceasing aim. At the same time, it cannot be doubted that a clear and decided knowledge of the period at which the religion of God was adopted and that of man abjured, tends to give both precision and tenseness to the believer’s mind through life. Not a little of that hesitancy and halting which characterize many believers may be traced to their want of such clear convictions ; and, on the other hand, the energy, the decision, the undaunted heroism in religion, which distinguish others, may be ascribed to their certainty regarding the decisive change. “ I *know* in whom I *have* believed,” was the saying of Paul ; and it might be ours, were our transition as distinct and as thorough, or our faith as simple as his. In the end, John Macdonald’s views of the change which passed upon him at this period were clear and unequivocal, although at the time it appeared as if he only “ saw men like trees walking.” He started on his new career, after an exercise and

experience which made all the past dark and sombre, except as God had led him by ways that he did not know, and all the future so much in the sunshine which He who is light sheds down, that he never faltered and never ceased to give the glory to that Spirit whose resistless energy had made him what he was—a monument of mercy, a humble, docile, and most loving child of God.

It is not easy to describe the results that follow that grand revolution of heart and life of which he had now become the subject. Can we picture what the sensations of the redeemed will be when the soul and the body shall be re-united at the resurrection, when they shall rush to each other's embrace to be glorified together for ever, and partake, without dread of separation, of the pleasures that are for evermore? Somewhat similar is the result when the sinner, clothed and in his right mind, first takes his place at the feet of Jesus. But why the struggles which so long harassed him? Is it needful that all should pass through such discipline? Must every saved soul sojourn for a season amid the peaky horrors, or exceedingly quake amid the typical thunders, of Sinai? No doubt, no sinner ever received and rested upon Christ till he felt his need of Him—that is, till he felt that he was a sinner; the Redeemer's predicted name implies all that—"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." Yet it cannot be questioned, that the protracted mental agony of some, ere they enjoy peace in believing, originates in self-righteous aversion to God's simple plan of saving us. Did we, as we ought, instantly come to Jesus when he says, "Come unto

me," we should instantly find rest; or did we, as we ought, instantly "look unto Jesus" when he says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth," salvation would immediately result. But we rather pore upon the disease than hasten to the Physician. We study the mental act of faith instead of simply believing. We analyze our own feelings instead of surrendering the heart at once to God. We would come with some self-derived fitness—at the very least, with deep feelings or many tears—instead of simply holding out the empty hand of faith to take the offered and unspeakable gift. By thus trying to mix our own righteousness with the righteousness of God, we vex ourselves in vain, we postpone, or it may be utterly prevent, our deliverance from the bond of iniquity; a soul-pacifying view of Christ is hindered, and, were grace not invincible, we might lie down in sorrow for ever. The simple faith of this convert, through all his subsequent life and ministry, was his own loud protest against the legalism which preceded his conversion.

It deserves to be noticed that one of the greatest snares to which he had hitherto been exposed was the idolatry of the intellect. In his unconverted state, it was supposed to be capable of achieving every thing—even of taking the kingdom of heaven by force. His training at King's College had favoured that delusion, and it required many efforts and much prayer to master it. Not that he ever despised the gift of a powerful understanding: he only sought to have it consecrated to God, and so trained by the Spirit, or so subordinated to Him, that God should have all the glory, and man be ever kept in his most

proper sphere—the dust. We repeat, he undervalued neither the knowledge of the schools nor the knowledge of the world; on the contrary, he was well armed with both, but he sought to employ all in uttermost dependence on that power and demonstration of the Spirit, without which all the efforts of man are as feeble as were the words of the monarch of old against the rising tide.

One of his early companions has said, that “if ever there could be an instance in which the most amiable and correct by nature could see and enjoy God without being born again, I believe it would have been found in John Macdonald. But no. Not even he could see God, except he were born again.—His letters, accordingly, show how vile he counted himself to be, when renewed and enlightened by the Holy Ghost.” All amiable as he was, and correct—may we say blameless?—in man’s eye, as his conduct appeared, even he needed the new-creative power to be put forth—even he required to see *all* old things pass away. There was no shading of nature into grace, far less substituting the one for the other, as is so often done, where religion is a sentiment, not a truth, or an emotion, not a principle. The change was thorough and complete. In the scriptural sense, it was blindness and sight—it was death and life—it was darkness and light, in contrast; and even though his previous career had been as remarkable for ungodliness as it was signalized by moral correctness, the change could not have been more decided. When he referred to it in other years, it was ever in such a way as to show the deep and solemn impressions which were made by the regenerating Spirit; so that

his case loudly rebukes those superficial views of the Saviour's religion which would dispense with that radical transformation which He demands, and which He has placed as the very sentinel of His kingdom, to search or to challenge every soul that would enter there. The effect of the change is briefly described in the words of one of his early friends: "He was quite carried over to Christ, and continued devoted to Him till the last."

It indicates his sensitive jealousy over his own soul—a jealousy that is in beautiful accordance with the Saviour's lessons—to hear him say, in reference to his affection to his father—"The thought struck me (while rejoicing at an interview), 'Must not God be jealous of my receiving, with so much pleasure and confidence, the expressions of endearment from a fond father, while I can listen with such coldness and indifference to the voice of love and mercy from Him who spared not His own Son for the salvation of such sinners as I am?'" He was learning to look at every event, and study every feeling, as it must appear to God; and, though he felt the honour of his descent from such a parent, he yet endeavoured to keep the creature in the creature's place. At the same time, his own spiritual transition had prepared him to look with other eyes on all that he saw, and his heart now exulted when he noticed that that work of grace which re-conducts the sinner to his God, was advancing in the souls of some of his early friends. To promote it, he now formed a concert for prayer with some of them, who agreed to be engaged in the work of supplication on a fixed evening weekly. He some-

times still feared that he was only a self-deceiver, but it was with that kind of fear which urged him to the shadow of the Great Rock; and "blessed is the man that feareth always" when that is the result. Trembling lest he should be more taken up with the act of discovering than the thing discovered, he tried to look to the Lamb of God, and, in looking, he exclaimed—

"O God! empty me altogether of self. Pride, pride, is the great mountain between thee and me: remove it—make me a little child—keep me low—keep before me the high standard of thy law—my own baseness and pollution. Make me remember, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, with *all thy soul*, thy *mind*, and *strength*. Whatever is short of this is *sin!* Oh! what *sin!*"

The divine life is not a sail upon a summer sea, but a fight, a wrestling, a warfare; and this young Christian soon understood by experience how truly it was so to him. The vicissitudes of his mind were never fitful, for his constitution was naturally calm—but they were deep, and he often had occasion to suspect that he was still a hypocrite resting on himself, instead of the atonement of Christ, or the faithfulness and freeness of the promises. But his Sabbath school continued to be a meeting-place between God and his soul; he was both blessed and made a blessing there, and the secret is found in his prayer concerning it: "My constant prayer needs to be—Humility, humility; Lord, give me humility." He felt more and more assured that there was no trusting to any thing *within*. Christ was all; and he rejoiced at the thought that we may have a fresh supply from the golden bowl, whenever we feel our

own graces burning low or dimly. Eager to have the soul pure that it might be blessed, he says:—

"*Thursday, August 13.*— . . . . . I would that my heart were indeed purified more and more. Lord, 'sanctify me by thy truth, for thy word is truth.' Let me live under an abiding and penetrating sense of thy constant presence—of thy love. Let me view thee as ever looking upon me, to see whether indeed I love thee, and desire to please thee, or whether I am ready to do that which I know to be grievous to thy holy nature—to thy wonderful, undeserved, love to sinners. Give me soul-abasing views of my own guilt; keep me ever humble, on account of my pride. Let me live by faith—by prayer—by a feeding on thee in thy Word; be in every duty—be thou my every motive. O that I were holy as thou art holy! Why am I at such a distance from thee, seeing that the enmity is taken away from between us? Why?"

When we remember how recently he has emerged from the gloom and bondage of the law, it is surprising to notice the clearness and fulness of his views of the gospel. He asks, How should perishing sinners be addressed by "ambassadors in Christ's stead?" and answers—

"*August 15.*— . . . . . O this alone is a cheering proclamation to the weary sinner, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' 'I will do every thing for you that you need. I will make you feel heavy laden. I will present myself so unto you, as to draw you to me. I will take off your burdens. Every thing that lies between your most atrocious guilt and your final deliverance from the stain of sin, I will take into my own hands. Only come unto me just as you are at this moment—trust me—put yourselves into my keeping—live in a humble yet confident reliance on me, and far more than you can ask or think shall be done for you.' O it is on this gospel that my soul alone



can rest—this is the only sure anchor which I can find for my soul, when tossed by a consciousness of fresh guilt, by a dishonouring unbelief; and it is an anchor ‘fixed within the veil.’ I know in what it is fixed, though I discern it not; and I feel it and know it to be firm and immoveable. Oh! blessed God, that hast brightened my heart by such a hope, how unworthy, how undeserving am I! Am I not every day throwing obstacles in the way of thy grace, and yet art not thou ever returning again unto me with more and more? My pride, my pride—O how disgusting is it! When I contemplate thy gifts, thy doings, am I not ever ready to substitute myself instead of thee as the author of them? Oh! I loathe myself, that a creature who has received so much should yet need so much more. O that I could live more upon thyself than on thy gifts! O lead me more unto thyself, in an especial manner, in that ordinance in which I am, on thine own day, to present myself as an empty vessel before thee, to be filled out of thy fulness. I leave myself with thee. It is in a spirit of humiliation, of conscious guilt and insufficiency, that I would desire to take into my mouth the symbols of my Saviour’s broken body and shed blood. To thee, O God, I desire to devote myself and all that I have—with thee do I leave myself, to receive strength to perform what I vow. O reveal thyself unto me, and grant me this greatest of all honours, to live ever in thy service and to thy glory. But it is through Christ crucified that I supplicate these things from God. O glorify thyself and Him by granting them. Amen.”

—This we regard as a close approximation to the freeness and the fulness of the gospel of peace. Confidence in the mercy of God has now taken the place of suspicion; and he whom God had thus visited and made glad, could no longer question the presence and working of a gracious power. The fear which before distressed him has vanished in the

presence of Him in whom we have righteousness and strength, and he now moves onward, with tolerable steadiness, in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good.

Nor were his opportunities few; and how well he could improve them will appear from a letter, dated Westerton, August 19, 1828. A friend, in anxiety about his soul, had written on the subject, and the following is part of his reply. Let the believer who has entered on peace after much exercise of mind, say how precious it is:—

. . . . . “ You ask me, ‘ What do you consider the properties of acceptable prayer?’ Now, perhaps it may surprise you when I say, that even if I could answer this in clear terms I would not do it, in the *present* state of your mind; because, if I may judge from my own experience, this is the query of a harassed but *legal* spirit, and the direct answering of it would, in my opinion, be at least unprofitable. I shall explain myself. You have a firm speculative belief that you are a guilty, undone, and perfectly helpless sinner; by the instrumentality of certain circumstances in Divine providence (it matters not what they were) you are led at length anxiously to labour for the salvation of your soul; you have also a clear speculative knowledge of the way by which you can attain to this; in one word, by *faith*. Granted. Your first work, then, was endeavouring to put this knowledge in practice. But how? Instead of turning your view immediately to objects presented in the gospel to excite your faith, and dwelling upon them as your only hope, you first looked whether you had this faith as a *preliminary* step, and intended then, if you found it, immediately to direct it to those objects which, in fact, must excite it. Could you, in fact, have faith, until you brought your mind to contemplate and rest upon the gracious promises and free invitations of the gospel,

which are addressed to you as a sinner, in the first place, without faith or any thing else that is necessary? Must not your faith, including your firm persuasion of the truth of what God declares, and your thorough reliance on it for yourself, proceed from an immediate contemplation of that unconditional freeness and unlimited fulness, *unfettered by one speciality*, upon which the sinner should at once come and rest his burden, without a fear of non-acceptance? Was not your course, like mine, the reverse of this?—you sought for faith when it could not possibly exist, before you turned to what could excite it.\* You feel, then, that you want those things, in your opinion necessary to the formation of faith—a *sense* of guilt, pollution, helplessness, &c.—to compel you to have recourse to the gospel, and a belief and confidence in the mercy of God to enable you to receive it. You have recourse to prayer—you plead for these things to be given you—you plead under a deep consciousness of wanting them; and so you should; but, then, your mind ought not to be resting on the mere consciousness of your harassing needs, but on the willingness of Him whom you are addressing to remove them. Does not the very act of prayer presuppose your belief of this? and are you then honouring Him in this act, when your mind is only filled with a distressing consciousness of your own miseries in it, and in no degree suffered, even for a moment, to rest on the truth that He is most willing, nay, waiting to remove them? But you say, ‘I cannot help it—I feel that I am not sincere, earnest, disinterested, in my supplications—that I am guilty of a ‘solemn mockery,’ and that my prayers, therefore, cannot be accepted.’ So, then, you have found out that this insincerity, indifference, selfishness of motive, &c., are not a part of that sinfulness which you

\* For his views on this subject, so often baffling to the awakened conscience, but here so simply stated, see a tract published by Johnstone, Princes Street, Edinburgh, entitled, *BEHOLD THE LAMB*, in a New Year’s Address to the Congregation of Free Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh. It is a letter from Mr Macdonald to a friend when turning Zionward.

want to be delivered from—no, no; they are quite a distinct thing, and a man must of himself be able to remove these first, and then he can have confidence that his prayer will be accepted and graciously answered! Do you really suppose so? Ah no! here is the sunk rock of legalism. Off with these to Jesus at once—these are the very consciousness of guilt, the stings of conscience, the dismal unbelief which you were seeking as preliminaries: plead them with Him—tell Him these are sin, and the worse, because they lie as obstructions in the very way to Himself, and that ‘He came to destroy the works of the devil,’ and there they are. But, O ——, plead His own promises with Him—show Him you are, without a doubt, included in the characters whom He invites, and tell Him that you have not a doubt but He is willing to receive you as one of such. You are not to be deterred by feeling a want of sincerity; rather plead for that gift, and also labour after it—earnestness in like manner—importunity in like manner; and as to the motive from which you come, when you show me, in His revelation of His will, an instance where he lays down *fixed* or *certain* motives from which sinners *must* come to Him, and without which He will reject them, then I shall be ready to admit that your case may *possibly* be a *hopeless* one. Your conscious unfitness for the *ministry*, is it not an unfitness to *promote His glory*—does it not proceed from *sin*? If it does not, then are you right. If it does, O what better motive than to come to Him to remove that sin which unfits you for entering on His service, and promoting His glory? Now, ask your own heart, Is there one single obstacle to prevent my closing at once with the gospel offer—to put all my confidence in God through Christ—to trust Him and believe Him as able and willing to save me? Is not His invitation as wide as the misery of human nature, and is there one excluding specialty? Nay, will He not be as willing to receive me who am seeking to know the way of salvation, as He was to pluck as brands from the burning such as Saul of Tarsus, who

were determinedly ‘kicking against the pricks?’ Calls He not on the ‘labouring, the heavy-laden, the thirsty, the miserable, the wretched, the poor, the blind, and naked?’ And am I none of these? Yes; I will arise and go unto Him; for, until I can prove myself an angel who has no need of mercy, or a devil who cannot have it, I *must* believe—believe that He who laid down his life for sinners is always willing to receive a sinner. You will say it is easy to see and admit all this to be true, but the difficulty is to *do* it; and it is more, it is an impossibility to man, for as simple as it appears to be. But here lies the urgency for importunate prayer—pray against *every individual thing* which you want to be delivered from, even to minuteness, every sin, weakness, or even tendency—pray for every individual thing you need, in like manner—pray against the very manner in which you are praying at that very moment, turning your consciousness into a prayer. Persevere, and on no account be foiled; remember that the devil is only trying to make you rise from your knees in despair. But, oh! keep constantly before your mind the grounds of all hope—the mercy of God, His faithfulness, His will-*ingness*; dwell much on his promises—strive always, when disengaged, to keep your mind full of these things—let your consciousness of weakness be your strength—avoid every thing that will tend in any measure to alienate your mind—in reading the Scriptures let your ejaculations for aid be frequent.”

It was by an analysis and arguments like these that he had now learned to counsel the troubled in soul. His gaze was intently fixed on the cross. In his own language, he “made straight for *it*,” and was there taught by the Crucified One to turn many to righteousness. “If I did not see the cross still on Calvary, I would be sunk in maddening despair,” were his words; and, like the seaman with his eye on the beacon, or the exile with his heart on his

home, he strove neither to swerve nor to falter. How different now from his mental condition when he sat down in agony, and after writing half a line, was constrained by his anguish of soul abruptly to desist! Yet, when he glanced at the fearful pit and the miry clay from which he had been rescued, he was covered with confusion.

“When I think,” he says, “of my past life, a life of pride and detestable pollution—how long I persevered in a course of regular idolatry of self, to say nothing of other sins—how determinedly I persevered even in intellectual pursuits and literary acquisitions, which were directly opposed to the claim which God has on my every thought and action—how a thought of Him never entered my breast unless as a subject of speculation—I see myself to have been rushing on, with open eyes and a torch in my hand, in a course directly opposed to Him. How did I contrive so long to resist every call of mercy from Him—to slight every offer made me? Blessed be His name, that He did at length enable me to say, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief’—that my mind has in a measure enjoyed peace in believing. But, oh! how much reason to fear lest, indeed, I be deceiving myself, when I find my mind in little or no degree impressed by divine things. How carnal are my thoughts of God—how few and feeble are they! Can it be that God so loved sinners, and yet I think so exceedingly little of His love? Can I really believe myself interested in these things, and yet be so little under their influence? O let me humble my proud heart before God, confess my ignorance, alienation, sinful desires, idolatry of self, the world, and his own gifts! O God, be thou my guide, and shed abroad thy love in my heart abundantly!”

—In truth, he continued to wish that every day were a Sabbath, that he might spend them all with God. He watched with lynx-eyed keenness the in-

ipient symptoms of spiritual declension, and, instead of living on the past, he sought to live and lean continually on a covenant God. It was the love of that God in Christ that kindled his ardour and evoked his alacrity—and his aspirations now become akin to those of David: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” “The short-lived thing called man” has taken his subordinate place, and God in Christ becomes his all in all.

It soon appeared that the Saviour's favourite grace of humility was one of the fruits of the Spirit which was remarkably to adorn the character of this convert. On the one hand, he felt “astonished that he could lift up his head for shame,” when he remembered how lightly he regarded the sacrifice offered for sin; and, on the other, he was equally amazed at the frivolity and the levity of men, walking, as they are, amid the shadows of death to the grave. Yet he wisely adds, “I need wonder at nothing which sin effects.” It nailed the Son of God to a tree; it renders the heart of man “enmity” against Him who is “love;” and, after such achievements, every thing else may be deemed natural and easy. But amidst such ruminations, his life was not solely that of a recluse. He was interested in all that could affect the glory of God, or the extension of that kingdom in which the Prince of Peace is king; and the following extract will at once remind us of some former contendings, and evince the need of guarding with care what God has magnified above all, His name:—

“On Wednesday (Sept. 10), I went in to Elgin to the

Bible Society meeting. Dr Thomson addressed the meeting on this great apocryphal controversy, and in a manner the like of which I never heard before. He is a man of most extraordinary powers of mind, and enters into his subject with an earnestness, an intensity, and penetration, which rivet the attention. I admired the man exceedingly; but I several times also felt my mind much impressed by a sense of the wisdom and power of God, who, when His purposes require it, can at once raise up such an instrument as this for the protection of the purity of His Word, and endow him with every thing needful. I could not but regard him as a special servant sent forth to this warfare; and, though he has been permitted to exhibit a good deal of what testifies him to be but an earthen vessel, this may issue in a good effect, and show him and others that, when left to themselves for a moment, they may do that which may cost them some bitter repentance. I have certainly returned with a stronger sense of the importance of the pure Bible cause, and that this is not a matter of indifference."

From his journal, it now appears that this young disciple grew daily more circumspect, both as regarded his motives and his actions. One of his tests deserves to be specially studied—it was his habit to inquire whether he was as busy in the duties which were seen only by God, as in those which came under the eye of man. He never was satisfied except when he made the latter the standard, and not the substitute of the former. Confronting his own conscience, and earnestly addressing it, he says, "Am I not shamefully neglecting the duty of secret devotion, and can my soul, then, prosper?" Indeed, he often questioned whether he had entered on the Christian course at all; for he feared that the dead calm which some-



times rested on his heart was the sad token of a Laodicean condition. Testing himself by the standard of God, and not by the usages of men, he felt his immeasurable shortcomings, and says, with affecting earnestness—

“I look back with a longing regret on the misery of June last, when my mind was in the midst of its convictions ; then my misery made me pray much and seek after God much ; and it was not in vain. I was unhappy, but it led me to God. O that I had still the same eager desire after Him ! But who made me so *then* ? It was God Himself, though I knew it not. And He can do it still, and will do it, if I ask it in like manner. These are precious words : ‘Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts ; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.’ (Ps. lxxx. 18.)”

—“Enoch walked with God”—such is the testimony of the Word regarding a saint of old ; and the life of this devoted youth begins to partake of that character. He has recorded—

“*Monday, September 22.*—How marvellous does it seem that this vain world, this polluted self, such paltry objects, yet acquire so complete an ascendancy over the soul, as to bring it down grovelling to their own base level ! And yet so it is. I have at times obtained glimpses, as I thought, of the overwhelming nature of what is unseen, so as that, for a moment, this world seemed to sink into a dot. I have felt so powerful a sense of the Divine Being, that I thought that it was impossible that any thing else should ever rule me ; but these are gone, and I feel my mind but too much frozen in an alienated, estranged, habit from God. My first warmth is gone already. I can think of salvation freely offered with cool calculation, on my own infirmities, and the faithfulness of God. What ! am I thus to add in-

sult to every thing else?—am I to consider God as bound, in any way, to supply me with grace, whilst I live at a distance from Him? If I really trust to Him for salvation, why so indifferent towards Him? Must it not be because I do not see the value of the gift that He hath bestowed, nor value the deliverance proffered? Yes, yes; I am a wretched creature, sold under sin, imposing on myself by a succession of duties, and thinking thus to prove to myself my interest in Christ Jesus. I spent much time yesterday in prayer, and it seemed to me at last not without effect. I have tried to humble myself, but in vain. It is only a view of the holiness and majesty of Jehovah that can make me exclaim, 'Depart from me, O Lord, I am a sinful man!' O God! hear my cry, vouchsafe to me the light of thy countenance, and humble me in the dust before thee."

Alternate clouds and sunshine thus marked his career as a believer. If he tried to live upon his experience, his faith, or aught but Him who is the Life, the trouble of his soul became intolerable. The love of the true was the basis of his character, and hence his ardour at once in pursuing and in spreading truth; and, as he had now reached it in its highest development—for conversion had restored to him his God—he found in Him what could perfectly satisfy his soul. But, as the true ambition, or the true covetousness—which the world can only counterfeit and mimic—was now guiding his mind with the force of a passion, he was ever pressing onward and upward. His life is, in short, a manifest growth in grace. At one time he was mourning in bitterness of soul, over what is perhaps the most appalling of all the thoughts that can agitate a believer's mind—that some now in eternity may be reaping the bitter fruits of sin, in which they were cheered and encouraged

by that believer ere he became a Christian indeed. "What if my former intercourse with him," he exclaims concerning a departed friend, "had any influence in hardening him in his indifference! What if I have much to answer for in regard to his eternal state!" Then, profiting by these solemn thoughts, he was at another time devoting himself, soul and body, to the work of pointing his fellow-sinners to the Lamb of God. There have been moments in the lives of some men, when they felt themselves stirred or summoned, as by a voice from heaven, to engage in the work in which the Saviour died. Augustine and Pascal\* are instances; and a similar power was now constraining this devoted soul.

His Sabbath school, and his pupils at Westerton, necessarily engaged much of his attention; but amid these duties his eye was ever fixed upon the hidden man of his heart, and every symptom of declension there was jealously watched. "The world's vanity" led to "bitterness of spirit." His "alienation from the Fountain of happiness" prostrated him in the dust. His rejoicing in "what was given, not in the Giver," was his daily burden, and he says—

"*Saturday, October 4.*— . . . . I thought I had God's glory in view, for I felt as I felt not before; and I then advanced and persuaded myself that the pleasure I felt in my success, was for the sake of Him and not of myself. In short, I have, step by step, mounted up to the height of spiritual pride, and then forgotten God. I complained that my mind was in so sickly and dead a frame; but I saw not the reason—I was withholding food from it. I neglected the Word of God, and looked for a substitute

\* See *Etudes sur Blaise Pascal*, par A. Vinet, p. 130.

in myself, or in other men. Prayer was cold, wandering, and painful, because I felt no wants, and could urge no necessities. My mind and affections are set on earthly things—on the pursuits of time. I feel no sense of the divine presence, either in love or fear. I talk to myself of reliance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, and persuade myself that I have such; but how like to a vain shadow does it seem! I have this day endeavoured to cast myself at Jesus' feet; but, O how stubborn and stiff-necked am I! O my pride, my self-sufficiency! I cannot master them. Lord, witness the desire of my heart now—take them and slay them.”

Again—

“*Sabbath night.*—Ought I not, ere my feelings be gone, this night to testify my gratitude to a gracious God for all His mercy unto me this day? I commenced it with a thick cloud upon my soul. I could see no sun, nor moon, nor stars. I was tempted to deny that there was a merciful God. I was miserable at morning prayers, in the morning school, in the services of the church. I could not obtain the slightest impression of God on my soul, and therefore thought all was gone. I prayed much, but, oh! how cold and miserable; this brought me to the test, and my mind was enmity to God. I could not commit myself to Him—there was a reluctance which I could not overcome. I was, however, brought to feel myself very miserable, and to put some trust in Him.” . . . . “I have been praying that my soul might be more impressed by an abiding sense of the divine presence and nature; but I find that this is granted most when I am engaged in the consideration of the *truth* of God, as revealed in His *Word*; and I have been neglecting that truth, by which alone He will sanctify the soul. O heavenly Father, witness my sincere desire this night to live near thee—to be totally divested of myself—to surrender myself to thee. I dread this will not continue—it will not, if I be left to myself. But here is my request, that I be

kept by thine almighty power through faith—that my heart may be filled with the knowledge and love of thee.”

It may readily be supposed that, to one who now panted so eagerly for a close and humble walk with God, no ordinary sorrow was occasioned by the meagre addresses which he often heard from ministers of religion. “The coldness, the total privation of the spirit of the gospel, which made them fall powerless upon men,” produced many regrets. Of such a discourse he exclaims—

“*October 13.*— . . . . O what is any address to the sinner without Christ crucified as its sum and substance? nothing else will produce an impression nor affect the heart; and this is a subject which must always be relevant—it is the very centre; and wherever we may be on the circumference, we may ever draw a straight line to the centre. O how many of our Church preach a gospel which is not the gospel, because they have not the glad tidings!”

—Even in his own soul he often feared that there was “nothing but death, a spiritual death to God;” and how much more did he lament over the cold negations which unconverted men have always substituted for the gospel of Jesus! So high did his feelings sometimes rise, that he wished on the spot to overturn the Babel fabrics under which, as refuges of lies, some ministers would teach the sinner to seek shelter. “Simple belief, and a total reliance on Christ crucified, not as *the condition*, but *the medium* of salvation,” was the compend of what he would have preached as the glad tidings from God to man.

Yet one cannot help remarking in the life of this youth, that he was often vexing himself in vain, by

the imaginary standard which he had set up. He was still but a babe in Christ, and born of God but a few months prior to this period; yet he expected to find already in his soul the full-grown maturity of a perfect man. God overruled this error for good, for it was made a stimulant to urge, or an attractive to allure, the young Christian forward on his way; but still the fallacy was a fertile source of sorrow to him, as it has been to many, when first beginning the career that terminates in glory. He forgot that the beloved disciple spoke of little children and young men, as well as of old men, in Christ. It is not to be concealed, however, that the path in which he was led was pre-eminently one in which he forgot the things that are behind, and pressed on to those that are before. In one scene, at least, he was generally joyous and exulting in spirit—we mean in his Sabbath school at Pluscarden—for the thought of “carrying even a crumb to one of God’s people” always gladdened his heart.\*

We cannot mar the beauty and the power of the following extract by any comment of ours. Vinet has said that “the profound, the pathetic, the sublime, are only different degrees, or different forms, of the true,” and this proves the remark—

“*Wednesday, October 22.*—I have had, less or more, during what is past of this week, a continuance of those feelings which I experienced and described on Sabbath. I have felt an unusual degree of peace and joy in my mind,

\* About this period he was so beset with temptations as to feel, and actually to say, “There is no God.” Yet soon thereafter he writes—“I had the sweetest time of secret prayer with God that perhaps ever I had. I felt no difficulty in pleasantly pouring forth my heart to God. I felt toward him as a merciful Father.”

and greater readiness in bringing it to think of the love of God to sinners—more pleasure in reading the Word, and greater delight in secret prayer. But, oh! how much need have I to tremble lest by one false step I lose all this; for I find it to be inseparably connected with a humble sense of dependence on Him, and a constant jealousy of myself. I had on Sabbath forenoon, indeed, a gloomy storm; but He spake the word, though I heard it not, ‘Peace, be still!’ and how sweet is such a calm! I have once felt the occasional calm of a false peace; but, oh! it was not like this—it was but an exhaustion of restless feeling, a preparatory intermission to a worse renewal. I have before me, this week, to be permitted to commemorate the dying love of my Saviour; and blessed be God that I have, for my mind was beginning grievously to faint and fall away. O my God! that I could so totally master myself, that I could wholly surrender myself into thine hands—that I could rest in thy love, despise the world and all its allurements, and view them in the light of eternity—that I could forget that there is any thing in this universe but thyself, thy glory, and thy cause! I can scarcely persuade myself that God can condescend to notice me; and yet I dare not say that He does not. Ah! no. Would Jesus have died for the sinner, and led him to believe so, and to rest his hope upon this belief, and yet, in reality, forsake, or neglect, or despise him? Witness my heart at this moment, O Redeemer of lost souls, that my hope for time and eternity is in thee alone—that I believe in thee as the only way of salvation to my soul—that there is in me a desire (but, O how exceeding feeble!) to be filled with thy love and thy presence. O let me not deceive myself, neither puff myself up—the work is thine alone, the grain of mustard, and the branching tree. How can the world thus ever rend me from thee? Bind me close to thee. Let me not be afraid to indulge my mind in a glimpse of the joys prepared for them who love thy name.”

—And yet, this Spirit-taught child of God forthwith

complains of his humility as "proud," and of his very complaining as "hardness of heart." He felt as if he were striving to make himself humble, instead of pressing on to the cross to be humbled there; and, no doubt, much of his sore exercise originated in the want of that simple fleeing to the Fountain which ever ends in peace. It was *labouring* for the attainment of his object, instead of *believing* for it—it was dwelling on the disease, not on the remedy—it was analysing the feelings, not looking unto Jesus, that occasioned not a few of his spiritual vicissitudes; and just in proportion as his mind learned simply to repose on God in Christ did a steadfast peace spring up in the heart. He wept in secret over what he had been, and what he was, and thus one who deemed himself "a proud and self-sufficient rebel," was gradually taught to be sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. "Was ever one," he exclaimed, "who was indeed a child of God, so little engaged in thinking about Him, his love, glory, and perfections, as I am? . . . . Christ crucified is thy power and thy wisdom. Reveal Him so unto me as may constrain me to live to Him that died for me."

To some soul that keenly struggles to be free from the power of sin, but is unable to accomplish its object, the following extract from a letter to a friend, dated Westerton, November 1, 1828, may perhaps be blessed:—

" . . . . But look back with me to our first acquaintance together; trace it on through all its details for the first five years. O what guilt of thoughtlessness, profane levity, scoffing, and impenitency!—what utter regardless-



ness of God, boasted liberality of sentiment regarding Him, and idolatry of every thing else!—and what laboured attempts to mislead others by argument, or example, or ridicule!—what a dark cloud of all these rests on those first years of our acquaintance! And if we have of late seen it brightening a little, and have felt, and now feel, a desire and a joy in devoting it more to the glory of God, who hath made us to differ? What makes us now to feel shame at things which we once laughed at, or to esteem as guilt what we once called levity? and so on. What hath done this? Assuredly not mere conscience, for conscience only becomes more hardened by sin, until it become seared; and if events awaken it, the events in themselves have not that power. We dare not deny the hand of God in even this change; and the day may come when we may see the thousand little links of providence in our lot all forming one chain for our good. And is not He who of His free good-will, without even our consent, began this good work, is not He willing also to carry it on?—were it not ungrateful to doubt it? Yes; let our prayer be, that He may prevent us from marring this work, and that we may be made ‘willing in the day of His power.’ Must not a consciousness of the disease precede the cure—is it not the first step to it? ‘I came not to call the righteous but *sinner*s to *repentance*.’ Here is the first ray of hope—they are not to repent, in order to be haters of sin and lovers of God—in order to be called freely by the gospel; but they are to obey the free call of the gospel in order to become such. But I dare say you admit all this. Well, then, here is the weight of the objection which causes your disquietude—‘If Christ be able and willing to save, and I be willing to come to Him, where is the obstacle?’ Nowhere, if such indeed be the case. But take heed; is it not laying a condition on the gospel to say, ‘I am ready to accept the offers of the gospel, *if* I found myself *willing*,’ or, ‘I must have a more sincere willingness *before* I can believe that Christ will save me?’ Is not our reluctance the

worst feature in our malady? and yet you think it is because you do not yourself remove that, that Christ will not remove the rest of it! Do you feel it give you no comfort to believe that Christ is willing, nay, waiting, to receive you at the moment the offer is made? If you do not, then you do not believe the gospel to be free. What effect ought a consciousness of your coldness and insecurity to have upon you? Why, to cling closer to Jesus, to cast a greater burden upon him. The more you lay upon Him, the more confidence do you show, and the more do you honour Him. You groan under a hardness of heart—then cast yourself on your knees, and whilst you pray to be delivered from it, oh! forget not also to pour forth gratitude to God that He hath thus made you to groan under it, made you to feel it, and arrested you in your former levity of indifference. Alas! in our concern for *more*, we too often forget what we *have* received. I am no stranger to that most miserable of feelings, deadness in prayer; and who can in words describe the sensation of a soul anxiously struggling with an unseen God to fulfil His promises of mercy, and yet bitterly feeling that it cannot come to Him—sinking under despondency that all is in vain—that you are addressing one deaf to your voice—that it is needless to persist, for at the very moment the heart is overpowered with vain and wandering thoughts, and you do not sincerely desire what you pray for? This is indeed a feeling most miserable, but, oh! how needful! Is not this praying indeed in sincerity, from the very consciousness of sin and misery? Is not the cry of a man struggling with the billows more sincere and earnest than of a man on the bank? Look, look at the Deliverer Himself, the Rock of Ages, with his hand stretched to you: grasp it—cling to it. What does he say?—‘I, even I, am He that blotteth out your transgressions, *for mine own sake*, and will not remember your sins.’ Is it for *thine own sake*? Oh! then, I need not fear my sins and pollutions will prove an obstacle. I am grieved for them, and desire to be a thousand-fold more so; but

glorify thine own self. 'Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee.' We are ever forgetting, ——, that our sins are the very reason why we need a Saviour, and ought not to be *discouraged* by them as proving any obstacle to His grace, when we are enabled to resign ourselves to Him; but we ought to be *deeply humbled* for them, and it is *then* that God giveth grace." . . . .

Those who have become believers they know not when or how may well wonder at what follows:—

"*Wednesday, November 5.*—Still my complaint is the same—a proud heart and cold affections. I cannot perform a duty, I cannot endeavour to humble myself, but it ends in self-exaltation, in self-complacency. Every discovery I make, even of my depravity, instead of abasing me, but feeds my pride. I seem to feel myself better than others, to have great confidence in my natural talents, and to think that I could do a great deal for God had I an opportunity. Is it a wonder, then, that I do not feel quite at ease; for 'God resisteth the proud'—and can the man be happy whom he resists? I have been frequent in prayer; but I scarcely know whom I address. I feel nothing present to my mind, and I repeat words in vain. My heart is not in the work. And yet I have a faint trust in God; but when I endeavour to exercise it, my mind forthwith flits from Him. 'Can these dry bones live? Thou, Lord, knowest.'"

Nor did this earnest, struggling spirit fail to mark the root and origin of his recurring conflicts, which he summed up in one word—"Unbelief." He had tried to act as if he had been "a son sent out into the world with his [inheritance by his father, and left to make the most he could, just as he pleased;]" but he learned at last that his safety lay in a constant sense of helplessness and dependence;

and that only when he was stayed on God was there rest for his troubled soul.

“*Friday, November 21.*— . . . . . To-night I read that beautiful tract of Legh Richmond’s, called ‘The Young Cottager,’ and I felt peculiarly affected by it, so that at one part the tears ran down my cheeks. How grateful I ought to be that what once I could have read with little interest, nay, with indifference, is now a refreshment to my soul, and that I have a delight in tracing the various ways in which God communicates grace to the souls of men, and makes it to appear in their expression of their feelings! What affects me most is an expression of a child-like faith in Christ, of a simple, total trust in Him; it reminds me (O God! forgive me if it be presumption) of my own first reliance on Him, when, after a toil and struggle with my own heart, I was forced down into the conviction that I could do nothing, and led into the sweet belief that Jesus, who died for sinners, was waiting to receive me. O precious truth! How much do I forget it, and live out of its influence! May it be sealed upon my soul! O that it were so impressed into my very heart as to become my very nature!”

On the 24th of November he heard of the death of an infant brother; and the following is his meditation:—

“ . . . . . He was indeed a dear child, that is now no more my brother—and so like Simon and my father, that he was indeed beloved. But there is none of us will grudge him to Him who first gave him, and now hath taken him away. How mysterious to weak man, that the Almighty Father should be pleased just to give the infant, and then take him away! But yet how merciful! It had yet committed no actual transgression; and there is good Scripture ground to trust that of such, the original guilt contracted through the first Adam is washed away in

the blood of the second Adam, and they are admitted into glory. And is this his happy, thrice happy, lot this night? then blessed indeed art thou, sweet Divie! But it is also an honour, that the Lord should have reared up in our family two of the little cherubs that are now around His throne. O that we may all join them! This is indeed an honour. But how unfeeling is my heart regarding this dispensation. 'Tis strange, that to-day I felt much spiritual pride and levity, and was looking for something to humble me—when this came. O Lord! I pray thee, sanctify it to my hard, ungrateful heart."

Again—

"*Saturday night, November 29.*—I feel a sad deadness of spirit to-day—nothing will rouse me, I am becoming so hardened in my ways. What shall I say? Can it be that I am imposing upon myself, and resolutely persisting in the imposition, lest I should have the mortification of a detection? Have I really the faith of the gospel? This is the great question, and yet I can think of it with the utmost coolness and carelessness. But oh! I have need to come before God with the publican's prayer, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!' Humble me, O God! for my pride hath awfully risen—therefore thou must resist me. Lay me in the dust at thy feet, and may I ever live upon thee.

"*Sabbath night.*—I have felt in a more elevated frame of mind than in my school to-night; but I begin to doubt whether matters are to be judged of by frames and feelings—these may measure the degree in which I may myself, for the moment, be affected by what I utter, but cannot measure the degree in which they may affect others. Into the hands of the Lord would I desire to commit my instructions, that he may bless them independently of all my frames and feelings, which are but too often deceitful, and substituted in the place of God. How much more ready am I to murmur for what I did not receive, than to be humbled for what I have received! as if I deserved all the latter,

and had reason to expect the former. O how exceeding free and sovereign must be the grace of God, when a sinner receives *any* portion of it, notwithstanding his abuse of what was already bestowed!"

The incident in the next extract may perhaps encourage, as well as instruct, some tried and desponding teacher in a Sabbath school:—

"*Thursday, December 4.*—I intend, if God will, to leave this to-morrow, for Urquhart. I felt a good deal impressed in speaking to my pupils as to how they may behave in my absence. Before they came into school, I earnestly besought God that he would enable me to say something with effect to them, for the good of their souls. They read a part of a beautiful little tract, called 'The Good Shepherd.' I took the occasion to make some remarks, but with little apparent impression. I concluded with prayer, as usual; and, just as I was done, the youngest burst out into a fit of crying, and on my asking the reason, sobbed out, 'Because I am bad!' I felt affected by this—the rest began to weep also, and I seized the opportunity of endeavouring to lead them to Jesus. But, O Lord, forgive the heartless manner in which I did it! When they withdrew, my eyes filled with tears, as I cast myself on my knees, and prayed for a blessing upon them, and as I also wondered at the marvellous condescension of God in listening to my prayers, and answering them so. Lord, give me to humble myself before thee on account of all that thou doest for me. O the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, when it can induce thee to show kindness to so hell-deserving a creature!"

The visit which he now paid to Urquhart, on the occasion of his infant brother's death, brought benefit to his soul. To a sinner on this side of heaven, a sober pensiveness appears the most becoming mood, and it was cherished by him at this period. The bruised reed

was not broken, nor the smoking flax quenched; and, amid many tears, he had still reason to rejoice in the loving-kindness of his Lord. About the same time he made preparations for undergoing his trials, preparatory to being licensed to preach the gospel. His never-failing alternative—prayer to his Father in heaven, for grace and guidance, lest he should trust to his own understanding—singularly marked this period. He could sometimes speak only in broken sentences, but they were the lisps of a child which the Father could interpret, for he knows the heart. Referring to his favourite work in the Sabbath school, he says—

“*Monday, December 22.* . . . . I endeavoured to cast myself unreservedly on the Lord. Blessed be his name, he did not desert me! I felt as I never felt before for immortal souls: I trust I spoke somewhat to purpose. But oh! how unworthily did I speak of the grand theme of redemption! Why can I not be swallowed up in it? How transcendently glorious, to be permitted to think of it myself! What an honour to be permitted to be so far an agent in its economy, as to have an opportunity of pressing home on others the glories of salvation! O Lord, I humbly entreat of thee, for thy glorious name's sake, let it not be wholly in vain what thou didst enable a vile worm to say for thee last night; honour what was thine—look not on what was my pollution! Last night my mind was in a happy state; and to-day I have had some comfortable glimpses; but my mind is so resolute in leaving the only ground of comfort, and in loving the things of time, that I wonder that it should at all please almighty, sovereign grace to interfere or take any notice of me. O the infinite merits of the Saviour's blood, when it is efficacious enough to enable the High and Holy one thus to remember me, in consistency with his just and spotless character!”

—Nor can we omit his record of the 24th, as showing how his views were gradually matured into accordance with Scripture. He thus refers to the power which renders the gospel a blessing indeed—

“ *Wednesday*.—On reading over some letters which I wrote some time ago, and which have again fallen into my hands, I felt ashamed of myself to find that, at that time, I made more frequent mention of the Holy Spirit than I do now. Indeed, I have reason to fear that much of my backwardness in spiritual matters may justly be imputed to my overlooking so much the work of the Spirit of God in the plan of salvation. I feel my mind, whilst praying for all the blessings I need, constantly forgetting that *each* person of the glorious Trinity must be distinctly honoured and glorified, in the manner in which their several works are laid down in Scripture. And oh! how important is the work of the Spirit—to open the eyes, enlighten the understanding, soften the heart, remove prejudices, ‘shed abroad the love of God abundantly in the heart’—to produce ‘the spirit of adoption’—to ‘witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God’—to ‘help our infirmities’—to ‘make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered’—to ‘give the earnest of the promised inheritance’—to ‘seal us unto the day of redemption,’ and so on. These are some of His works. O how worthy, then, to be honoured, even as we honour the Father and the Son! And whence proceeds my neglect of Him? From pride—from a desire to account for effects in the natural way, as that, by contemplating the truths of the gospel clearly exhibited, my own mind would naturally work the rest.”

He thus commenced the year 1829—

“ *January 1, 1829*.—*Dalvey*.—Once more, through the mercy of a long-suffering God, am I led to the commencement of another year, but, ah! with how small a degree of those feelings by which I ought to be animated into a pro-



found humility and gratitude. Last night I had a painful and hard struggle with a vain, proud, and unbending heart—nothing would soften or bring it down—not all my prayers, nor cries, nor appeals to Divine mercy—not all my endeavours to cast myself on the Lord to work in me—not all my endeavours to contemplate divine truth—not all these could bring down the sovereignty of an evil heart of unbelief; alas! for my deceitful self-righteousness. I think I am throwing it off at the very moment it is at its height. I would desire this morning to be as the publican, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner!’—‘the blood of Christ cleanse from all sin.’ O why does it not cleanse from mine? I cannot wash or sprinkle myself with it; but thou canst. O the joy and peace of believing! But do I deceive myself? Forbid, O most holy One, that I should! Give me of the fulness that is treasured, not in myself, but in Christ Jesus; for that is what the poor sinner needs, and what is suited for him. Unto thyself, as a God in Christ, do I desire wholly to commit and dedicate myself. O accept me in the Beloved—grant me the remission of my sins, and an interest in thy favour. Amen.”

As the grand object of faith stood more simply out in the brightness of his glory before Mr Macdonald, he became more and more anxious that every idol should be displaced. Yet he felt that he was advancing but slowly in the path in which he ought to go, and supposed, by a law in spiritual things which admits of easy explanation, that in former times he had been more crucified than he was now to all external attractions. He says—

“*January 7.*— . . . . All men are idolaters. I too am one. But in what? I cannot in my heart detect any *one great* idol, but a thousand small ones. There is not any absorbing one that I habitually bow down to; but there are on every hand without me, and in every cranny within

v me, objects that send out claims ill-founded and vain, but which the inclinations of my nature make me but too readily yield to. O that the Spirit of truth would 'cleanse me from all my sins, and all my idols!'

"Westerton, January 13.— . . . . The presence of the Lord is gone from me. I walk in darkness. O for the candle of the Lord to shine upon me! And wherfore is it so? I have been permitting myself to become worldly—too much conformed to the world in heart and in practice. Prayer is dwindled into an outward name—the Word of God has been neglected, or the mere mechanism of reading attended to. I have in my body, at this moment, several things which make me uneasy and anxious; but I forget in my fretfulness Him who hath sent them. I know not what to say—every thing looks black against me, and I am almost ashamed to cry unto the Lord; but I must do it, for who else can help me? 'Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner!' I can say or plead nothing for myself. My hope is in thee, through Christ Jesus. Hear my cry, and answer me. I labour, and am heavy laden. Lord, give me rest; for unto thee do I come, and have lost all dependance on myself."

We cannot here insert the recorded yearnings of his heart, and his affectionate petitions to God on high, on behalf of a much-loved brother. It is not meet that they should be opened to every eye; but so earnest is the cry "that a brother in the flesh might become also a brother in the Spirit," that it is at once an exquisite token of a Christian's love, and a ground of hope that the prayer will be heard, and answered. "Such things," he says, "belong unto God. Unto Him will I pray, that He may bring them to pass."

About the same period he again visited Aberdeen, although it was with a reluctance which he felt to

be growing. It was now wellnigh like a desert to him; but as he thought of the friends that had passed away, he remembered that there is a principle which increases as years diminish, and just clung the closer to Him who is without the shadow of turning. The visit, however, deadened and depressed him, and he hastened home to prepare for his trials before the presbytery. All was employed by him as reasons for frequent errands to the throne; and though he imputes that practice to selfishness, as if he sought God only in his straits, it is easy to see that he was drawn as with the cords of love. The Spirit of adoption had been imparted, and the child could not be long absent from the Father.

“On Sabbath (February 8), during the day,” he says, “I was led to feel much weakness in myself. I felt conscious of much self-insufficiency, and was led in some measure to cast myself upon the Lord; and he did sustain me. In my school never did I feel so much elevation of soul. I felt labouring to force conviction into the words I uttered, and sought for the most weighty thoughts. May the Lord grant that some of the seed which I trust He hath given me to sow, may be cast in good soil, and may yet spring up! During the rest of the night I felt myself highly favoured, and that also in a manner calculated to humble me. But soon do I mar my own comforts—there is a constant tendency to depart from the Lord. O this woful pride! Lord, bring me as an empty vessel to the foot of the cross. Let me constantly live as in thy presence. O the earnest wrestling and pleading that distinguished thy people in former days! and how cold and listless am I, and how much do I exalt myself for a little fervency!”

“*Saturday, February 14.*—To-day, whilst walking to some distance, I went in the same track in which I went in July last, and I could not help comparing my feelings now

with what they then were. At that time my mind was in a struggling state. The ray of hope had broken in upon me, but I scarcely knew it; and yet it was a sweet pleasure, whilst I felt in the midst of my darkness a warm beam darting in upon me, though I scarce knew what it was. My soul was also panting after God, and thirsting for a sense of His favour within me. I prayed as one that had just discovered the sweets and the power of prayer. Alas! that since then I have not been improving. I feel a lamentable contentment with the cold, lifeless state I am in; and whilst *then*, with a babe's thirst, I was anxiously sucking in the 'sincere milk of the Word,' I feel *now* pining away for lack of nourishment, Lord! rouse me into life. Let me not thus sleep. 'Arise, depart; for this is not thy rest,' saith the Lord."

Nor should we fail to notice the lights and shadows which continue to flit across the soul of such a believer. In one record he says—

"Return, O Holy Dove! return,  
Sweet messenger of rest;  
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,  
And drove thee from my breast."

—And in the very next he tells—"Yesterday I enjoyed much of the Divine presence in my soul." We would not limit the sovereignty of Jehovah, for He *may* originate, as he does permit, such alternations; but are we not to ascribe them rather to the heart's unfixedness—its want of simplicity and singleness of aim—its wavering and vacillating, instead of constant reliance upon Christ exclusively and alone?

It is thus that he closes his twenty-second year—

"Monday, February 16.—To-day is the last of the twenty-second year of my existence; and I could have wished to have had more leisure for taking an impartial and accurate retrospect of it; but this at present I have not. I must,

then, content myself with a more rapid survey. And may I, whilst so engaged, as under the immediate and piercing inspection of a holy and omniscient God, be enabled to think and act with sincerity and faithfulness.

“I. That the year now closing has been the most important of my past life, unless I be awfully mistaken, I cannot deny. I humbly trust that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, I have, during that time, passed out of a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance with God. It is with reverence and trembling that I would say this; but still I dare not deny it. The manner in which it hath seemed meet to the Lord to effect this, hath, in the course of its progress, been amply detailed in my Diary; and I am thankful that I have been ever led to keep the narration of it. I am now enabled to see that, for a long time, the Lord hath been dealing graciously with me, leading me on to himself whilst at the time I was unconscious of it. His operations towards me have been as the dew, small and gentle, and softly distilling. I had, through early advantages, a pretty clear and distinct knowledge of the gospel plan laid down in my intellect. My heart had, from the same source, formed a sort of predilection for religious subjects. My mind, through natural disposition, external circumstances, and other causes, gradually formed itself into thoughtful, reflective habits. I began to keep a Diary, and solitude led me to converse much with myself on the circumstances around me, and my own feelings within me. I was led more deeply into my own heart, to see its exact state, the sources of its miseries, and what it yet lacked. Still I lived in gross sin; but even here I was brought to feel my own utter weakness and helplessness. I knew what my remedy must be, but I had not the power to apply to it. In this state I was at my last birth-day. I was gradually becoming more thoughtful and reserved; and though that was observed by my friends, yet I could assign no cause. I was also becoming more concerned about the spiritual interests of others. I felt occasionally more earnest in

prayer. My father's letters and company, when I met with him, left some favourable impressions on my mind. About this time I met with Mr Gentle, and his fervent and simple piety forced itself still more upon me. By my conscience also, and by some dear friends, I had been led to think seriously of the duty of communicating, and I fixed a time for it: this also called for serious thought. Now, all these things were gradually breaking down and softening my heart, under the divine hand of a merciful Father. But still it might be said to me, 'One thing thou yet lackest.' At length a brighter day dawned. In June two tracts were given me by Mr Gentle, which led me, under the Divine blessing, to clearer views of the gospel. I was brought to feel my own guilt, ignorance, and insufficiency, and to cry unto the Lord for mercy. For a week or two I was in a dejected state, and had to struggle with my heart; but—for ever blessed be the name of the Lord!—I was enabled to cast myself on redeeming love, and to taste somewhat of the joy and peace of believing. I could then only read my Bible—everything else was thrown aside; and nothing could satisfy my thirst but the milk of the Word. I began to be concerned for the glory of God; I became zealous, but, alas! began also to look for comfort to my works. I became then again unhappy, and was obliged to go back to Jesus as at first. My mind since then has had many phases and changes—I have had light and darkness. But all along my grand complaint has been pride. I have been exalting myself above measure before God. To cast myself at His feet, I find a hard task. I cannot keep from comparing myself with others, and whilst I see myself respected and beloved by those around me, oh! I feel myself detestably elevated before God. O what a vile worm I am, when I think of all that has been and is in my heart—how much insult I have offered to the Heavenly Majesty, and how lightly I have thought of the transgression of His law! What am I, that the year which began in darkness should close in light? Yet still, with all my pollutions, I feel that

I must cleave to Jesus—that I must go to Him whom I am still grieving by my neglect, and seek more grace from Him.

“ II. . . . . \*

“ III. *My studies.*—In regular study I have made little advances—reading very scattered.

“ In conclusion, I would that I could say with the apostle, ‘ Forgetting the things that are behind, I reach forth to the things that are before.’ ”

On his birth-day, in the year 1829, he entered into a solemn covenant with God, which he wrote out at length, and formally subscribed, amid many prayers.† Without deciding here on the propriety of such a step, regarding which holy men have been much divided, as it may be perverted and made a snare, as well as blessed and made a help, we may mention, that soon after he had subscribed the deed, he became agitated and doubtful lest he had acted presumptuously in the matter. It was a new reason, however, for his resorting to the source of purity, and he at once sought to be strong in the grace that is in Christ, and to pay his vows to his God. He waited on the Lord; he hoped in his Word; and though he says that his heart needed to be humbled inch by inch, he still pled the promises, and persevered.

About the same period, he was induced to entertain the purpose of resigning his charge at Westerton, and returning to his father's manse, with a view to prosecute his studies with less distraction. After a period of uncertainty, it was at last agreed,

\* This refers to his labours connected with the Sabbath school.

† See Appendix, No. II., for the document referred to.

that for the present, he should continue where he was, and return to Urquhart before the winter. The resolution was adopted amid much spiritual discomfort and uncertainty, yet, at every step, he tried to wait upon God for guidance, and felt as if he were led aright. He says—

“*Thursday, February 26.*— . . . . May the Lord stir me up to exert myself for him during the time that may remain! He hath for some time been humbling me and mortifying me. My mind hath been dark and comfortless, and I feel much restlessness; neither have I delight in prayer. Last night, in the weekly exercise, I was miserable, dull, and careless. And what can be the cause? The fault must be mine; but where does it lie? Every where. There has been in me an overwhelming self-righteousness—a want of dependence on the merits of Christ alone—a want of habitual repentance—an attempt at faith without humility. I need to be forced down to feel my own weakness and misery. Oh! let the Lord do to me what seemeth meet to him. I am a foolish, guilty son. He is a wise and merciful Father. I resign myself unto thee, O my God! Cast me not off; restore to me the joy of thy salvation.”

—And his prayer was accepted, for in his next record, under the gladdening influence of “the joy of the Lord,” he prays “for an habitual panting after Jesus—a following on to know Him—a thorough resting and leaning on Him as the beloved of his soul.” The body of sin and death was felt to be increasingly offensive as he advanced, while there arose in his bosom a dim presentiment—one of those half-prophetic perceptions which leave on the mind an ineffaceable impression, that some other work was in reserve for him than that in which he



was now engaged. The stirring of grace within was adapting the mind to the designs of Providence without, and he writes—

“*March 3.*— . . . . I have endeavoured to submit myself wholly unto the Lord; and whilst this night I enjoyed more sweetness in prayer, my cry unto Him has been, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ I desire to leave all, and follow Jesus. The too prevailing restlessness and fluttering to and fro of my soul, will sometimes lead me to hope that the Lord hath some work for me to perform, and that until I am led to it there shall be no rest for me in aught else. If it be so, Lord, I beseech of thee to reveal it unto me, who desire to be thy servant, weak and unfit in myself, but trusting to the fulness that is in thee—O reveal unto me what thou wouldst have me to do!”

Again—

“*Thursday, March 5.*— . . . . What awfully limited, carnal, dishonouring views I entertain of Infinite Majesty! My thoughts never seem to rise above the earth. I feel as if nailed down to it. And yet I feel my ties to earth breaking. I have no enjoyment in it that is constant even for a few moments. Strong feelings of various kinds have been gradually giving way, and I feel myself gradually becoming more and more detached. O for a complete surrendering of myself to God! Hath He any object in view in thus breaking me off? O Lord! still would I cry, ‘What wilt thou have me to do?’”

To his temptations he thus refers:—

“*Wednesday, March 11.*— . . . . Never have I been more sorely tried than on Sabbath night. I had great liberty and freedom in the school, so that even some of God’s people noticed it to myself, and others complimented

me; and my own heart beset me, and Satan coaxed me. Thanks be unto the Lord, I was enabled, in a measure, to feel my danger, and to cry unto Him for help. Nor did He fail me; but still my mind hath, almost unconsciously, been exalted, and therefore my peace destroyed by an exuberance of spirits. O how is it that I cannot take to myself much that I so earnestly urged on others? How possible is it for much that is good to pass from the lips without impressing the mind of the speaker before or after the moment of utterance! In how many ways can the Lord humble the proud instrument! He can, when He pleases, give him much to utter, and yet leave him unimpressed. I felt my mind most elevated in explaining the instrumentality of the Word, under the agency of the Spirit, in the work of salvation; but O how little did I speak from experience! I am bewildered by this nature of mine. O that I had boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, to plead for forgiveness, and more and more death to sin and to this world!"

When his graces at any time grew dim, so that he feared that he was swerving from the narrow way, he was now wise enough in spiritual things to suspect that it might be occasioned by some duty neglected; and on one of these occasions, his prayer was—"May the Lord lead me to see the cause of His controversy. Is there a work that He would have me to undertake, and yet I am reluctant to set myself to it? If it be so, O Lord! thou hast my heart in thy hand, turn it as thou wilt!" But the secret tendencies of his mind at this period are unveiled in the following extract, where the first allusion is made to that work which at length became the master object of his life, and in prosecuting which he died. He writes—

“*Monday, March 30.*—Am I dealing faithfully with myself in not recording here a matter which has for some time been pressing on my mind—a matter, too, which has had much share in the varied states of my mind of late, and yet I can scarce get myself in direct terms to express it? I have had thoughts of becoming a Missionary, of devoting myself to the Lord for the extension of His kingdom in the lands of heathen darkness, if the Lord should be pleased to grant me so great an honour. It is now some months since the thought first struck me, chiefly on reading a delightful little work called ‘Labourers in the East.’ For a length of time it died away, and became only a recollection; but, within these few weeks, it has again been revived, and clings to my mind. I find it predominant in my mind when in its happiest frame, and its banishment is only contemporaneous with my most restless and joyless moments. It has been a subject of almost daily prayer and reflection with me. I have besought the Lord that he would give me a spirit like Paul, to cry, ‘What wouldest thou have me to do?’—that He would make known to me His will, and give me a disposition to comply with it.”

In connection with a movement which largely swayed the whole of his future life on earth, we long to ascertain the exact state of his mind at each successive stage. He refers to his missionary views again as follows:—

“*Thursday, April 2.*—Last night, before entering on the weekly exercise, I endeavoured to think of some of my greatest wants, that I might set them in order before the Lord. They are, in a measure, these: in prayer, a want of minute confession—too general—want of particular thanksgiving—want of preparation of spirit before, and a want of due reverence in prayer—a woful want of intercessory supplication for others, and of zeal for the cause of

God—and a want of constant reference to the atonement as my only plea ; in reading my Bible, a want of esteem for it, of feeding on it, of feeling a habitual need of divine assistance and teaching. I have to complain of a weakness and deadness of faith, arising from a thoughtless levity—from want of determined conduct—from regard to men—and, most of all, from a habitual want of looking to the cross of Christ. With regard to the subject of last day's diary, it is still uppermost in my thoughts; and the more I think of it, the more do I feel myself bent to it. But Satan is not idle—he hath begun to tempt me, setting before me vain and earthly motives, and filling my mind with tinsel and despicable ideas; so that if I found such things have the ascendancy in leading me to what would seem a devotedness to the Lord's work, I must needs relinquish it. I have been a good deal perplexed by the question, 'What constitutes a call to become a missionary?' I have given it some little consideration, and have drawn out some heads upon it, which I intend, if the Lord grant me inclination and ability, to consider at more length. In the mean time, I desire not to neglect keeping the matter before the Lord. He can make his call plain to me. O Lord! do with me what seemeth good unto thee. Dispose all things for thine own glory, and let the few short years I shall spend here below be all for thee!"

He had an early opportunity of opening this matter to his father, at a meeting in Elgin; and on the subject of that interview he has written—

"*Tuesday, April 7.*— . . . . We sat up till very late, or rather early, and I opened to Him my whole mind, especially regarding what has occupied so much of my thoughts of late—the desire of going forth as a missionary. I mentioned it as a thing that was much in my mind, though not determined upon, and as one in which I desired neither to advance obstinately, nor to reject rashly. We entered into a lengthened conversation, which I could

scarcely here give the substance of, but it has left me exactly where I was, only with this difference, that I am now as it were committed, and have advanced the length of divulging it to another. My desire is to keep the matter before the Lord, to seek to have my mind kept open, to mark and be influenced by every leading of Providence, and to be fitted for whatever the Lord may design for me. I felt my mind comforted to-day by the words of Hezekiah, ‘ God, who dwellest between the cherubims ’—ever on a mercy-seat ; then may I come unto Him as a creature needing mercy. I am unworthy, but Jesus is worthy ; and I desire, through faith, to be united to Him.”

Dr Macdonald’s counsel to his son on this occasion was brief but comprehensive. He was to keep the matter of going forth as a missionary constantly before the Lord. His prayer was to be, “ Lord, here am I, send me.” He was to study closely, and dispassionately to examine, the various openings of Providence. He was to be diligent in the discharge of present duty, and then to commit his way to the Lord, that He might bring it to pass. His own desire was patiently to wait—to follow when the pillar moved, and to refuse to follow where it did not lead. His favourite maxim was, that “ Scripture is strength, and the knowledge of it power ; ” and he strove to walk in the light which it sheds.

And no befitting opportunity is now lost for dwelling on this topic. After describing a season of darkness and depression, he thus writes :—

“ *Saturday, April 11.*— . . . . And how stands my mind with regard to the important object of my thoughts for some time—the devoting myself to the extension of the Lord’s kingdom in the countries of darkness ? It also has

been low with me—it has fallen with my fall. And am I free from guilt in this? My heart says no. Have I been pleading with God for light and direction on it? I would not presumptuously rush on, but I must not daringly cast from me what may be from the Lord. O that the spirit were in me to come to His foostool in the name and with a perfect reliance on the blood of Jesus, and there cast down my case, and seek light to beam upon it—to devolve the whole on His grace and wisdom, and rely quiescently on whatever the Lord might be pleased to point out to me! O Thou who hast marked out for me, and at this moment by a glance seest my every path and step, until the moment when time shall expire for me, give me a delight in thyself, a repose in thy dealings, and a total resignation of myself unto thee, as a merciful Father in Christ Jesus, in whom is my all, my only trust!”

It is to be feared that not a few, in all ages, and in every section of the Church, have addressed themselves to the study of theology and to preparation for the ministry, without knowing the God who originated, or the Redeemer who unfolded, the plan of redemption. Hence, some have preached about a Saviour who was no Saviour to them, or told of a pardon which they could never enjoy, or pointed others to a heaven which they were not preparing to enter. It was the priest's office that was coveted, and not souls that were loved. An unsanctified ministry has thus been raised up, and “the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly healed.” The following extracts from a letter, dated Westerton, 13th April 1829, may well awaken such students to solemn reflection:—

“Our lightest, and, as we *once* reckoned them, our *happiest* moments, were spent there [Aberdeen]; but how

should we like to view them on the verge of eternity? Never, amidst all the ardour and anxiety of our literary pursuits and our social enjoyments, did one thought of the glory of God, one concern for the salvation of our souls, one care for eternity, seem to have obtruded on us. But the Lord bore with us, for I trust that we now know that He did not mean to cast us off. He gradually led us by a way that we knew not of, though now I trust that we can in a measure trace it. He has led us in some degree to see the error of our ways; and, O ———, now may we not wonder at it? But how ready are we to think we have run the race when we are but at the starting-point!—to think we are *τελειοι*, when we are but babes! Let us remember that if justification be but an act, sanctification is a work—that we are left here to be daily ripening for heaven; for, according to the measure of conformity to God in this world, shall be the degree of our capacity for the enjoyment of Him through eternity. Let us, therefore, always bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus, that our life may also be like His.

“ I have read with great pleasure Edwards' *History of Redemption*; and, I trust, with a little profit also. Edwards is profound, acute, clear, and pious, in his writings. His strong and comprehensive grasp of Scripture shows a mind much taught by the Spirit of God; and the grandeur and sublimity of many of his thoughts, show a soul familiarly conversant with divine things. O ———, does not the stature of men's minds seem still diminishing? There is a boast of greater enlightenment and liberality of sentiment amongst us: but where are the men that spent a sixth, a fifth, a fourth, nay, a third, of their hours in close communion with God—that not only studied and knew the Word of God, but even *lived* it, if I may so speak; so that, in their writings, Scripture and devotion seemed to flow from their pens as naturally and freely as the ink with which they traced them? The modern enlightenment and liberality I am afraid to look into. I dread it to be over-

diluted religion, that proves a snare to many. It is more easily attained to—it more readily flatters and is flattered—it cares less for evil, and it acquiesces without *rejoicing* in the truth. What say you?”

In previous extracts, we have seen enough to convince us that this believer is learning to walk with God, and endure as seeing Him who is invisible. It may comfort the disconsolate, however, and raise up the bowed down, to read the following:—

“ *Thursday, April 16.*—I have not been at all comfortable to-day, and my feeling, in a word, is, that I am as if I had lost my hold of Jesus. Oh! I am dead, dead, dead! I feel no symptom of life in me, but the consciousness that I want it. I dare not say that God is not my Father. He hath already done so much for me, and Jesus is still so free in my offer, that I dare not suspect *His* love. But oh! where is mine!”

And in the same strain—

“ *Wednesday, April 29.*—Just and right, O Lord! in all thy ways, art thou: O for a heart to bow to thy sovereignty! ‘I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy, and whom I will I harden.’ I have this day heard somewhat to grieve me; and yet I am not grieved enough. I want to feel it more; but it is thy voice, O my God! that I want to hear. Thou dost speak in it—I want to hear thee. O let me understand thy voice! I have reached the pinnacle of spiritual pride. I have been my own god. I have been presumptuous, bringing to thee the maimed and the torn for a sacrifice; and yet I have been asking, ‘Wherein have I robbed thee?’ I have abused and trampled upon the blood of Jesus so often, that I am ashamed any more to apply for it; and yet I must do it. O thou adorable Saviour! how incomprehensible thy love, that thou ever leavest thy precious blood open and free to such a



wretch as I am ! I feel as if I could dash my head against that wall, if it would make me love thee ; but it cannot. O make me to love thee ! It is merciful in thee thus to afflict me ; but, O be merciful to the cause of it ! May he be forgiven and led to thee. Let me plead for ———. I can pray to thee for that which I dare not write. ‘ Keep not silence, O my God ! ’ but make me to hear thine own voice in this matter. Let it be for good. Let me be directed by thy Spirit. Draw me close unto thee, that I may feel the warmth of thy love ! ”

He was not, however, wholly absorbed by such topics. The country was at this period agitated by the commotions which preceded the political measure which conferred civil privileges on Romanists in Ireland, and the subject attracted much of his attention. It was with difficulty that he could make up his mind regarding it ; indeed, he could not decide where the justice lay, till he saw the bearings of the measure upon the truth of God. Then only did his views become clear and decided in favour of preserving our constitution as a Protestant one, and our nation as a standing witness against the errors which had, in nearly every land, succeeded in effacing the truth that saves, and entralling the nations of the earth.

But whatever topic might engross him for a season, he perpetually recurred to what formed the burden of nearly all his thoughts—the Redeemer in the glory of his person, and his work. On the 7th of May, he wrote thus to a friend :—

“ . . . . . You wish for my mind on some things stated in your last, but I find we are both fellow-travellers meeting at the same point, and asking one the other,

‘Which way next?’ We have come so far separately—we seem even side by side—we might each direct a stranger in what is past; but the road is new to us both where we now are, and where we desire to advance. But let us, like fellow-travellers, talk the matter over, and who knoweth whether the Lord may not join us by the way, even though our eyes should be holden that we may not know Him? Well do I know that *self-seeking* spirit which you lament. I should say, *bitterly* do I feel it. It is my constant companion, nay, the very inseparable shadow of all my services. It is the unfinished Babel of my former days. I have been driven from the top of it—I dare not again build it; but still I have a constant hankering to begin again, and to fetch materials for it. To be plain, I feel (more or less), in my duties before others, an anxiety about their opinion, a regardlessness about Him in whose presence I am, and a congratulating of myself, that, on reflection, makes me to abominate myself. Ah! but say you, it is happy for you that you can abominate yourself. Wait, what is the result? On the very back of this self-abominating, I rear another monument of self-exaltation. I am proud of my humiliation, and am ready forthwith to put it in place of a Mediator! Then, again, I am ready to feel proud of my consciousness of this, as a mark of Christian attainment—and so on. O ———, nothing but divine, free, sovereign, irresistible grace will do for us; and how wonderful that the Lord should persevere with us! I could at times almost cut myself, like the priests of Baal, at the thought of these things. Nothing will do but to come to the Lord and spread out every thing before Him, and say with Abraham, ‘O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet once more!’ Blessed be His name, we may. But, my dear ———, I have a malady more extensive, and far more fallacious than even this, and that is a selfish seeking of the Lord for *my own* sake, not for *His*—a seeking of His favour and countenance for my own comfort alone, not for His own moral excellency and beauty—a seeking for strength for the per-

formance of duties up to a certain standard of my own or man's forming, without casting myself upon Him in an unlimited degree, to spend and be spent in His service. This is often deceitful—it is limiting the Holy One—it is seeking Him for certain purposes—forgetting (to use a figure) that, whatever may be the superficial contents of the whole soul, Christ must be in contact with every part of it ; and that it is in proportion as this is increasing, that our sanctification is growing and advancing. What a grand attainment, when Christ is made unto the soul wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption !—Wisdom as our prophet, righteousness as our priest, sanctification as our king, and redemption as our all and in all. O let us not rest satisfied with ordinary attainments. Why should we be contented to breathe only, when we might walk—to walk only, when we might run—to run, when we might fly—to fly, when we might mount up on wings as eagles ? The more I compare the religion of the present day with that of our fathers, nay, even the religion of believers themselves, the less do I wonder at the mournful death-sleep that is amongst us, and the little success of our ministers. Those men left not the windows of heaven shut day nor night—they ‘prayed without fainting’—they ‘walked with God’—they heeded not the opinions of men—they were devoted in solemn and personal covenant to God, soul, body, and spirit. My own spirit, ——, almost faints within me with despair, when I think of such men. I feel as if it were useless to turn up my eye to that cloud of witnesses that look upon our world ; it almost disheartens me from the little that I would fain do. But wherefore should it be so ? What saith the prophet : ‘O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened ? Are these *His* doings ?’ Ah ! no, they are not His doings, they are ours. ‘Behold, the arm of the Lord is not shortened that He cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear : but your iniquities have separated between you and your God.’ Let us, then, awake the arm of the

Lord, as the prophet: 'Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord; put on thy strength, as in the days of old.' May we be enabled to contemplate in this spirit the holy office to which we are approaching. Let us invoke that arm to be with us, nor be discouraged that ours is an arm of flesh. With regard to that feeling of occasional distrust which you speak of as 'going before your judgment'—I fully understand your meaning, though I have sometimes felt it in a different form. But there is no cure for all such feelings but contemplating Christ's finished work, and making the soul as it were to imbibe its fill of that. What could the Lord have done more than He hath done, to prove His sincerity in all His offers and promises of mercy? By what greater gift could He have sealed them, than by the free, unconditional gift of His dear Son? 'Tis here that I feel the awful strength of the strong man armed within me. In the performance of a duty he may sometimes seem asleep, but whenever I try to think of the love of the Godhead as exhibited in Christ Jesus, then do I stand insensible as a stone. All my corruption puts forth its strength to deaden me. Satan presents something to distract me, and unbelief lays hold of his prey. When we think of the mighty mass of corruption which has to be overcome, ere the standard of the Lord can be planted triumphant in the soul, need we wonder at the difficulty of casting ourselves wholly and permanently on Jesus? and what is this but to come to Him as vile and helpless sinners? O ———, the viler I see myself, the more ready I am to come to Him. Faith is a lesson to be learned every day, and a lesson which God himself must teach. If we came to Him every day for it anew, we would receive it; but we think we have it, and that it only requires to be blown up, like our kitchen fires, by ourselves, and all is well. Remember, that all the inhabitants of the land are not expelled; they are left to keep you ever looking up to the God of battles. They will be upon you one after another—now the Midianites, then the Moabites—now the king of Canaan, then the lords

of the Philistines—though unbelief, like the Philistines, may be the longest and bitterest. Faith is within us like a spark in the ocean—what a miracle that it at all lives! Nay, but it shall dry up that ocean, if we cleave fast, as hell-deserving sinners, to the Lord of life.

“*Tuesday, May 12.*—I began this letter last week, but as our sacrament in Elgin came on, I laid it aside till my return. We have had cold, lifeless sermons; the builders almost all rejected the ‘chief Corner Stone,’ but I felt my heart cleave to Him all the closer, and I did enjoy a measure of comfort.”

His step thus gradually became firmer as a man of God. He continued to dread presumption, but he no less dreaded what many overlook, the ingratitude of denying what the Lord had done in him and for him. He asks—

“*May 7.*—Have I not had evident marks that He hath been gracious unto me?—dare I deny the thorough change and revolution that have taken place?—can I say that I do not sometimes hunger and thirst after Him? I cannot deny the gifts of His grace, more than of His providence. But I cannot derive comfort from the remembrance or consciousness of this alone. I must have a constantly realizing sense of the blood of Jesus—a newness of access to Him—a casting of myself before Him, as my all and in all—a looking up in His face and pleading, ‘Lord be merciful to me, a sinner!’”

This extract shows that tranquillity has now succeeded to those tossings to and fro which he had so long experienced, and he has not infrequently occasion to record, that, though his religion brought him no transport, it produced a sweet peace in his mind, and perfect resignation in looking to Jesus.



His exercise, while seated at a communion table (May 10), he thus describes:—

“ I could, without feeling that it was presumption, say, ‘ I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine; ’ and I devoted myself to Him in soul, body, and spirit, in the strength of that grace which I saw in Him. Every matter about which I feel anyway concerned, was brought to my recollection, and I devolved them on Him. Every one near to me, or dear to me, or in whom I feel the slightest interest, came with rapidity before my mind, and I besought the Lord for them—His own cause and glory also; so that I felt as if every thing concerning my lot was perfectly arranged at that moment, and that I was willing to depart and be with Him. This soon wore off; but the rest of the day was pleasant to my soul, and, perhaps, altogether it was the sweetest I have yet experienced. O for an abiding impression of these things! Alas! how soon my heart becomes disquieted and conformed to the world!—how soon do mine iniquities separate between me and my God!”

About this period, he thought that he felt some forewarnings in his body that his life was not to be a long one; but they only stimulated him to a more lively zeal in preparing to depart. He confessed that he had been a “ very expensive child for his heavenly Father to rear ”—so much tending had he needed, and so much grace had he frustrated or squandered; yet again, he rejoiced in the High Priest over the house of God, whose grace is exhaustless as his love is infinite, and had occasion to say—

“ My soul was sometimes so favoured to-day, in thinking of Jesus, that I felt as if at the moment I could part with the world and go to Him. But O my heart, my heart!—how deceitful! how unmanageable! Lord, take it, I beseech of thee. O to be thine altogether! I would even now



surrender myself to thee, but I cannot: 'When I would do good, evil is present with me.'"

When we reflect on the high standard which he had now set up, and which he thus described— "Whatever duty I perform, if it be not from love to God, however good in itself, it cannot avail"— we cease to wonder at his earnest aspirations on the one hand, and his deep humiliation on the other. Perfection was his constant aim, because the Saviour had appointed it; \* and, instead of measuring himself by the conventional usages of the world, or even of the Church, he was ever pressing on towards a height which rose as he approached it, or, rather, as he acquired the power of discovering its grandeur and beauty. Delighted himself, he sometimes wondered now, that sinners could hold out a moment against such a scheme as the gospel; but it was only because he forgot what is written: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

We are permitted, however, from time to time, to see him in a state of great repose and peace of soul. His humility is increasing, but, in the same ratio, the joy of the Lord becomes his strength, even till he is sometimes compassed about with songs of deliverance. On Sabbath, 7th of June, he says—

"O that this Sabbath might not end! I feel a sweetness and tranquillity, as if I were not far from the gates of heaven. But alas! I am very far, and in a few minutes

\* Matt. v. 48; 1 Pet. i. 16; 1 John iii. 3.

more, I may be farther still. Lord, I am ashamed of myself. What provocation have I given thee this week!—how have I grieved thee!—how stubborn and stiff-necked have I been! Alas for me! if thy grace had not been sovereign. I am but a worm, but therefore are my sins more crimsoned; and yet what is the greatest of them compared with the blood of Christ! I have ceased to write of my works, but as thy grace appears in them. Oh! it is thy grace that I would speak of, if I had one here to whom I could speak of it—to thyself only can I speak of it. Give me to bow to thy sovereignty—to sow in hope, and leave all the rest to thee. I know not thy purposes, but I know thy will—enable me with all my soul to do it, that the glory may be thine.”

He had now, as he himself hoped, been for a year “a poor weak believer in Jesus,” and was making daily discoveries of the subtle power of self-righteousness. The Spirit had long brooded over the waters ere the new creation appeared, and had encountered much opposition in the work; but still He strove, till He fastened conviction on the conscience. That was followed by a season of thick darkness, which was in its turn succeeded by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness; and he who had thus been visited in mercy was forced to confess that the morning had been full of joy.

Not the least blessed result of his various exercises was the deep conviction regarding man’s spiritual helplessness, which now possessed his soul. Impressions for good so speedily vanish away, and the heart is so easily hardened, that he early imbibed the scriptural truth, perhaps the most influential upon Christian practice of all the disclosures of revelation, that the Spirit of all grace must not



merely make us Christians, but keep us so in every breath we draw. Free and sovereign grace was therefore his sheet-anchor. He put a literal construction on the Saviour's title, "The Captain of Salvation;" and said, "I must be as a private soldier, under the Captain of the Lord of hosts. I must obey orders, because I am commanded, though I know not the purpose in view;" and he was stimulated forward in that direction by feeling how the roots and tendrils of his heart still clung to earthly things, to the exclusion of his Lord. As he felt the alternations which that tendency produced, he grew more and more assured that only grace could establish him, and for that grace he fled ever and anon to Him in whom it is all treasured up.

The following extract shows how ardently he longed for seasons of refreshing in the work of God:—

*"Saturday, June 4.*—The sacrament is now dispensing in my father's parish, and if there is any thing I covet at this moment, it is to be there. O what a gospel time it is!—such eminent servants of the Lord! My heart fills while imagining to myself all that I have once witnessed there, though I had not then the heart to improve or value it. What a still solemnity, what a holy serenity, used to breathe around that mansion on the sacrament Saturday evening!—it seemed like the breathlessness of expectation before a mighty battle—the servants of the Lord, like his generals, mustering and marshalling their troops—his many people uniting, in their many little handfuls, in earnest supplication. But I desist. The Lord is not limited: He is every where present. He may be gracious to me here, and to them there, and may cause us to be on each others' spirits."

When the Apostle Paul spoke of himself as the least of all saints, or the chief of all sinners, some have deemed it the language of hyperbole, and have argued that he could not think as he spoke. Yet nothing is more capable of demonstration than that the apostle would deem himself decreasing, just in proportion as he grew in grace. He became capable of judging by a higher standard, and a more perfect model, as he saw light more and more clearly in the light of God. Sin became more hateful, and the beauty of holiness both more desired and in appearance more distant. The apostle consequently sank in his own esteem, not because he was really falling back, but because he was testing himself by a more searching or severe criterion; and the same principle operates in the life of him whose earthly course we are tracing. "I scarcely see any difference," he says, "from what I once was." He complained of the mystery of iniquity that was still within him, and the yearnings of his soul were thus embodied:—

"*Wednesday, July 1.*— . . . . Oh! this mystery of iniquity! how a worm so vile, so despicable, so abominable, can so expend and abuse grace so infinitely precious, almost, nay, altogether, without compunction; and here I am, as hard as a stone! And yet, to whom shall I come but unto thee? I dare not keep at a distance from thee. That were still more to insult thee, than even abusing what I have received. Lord, according to thy promise, give me 'a heart to know thee,' for still I do not understand my relation to thee. Draw me by thy love; teach me by thy Spirit; lift on me the light of thy countenance."

Although at this period he entertained some

doubts regarding his call to the work of a missionary, Mr Macdonald was still longing to declare the glorious message of mercy to sinners. On reviewing his history during the previous year, he writes on the 8th of July—

“ I. I have felt a complete change as to the element or atmosphere in which I have moved. I have felt an air of peace and reconciliation around me—no terrors of hell, nor the wrath of God, but a secret satisfaction and happiness of mind—a feeling that every thing is safe in the hands of my God. In short, I feel as if breathing freely a pure and enlivening atmosphere; whereas, formerly, I felt afraid to draw breath—to look behind me or before me; I saw nothing but darkness and a cloud.

“ II. As to my regulating principle of action, I feel as if it were a something pointing to God. I cannot define it—it is sometimes strong, sometimes feeble; but at the feeblest it would not let me set any thing above Him; or if my corruption did for a moment master it, that was followed by grief and repentance. I see every thing as being connected with Him—every event of my lot, small or great, as ordained by Him for my good—every circumstance as a part of His providence. Saints I love, as being his; sinners I lament over and pity, and seek to save, as being in the hands of God. Means of grace and instruments I value only as from Him. My own exertions seem as nothing in the sight of Him, and my prayers worthless but as he is present with me. Far be it from me to say that such is uniformly the case with me; ah! no—often have I to loathe and abhor myself for my alienation of soul from God; but I mean to say, that God seems the prevailing end of my actions, and a looking to Him the ruling principle of my mind.

“ III. As to the power of sin, I feel it still lamentably great. I cannot think one thought as I ought to do. I cannot do one deed without a mixture of corruption in the

motive. I cannot begin to pray without wandering. I cannot instruct without the intrusion of self. But the difference is here, that, whilst I once was indifferent when I was far deeper in sin, now my sin is a burden to me. I am coming daily to the Lord with it. I have no delight in it, but reckon it a bondage.

“All these things I must own, to the praise of divine grace. But I say them only *comparatively*. I am still a poor sinner, a miserable believer.”

On July 18th he suggests to us a standard which should humble all who would follow the Lord fully—

“How much need have I for self-examination, and yet how almost unattainable a duty I feel it to be! My father, in his discourse last week, called upon us to examine the connection between what we call our ‘good works’ and faith, and to see whether they actually have sprung from it. When I do so, O how fearfully is the catalogue of my works diminished—how many things that I thought well of are utterly worthless! I trust, on the whole, my profession is not altogether inconsistent with the gospel; but, oh! what availeth that to myself, if it spring not from gospel principles? How rarely is Christ crucified now in my mind! How few things do I out of regard to Him! how many things out of a self-righteous spirit? Lord, have mercy upon me, and revive my dead soul. ‘O send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may guide me.’”

—At the same time, there was a constant struggle in his mind between the love of the world’s approbation and his desire to be dead to its applause. He felt in his soul that he was a poor wandering sinner, and his daily record bears evidence of the pain which he experienced when he was regarded in any other light. It is rare to meet a believer so placid and tranquil in spirit as he was, yet he writes—

“*Thursday, July 29.*—How watchful would I need to be!—how many enemies, how many temptations, ever, and on every hand, beset me! Often is my peace of mind broken by this temper of mine, which is exceedingly irritable in school. I seek to guard against it; but in a moment I am roused and fly off, until the unhappiness of it check me. When I think of the meek and lowly spirit of Jesus, O how unlike am I to him—how patiently He submitted to the most cutting and provoking trials! O to come more to his blood—to dwell upon his character! In last night’s exercise I had much struggling, but, I am afraid, little faith. I must cleave the closer to Jesus, that my prayers, may, through Him, be accepted; for in themselves they cannot.

“*Saturday.*—I went to ——— to-day, but, oh! what pleasure do I find in the society of the world?—nothing but vanities and trifles talked of. O why was there such a display of Divine love all in vain, as it would seem? And when there is such coldness in the ministers of Christ, oh! who can wonder at the deadness of religion amongst us? Lord, rouse me to see thy love in Christ—to be constrained by it—to be very zealous for the Lord of hosts.”

We have already seen that this devoted servant of Christ often mourned over those men who preached a gospel without a Saviour, but he rejoiced not less in spirit over those who set forth the bread of life—the hidden manna for the soul. As a specimen of his mode of profiting by what he heard, we extract the following:—

“*Tuesday, August 17.*—Yesterday Mr ——— preached, and, oh! what rich supply he set before us! His text was, ‘I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.’ (Zeph. iii.) God ever had a *Church*—*He* keepeth a remnant—in the *visible* Church, affliction and poverty alike to

good and bad *externally* : but [former] *afflicted* from—1. A sense of demerit ; 2. Of inward corruption ; 3. Hiding of God's face—*poor* in spirit, in righteousness, &c. II. Trust in God—they *know* Him only as He is in the Bible—trust Him as a God *in Christ*—trust Him for *all* things—trust Him in *all cases*, demerit, corruption, hiding of His face—*holy* trust—*active* trust, seeking ordinances and means. Application—1. Blessed are the people that trust in Him, in many ways. 2. Awful danger of not doing so. Christ still held forth as an object of trust. I was delighted with the heartfelt experience and gospel truth contained in these discourses—my heart and my eyes were full. Lord, let it not be in vain ! O for that implicit trust in thee—that childlike confidence—that poorness of spirit, such as Jacob, David, Job, Isaiah, and Daniel showed. O for more conformity to thyself !”

The line of separation between the people of God and the friends of the world was now more and more exactly traced by him. He drew closer and closer to the former—he pitied and he prayed more earnestly for the latter. In his own religion, there was no attempt to blend what God has pronounced irreconcilable—the love of the Father and the love of the world, but as the separation between them is made as distinct as that between Christ and Belial, he strove to keep it so. His grand peculiarity was to cast himself, on all occasions, on his Lord ; and, through the wisdom which He imparts, he was guided and kept in safety. Even his privileges drove him to the cross ; and, much more, the pain which he felt at witnessing the doings of a world that knows not God. He records, that he was now hardly ever left “without the hope of being an heir of heaven ;” yet was he kept humble by a sense of

indwelling sin, and still needed the fountain as much to perpetuate purity as at the first to produce it.

About this period (Sept. 1) he began to prepare for his Sabbath scholars a tract, which he subsequently published under the title of “THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.” He hoped it might be useful; and yet, such were his views of human nature and himself, that he feared that nothing which he could do would avail for good. He proceeded, however, and committed the result to God. It was begun and continued in the spirit of prayer, and crowned, in the end, with a blessing. Nor need we wonder, when sentiments like the following accompanied its commencement:—

“ *Wednesday, Sept. 2.*—O how proud and rebellious a heart is in me! When I look to the children of God, and see their humility and self-abasement, I have none at all—I loathe myself. O that I had such a view of the Lord as would abase me! And what is this secret suggestion within me, that would whisper that I am *something*?—It is a robber that saith so—base corrupt heart! What! speak of *something* in the presence of the Lord of glory! Who that has a particle of faith is like me? O my God! give me a heart to know thee—give me implicit reliance on thee! Let thy presence be with me in the exercise of this night, unworthy as I am, for thy glory’s sake!”

At a subsequent period, while toiling as a missionary in India, he says that the tract was published under the constraining impulse of a “first love” to the Redeemer of this sinful world. He confessed that it was characterised by “imperfections resulting from youthfulness in years and grace;” yet the overflowings of love which are there—love at once to the Redeemer and the redeemed—render it a fit

exponent of his first religious convictions.\* His simplicity in propounding the truth of God—his pathetic and faithful remonstrances with sinners—his unction in applying the truth to the wounded conscience, were even then apparent; and we can scarcely read the tract without feeling as if it were the production of one that was speedily to ripen for glory. A youth of twenty thus addressing sinners is not deemed a marvel, only because men too often have no admiration for such close dealing with the soul for God. “Once more,” he says, “before we part, in the name and presence of God, and in CHRIST’S stead, I lay before you my message, even this record—‘God giveth you eternal life, and this life is in his Son.’ The free, the full, the sincere gift of eternal life through Christ Jesus, is at this moment held out to you whose eyes now rest upon these words. Trifle not with it—put it not from you, I entreat of you. You have to answer for this very offer; your accepting of it will, from henceforth, make you eternally happy; your refusal may be the signal for the door of mercy to close for ever.” Wherever he went—to the Sabbath school of a secluded hamlet, to the pulpits or the streets and market-places of the metropolis, or to India, the land of death—he was instant in season and out of season; and we need not therefore wonder to hear Dr Macdonald say, that “the fruits of his labours of love in the district of Pluscarden began to manifest themselves very soon after his own conversion; and it is

\* The title of the tract in the third edition is, “The Suffering Saviour: a Tract for Sinners. Originally addressed to a Sabbath-school.”



known that at this day there are not a few who date their first saving impressions from his instructions."

On Sabbath the 13th of September, he says—

"Next to the agony of an awakened soul when it feels that it has no interest in Christ, what agony can equal that of the believing soul when it sees poor perishing fellow-creatures pressing on to destruction, unmoved by every thing that can be said or done for them? This, in a measure, I feel. The Lord is causing me to see more and more that nothing will do but His grace. Alas! that I have been so stubborn to learn this lesson. I have been too confident in my own strength—I have trusted too little in Him. But, oh! why should others suffer from my fault, from my ignorance?—this is the painful thought, but not less painful than true. Yet, why should I murmur?—the will of the Lord be done. I am but a blind instrument; He knoweth His own purpose. I must, and in His strength shall, bear witness for Him, let men hear or forbear. O that my will were as God's will! Last Sabbath night I thought myself resigned; but O how deceitful, or how changeable, is my heart! Lord, thou knowest that I love thee, and would feed thy lambs—do thou as seemeth thee good!"

He was now gradually and gladly led to what is the believer's real strength, in dealing either with his own soul or with the souls of others—a simple reliance on the Word of God. It was neither in the clearness of exposition, nor the cogency of argument, nor the power of eloquence, that he confided—it was because the mouth of the Lord had spoken it that he expected good to result from Scripture. He exclaims, "O how sure is the Word of God! A man need not fear earth nor hell when backed by

it." At the same time, he felt strengthened by remembering that, while he was a sinner, Jesus is a Redeemer, and daily, hourly, constantly, he sought to be guided to Him; and while he mourned over his own and other's sins, he was pressing nearer and nearer to Him who was at length to honour him in beckoning sinners to the cross. His reiterated expressions, "I sometimes feel sick of myself"—"I loathe myself"—"Alas for the sandy desert within me!"—"O the den of lusts and evil passions within me!" may seem overstrained to some; they are, we believe, the genuine expressions of a feeling prompted by the clear perception of the deep sinfulness of sin, in contrast with the pure holiness of God. The basis of real grandeur of character is humility—and the only wise God has so planned the system of salvation, that that grace lies at the root of the whole. Man fell through pride, and must rise in a way that humbles him, if he ever rise at all.

In the following extract, the true spirit of the children of the kingdom will at once be recognised:—

*Thursday.*—How sweet it is to hold converse with God's children in this vale of vanity and vexation—with those that speak the language of heaven, to speak about our mutual Lord and friend, even Jesus—to encourage one another, and to make known one to another our feelings and discoveries! Sweet indeed is this, amidst all the pollution that daily grieveth our spirits—to taste one little drop of that rich repast which awaiteth us in glory. There is near me one Christian friend, whom I often go to see; and humble indeed though she be in the world, yet, O how honoured by her Redeemer! Her conversation has been of great use to me, especially in leading me to

rest more on the Bible as the word of God, and to depend less upon the word of man. How jealous is she of that word! How utterly insignificant is every other word to her! Lord, such are thy children! O make me, like them, jealous of thy word! O give me a heartfelt belief of it—a hearty self-application of it!”

On the 24th of October, Mr Macdonald left Westerton for a few weeks, to visit Edinburgh and some other scenes, in company with his father. He had not seen the place of his birth for sixteen years; and his feelings, when he beheld the abode of his infancy, dimly remembered, but still impressive to his susceptible mind, were chequered and deep. His recorded prayer is, that “the intervening years might never rise up against him in judgment.” He has treasured up his impressions of the different preachers whom he heard on this occasion. We give but one—

“On Sabbath, heard the celebrated Dr —— preach from the words—‘Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again.’ (John x. 17, 18.) The object of the discourse was, to illustrate the coincidence of will between the Father and Son in the work of redemption, the voluntariness of Christ’s sufferings and death, and the consequent love and honour bestowed upon Him as Mediator, by the Father. It was a most powerful and impressive discourse—but I regretted the want of formal arrangement, as it left but a very faint trace on my memory.”

He visited Glasgow at the same time, where he formally enrolled as a student in theology; and so completed his course of study at the hall, if such a term may be applied to the mere formality of enrol-

ment. On his return to Westerton, it does not appear that his spiritual susceptibilities were as tender and acute as when he started on his journey, for his cry then was, "My leanness! my leanness!" He feared that the blood of others whom he had neglected might be upon his head, and was altogether like Ephraim bemoaning himself; but while his soul continued for a season thus deadened and depressed, it sought relief in the cry—"O for a beam of thy Spirit, that I might realize this sweet verse, 'Lord, who is a God like unto thee, forgiving iniquity, and passing by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?' Lord, breathe on me!"

The period of his being licensed to preach the gospel now drew on; and he sometimes trembled at the prospect. He felt as if he were taking the first step into an ocean, whose farthest shore he could reach only at death; and when he thought of his ignorance of the Word—the only chart—he shrank from the undertaking. "And yet," he says, "why should a vessel complain that it cannot fill itself?" and then he cast himself upon a covenant God. "Lord, abase me, abase me!" followed the exclamation—"Take what way thou wilt with me, but make me like thy Son, thy lowly Son, my Lord, my Redeemer, and my Master—O send forth thy Holy Spirit to sanctify me!" Few, few ever entered on the work of preaching the gospel of the grace of God after such exercises of soul, and such earnest cries for the teaching which man cannot impart. On the eve of it, he felt "unstable like water;" but his mind at last was kept in perfect peace upon the subject, for it was stayed on God.

“ I cannot resist the hope,” he says, “ that the Lord will permit me to be engaged in it ; and yet it is tempered with the impression that my course will be short. But the Lord’s will be done. I feel it to be but the alternative, ‘ Glorify Him on earth, or enjoy Him in heaven.’ O for more nearness to Himself, for He is dealing very liberally with me ! ”

With trembling anxiety, he wrote (16th December) to his father on the subject of his being licensed to preach, imploring his advice, after he should himself “ have consulted the Counsellor.” On the one hand he felt the responsibility of the work, but on the other he saw the wants of thousands around him, and his spirit was stirred by the sight. He says—

“ I shall state my views and feelings on the subject, that you may consider them. First, then, I often feel my heart burning within me to preach the gospel. I feel myself a deep debtor to my fellow-sinners, to the Jew and to the Greek. I see them on the right hand and on the left crowding on to destruction, and none to stand in the way to arrest them. Sinners at ease in Zion—pastors with their heads on the pillow—and even Christians as dark lanterns, not as lights upon a hill : I feel these things reach my heart. Now time is short, and a moment is valuable ; it is uncertain, and the moment must be caught ; for every moment brings off a soul and a load of guilt to eternity. And my own time now is uncertain. I may soon reach my eleventh hour. Have I, then, a right, in such circumstances, to put off longer than is consistent with due observance of the forms of the Church I belong to ? Again, all God’s people around me wish me to preach before I leave this, and seem to have set their hearts on my doing so. If all the wisdom of this world were united in one man, I would not ask nor give one straw for his opinion in this matter ; but ought I

altogether to slight the wishes of the humble and despised people that have God's glory at heart? I have been already indebted to them more than to all my professors of divinity."

—He felt it to be "delicious" to surrender all to his Lord. Yet he would adopt the proper means for ascertaining His mind, and the result was that he went forward to the work.

The year 1829 closed, and 1830 commenced upon him in a happy frame of soul, for his faith had now been simplified, and serenity was the result. He records that the past year had been his happiest, for this, among other reasons, that God had laid him lower; and accordingly he hails with "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me!" the year on which he entered.

"O wean me," he prays, "from the snares and vanities of the world, and let my eye be ever fixed on *thee*; and let me ever view every thing as connected with *thee*, through the working of the ever-blessed Spirit, and for the sake of thy well-beloved Son. Amen."

On Wednesday, the 6th of January 1830, he who was now so earnestly coveting the best gifts was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Elgin. On that occasion of so much anxiety to his sensitive mind, he lifted up his soul to the Lord,

"That He might effectually and spiritually ratify what was outwardly done by His Church below; and having snatched a moment of privacy, my soul spake thus—'Oh! my heavenly Father, the blood of thy Son is powerful, the working of thy Spirit is efficacious, and thou art gracious: this is all my hope—all my strength.' O for a perfect confidence in the Lord for grace and strength! I know He

will not fail me. O that I could rest and be at ease in this—committing myself wholly to Him! I find this to be very comfortable, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!’ But I desire to remember that this is promised in connection with ‘teaching all things whatsoever I commanded you.’ Here must be my endeavour. Lord, give me to be faithful, earnest, and persevering, even unto death!”

## CHAPTER IV.

Mr Macdonald's First Sermon—His Theory of Preaching—Elgin—Its Spiritual Condition—His Prayers—He leaves Westerton—The Effects of his Labours there—Removes to Urquhart—The Men of Ross-shire—Concert for Prayer—Revisits Pluscarden—His Spiritual Discipline and Vicissitudes—He is invited to London—His Perplexity—His Correspondence—And Resolution—He Removes to London—His Fears.

It is often noticed that when God has some special work in store for his servants, their training is peculiar, to prepare them for their sphere. Luther's example may suffice for all. That mighty truth by which he was enabled to convulse so large a portion of the world, and disenthral so many in Christendom from the grinding yoke of Popery, was learned by the Reformer amid agonies and throes which taught him at once the importance of the doctrine, and the recoil of the self-righteous heart of man from justification only by faith in Christ. We may trace the same wise adaptation in the training of Mr Macdonald.

From the very first his anxiety was not merely about preaching, but about turning sinners to the Lord; and "to cry aloud and spare not," was his first, as it was his final resolution. The deep-seated Popery of human nature, which ever trusts to the *opus opera-*



*tum*, and which grieves or quenches the Spirit of God, was watched and prayed against; and though he might feel elated beyond what was right, he knew of the ever-open fountain, and thither he ever fled.

We give a single extract to exhibit his feelings, on the eve of his first appearance in a pulpit, to plead for the Saviour whom he loved. His very dreams related to the best mode of winning souls, and they were eventually turned into realities.

“To-morrow [Saturday, 16th January] I must leave this and go to Pluscarden, to preach on Sabbath. And what are my feelings? Oh! I can scarce tell. On the one hand, I feel a strong trust in the Lord, that he will bring me through all well and comfortably; on the other, I feel as if I deserved to be chastised and humbled by Him, for, how lightly the matter sits upon me! I feel no anxiety whatever about what men may think of myself, or my appearance; but I am concerned as to whether I may deliver the truth so as to reach the heart, and lead unto salvation. O if it might please the Lord to encourage me at the outset, by giving my dear Master to see somewhat of the travail of his soul through me! Do I ask too much? Oh! my Father, are not my interests and thine all one? But I will lay hold of thy strength, and plead with thee for this—make me vile and contemptible as thou wilt, but let my Redeemer be crowned; and O let me assist in the crowning—for, alas! I did once assist in crowning Him with the thorns! I am satisfied—thy will be done—I will go on in thy strength, and make mention of thy name, and thy righteousness only. All things shall be for my good and thy glory!”

Nor can we omit his notice of his first address—

“*Monday, January 18.*— . . . . I felt yesterday, in

the pulpit, as much composure as if sitting in my chair—my mind quite clear and collected; and I felt a strength in declaring the most awful truths, that I could not have enjoyed if I had written only for effect. I have met with the approbation of God's people; for the rest, I care not as to their opinions. But, oh! it was a strange feeling when all was over. I could scarce believe that I had preached. I felt not like one relieved from a burden, for it had been no burden to me: but I felt happy in having been permitted to deliver the Lord's message. O may He accompany it with His blessing! I commit all to Him. He will not fail me nor forsake me; but may He not chasten me for my unfaithfulness? O for strength to cleave closely to Him!"

He describes his feelings yet more minutely to a friend, in the following extract from a letter dated 20th January 1830:—

"I dare not deny the mercy of my Lord, in that He did support me by the precious promises of his Word. I felt much comfort from 2 Chron. xx., especially verses 15-20, and from 1 Cor. i., and from the promise, Matt. xxviii. 18-20. The moment of entering the pulpit was the one in which I felt most; but it was an uplifting of my heart to God. With, I suppose, a slight tremor of voice, I gave out Psalm lxxxv.; after prayer I read Hab. iii.; then gave out the text, Micah ii. 10, 'Arise ye,' &c., from which I preached forty minutes. I had a small skeleton of jottings before me, to which I looked occasionally. I often varied in language from what I had written, leaving out some things and inserting others, but found my mind as clear and collected as I could desire. There was a great crowd collected; but this I felt rather animating than otherwise. I had some paragraphs of my discourse, indeed the most of it, in the style which some call *wild*; but the more close and faithful it was, the more strength did I feel. But,

alas! how little spirituality of mind and affection did I feel! O what shame and confusion of face may well be mine, when I think out of what impure lips such solemn truths did proceed! O my God! when shall it once be that I shall be humbled to my true place before thee? When I was done, I felt my mind like this sheet of paper before I commenced writing on it—not a trace of all I had said. I could scarce believe I had preached, but felt as if just born into a new world of relations to my fellow-creatures.”

—His aim, as he declares, was to get at the root of the matter with sinners, and to search them to the quick; and, though he distrusted all human agency viewed in itself, he yet determined to use the keenest weapon of the Spirit to separate between the sinner and his sins. He knew that men are not born Christians, and that spiritual death reigns in all till they be born again. His first endeavour, therefore, was to secure that end; and, as regards unconverted men, it is not too much to say that every effort which he made until his dying day had the same object in view.

The following extract, from a letter to a friend, will clearly exhibit Mr Macdonald's simple theory of preaching. He began where many ministers end:—

“O ———, ———! nothing will do but ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ I have tried the wisdom of words, the pathos of feeling, the power of imagination; but I find one ‘Thus saith the Lord, Hear ye *dry bones*,’ better than them all. When I have *that*, I feel as if standing on a rock—I feel as if I had a weapon that will not shiver in my hand—I feel that I am safe, and that they to whom I speak have to reckon with Him and not with me. We would often think a strong logical argument better than a plain text of

Scripture, perhaps because men will attend more to it, and because we have some sort of feeling that it is more pointed and touching; but there is in a text of Scripture a something that sticks to the conscience whether men please or not; nay, sometimes it so adheres, that after many days it puts forth its germ and springs up into life eternal, contrary to our probabilities. O ——, how I lament my deficiency in the Bible—I am only beginning to see its importance. My views of it at first seem to me to have been altogether selfish—I read it only to obtain peace of mind, or immediate guidance, or preparation for some immediate duty. But now I could wish to look into it as the only accessible *mirror* of divine glory; as the place of manifestation of that glory, and especially of such manifestation of it as is suited to the nature of fallen creatures. Alas, for me! that I see so little; but thanks be unto God, through Christ Jesus my Lord, that He enables me to see a little of that glory in the face of Him.”

Again—

“My heart’s desire is to be faithful in the strict demands and rigours of the law as it lies on the sinner, and in the winning, gracious calls of the gospel as addressed to the vile; not to heed the wincing and the shrinking of human enmity under the probing of God’s Word, but to reach the very core, and cause the sinner to say, ‘Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

He again writes—

“*Saturday, 30.*—I do this night feel a degree of weakness and unfitness for what is before me to-morrow. But, alas! of what kind is it? Is it such a weakness as the Lord will be ready to supply? does it not spring from pride—*anxiety about an exhibition of myself—anxiety how men may be satisfied, not with the style or composition, but with the sentiments?* But it matters not what it may be. Lord, I come to thee this night as a poor sinner. Whatever my wants, my weaknesses, or my sins may be, to thee

do I come, and cast them upon thee, for I know that thou carest for me, poor and mean though I be. O give me to be concerned about immortal souls! Am I right in committing all to memory, instead of venturing upon thee? Show me what is duty. O what a poor, vile instrument thou hast chosen! Magnify thy glory in me, even in me!"

—It was "with tears" that he besought the Lord to prepare him for his work; and need we wonder though some arrows sharply pierced the hearts of the enemies of the King! \* One of his earliest discourses was in Elgin on the words "Ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth;" and his record concerning that place, which he always remembered with lively interest, discloses a saddening state of religion as then prevailing there.

On his birth-day, 17th February, he writes—

" . . . . . I desire to renew my solemn covenant of dedication with Him, which I drew out on last occasion. I do it under a deeper conviction of my own helplessness and insufficiency, and a stronger confidence of the riches and resources of His grace; and I do it, too, with a more special object, even the devoting myself wholly to His work, as an ambassador for Christ, and with greater encouragement, as knowing what He hath already condescended to effect by me. I do it, too, as nearer that eternity to which I am hastening; and, believing myself nearer to an eternity of heavenly rest, I feel animated to more labour ere I enter upon that. I desire to do it, in short, more under the conviction that I am a poor, a vile sinner, and more under the conviction that Christ is a great, an infinite Saviour.

\* Some of his first texts may exhibit his general style of topics. His first sermon, at Pluscarden, was from Micah ii. 10; his second text, at Alves, was, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" his third, at Duffus, was from Job xiii. 11.

“ With these feelings do I again, at the commencement of another year of my existence (though its termination may be in heaven) set my hand, as in thy presence, to subscribe that, by the right of thy sovereignty, and by the purchase of my Redeemer’s blood, and by the actual application of it through thy Spirit, I am thine, wholly thine, in soul, body, and spirit—to do whatever thou wouldst have me do—to go whither thou wilt—to suffer what thou wilt—to prefer thee above myself, and every thing else ; especially in proclaiming thy message to perishing sinners, in comforting thy people, and in extending thy kingdom whithersoever thou callest me. As without thee I can do nothing, my waiting eyes are fixed on thee, for the aid of thy Spirit and the grace of thy Son, through whom do thou accept me. Amen.

JOHN MACDONALD.”

The inconsiderate encomiums of friends now began to occasion an increase of his trials, for he says that they “ sometimes stole over so as to startle him.” He sought, however, to live near to God, and the contrast was sure to humble him. Faithfulness to souls, and fearlessness in his work, now became the burden of his prayers ; and some have risen up to bear witness that these prayers were not unanswered.

At seasons his mind had been hitherto perplexed by the anticipation of an early death ; but he now exhibits a more tense and vigorous tone. His hands were full of the work to which he was devoted, and all was harmonious under the blessing of Him whom he served. Both theoretically and personally he had adopted clear and thoroughly scriptural views of the sovereignty of God ; and, while he thus learned to be still, he was upheld, and countenanced, and blessed. His heart’s plague did strive and harass

him, but it was made a frequent errand to the throne; and Satan was thus foiled with the very weapon with which he had made an assault. "O break me down, down, down!" was his prayer to-day—on the morrow he had to record, "I have had a truly happy day." Prayer preceded, prayer accompanied, and prayer followed, all his efforts as an ambassador for Christ; and his example irresistibly forces on us the thought, that all that is needed to transform the world into the Church is a race of ministers as devoted in spirit, and as tender in their walk as this preacher of the gospel was. "Vile, vile, indeed, I am," was his cry; and his Lord heard him bemoaning—

"*Friday, April 23.*—I desire to bless God that He has in some degree restored my soul. I have, in a measure, had a way of escape opened up from my temptation, but in such a way as to leave me humbled and trembling for my own insufficiency. It seems to me that there lives not in God's family a more backward, less renewed, or more perverse child than I am—a more unstable, wandering heart, nor one so little spiritually-minded. Lord, have mercy upon me! I must still cling to thee like a drowning man. This heart would still carry me away to destruction, if thou didst not prevent. Lord, have mercy on poor perishing sinners! See, O see them, sweeping on to destruction—wilt thou not arise, and make bare thine arm, and pluck the brands from the burning! Lord, I am thine. Thou knowest that I have put my life into thy hands—only, let it be sacrificed in saving sinners. O prepare me to be faithful and earnest on that day, now drawing near. I had a long conversation with a Roman Catholic to-day, and, at parting, gave him a copy of 'Baxter's Call.' O may the blessing of God render effectual what was done in His name!

"*Saturday night (1 A.M., Sabbath.)*—I have now nigh

finished my preparation. O that the Lord would visit me, vile as I am! Lord, it is in vain for me to go forth, if thou go not with me. Nay, but thou wilt go: thou hast promised. O pity poor perishing sinners! O pour out thy Spirit in rich abundance. I will not let thee go until thou do it. Give me strength to prevail with thee, that some brand may be saved!"

But if God was lifting him up, He was also bringing him low, that he might be prepared for explaining to others the paradoxes of the Christian life. He exclaims, in language which will find an echo in the heart of many a minister—

"*Thursday, May 6.*— . . . . Lord, show me what I am! I have been forgetting my own soul in my ministrations. O to have my delight in the law of my God! Gracious Father, have mercy on thy poor child! O pity me! I cannot conquer this stubborn will. I fight, I struggle in vain. Lord, I cast myself upon thee! O save me!—thy billows have gone over me—my head is wrapt in the sea weeds—I look to thy holy temple. O vouchsafe the light of thy countenance upon me! O prepare me for expressing my love to thee on thine approaching day of communion! I look to thee with expectation. O visit me, and show me once more that *thou art God*, and that I am a *worm!*"

On the 16th he preached from the Song of Solomon, viii. 5, and says—

" . . . . . I have felt it a rich day to myself; and I believe the Lord will not let it return void to others also. Oh! what delightful and animating work is the Lord's! I could work in it to death, if I ever felt in it as I did to-day. To be holding up the cross, the cross! to poor perishing sinners—'tis indeed a sweet, a rich work. Lord, have mercy on my poor, wandering, corrupt heart!—it will go away from thee immediately. O keep me near to thee!"



But the period had at length arrived when he was to leave Westerton, the new birth-place of his soul. There is reason to believe that his residence, his lessons, and example there, were blessed by the Spirit of God to plant the truth in the heart of more than one member of the family. The fruit of his labours, in that respect as in others, appeared even after he had taken his place among the heathen in Hindostan; but he was now on the eve of leaving that sphere; he had addressed his Sabbath scholars for the last time; he had preached from the last verse of the Bible, and on Tuesday, 25th May 1830, he writes—

“This, in all probability, is the last of my Diary I shall write in Westerton. 'Tis a sad and trying hour, thus to part—but come it must—my connection here is wound up. I am at this moment in tears. O Westerton! thou art dear to me, dear indeed. Here did Jesus first meet me—here He won my heart—here did He first employ my poor worthless services. O eternity! eternity! how shall I look back and think, it may be not on Westerton, but surely of that in Westerton that connects me with thee! It almost breaks my heart to part with every one weeping. Farewell, thou apartment in which I now sit—sweet hast thou been! Farewell, all. The grace of my Lord be with you all! Amen and amen.”

He accordingly removed for a little to the manse of Urquhart, and soon felt, as he records, that the giants of Ross-shire made him appear a mere dwarf in the divine life. But the discovery was salutary—it humbled him more and more, and he glorified God on that account. His prayer still was—“Down, down, bring me down, O Lord!”—“Bring down self, and exalt Christ in me, and by me.” He found many in his father’s parish of whom he had to say, “Each of them

is a divine;" and their presence stimulated him to greater assiduity. Amid many trials of various kinds, he often had "no plea but Christ;" but he found it ample enough to cover all that he needed. "To thee do I look" is the termination of all his difficulties.

At this period he planned another concert for prayer for a revival of religion in the land; and at the meeting of friends, at which that was agreed on, not an hour was lost—prayer was instantly offered; and he says, "I shall never forget that night. Oh! it was wrestling!" A revival has, in a measure, been granted in this land—how much of it will eternity show to be connected with such supplications? One of the felicities of heaven will consist in seeing the connection between the prayer on earth, and its answer in glory—between the heart of the believer pouring itself out before God, and the friend or brother rescued from the burning in answer to the cry; and the joy of the redeemed will be enhanced by the retrospect.

But it does not appear that his mind, sensitive as it was, retained at all times that exquisite delicacy of spiritual perception by which it was commonly signalized. About the time to which we now refer, various alternations were experienced, as if public duty had somewhat marred his fellowship with the Father and the Son. "I enjoy not much of the Divine countenance, because of my sins"—"Did I yesterday raise a memorial to the Lord's goodness? Then to-day must I do it to my own guilt"—"I have fallen into spiritual sloth"—"I am pining away in the divine life"—Such is the language which he occasionally employed. Still, however, he was engaged

in preaching sometimes from day to day. "Enoch walked with God," was with him a favourite text, and he was unconsciously trying to follow in the patriarch's footsteps. He visited his former scholars at Pluscarden, and sought to urge them onward in the narrow way; and he there enjoyed a time of communion with God, the very remembrance of which melted him to tears, while there is reason to believe that some will rejoice for ever over the services of that season. "O for more nearness to Him! His work is sweet work," was the utterance of his heart on the retrospect; yet he was taught to know that he was still in the wilderness, and had occasion to pray, "Lord, humble me, so that I shall not feel myself humble." He was afraid that such a feeling would have made him proud.

But the time was approaching when his sphere was to be still farther changed. He says—

"*Wednesday, October 13.*—I am at this moment reduced to great perplexity, and none but the Lord can solve it. I have just got the offer of a small English charge in London. Whether to accept it or not, is my doubt. If I do, for a time at least I break off my study of the Gaelic, in which I am making some progress, and in my acquiring of which the Lord's people in this quarter seem much interested—a language which is essential to usefulness in this country, which I *now* feel it a duty to acquire, and I have but little hope of ever acquiring it well. On the other hand, in refusing, do I not close an opened door for preaching the gospel?—do I not put a more distant good in place of a more immediate duty? In matters that concern souls and eternity, I feel slow to act, and it is more difficult to look to, and depend upon the Lord, for direction in straits, than many think. O for such guidance now!

"*Friday.*—Still am I sadly perplexed about the matter

I last wrote of. Sometimes fixed, then unfixed—human counsel avails me nothing. O my God, my God, hast *thou* forsaken me? Oh! it is *now* that I feel the bitterness of having forsaken thee! Alas for me! I have grieved and provoked my best friend. O pardon, pardon!”

His earnestness in calling on his God was never more apparent than now. In the difficulty of deciding on the matter before him, he exemplified the Saviour's neglected maxim to take the kingdom by force, and he was led to a conclusion which both the providence and the grace of God abundantly ratified. “I have answered in the affirmative, and leave the matter in the Lord's hands—let Him do as seemeth Him good,” are the words in which he referred to a decision on which the eternal portion of not a few was suspended.

The following is the letter in which he communicated his determination :—

[URQUEHART, 21st October 1830.]

“MY DEAR SIR,—I received your important letter of the 7th on the 13th, and have delayed as short a time in answering it as the state of my feelings in regard to the subject of it would permit.

“I was taken by surprise, and must confess that I was scarcely surprised in the posture in which it becomes the Lord's servants to be so—‘standing with the loins girded, and the lamp burning.’ I have, however, sought after singleness of mind, in regard to God's will and glory, as well as simplicity of dependence on Divine direction in my deliberations; and I would humbly trust that I am now divinely directed to say, that *I believe the call you have sent me to be of God, through the Church, and therefore I obey.*

“I should have hesitated little about the matter, had it not been that I was engaged in the study of the Gaelic language, with a view to more extended means of usefulness in my

own country, if such were the Lord's will—a course to which I was led by a sense of duty, and the counsel of the Lord's people. The prospects of to-morrow, however, must yield to the duties of to-day; and on this ground I submit. The pressing needs, too, of the multitudes around me, weighed deeply upon me; but, being as yet externally uncalled to labour amongst them, I feel open to a more distant call.

“That this invitation has been altogether unsolicited is a source of much pleasure and satisfaction to me: that it is an invitation from such a body of Christians as you represent them to be, is a source of still more. That they are mostly *Scotch*, I love not the less; for so it was with our great Master, and His great apostle, when they were most devoted in soul to their kinsmen according to the flesh. That you have, in general, found them ‘kind, intelligent, and united,’ must have been to you a comfort, and is to me certainly an encouragement; and that they would, as a body, desire the truth in its simplicity, is just what *meets me*, for other gospel am I determined, in the strength of God's grace, to preach none than that which is a stumblingblock to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, but which is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto them who are called.

“It is my comfort to know, from my acquaintance with you, that you have not been one to feed them with novelities, which fill an unwise imagination whilst they starve the immortal soul; and that, therefore, a people fed by you will seek none such, neither by such taste be turned aside from the love of the truth, for in such steps I shall seek to follow you.

“With regard to the time of my coming to you, I am at present unable to fix any precise period. The utmost I can say is, that I cannot be with you before the end of November. This is owing chiefly to my father's being called to Edinburgh on public duty, and, during his absence, a good deal devolves upon me. He will return, I hope, about the middle of the month, and I shall endeavour to be with

you as soon after that as possible ; and I should like to see you there then. Be kind enough to mention what you deem my best mode of travel.

“ I cannot conclude, my dear sir, without rendering you my warmest thanks for your kindness in thus bringing me into the view of gentlemen unknown to me, and to whom I am personally unknown. May the great Head reward you by giving you to see much of the travail of His soul in the important charge to which He now calls—for what reward is as the winning of souls?—and reward you, too, in giving you to rejoice in the choice you have made in me, a weak and unworthy servant, but, nevertheless,

Yours sincerely and affectionately in Jesus,

JOHN MACDONALD.

“ REV. W. B. TAYLOR.”

Thus, then, do we find this devoted man led to consecrate himself to the work of God in the metropolis of our empire and the world. The congregation that called him was small, and worshipped, at that period, in a hired chapel in Chadwell Street, Pentonville ; but all who know the history of his connection with them are aware with what faithfulness and affection he laboured among that people. His past training, under the power and demonstration of the Spirit, was calculated to fit him for a sphere of special trial ; and we shall soon discover that the Lord gave him souls for his hire while ministering there. His lips kept wisdom ; an “unction from the Holy One” rested on his labours ; and of few servants of Christ has it ever been more true, that to all who heard him, he could not but prove either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

## CHAPTER V.

Mr Macdonald settles in London—His Impressions and Resolutions—The state of Religion among the Scots in London—He commences his duties as a Preacher—London as a sphere of Ministerial duty—His exercises of Soul—His views of Religion in the Metropolis—The effects of London society—His Ordination—His Views expanding—British and Foreign Bible Society—His manner of Preaching—Open-air Preaching—Politics, and their effects on the Christian life—His preparations for the Pulpit—Reflections on London life—Dr Macdonald visits London—Rev. Edward Irving—Brighton—Longings for some wider sphere—Street-preaching—Is presented to William IV.—A preaching tour in Scotland—His call to Fodderty—Resolves to remain in London—Sickness—Its Lessons—Dr Macdonald again visits London—His Labours—His Son returns with him to Scotland—Renewed proposals for his removal from London—His views on Satanic agency—A Death-bed—His views of the Church and Dissenters—Closes his Chapel in Chadwell Street—Again an Invalid—Revisits Urquhart—Pluscarden—Takes possession of his new Chapel, River Terrace, Islington.

It is the remark of a man of powerful thought, but sometimes ill-adjusted opinions, that “no man could judge more than one in ten thousand of all his thoughts, sayings, and actions, worthy to be mentioned, if memory were capable of recalling them”—and he adds, “In a deliberate review of all that we can remember of past life, it will be possible to select

a certain proportion which may, with the most propriety, be deemed the history of *the man*." This idea of Foster is what we have tried to adopt as our guide. We have endeavoured to trace as far as possible the minute, and often imperceptible, evolutions of character—the effects produced by passing emotions or events, all exhibiting in their aggregate result the individual *man*, slowly and gradually moulded into what he is, under the plastic hand of Him who is guiding many sons and daughters to glory. There is a procession in the case of every renewed soul, as there is in the entire multitude of the redeemed; and it at once exhilarates and strengthens the pilgrim to trace the path along which those who have already reached their home on high, joined in that majestic train which is moving forward to glory, and preparing for the grand 'Ευγενια, which will mean, not merely "I have solved a problem," but "I have found my God."

On the 16th of November 1830, John Macdonald left his father's house to proceed to London, in terms of the invitation which he had received and accepted. His parting occasioned many anxieties and fears to his relations and himself; but he says, "We knew on what ground we were parting—it was for Jesus's sake;" and he proceeded calmly on his way. He tarried for a day at Westerton, to be happy again where he had found true happiness at first, and had occasion to allude to "the cleaving of heart to him which he experienced there." He preached in Aberdeen on the following Sabbath; and when he parted with the last of his friends, he threw himself into the arms of the Shepherd of Israel at once for guidance



and protection. He writes a day or two after his arrival in London—

“*Friday, November 25.*— . . . . In advancing to a strange place, it was my consolation to know that He was here before me, and I looked to Him to order every thing for me. So he has done, and with wonderful goodness! O what a master is this that I serve! O to be confounded in dust and ashes, because of these things!”

When he first gazed on London from the deck of the vessel which bore him up the Thames, with its thousand towers, and spires, and domes, penetrating the cloud that overhangs it, and thought of the millions there, many of them rushing upon ruin, and all of them exposed to dangerous snares, he often said that his heart sank within him at the idea of ministering in such a place. But when he remembered that his message was from God, and thought of the assurance that it would not return to Him void, he went forward in faith, trusting in Him who could give mighty power even to a pebble from the brook. He was accustomed afterwards to say that this was then his conviction—“Though my God commanded me not merely to preach in London, but to lift Ben Wyvis (a mountain visible from his father’s manse), I would through grace obey.” His ministry in London was all conducted on the principle implied in the remark—the principle of simple and submissive faith, which takes hold of Omnipotence, and moves forward to duty.

On entering that city, he was not so much excited as he had expected to be. “Vanity and corrupt fallen nature,” he says, “appeared on every side”—he could see “nothing but broken cisterns, and

v multitudes endeavouring in vain to fill them." He in consequence beheld a wide field of labour spreading out before him, though in spirit he was depressed and saddened by the spectacle. At that period, religion was not in a prosperous state among the Scottish population in London. Events had then transpired, or tenets been adopted and proclaimed, which had injured the cause of truth; and though some stood steadfast and immovable, yet many went widely astray, others were startled and amazed, while not a few were bewildered and perplexed. The worldly among them scoffed and exulted, and deemed their worldliness excused, while the people of God mourned in silence over the sad desolation. It was when these things were fast hastening to their crisis—that Mr Macdonald arrived in London; and his brief record is—

" . . . . Our Scotch Church here is miserably low. Religion seems to me very diluted and weak even among believers; and a man is here visited with temptations that before were unknown to me." . . . .

—He again threw himself, however, on his Master, he literally began the battle on his knees; and his first comment on the state of matters in London closes with words which were favourites with him —“Jehovah-Tsidkenu, Jehovah-Nissi, Jehovah-Jireh.”

On Sabbath the 27th of November, he commenced his public duties among the flock who had invited him; and it is not difficult to perceive that in doing so, one of his master principles was the essential distinction existing between the Church and the world, a distinction evermore obtruded in the Word of

God, and recognised by the very structure of the Hebrew tongue, though constantly effaced by men.\* Satan and an unbelieving heart were then threatening to overwhelm him ; and his record on the occasion deserves to be preserved—

“*Sabbath.*—I am this evening called upon to preach for the first time in this place, and I feel very peculiarly situated. Satan and an unbelieving heart try me sorely. But oh ! my Lord and Master, thou knowest my circumstances, and thou art the same every where. I came here, as I believed, at thy bidding. I besought thee, if thy presence came not with me, not to carry me up thither ; but thou hast done it—and now, here I lie on thy hands, and I will not leave thee except thou bless me. Show me a token for good this night—a pledge of what thou wilt yet do for me. I beseech of thee, show me thy glory. O deliver me from man, from Satan, from myself ! I take thee to witness that I throw every thing into thy hands ; do as thou wiltest. But, *O for one soul* this night—for an earnest, as a first-fruits ! Pardon my boldness—I am a base, vile worm ; nevertheless, thou hast made thy glory dearer to me than mine own self ! My waiting eyes are towards thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ! *Eleven o'clock.*—I have now preached, and what have I to say ?—that things have not been with me altogether such as flesh and blood could desire ; but that the Lord, nay, *my Lord*, has been pleased to deal in a way that displays much more of His wisdom. O what a privilege it is to have such an all-wise as well as gracious Lord ! He has chastened me in soul (though perhaps not before others) this night—and yet I had delicious moments. But, thanks be to His name, I can kiss the hand that smote me—yes, and can trust that He will yet do that, and far more than I asked of Him. Still do I cleave to thee—I cannot let thee go.”

\* The Hebrew has two words for “people”—one of them is invariably applied to the Jews; the other as invariably to other nations.

As a sphere of ministerial labour, London is, perhaps, the most trying in which a frail mortal can be placed. He is either caressed, and tempted to vanity, or neglected, and allowed to pine. He either resolutely opposes the world's ungodliness, and is repaid with the world's coldness and antipathy, or he imbibes the world's spirit, panders to the world's love of novelty and excitement, mingles in the world's frivolities—and enjoys the world's smile. Yet, on the other hand, so wide is that field, and so multifarious the minds that teem there, that a minister of Christ, holy, devoted, and bent on rescuing souls, will at last become both known and honoured by the people of God. It was so in the case of John Macdonald, and we shall hereafter find him who entered London a stripling, a Timothy, a David against Goliath, transformed by grace into a Paul for heroism, and a John for love. The exigencies of the place drove him to his Lord, and His grace was found to be amply sufficient. While that youthful minister of Christ “dropt into his place, the dust,” he was exalted in due season.

It was, however, amid much dejection that he began his labours. His high estimate of the believer's character, and his lowly opinion of himself, often drew forth deep self-condemnation; and amid his struggles he exclaims —

“*Saturday, December 2.*— . . . . I am not, I cannot be satisfied, because I feel not my Lord's face shining on me as it was wont to do. Lord, Lord, have pity on thy poor servant! I am vile, very vile; but, oh! thou knewest this when thou sentest me forth. O be with me on the evening of thy holy day! Turn, turn, O my God, I beseech of thee, *for thy name's sake!*”

And on the evening of the following day, the Sabbath, he says—

“*Sabbath night.*—Lower and lower has the Lord brought me. I was in darkness all day, even at His holy table. I was made speechless at His throne. I was about to think that my Lord had cast me off. But, O no, no! O his kindness is confounding, his love is overpowering! O what resources, and O what a heart He has! I preached this night on the preciousness of Christ. I felt it, in a measure, transporting to my own soul, and the attention of all seemed fixed. I admire the matchless wisdom of my Lord. He has made me prize his grace. He has done as seemed good in His sight, not as my foolish heart would dictate. Lord, ever keep me humble, and empty of myself. O save me from the snares by which I am beset!”

But to exhibit as clearly as may be his state of mind at this period, we quote the following:—

“*Saturday, December 11.*—Oh! my Lord has suffered me to fall woefully this week. He has made me a vile beast in my own estimation. Lord, I am ashamed to look up to thee—ashamed to ask thee any thing. Mercy, mercy!—pardon, pardon! O that thou wouldst hear me, and keep me. I am helpless as a babe. The enemy is drawing his snares thickly around me. Alas! I feel them. My God, my God, O I beseech thee, save me! I was trusting to my state more than to my Saviour. He has let me fall, and the enemy is now above me. ‘But rejoice not, O thou foul enemy, I shall yet arise;’ and bitter shall be my vengeance on thee, if grace be given me. But, O my Lord, listen to my cry; save me, or I perish! O what forbearance thou hast!”

“*Monday, 13.*—I desire to praise God, who favoured me much yesterday in preaching from ‘Of whom I am chief.’ I felt my subject, and much reason had I to do so. I ex-

pected the Lord would have chastened me before the world; but, oh! he did it not. What a wonderful God He is!"

Thus, then, is he placed on a watch-tower in London, to be one of the Lord's remembrancers there, and to warn men of the coming wrath, or tell them of the coming glory. He is as yet only a preacher, without ordination; but as he found "the Church in ruins," he prayed for grace to be made a repairer of the breaches. His cry, like many others, was—"Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord;" and, throwing himself as he did upon Omnipotence, we may be prepared to find him amply sustained. His close walk with God, his holy jealousy over himself, his eager desire to do good in rescuing souls, and his attitude of constant dependence, combined to throw an unction into all he did, and made his face shine like one that had been on the mount. "O I am poor and needy, lonely and desolate in spirit! O that my God would think on me! How long, O Lord, how long? Have mercy, O have mercy, ere I sink!" were the words in which his trouble of soul sought relief, when he contemplated the glory of his work and the weakness of the instrument. Have we much of this close walking and close watching now?

On the 18th of December he wrote as follows:—

"*Saturday*, 18.—I am now left alone to labour in this place, as Mr Taylor, my worthy predecessor, is gone. I have now no dear friend to commune with. All around me are strangers. But, O what a privilege to have Jesus still the same dear friend!—'The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' And, oh! to think that that friend is God! I am amazed, lost in the thought. O what am I, vile and abominable, that I should so be able to speak! O what

shall I do for thee, my Lord!—how shall I spend and be spent for thee? I have given myself up to thee. I gave my life to thee—I gave all to thee. O accept the poor, poor gift! Whilst I am here use me to the uttermost, I beseech thee! Thy Church here is in ruins. Oh! wilt thou not make me a ‘repairer of the breaches?’ If not me, O raise up some that will! O wilt thou not quicken me? I am dead as a stone, doing nothing but sleeping, nothing but indulging the flesh. O arm of the Lord, awake, awake, and rescue me!”

His retrospect and review of the year 1830 enables us to understand how he rejoiced in the work of preaching the gospel. He “had enjoyed many happy moments in it that he would not exchange for the world,” and he felt that eternity would witness, in some degree, to the results of his preaching; but it was the retrospect of trials that humbled him most profoundly. In passing through the furnace he had become better acquainted with God and himself than he would otherwise have been, and “the benefit of scourging from his heavenly Father” was one of the subjects which called forth his frequent thankfulness. His New-year meditation contains the following sentences:—

“*January 1, 1831.*— . . . . . Art thou about to cast me off, as indeed I do deserve? O no, thou wilt not do that! I am thine—though I be fit for hell itself, I will not draw that back. I have given myself [to thee]. I meant this day to make many resolutions, but I can make none. I can but simply throw myself on thee, as a helpless child. O pity me, and make thy grace sufficient for me, and thy strength perfect in my weakness! O wilt thou not begin a new era with me in my ministry? Look down, I beseech of thee, and visit thy Church. Oh! see how desolate it is. O take what means thou wilt to revive it, and employ me

as thou wilt in that work. Thine I am, absolutely thine, and thy will is mine! These petitions only I ask this day—

“1. A more close and holy walk with thyself, through thy Spirit.

“2. A more total devotedness of soul, body, spirit, and property to thee.

“3. A more complete emptiness of all self-sufficiency.

“4. A more perfect deadness to the opinions of men.

“5. Greater simplicity, faithfulness, and love, in preaching thy gospel.

“6. More soul-stirring views of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory that awaits me.

“O hear a poor worm!”

His own views regarding the state of religion in London, as soon after his arrival there as he could calmly form an estimate, are embodied in the following letter, dated January 5th, 1831:—

“. . . . . As to my mind, I am in tolerable spirits, considering the Lord's dealings with me since I came. He has, in much wisdom and grace, been laying on me stripe after stripe. He knew I needed it; and blessed be the love that spared me not! I have been in the lowest depths of self-loathing. I have been groaning under the power of temptation. I have thought myself cast off for ever. I have felt fiery darts injected, that all the past was a delusion. I have been shaken by man's fear, and moved by man's praise, as I never was before. In short, I have been made to pass through a pitch dark cloud, known only to myself and to Him who sent it. I have been permitted to emerge from it into a state of comfort, but not without a memento of what a poor, contemptible, and helpless thing I am; though yet, I doubt not that my soul is precious in God's sight.

“I am satisfied that it was my duty to come here, though I have been tempted for moments to think otherwise; and



this I do believe, that if there is anything to be done through me here, I shall be brought down lower still. Let the Lord do what seemeth Him good, only let His own glory be magnified! And yet I must not hold back that I have had sweet, very sweet, moments since I came—moments when I could say, ‘Who is a God like unto thee?’

“I have been obliged to see a good deal of society since I came to London; but I have not been able to see one dear friend. There are moments when I feel this. All here is but a stream of new faces. I meet, however, with much kindness; and in the family in which I lodge, I feel quite at ease. As to my charge, you will have seen what I wrote to my father. I am much pleased with it on the whole, and feel much more at ease than I did at first. I am beginning to set men more on their level. At first I thought every man here must be a superior man, and a good critic and judge of preaching. Now, however, I find them but neighbour-like, most of them skin-deep, others contented to let the words enter their ears, some few seriously disposed, but these rather needing milk than strong meat. I have been much engaged in writing discourses since I came up. Whether I shall continue to do this to the full extent I know not as yet. I shall at all events relieve myself occasionally by an unwritten, though not unstudied one. They much need to be roused here. Christians in London seem sadly set upon their lees—there is a deal of self-righteousness and censorious talk. You see them not here with the finger to their own sore, but a species of religious robe-tearing that tries me often and makes me silent. ——— has done much mischief here. He has forced men to let loose their tongues, and the habit once formed, it ends not with him. I went to hear him one week evening, but I must say that I was disgusted with the man, horrified by the doctrines, and pierced to the very soul by the whole exhibition. His prayers shocked me above all. There was in them a height of pride, a ‘washing of the hands in snow water,’ and a bringing of his unhal-

lowed doctrines to the very throne of God, that I dared not expect—not a confession of sinfulness in it—and in the conclusion, he prayed for signs, and wonders, and miraculous works of the Spirit, to attest the truth of their gospel! . . . . . It is distressing how low the Scotch Church is here. Almost all the Scotch gentry think it vulgar to go any where else than to the English Church. Too many of those who newly come up from Scotland, neglect religion altogether, so that, in general, Scotch youths here are proverbially irreligious. They are met by a thousand snares to which they are not accustomed, and have not internal principle enough to resist them.”

He was now sowing beside all waters, but he also tried to reap. On January 8th he writes—

“ On Wednesday, heard a most refreshing sermon from the Rev. D. W——, on the importance and supports of the ministry. I felt much refreshed and invigorated by it for a time. On Thursday, heard a most able critical discourse on the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, by Dr P. S——. To me it was a rich treat of intellect, but it touched not my heart. Yesterday, witnessed the induction of a pastor. To me the services were defective in zeal and unction.”

He adds—

“ I feel this night just as if my wings were broken, and my sinews cut. No prospect of doing any good. I am, indeed, an empty vessel, and I have no faith to obtain a filling. Lord, if there was ever an object for pure disinterested mercy to look upon, I am he. I cannot even ask any thing. I cannot even wish or hope. I am just a poor paralytic man. O Jesus, thou didst once heal such an one! O do it again! . . . . . In the face of self and of hell, I will say, weak as I am, ‘ Though thou shouldst slay me, I will love thee, O blessed Jesus!’ Help, help, O help, for thy glory’s sake, for a little time, and then take me for

ever! Come, come, O Spirit of the Lord, come, for Jesus' sake!"

The vicissitudes through which he passed at this period, in reference to his work, are described in the record that follows—

"*Monday, 17.*—I laboured under considerable depression, Saturday and yesterday. The Lord is emptying me of self, by a trying process; but I seem to fill as fast as he empties. O when shall this have an end? My subject yesterday was refreshing in itself—the 23d Psalm—and I did enjoy considerable comfort in it, though not all that I had expected. But the Lord would teach me that what He does, He does for his name's sake, not for the subject's sake, nor any thing else. I am much perplexed by the opinions of men in regard to style and composition. O why should it be so? Lord, deliver from all such attacks or temptations. O tell me what thou wouldst have me to do! Only make it known to me, and I will endeavour to take up my cross and follow thee. O have pity upon me, and strengthen me!"

With all this, however, it is not difficult to perceive, that with his spiritual exercise and discipline there was unbelief sometimes mixed up. It was not simple coming, or simple looking, to the Saviour—his eye was often turned inward, or perhaps to his work and his duties, for hope, and not to the Lamb of God; and what could be seen *within* but crowding causes for sorrow or despair?—what in his duties but the reiterated conviction that he and they were vile? Regarding his work of preaching he says—

"*Saturday, January 29.*— . . . . I felt miserable—more so, I think, than since I came to this place. I was wholly unstrung, dismayed, and confused; and I felt as if

my hearers were all mentally despising me. I could not even throw myself on my Lord, for I was conscious of negligence in my work. . . . . I wonder at myself—I abhor myself; and yet, what good does all this do? O Lord God of hosts! how long wilt thou thus strive with a poor worm? Have I rushed unwarrantably into this office? What is thy cause of controversy? O make it known, and take it away! O for the Spirit of truth to quicken me! O come from the four winds and breathe upon me! O save me, or I perish!”

He explains his anguish thus—

“*Monday, February 7.*—During the week that has intervened, I have enjoyed considerably more comfort than for some time before. I believe one cause of the former controversy to have been that I was doing the Lord’s work slightly, not giving myself up closely enough to the preparation of my discourses. For this the Lord has scourged me, and in endeavouring to follow an opposite course, He has been pleased to encourage me. His ways are all so wise that, whether I see so at the time or not, afterwards I am filled with wonder at them!”

His intercourse with the ministers of the metropolis now prompted him to scrutinize with care the qualifications that are needed by the man who would stand between the living God and dead souls, and be the medium of blessings from the one to the other. If the injudicious encomiums of friends had hitherto tended to elate him, his new position was blessed to bring back his mind to its normal condition. He says that, “Coming into contact with society of another order showed him more of his littleness;” and those who knew him, and his lowly estimate of himself, will at once recognise the following extract:—

“*Saturday, February 26.*— . . . . My pulpit quali-

*fications* are sinking fast in my estimation; and I had need that they should. I have had many sore lessons on this head of late. But, besides, I see that to be an able servant of Christ in the present day, needs an application and study, an extent of knowledge of the outworks and inworks of the truth, and a clearness and accuracy of thought on every point, that almost dismays me. I am often ready to forego the defence of the truth, from conscious unfitness of this kind. I feel my mind becoming more alive to these things of late, and a growing determination to apply more fully to the acquisition of all that is needful for the Lord's work. Oh! my Lord and Master, I desire to depend on thee for direction and strength! I feel peculiarly affected by the removal of two eminent men from the Church, Dr Thomson, and Hall of Bristol. O for their mantle—a double portion of their spirit! . . . . There is none now present with me but thou alone: thou art reading what I write, seeing what I think. Oh! I am not a hypocrite to thee—am I, O my Father? O hear for the sake of thy love to thy Son! I am thine—I devote myself to thee. O take me, keep me, fill me, direct me, strengthen me, uphold me through thy Spirit, henceforth and for ever. Amen."

And farther—

"*Saturday, March 5.*— . . . . I am a poor, weak, wandering creature; but, Lord, I am thine; O help me on to thy work, for I have done nothing as yet! O Spirit of Christ, come from the four winds and breathe upon me, that I may live. O come, refresh my withered soul. Come, animate me with the spirit of my Lord's servants that are gone home. Thou wast in them—be in me; annihilate self; fill me; be all and in all within me. Come, O come! Jesus, my Lord, my dependence is on thee. In that strength I look forward to the morrow; but, O I am weak, and I have but a few weak words to speak. 'Lo, I am with thee!'"

And farther still—

“ *Sabbath.*— . . . . . Thou art making me to value grace. O for a heart to thank thee! But, indeed, I cannot do it enough, until I spend eternity with thee! Lord, I have done nothing as yet. Come, O come more and more, thou blessed Spirit of my Lord, that I may be Christ’s more than ever I have yet been! I feel now the benefit of diligence in the Lord’s work. I wonder not that the Lord scourged me at first. I love him for it! I preached twice on that passage, ‘ God commendeth His love towards us,’ and felt much strengthened: but, oh! my joints were loosed beforehand. O keep me near to thee, transformed from the world, and make me more like Jesus, who loved sinners *to the death!* ”

On the 17th of March 1831, Mr Macdonald was ordained as a minister of the gospel, by the Presbytery of London. A brief period of probation had sufficed to exhibit his devotedness and worth to the men of spiritual discernment among those to whom he ministered. That led to a cordial call which he accepted, amid much conscious weakness and self-distrust; and he accordingly passed from the rank of a probationer to that of a pastor, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

On the eve of that ordinance he writes—

“ *Wednesday.*— . . . . . The Lord is dealing heavily, and yet with infinite grace, to me. O He is wise and good! I have already bound myself to Him and to the souls of men. To-morrow will be an additional bond. O for grace to feel the weight of the matter! I am a poor vile worm, yet the Lord thinketh of me! O continue to think of me—help me! I am dry and thirsty; O for a draught of thy Spirit! Lord give me to drink. Oh! I beseech thee to remember me. I have no hope but thee. Though thou slay me, yet will I look to thee. Father, Son,

and Holy Ghost, O rend the heavens ! How long, Lord, O how long will it be ere the time come for reviving thy work ? Hear, Lord, for my spirit fails ! ”

And on the following day—

“ *Friday, March 18.*—Yesterday I was ordained—it was a very impressive service ; and yet I have been scarce able to collect and concentrate my feeling since then. I have to-day been much depressed, and yet not enjoying freedom of access to my God. O for a renewal of heart—for the light of God’s countenance to shine upon me ! O for strength ‘ *from the sanctuary !* ’ ”

But he was now speedily plunged into the vortex of London engrossments. His duties as a pastor, though his flock was small, occupied a large portion of his time ; but one so catholic and devoted as he, was not left to minister merely to his own hearers. “ I feel my soul expanding,” he says, “ as to the Redeemer’s cause, but I feel myself sinking in fire and zeal ”—and that feeling drove him again to the throne. We see him, however, now started on his career, along the thorny path to glory, in which he is never to halt till he be translated to the Church of the first-born on high. Charged to watch for souls, he does it by night and by day, till he reaches the home where the weary are at rest

His tender scrupulosity is exhibited by what he says on Wednesday the 30th of March :—

“ Whilst I am calling on God for help, how many Achans are there in my camp ! Will He listen to me until they are destroyed ! O no ! Forgive me, O my God ! that I have been thus insulting thee, by asking of thee such blessings, and yet doing those things that thou must be displeased with. My conscience accuses me for I know not how many things—not so much of commission

as of *omission*; and they are ever weakening me, both in active duty and in my appeals to a throne of grace.

“ 1. *Great negligence as to secret prayer.*—Little time, little fervency, little intercession, little special prayer for my office, or for my flock.

“ 2. *Great neglect of the Scriptures* as to private or ministerial edification—great absence of Scripture proof in my sermons—flimsy, confused views—no pains to ascertain their full meaning and connection, or to make them bear on heart or conscience.

“ 3. *Great waste of time*—in my studies—in sleep—in visits unnecessarily prolonged—in want of unity of effort—in desultory reading, and in beginning discourses.

“ 4. *Want of close application to my work.*—Loitering about trifles—suffering any thing to interrupt me—putting off what should be done immediately, and not writing enough.

“ I might enumerate more, but O how fearfully do these mar my work! Lord, have mercy upon me, and purge me as a ‘son of Levi,’ according to thy promise!”

While his work thickened around him, and encouraging tokens of success began to appear, he still complained as if he had been only a cumberer of the ground. The following extracts exhibit the history of his mind at this period:—

“ *Wednesday, April 12.*—My time is now exceedingly occupied and broken up by various things, and I feel more and more my need of being able to economize it. My heart is so depraved, so cold to Christ’s love, so indifferent about his glory, and so unconcerned about the salvation of my fellow-men, that I am almost in despair. I am doing nothing, absolutely nothing, as for eternity. The Lord have mercy upon me!”

“ *Sabbath, April 23.*—I am almost afraid to say how good the Lord is to me lest I become proud, and stumble and fall. He is pouring out on me of the riches and trea-



tures of His grace, so that sometimes I feel as if I had scarce room to contain it. He is kindling once more within me the flame of zeal for the souls of men, and the glory of Christ, and granting me a simplicity, and faithfulness, and earnest application, that seem not altogether unacknowledged. It is all his own; I cannot thank myself for an iota of it; no, no! I deserve nothing but wrath and continued chastisement."

—And on the afternoon of his first communion Sabbath he writes—

"I have now finished the solemn services of the day, and what shall I say? I am ashamed even to think of what He has done. He has exceeded my requests—he has exceeded my conceptions. He has acted like God: I can say no more. . . . I am amazed at this day. I feel now like an empty vessel, longing to be again in the work. Some seemed affected. O that it were the movement of the Spirit! Have yet to preach to-night. O that the Lord were yet with me!"

On Wednesday, May 4th, we find the following entry:—

"*Wednesday, May 4.*—This day attended the meeting of B. and F. B. Society; and it has been indeed a painful day. The question was brought forward whether Socinians and Arians should be admitted to the agency of the society. Some faithful, and, to me, dear witnesses of the Lord spoke; but, alas! they were drowned by the crowd of compromising, worldly-minded friends, or of bold and decided enemies. O my Lord Jesus, I thought of thee and was sad! To see thee thus slighted and despised in the house of thy friends (professedly so) cut me to the heart. But thou reignest, and thou shalt reign despite of all. O wilt thou not arise and separate thy true Church and people, were it by fire and sword, and reproach and calumny, or whatever thou wilt, rather than that we should be thus sunk in the

mass of thy false friends and disguised foes ! Lord, I am thine ; I am weak in body, and it may be that my days are rapidly closing ; nevertheless, thou knowest all. Here I am ; if thou hast use for me, send me ; and I do, after this day's scene, vow that, in the strength of thy grace, I shall more devotedly and decidedly stand up for thee and for thy glory than I have ever yet done. O hear me, and accept me, and enable me !”

But the circle in which he operated was rapidly expanding, and his catholic spirit was no longer satisfied with preaching the gospel merely to those of his own communion. It were nearer the truth to say that wherever he saw a sinner, or could find an open door, he was busy in the work which God had given him to do, yearning over the dead, and seeking to restore them to spiritual life. After preaching in the pulpit of an eminent dissenting minister, he says—

“ I bless the Lord for all that He has done ; but I am not satisfied. I abominate myself—I am asleep, doing nothing, absolutely nothing. There they are, multitudes perishing around me, and scarce one to rescue them. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, O hear me ! I would pierce to thy throne if I could, and tell thee the miseries around me. But thou knowest them : and yet canst thou look silently on ? hast thou forgot to yearn over sinners ? O no, no, no ! What then ? O this mystery ! I had almost vowed not to cease until I should obtain from thee a revival of thy work. But I fear my own weakness. O that thou wouldst strengthen me to prevail with thyself ! Dost thou ask me if I am willing to become the instrument ? Oh ! my heart bounds at the very thought—yes, yes ! Dost thou ask if I am willing to suffer in this work all its reproach and persecution ? O yes ! I know my weakness, and thou knowest my deceitfulness, but, oh ! thy grace is more than enough for me ! Dost thou ask, am I willing that the work should

be done by another hand than by me? O yes, if it *must* be so, thy will be done! but, indeed, I am not willing to stand by, and only see and hear. O I love thee and the souls of men too much to be a spectator! If it be thy will—but, oh! vile wretch that I am, how dare I thus speak to the Lord of the universe? O smite me not to the ground—pardon me, pardon me—I am too base and dishonourable an instrument. I know it, I feel it. Do as seemeth thee good. Choose whom thou wilt. And yet I cannot leave thee, I cannot let thee go. Though thou slay me I shall persist in beseeching thee. O revive thy work!—thou hast promised to do it; but when? Oh! when faith shall take up thy promise and plead it. Give me this faith, for I cannot muster it. Direct and strengthen me in this matter!”

While reading such language, evincing such intensity of feeling, it may occur to some that Mr Macdonald was of a temperament that was easily excited, or that glowed at every passing incident. On the contrary, however, he was calm, sedate, and grave in all his ways, and we believe that no one ever saw him excited as a minister of Christ. Indeed, it was the absence of that animal fervour which is often all that worldly men can feel in the Christian ministry, that made his preaching devoid of interest to worldly minds. His was the power of truth, not of muscular or mental excitement; and where the mind was prepared to receive it, then, like Wesley and others, by the calm solemnity of his style, he produced effects which stirred the conscience, which searched the heart, and pressed the earnest listener to whisper, if he did not cry, “What must I do to be saved?”

He was thus panting, then, in intense anxiety for access to the souls of men. Like Paul at Athens,

his own was stirred within him as he beheld the gross ungodliness that every where prevailed ; and all that he has recorded, or all that is known of his history, proves how anxiously he longed to be an instrument of good to the perishing. If it be true that God gives large desires, and a waiting spirit of prayer, before he grants abundant blessings to a soul, we may surely expect a rich shower of mercies on this servant of Jehovah. He exclaims, Sabbath, 22d May—

“But, oh! how faithless and useless am I! I have done nothing yet—I have been but trifling like a child—I have never yet preached the gospel; no, no! it has been but odds and ends of it; no one can hear the glory of the gospel in any thing I preach! O for the Spirit, the Spirit, the Spirit! nothing will do but the Spirit!”

—And farther—

“Did I not from the first give my life into thy hands?—have I drawn back? Oh! if I have, pardon me; once more take me; I must see thy work. O Spirit, Spirit, Spirit, come, come!”

From Mr Macdonald's Journal it is now easy to perceive that his training was becoming very peculiar. As if there were some unusual work in store for him, his mind is disciplined in many ways into great acquiescence in the will of God, and equal dependence upon Him. At one time his cry is, “O when will He come to my aid!—I cannot go on thus. See, Lord, a poor worm! I cannot conflict with the powers of darkness.” Then he exclaims, “I am reduced to very helplessness itself.” Soon thereafter he says, “The Lord has been very gracious to me, and yet I have suffered myself to be disquieted. O for a

perfect peace and repose in Christ!" By such alternations he was learning how precious is the privilege of a believer—to rest on one who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If he has ever put his own feelings in the place of his God, he is now to be disciplined for that error, and taught to glory in the Lord alone.

It was about this period that he began to preach in the open air, an employment in which he greatly delighted, and where he was not a little honoured by his Lord. We shall have occasion hereafter to refer to such work, but the following extract exhibits the zeal which urged him to engage in it:—

*"Sabbath, June 19.— . . . . .* In the afternoon I preached in a tent in the fields, from 'Why will ye die?' There was a considerable congregation of straggling sinners. Oh! I felt in my element among such. Some careless ones seemed touched, and all seemed attentive. But, oh! to forget the things that are behind—to deem them as nothing! Lord, pity thy poor worthless servant! I have done nothing yet but dishonour thee—I have betrayed thy cause by my weakness and lukewarmness. O arise, arise! Here am I still. What wouldst thou have me to do?"

. On the 25th of June he records—

"I know not what the Lord is to do with me; but I am daily becoming viler in my own sight; and surely, then, a thousandfold more in His sight, whose eyes are so pure. He must surely give me up, as a useless wilderness that *will* not be cultivated. I know He will not suffer me to perish; but what use is it to be spared here, a monument of fruitlessness? O take me not away as a disgraced servant! Lord, hear me—spare me to do something! I am tried, sorely tried. O help me, help me, ere I sink in utter shame and confusion!"

The lowly views which he entertained of his own position and attainments can scarcely be adequately described, unless his entire Diary were made public; but the following selections will exhibit the state of his mind as often as he ruminated on his spiritual condition :—

“ Oh! I am insufficient. I can never pardon myself for a thousand things. Lord, pardon thou me.” “ I spent the day in my study in gainsaying and disobedience, until I was wearied of myself—until I should feel what husks I must eat if I leave my Father’s house but for an hour.” “ O when shall this warfare against my God cease?” “ O for more simple dependence on God! How proud I am! I am amazed at myself that I can never be taught. O for more strength from God! My body is not strong; but, such as it is, I am ready to offer it up to thee, my Lord, and for the salvation of my fellow-men.” “ O to be independent of the world! O Lord, cause thine arm to awake! O how trying to see a few scores only in God’s house, and that men *will not come!* Nevertheless, thy will be done.” “ I have been growing viler in my own eyes. I am heartily wearied of myself; I am so ungrateful to God—so insensible to the love of Christ—so proud and self-righteous—so careless about the souls intrusted to me—so negligent in every duty.” “ None of my flock have yet died, thanks to thee; but, oh! how soon they may! ‘ Son of man, his blood will I require at thy hand.’ Fearful sentence! Oh! ’tis like an arrow in me.” “ O remember what a poor, foolish, wandering orphan I am.” “ I am a child that cannot yet walk.\* My constant cry is, ‘ Pardon, grace, grace!’ I must bestir myself. Hear, hear, O hear me!” “ I felt ashamed that such a wretch

\* He was now preaching somewhat frequently in the fields and suburbs of London. He thus refers to one of these occasions: “ Preached on Thursday night (July 28), in White Conduit fields, from ‘ Behold thy God,’ with more strength than freedom. O help me!”

as I should preach on *holiness*; but I felt that I must go on. O there is a loud cry here for firmness and decision, for breaking the fearful compromise between the Church and the world. If enabled to persevere, I must endure reproach, nay, I feel I must be almost alone. O Lord! arise and have mercy; deliver, deliver me; save thy people and bless thine inheritance!"

To those, we repeat, who remember the gentle composure and placidity of Mr Macdonald, and the entire absence of excitement from all that he did, the fervid earnestness of some of these extracts may appear surprising. Yet they only embody his unquenchable desire to gather home souls to the Redeemer, and to see his work revived in the midst of the year. His spirit was deeply stirred when he saw how the Church and the world were commingled—how the boundary line between them was effaced, till men too often acted as if God and Mammon could both be served. Hence much of his fervour, hence not a little of his most poignant sorrow, and hence his frequent complaints against all attempts to blend the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. But his position was now boldly taken up, and he records—

"*Sabbath, August 21.*—Preached this morning, at seven, in the street (Farringdon), to a congregation of some hundreds, from 'Flee from the wrath to come.' Had comfort and much attention. O the worldliness of my soul, that is ready to be so much affected by the censure of the world! Lord, deliver me from it! In the forenoon, from Isa. xxxv. 8-10, with much enjoyment. O it is sweet! In the evening, from Job xxvi. 14: 'The thunder of his power, who can understand?' herein was enabled to speak some awful truths with strength. The Lord is helping me. O to see

self under foot!—to see the Redeemer's work prosper in my hands! Alas! how loathsome I am! O cut me not down! O send me, if thou wilt! Here I am. Sanctify and separate me for the work."

—Yet this servant of God, soon after thus taking his stand among Sabbath-breakers in the streets of London, to warn them to flee from the wrath to come, writes regarding himself—

"*Thursday, September 1.*—I am becoming every day a greater wonder in my own estimation; such a compound of external profession and internal loathsomeness—of pretensions to grace and of vile lust; so many stirrings of the Spirit and so many self-prostrations to Satan; such declarations against sin to others, and yet such indulgence in it myself; such seemingly clear views of duty, and yet such stubborn determination not to perform it—all these, and a thousand more growing over me, like thick rust on a thin blade, have nigh consumed me, so that I am unfit for almost any thing. And then I am amazed at my own impenitence—scarce a feeling of sorrow do I seem to have. Yesterday, indeed, I was melted into some sweet tears, when reading the life of that very dear servant of God, Joseph Alleine; but it was like a shower on the highway at noon. I see no hope for me but in God. Often does my eye look thither in this drought; but conscience says, 'Remember!' Remember what? That He is holy—O yes! That He is just—O yes! That He is true—O yes! but I will remember what He bids me, too—that He is *gracious*. What! gracious after all this provocation! Yes; nay, rejoicing to be so. Well, I can say no more. O this poor heart of mine! Lord, here it is—a stone, an adamant! Take it—I can give thee no better. O pity me, my Lord!"

We have seen, that when he contrasted himself with other servants of the Saviour, he found that the



lowest seat should be occupied by him. "I have felt myself annihilated," he says, "by the comparison;" and he could think of no mode of advancing his sanctification as he desired, except by some trying dispensation from his God. Yet amid all this, though he would not own it, he was really growing up like willows by the water-courses. His soul still pointed toward God, while he felt that "things were surely coming to a crisis with him, though he left all with tranquillity, while it was sometimes with trembling, in his Father's hands." "My soul burneth," he exclaims, "to have more of the Lord's work.\* Alas! poor wretch that I am, what am I!—and yet the Lord thinketh of me!"

While he thus felt at seasons like a sparrow on the house-top, his health began to show symptoms of feebleness. He was in labours so abundant, and in zeal so intense, that the light which illumined helped also to consume him. But any glimpse of encouragement in his work, any symptom of sinners reclaimed, and the Redeemer's glory advanced, requited and refreshed him. Nor was he indifferent to the agitations of the period which preceded and followed the passing of the great measure of Parliamentary Reform. He says—

"*Thursday, October 13.*— . . . . This is a time of much political confusion and peril. How Christians are disgracing themselves! I am grieved to the very soul. They talk like the world. I would fain tell them so. The Lord help me! O for more faithfulness! My heart beats with longing at the thought of speaking out against the world and hell. O for help in these trying times!"

\* He now preached pretty regularly three times each Lord's day, one of them in the open air.

In the case of one who laboured as he did, and was ready at the call of every thing which he could reckon duty, it might be supposed that study would be neglected, or only superficially carried on; but the reverse is true. Again and again he refers to the need of systematic preparation for the pulpit, and again and again does he condemn its neglect. Though he rarely wrote out his sermons at length, he has been known to study nine or ten successive hours on the days dedicated to preparation for the Sabbath; and his Diary clearly exhibits the solemn importance which he attached to such work. Indeed, it may be said that he composed his sermons on his knees. The presumptuous and the superficial may deem it easy to prepare for pleading with sinners for God: he ever reckoned it an awful work, and both prayed and laboured that he might be guided into the avenues which lead us to the heart. Withal, however, he has said—

“*Monday, October 24.*— . . . . . I never preach a sermon with which I am satisfied, I am such a poor, weak, lifeless creature. I thank my God for bringing me to London, were it but to teach me how little and useless I am. There are sad things going on here—the Church is tossed to and fro—heresies, and miracles, and tongues, are driving men’s souls out of their thoughts. I scarce know what part to act, whether to advance to the charge or confine myself to the preaching of the cross. The Lord direct me!”

“*Saturday, 29.*—I am in a miserable state this day. I feel ready to deny every thing. I can do nothing. God shutteth out my cry—my sins stare at me—I condemn myself as a castaway. I know not if there be a *special* ground of controversy, but I know that there is enough of

a *standing* one. The Lord have mercy upon my poor soul, and upon the poor flock that has such a pastor! I was bitterly chastened in preaching last night; but 'just and true art thou, O King of saints.' . . . . ."

"*November 1.*— . . . . . My self-denial and cross are but mere talking. I am more and more convinced that I am not what a minister ought to be. I find that I have never yet preached the gospel of Jesus. I have been going about and about the mark, but ever shunning it. I need not wonder that the Lord has not countenanced me. If I had preached the glorious gospel of justification through faith and grace more fully, I believe it would have been very different with me. I have been reading the Life of Wesley with deep interest, and with deep conviction too. I long to be of such a spirit as he was of; and yet I have not courage, with all my pride and boasting. With thee, O Lord! all things are possible. Thou canst make a servant even of me!"

While complaining of his lethargy and indolence in his Master's work, and mourning under the conviction that he had "the pride of Satan under the scales of leviathan" to mortify and subdue, he frequented more than ever the throne of Him who sits between the cherubim. He says—

"*Saturday night, December 17.*—I take up my pen, but my soul is in a very dark, lifeless state. I fear for the morrow's work. I am sinking into a dreadful legal spirit—looking for every thing from God in connection with things done in and by me, instead of looking to Christ alone. O thou Spirit that glorifiest the Lord Jesus, breathe on me—I am dying for the want of thee—O come, come, rouse me!"

But we cannot exhibit his state of mind at this stage of his journey Zionward more clearly than by the following extracts from two letters written about

this period. In the first, dated 26th December 1831, he says—

..... "I am now beginning to recover myself from London influences and overwhelming distractions: things are beginning to clear up before me, and to assume a fixed and tangible shape. I find that the old and Scotch propensity of handling every thing is a good and needful one here, and especially so in the religious world—it is very different from what it seems, and a man needs to carry his Bible as a pocket lantern, to look into people's faces. One of my greatest wants is that of true Christian brethren, who might be as a 'sharpening iron to me.' I find good men and brethren, but then they are always running to our points of difference, and will not stick to the 'glory of Christ' as our centre."..... "I have joined the New Bible Society, and trust have done my duty in so doing. I think it is a noble and legible enough protest against the dreadful leaven of latitudinarianism that is abroad."..... "I have commenced a week-evening lecture (Thursday), which my more serious people attend."..... "A few are adding to my congregation; but still we are kept graciously dependent on the Lord, and we desire to continue so, making this our constant petition, 'Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the year.' Oh! if my dear Christian friends in the north knew fully the post in which I am stationed, they would cry much to the Lord for me; and if they really knew what a poor, vile fragment of a thing I am, they would cry still more. I dare not shrink into my chamber here, neither do I want to stride over the field with a drawn sword; but I want to walk the high-road of appointed duty, and fear no man's face and no man's steel. But this cometh only from above."

In the next letter, he writes to his father—

..... "I have now been twelve months in London, and you will perhaps like to know what my feelings are as

to my residence here. I feel convinced that it was my duty to come here—my very discouragements (and they have not been small) tell me so. I can see in them a course of training, needed by me and suited for me. I feel myself stripped of much of that fleshly ardour and spiritual ambition with which I set out; and I feel myself settling down into an inwrought conviction, not a mere doctrinal one, that nothing but the simplicity of God's truth in the hands of God's Spirit can accomplish any thing as to salvation. I have been sobered down into a tolerably low estimate of my own powers, through a severe process in various forms. I am daily finding my level, which it is very difficult to do among partial friends; but at the same time, I feel my soul, from a sense of weakness, taking deeper root in the truth. I feel an increasing ambition to present my weakness as a medium for God's strength; and, amidst all my fearful and aggravated unworthiness, I have reason to bless Him that he has not altogether rejected the gift. Oh! wonderful God. I feel now delivered from the leading-strings of mere human opinions and precedents. I have been obliged to act independently of others, having no arm of flesh to rely on; and I have seen so much of weakness and inconsistency in those whom I had been accustomed to look up to by name, that I have learned to feel more particularly that 'it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' The state of the religious world here is quite incredible. I scarce know whither to turn. I want to love and join myself with the people of Christ, and yet I see so little of the spirit of Christ, that I scarce know where to find such in the cordiality of true love. There is an immense talk about the points of unity, but all seem to stand on the points of difference. But enough of this: I forget that whilst I talk of the mote, there is a beam in my own eye. My congregation is gradually increasing; but, what is of more importance, the Lord often grants me much of his presence in my ministrations, and leads me to the hope that I am not labouring in vain."

It will be noticed, from these communications, how bold and resolute Mr Macdonald had now become in the opinions which he held. Amid all his natural gentleness or timidity, he found that if he would follow the Lord fully he must dare to be singular, and do as he did who exclaimed, "It is a very small matter that I should be judged of man's judgment"—and never was there one who acted more implicitly on that maxim. He did nothing to provoke or invite assault; as little did he outrage the courtesies of life; but wherever the truth of God constrained him, he became firm like a rock, and fearless as one who knew who was his master and guide. No dread of criticism, no pandering to man's opinions, no bending to expediency, was tolerated by him; for he equally shunned the selling of the truth for any bribe, and the betraying of souls under any pretext. One was his master, even Christ: upon him the servant sought grace to live, and not on the vapid applause of his fellow-mortals.

He closed the year 1831 as follows—

"*Saturday, December 31.*—This is the last night of 1831, a year of the utmost importance to me, as being the first of my stated ministry, and my first on the world's ocean. It is a year in which I have learned more of myself, of the world, and of my God, than in any preceding; and one which has brought all my gilded imaginations and towering prospects down to the dust. It has made me, I trust, more simple, faithful, and earnest in my ministry—has made me to lean more on God, and to despair [more] of man than I formerly understood how to do. But how great have been my guilt and deficiencies during the year! O what a fearful tract of neglected duty lies before me!

How many souls left unregarded ! But what is the use of this moaning ?—nothing. Mean I to do any thing ? O Lord ! thy grace alone can enable me. Thou knowest that I desire to take thy Word as ‘ a lamp to my feet and a light to my path,’ and to devote myself simply to it. O help, help, I am a stranger with thee, as my fathers were !”

The new year on which he entered found him, then, still struggling forward in the narrow way. His ministry was owned and blessed to some ; but his complaints were still frequent, both as regarded his dreaded declension and his neglect of duty to the souls of men. On Thursday, January 5th, he says—

“ Here am I groaning under the hellish hardness of my heart. I know not the immediate occasion of it ; but this I know, that it is a fearful thing. I have been neglecting my own soul fearfully in my ministerial work. I have been more conversant with man than with God ; self has been occupying the place of Christ ; and I feel amazed at how I have been making salvation a foil for pride and vanity. I have been most unfaithful to the souls committed to me. I see this more and more every day. I am surely a murderer before God. I feel that I am labouring at present under a temptation of Satan. I have been crying to the Lord, and agonizing—but He will take His own time.”

—And in the same broken spirit he writes—

“ *Saturday*, 14.—Still do I groan under darkness and unbelief. I have been departing gradually from my God, until I have become far off, and scarce know the way of return. I have been crying to the Lord much this day ; but in vain. My cry could not reach him loaded with legalism. O this wretched heart of mine !—what shall I

do with it? I have been striving to come to God as the justifier of the ungodly, but I have no strength to believe or appropriate. To-morrow's work has been heavy upon me in study. O come, thou Spirit of the Lord, and breathe on me! I plead my Saviour's promise; I plead the Father's promise to my Lord; I take the Church's prayer, 'Awake, O north wind, and blow, O south, that my spices may flow forth!' Two years to-morrow I preached my first sermon. O how little changed am I!—how little good done! Lord, pity me!"

The reason, perhaps, of these lamentations is to be found in the deteriorating effect produced by the distractions of a ministry in London. The soul, as he felt, was insensibly dragged downward to the world's level. Communion with God was too often marred, or degraded into a name, and a conscience so sensitive as his felt aggrieved or defiled by such effects. Still, however, his depressing experience was overruled for good. He was constrained to fall back on the truth, that God "justifies even the ungodly;" and he found it, as Luther did, to be the mighty weapon of conquest both in his own and other souls. Though he had still occasion to lament that he found little of the Lord's work going on in his flock—"only a drop here and there," instead of the shower for which he prayed—he cast his burden on the Lord, according to the command, and was sustained according to the promise. "His soul had become like a withered arm;" but, at the Almighty command, he stretched it forth and it was made whole. With deep solemnity he says, and the record contains the philosophy of preaching—"I feel daily, that if I would prosper in my *work*



I must throw myself more unreservedly on the Lord, and *that I and the world must part.*"

At this period of trial and depression he was cheered by a visit from his father, who had gone to the metropolis, as he had journeyed over the kingdom, beseeching men to be reconciled to God. Though the son felt the benefits of such a visit, and recognised in it the goodness of his Lord, he was still deeply self-condemned, and he sat like Job, in sackcloth and ashes. He has recorded—

"*February* 18.— . . . . Yesterday, I entered on my twenty-sixth year. I was not able to set it apart as I would; but, oh! I have had humbling reflections! How useless a cumberer I have been! What have I yet done? Nothing but a little child's sword-play. I feel waxing weaker and weaker, since, on my twenty-second birth-day, I devoted myself to the Lord in a solemn manner. I find now that I can live only by faith. O Lord! I would begin another year of my existence with this petition, 'Lord, make me wholly, only, and eternally thine'—the way I commit to thyself—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!" . . . . "Alas for me! I am sinking under an increasing sense of ignorance of the truth. I know nothing, for I seem to know God in nothing. I am squandering away my life in the merest trifles, or doing nothing at all; and yet I have no heart to reform or apply to my work. The Lord have mercy upon a poor wretch! I am sick of myself, and of my pen; I can add no more for my self-loathing, and yet even this is not of the right kind. Be merciful to me, O God! Be merciful! O quicken me! quicken me!—take thine own way of doing it—only quicken me!"

On reviewing the results of this visit from his father, after a separation of great sadness, Mr Macdonald wrote—

“ *Wednesday, March 7.*— . . . . I bless the Lord for my father’s visit; it has refreshed and edified me much; others too have rejoiced in it—may eternity do so also! It is true that I have not had half the conversation with him which I had anticipated, owing to the unceasing round of engagements he was drawn into; but still I have learned much—may the Lord impress it on me!

“ I have learned that I have been very *unfaithful* as to the grand doctrines of the *cross*, and the grand object of *saving sinners*.\*

“ That I have been awfully *ignorant* of the *truth*, in *doctrine* and *experience*.

“ That I have been shamefully *cold* and *powerless* in my ministrations.

“ That I have been fearfully *wavering*, *accommodating*, and *compromising* in all my ministerial *aim* and *work*.”

It is not possible by any series of extracts, and still less by any general description, to exhibit aright the closeness of this man’s walk with God, in public and in private. At one place he writes, “The Lord is enlarging my soul much in preaching, and lifting me much up above man. I think I know now what it is to stand in Christ.” At another, he records, “I am taught more and more, in this place, not to trust in man. O that I knew more of what it is to live with God, and rest on His arm!” But these, and similar expressions, only show the direction of his feelings—they cannot exhibit either their depth or their heavenly-mindedness. While thus weaned from man, and seeking to glory only in the Lord, he found the truth verified in his case—“ Him that honoureth me I will honour,” for he now says—

\* From the very next entry in his Diary, it appears that he who so complained preached once on Friday, thrice on Sabbath, and once on Thursday, besides doing stated pastoral duty.

“The Lord is pleased to present to me some pleasing encouragements in my work. I find that there are some seeking the Lord amongst us. When I think of my own sloth and carelessness, I am amazed at this. O for grace to awake to my work of saving souls! Alas, that Satan knows me so well! But does not my Lord know me better? Yes; here is my hope, that He will not suffer me to fail!”

We have seen that the opinions adopted by Rev. Edward Irving and his followers had long ere this period begun to disturb the peace of the London Churches. His noble powers, his unwonted and entire ascendancy over thousands of minds, and his personal godliness, which only the profane had hitherto questioned, gave him a place and a prominence in London such as few ministers of Christ had ever possessed. He had been blessed as the instrument of producing a wide-spread interest in religion among all classes in the metropolis; and his influence had become unmatched, especially among the Scottish population. Many among them had been rescued, by the Spirit's blessing on Mr Irving's ministry, from the deep worldliness into which they had sunk; and the melody of joy and health had been heard in many a home where the spirit of the world had reigned supreme before. For a time this state of matters continued, and many rejoiced in the ministry of him who had been indeed a burning and a shining light. But Satan marked with envy the encroachments thus made on a domain which the prince of this world holds as peculiarly his own, and for causes which we need not tarry to investigate, or which lie among the secrets of divine

sovereignty, and far beyond the ken and the scrutiny of man, that light was eclipsed—it was eventually quenched. Opinions the most erroneous, and practices the most abnormal, were adopted; and the Church became a scene for displays which gladdened the godless, as much as they pained and humbled the people of God. Feverish excitement took the place of the spirit of purity and peace. Tenets that amazed by their extravagance, or startled by their novelty, were propounded, while loud condemnations were uttered against all who questioned or denied them. The doctrine of universal pardon—distorted views of the millennium—the peccable humanity of the Redeemer—the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles,—these, and similar doctrines, were put forth. Confusion and many evil works became the result; and those to whose communion Mr Irving still ostensibly belonged, but who contended for “the form of sound words,” could no longer be inattentive to such procedure. Ecclesiastical steps were taken; and the following extract from Mr Macdonald’s Diary is the first that refers to the painful subject:—

“*Saturday, April 28.*— . . . . Last Sabbath evening I preached from 2 Cor. v., last verse, especially the clause, ‘Who knew no sin;’ in which I was helped to maintain the sinlessness of Christ’s nature against the abominable heresy that is now so prevalent on that point. I have been much engaged with my co-presbyters this week, in the case of the Rev. E. Irving. It has been exceedingly trying and painful; but I bless my God who has preserved me in soul and body. O how easy a thing it is to fall, and to condemn the fallen! I cannot at present say more on this subject. What I seek is the presence of the Lord in my soul—per-

sonal as well as official grace ! O Lord, restore me, for thy name's sake ! O be with me on the morrow—hear thy child's cries ! I am needy—O think upon me ! O Spirit, come and breathe on me and on the slain around me, that they may live !” .

Again—

“ *Friday evening, May 5.*— . . . . . On Wednesday, all day I sat with my co-presbyters on the case of the Rev. E. Irving, which terminated in our deciding against him. It has been a most painful case. It has taught me many important lessons, and especially my own weakness. O how subtle error is !—how insufficient I am to stand against it !

“ I have much to say against myself—indeed, every thing that is bad. I am almost spiritually dead ; I have neither diligence in business nor fervency in spirit. O my Lord and Master, behold what an object of pity I am ! O blot out my sins ; remove my guilt—it is as a dead-weight upon me. I cannot lift up mine eyes. I have neglected thy Word, slighted prayer, squandered time, acted without the conviction of faith ; I have spoken beyond my conscious sincerity ; I have sought effect more than truth ; and, above all, I have been seeking myself more than thee ! And is this my return to thee for thy love—thy blood and grace ? Ah ! yes, it is. I have sinned against thee. O my Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant ! O pour out thy Spirit on me—quicken me—put into me burning love and zeal ! Here I am. I throw myself upon thee. O mercy, mercy, mercy !”

On the day to which Mr Macdonald refers in the extract just given, he delivered his opinion in his presbytery regarding Mr Irving's position. Without one vituperative syllable against the greatly fallen man, he spoke with decision regarding his tenets and practices. He viewed the proceedings which then agitated no limited portion of the Church in

this island, as offering "dishonour to that Being who is King of kings and Lord of lords;" and the result was, as we have seen, that he united with the other judges in deciding that the practices indulged and the doctrines held were not in accordance with the standards which Mr Irving had vowed to uphold as agreeable to the Word of God. It was on no merely ecclesiastical grounds that he based his opinion, consistent as he was as an ecclesiastic. He looked at the tenets held, and the practices indulged, as they bore on the glory and the cause of the Holy One and the Just; and from that point of view his decision was easy and simple.—When all excitement has now died away, it is painful to reflect on the necessity that had arisen for such an excision. The strange cause that led to it finds a parallel in the melancholy fact, that even the profound Pascal, who went so far in the direction of the truth, yet without going far enough, when making his will, "implored the intercession of the glorious Virgin Mary, and all the saints in paradise." It appears that the mighty God has decreed that if we will worship idols, we must do it after they have been shivered to fragments before our eyes.

But Mr Macdonald engaged in such things rather from a sense of duty than because he had any cordial relish for them. He regarded the Church, not as a fortress from which to fight, but as a temple in which to adore. He knew that it became him to take part in ruling Christ's house according to his Word, and no presbyter was ever more assiduous than he in discharging that function. But neither that, nor the cares of a congregation which was gra-

dually increasing, with its Sabbath schools, its frequent lectures, and all the appliances which betoken spiritual vitality, could hinder him from the profitable, though often neglected, duty of communing with his own heart. He writes—

“ *Wednesday, May 16.*—My soul is in a very parched state, and my conscience upbraids me with the guilt of this—for I go on thinking, and speaking, and writing, about duty, and yet I do nothing. What a spectacle I am in the sight of that God who gave his Son to die for me—vile, vile, vile! I am ashamed of my own self. I am become quite carnal and worldly. I feel my inability; but it is moral, and therefore I groan under the guilt of it. I see my duty, but I cannot look it in the face, for I feel that I will not do it; there is a bondage on my will, which I abhor, and yet there it rests. O my God! what am I to do? All this abominable abyss of corruption and insincerity is open to thee. Thy Spirit alone can deliver me from this thralldom. O pour Him out on me! Hast thou not said, ‘I *will* do it?’ O that ‘will’ of thine!—is it not stronger than mine? Lord, prevail; conquer this heart and will; take glory to thyself, O mighty One of grace! Make me any thing and every thing thou willest. See Jesus, my righteousness! Amen, and amen.”

About this period he visited Brighton, where his friend, the Rev. Charles C. Mackintosh, minister of Tain, was then residing as an invalid. Both in body and in soul he profited by that brief sojourn, and, as usual, traced his blessings up to the Father of lights. He had sat at the feet of him who found deep-reaching lessons in the fall of a bird, or the hues of a flower, and his grand regret was, that he could not more habitually realize his dependence on Him who is a sun and shield. On his return to London, he

found that he had been appointed to preach for a Sabbath in the pulpit of the church which had been made vacant by the proceedings against Mr Irving. The duty was painful; but, after recording his feelings, Mr Macdonald says—

“ Oh ! it is a hard thing to keep out of the snare of the devil in this place, it is set in so many forms and ways. I feel my need more and more of looking well to my own spiritual state before God. O for a closer walk with Him ! I feel such workings of pride within me, that I tremble for myself, lest the Lord should suffer me to fall to my own humbling and the warning of others. Lord, suffer me not to fall, but uphold me by thy Spirit. Amen ! ”

But his mind was still longing for a wider sphere. There was something stirring within him which pointed, though he scarcely knew it, to some other mode of serving his Lord than his present one. On that subject he says—

“ *Wednesday, June 20.*—My soul is still toward a more extended devotedness to the Lord’s work, but somehow or other I cannot begin. When I read the lives of such men as Whitefield, it is as a coal within me. That there is a spirit of slumber abroad, I cannot but see ; but how to be made instrumental in awaking men from it, I see not—my own sphere is limited so. Yet, oh ! if I walked more with God—were more devoted to Him in soul—should I not have more of His strength and zeal, and would not His providence open doors for me ? ”

Such longings, however, did not unnerve or enfeeble him in the work which God gave him to do ; and he thus refers to the duties of a Sabbath-day—

“ *Sabbath night, 24.*— I would desire this night to raise a special memorial to the Lord’s goodness and mercy



this day to a poor sinner like me. In the morning, dispensed the sacrament at London Wall. Preached from Isaiah lv. 8, 9. Was helped, I trust, to some plain dealing and simple statement of truth. In the evening preached from 1 John i.: 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' Herein I was helped to unfold something of the gospel. My heart burned within me. O that the Lord would pour out His Spirit upon me! I feel the need there is for fresh and new exertion in this matter, but I am frozen up by I know not what influence. Lord, arouse me, and constrain me to become thine continually."

—And in a few days he anxiously exclaims—

. . . . . "I have to lament how little pains I take to have my soul right with God, and tranquillized in Him, through the blood of Christ. O to be filled with Christ! Lord, empty me. Lord, fill me! Pour out the Spirit of grace on me, that free Spirit of thine. O let Him visit this sapless, barren vineyard of thine, and refresh me! O to be thine—make me thine, at any cost! O to be a glory-gatherer for God, through Christ! Amen! Amen!"

While the soul of this servant of Christ was thus bent on his ministerial work, and living on his Lord, opportunities were graciously afforded which he was learning zealously to improve. He writes—

"*Saturday, July 7.*—My soul for some days has been full of thoughts in regard to my work—but are they not vain? I am never satisfied as to my devotedness and activity, always discontented with myself, and yet never doing more. One thing the Lord knows—the panting of my soul for enlargement in his work; and, if it be from himself, I trust he will open a way for it. A missionary life, first abroad, and since then at home, is what I have been ever thinking of—I see such multitudes perishing, and none ready to rescue them. I have a large field here, had

I but courage enough to break through, and proclaim the gospel on the byways and in the openings of the gates. A little more I have done in this way than my brethren approve of, but, oh! it is miserably little.

“I preached last Sabbath morning in Farringdon Street, in the open air, at seven, from Isa. lv. 1, 2, to an attentive congregation—forenoon, from Psalm li., concluding lecture—afternoon, at Swallow Street, from Psalm li. 1-6— evening, to my own people, from Matt. xi. 28. Felt considerably exhausted, and had not much freedom at night. I feel more and more our need of an effusion of the Spirit upon us. O the barrenness of my soul, and the hardness of my hearers' hearts! Nothing will move that heart of man's. Lord, how long, how long?—mine eyes are weary with looking. O come for my help, Lord, Lord, I beseech thee! Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”

—Some of the men who stoutly contend for the dignity of their order, opposed the irregularity of preaching in the open air, as if souls should be saved only on ground supposed to be hallowed. He felt, however, that if he could “save some,” he would gladly forego all notions of professional dignity, as based upon pride, and contrary to the mind of Him who made humility his darling grace. The streets and lanes of the city were, accordingly, more and more frequently the sphere in which Mr Macdonald proclaimed the glad tidings from God to man. These works still follow him, for some are known to be now glorifying God for the lessons which they learned from his lips in the haunts of the Sabbath-breakers of London. At the same time, his own flock was not neglected; nay, we cannot doubt that part of the blessing which attended his ministry among them, was owing to his zeal in winning souls wher-

ever they would listen to his voice. In watering others, his own soul grew; and, out of its spiritual acquirements, he imparted more and more abundantly, from season to season, a share of the unsearchable riches of Christ. It may be regarded as a law in the Church of Christ, that wherever a sectarian or merely congregational feeling pervades a flock, the spiritual life is feeble and declining. They are the catholic and the generous who grow in grace, and more and more largely imbibe the spirit of Him who went about doing good. On Saturday, 14th July, he says—

“ My increasing desire and endeavour in my ministry is, to be more faithful. Simplicity of expression I see to be more and more needful also. May the Lord grant it me! After for a while labouring under the trial of discouragement, I am now beginning to be called to endure a still severer trial of encouragement. May the Lord help me, and keep me humble!”

—And after referring to a sermon on John v. 40, he continues—

“ Alas! that on such a subject I have so much to say from experience. O that the Lord would take full possession of me as an instrument for His glory! My soul longs for such a consummation! I have in prospect to preach to three different congregations to-morrow. I thank the Lord for the opportunity. O for help! Lord, send thy Spirit. ‘ Not by *might*’—O no! ‘ not by *power*’—O no! ‘ but by *my Spirit*, saith the Lord.’ Even so be it unto me!”\*

\* He had by this time secured a high place among the devout and judicious of all the congregations where he occasionally ministered. His simplicity, and love, and unction, drew to him the hearts of all that loved the truth, and he often preached in *three* of the Scotch churches

In answer to his prayer, he says, he had "a good share of work in the vineyard, and yet it seems to me as nothing. What I feel most is the weakness of my constitution—this prevents me from doing what I otherwise might. Last Sabbath I preached in the morning at seven, to a few hundreds;" and, as if to supply a contrast to such a scene, he was about this time presented, along with some of his co-presbyters, to his late Majesty, William IV. "I saw his Majesty," he says, "and kissed his hand; all was a vain show, and has taught me a useful lesson."

At a former period he had hazarded the opinion, that preaching was not the most difficult part of a Christian minister's duty; but experience had now undeceived him. He was daily taught to understand the need of teaching from on high, to fit him for that work, and says, "To preach the gospel I feel to be one of the most difficult works under the sun." Yet rough places were made smooth, for He to whom all things are easy appeared on His servant's behalf. After referring to a communion Sabbath, he writes—

. . . . . "I find that the children have been filled, and are rejoicing in the Lord. And now, O Lord! hold me up amidst all my weakness. O deliver my soul from the enemy! Quicken and strengthen me! Oh! a day in thy pavilion is sweet. How sweet will eternity be when so spent with my God and my Lord? O for meetness for thy rest! O for pantings after it! Spirit of the Lord,

on the same Sabbath. Such entries as the following are frequent in his Diary :—"Morning, at London Wall—afternoon, St Andrew's—evening, my own."

come and sanctify me wholly! I commit myself to thee, Amen, and Amen!"

—The secret is found in the fact that, amid ever-increasing engagements, he continued to commune with his own heart and his God. His endeavour, even to prayer, was—"To study more than I do, I must pray and meditate more; and, above all, I must live more on Christ and grace. O miserable life—how low my holiness—how sensual and grovelling my soul! O quicken, purge, elevate, conform, my soul! O Spirit, breathe into and fill me, that I may live and die for Jesus, my Lord and my God!"

Having been asked by the Committee of the London Hibernian Society to undertake a journey to Scotland to preach on behalf of that Institution, he now gladly consented to the proposal. It opened up the prospect, not merely of benefiting the society, but of gathering souls into the fold of the Redeemer, and on that work Mr Macdonald always entered with alacrity. After a solemn dedication of himself to God in reference to his special embassy, he left London on the 27th of August, and proceeded by Newcastle to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock, and thence to Stirling, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, and the north of Scotland, proclaiming as he went God's message to man. His journal of this tour shows how watchful he ever was—how ready to learn, and how abundant in labour. His registers are brief, but some of them are characteristic:—

"Heard Mr —— preach, but not with the benefit I anticipated. Much vivacity and brilliance, but not much

ing subject. I had much enlargement of soul in both, and all day. I felt something of what it is to be spiritually-minded, and was raised above the world. Oh! the bliss of being faithful for God!—what an undeserved reward of grace he bestows! I have been tried this night already by one who, I believe, is a child of God, but who has been acted upon by one who, I fear, is a proud professor (Lord, pardon me if I am uncharitable), and that whence I least expected it. But, O my God! my reward is with *thee*; my way is not hid from thee in this matter.

“And now, O for grace to hold me up in my goings! I fear, O my Lord! a fall—hold up and retain a poor backslider! O Jesus, dwell in me! O Spirit, dwell in me! Preserve me, O preserve me!”

While trained to discover more and more of the two great mysteries—sin in himself, and grace in Christ—Mr Macdonald was brought to see the close of his second year in London. Referring then to his fears of an early death, he writes—

“*Sabbath afternoon, 25.*— . . . . . I cannot resist committing to writing a thought or two connected with this His sparing mercy. And yet I would rather turn it into prayer, and say, ‘O Lord God! thou hast preserved and continued me. My thoughts were once high, but thou hast brought them low—I thank thee for this. But, alas! how unfaithful, corrupt, and vile have I been before thee! O how much waywardness, pride, and negligence, hast thou had to encounter! I am ashamed to think of it; yet thou hast been enlarging my views, laying to my hands, and much encouraging me by thy presence. But, O my God and Master, Jesus Christ! what availeth my ministry if souls be not saved? Pardon my boldness, but I know this to be near thine heart. I cannot let thee go without a blessing on poor sinners. What is to become of them?—must they die? O no, my Lord! if it please thee,

pour out thy Spirit—it doth please thee. O for faith to lay hold of the promise! O Lord, thou knowest all things! Thou knowest that I want nothing for myself—I have given up many things for thee, and I would count them all but dung. O to give up all things! I know not whether my time be long or short; I have ever counted it short; be it so, I am contented, if thou be with me; only, like Samson at the last, let me slay many. My sorrow of heart, my self-abhorrence, are known to thee. O my God! help me this night to lay hold of the pillars; and whenever the end of my work comes, I shall be at home with the Lord. O for mercy, mercy, mercy! Breathe, breathe thou Spirit of the Lord!—I see my work in vain without thee. How long shall I go mourning?—and yet I deserve all!”

But to prayer, and strong crying and tears, he added assiduous painstaking; and, after referring to another visit to a Christian brother, “then in the furnace,” he says—

“*Friday, December 7.*— . . . . I feel much humbled, and yet much encouraged. His solidity, depth, and constancy of spiritual reflection are riches to me. One or two profitable lessons have I learned at this time from him, directly or indirectly—

- “1. To study more, both generally and specially.
- “2. To exert more energy of that which is in me.
- “3. To have more confidence in the talent given me.
- “4. To be more spiritually-minded.

“My constant cause of lamentation, and source of temptation, is, that I have so little singleness of eye and of aim in my work. O that the Spirit of God would, by Christ Jesus, take possession of me!”

Nor was he without crosses of another kind. On the 12th December, he wrote—

..... "I have been sorely tried this week by intelligence of a distressing kind, concerning one dear to me. I had been anticipating a blow, but not to this extent. O Lord, sanctify it to me! It is a case in which grace alone can act—to grace I would commit it, as in another and similar case heretofore. I know that God is sovereign—but it may please him to grant us deliverance."

—"In the world ye shall have tribulation," was one of the Saviour's bequests to his people; and all who are his have inherited that lot. It is a blessing, however—a pledge of our adoption—a token of the love and care of a covenant God, when we learn, like John Macdonald, to say, "To grace I would commit it all." In that case, our very sorrows bring us into closer union with God in Christ. They show why the Redeemer came as a man of sorrows—why he sent the Comforter to dwell in his people; and they teach us to understand the paradox, that, on the one hand, man can be humble though he believes that he is united to God, while, on the other, he is not dejected though he believes that he is but a worm of the dust.\*

Prior to this period Mr Macdonald had oftener than once been invited to return to Scotland as a minister of religion. But, about the commencement of the year 1833, a special call was given to him from the parish of Fodderty, in Ross-shire. The people and the patroness unanimously concurred in his appointment. The latter, the Honourable Mrs Mackenzie, wrote again and again, endeavouring to persuade him; but, amid all the attractions of such a sphere, and all the openings for doing good which

\* Pascal.



it seemed to afford, he felt the claims of London, or his ties to his people, to be stronger still; and, after maturely weighing the proposal, he came to the resolution of declining that call. And certainly not the least instructive passage in his history is that in which he describes the process by which his mind arrived at that conclusion. All was weighed in the balance of the sanctuary; all was looked at in the light of God's countenance; and every thing was tested by its apparent bearing on the welfare and the winning of souls. He could not "desert his post without a call clearly divine;" but neither could he continue in London without as clear a warrant. He considered the repeated letters of the patroness, the petition of the people, the counsel of valued friends, and the importance of the parish; and all these, aided by the predilection of an affectionate nature for his *home*, swayed him in one direction. But, on the other side, the strong bent of his own mind to remain in London, "the metropolis of Christ's and Satan's kingdoms as well as of Britain," the promising condition of his flock, with his own strong and affectionate ties to it, all forbade him rashly to abandon that sphere. He confesses that he had been, and still was favoured with "much of the Divine presence" there; and as "he had begun to bring his talent for open air preaching (whatever it was) out of the napkin, to turn it to usury," he could scarcely hesitate on the subject. In short, all nature appeared to be on the one side—all grace on the other; but, lest he should decide according to his own will, and not the will of God, he concludes—

“ I feel that no effort of mine is sufficient to strike out light on this subject. *To thee*, then, do I now commit, *O Lord Jesus! Head of the Church*, to guide me to a decision *by the Spirit, through thy Word, and in thy providence*. Thou, O Lord! knowest that I have taken counsel with neither flesh nor blood in this matter—that if I would love rather to stay where I am, it is for the sake of thy *truth* alone, and that I love this place because of what of thy *presence* I have experienced in it, and not from mere worldly or carnal motives. But yet, O Lord! if thou wilt have me to remove to the other charge presented to me in thy providence, then make this manifest to me, so as that I may know it to be duty, and comply cheerfully, notwithstanding all the pain connected with it. Thou knowest in what way to effect this, and how to remove all insincerity and self-will far from me. O do it according to thy promise! I am thy servant. Thou hast called, and in some measure blessed me, I would humbly trust; and now, O my Lord! forsake me not. My sins are many, and have been, even of late, very aggravated: they might form a just ground for removing all grace from me—but that thou art pledged not to do. Oh! then, for thy mercy’s sake, hear me, and send thy Spirit and Word, thy light and truth, to guide me! I must now leave it with thee to make known that which thou hast already determined, as the great Head. O Lord! hear and deliver me when I call. I wait on thee. Send me a token of thy will, and give grace to believe and obey, for the glory shall be thine for ever. Amen.”

In the end he felt that it was not easy to decide the really decisive question—“Is this a call from Christ or not?” but while he prayed for light from on high, he strove to proceed in the path of duty, in the hope that He who is given as a covenant and a leader to the people, would be the breaker up of his

way. He felt that his work in London was not yet done—that he had told but fragments of the truth of God, and proceeded to open it up more freely and abundantly than ever. On Thursday, January 10th, he says—

“I feel now decided to remain in London. I believe my path has been divinely cleared up. My conviction is strong, but humble. I cannot boast, which leads me to confide in its divine origin. In the foregoing pages I have depicted the array of considerations on both sides which agitated me. I was compelled by an inward monitor to give them full and searching contemplation. I gathered together, by conference with Christian friends, all such circumstances as might help me in bringing my mind to a well poised state. At length I felt myself reconciled to whatever might be the Lord's will—to go or stay. I went to his throne and said in sincerity, ‘Here I am, *willing to go!*’ This was the state of mind I was struggling after. I now determined to wait for the Lord to impart that conviction of duty which I could not attain to; and this he did in his own way. I determined on Saturday night to leave the matter over until Monday, that my mind might not be agitated on the Sabbath. After I had done this for a little, all at once there entered into my soul a sweet and tender drawing to the throne of grace. I could not but pray—my heart was broken up, and my eyes filled; and as I prayed, my conviction waxed stronger that I should remain here. This sweet frame I enjoyed next morning also. My soul seemed nearer to God than usual. I had special enlargement in the services of the day, and since then I have felt more spiritually than for some time. I have returned an answer to the lady patroness, declining the charge proffered, and have informed my friends here of my decision, so that all seems now at rest.

“There now seems to remain for me nothing but to en-

deavour to ascertain the ends of this peculiar visitation, so far as I can discover, that I may fall in with them; and also to gird up myself to my work more than I have yet done. O Lord my God! deliver me from all improper feeling in regard to this matter. O sanctify me more than ever! O deal bountifully with my soul, that it may manifest that in this matter I have not been disobedient!"

Few may be disposed to sympathize in the difficulties which were felt on this occasion. It may appear as if a brief consideration might have sufficed to dispose of the question. But this man of God, so humble and obedient to his heavenly Father, had learned that while the words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven" dictate a prayer, they also contain a rule of duty; and he therefore sought to lose his will in God's. Hence his grand anxiety was to discover the path in which he should go, and then cheerfully to walk in it. When his mind subsided, after the agitation of the question, he enjoyed great serenity of soul, and was wont to date an important change in the *effects* of his preaching from the period of this decision. While preaching from such texts as, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" he says that his soul sometimes felt "flooded with grace," and all that he viewed as a token that he was at the post and in the path of duty. Long after this period, he reflected with great satisfaction on the conclusion to which he had been guided. Yet it was true that in the world he had tribulation still; and he says—

"*Friday, February 8.*—I have much reason to groan under the load of sin that rests upon me, and especially that of the want of spirituality. I feel my soul weighed

down by the flesh and the world. Ere I am aware, I find myself in bondage ; and yet it is a guilty bondage! I dare not deny it ; for, though the full amount seems not wilful, yet each step, as it accumulates, is so. More and more am I convinced that nothing but the gracious indwelling and omnipotent operation of the Spirit of God can alter this. Lord Jesus, remember thy poor servant ! ”

At the close of his twenty-sixth year he says that his eyes were but opening to the need of the Spirit's work in the ministry and in the soul ; and as such wishes with him led forthwith to action, he was instant in propounding the truth, so habitually forgotten, that “ no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” At the same time, while he saw truth after truth assailed, and error after error ascendant, his soul rose to the exigency like a seaworthy vessel to the billow, and he writes—

“ *Wednesday, March 13.*—I more and more see, that if I were but thoroughly roused I could do much more in the Lord's cause than I have yet done. I feel often a great struggling within me, as of some latent energy that would unfold itself : it is not ambition—it is something on God's side. I fear that I am often suppressing it. I have always laboured under a false diffidence of myself, or rather of promised grace ; and because I feel not myself capable, I attempt not—therefore I have done but little for God according to the opportunity afforded me.

“ I often feel a strong desire to stand forward more publicly in behalf of truth, and could almost wish to be drawn into its defence, as at present assailed ; but soon am I thrown back by a consciousness of ignorance, and the fear of falling into a snare. In this I would desire to be made to know the will of the Lord.”

We have already had occasion to notice how assi-

duous and painstaking Mr Macdonald was in preparation for the pulpit, and that practice he continued, under a strong conviction of its necessity. At times, however, after preparation, his purposes were thwarted, and his topics changed—and on such occasions he ever carefully watched for the hidden design of Him who sees the end from the beginning. He says—

“ *March 26.*— . . . . I cannot but wonder at the way in which the Lord has led me out of late, in the choice of subjects. My plans and preparations have been almost regularly thwarted, and I have been drawn into subjects wherein there has not been wanting evidence of a divine seal. O for an effusion of the Spirit ! ” \*

As to his success he records—

“ *Monday, April 15.*—For some time past I feel that I have had somewhat more enlargement in my ministry. My mind has become more practical; I have been preaching more to realities than formerly; and I have been endeavouring to be more faithful for God’s word. In all this I would trace the influences of the blessed Spirit, and rich unmerited grace of God, and the love of my blessed Lord Christ. But, O Lord, how vile and unworthy am I ! What wretched pollution in me ! How corrupt is my heart, how selfish, how disbelieving of thy word ! O help me to deeper repentance and stronger faith ! ” †

\* He says under a future date, “ Preached in Crown Court on Sabbath morning, from Prov. xxviii. 13, . . . . was constrained to choose that subject after entering the pulpit ; ” but he had previously preached from that text to his own flock.

† His increasing aim now was to “ come to close quarters ” with men about their souls, taking Knox, and others, for his model. After again reading the Reformer’s life, he says, “ What a poor, soft coward am I ! Lord, help me to be bold for thee ! ”

On the 17th of April, Mr Macdonald was taken ill of a disease which ended in inflammation of the lungs, and for some time his life was deemed in imminent danger. He believed that he was dying, and was "put to it as to the sufficiency of his hope," but found the name of JESUS, when relied on, all-sufficient for the soul. When stretched on his sick-bed, a poor, helpless, and sometimes delirious, creature, he was enabled to rejoice in the words, "It is finished"—he tried to throw himself upon them, and derived composure and strength from the truth. During that illness, it was his frequent endeavour to bear testimony to the mercy of God, the grace of Christ, and the excellency of the gospel; and thus from what he supposed the very edge of the grave, he tried to preach "the Life." Though laid aside from his ministry, and dreading the insidious approach of consumption, he thus strove, as he had opportunity, to witness for his Lord—to declare His wondrous loving-kindness and all-sufficient power.

This illness impressed on him many lessons, which he never forgot. While his body, so wonderfully made, "became like a log of wood or a burning coal"—while his "wandering and delirious mind was incapable of a single effort"—while the world was seen to be a vain delusion even in sickness, and much more at death and judgment—while the thin film that separates time from eternity became transparent, so that the overwhelming future became a visible reality—thoughts took possession of the mind which never were effaced. We quote the following as some of his reflections on his sickness:—

*"How precious the gospel of Christ! This is made evi-*

dent in the hour of affliction. When, through pain or sickness, the soul is disabled—when the man seems to himself utterly useless and worthless—when death seems near, and judgment equally so—when the soul cannot do any thing for itself, and yet something must be done—O how precious is one divine beam of the precious gospel shining from afar! ‘It is finished’—what a rock! Oh! then to lay hold of a promise or an invitation—to throw the soul upon it and leave it there—how sweet! how satisfying!

“*How glorious and all-sufficient a Saviour is Christ!* This is a reflection which I trust I have been enabled in some measure to realise. Every thing I can desire is in Him—*atonement*, to remove my fearful guilt—*righteousness*, to entitle me to eternal life, with all its unspeakable benefit, here and hereafter—a constant *representative* before my holy and gracious God. My *affliction* is but the smiting of His merciful hand, and therefore it is an *ointment* savouring of heaven. *Death* He has passed through, and in it He stands ready to receive me. My present *cares* I can cast on Him, even to the smallest lawful matter; and every thing that is wise, right, and good, He will do for me. I have His own word for all these things. What a Lord and Saviour for a poor, sinful, afflicted creature! How blessed to trust in Him—to see Him by faith, with ‘grace on His lips,’ and ‘the government on his shoulder!’ O that I might continue so to see Him! Holy Spirit, quicken, enlighten, and uphold me in Christ, according to the promise!

“*How unfit is a sick-bed for spiritual exercises!* Many trust to it for their faith and repentance; but how deluded! This I can in some measure attest. It must be an amazing, and, I must say, an additional exercise of grace on the part of God, that can fit the soul for any thing spiritual at such a time. No inherent natural power of man will avail any thing; and yet men will think otherwise. Oh! if I had not known Christ before my illness, what could I then have



done? My very inability to think would have driven me to despair.

“ *What a fearful lack of spiritual-mindedness* has this my affliction laid bare in me! In the day of health I was made sensible of this in some measure by the outbreakings of corruption of a positive kind; but in the whirl of active duty these were soon forgotten. Now, when cut off from other things, and shut up to God and myself, how do I feel? What mind is in me?

“ *Indisposition to prayer.* ’Tis true that, since my illness, I have had some sweet moments in prayer; but for these I am indebted to prevailing grace, not to myself. I am backward and slothful in prayer.

“ *Little relish for the Word.* ’Tis true that the Word has been made precious to me in my affliction; but yet, O how little relish for it! How ready to substitute other books for it!

“ *How little realization of God!* My mind is so carnal and full of the world, that there seems no room for Him—no seeking after Him. O base wretch! thus to act towards my blessed God! Nothing tempts me more to infidelity than to view the atheism of my ungrateful heart. It seems incredible that there can be a God and I not love, seek, admire, and trust in Him. O shine forth, thou that dwellest between the cherubim! stir up thy strength and might! O come for my salvation!

“ *How little desire for the joys of heaven!* When I now endeavour to bring my mind to contemplate death and the joys beyond, O what a shrinking back—what a fearful unwillingness to part with even the prospects of this world!—how much more its objects! I thought, when I was sensibly near to death, that I was willing to die; but O how little of this feeling was spiritual and gracious! The Lord deliver me from all false foundations, either in doctrine or experience, and give me to rest on the grace of Christ, as exhibited in the Word, applied by the Spirit, and having its fruit in spiritual-mindedness!”

When Mr Macdonald was convalescent, but still unable for duty, his father again visited London, and at once cheered his son and ministered to the flock, for a season deprived of their pastor. On the 10th of June, in compliance with medical advice, he left his home for Scotland, and proceeded with his father to Urquhart,\* where he soon resumed his favourite work of preaching, though cautiously, and with restraint, as his recovery was tardy.† His interviews with friends whom he had known before he knew and felt the truth as it is in Jesus, did not pass unimproved. He attended one of those fellowship meetings which are nearly peculiar to the north, and says regarding it—

“It was indeed delightful to hear nineteen different Christians, matured in years and experience, all harmonizing in Christ the centre, and all speaking with a sobriety and force becoming confirmed saints. The passages spoken to were John vi. 57, on the marks of them who live by Christ; and Rom. v. 10, on the marks of them who are reconciled to God.”

His health being at length in a great degree restored, Mr Macdonald left Urquhart in the beginning of September, and arrived in London on the 14th of that month. Next day he resumed the work

\* In connection with this journey he records an incident, which should perhaps be preserved. His stipend in London was small; sickness had made his exigencies considerable; and he says—“I had the night before been acknowledging the justice of God in so chastening, and confessing my unbelief, in that I trusted more in man than in Him; when, just as I was setting out, a kind gentlemen of my congregation called, and put £10, 10s. into my hand. Herein did the Lord reprove and yet encourage me.”

† One of his discourses in Ross-shire was on the second coming of Christ—a subject to which his mind was much turned by the continued fear that his days were to be few.

for which he lived; for though agitated by his return, after an absence of five months, the one object on which his heart was set speedily superseded all other cares. On the 1st October he exclaims—

“ Would to God I could realize the full experience of that text, ‘ Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace!’ I am the sport and victim of sin. Though I see my privileges in the gospel, and the security given me against sin, yet for the sake of a little indulgence I forfeit them. Lord Jesus, Saviour from sin, have mercy upon me! I have no hope but thee—save me, O save me! . . . . Last Thursday met with two brethren in Christ and in the ministry, Messrs Scholl and Monod (Valdenses), and had much pleasure in their company—oh! the oneness of Christ in all his people—admired their simplicity and directness of mind. Same evening met a brother of the English Church (Sandford). O how delightful to find them animated by one spirit! The Lord give me a more single aim and united heart.”

Few would suppose that one of the sins with which Mr Macdonald had to charge himself was, “ trying to live out of Christ;” and yet, testing himself by the scriptural standard, that is one of the transgressions which he confesses and deploras on the eve of a communion. He earnestly prays —

“ O for mercy to remove the guilt of these—for grace to take away their pollution! O Lord Jesus! remember me when I would remember thee. O Lord the Spirit! come, O come—breathe on me and on my flock! We are thine. Father of mercies, manifest thyself to us! O for a fast hold of the promise!—then all were right.”

On October 25th he says—

“ Amidst much and grievous backsliding of spirit of

late, I trust I have been enabled to realize a little of true repentance ; and I trust I have been constrained to seek after a clearer and firmer realization of spiritual life as it is in Christ Jesus. But, oh ! poor, wayward, wicked, deceitful heart, what shall I do with thee ? Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me ! Spirit of grace, have mercy upon me ! O God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me !”

And on November 3d—

“ I have had many and humbling thoughts of my poor sinful self this week ; but, alas ! how little effect produced by them ! O for the promised Spirit to quicken me !—my soul seems dead—my ministry weak and powerless—my cursed corruption is destroying souls. I would be up, yet I cannot. O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, have mercy ! Thou art my life, my only life still. O remember me—cast me not off ! Spirit of the living God, visit me !—do thine own work in me whilst I would exalt my Lord ! And oh ! my heavenly and merciful Father, I would look to thee alone for grace. O that I were directed in the way of thy testimonies !”

And on the 23d—

“ The Lord, by a very humbling and trying process, is bringing me down into the conviction that there is something radically wrong in my present state of mind—something that is as a dead-weight on myself, and as a cloud between Him and me. And yet I want resolution and singleness of aim sufficient to lead me to thorough sifting in the matter. With the exception of a few faint emotions, my soul seems dead—my flesh is as a load on me—the world is as a fowler's net, from which I cannot get extricated. I cry for mercy, but not as a man in earnest. I sit with my hands folded, and yet see the danger before me. My afflictions, wisely and graciously sent, seem vilely thrown away. O God, be merciful to me a sinner !”

## He thus closes the year 1833—

“*December 31, 1833.*—This night this year closes, and with it another stage of my journey is finished; and I would trust that, through the blood of my Redeemer, I am so much nearer to my heavenly and eternal rest. O that my meetness for it corresponded with my nearness to it. . . . . But, oh! in the sight of God it has been a year crowded with *sins*, and amongst them carnality and ingratitude seem the most prominent. Lord, *I repent of them*, and from the heart do beseech of thee to forgive them and remove them. My *spiritual progress* has been small, but I trust sure. I have been driven to the foundations, and, I hope, am a little more conversant with them. I trust I am more convinced than ever, that by grace I must be saved, and that without Christ I can do nothing. And O! if my *soul* were but revived, and my *ministry* blessed, then the Lord knoweth that the two first wishes of my heart were accomplished—*lesser ones* I leave at His throne, and say, ‘*Thy will be done!*’ So would I end this year, and begin the next. Be thou, O Lord! with me, and then shall I say of every thing, ‘*It is well.*’ Amen, and amen.”

The wisest of the sons of men has said that, “the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord,” at once to enlighten and to search us; and that candle was often shining on the heart of him whose life and labours we are describing. His ardent aspiration was for a portion of that zeal which consumed his Lord. Like Robert M. M’Cheyne, he “had no hope but as a worm on the arm of Jesus;” and he leant on that arm. Like Henry Martyn, he feared “lest he should retain the manna of past experience till it putrified in his hand,” and therefore sought his daily supply in direct communion with his Lord. Like David Brainerd, his favourite, and, in some respects,

his model, he could exclaim, "Alas! when God withdraws, what is there that can afford any comfort to the soul?" Like John Love, he was chiefly "engaged in keeping all right within"—but, whatever might be the diversities of his experience, he continued to press into the kingdom, and agonize for immortal souls. When we look into the lives of the most gifted of unconverted men, it is often painful to notice the utter absence of all recognition of the great I AM. Many of them could not have acted or spoken otherwise than they did, though there had been neither a God in heaven nor an eternity beyond the grave. All is of the earth, earthy: the motive, the means, and the end of action—all centre in the creature. But while God is not in all the thoughts of such men—while they luxuriate and revel amid His bounties, to the entire oblivion of Himself—the man of God finds that all is unsatisfying as a dream when one awaketh, until the Creator be also the portion of the soul. Ever feeling after God, Mr Macdonald writes—

*February 7.*—I have much reason to search and try myself before God, that I may discover the secret plague which is at present preying on my heart. I am guilty of fearful laxity in spiritual and personal duty. In ministerial devotedness, too, there is in me an awful shortcoming and dividedness of soul. I feel as if the very foundations of religion within me were ready to be broken up, and as if there were but a slender thread attaching me to my Lord and Saviour. O how much does He bear at my hand!—how patient is He! O Lamb of God, thou hast indeed been to me as a lamb! O take away my iniquities, heal my backslidings, receive me graciously! O put

thy Spirit within me!—revive me, Lord, revive my poor soul!”

“*February 18.*—Yesterday I entered on a new year of my life—it was my birth-day; but I enter on it in a very degraded and self-loathing state of mind. The flood-gate of corruption has been once more opened upon me, and my soul is wellnigh swamped; and did I not believe that I have been set on the Rock of Ages, I should be ready to sink in despair. My only glimmering of light is from heaven: all within me is storm, and darkness, and quicksand. O Lord! out of the depths of corruption and of shame do I cry to thee. O Lord, hear me! Enter not into judgment with me. O my God, return and visit me! Look on thy vineyard within me. My hope, my only hope, all my hope, is in thee. Oh! then, visit me with thy salvation, that this new year of my life, begun in darkness, may end in light.”

He was again harassed about this period by two proposals for his removal to Scotland. His mind was firmly bent on remaining in London, but he found such repeated applications exercising a detaching influence; they served to “stir up his nest,” and he regarded them in the light of trials.

“*February 25.*— . . . . It is remarkable how Providence has been trying me since I came here. Scarce was I in London when I had a proposal regarding R—; then in May 1832, another for the same; September 1832, also to the chapel of I—; then in December, the parish of F—; and now what is referred to above. May the Lord teach me by all these how tremblingly and diligently I ought to fulfil my ministry, seeing that my stewardship amongst my present flock may at any time be thus closed as well as by death!

“For the last two Sabbaths the Lord has granted me much out-going in preaching the truth. Morning, 1 Cor.

ii. 6-11; evening, Gal. iii. 10, on the sinner's relation to the law as a covenant. I have no doubt that some would think my discourses wild, but I see more and more the need of rousing men. May the Lord awaken them!"

But not merely in such matters did he recognise his God—in every thing, by prayer and supplication, he made known his requests:—

" *Friday, February 28.*—I had a pleasant meeting this evening with some of my flock, in interesting circumstances. We had been unexpectedly thwarted in our plans for building a new church. Our promising scheme, when just about to be completed, was overthrown, and we seemed all at once left helpless. I invited our committee to meet together for prayer, special prayer, to confess our past sins in this matter, for which it seemed meet to God to visit us with disappointment, and to implore his blessing on our future proceedings. A few of us did meet, and I had much enjoyment in our service. I hope there was some sincerity among us. . . . O may the Lord hear us! I feel interested in this work, and I feel a degree of trust in the Lord that He will bring us through. O for more self-abasement because of my sinfulness, and to be more weaned from the world and the flesh! Lord, help me, and fit me for thy work, and for thy glory!"

" *Saturday, March 8.*—This has been a day of much humbling and trial with me. My soul was as iron under chastening, I felt as if I would or could not bend; but the Lord has triumphed. After much darkness, I have this evening been much assisted in my work. Still corruption is strong—it is but lurking, not destroyed nor expelled. O my Saviour, help me! Be thou mighty in me!"

" *Tuesday, 18.*—My soul is much pressed down still by the flesh and the world, so that I go heavily. I know the cause of it is that I live so little by the faith of Christ.



I look to my own strength, or am depressed by my own weakness, and in either case I fall into sin. O for grace to live by grace! I am kept in great suspense as to the matter of February 25.\* I know not what Providence may bring out of it. But O for a pure heart and a single mind, and Christ's reign within me; then all were well!"

"*Wednesday, April 2.*—Still does the Lord see it needful to humble me. The process is trying, for He makes myself the instrument. I am always ready to say, 'It is enough,' but God says it is not, and I see it myself too. I would wait still upon Him, however hard to do it; and believe that He will at last prevail. I feel a great want of life in my pastoral work. Personal devotedness scarcely breathes in me. I feel as if I were dying spiritually. It is a dismal experience in the soul, and I see not where it is to end. I cry for mercy, but there is a want of sincerity in my prayers, which tells me, when offering them up, that they will not be answered. O the deceitfulness of sin, and of the carnal mind! O Lord! I am as a beast before thee."

While he felt that indwelling sin had been detected and laid bare, he was no less convinced that its removal had yet to be accomplished; and he writes in this humble strain regarding his spiritual condition—

"*April 18.*— . . . . The process by which the Lord is subduing me, is by writing on my conscience with the pen of self-abomination, and leaving me from time to time to groan under the load of self-sought sin. My cry is, 'Spare me, O my God! else I sink for ever.' I feel strong and confident for a time, my soul rejoices in its supposed emancipation; when God leaves me to myself, and that moment I am weltering in the filth of sin. O this flesh, it is too much for me! When in sickness, I desired resto-

\* His proposed translation

ration to health—it was granted ; but sin comes too with renewed force. I sought restoration to my ministry—it was granted ; but sore, nay, the sorest temptation I have yet had comes with it ; and so I am kept crawling when I would fly, and halting when I would run.

“ My God, I have given myself up, but I have not given thee up. O appear for me, my Saviour !—I cling to thee, though covered with leprosy. O hear me !—I beseech of thee to hear me ! O for the life of the Spirit ! ”

“ *Monday, April 21.*—The mercy of the Lord has been great towards me. I had reason to expect desertion in just judgment for my grievous provocations ; but, behold, mercy came ! O Lord, how manifold are thy ways of humbling thy people ! Yesterday was much helped ; in the evening more than usual, in a very searching and touching subject, Isa. v. 4 : ‘ What could have been done more for my vineyard ? ’ I felt the subject myself, for that night twelve months I lay in the height of inflammation and delirium. May the Lord sanctify to me all his humbling dispensations ! Alas ! that I am so miserably ungrateful.”

His tranquillity of mind was at length restored ; and though he felt ready to “ plunge again into the mire from which he had been taken,” he had learned to cling to the Rock and be safe :—

“ *Saturday, May 3.*—To-morrow will be my communion Sabbath. I feel weak, but contented. My trust, I hope, is in the Lord. I feel my need of His Spirit. O Lord my Saviour, remember me on the morrow ! O send thy quickening Spirit ! My work I do now roll over on thee. Lord, help me ! O may the Cross be every thing to-morrow, and I nothing !

“ *Sabbath, May 4.*—I cannot forbear setting up an Ebenezer to the Lord this night. He hath wonderfully helped me in all the services of this day, the whole of which have devolved on myself. Action sermon from Luke xxiii. 33, on the crucifixion, and evening from Isaiah xiv. 1-5.

I had great outlet. The Lord help me, for I fear a fall. O my Redeemer, help me! My prayer was heard last night, but hear me this night too. O hold me up, Spirit of the Lord!"

About this period he began to bring under the notice of his flock the subject of Satanic agency, as one little thought of and little understood. The Word of God is full of the doctrine, and, to counteract the malignant spirit who ensnares and assails the believer, He has sent an omniscient and omnipotent Spirit to defend him. Rarely, however, does the influence of the evil one hold that prominence among the believer's convictions which it does in the Word of God; and, to bring the minds of his flock into unison with the disclosures of Jehovah, Mr Macdonald studied, and opened up the subject, which ever after held a prominent place in all his ministrations \*—

"*Saturday, May 24.*—I have felt the duty of bringing before my people the doctrine of Satanic influence and agency. I find it much more difficult than I anticipated. I doubt not that Satan himself is endeavouring to perplex and mislead me. O Lord Jesus! my eye is to thee for help—make this subject practical and saving. My sins are many, but thy mercy is great. O Lord, help me! My deficiencies are staring me in the face—my unfaithfulness has been great—souls are perishing, and I am not free from their blood: my flesh and Satan are too strong for me. O Jesus, my Lord and my God, rescue me! I scarce ever remember being so devoid of love to Christ as at present. I am conscious of it, and yet how sluggish—I dare not say self-satisfied—am I! O Lord! arise and deliver me from

\* He has left, in considerable forwardness for publication, a treatise which he was preparing on the subject.

the enemy, who hath for a long time been treading me under foot."

"*Saturday, June 21.*—My corruptions have been strong, too strong for me : they have made me go heavily. I have been preaching on Satan again, but I have had much of it to encounter. Yet the Lord hath enabled me to arise when I fall. But O how mournful a thing to be in this miry clay of uncleanness and filth of sin!—how my soul nauseates it!—and yet I watch not ! My mind has been much dissipated by excess of society of late—every snare surrounds me. O Lord Jesus ! shut not out my wretched cry — I am wearied of myself because of this body of sin ! Save me, O my God !"

"*Saturday, July 5.*—I am wearied with constant complaining of myself, and yet doing nothing ; there seems no end to it. Satan knows me but too well. I am no match for him, and yet in my own strength I am endeavouring to stand and fight. This is the source of all my discomfiture. O for an understanding of that secret—" *living in Christ,*" "*walking in the Spirit !*" God of mercy, pity my deplorable case ! I know I am guilty, and obstinate, and am accountable for all consequences ; but oh ! wilt thou leave me so ? O send thy living Spirit to revive me ! I am grieved by my apathy as to the souls of my fellow-men. It was not so with me *once*—no ! I once felt for perishing men. Jesus, I have stood forth as thine ambassador—wilt thou not have mercy ? O restore me for thy name's sake !"

But he was trained in other schools besides those of personal experience and buffetings from Satan. A brother in the ministry had gone to London, on his way to one of our colonies, and his partner was there taken away with a stroke. Mr Macdonald was much with the dying one and the mourner.—

"*July 22.*— . . . . It has pleased God to remove from this world of evil the dear friend in whom I felt so

much interested. O may the Lord enable me never to forget the solemn and striking nature of this event! I have been taught, I hope in some degree graciously, much important truth by it. She was one of the Lord's dear children. Not one month married to one of his devoted servants, going abroad to an interesting station, when it pleased the Lord to say, 'Come up hither;' and she went. She suffered much, but faith rode on the billows—her darkness and tossings through disease were great, but her anchor was firm. I saw her expire. Oh! it was a solemn and intensely impressive moment. I shall never forget it. There was a last gentle heave—the breath went, but returned not—death gathered over her face. 'This is death,' I said to my heart; 'mark it.' This is sleeping in Jesus. Lord, let my end be in thee, and my head droop on thee! The Lord threw her and her husband much on me, for they were strangers to all here but me. Lord Jesus, I thank thee for this kind favour to me—I consider it a token of thy love. Her husband has been wonderfully sustained, and shown the spirit of a true child. She died on the 16th, and we buried her on the 19th—read over her grave Ps. xxxix., and part of 1 Cor. xv."

While apparently absorbed in the personal and the internal, Mr Macdonald continued to maintain a close connection with those friends of his youth who were like-minded with himself. To one of these, a letter, containing the following sentiments, was written on the 25th of July 1834, and we cannot refrain from asking attention to these extracts, as half prophetic of solemn events which have since transpired. In the Word of God there lie many seminal truths constantly germinating into actual events, and he who studies the bud can often foretell the character of the fruit:—

" . . . . With regard to my position in London," he

says, "I have found it a very needful one for myself; and my call here has been to me another evidence that God knew me better than I did myself. No place can I think of more calculated to subdue my vanity, or to crucify my early aspirations after mere popularity, than this is. Here I have had to encounter the *world* in all its iron and sinewy development against the truth. I have been constrained to lay aside my first armour, which was Saul's, and was cumbersome, and to pick up pebbles from the brook, and sling in God's name. Here I have been made to view man in his kaleidoscope, and to know how hopeless a thing it is to be preaching to such a changing, shifting mass as human nature is. It is in London that you can know fully what, as a minister, you have to contend with—to be convinced of the necessity of the *Spirit's influences*. What God's purposes regarding my future life may be, I know not; but I shall never regret the discipline of my sojourn in London. My charge continues to strengthen. If Providence bring us into our new place of worship, now erecting, I believe it will be much in our favour as to increase, and I hope usefulness also." . . . . .

"You ask my opinion about *Dissenters*. As they are at present, I believe they are a 'whip of cords,' made to scourge the buyers and sellers out of the temple—and that, if we Churchmen were more concerned to know what God designs by them, than what they themselves mean, we should be far more benefited than we are. To say in a bad spirit that another man has a bad spirit, is to give the bad spirit two triumphs for one. This Voluntary controversy has let out a great deal of worldly humour, and bad, diseased blood from the Church—I wish the wound may be washed, and the system purged, by the grace of the Spirit. I believe, from the signs of the times, that our Churches will have a short respite, and a gleam of earthly sunshine; but the elements of overthrow are generating between Whig liberalism and Tory bigotry—the one under the guise of charity, the other of zeal. Political *atheism* will be the

birth. Instead of the political *superstition* of former ages, it will reign. Church and Dissent will then give off to the world all their hollow, rotten, infidel, hypocritical members, and will merge into the simple, unbefriended, persecuted, but pure and spiritual, body of Christ. Such is the view which I feel constrained to take, when comparing 'the spirit of the age' with the Word of God. The time seems come when we must draw on the *Bible*, and not on newspapers or statesmen, for our politics, and think more about the Church in its inalienable and everlasting character as established by Christ, than in its varying and accidental one as established by a nation. Here our faith finds rest, and our hope an anchorage—whilst our love goes forth to discharge an interim duty of defending the truth. It is seldom, my friend, that I indulge in as much of what may *seem* prediction as I have now done; but placed as I am, in the very furnace of politics, I find it necessary to have something to rest on, and which will not prove so variable as sometimes our most trustworthy statesmen seem to be." . . . . .

—But he could not dispatch a letter referring only to such matters, and he therefore points for a little to the upper sanctuary before he closes, saying—

"I am sorry to find, my dear friend, that you do not feel your own spiritual burden removed. It is only the *Holy Ghost* that can effect this. Are you sufficiently conversant with this truth? Remember that the effectual application of truth remains *with Him*, and that He waits to be honoured. *The Spirit's work* is the one thing you need. Read Isa. xlv. 1-6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 27, 31; Zech. xii. 10; John xvi. 8; 2 Cor. iii.; Eph. i. 17, 18. Pray these passages, and pray for them—study the Spirit's work for the purpose of experiencing it."

A short excursion into the country for a few days, instead of his usual recess of some weeks, was the only relaxation which he would allow himself during

this autumn. The flock which he had received in a state of infancy and weakness had gradually increased in his hands, and a new and commodious chapel was in course of erection. His prayerfulness and assiduities were helpful, in a large degree, to the success of the undertaking; for, in one point of view, he aided in erecting the material as well as the spiritual temple.

“*Saturday, August 30.*—I have much to mourn over as to my state before God. I have still to groan, because of this body of sin and death. O for the victory! For some time past it has seemed all defeat. O Lord Christ! when wilt thou triumph? . . . . My present chapel is to be closed to-morrow rather unexpectedly. I have had three years and a half of stewardship in it—may the Lord enable me to give an account of it! All things are reminding me that I am a pilgrim. Lord, do thou remind me, by the teaching of thy Spirit! Be with me to-morrow, to forgive me, to bless me and my people! O Spirit, come, for Christ’s sake!”

He accordingly closed his chapel in Chadwell Street, by a solemn sermon on the text—“There are some of you that believe not,” and then wrote in his Diary—

“My mind is tossed by various considerations; but I need to be humbled. It is a hard thing that I should plunge myself in the ditch—but perhaps nothing else would do; I only wonder at the power of that grace which keeps me from becoming the bond-slave of Satan. O my God! do not let me go, though thus I struggle with thee.”

But amid his diversified and exciting engagements, he was again invalided. The disease, however, was checked; and though he was interdicted from his much-loved work of preaching, he acquiesced in the



appointment, as coming from a sovereign Lord, and says—

“ In this trial—

“ 1. I have another admonition of my frailty, and the delicateness of my frame.

“ 2. But I have also been led to search into my ways, and see my sin and guilt that have entailed the rod upon me—nay, the displeasure of God seems to my conscience connected with one special sin, which I shall leave recorded before God and not here. From it I would turn away with loathing—may the Lord the Spirit impart from his own mind to me that holy loathing! My mouth must be shut to-morrow in thy house—open thou my heart! O almighty Spirit of Jesus Christ and of the Father! come, visit my poor soul—be mighty in me to the cleansing out of sin—satisfy me with the goodness of thy house, and the rich dainties of thy table, if thou permit me to approach thither. O be merciful to me, a poor stricken sinner! Be with thy servant who is to minister to-morrow. O help him! I commit my way unto thee.”

When prevented from dealing with the souls of others, he communed the more closely with his own and with his God—

“*Sabbath Evening, September 28.*—I enjoyed the privilege of hearing the word, and of receiving the communion, this day; and oh! what a privilege, seeing that, for my iniquities, I was forbidden to speak the one, or join in administering the other. Yet I have not been as I could wish. I was scarce in a meet state of mind—so much sleep on my poor soul—such spiritual paralysis—so much confusion of thought. Lord Jesus Christ, how unable am I to live upon thee! Do as my bodily physician is now doing—search my system—alter, renovate it, by thy Word and through thy Spirit. O my Lord! thou knowest the specialties of my case—thou didst create me—thou didst,

from my infancy, surround me with thyself—gavest me a godly father, holy example, religious society, pious conversation—thou didst bestow on me sufficient gifts and talents, a liberal education, and other advantages—thou didst place me in situations and relations for my good, manifesting thy special care for me—didst, after a lengthened and pains-taking process, bring me to the clearer knowledge and faith of thyself—thou hast called me to the ministry and given me a love to the same—thou hast helped wonderfully therein—thou hast carried me on by a constant miracle—thou hast sealed and stamped my work by inward experience and outward seals—thou hast brought me hitherto by thy Spirit: but, O how vilely have I requited thee!—thou knowest thyself, the world never shall. My prayer to thee this night, whilst lying with my mouth sealed by thy finger for sin, is, that thou wouldst at length come to my help—the battle is too strong for me. Oh! tarry not, I beseech thee. I have been trodden under foot of the enemy until my own clothes abhor me. I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God—I call on thee as such. Witness my prayer here recorded. O send thy Spirit unto my help! Lord, I cannot, I will not go on without thee—'tis thy own strength that makes a vile worm plead so! Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, hear this the prayer of my Mediator in heaven. I wait upon thee, my God, according to thy word. Amen, and amen!”

His recent illness, though slight compared with former attacks, combined with other causes to render it expedient that Mr Macdonald should again leave London for a time; and he proceeded to the manse of Urquhart. He preached thrice in Aberdeen on his journey, and “had much enjoyment in the work.” He writes—

“*Wednesday, October 8.*—Visited Pluscarden, where I was overcome by kindness. Indeed, I found myself the

object of such excessive kindness there and in Elgin, that I felt myself relieved by my departure. I felt that I was preferred to my Master; and how, then, could I be happy?"

During this residence in the north, he was as instant as ever in preaching the gospel, and rejoiced to find in some places a work of grace advancing. In the intercourse of Christian friends, amid works of faith and labours of love, his health was gradually re-established. In recording one of his services, he says, "Preached at ——, from Isa. v. 4, with much inward conviction and indifference to human opinion. The people there are conceited and censorious, and I chose a plain and searching subject."—At one period of our Church's history, it was requisite to pass an Act of the General Assembly, to compel ministers to preach against the sins that reigned in their own flocks or neighbourhood; but this man of God found his warrant for doing so in the words and practice of Him who pronounced a woe upon Chorazin and Bethsaida, at the very moment that he trod their streets or gazed upon their pride. The disciple rejoiced to walk as the Master did.

He returned to London on the 28th of November, and on his arrival found that death was doing its work among his flock. Thomas Pringle, a poet of some merit, and the author of several works, was one of their number, and he was then on his death-bed. On Thursday, the 11th of December, the Scotch Church, River Terrace, Islington, was opened for public worship, and on the following day its minister wrote—

“ Was brought, on the evening of the day, to witness Mr Pringle’s death. Sat by him during the last three hours. He seemed to cling to me. Watched his expiring—all was tranquil, and, I trust, safe. The sight has weighed me down much. O Lord, sanctify it to me! Altogether it has been a trying and humbling week to me; but the Lord saw it needful, and I felt it so myself. After the dandling and partial idolatry I had of late to encounter, I had need to be brought low, and look to the Lord alone for righteousness and strength.”

## CHAPTER VI.

Extracts illustrative of Spiritual Progress—His Missionary Longings return—His Views and Inquiries—Visits Edinburgh—His Correspondence—A Brother's Counsel to a Married Sister—His Labours in London—The Neglected Masses—Letter to B. W. Noel—Professor Tulloch's Testimony—The Fruit of his Labours—The London City Mission—David Nasmith—A Christian Brotherhood—His study of Providence—Resolves to become a Missionary—Confers with Dr Duff—Receives an Invitation from the Foreign Missions' Committee—His Correspondence with Dr Brunton and Dr Duff—Proceedings before the Presbytery of London—Republishes Brown of Wamphray's Treatise, "Christ in us the Hope of Glory"—His final Resolution to go to India—Another Letter from Dr Duff—A Believer's Death-bed—Visits Scotland—His Labours there—His Marriage—Leaves Ross-shire for London—Set apart in Edinburgh—Arrives in London—John Somervell—Mr Macdonald embarks for India—Reflections.

THE felicity of man consisted at first in unbroken communion with his God. The loss of that was wretchedness, the restoration of it is joy to the soul; it is Eden replanted, and man placed in it again. The minuteness with which we trace the spiritual history and development of the missionary Macdonald, is designed to throw some light on the path by which man is thus reconducted to Eden and his God.

Amid all that befell him, Mr Macdonald could be satisfied with nothing less than souls. His constant prayer was, "O that God would grant me an inlet to the hearts and consciences of my hearers!" and he was driven, as well as drawn, to this fervour by the gracious correction of his Father in heaven. Of some very peculiar trials that befell him at this period of his life, he says—

"*Saturday, December 27.*— . . . . . But, above all, God is here in love and faithfulness. I needed a lesson, and He has not withheld it. He knows the vulnerable part of my soul, and He has in wisdom reached it. Lord, I have sinned and done wickedly; though in this matter thou knowest my integrity. I have deserved separation from thyself. . . . . O Wonderful, Counsellor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, I devolve this matter wholly into thy hands! Rule and overrule. Accomplish thy glorious purposes, and then take the glory.

"*Wednesday, December 31.*— . . . . . This is the last day of the year; but the longer I live, I feel less taken up about particular days. Every day is now assuming a more important place in my mind than formerly, and therefore special ones become less important.

"I have reason to consider that the past year has exerted a more than ordinary influence over my mind and character. This I feel. I have seen several peculiar providences, have been called to more arduous duties, have been exposed to more peculiar temptations, and have been braced up more in my general work and ministry than formerly.

"I have been taught more of the world's vanity, uncertainty, and evil, even in its choicest objects and pursuits—seen more of the preciousness and all-sufficiency of Christ—have been more experimentally persuaded of the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's work than ever before.

“ And now I would thank God for all his patience, grace, and faithfulness to me, in pardoning me when I sinned, in raising me up when I fell, in cheering me and in chastening me. Be with me now, even unto death, O my God! through Christ thy Son, and by thy Holy Spirit. Amen, and amen.”

That he was daily learning to walk more closely with God may appear from the following extracts:—

“ *January 30, 1835.*—I have reason to bless the Lord, that of late He seems to have granted me some revival in my soul and work. I cannot be altogether insensible to His grace, and would acknowledge it. But I do still walk very unworthily; there is much of the carnal mind—the vain, proud, wandering heart; so much of worldly consideration and sinful prudence in me, that I long to have my shackles broken, and my soul set free. I desire to look to the Lord specially as to the morrow, my communion day. ‘Awake, O north wind, and come, O south, blow upon my garden!’—‘Come, O breath, breathe on the slain, that they may live!’ O Jehovah! Spirit of Jehovah! my only life, come to my aid, that it may be a day of refreshing to thy Church—a day never to be forgotten. O lift me above man, into thine own company and presence, that thy Word from me may breathe of thy power! I tremble from my awful pride and presumption, yet I would trust that something of that joy and confidence which I feel is of thee, for it rests on Christ! For his sake hear me!”

“ *February 14.*—This week has gone rather heavily with me; but it is needful as the chastisement of my sin, and to shut me up to grace. I have had some little trials too, wherein I am constrained to look to the Lord even as to the things of this life. I wonder that my chastenings are so light, when my sin is so great; the disproportion between these two shows the magnitude of grace. Yet I feel my soul opening out more to the ministry of grace.”\*

\* He was at this time invited to become a candidate for Gilecoston

“*February 19.*—The day before yesterday was my birthday, when I completed my twenty-eighth year. I did at one time attach much importance to birth-days, but now I think so wretchedly of myself, and feel that I have been so useless in the world, that I do not desire almost to remember them. I have formed, on such occasions, so many resolutions that I have broken, and lifted up so many supplications which I have afterwards neglected, that those days, in the retrospect, are to me a cause of humiliation; and I feel that I must live from day to day by the grace of my Redeemer. This conviction is forced upon me by daily falls. I am losing all dependence on the moral adaptation of events or truth to produce saving effects without the Spirit of God. I desire, then, to begin this new year of my existence in weakness and self-renunciation—casting myself on the Lord as *my Lord*—waiting on him for the knowledge of his will, and for grace either to do or suffer it. My desire for increased usefulness is increased; but I see not my way in some respects. I have been staying with my present flock, notwithstanding calls elsewhere—and herein my conscience has been clear; but were I to judge from the frequent enlargement and leading out of my soul, either my present sphere will be increased, or I shall be called to a new one, or, it may be, I shall be called home. The Lord fit me for my present duty; and may he enable me to hear when he speaks. I last week felt it my duty to decline an application from Gilcomston Church, Aberdeen. Thus am I ever kept trembling. O that I were stirred up to more diligence towards my people, seeing that our connection is so precarious!”

“*Saturday, March 14.*—The Lord has been dealing graciously with me in preserving me from strong corruptions; yet there are many little foxes that spoil my vine. O

Church, Aberdeen, but of course declined. About the same period he wrote a tract entitled “*Christianity*,” which was issued as the first of a series by the Monthly Tract Society of London. The question, **WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?** is briefly, but clearly, answered there.



Lord! sanctify me wholly. I want more singleness of aim, and more devotedness of soul in my work. The Lord tried me much in my preparation for last Sabbath, especially as to the choice of my evening subject; but I went to the pulpit under the conviction that I had a message from Him. So to-day have I been tried. I have begged from the Lord, and he has not left me empty. O for His mighty converting Spirit! I feel as if in travail for my people; but, alas! there seems no birth. O Lord, own thy work! I would serve thee. Help me for a short time here. O Lord Jesus, I am thine! Come forth with thy Spirit, conquering, and to conquer!"\*

"*April 4.*—For the last two or three weeks I have felt myself more than usually strengthened against sin, and have enjoyed more communion of spirit with unseen things than I commonly do. Yet my imperfections seem to increase; but I am not so dismayed by them as formerly. I feel more confidence in Him whom I serve. My work, I thank God, is, for the most part, a joy to me; and, though more than ever convinced of my utter inefficiency in myself, and the hopelessness of man's self-conversion, I feel more strengthened in the sovereign power of God. I would work faithfully, and wait patiently, knowing that is the least I ought to do, and that the disappointments of a lifetime were but a slight return for all its sins. O Lord! I resign myself to thee, as the fountain of my life, to fill and quicken me. I wait on thee, in Jesus Christ's name. Hear me."

\* The following entry shows the nature and number of his engagements:—"Sabbath, preached morning and evening; Tuesday evening, preached at the Refuge; Wednesday morning, at Mr Meux's; Thursday evening, my own church." *The Refuge* was one of the asylums for erring women; and Mr Meux's was the house of a God-fearing gentleman in London, at both of which places Mr Macdonald officiated almost with the regularity of a chaplain. His accounts of the scenes through which he passed at the Refuge, on one or two occasions, were such as to make the ears tingle. He had also resumed his open air preaching, discontinued owing to the state of his health.

"*Friday, April 10.*—The stirrings and exercises of my soul have not been small of late ; but they have brought nothing to the birth. That God has been moving, by His Spirit, on my soul, I cannot doubt, but I have not been cherishing the work as I ought. My heart has been filled with much zeal for the Lord's work, but my hands are tied up by irresolution. Men are perishing, and I am shrinking. I see my guilt, but have no courage to repent. My grand defect lies in the want of the life of God in my soul ; instead of living to Him, I live to myself. O Lord God, the Spirit, breathe upon me, and quicken me ! O come from the four winds ! The remedy is with thee. O let me not pass away as an unprofitable servant, but remember mercy ! O Lord Jesus, my Master, pity thy servant whom thou hast redeemed and called ! Save me from this evil world ! O make me partaker of thy heart in this work of salvation ! I must look to thee to stir me, and impel me, and guide me."

"*April 18.*— . . . . . On Wednesday morning, at Mr Meux's. Met with Owen the infidel, who seemed to listen attentively to my exposition. Afterwards had a long conversation with him on the faith of Christ ; but found him quite hopeless. It is plain, in such a case, that grace alone can save."

We have already had occasion to notice the workings of Mr Macdonald's mind in regard to the missionary field ; and those stirrings, which were nearly coeval with his spiritual birth, had never utterly subsided. From time to time he felt as if he were not in the path of duty, because they were not followed out to some decided conclusion ; and the struggles which he had often to maintain against indwelling sin, made him fear that the Lord had a controversy with him on some secret account. He now resumes the subject, and it is never again laid to rest till he

passes away to plead for Christ among the idolaters and pantheists of Hindustan.

“*Saturday, May 2.*—The Lord continues to be most merciful to me. I still have a breathing time from the painful and humbling conflict I have long had to carry on against sin and corruption. My soul has been in a resigned state. For the last fortnight I have felt my early workings in regard to missionary work revived in a very strong manner. I have never been free from such impulses and workings; but the presence amongst us of a zealous missionary of our Church from India, has been the occasion of much renewed soul exercise on the subject. I have been endeavouring to think carefully and honestly about it, and I have been brought sincerely to say, ‘Thy will be done.’ Lord, thou knowest that I desire to go or stay, as seems good to thee. The strongest claim on me to remain is, that, within this week or two, the Lord has been discovering to me that He is carrying on a work among my people; and would I be warranted in deserting it? There are souls in travail, and can I leave them? The Lord knoweth that my mind is made up to cut all other ties if He desire it; even the tenderest of them all I have laid at His feet; and, O Jesus! what are all these to thy love? Show me thy will, that I may do it! With thee I now leave it, and do wait. Tomorrow is thy day of special communion—be with us in the Supper—send thy Spirit to bless us. O Lord, the Spirit, come forth from the Father and the Son, and descend, and quicken, and refresh, and elevate us to glory!”

The following extract from a letter dated 6th May, in which he again refers to Dr Duff’s visit to London, will exhibit his views at this period:—

“Of late it has pleased the Lord to increase my love of preaching the gospel, and also in a striking manner to afford me many opportunities of addressing my fellow-men. My groups may be small, but number compensates for the

smallness of each. My hands are more full and my heart has been more satisfied than formerly; and my desire is to be breathed upon and quickened by the Spirit from on high, that, being delivered from animal excitement, fleshly confidence, and spiritual pride, I may devote myself in heart and soul to my Lord Himself in my work. It is only of late that my eyes have been opened on what has made my knees feeble and my hands to hang down, even the lack of the Spirit's power within me. I was full of lifeless words—the cold cinders of truth. They set fire to none, for they burned not in myself; but I think I have had a little kindling: the Lord increase it! I have no doubt, my dear brother in the Lord, that you remember me in your prayers; persevere in my behalf, that I may be quickened; and plead that 'Christ may be my Life.' O what a demand there is in this poor world for exertion and sacrifice! I cannot understand how it is that I am not more moved by the prospect. How can I sit still as I am doing, whilst millions of my fellow-men are perishing around me? Can it be that I am believing any thing more than *words*? Am I believing in *things*? Such thoughts pass through my heart and conscience, but, alas! like the arrow whistling through the yielding air, without leaving a trace. But enough of my poor ailing self."

Farther—

"*May 13.*—That it has pleased my heavenly Father of late to grant me a revival in my soul and work, I dare not deny, but own to the praise of His glorious grace. He has granted a sweet and peaceful triumph over besetting sin, and has opened my heart in my ministry, and also strengthened and kindled me in my work. Yet it is all done so as to convince me that it is wholly of the Lord. Still is my mind much possessed and exercised by missionary thoughts—it is the engrossing object of my meditations, reading, and prayers before God—I cannot in my solitude ask a blessing over my food without a petition for light on the

matter. My anxiety is to have my call made clear. My mind is weaned from every consideration but the *will of my Lord*. I appeal unto Him as my searcher, that that is my only concern now—father and mother, brother and sister, and friends, . . . . . I have laid at the footstool of the throne, as at my Lord's service, so that I shall leave them if He demand. The only difficulty is in regard to my call here, where my work has hitherto been, and where the Lord is owning me. My present determination is to keep the matter unceasingly before the Lord, and to wait submissively on His providence, in my present post, until the call for separation or continuance shall become clear."

He had now occasion to visit Edinburgh, to be present at the marriage of his sister Margaret. His mind, however, was still supremely occupied by the thought of missionary labour, and he hoped that some light would be thrown on his path during his visit to the North. Regarding it he says—

"*Saturday, June 6.*—The Lord has carried me to and from Edinburgh in safety, for which I desire to bless him. The event which led to my journey was comfortably consummated. My sister was married to a man of God, esteemed and respected. I had an opportunity of attending the General Assembly of the Church—an interesting thing to me, and edifying indirectly. I heard little that was spiritual, for there seems still much bondage and occasional wavering even among those who are right. May the Lord grant me more spiritual-mindedness, for I am a sad coward!"

"*Tuesday, June 23.*—The weakness of self is made manifest to me by many falls; yet the strength of the flesh is fearful. I have to humble myself for sad provocations of the Lord; yet His grace has remained unaltered. He has granted me much serious impression of His presence, and some sweet fellowship in duty. I have been enabled to

speak and preach with a solemnity and seriousness of which I have been but seldom conscious. May the Lord own his word! In regard to the missionary matter, my mind has received no further evidence of duty—I still leave it. I want to be guided by the infallible light from above. I have communicated the matter to my dear brother Tweedie, and he views it seriously. O my Lord, guide me! On the one hand, let no undue attachments detain me—on the other, let no vain-glory allure me. If I know my heart, I want to do thy will, and will do it. I feel in some of my services as if I were winding up matters here; and certainly my fleshly likings in this place have been wonderfully taken off. Lord rule—be absolute in me!”

The following extract from another letter to his friend Mr Mackintosh, dated June 24th, should not be omitted:—

. . . . “And now, my dear brother, having made these crude remarks regarding you, permit me to speak of myself. There is a subject of much importance to me as a minister of Christ, wherewith I have been much exercised of late, and on which I desire prayer and light. I feel strongly drawn to the *missionary life*. This is nothing new. When licensed, nay, months before, I felt strongly drawn to go forth to the heathen. I had deep exercise on the subject; though I now see that there was much of the flesh in my impulse at that time, and am thankful that I was not then permitted to go forth in my crude inexperience both of God and man. I made the matter known to my father at that time, and his counsel, together with my own more sober judgment, led me to leave the whole matter in the hands of God, and go on with present duty. But my mind has never since been free from missionary impulse, and from many serious thoughts as to my duty in the matter; yet I have been afraid of them as temptations from present duty. However, for the last three months nearly, I have not been able to shake it off—the alternations of my mind have

been many and great—sometimes I have felt as under authority to decide instantly to leave all and carry my message to them, who never heard it, seeing that scarce any else will do so. Then I subside again, and say, This is a trial of me, to see whether I am *ready* to sacrifice my Isaac; and if I am ready in all sincerity to do so, then the end as to *me* is accomplished. But this passes away in its turn, and appears to me as a cold-blooded application of Scripture, in order to escape the pain of the act itself; and so I am perplexed. The appearance amongst us of our devoted missionary, Duff, and his fervent, distressing appeals, have added fuel to the flame; and the fact that I have had a few years' experience in the ministry, and have thereby acquired a little practical knowledge, and have had some few seals of the acceptance of my efforts, only increases my desire to surrender that which money cannot buy, and colleges cannot give, to this long-sighted missionary work. I speak all this in strictest confidence, as I would not for the world that it should come out until God's will be manifested. There are only two others that know any thing about it, my dear father and Mr Tweedie, who is indeed my brother. I have begged their supplications on my behalf for *light*, and now I beg yours. *Light* as to the duty, is what I now want—the *sacrifice*, if required, I have solemnly vowed to make—that light God alone can give. The whole may end in proving a mere *trial*; be it so. I want in my conscience to see it so, that I may have no festering doubts afterwards. Let me, then, have your daily prayers, and also your *mind* on the matter, whatever it may be, and let it be an absolute secret."

In his Diary he says—

"*Thursday, July 2.*—My sins are great, and cast me down much; but my hope is not taken from me. I am a vile, obstinate transgressor; but the Lord's cross remaineth. My mind is much exercised about the missionary call; but yet I have not got clear conviction as to duty. I am en-

deavouring to arrange in my mind for probable consequences, and desire to hold myself in readiness, having endeavoured to lay all things at the feet of Christ; but let Him do as seemeth good. My mind has certainly had a strong leaning to the work this week; but by such a criterion alone I may not judge. Lord, teach me thy way!"

"*Tuesday, July 14.*—On Saturday, I had another of those special trials which towards me have abounded—a solicitation from the parish of K——, now vacant, to permit myself to be applied for; but this I could not do, and I replied accordingly. What can be meant by all these calls which I have had throughout my ministry here? I have been kept in a loose and detached state of mind and affection. May the Lord teach me! I am not yet able to see my way clear to the surrender of my charge here, and the going abroad to the Lord's work in India; still, my soul is drawn to it, and my heart steals out after it. There is much to detain me here as to the Lord's countenance upon me, and ardent love of his Church; but is there not more abroad in the thought of the perishing multitudes of India, and that scarce any will go to help them? O my Lord! look on this divided heart of mine, which yet in each of its parts is knit to thee—in London or India, I would be thine only. Have mercy! Show me thy path. My sins have prevented light; but O save me from my sins! *All, all is thine!* Lord, use it. How long, Lord, wilt thou leave me thus? O for the calmness of the waters that will move before the softest breeze!"

"*Saturday, 18.*—I have had a second communication on the same subject as on last Saturday, to which I gave the same answer. I feel clear on the duty of refusing such an application at present. I cannot permit myself to be diverted until I have this matter of the missionary call made manifest to me. I feel that to act otherwise might be the quenching of a divine movement within me. I am more and more wrought upon by the persuasion, that the Lord's work is in such a state as to demand some *sacrifice some-*



*where*, in order to stir men up. There is no self-denial amongst us, and we preach it in vain unless we cause men to see it; and, if we cannot attain to this in others, let it be in our own selves. Lord Jesus, if my leaving all that is dear to me (and thou knowest that to me my flock is the dearest object on earth), and following thee to a distant land, be needful for the good of thy Church, 'Here am I, send me!' But oh! leave me not in this perplexity. Make plain my path. Show me some token of thy will. And oh! thou Holy Spirit, who didst separate Paul and Barnabas, and send them to their special work, direct me infallibly as to duty—to go or stay. Pity my ignorance of the way in which thou dost make manifest thy will. Bear with me, and help me."

We have seen that he had lately gone to Scotland to attend the marriage of his sister Margaret. Her husband was the Rev. D. Campbell, then minister at Lawers, near Kenmore, and now of the Free Church, Kiltearn. Soon after Mr Macdonald's return to London, he wrote a letter to Mrs Campbell (July 2), full of counsels such as are too rarely addressed to the recently married. Though the following extract be long, no clause of it should be omitted:—

"Together with health, may the Lord grant you every other temporal comfort consistent with the covenant of grace, and contained therein; and, however much you may desire it, may He never give you any other, lest you fall into sin, which is worse than sorrow. The desires of my heart for you are larger than I can express, for they are spiritual: the tongue cannot speak them, nor the pen write them; but God knoweth and comprehendeth them, and that is all I want, seeing that it is from Him I seek them. Whilst a gracious and all-sufficient Father understandeth my poor lisping soul, I am not concerned about results.

"But there are some of my desires that I can to some

extent express. I desire that *the Lord may be with you in your union*. Your natural life is from Him; hold your conjugal life from Him too, and in Him; seek its continuance in conformity to His will who binds and unlooses as He pleases; and seek its enjoyments no further than is consistent with His holy and spiritual law and presence. That relation which you have formed by His original institution, and in the course of His providential appointments, you must discharge and exercise according to His revealed will. Search out all His mind on the subject scattered through His Word, and study it and pray over it; and thus set the Lord before you, and He will be with you.

“*Love Christ* above your husband—this is essential to true and lasting happiness. I rejoice to think that your husband is one who would love you more for loving Christ better than himself. Be thankful for this mercy, and improve it. It will be a source of increasing conjugal love; for if you find that your husband loves you in proportion as you love Christ, and he finds that you love him in the same proportion, then this will prove as a mutual attraction to the one centre, even the heart of Jesus—and oh! who can tell the serene, pure, ardent, and spiritual enjoyments of two souls at one in Christ! May the supreme love of Christ save both of you from idolatry, and may the mutual reflection of Christ's love and image be the unchanging basis of your mutual delight!

“Be careful, my dearest Margaret, as to your own *personal religion*: let not your change of state prove an interruption to this. You have just been withdrawn, by the kindness of God, from the many anxieties, vanities, snares, and wearisome imaginations of unmarried girlhood; and in a little time you may be called into the many cares, sorrows, solitudes, occupations, and necessary bustle of married womanhood. You are now in a transition state. You have a temporary interval of calm tranquillity and retirement, peculiarly favourable for spiritual improvement

—though, alas! I have too often seen in my own little sphere of observation, that it is an interval too often given up to sloth and indulgence; and therefore that the Lord must soon afterwards arise, with His rod in His hand, to awaken and chasten such slumbering children: let it not be so with you. Bestir you to prayer and the Word now—to meditation, repentance, and faith. Redeem time for the doing of good. Take an active, spiritual, and decided part at once. You have been called to a new and strange scene of action, and this is always an advantage to those who will improve it. May the Lord make you a mother in Israel, even to His own little ones! Be a fellow-worker in promoting your husband's ministry—by prayer, by character, by the hand, by the lip, work for your Lord in heaven. The pious wife of a gospel minister may be of incalculable benefit in winning and encouraging souls; but she who is not so will incur the fearful responsibility of arresting the Lord's work. Render yourself, then, up unto the Lord as His; walk in the Spirit, and seek constant love, light, and strength."

On Thursday, the 23d of July, a day set apart for humiliation before God, Mr Macdonald entered into a close scrutiny of his past life and present condition as before the Lord. To read the record of his profound prostration and abasement is at once humbling and joyous. It is humbling, because it tells that few of us are so holy and circumspect—it is joyous, because it shows what grace can make us. After confessing his sins in detail, he says—

"What might I not have been in personal holiness, and what might I not have been enabled to accomplish for thy cause, had I been faithful to my vows, ministerial and sacramental! Lord, cast me not off! Accept of the poor personal services which I would lay at thy feet. O purge me by thy blood—renew me by thy Spirit! If thou hast any

hard and painful work to accomplish, ' Here am I, send me. I feel my need of such work, to humble, mortify, sanctify me, and to draw me into total reliance on thee. Or, if no such special work, then make me self-denied and unwearied in my present ministrations. Spirit of the Lord, come in unto me and fill me ! O awake, constrain, compel me ! Nothing but divine force, gracious compulsion, can surmount this barrier of flesh wherewith I am encompassed. Break it down—O break it down ! Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner ! ”

While his mind was exercised, as we have seen, by the question of duty as to becoming a missionary, he was also passing through an arduous spiritual conflict. “ I have had a desperate conflict with Satan and the flesh to maintain for some weeks past ”—“ That I shall finally be delivered, I doubt not ; but, oh ! it is an abominable thing to be floundering in sin ”—“ My fight is still desperate ”—“ I am satisfied that there is some crisis of my history approaching, I have of late been cast into such a turmoil and conflict of soul and flesh ”—“ My mind is full of recrimination for having done so little for the salvation of my fellow-men perishing around me ”—such is the language in which he describes his feelings ; and then, in the very act of thus striking his roots deeper into the Rock, he says—

“ O Lord, have mercy upon me, and bring me up out of the pit and miry clay ! O set my feet on a rock ! Pardon, renew me—show me thy will ! Lord, thou knowest that I loathe myself. O what a strange compound I am ! I love thee, and yet do I disobey thee ! I love Christ, and yet I pierce Him ! I love thy Spirit, and yet I grieve and quench Him ! O for the revival of thy work in me and by me ! Give me holy and triumphant vengeance over the

serpent and his hosts. Lord, save sinners by my poor services. O Spirit of the Lord, breathe on me as a dead corpse before thee!"

Matters were indeed now converging. He says that it was "with pain and impatience that he walked the streets" till something was done in regard to the object on which his heart was set—preaching Christ to the heathen, if such were His sovereign will. But the heathen at home were not neglected, To Farringdon Market, and White Conduit Fields, as places for open-air preaching, he now added Islington Green,\* and Coldbath Prison Fields; and on the eve of proclaiming the glad tidings at one of these stations, he exclaims—"I have the sweet prospect of preaching three times to-morrow, once in the open air: Lord, help me to be faithful and loving—Spirit of Christ, breathe on me and quicken me."

In recent years much has been said, and not a little has been done, in the hope of extending the influence of religion to the neglected multitudes in our large towns; and every Christian philanthropist must eagerly long for the time when the truth shall find its way into their desolate, and too often godless, abodes. About fifteen years ago, it was statistically ascertained that there were at least half a million of immortal beings in London alone, without ministers,

\* In a note, Rev. Dr Hamilton of London says, "Soon after my coming to London — joined the Church as a young communicant. He was one of the fruits of Mr Macdonald's ministry. He was passing while he was preaching on Islington Green, and being struck by the sanctity of the man, and things which he said, he sought out his Church and began to attend it. . . . I have no doubt that the Spirit of God had sealed the truth in his heart and conscience."

without churches, without any to care for their souls, and that, too, after allowing that Popery, Socinianism, and Judaism are religions. Like a fermenting mass, these hundreds of thousands are spreading moral desolation and death far and wide over the community; and so overgrown and overshadowing is the evil, that nothing but national resources are adequate to grapple with the aggregate of degradation, or provide means for its alleviation. Among the various devices which Christian benevolence has adopted, we are not sure that sufficient prominence has been given to open-air preaching. No doubt, it is attended with many disadvantages. The effects produced may be deemed transient and evanescent, and we confess that they may be so. But God has honoured such means, and why should we despise it? This man and that man have been born of the Spirit under that agency. The wide world knows how much Whitefield achieved by such labours, and perhaps, did we honour God more, he would honour us more in this mode of plucking brands from the burning.

But whatever we may think of such measures, Mr Macdonald's mind was clear and decided, and he lost no opportunity of thus proclaiming the truth. His attractively mild demeanour, his pathetic pleadings, which were in harmony with the strong love of his glowing heart, and his solemn appeals to the consciences of men, often arrested the loiterer, or assailed the sinner on the streets of London. His practice in this respect attracted the attention of many who watched for the souls of men, especially of the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel; and in the year 1835, the fol-

lowing letter was sent by him to that gentleman, who then meditated some systematic plan for the amelioration of the outcast and neglected :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—You expressed a wish that I should set down in writing what little information I can give you as to my experience in out-door preaching. I regret I can be of so little use in this matter ; for my special pastoral duties, a degree of anxiety for my health, till lately very insecure, and, above all, a baneful habit of spiritual sloth in reference to my Master’s real work, have much impeded me in the discharge of those duties ‘out of season,’ to which I am as certainly bound as to those which are generally considered ‘in season.’ During the summers and autumns of 1831, 1832, and 1834, but chiefly of this year, I have deemed it my duty and my privilege to embrace the opportunities afforded me to preach in the open air in various parts of London ; and my testimony, feeble as it may be, is most decidedly in favour of that most necessary mode of reaching the mass of our irreligious population, to which, with primitive simplicity, you have called the attention of the Church. I confine myself strictly to my own experience and observation ; and if my testimony should in any respect differ from that of others, I can only say, under the inspection of witnesses, that it is mine. . . . .

“In *Farringdon Street*, at the gate of the market, at seven in the morning, I have had a congregation varying from 200 to 400, perhaps 450. At *White Conduit Fields*, within a tent (where I have generally found the congregation to be smaller, and perhaps more select than could be desired), from 100 to 300 persons. On *Islington Green*, during this summer, I have marked a considerable increase. I have preached four times there during the season, on the Sabbath afternoons—on the last two occasions to congregations not much under 500 persons. Here there was a considerable nucleus of well-disposed persons, members of my own and other Churches, which is an advantage in

attracting others, and in preventing, perhaps in some degree, such minor interruptions as may be checked by the presence of external respectability.

“As to the general demeanour of such congregations, so far as my experience extends, it has been of the most satisfactory kind. I have not personally met with any interruption worth calling such. I have met with uniform attention, and have often witnessed a most striking change of expression, and sometimes deep emotion, in persons who were hearers not by design but accident. The fluctuation of hearers I have not found to be great; true, there are passers-by, who stand perhaps only for a minute and then proceed on their way; but of those persons who have remained for a few minutes, I have found that a very small proportion depart in general before the conclusion of the service. I should say that fifty out of five hundred is an over-statement of the number of such persons.

“In Farringdon Street, I have often been gratified in being surrounded by a congregation, the greater part of whom were evidently of the very lowest order, in every sense of that term—wan, grisly, ragged, diseased, profligate, debauched, hardened, and apparently inclined to scoff through ignorance—they seemed a present realisation of our blessed Lord’s favourite audience when on earth; and yet I must say, that my reception among them has been uniformly of such a kind as to encourage my heart, and banish such cowardly misgivings as might be excited by the silly, but cruel, remarks of those Pharisees who are to be found within a Voluntary as well as an Established Church. The trembling limb, the reddening eye, the declining of the head, or the fixed gaze, and the gaping mouth, have often evinced the temporary impression produced by the simple appeal to heart and conscience among those who were truly of the ‘publicans, sinners, and harlots’ of London. Nay, I will add, though formerly accustomed to all the comfortable peculiarities of an Established Church, though not wholly a stranger to the intellectual pleasure of addressing a well



educated audience, and though richly enjoying the present endearments of an attached flock, I have felt as if I could even part with all these for the pure, sober, spiritual, humbling, bracing, and Christ-conforming pleasure felt in addressing the multitude of those poor and wretched persons whom human pride casts off, and Christian love does not take up—for whom the Voluntary cannot, and the Church will not, make provision. I pray God, that the awful statements which you have made on this subject, may prove as a conducting-rod for heaven's fire to consume and quicken—to consume all hindrances, and quicken all activities in the Church. There is an evident crisis in Zion's warfare—there is a clear breach made, and *still* left, for her armies to enter by. If *they will not*, oh! is there no 'forlorn hope' among her sons that will peril all for Christ's sake? Excuse my boldness in thus expressing myself—for the subject is one on which I have felt, and still feel, strongly. You only asked for a few facts, I have also given you feelings; but these latter you know how to detach from the former, for any purpose save inward experience.

“There are some further observations which I had thought of making in connection with the subject of your request; but they are not new, and have nothing of the importance of discovery. What I have written, you are at liberty to make any use of, in any shape or degree you please.

“That the Lord may bless you with a strong heart and an unflinching hand, in that most despised part of his holy ministry referred to in this letter, and to which your soul has been of late directed, is the prayer of yours faithfully, in the ministry of Christ,

“J. MACDONALD.”

Need we wonder, after this, to hear Professor Tulloch say, in a letter (3d January 1848) upon the subject—

“It was not till I met him in London in 1836, that I had any idea of the zeal with which he prosecuted the great, the only object of his life—the winning of souls to Christ. I sometimes accompanied him in his preaching visits of mercy to those who appeared as if steeped in misery, and I have witnessed the effect produced by the announcement that the way to the throne of grace was still open, even for them. Never did the words of our Saviour, ‘that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you,’ occur so vividly to my mind as when witnessing the effect of my friend’s appeal to the consciences of those wretched outcasts.”

Mr Macdonald’s difficulties, regarding his future lot as a servant of Christ, were not to be speedily removed :—

“*Tuesday, August 25.*—I find it is more easy to speculate regarding the Divine will than to discover it. My mind is still exercised about the missionary call. I have set my thoughts in order in another record on the matter. I had determined then to *wait* on the providence of God to give me light ; but I am tried by this, whether it be not my duty to advance and present myself for the work, and whether that may not be the step in providence which is to decide me. Then, on the other hand, though I have not presented myself to man, have I not to the *Lord* ? and if He has sent the call, and accepts the offer, will He not prepare me a way in so far as regards man ? O Lord, show me thy will, teach me thy way, relieve me from all doubts, and fit me for present duty !”

“*Saturday, September 19.*— . . . . My workings as to the missionary work abroad have been subsiding ; yet the Lord knoweth that I have not drawn back. Lord, all things are still at thy feet—I am still at thy command. O stir me up to whatever my hands can find to do in my present sphere, that so I may be in the spirit of readiness for thy command ! O help me on the morrow to glorify

Christ thy Son, and to show forth thy righteousness and grace in salvation!"

"*Saturday, October 10.*—For a week I have had a little respite from war of soul; yet, oh! how thankless and unwatchful am I! Truly, if Christ did not keep me, I should have perished long ago. O what fearful havoc is the flesh making in the world and in the Church! It is Satan's covert way of attack. O Lord, help me in to-morrow's work! O speak by me, and prepare me as a chosen instrument!"

"*Wednesday, December 2.*—I trust the Lord has been with me on the two last Sabbaths. I have had much freedom and boldness vouchsafed me. I am convinced that the grand cause of the lowness of the Lord's work amongst us, is the want of the manifestation of truth to the conscience; and this cannot be attained to without a close walk with the Spirit of truth. O for more of this! In regard to the missionary work, I feel as if my mind were progressing towards it; but I am much tried as to duty. Lord, shine upon me, and banish my darkness. Must there not be something selfish and carnal in me, when I am so long in deciding? Is it a feeling of self-importance, as if I were needed here? I fear there may be something of this. Lord, help me to crucify it! I had some interesting fellowship with my dear brother T—— on the subject last week. He is so self-denied in his friendship, that he encourages my advancing. I have written my father again, asking counsel from him. O Lord! thou knowest that my mind is single, and my desire simple, in so far as I know myself."

But he was not utterly engrossed with these engagements or inquiries, pressing as they were. Amid them he thus wrote to a much-tried friend:—

"I have been much concerned, my dear Mrs ——, to hear of your prolonged ailment of late; and though I have not for some time written to you, I have not been

without an affectionate remembrance of you. Your trials, since you came to seek and know the Lord, have not been few nor small. You have been put into a furnace of every sort and of every temperature. You have been tried in relations, property, family, person, and spirit. You have had to taste of the vanity of the world, the sinfulness of the creature, the frailty of the body, and the corruptions of the soul. In the day when you gave yourself to the Lord, you accepted His covenant, embracing in it all its provisions for sanctification. These are not revealed in their details until they are sent forth and experienced. We have embraced the grand result in the promise of holiness. Then in succession, with an occasional breathing-time for our weakness, our trials come forth in all their exquisite but painful adaptation to our several corruptions. The Lord is an unerring archer. When a deadly corruption has reared up its head and its hand to slay us, and when, in our spiritual lethargy, we are ready to yield ourselves up to its power, He speeds a shaft from His covenant bow that fixes in our corruption, and that cannot be extracted until He comes Himself to relieve, bind up, and heal us. It is not *we*, but our sins, He would slay. The destruction of our idols is our safety." . . . . .

The fruits of his holy ministry now began to appear in various ways, and in one of his letters he says, "I find some small blossoms appearing to form, but O the blighting winds of London!" But as his sphere enlarged, and his success became more apparent, he says that he was often "tempted to spiritual pride and personal vanity, till suddenly some trial came, and he was plunged in the ditch till his own clothes abhorred him." His success prompted him to deeper thankfulness, while the measure of health which he had enjoyed amid his labours suggested the inference, that the God who gave it

had still work for him to do. Without ever laying aside his armour, or supposing that his duty was done, he, in season and out of season, stood forth to work the work of God, and, amid all his self-abasement, even while exclaiming that he was "proud as Lucifer," his Lord was training him for the highest places of the field. He says—

"*December 31.*— . . . . The important feature of my experience has been that of the exercise in regard to the missionary work. Since the month of April last I have been under it, and still am as much as I was then. I see not yet the path of duty with conviction, though I desire to see it, unless I grossly deceive myself. All remains at the feet of Christ. I feel equally disposed to go or stay. This matter, however it may terminate, has been overruled for instructing me in self-denial, so that I understand it better than I did before, and, I trust, have been enabled to preach it more effectively. Perhaps the call may go no further than to produce this effect. If it do not, I can see a wise and gracious end in it; if it do, I trust I am ready to arise and depart. The Lord help me!

"As to openings of usefulness this year, I have had my usual Sabbath and week-day services. I had much pleasure in my Tuesday evening meetings with my young men. I have, with much satisfaction and encouragement, carried on my Wednesday morning expositions at Mr Meux's. My attendance at the Hackney Penitentiary has been not unacknowledged; and my open-air preachings during the summer and autumn have much encouraged me. I have also got acquainted with Christians who have been profitable to me, and especially Noel.

"Lord, for all thou hast done for me and by me, I thank thee, and would conclude the year in the words of thy servant of old: 'And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee.'"

About this period no little activity was displayed in various portions of the Church in promoting the spiritual welfare of men. Different denominations of Christians were provoking each other to love and to good works. Godly ministers and members of the Established Church united with the more judicious and devoted among the dissenters in urging forward various labours of love, and, among other schemes for advancing the highest interests of men, the London City Mission was commenced. A simple-minded, imperturbable, and resolute servant of Christ, David Nasmith, is known as its founder; but he had many coadjutors, and many with whom he took frequent counsel. Among the latter ranked Mr Macdonald, who, from the first, entered with zeal and energy into the measure. He prayed for it—he assisted in planning it—he wrote for its magazine—he became one of the examiners of the applicants for the office of missionary—he frequently addressed them after they were elected—and, in short, did all that thorough devotedness and a congenial spirit could achieve in an undertaking which he ranked among the most Christian of his day. Without seeking the work, he was gradually drawn into it; and on no department of his labour did he ever reflect with greater satisfaction. “In the morning sow thy seed, in the evening withhold not thy hand,” was his maxim, and he eventually saw that both were prospering.

Though the controversy regarding Establishments was raging with great violence, and not a little rancour on both sides, at this period, even that could not wholly hinder the intercourse of congenial minds who found their common centre in the heart of the

Redeemer. About fifteen ministers of different denominations—Presbyterian, Independent, Episcopalian, and Baptist—statedly met in the vestry of Mr Noel's chapel once each month, during the very heat of those discussions, and none more cordially enjoyed such re-unions, spiritual or mainly devotional as they were, than Mr Macdonald. The oneness of the Lord's people in all the Churches was held by him with something like the force of a passion, and he rejoiced in every opportunity for its visible manifestation. In common with all who frequented these meetings, he felt humbled yet encouraged, cast down yet emboldened, by them. The mellow and deep-toned godliness of Mr Harrington Evans—the simple-hearted and loving piety of M. Scholl, now the persecuted minister of Lausanne—the devout and earnest spirit of Mr Noel—with the lowly bearing of Mr Macdonald—formed a group on which the eye but rarely rests on earth, knit together in the bonds of an affection which death will only deepen and complete. The mere recollection of such things prompts one to inscribe upon a transient world, "*Tinnit; inane est.*"

This devoted man, however, was not self-satisfied :

"*February 17, 1836.*—I do not know that I have ever felt a greater absorption from the world than for some weeks past—I am incessantly occupied, and, I trust, chiefly about the Lord's work. Yet I have to confess and bewail a great lack of spiritual-mindedness. I fear I am suffering the work of Christ to take His place within me—the kingdom to take the place of the King. My soul is not in that sweet and placid frame which I could desire, though I have still an assurance of Divine favour. I have also to say, and I bless the Lord for it, that I am not aware that

I have ever been brought to form so mean a judgment of my own self as of late. In a moral and intellectual point of view, I seem to be quite incompetent for any thing; yet the Lord is prospering me in many things. I am still shut up in soul as to the missionary work. I have heard from my father, yet that helps me not, save to convince me that light must come from my blessed Lord. O when wilt thou show thy way to thy poor, unworthy, waiting servant? Lord, if thou seest that I am now waiting, O show it to me, and turn my heart towards thee! This is my birthday, and I now complete my twenty-ninth year. The Lord have mercy on so old a sinner! I have nothing to say for myself, save that I renew my surrender of soul, body, and spirit, unto the Lord. May he employ me in his service now, and afterwards receive me into his presence, is all I ask! O Lord! I think I will be contented to be the least of thy servants, provided I have most of thine image. Grant me the indwelling of thy Holy Spirit to keep me for thee, and I am satisfied. Lord, show me thy way, and cause me to walk in it!" . . . . .

"*March 2.*—For a week or two past I have had a little respite of soul from sin in its more violent assaults, and have felt more superiority of mind above this poor world than I have been conscious of for a long time past. I have been enabled, I think, more clearly than ever, to find out that, for a long time past, I have (however unconsciously) been wrong in my ministerial practice. I have been labouring to exalt myself, seeking to be some great one. This is a fearful and radical sin. I have often suspected its existence, but it now seems palpable to me, and I think I can trace it back through the whole vista of my past ministry. Need I wonder, then, at the many humbling dispensations I have had to conflict with—need I wonder at the many stripes laid on my pride? O no! wonder only, my soul, that we have not been both cast into hell. How Christ has made it consistent with His divine glory to bear with me, and in some things honour me, during a course



of spiritual speculation on my part, I cannot comprehend. The unsearchable mystery of His grace seems but just opening on my view. O for a soul to embrace it! I see now I must reverse my personal and ministerial procedure—I must be *least* of all, yea, I must go down into the depths after my Lord. But, oh! how is a proud devil to do this thing? How is self to become extinct? I know not, but *thou* dost! Into thy hands I commend my spirit. I feel as if something were nigh unto me—what it may be I know not. This only I beg, O my own God and Saviour! empty me of my own self, and fill me with thyself—then all will be thine!”

The roots of sin, spread through his whole system, still vexed and grieved him, though he felt that the tree was cut down. Again and again he was on the eve of taking some decided step regarding foreign missionary work, and it is obvious now that his mind is steadily advancing in its inquiries and convictions. Every little incident—the gift of a book, such as the *Life of Thomason*, a missionary minister, the hearing of a sermon, or a casual conversation with a missionary, added fuel to the flame. He still, however, committed his way to God, and prayed and trusted that he would shed light upon his path. “My congregation,” he writes, 19th March, “seems not at present in a flourishing condition as to increase of numbers: what else may be doing in it, the Lord knows;” and in that condition his zeal grew stronger for that department to which his heart had so long been turning. He thus writes—

. . . . . “I seem to myself fit for nothing but a beacon to others, to warn them against self-confidence, sloth, vanity, cowardice, and lukewarmness in the Lord’s work. Such is the wretched conviction I am brought to at the

end of five years. Lord, I lie like a dead corpse at thy feet. Have mercy, O have mercy! I do not entertain the smallest doubt of thy love towards me—no, O my Lord!—but I basely requite thy love. This I mourn over. Revive me by thy Spirit, for thy name's sake!"

—It was his strong conviction that the Lord makes known his mind to his people, in providence as well as in the Word, when the latter is consulted as the interpreter.\* Under that firm persuasion, matured by him wellnigh into a system, he now arrived at the conclusion that he must decidedly take up his position in the missionary field, and he records it in the following memorable words:—

\* Some may reckon the following incidents trivial. He connected them with Him without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground:—  
*"Saturday, July 30.*—Whilst in regard to my missionary cares I meet with no marked providence to decide me, yet it would seem the design of God, for whatever end, to keep the matter before me by a variety of little incidents of an unexpected kind. Last Saturday the Rev. Dr Duff called on me, with Mr A., the new missionary to Calcutta. On Monday I went out to Norwood Green. When alone in the parlour, I opened a large volume; it proved to be an Atlas, and the place which opened to me was Hindustan. That night I was a little exercised about the matter in prayer. Next day returned to town—meant to have come down at Fleet Street, but all at once determined to go on to St Paul's; first I intended alighting at the east end, but changed my mind, and came down at the west; then I would have turned up by one of the alleys into Newgate Street, but changed my mind and went along the front of St Paul's; when I saw Dr D. and Mr A. ascending the steps. I immediately followed, and we stood alone under the stupendous pile. I felt peculiarly in this most unexpected and transient meeting. Were time and distances so exquisitely balanced without a design?

"Again, last night, I was astonished on being asked by one of my people whether I was not going out to India as a missionary? This is one of the most important elements in the matter yet; for such a report may prove a forerunner to some decision in the matter. I still feel perfect confidence in committing all to the Lord's decision. Again would I say, Lord, decide for me! I would not be biassed by circumstances which may be mere trials; yet I daily see that nothing in the system of providence is to be despised."

“ *Tuesday, March 22.*—I know not what may be the result of this day’s exercise of soul—it has been a momentous one to me. *I seem to have determined to go forth as a missionary*—I say *seem*, because I can scarce realise even the decision of my own mind. As an *act of my own will*, it is now *decided*, and I have taken God to witness upon it, with this single petition, that if I am labouring under mistake or delusion, He will rectify it and deliver me. My soul has been easily, freely, yet irresistibly, drawn to its determination this forenoon. I am calm and composed as ever in my lifetime. There is nothing in my view but a simple act of obedience to Christ. I seem to myself as a mere cipher taking its place where the ciphering hand would have it to be. Lord God Omnipotent! I have nothing to say of myself—I am afraid of my own act, lest it should be wrong; or, if it should be right, lest I should withdraw from it, through unbelief and weakness. I have not considered futurities or consequences; they belong to thee—manage thou them: this present act of duty alone do I regard. O God, my Father! O God, my Saviour! O God, the Spirit! I am now holiness unto thee. Keep, O keep me holy to thee in this my purpose and act!”

He still dreaded to advance, however, without a sufficient warrant. It was suggested to him by a missionary of another Christian body, just returned from foreign service, that, as a minister, his call should come through the Church, and that, if she neglected her duty, she should be stirred up to discharge it. While perfectly unchanged, therefore, in his purpose, he resolved not to put it into execution till such a call as he now desired were given. He felt “in the condition of a living sacrifice,” and “held himself given up to the work.” He waited for the Lord’s orders, and the calm which his soul enjoyed when he had reached that point,

was viewed by him as a token that he was in the path of duty. "He who knoweth all things," was his solemn appeal, "knoweth that my honest and single desire in this matter is to do His holy and gracious will," and he felt that he was not left in ignorance regarding it. "My will, I trust, is holding on, through the crowd of Satanic suggestions, to meet my Lord"—was his language at this crisis. "*Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas.*"

Mr Macdonald now gave utterance to his sentiments through the press, in a series of articles published in a London periodical, which lived only for a year. He there brought prominently out the twofold character of the Church, as first evangelical, and secondly evangelistic, and regarded the Christian ministry in the latter light, rather than as referring to any definitely settled sphere. His mind at the same time was feeling after full information. He preached, he spoke, he conferred with missionaries, especially with Rev. Dr Duff, who was then in London, and all tended to deepen and strengthen his convictions of duty. Instead of adopting the convenient maxim, "*In magnis voluisse sat est,*" he felt that mere wishing might be hypocrisy—Christ and his cause demanded action, and deserved it.

Between May 14th and July 19th he made no entry in his Journal. The following, under the latter date, will explain the reason:—

"It is now a long time since I have penned my mind in this record. My thoughts have been conflicting—my duties have been more than usually pressing and numerous—my time much occupied—and my mind indisposed at night for any additional exercise. I have, during the in-

terval, to own much of the Lord's favour in my ministerial work. I do not know that ever I have had sweeter thoughts of Jesus Christ than of late. Yet my sins have been many and great. The Lord have mercy upon me!

"Still is my soul engrossed about the missionary work. I have found no resting-place, save in my duty from day to day. What to do I know not. I feel that I may not shake off the matter, and yet I have not felt at liberty to take any direct step in it. As to this latter point alone do I feel any anxiety—Is it my duty to place my services at the disposal of the Church, or is it not? I feel the realities and solemnities of such a step rising up before me with more force than heretofore; yet I know that in Christ I am complete as to all the strength I may need. When I need resources, I know they are open. For a few days past I have felt much the force of this appeal, suggested to me in prayer, 'To what course would the love of Christ constrain you?' I feel that it would be a higher tribute to His love to go abroad than to remain here. Does it follow that, therefore, I am called to depart? O Lord! I am in a strait betwixt two—decide for me."

On the 21st of July he wrote again on the absorbing question to his valued friend, Mr Mackintosh of Tain—

..... "The claims of a perishing world and of a dying Saviour's love have been swelling out, sometimes almost overwhelmingly, on my soul, and then in that very proportion has my own sufficiency been disappearing into mere nothingness. I have been brought to see, however, that the omnipotence of the indwelling Spirit is commensurate with all demands, and can render the weakest footman in the Redeemer's host more than a conqueror; so that I cannot escape by a sense of insufficiency. I have been, and thus still am, shut up to look the matter full in the face; and thus I wait, afraid to recede or advance one line, save by authority. I can say, I trust in truth, that I

am waiting orders, and am willing to go backward or forward, or stand still, as may seem best. Pray for me, my dear brother, that it may be given to me to discern, choose, love, do, and suffer the Lord's will in all things." . . . . .

To one who habitually remembered like him that "the hairs of our heads are all numbered by God," the slightest incident came fraught with a lesson. About this period some thoughtless hearers left his flock because they deemed him an Arminian, and nearly at the same time others withdrew because they suspected he was a Calvinist; and while he could so balance these contradictions as to discover the emptiness of human opinions or applause, he sometimes viewed them as warnings that his ministry might not be designed for London. These, added to other trivial incidents, took hold of his mind, always susceptible, but now doubly so; and, like the rain-drops producing a flood, promoted the grand result at which he soon arrived.\*

Through many alternations of experience and view, India never faded from before him. He waited for what he would deem a warrant to go forward, and it arrived. On the 2d of November he records—

"How peculiar are the circumstances under which I now write! I have before me a letter received yesterday

\* It should be noticed, however, that his services were sometimes signally honoured by God at this time, among the outcasts to whom he rejoiced to minister. A scene occurred at the Refuge, near Hackney, which we dare not describe, but which he regarded as one of the most remarkable passages in his ministry. Another incident shows how his services were enchain'd. A lady, on her way to church, lost her gold watch, or had it stolen. She did not miss it till Mr Macdonald had begun his sermon, when she communicated the mishap to her husband. He was fixed, however, by the minister, and only replied, "Never mind; hear ye!"

from the Convener of the Assembly's Committee on the India Mission, inquiring into the reality of my reported sentiments on that subject, and making to me a definite proposal of entering on their field of operation! Thus are all my past exercises brought to a bearing. The only element which seemed wanting, an external and personal call, seems now introduced. What am I to do? Is this a *call* from *Christ*? This is my only concern. I feel now that a *reality* is different from a mere anticipation. The mind becomes confused and perplexed, and the flesh shrinks before a vast and solemn reality. I feel what a poor, ignorant, helpless creature I am. To the Lord alone can I look. What is *thy will* in this? Let thy Spirit, as heretofore, teach me! I have taken the step, before a definite reply, of inquiring into the nature of the post proposed to me, that I may judge of it; and there for the present I leave it."\*

Mr Macdonald's next step is thus described—

"*Saturday, November 12.*—After another week's reflection my mind has somewhat subsided again, and I feel contented that the providence of God should take its due course. Step by step is the safest way for a child to walk: so would I move. I sent a reply last week to Dr Brunton, stating my mind for a length of time past, as it has actually been, and inquiring into the nature of the proposed post; since for all I am not even naturally fitted. Should a definite reply come, then must I bring matters to an issue. O may the Lord help me!" . . . . .

In his reply to Dr Brunton, dated 1st November, he says, with that mixture of judiciousness and humility which so remarkably characterised him—

. . . . . "Permit me, however, to say, that there seems one grand difficulty to interpose between me and effective—

\* The letter from Rev. Dr Brunton, then Convener of the General Assembly's Committee on Foreign Missions, is marked *private and confidential*, and is a highly judicious document.

ness as a servant under the Assembly's [Committee on] missions; yet it may be removable. The principle of your India mission demands resources, literary, scientific, and classical, which I do not possess. I have ever been but a poor secular scholar. For nearly seven years my whole time and energies have been devoted to the teaching or preaching of the gospel of Christ, publicly or privately; so that now, both as to disposition, ability, or calling, I could not, with faith, accept any post in which my main work would not be to communicate the knowledge of God's holy Word. Be assured that I honour the Assembly's scheme, and hail its blessed fruits. But all have not the same gifts, neither have they the same calling. You can still find some of noble and sanctified attainments, as you have already done. I feel that I could only act as a humble teacher of God's Word of grace, in whatever form might be found most expedient.

"I trust, then, I shall not be misunderstood, reverend and dear sir, when I would inquire into the nature of the post which you would be inclined to assign me, in the event of my being led to enter into the venerable Assembly's service abroad. Such information might contribute much to a speedy and satisfactory decision." . . . . .

Dr Brunton as judiciously replied:—

"EDINBURGH COLLEGE, *November 11, 1836.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I have communicated your letter of the 4th, as yet, to nobody but Dr Gordon. He gives me the satisfaction of his entire sanction to what I am about to state in reply.

"If your way be clear in other respects, we have no doubt of your qualifications for any department of our work which may be intrusted to you. It is true that we find even scientific instruction to have a direct spiritual tendency in India, because what the natives call their science is so entwined with their superstitions, that every exposure of the absurdities of the one shakes, by inevitable consequence,



the authority of the second. It is also true that he conveys elementary instruction best who knows his subject the most thoroughly, provided he can bend to the circumstances of the learner. But it is equally true, that, for all common purposes, what is elementary knowledge among us takes a far higher grade in India; and that the charge which our missionaries take of elementary teaching is more that of superintendence than of personal teaching. No precise line of duty is marked by us for each individual member of the mission; we have always found them willing to accommodate each other, and to co-operate in such way as they thought each might do it most efficaciously, under the Divine blessing, for the furtherance of the common work. . . . .

“ Yours faithfully,

“ ALEX. BRUNTON.”

In his answer (16th November) Mr Macdonald expressed himself satisfied with the plan proposed, and agreed to “go forth in the full freedom of an ordained minister of Jesus Christ, to carry on, in connection with the missionaries already abroad, the work of evangelizing the heathen in the form most practicable and expedient.” He was anxious to “be at liberty, under the Church’s control, to exercise spiritual discretion as to the precise mode of labour in which he might most effectively engage, according to his sense of ability, or conviction of duty;” and with this announced, he intimated his purpose to bring the proposal made to him under the notice of his co-presbyters in London, and so to open up the way for entering on “any sphere or form of his Master’s work.” A formal application was accordingly sent by the Committee, inquiring “whether he would accept the situation of one of their missionary

ministers at Calcutta?" in answer to which, after explaining his proposed mode of procedure, prior to leaving London, Mr Macdonald says—

"In reply to your private note, I may state that I consider the terms of the invitation, 'Missionary minister,' as quite satisfactory, leaving me to hold the preaching and teaching of the glorious gospel of the blessed God as the grand end (to which I was ordained), whilst bound most harmoniously to co-operate in subordinate means, which become the channel of this stream of grace."

So far the momentous matter is arranged—at least it is in progress: the judgment of the presbytery formed the next stage in the procedure. But there is one, we mean Dr Duff, whose public pleadings and private converse had largely influenced Mr Macdonald's mind; and a stirring letter from him on the occasion helped both to guide the inquirer and deepen his previous impressions. It is characterised by that large-hearted generosity, and that high spirit of Christian enterprise, on behalf of perishing heathens, for which its author is signalized, and went glowing to the heart of him to whom it was addressed, who records, that it at once "encouraged and stimulated" his mind.

While these negotiations were proceeding, Mr Macdonald conferred with his co-presbyters, searched with lynx-eyed scrutiny into his own principles and motives, and yet could not swerve from the great object of his aim. "Help me to confide in thee, by the power of thy Spirit, and through the grace of thy Son," was his prayer; and it was answered.

His "peace and composure" of soul continued with slight interruptions, amid all that he had now

to encounter. He had trials of a most touching kind to endure; but the severest blow can be borne through Christ strengthening us—he believed that, and “endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” Amid these trials, he was taught to feel that they were light and merciful, compared with the misery and degradation which crime occasioned to others. He was often the witness of scenes which none but those who watch for souls, and come into close contact with them, can ever know; and after mingling as a counsellor in some of these, he exclaimed, “O merciful God, what dare I say of trials after that!”

He now set apart a day for solemn self-searching in reference to the call to India from the Committee of the General Assembly, and records,—

. . . . . “These special sins I plead to—

“Great *neglect of thy Holy Word*, as to the perusal and meditation thereof, and living by faith thereon.

“*Restraining of prayer*—limiting it—hurrying it—and entering vainly into it.

“*Distance from God*—not walking with Him in all things, nor setting him before me—not serving the Lord. . . . .

“*Levity*, too, does often haunt me; and, when indulged, does often mar my soul, and weaken the impression of God’s truth.

“But *vain-glory* does, above all, mar my soul and my work. O Lord, how have I sinned against thee in this! Thou hast been contending with me, and tumbling me into the ditch; but I have been setting myself up instead of thy dear Son, and thinking of my gifts as if they were mine own! Out of this have sprung *talkativeness* and *boasting*, whereby I have often grieved thy Spirit!

“These special sins (and many more there are, even as the hairs of my head) I confess, disallow, repent of, condemn, and, by thy grace, will resist, mortify, and crucify.

Lord, in regard to them, I take refuge in Christ's blood and righteousness. O, pardon, justify, accept! O hold me as righteous, for Christ's sake! and, by thy Spirit, show me thy ways, teach me thy will; for I desire to do it, and will, by thy grace, do it."

Mr Macdonald was now, as he records, assailed with some vehemence by friends who sought to turn him from his purpose to dedicate himself soul and body to missionary work; but they only made him more circumspect and cautious, lest he should take any step before he felt his footing to be firm. He was at one time wellnigh tempted to leave the matter to the decision of his presbytery; but as he knew that they were, by their affection, in danger of becoming parties rather than impartial judges, he shrank from that step. He became more and more anxious for light on both sides of the agitating inquiry as to duty, and fervently exclaims, "Lord, show me thy ways!—O help me, O breathe on me!"

We do not tarry to detail the different stages of this affair before the Presbytery of London. Mr Macdonald's record of December 27th will suffice to unfold the tenor of the proceedings.

"*Tuesday, December 27.*—The absorbing matter of my attention at present is advancing now, step by step, towards a consummation. I find that to throw all things into their appointed channels of providence, is duty, and brings peace. On the 13th, I laid the matter before our presbytery meeting, and they appointed that, as a first step, my congregation should be called to appear for their interests. They have, accordingly, had meetings on the subject, and have drawn up a Memorial, which was this evening presented to the presbytery. The disclosure made therein, and by com-

missioners who spoke in addition, was of a humbling and rejoicing nature. I knew not that the tie between us was so strong, or that the Lord had so blessed my work. O my Lord! keep me humble and dependent—hold up my goings! I have great peace of mind vouchsafed unto me, and I feel that the spiritual world is as real as the natural. O the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, how substantial and sure! and the Spirit's work, is it not also so? I know not how it is, but my mind *seems* as a tide, moving irresistibly onwards without effort; every obstacle seems but an additional attraction. What am I to make of this *bias*? what place ought I to give *it*, apart from other circumstances? Is it that 'stirring up' spoken of in Scripture, *preparatory* to a call to work? This point I must more look into. O Lord, how tremendous to the flesh seems the trial now in prospect, if this be a true call! But what is it to thy cross? Do this for *thee*? Yes, my beloved Lord, and a thousandfold more, I trust, through thy grace, if needful. O keep me, guide me, strengthen me, carry me with simplicity, purity, and integrity to the right end!" \*

While passing through scenes so trying, he thus closes another eventful year—

"*Saturday, December 31, 1836.*—This evening closes another year. It leaves me as it found me, a poor and vile sinner; but, I trust, also saved in Christ. I have nothing to say of myself or my doings—they are before and with my God: there I leave all. I close this year in great, yea, utter helplessness; my decision is not yet come, but my soul

\* The Memorial presented to the presbytery by his flock is of a most touching kind. It concludes with these observations: "The congregation would submit their case to the earnest and prayerful consideration of the reverend court, praying that you may be directed by the great Head of the Church to counsel their beloved pastor to such a decision as will best promote the glory of God; praying, also, that their pastor and themselves may be made clearly to discern what is the mind of the Spirit, and to bow to it willingly, in assured confidence that God will support them if found in the path of duty."

waiteth on the Lord; the matter is in my Advocate's hand; He will obtain and send me, in due time, a deliverance.

"The year has been one of great conflict. Satan, through my flesh, hath raged most furiously against me, and hath sought to tear me; but the Lord hath prevailed, not I; and I am, though with many wounds and noisome recollections, brought thus far in safety.

"During this past year, I have had much encouragement in my work; and yet, on the fruits I can scarce lay my hands. Others have said much; but I see little decision; still I am bound to believe that my work has been prospered.

"I am bound also to record, that I have tasted and experienced more of the realities of the divine life during this past year than ever before. The love of Christ has been more defined and real to my mind; also the power of the Holy Ghost and the truth of the Word I have discovered more than heretofore."

But while thus waiting, nay, struggling for light, regarding the foreign field, he was not neglectful of any available means of advancing the cause of Christ at home. He republished, about this time, John Brown of Wamphray's treatise, CHRIST IN BELIEVERS THE HOPE OF GLORY, with an introductory sketch. The subject was congenial. The author was one of the worthies who contended to the death for the crown-rights of the Redeemer; and in putting his treatise into the hands of Christians, the editor caught a portion of Brown's own spirit. Mr Macdonald unconsciously sketches his own character in the following vigorous and graphic paragraphs of his preface:—

"In Brown of Wamphray's ministrations," he says, "we have not obtruded on our famishing souls that oily sentimentalism, or that iced intellectualism, which so abound in

this epicurean age of the Church; but we have the true bread, just as it has been gathered—wholesome and nutritious. O that, amidst the multitudes of our *popular* and *evangelical* preachers and writers, we had but a phalanx of *godly* and *spiritual* men like him—men of heart, men of business—who would in right earnest negotiate between the Prince of life and dying men, and not merely transact between a dead doctrine and a blind intellect!—men who will not ever be substituting the vague idea of ‘religion’ for the living person of the Son of God, or ‘moral influence’ for the personal operation of the Holy Ghost.

“In contemplating a past age, through such a work as this, and in contrasting our present character as a Church with the ‘worthies’ of that day, have we not much reason to be ‘stirred up to call upon the name of the Lord, yea, to take hold on him’ as our covenant God, that He may come in, and dwell with us, and in us, as our Hope of Glory? Have we not much reason to pour forth our hearts, saying, ‘O the HOPE of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble! why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry but for a night? Why shouldst thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet thou, O Lord! art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not!’

“O do we not, in these our days, need a race of men, full of strong and ardent *love* to the living and divine person of our Lord Jesus Christ? who can discern between the Master and his service, and love the latter for the sake of the former—men who can discriminate between the infirmities of the flesh and the image of Christ, so as to love that which is His in spite of all that mars it.

“Do we not need men of *humility*, contented to decrease provided Christ increase? ready to live or die, to work or cease, to do or suffer, under Christ’s eye alone; not desiring notice or advancement from man, but thirsting only for that ‘favour which is better than life,’ and wist-

fully catching that eye whose beam glisteneth upon us in secret and silent power ?

“ Do we not, amidst our multitude of covetous worldlings, and laborious earth-worms in the Church, need a race of *holy* and *heavenly-minded* men, who shall pursue after holiness more than riches, and whose evident and supreme ambition shall be, perfect conformity to, and constant fellowship with Him who sitteth in heavenly places, even the Son of God—who shall speak of heaven as those who do really thirst for it, and who would even now prefer it to earth, were their Lord’s work but done, and His purposes completed ?

“ Need we not also a race of men, in whom Jesus of Nazareth may be evidently seen dwelling by faith, as their sole and cherished hope ?—men who will breathe Christ, reflect Christ, diffuse Christ, savour of Christ, and glorify Christ ; so that every work to which they set their hands, every gift they give, every sermon they preach, every prayer they offer, may be perfumed with the unction of His name ; and so that the world might be compelled to say, ‘ These men also have been with Jesus ? ’

“ Is there not need amongst us also of a band of *self-denied* men, who, by reason of their living and indwelling ‘ hope of glory,’ would lay all things at the feet of Christ, and, taking up their cross, would follow Him whithersoever he led them ?—in whom it would be seen, as in the days of Zion’s martyrs, that in their meekness, purity, and zeal, they were ‘ living sacrifices,’ ready to be offered—who would stand bound by cords of love, which they would not loose and cannot break, to the altar of Christ’s service—and whose only voice would be, ‘ Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ? ’ O how would such confound the armies of the aliens !

“ Need we not men so filled with the *Holy Spirit* that He should become their very life ?—men full of joy without levity, full of peace without presumption, full of might without pride—men promoting the kingdom of Christ by



their evident happiness, and strengthening their brethren by their constant hopefulness of mind—who should at all times so act, speak, and suffer, as they who are living temples of God the Holy Ghost, ever ‘rejoicing in their hope,’ even when constrained to exchange Saul’s armour for David’s sling and pebble—men not blustering in their speech, nor vaunting in their tone, but advancing in the silent consciousness of God dwelling within them? O for such men of God amongst us!

“And, lastly, do we not need an army of Christian men, who shall never think that they may sit at ease and rest them, that they may doff their armour, or hang up the gospel trumpet in selfish silence, while hundreds of thousands in their own land, and hundreds of millions over the world, are trodden under foot of him who ‘was a murderer from the beginning,’ and are daily burying in the pit of eternal death, ‘WITHOUT HOPE?’” Jesus is *our* hope; by the *gospel* has he become such to us; that gospel of ‘Christ in us our hope,’ we hold *on trust* also for those who are perishing around our dwellings and over our world; for ‘God *would* make known this mystery among the Gentiles;’ and to *us* he hath committed the work of its publication.

“Men and brethren, let us arise, with Christ in our camp as the ‘Hope of Glory;’ let us each one shake off our sleep of selfish ease; let us arise and take possession of *our* promised land, which is not Judea, but the *world*. O when shall that day once come, when all Christians, in their every calling, shall live for this, not as a subordinate, but as a primary end, that ‘every creature’ in Britain, and ‘every creature’ in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and ‘every creature’ over the whole world, may hear of the blessed mystery of ‘Christ in us the Hope of Glory?’”

—“Whether I am to go or stay, my mind is strangely taken off the world and the things of it. Never in all my life did its joys and its sorrows appear so

insignificant to me; never did my Lord Jesus Christ so dwell and rule in my heart; never did heaven seem so near and so blessed; never did God appear so amiable and excellent—to Him be all glory for this!”—Such was the language employed by Mr Macdonald, in writing to his early friend, the Rev. David Fraser, on the 6th of January 1837. On the 2d of that month his presbytery had met, and his co-presbyters had delivered their opinions. “Two of them,” he says in a letter to another friend, “gave their mind so decidedly against his going, and in such unqualified terms, as to imply that his yielding would be a desertion of duty, and therefore a sin.” But such statements, to his mind, answered themselves. Others, to whose opinions he attached more importance, spoke warily on the subject, and could not deny that there were considerations involved in the matter, which could be adjusted only between God and the individual soul. “Thus has opposition seemed to melt away,” he writes, “and nothing appears to be left but a straggling shot here and there.” Devout, judicious men “were fearful to interfere,” and again, therefore, must the question be debated in the individual conscience. From this hour Mr Macdonald’s course was clear. He has now accepted a call—and will go, under Jehovah’s escort, to India.

But while these discussions were in progress, a letter was received from Dr Duff. He had judiciously waited till Mr Macdonald should have stated his own mind in presbytery; and only after that did he resume his correspondence. His letter was at once stirring and refreshing:—

“*Edradour, by Pitlochrie,*  
“18th January 1837.

“MY DEAR MACDONALD,

..... “I felt it was wrong to give way to painful anxiety, since, if the Lord had really work for you in India, I *believed* He would interpose in the day of trial. O how I now see His hand in the matter!—yes, *visibly* see it! Some of your brethren *positively approving*—the rest with their mouths shut, lest they should resist the will of God—and an attached flock *prepared*, if needs be, to surrender a treasure—all, in resignation, seemingly ready to adopt the patriarch’s language, ‘The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!’ Ah! my friend and brother, I know not how you feel now, but my heart beats high with gratitude to God for this His singular, His manifest interposition. More I shall not say now, but, as before, leave it in the hands of our heavenly Father, who will bestow the *wisdom* and the *grace* to enable you to *perceive* the path of duty, and *strengthen* you to walk therein.

“Most explicitly have I unfolded *orally* and in *writing* to Dr Gordon my own views on the subject of your appointment; how your *special* and *peculiar* vocation would be to impart, through the blessing of God’s Spirit, a spiritual impression to the minds of scores that have already become dispossessed of Hinduism, as well as preach, whenever an opening presented itself, to adult idolaters. This I conceive to be your *distinctive* vocation; while a little experience might qualify you, in case of sudden emergency, to do something *temporarily* in upholding the integrity of other parts of the system. Our plan is now so extended as to admit of a division of labour; so that there is now room for the entire services of such a labourer as yourself. This I have fully explained to the Committee; so keep yourself *wholly at ease* on this score, and let not thoughts of unfitness be allowed for a moment to embarrass your determinations.

“Cast this disturbing element wholly out of view: you

are qualified for the post that shall be *especially* assigned to you, and for any other which necessity may call you temporarily to occupy; and doubt not that time and experience will confer all the qualifications that shall be required." . . .

Mr Macdonald himself thus writes—

"*January 1837.*—The year thus begun with me, will, in all probability, prove eventful. It is true that I may soon, very soon, pass away from this scene of events, and all those things which now absorb me be terminated for ever. But if spared in life, I seem now to have passed a solemn crisis, which is to terminate in something different from any thing I have yet experienced. The long workings of my mind have at length ceased. On Tuesday last, the 24th, I gave in my decision to the presbytery, with reasons, which I read. The impression left seemed on the whole satisfactory: there seems a conviction imparted to the more spiritual, that I am called to go of the Lord.\*

"But oh! what shall I now say of myself? I seem inclined to despise myself for making myself so important in this matter; and yet importance I did not seek. Yea, I feel personally glad that men seem to take little notice of what I have done.

"O my Lord and Saviour, have pity upon me! What a poor, miserable object hast thou taken on thy hands in me! O what am I fit for? Lord, I cannot tell. I know not

\* The Reasons to which he here refers were printed under the title, "Statement of Reasons for Accepting a Call to go to India as a Missionary." It is a remarkable document, and exhibits religion in a phase which, we think, is too rarely witnessed. He says, "In a day, when, on the one hand, a carnal fanaticism would counterfeit, and, on the other, an earthly intellectualism would supplant, the self-evidencing and personal operations of the Holy Spirit, Christian men, however timid, ought not to shrink from avowing their grounds of spiritual judgment." He adds, that the excitement occasioned by his transition from pastoral to missionary work, argued a degenerate state of the Church, and asks— "Why is not such an event commonplace?" We know of at least one missionary minister now labouring in the East, who was induced to proceed thither by studying Mr Macdonald's "Statement of Reasons."

for what I am going away. O help me to maintain my conviction of a call, for Satan and my wicked, treacherous flesh would dispute it. Shine forth upon me!

"I never thought that the praise of man could seem such a mean insignificant thing to me as it does; nor that bare faith could lead me as it has; nor that the love of Christ could so vanquish the love of the creature. Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

"*February 17.*—This is my birth-day. I complete my thirtieth year. Now seems beginning a new era in my existence. I know not what is before me; but on this do I rest, that I am the Lord's. On this day have I renewed my dedication to the Lord—this is all I can do; and I thank Him that He has enabled me so far to prevail against the flesh, that I am enabled to do this freely. O what peace is connected with such consecration! Last night, or rather this morning, when rendering up myself before going to rest, I had some sweet and almost overpowering thoughts on being with Christ as the Son of God. O for more fellowship with Him! I am just now closely shut up to Him, for none but He can judge for me or help me. O Lord! I begin this new year by yielding up all to thee. Accept, rule, judge, defend, guide, bless, and glorify me—all, all is in thy hands. May that Spirit, blessed Lord! which descended on thee in thy thirtieth year, rest on me also now. Oh! as thou art calling me to a more trying and public ministry, help me that I may not dishonour thee! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whose I am in baptism, and by covenant of redemption, I yield myself up to the one living and true God, for evermore. Amen."

In unbosoming himself to his dearest friends at this period, he exhibits the very interior of his soul, and enables us to see the gracious workings of Him who "leadeth Joseph like a flock." To Mr Mackintosh he writes again (March 6)—

. . . . . "As for myself, I have much reason to bless

God for the habitual peace of mind which I am enabled to enjoy. As you know and refer to, my decision to go abroad has been declared, and the statement of reasons which I made before the presbytery, has, at the request of friends, been published, so that at some future time you may read it. I have been, indeed, sorely tried by Satan's assaults of darkness. He has tried to make me doubt whether there be a Christ, and whether faith and love be not traditional delusions; but he was not suffered to prevail—and, although he still endeavours to carry on a sort of guerilla warfare with me in all the little details of duty, I find that he flies before the simple unsheathing of the Word. I have no doubts or misgivings as to my decision; and I feel happy in having crossed the Rubicon. Pray for me in regard to the actual trials that are yet before me, for I know that my flesh will fight and die a hard death. Pray that my faith fail not." . . . . .

—And in his Diary he records—

"*March 18.*—Yesterday was the sixth anniversary of my ordination over my people, and to-morrow of my first Sabbath as their pastor. The thought is a solemn one—six years as an ambassador among my fellow-sinners: what have I been doing? Lord, have mercy on me! I have no plea but mercy to urge. My sins as a minister are more in number than the hairs of my head; but, Lord, cast them into that ocean of divine blood! Oh! this is my covenant plea before thee—I know thou pardonest me. O revive me, thy poor ambassador, by thy Spirit! Lord, fill me, and embolden me, and accompany me! Lord Jesus, help me! Behold, how some of my people do still hold out! O save them! O give them to me, Lord, if it seem good unto thee! O let them not perish! Help me on the morrow, and seal thy word."

"*March 24.*—Amidst my solitude and present trials, I have to praise Him who causeth me to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I certainly did not understand the all-sufficiency of Christ to make me happy until of late.

He has magnified ‘ His word to me above all His name.’ O how strange that He is not wearied of me, and has not cast me off! Had I been He, I should have cast myself off long ago. I know not if my dear Lord has any thing in store for me until I reach His glory above; but I am sure if He has, there never was wretch more unworthy of it. I should feel thankful that I am enabled to resign my keeping to Him, and that I can trust in Him to save me even from myself. O glorious and blessed Saviour! I am thine, by thine own grace—this is all my hope. As for my present light afflictions, they endure but for a moment. What is all this poor short life compared with eternal glory? Alas! my poor vain heart, why beatest thou so about this life and its dear, too dear, objects? Lord, save me, fill me, keep me, and bless me!”

Amid these public and often harassing engagements, he was called to attend the death-bed of one of his spiritual children, where he was both tried and made glad, as well as braced for the work in which he was engaged. The narrative which he gives of her closing days has much of the touching pathos of genius, as well as of spiritual discernment. We would fain transcribe the whole, but can give only the following extracts:—

. . . . . “She referred to the unfaithfulness of her first minister in Scotland, Mr———, that he said many pleasant things about religion and heaven, but nothing about the terrors of the law, or about hell—that he admitted her to communion without examination, because she had been twelve years in the parish and known to him, though she was then devoted to vanities, to card-playing, and dancing; and that he had himself once compelled her to dance: all of which she now saw to be awful.” . . . . .  
 “On Sabbath at noon, I sent a message that I should call in between three and four o’clock. I knew not the time of

her departure, but the Lord did, and directed me. She had expressed a desire that I might be with her when she died. I did not know of this ; but it was also my own desire—and the Lord granted me the privilege. When I went into the room it was indeed the chamber of death—dark and full of mourning. There sat the mother behind the curtain in silent sorrow, wrapped and hooded in her chamber cloak—for she could not look on her dying daughter. Behind the sufferer, and supporting the pillows on which she rested, sat a Christian sister, watching over the departure of life. Death had spread over the whole field of matter his saddening victory. Life was fast ebbing—a faint gurgling breathing alone marked its continuance. The eyes were fixed upwards, and never once moved, nor did her eyelids twinkle. There was nothing to denote consciousness. In this state she passed away. All was peace—the mandate of her Lord had met with a joyful and ready response. But it was a solemn moment when her frame became lifeless. Immediately I felt an undefinable chasm. I wept, and cherished the weeping. It was over my own daughter in the gospel, and my tears were those of joyful sorrow. This poor world disappeared before me, and nothing but Christ and heaven seemed desirable to me then, nor scarcely yet. O death, how awful!—O Christ, how lovely ! When the covering that concealed her hands was unfolded after death, they were found gently clasped over her breast, as in the attitude of supplication or reverential contemplation. Thus, when the soul left its body as a temporary trophy to death, even that trophy had in it the attitude of victory, in the uplifted, unwinking eye, and the clasped and upraised hands ; and thus, when the spirit winged its flight into glory, the body that was left behind seemed as if it would fain follow its blessed and joyous course. O how beautiful is such death to the eye of faith, although still it be indeed awful to the eye of sense ! Lord Jesus, thy grace hath done all, and by this time she hath cast her crown at thy feet ! I feel as if I could join the



blessed throng around thee, and that soon, nay, *now*. But let me first finish thy work, if thou hast more work to do by me, and then shall I be with thee for ever! Blessed hope!"

The cares which arose out of his approaching departure often interfered with his spiritual progress—at least such was his fear; but he sought refuge in his Lord, and was kept in peace. He had to summon up all his natural courage to subdue his natural feelings; but as he "had no misgivings as to his duty," every thing else could be cheerfully borne. He was kept lowly amid all that was done; and we believe it to accord with the observation of all who knew him, that never, during all his ministry, did he walk more humbly with his God, or more meekly and gently among his brethren than now.

On Saturday, 6th May, the eve of his last communion in London as the pastor of a flock, he says—

"To-morrow will be my last communion Sabbath with my flock—may the Lord make it a day of true communion! O Spirit, breathe on us! quicken and revive us! O thou who dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth! O let it be a blessed day! Enter not into judgment with me! I throw myself into the Mediator's arms. O bear me up! Help me to magnify Christ—this is all I ask, O Father!"

The next extracts beautifully exhibit the result of honouring God:—

"*May 13.*—To-morrow, I preach to my people my last sermon as their pastor. Thenceforward must my work be sealed up till judgment. This is a solemn thought—may the Lord sanctify it unto me! I have reason to wonder how the Lord supports me. I could not have supposed it possible that I should be so kept in peace and composure. O

may he help me on the morrow! Spirit of God, be thou there in the midst of us! O send help from the sanctuary, and carry me through all that is before me! Last Lord's day thou didst hear and answer my prayer; O yet once more, my God and Father, hear me and come for our salvation! I plead only Christ's name—O bless me in Him!

“*May 14, Sabbath Night.*—I cannot suffer this night to pass away without recording the goodness, and mercy, and faithfulness of my Lord towards me. O how hath he helped me! I long dreaded this day of separation with my flock; but how merciful hath the Lord been! I was raised above the flesh, and my people seemed so also. Mere natural feeling was subdued, nay, triumphed over, and the Lord was revealed. My prayer has been heard. I feel, as well as believe, that I am accepted. To the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be *all* the glory! (Subjects, 1 Thess. ii. 19, and 2 Cor. xiii. 14.)”

He now prepared to visit Scotland previous to his final departure for India, and left London on the 17th of May, on his way once more to the manse of Urquhart.\* He was present at the meeting of the General Assembly, and heard Dr Duff's second address to that reverend body, which, he says, “was indeed splendid and powerful, and proved some refreshment to him.” After visiting his sister in Glenlyon, where he was exhilarated by the mingled grandeur and peacefulness of nature, he reached home on the 1st of June, and proceeded as usual, without any respite, to proclaim the glad tidings of great joy. In the course of a few days, we find him so engaged at Urquhart, Kiltarn, Inverness, Kirkhill,

\* His friends presented him with a gold watch, and other memorials of affection, previous to his departure.

Dingwall; again at Inverness; Urquhart (twice on Thursday and twice on Sabbath); yet again at Inverness, on Thursday, Saturday, and the Sabbath; once more at Urquhart; then two sermons at Rosskeen; next day at Resolis; then at Fodderty, twice on Sabbath, and twice on Monday; then at Urray; then at Dingwall; then at Urquhart on Lochness; and once again, on Sabbath, in his father's pulpit. It was his purpose, early formed and resolutely adhered to, never to decline an invitation to preach, unless it was impossible for him to comply, and we see him here carrying out his resolution to the letter. He went every where sowing the good seed of the kingdom. His untiring perseverance in that much-loved work reminds us of Whitefield himself; and though his preaching had none of the rousing effects of that remarkable man's addresses, the day when all secrets shall be laid bare will show what blessings followed his simple, solemn, and affectionate appeals.

For several years Mr Macdonald had contemplated an union with one who had been the companion of his youth, and the choice of his manhood, as a partner in life—Anne, the elder daughter of Alexander Mackenzie, Esq., formerly a merchant in London. Various obstructions had occurred to retard that union; and some of the most exquisitely touching, as well as most profoundly devout, passages of his Journal refer to that subject.\* At length,

\* On June 4, he says— . . . . . “ I was enabled to see the end of patience and trust in the Lord, and I sought to praise Him; but, oh! my poor heart was unthankful. I also felt that this was the gift of the Lord, for I had sought to leave all with Him, that He might judge; and

however, all was arranged; and after attending a funeral, concerning which he says, "It seemed to me as if a funeral the day before marriage were meant to be a lesson"—he thus writes—

"*Urquhart Manse.*— . . . . . It is to me a cause of thankfulness that I can realise the Lord in this matter. I have a clear conviction that it is of Him, for I rendered it up to Him in the beginning and ending of it. O Lord Jesus! whom I have much and often provoked, I throw myself on thy free mercy and grace; when entering on this new relation, be present and bless us! O living, holy, and eternal Spirit! unite thou us in Christ Jesus, and fill us with thyself! And, oh! ever-glorious and gracious Father! take us under thine own fatherly care, and bless us as thy son and daughter—man and wife as to the flesh, brother and sister as to the Spirit. Lord, we are thine—bless us! O bless us in thyself, now and for ever! Amen!"

On the 1st of August they were accordingly united in marriage, after which they took their journey to the south; and on the 3d he says—"We went on to Aberdeen, and took up our abode with my former dear friends, Mr and Mrs Tweedie. There we spent some very happy days in Christian fellowship—one of the happiest times, I may well say, of my past life." He preached twice on the following Sabbath, and after a short sojourn in that city\* proceeded to Edinburgh, where he again met with Dr Duff. On

if He had judged, it was surely for good. O the blessed Burden-bearer before the throne!"

\* During this sojourn, he was offered the degree of D.D. previous to his leaving Britain for India. He respectfully declined it, "because his father had not received that honour from his college." It is known to those who were familiar with him, that in the course of some conversations held previous to this time, suggestions were made to him which pointed to his occupying a professor's chair in one of our univer-

the Lord's day he preached in the Gaelic Church, in Dr Gordon's pulpit, and also a missionary sermon in St George's in the evening, regarding which he recorded—"I felt very happy in it. I had long felt a shrinking from preaching in Edinburgh. I was timid and unbelieving; but I desire to bless God that I felt more than usually strengthened, and was enabled to open my mouth boldly."

Soon after his return to Ross-shire, intelligence reached him which made it necessary that he should hasten to London to prepare for his departure to Bengal, and the 27th of August was his last Sabbath at home. He preached thrice at Dingwall, and occupied the intervening time till Thursday in visiting his friends, of which he says, with characteristic unction even in such minor things—"Such farewells are precious, for they are but prayers—the Spirit's breathings." On the 31st of August, he left for ever the scenes of his boyhood, and his closest earthly ties. In parting with many much-loved friends, his heart was often sorely wrung; but as separation after separation came, he "proposed prayer, and immediately after it, before their feelings had time to rebel, they parted." His feelings did at last overcome him; nature exacted one tribute, and he says—

"My dear mother behaved like a Christian. As we drove slowly away, my accumulated feelings gushed forth, and for a little time I wept plentifully, and was thereby much relieved. The Lord be thanked for the special grace

sities. His own statement was, that he would rather be the minister of his London chapel than occupy any chair.

vouchsafed throughout this trying scene. My dear father was to follow us to London."

On the following Sabbath Mr Macdonald preached in St Luke's Church in Edinburgh, and on Monday he was designated to the missionary work in a service specially appointed for that purpose. On Tuesday he sailed for London, and was accompanied on board by Dr Duff, and others of the brethren. His return to London was the signal for assembling not a few of his former friends, among whom it would be wrong not to signalize Mr N. H. Cotes of Cheapside, one of his earliest and most devoted friends in the metropolis. Dr Macdonald and Mr Mackintosh arrived in town a few days after him. On Friday he preached; on Saturday his father occupied the pulpit; and on Sabbath the missionary minister again preached from the words, 'O God, my God!' previous to dispensing the Lord's Supper once more to the flock, now no longer his. It was a day to be greatly remembered—for the Master of assemblies was there. In the evening, untired by all the excitement and exhaustion of the scenes through which he was passing, Mr Macdonald preached his last sermon in London in the Scotch Church, Swallow Street.

The following extracts from his Diary will tell how he spent the closing hours of his sojourn in Britain:—

"In the evening (Sept. 12) there was a meeting of presbytery for prayer on my behalf, as going abroad. Afterwards, I addressed the numerous congregation present; and I made it a sort of general farewell to my London friends. It was peculiarly affecting to me after the service

to bid farewell personally to a hundred or two hundred persons, under every variety of emotion ; but I was enabled to do it even cheerfully. My last farewell was with my dear friend and father, Mr Somervell.\* He alone kissed me in silence, and departed. Many sweet hours of godly converse have I had with that dear man of God—yea, with none in London more than with him. God be with him, and may we meet in glory !”

“ *Saturday*.—At nine a. m. left London for Portsmouth. Several friends accompanied us to the extremity of London ; and two dear friends came to Portsmouth, Miss Cotes and Mr Anderson. But our chief comfort was in my dear father’s company, who was quite cheerful, and

\* To this devout and Simeon-like man, Mr Macdonald refers in the following beautiful passage in the “ Presentation ” of a volume of his sermons and addresses, entitled, “ A Pastor’s Memorial to his Former Flock,” sent home from Calcutta in 1841 :—“ In my heart,” he says, “ there is a record of all the flock ; on its tablets is written a history of past events, profitable and interesting, such as only a pastor may know. In my heart’s little place of tombs there are memorials of the dead which I often visit, and love to look upon. Amongst these there is one which I cannot help transferring to these pages—there is one name of the dead which I must record—that of John Somervell. He received me at the beginning, he parted with me at the end, of my ministry amongst you. He was my first counsellor in London, my alone elder for several years. He was a man of God, wise, faithful, humble, and upright ; he understood the truth, and he loved it well. I was glad when he was a hearer of the Word, for then I knew that faith united earth and heaven, and prayer was transacting between the pulpit and the throne. Long tossed on the billows of secular life, deeply tried in spiritual conflict, he thirsted vehemently for the gospel of the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord ; and having a feeble body which had long dwelt on the borders of eternity, he knew death, and was familiar with the glory that should follow. The love of Christ and the bliss of heaven were our frequent themes when we met ; and I can well remember some Sabbath afternoons we spent together, in which I felt nearer the gates of heaven than I have ever otherwise known. He has now entered there, and is at rest. Blessed is he ! for he hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and now he is for ever filled. The Lord grant you many like your first elder, having his grace and gifts, and ready, if called to sustain the same holy office in the Church of Christ.”

seemed as it were happy in spirit, however sad in heart, in conducting us to our Master's work. Reached Portsmouth in the evening."

"*Sabbath, September 17, 1837.*—However reluctantly, we found ourselves compelled to embark on the Lord's day. After spending the forenoon in reading, prayer, and religious conversation, at three P. M. we were accompanied on board the 'Marion' by my dear father and the two other friends. After the interval of an hour we were obliged to part, and thanks be to God that it was in some degree as conquerors: the last sight I saw of my beloved father, as the pilot-boat moved off, was smiling with one of his own sweet smiles, and I could not but smile too with joy that the love of Christ was still triumphant."

Thus, then, do we find this man of God embarked on the vast ocean, following, as he firmly believed, the leadings of his Lord. And though the world undervalues such things, there is something spiritually sublime in such a movement. A stripling in a rural retreat in Scotland is taught by the Sovereign Spirit to face the solemn question, "What must I do to be saved?" In answer, the truth as it is in Jesus is rooted in his mind. Nearly at the same time he reads the life of Brainerd and Martyn, and longs to become the instrument of telling to heathens, as they did, what God has done in love to a world where all are groaning and travelling together in pain. But new connections are formed—new engagements bind him—new duties press. At the world's heart—in London—that stripling is placed as a watchman, and there, in streets and lanes, in asylums, refuges, and penitentiaries, as well as in pulpits, he pleads with sinners to be reconciled unto God. He hands are full of



work, for his heart is full of love; but still the heathen!—they are perishing; and not merely the world, but moreover the Church, seems asleep, or indifferent to their perdition. Will no one arise to evangelistic work? The thought is heavier than he can bear. He waits on his God for guidance, and the pillar of fire appears. On the one hand were an attached and weeping flock, on the other were much-loved friends and brethren, a father whom he revered, and a mother whom he loved, though he was not bone of her bone—yet he would not be restrained. “The love of Christ shall be triumphant” was his vow; and, through grace, he kept it. He neither faltered nor felt regret till he had embarked on the great waters, and hazarded his life for the name of Jesus, as thousands do for gold, for glory, and for power. Is not religion a reality? Is not truth, though despised, still mighty? What now becomes of that Satanic sneer, which embodies the hatred of the carnal mind to the truth of God, and describes the friends of missions as only “apostates from the anvil and the loom?”

And never perhaps did a case occur in which mere nature had less influence, or grace so completely the ascendant. All nature, and, as it appeared, not a little of grace, were opposed to Mr Macdonald proceeding to India. Steadily, however, he kept the matter before the Lord, and found that he was walking safely. Through tears, entreaties, and remonstrances, nay, on two occasions, through the angry denouncements of injudicious friends, he proceeded on his way, and felt unmoved, at least unchanged, in purpose, amid all that happened.

We cannot, however, exhibit the style and spirit of Mr Macdonald's movement better than in his own words. In stating to his presbytery his reasons for accepting the call, he says—

“Should this invitation *not* be a call from Christ, and should I, from self-will, close with it, and leave my present post of duty, then should I incur the displeasure of my Lord, by fleeing from His presence, and be chargeable with all the damage to the souls of my flock which might ensue from my sinful departure. Should this *be* a call from the Lord Jesus Christ, and should I, from regard to the flesh, disobey it, and remain here against His will (which may always be known where needful), then should I, even on the scene of former blessing, honour, and joy, expect just wrath, and its fruits in a blighted ministry, a dishonoured name, and a pining heart—and this neither my people nor my presbytery would desire as the price of my remaining amongst them.

“It is therefore with peculiar solemnity of soul, as it is after much prayer and deliberation, that I now declare to my brethren, that *I believe in my conscience* this to be a call from the *Lord Jesus Christ*; and that therefore it is my *duty to obey it*, and go forth as His missionary servant to foreign parts.”

“Now, then, if the Lord hath said in my hearing, even in my heart, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ was I, or am I, wrong in saying, ‘Here am I, send me?’ If death were to seize me to-morrow, or the ocean to close over me ere I reached a heathen shore, still would I die in the conviction that I had done my Lord's will in accepting this call—that he could cause that which was dead to bring to nought that which was living—by the death of one man he could break up the apathy of ten, and by the last crash of life accomplish more than by a warfare of years threescore and ten!”

. . . . .

“ If any chain forged on earth could bind me, that Memorial \* might; but I feel that, contrary to my own weak nature, all ties are made as flax to me. I feel bound in spirit, and I cannot but go. I feel that I have this night come to the brink of waters, deep, dark, and strong; and never has my flesh trembled as now. But there is a voice from the Unseen, which says, ‘ It is I; be not afraid.’ That voice I know — it is ‘ the Beloved’ who speaks. I must not shrink—I may not fear, but will follow whithersoever He calls. I am not yours, my beloved brethren and flock, neither am I my own. If I follow not Him, the sentence is already pronounced, that I am not His. But His I am, and must be; therefore, *I go*. Lord, lead me! What I have done evil, forgive; what is thine own, accept; and ‘ thine be the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen!’ ”

It is indisputably true, that “ the lofty piety, the holy zeal, the true heroism, which characterised the sufferers of former days, shone forth with undiminished lustre in Martyn when he died at Tocat—in Carey, when, as a poor shoemaker, he formed and executed his project of establishing a mission to evangelize India—in Vanderkemp, the Dutch physician, when he left his country to devote his life to the conversion of the Hottentots—in the native martyrs of Madagascar—in Robert Haldane, when he sold his patrimonial property to support the band of missionaries whom he proposed to accompany to a foreign land—in Dr Judson and his wife, during the Burmese war—in Chalmers, when he retired for conscience’ sake from the Establishment, to whose

\* From his congregation to the presbytery.

support his powers had been devoted ; and in Macdonald, when he calmly weighed the considerations for and against his leaving his native country, without the bias of a desire of any kind interfering with his simple resolution to obey the will of God, whatever that will might be. ‘ By faith ’ these men acted, and were supported—faith as true, as pure, and as powerful, as that which dignified the earliest martyrs and apostles of the Church. The day will come when this will be known and acknowledged—when the power of divine grace will be seen to have acted with undecayed effect—and when the work in which the present generation of Christians are engaged, will be found to the praise, and honour, and glory of the Lord, who deigns to direct the zeal and to use the services of His people.”\*

Men speak as if the aggressive power of Christianity were now exhausted. Even in the high places of the land, as at Oxford, the advocates of a flimsy evangelism have adopted such an opinion ; but they know not what they say, for they do not understand the power of that truth which they traduce. Persecution has tried to crush it, but only threw oil upon the flames. Royalty has professed to adopt it, only to learn how stanchly it denounces all tyranny, and proclaims the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Heresy has tried to corrupt it, only to find that its upas influence was not a match for that principle of indestructible life which is lodged in the religion of the Redeemer. It still lives, and still grows, and is still energetic, walking serenely forward in its hea-

\* See a vigorous sketch of Mr Macdonald, in Vol. vi., No. 9, of the *Calcutta Free Churchman*, by M. Wylie, Esq.

venly work of reclaiming to God all who are the called according to his purpose. The Churches may be supine, and ill-judging men may palliate that supineness, by pretending that the religion, the truth, of the unchanging God is a mutable thing, becoming exhausted by years, or effete by labours. But who does not see that there is infidelity in the sentiment? Like Jehovah himself his truth is immutable. It will go forth conquering and to conquer, till the last of the redeemed be gathered into the fold. It was to forward that result that Mr Macdonald proceeded to Bengal; and we are next to see how far the work of the Lord prospered in his hand.

## CHAPTER VII.

The Foreign Missions—Dr Inglis—Dr Duff—His Return to Britain—Our Indian Empire—Mr Macdonald at Sea—His Services on Board—First Sight of India—Juggernaut—Bay of Bengal—The Ganges—Saugur Island—Kedgeree—His Maxims when Landing—First Impressions—The Assembly's Institution—Resumes Preaching—A Retrospect—His Duties—Sickness—Missionary Trials—Caste—Controversy—His Views of the Scottish Mission—His Labours—The Oratorio—Renewed Sickness—His First-born—His Views of the Baptist Controversy—The Calcutta Mission—The Scottish Church Controversy—The Calcutta School-Book Society—H. C. Tucker, Esq.—Female Education in India—Mrs Macdonald's School for Females—Prayer Meetings—Letter to a Sister—Renewed Sickness—The Scottish Revivals—A Missionary Letter to his former Flock—His Tracts, and their Influence—His Views of the Disruption—Memoirs of Isobel Hood—He anticipates the Disruption—The intelligence arrives at Calcutta.

WHEN Mr Macdonald first thought of becoming a missionary in India, his mind was more or less biassed against the system adopted and carried on by the agents of the Church of Scotland there. Dr Inglis, the sagacious leader of the Moderate section of the Church, was the accredited projector of the mission at Calcutta; and as he nominally belonged to that class of men who, about a quarter of a century before, had voted down all missionary enter-

prise, the scheme was at first regarded in the spirit which prompted the inquiry, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But, in truth, Dr Duff was the founder of our India missions. It was he that seized on the great leading feature that signals them, and matured it into a consistent and thoroughly scriptural system. When he proceeded to India, he was left free to select the best sphere, and adopt the best system, which inquiry and observation should suggest; and we believe that coming generations will regard the day of his arrival in Bengal as an era in its history. The idea of training a native ministry for India is the only rational one adapted to that vast country. Yet the jealousy and suspicion with which the undertaking was viewed were natural, as long as men looked only at the projectors, and not at the principles of the system.

But these suspicions were gradually fading away, and, in process of time, our India missions would have taken a prominent place in the national mind, even though nothing had occurred to precipitate that result. It is known, however, that, in 1835, Dr Duff returned to Scotland, an enfeebled, and, as many thought, a dying man. His glowing addresses soon dispelled from reflective minds the lingering remains of doubt; and, among others, Mr Macdonald felt these effects. When he first met with Dr Duff, he feared that it was the agency of man, and not the operation of the Spirit, that formed the basis of hope from the system; but his path became clear at last, and in one of his earliest letters to the Convener of the Assembly's Committee, he carefully expresses his approbation of the plan. Nor could he do less,

after hearing Dr Duff declare, as he often did, that, "while the missionaries of the Church of Scotland have been sent forth with a special commission to prosecute the only means within their reach, in the absence of miracles, towards rearing a superior race of native teachers and preachers of the everlasting gospel, they have been sent forth with an equally special commission to preach as they have opportunity—to be instant in season, and out of season, in communicating the blessed knowledge of salvation to all around them, of every class, and of every grade, and that, too, irrespectively of those conventional forms and modes of address, all those mechanical arrangements as to places of stated resort, which, in a Christian land, ages have served to consecrate." In short, now that suspicion has all cleared away, it is obvious that the system tended directly, hopefully, and every lover of mankind will now bless God that we can add, successfully, to "preach the everlasting gospel unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

To aid in working out that plan, Mr Macdonald is now on the ocean, on his way to that land so strangely placed under the dominion of Britain—a land which is alleged to contain a sixth part of the world's population, and which yet, through all its borders, may now be said to submit to the sway, or at least to feel the genial influence, of the laws of our island. And why is Britain the mistress of these millions? Why does she now hold the place of Tyre of old in relation to India? Why does London, in regard to Eastern commerce, occupy the position once held by Alexandria or Bagdad? Why



have our soldiers, almost in spite of ourselves, been forced to repeat the doings of the Macedonian on the plains of India? Is it merely that our merchant princes may become more princely still?—that the priceless diamond of one Eastern tyrant, or the fertile kingdom of another, may add to the splendour of the British crown? He that reasons with the Word of God to guide him, will arrive at far different conclusions. As a nation, we are made stewards of the mystery of redemption, and charged, in the providence of God, to make that mystery patent to the teeming myriads of our Indian fellow-subjects. We may neglect our high commission—we may be unfaithful to our stewardship—we may choose rather to employ India to pander to our national pride, than discharge our national responsibility regarding it; but, meanwhile, He who is King of nations as well as King of Zion, has given us that land of death in charge, that we may impart to it the life; and it is only sober truth to say, that on the mode in which we treat it depends our national blessing or our national curse.

We are tracing the career of one who viewed India in that light, and he is now on his way to beckon some from among the millions of Hindustan to Him who is to be honoured by Sheba's and Seba's kings. His first entry in his Diary, after leaving Portsmouth, is as follows:—

“ On board ship at sea. . . About lat. 34° south, and long. 16° east, near the Cape of Good Hope.

“ *Tuesday, November 28.*—I am reminded to-day, by our contiguity to land, of the great blank existing in my Diary. The sea seems as one blank until it be done—it

affects all one's habits, and renders him unfit for his usual exercises, at least such as require mental activity. Such has been my experience of it, although others occasionally seem to enjoy it more, and are apparently domesticated on it. My intention is now to resume my Journal, and, in some degree, keep it up if I can, so that I may hereafter have some memorial of these few months which form a peculiar parenthesis in one's life."

From a retrospect which he then took of his voyage, it appears that, after weighing anchor on the 19th of September, the captain of the Marion, in which he sailed, had been obliged to drop it again, and linger at Spithead; but on the 20th the vessel was fairly under weigh, and the missionary and his partner were gazing from the deck, half joyous, half sad, on object flitting past after object, as they skirted the Isle of Wight. The effects of sea-sickness soon prostrated the strength of both, though Mr Macdonald's sufferings arose rather from the protracted illness of his companion than his own. "Through life," he says, "I have had to suffer more through others than in my own person, and this matter seemed a continuance of past experience."

"Day after day," he writes, "passed on after this, with the most trying monotony. Once we had a peep of the Portuguese coast for an hour or two, but this is the only land we have yet seen. However, I soon became accustomed to the monotony of a sea horizon, and now seem scarcely to mind it. The only day of interest has been the Sabbath, although respect for that day has been comparatively confined to our own cabin."

On each successive Sabbath he endeavoured to collect the passengers and ship's crew, and in that

he generally succeeded. On more than one occasion, however, under various pretexts, it was interrupted, but after his calendar of services and texts, he says—

“ In these services, on the whole, I have met with attention, and almost all the passengers, with the officers and European sailors, have attended. One or two have occasionally absented themselves. I have endeavoured to be plain and practical, and have dealt chiefly in exposition. May the Lord bless my wretched endeavours to speak His message !” \*

The Marion reached the Cape of Good Hope, “ the land of Ham,” on the 29th of November, and remained at that station for five days. Mr Macdonald was welcomed with much kindness by brethren there, and preached in St Andrew’s Church, Capetown, on the forenoon of the Sabbath, and in the chapel of Dr Philips in the evening, where a crowded congregation assembled to hear him. From that town he wrote to his father, giving a short account of the past portion of the voyage. We extract the closing paragraph of the letter, invested as it now is with a very mournful interest.

“ In drawing to a conclusion,” he writes, “ let me say, my dearest father, that my conviction of my present path of duty has never yet failed me—that I have enjoyed more than usual nearness to God—that he has granted me prayers even of the most indulgent kind ; and that he has been altogether ‘ preventing my goings.’ This, I know, will rejoice your heart, for you have never yet grudged me to the Lord. We parted in peace, and almost with a smile. Our

\* We have evidence before us calculated to show that his labours on board the Marion were not wholly unblest.

next meeting, whether it be on earth or in glory, shall be with joy. O blessed Lord! this is the worst that can befall thy servants."

On the last day of the year 1837 he writes—

"*Sabbath, December 31, 1837.*—This is the last day of another year. It ought to be, as heretofore, a day of meditation and reflection, but circumstances in some degree prevent. The year has been an eventful one as regards time and eternity. The decision, which at the commencement of it seemed but probable, has taken place, and I am now, at the close of the year, so far on my way towards the proposed field of missionary labour. In all that is past, I see nothing to repent of in *substance*. I feel satisfied that I am now in the path of duty, whatever results may take place. The Lord be praised for all His tenderness, wisdom, and faithfulness, vouchsafed to me in this matter. Truly, I may say that I have '*tasted that the Lord is gracious.*' I have been separated from my congregation in the most cordial and comfortable manner, and I trust that the substitute found for me will be seen to be of God—if it should not be so, still I feel that I am guiltless. I am now as a widowed person, loosed from one bond, and another not yet entered on. May the Lord grant me the grace needful for me! During the past year, also, the uncertainty which hung over my proposed marriage has been dispelled, and I have now been five months united to the present dear partner of my heart: for this I feel increasing cause of thankfulness. She is one of God's witnesses, and this strengthens my hands.

"Separation from all earthly ties, and the long solitude of the ocean, followed in quick succession, but I trust they have made Christ more precious to me. I have felt more nearness to God, and a greater reality in faith. On board of this ship I have had a new scene of labour, but O how difficult, and how deficient have I been in improving it! Arise, O Lord God, and in thy might enable me to do

something before I leave it! To-day I have had another opportunity of addressing the ship's company. I took the parable of the 'barren fig-tree' for my subject. I met with attention, as usual. O God, bless thy Word! And now I conclude this record for this year, with imploring thy forgiveness, O Lord, my God! for all past sins. O take them and cast them into the bottomless ocean of mediatorial love, and purify me, by thy Spirit, from all sin, and fit me for thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, my Lord! Amen."

The following is peculiar:—

"1838.—At sea, about lat. 10° 54' south, and long. 84° west.—*Monday, January 1.*—In great mercy do I see the beginning of a new year, and although it be on the comfortless deep, yet this no wise impedes the exercise of faith, but rather incites it. For the fact that I am on a voyage but reminds us that life is the same. The dreariness of the ocean but proclaims the character of the world through which I pass, whose bottomless gulfs have swallowed up many a soul. The successive changes of winds and waves are as the fluctuating events of a sovereign Providence, whether prosperous or adverse, whether they be, like the billows, immediately connected with this present visible world, or whether, like the winds, they be of an invisible and superior kind. The expanse of the sails is as the outspreading of the soul's love, receiving all that God sends to propel it to glory. The constant movement of the rudder in correspondence with the compass spread before the helmsman's eye, is as the constant acting of true faith under the hand of the Holy Ghost, and in correspondence with the written Word. The unceasing movement of the ship reminds me of the soul's steadfast advance to glory. The haven before us, called by men the City of Palaces, is the rest that remaineth for the people of God. But what or who is our *ship*? To the true Christian it is *Christ* Himself. He is the ark, the vessel of mercy. Blessed are

they that are found in *Him*, for they shall sail safely over a present evil world, and finally, and without shipwreck, enter his rest, which is glory! Amen. O Lord, do thou thus bless me!"

The Marion and her crew came in sight of India on Sabbath the 21st of January, when Mr Macdonald says—

"*Sabbath, January 21.*—On this holy day have we first come in sight of India, and this I feel as an interesting and appropriate circumstance. I cannot but feel a glow of emotion towards the land of my pilgrimage, and to see it first on the day of rest connects with it a sweet and holy association. May the Lord be my rest in that land, and may my residence there be as the eve of preparation for an eternal and heavenly Sabbath!"

His reflections as he approaches the land of his pilgrimage, his last labours, and his grave, deserve to be recorded—

"*Tuesday, January 23.*—Nothing of any peculiar note has occurred till to-day. We were suddenly aroused by the cry of '*A man overboard!*' We rushed to our posts, and saw a man just floating past. He could swim a little, and this gave me hope concerning him; but in vain. Every thing was done for him that could be. A life-buoy was thrown to him, but it did not reach him, and he could not reach it. As quickly as it could be effected, a boat was lowered, but before it came up with him he had sunk for ever! The ship, too, had been put about so that her wake formed almost a circle, but all was in vain—his hour was come, his course was closed, and means were useless, even to the astonishment of those who used them. I felt deeply affected by this event. The feeling during the moment of suspense was intense. I offered up an ejaculation on behalf of the perishing fellow-creature. It was all that I

could then do. Many reflections have since rushed into my mind, and I trust have been profitable to me.

“How *sovereign* is God in his dealings! In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He lays His arrest on this creature, without warning of any kind, selecting him from the whole ship’s crew. Nay, when two men were together painting the ship’s anchor, within one yard of each other, one is taken and the other left!

“How *ignorant* is man! No one knew that this most solemn event was about to take place—no, not even the subject of it.

“How *humbling* is death! In a moment one of God’s chief works disappear, and the bubble of the ocean triumphs over it. This man died as a dog dieth.

“How *solemn* and *awful*! This man was very wicked. A few weeks ago he had been punished for drunkenness and not attending church. Last Sabbath he heard me preach on repentance and godliness—now he is before his God. How little avail means in themselves!

“*Thursday, January 25.*—For the last few days we have been coasting along in sight of India; but a thick haze rested over it, so that its outline was like that of a dim cloud. Yesterday, however, the veil was for the first time removed by our proximity to land. I could see the huts and the palm-trees; nay, could see between their foliage. The coast was that of Ganjam and Manikapatam. The outline was beautiful as to nature; but the fruits of industry did not appear. This morning we have been in sight of the great pagoda of Juggernaut, so infamous for its murderous idolatry. Its external appearance at a distance is imposing; but to the Christian it is as a monument over entombed humanity, and yet as a finger beckoning to us, ‘Come over and help us.’

“This day, in reading with my wife, we read in course, Acts xvii., describing Paul’s visit to Athens, and the effect which the sight of its idolatry had upon him; and our joint prayer to the Lord was, that he would quicken us into a

conformity of spirit. O when shall Juggernaut, like Dagon, fall before the ark? O Lord! how long?

“It was on yesterday twelvemonth at night that I gave in to my presbytery my final decision as to going abroad; and it seems a coincidence not unworthy of notice, that on that day year, and the morning following, I should have so clear a view of India and its chief fabric of idolatry. May the result of the minuteness of God’s works towards me be, that I shall live more nearly to Him, and see Him in all things.

“*January 26.*—We are now rapidly approaching the end of our voyage, and we have to acknowledge great temporal mercy in the comfort with which it goes on. Our captain, contrary to the usual practice, in coming up the Bay of Bengal during the north-east monsoon, has held by the western course (the Coromandel coast), and thus we have had the advantage of a smooth sea, and a view of the Indian coast; but chiefly bodily and mental tranquillity. My wife and I are thus enabled to make necessary preparations for shore, and to recover ourselves before entering among strangers. There are still difficulties and intricacies to encounter in the mouth of the great Ganges; but the Lord is our pilot.

“*January 27.*—There is something peculiar in being shut up with a number of strangers for so long a time, so as to be compelled to make them acquaintances, if not friends; we constitute one household for months, although we have never met before, and may never meet again. To the Christian this is a peculiarly irksome situation when the company are set against the truth, either negatively or positively, as they generally are; and the only circumstance that tends to relieve him is the hope and endeavour to do good among them, and, if that cannot be effected, to bear witness for his Lord. I have not had reason to think any of our company true Christians, so far as evidence is concerned; yet I have found some comfort in endeavouring to make them so by grace. As to the result I cannot say



much ; some favourable symptoms of a lesser order have shown themselves in the way of reformation and sentiment, but nothing decided. Lord, pardon my great unfaithfulness and blood-guiltiness ; and bless the seeds of thy truth wherever sown. . . . .

“ *Sabbath, January 28.*—This is probably the last Sabbath we shall spend on board the Marion. It is certainly the last Sabbath which the whole ship’s company can expect to spend together, as some intend leaving by the steamer this night. We had public worship as usual, and I endeavoured to improve the occasion. I read Ps. cvii., Isa. lv., and 2 Cor. v., and addressed the company from Deut xxxii. : “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end ! ” endeavouring to improve the termination of our voyage, and the sudden death of the sailor on Tuesday. There was very pleasing attention given to the word spoken. O Lord God ! do thou set thy seal upon what I have with great imperfection spoken—let the seed cast on the waters appear after many days ! Thou knowest that my soul mourns over my great unfaithfulness ! O forgive me, and bless me in thy mercy !

“ This morning we are in the muddy waters of the Ganges, which extend themselves thus far. They are, indeed, a fit representation of the superstition of the country from which they flow. O when shall the river of pure heavenly water flow over the earth ? Lord, hasten the time !

“ To-day the pilot boarded us. There is a regular establishment of them about the mouth of the river, who are continually cruising about to take up ships to the place of their destination. This reminds me of the gospel ministry : we are as pilots to conduct poor souls to glory—to lead them through the narrow channel of everlasting life.

“ This afternoon we are at anchor, waiting until the tide turn. So must the Christian often wait until the tide of providence enable him to proceed, under the superinten-

dence of the Great Pilot : waiting may sometimes save shipwreck.

“ This last is the most intricate part of our voyage : so with the Christian life. Lord, be with me through the unknown entrance of eternal glory !

“ *Tuesday, 30.*—We are still proceeding slowly up the river, sounding every fathom as we go, and anchoring half of each day. Yesterday we passed Saugur Island, a poor and desolate-looking place—a humbling portal it is to India. On the other side, we soon came in sight of Kedgerree, a native village, where there is also a European station. From this place there came to us a post-office boat ; and it seemed strange that the only letter she brought should be to me. It was from Mr Mackay of the mission, inviting us to his house on our arrival. This was a most seasonable communication, and seemed most providentially directed, for I know not how the writer could have known of the ship by which I was coming. Thus are all things ordered for us.

“ Last night and to-day we have been surrounded by a number of natives. Their appearance is exceedingly humbling. To see the full structure of the man accompanied by a predominant animal expression, and scarcely covered as decency would require, is painful to the Christian’s eye. There seem a substratum of intelligence in them, though it be debased and perverted. O how changed would these poor natives be, if once converted to the gospel !

“ *Friday, February 2.*—Here we are aground since yesterday in this intricate and dangerous channel. This is a new cause of delay, but will be overruled for good. On Tuesday evening we went ashore for the first time, and went through a part of the village of Kedgerree. I felt, of course, much interested in every thing I saw. The houses looked clean, and their little bazaar was tidy. The people look well-made, intelligent, and good-natured ; but, at the same time, [offensive] from their nakedness, like savages.

We saw a fakir sitting by a tomb where there was a light burning — he was a squalid, wretched-looking creature, with misery in his very face, or else hypocrisy; perhaps both, the former flowing from the latter. . . . I feel no impatience at our tedious movements up this noble stream. I find enough to do; and I am enabled gradually to habituate my mind to my change of place and circumstances. I know not what is before me in Calcutta—but I desire to fix and determine the following principles, which, if upheld by grace, will guide me to present duty and future glory:—

- “ 1. *To abide in Christ*—as in John xv.
- “ 2. *To yield myself to the Holy Spirit, for all His ends.*
- “ 3. *To walk with God, in true fellowship.*
- “ 4. *To hold all things and relations as God's own property.*
- “ 5. *To count every thing loss in order to fulfil my ministry.*
- “ 6. *To make Christ crucified my theme.*”

—Such was the spirit, and such were the resolutions, with which Mr Macdonald arrived in India. His residence of nearly ten years there forms one long comment on these six principles of action.

His first impressions are thus described:—

“ *Calcutta, February 7, 1838.*—At last we have reached the place of our destination. On Saturday afternoon we were met by a steamer, which towed us up more rapidly than we had previously been moving. The scenery is very monotonous, but fresh at this season. On Sabbath morning we were very near Calcutta, but the ebbing tide detained us. About three p.m., we were at anchor off our long-desired haven. Immediately my brother Mackay came on board to welcome us. We had no intention of landing that night, but, by his representation of the inconveniences of remaining, we were induced to come on shore

to his house. We felt some measure of regret on leaving the ship after so long a sojourn in it, notwithstanding its many inconveniences. May the Lord render effectual what was done in His name!

“On Monday forenoon visited the ship, and, after considerable trouble, got all our baggage secured; and on coming away gave a book to each of the officers, with which they seemed pleased. Visited the Rev. Mr ———; was struck with the splendour in which a minister of Christ can consent to live. O how deceitful is the world—how powerful the flesh!

“On the same evening I attended a prayer-meeting of the united missionaries of Calcutta. The meeting was pleasantness. . . . .

“Next morning (Tuesday) attended a similar meeting, only of a more private nature. It was very interesting in one particular—the variety of nations from which our company was composed—Scotch, English, French, German, Swiss, Armenian. I was asked to pray, and felt much nearness to God.

“This forenoon (Wednesday) I visited the Assembly's school here for the first time. I was much delighted by the numbers I found there—by the progress made in knowledge of English and general literature, and, above all, by the intimate acquaintance with the evidences of Christianity shown by the upper classes. All this is subordinate, and most useful in its place; but life is wanting, as in Ezekiel's vision of the full-formed bodies: this I would make my grand concern. May the Lord direct me!”

It was Mr Macdonald's anxious desire to be instantly employed in the work which has drawn his heart away from his home and his flock. At first he could not clearly see what corner of the field he could occupy so as to make his labours directly and immediately available in the work of conversion. He was unable to preach to the natives. As one who

had occupied the position of a minister of Christ, directly proclaiming the gospel, he felt a difficulty in foregoing that privilege—it had, indeed, become to him a necessary of life : but he says—

“ *February 13.*— . . . . The following general plan I have been forming for myself in the meanwhile, as within my power, and suiting my constitution and the climate :—

“ To preach in English to Europeans of all sects, as I may be enabled ; and thus I may be engaged on the Sabbath, perhaps very frequently.

“ To take such part in the Institution as I can consistently with my ministerial calling, being ready to relieve my colleagues in the mission, and to promote what is Christian by the subordination of what is secularly useful—and this seems one way of dispensing acts of mercy as seals of Christian benevolence.

“ In the meanwhile, also, to take such opportunities through the press, or by lectures, for promoting the gospel, as may occur to me.

“ And, lastly, to carry on the study of the native tongue, so that in due time I may be enabled, if it please God, to fulfil my ministry by preaching in the full sense of the term. In all this may the Lord help !”

And again—

“ *Sabbath, February 18.*—I feel in some measure the want of my usual stated ministry ; but is it not needful that I should be weaned from *formality* in the Lord’s service ? There are more ways than one of doing good—therefore, let me embrace what I can find to do. Is it not needful that I should be humbled as a little child, and made to begin even with the elements again ? I heard the Word preached this morning with comparative clearness, and I am to preach this evening from 2 Cor. v. : ‘ We walk by Faith.’ Is not this a privilege ? My unceasing prayer

would be for the grace of the Holy Spirit. Lord, vouchsafe this unto me!

“*Thursday.*—I feel here as if I were beginning life again. Is this my missionary life? I am tempted to say. But I repel the suggestion by this, that God hath led me to this—that it is my part to wait on Him to give me my work, and that in the meanwhile preparation is my duty. I am daily engaged on my Bengali Grammar; and, however slow my progress, my heart is at rest in this.”

While thus employed, Mr Macdonald embraced every offered opportunity of preaching the glorious gospel. He took an earnest survey of the state of vital godliness in Calcutta; and though he feared that evangelical doctrine was more acceptable to some than spiritual truth, that only made him more anxious to bring the living Saviour near to the souls of men. He is not a fixed star shining dimly in the distance, but the Sun of Righteousness to vivify and enlighten; and our missionary made it his prayer and endeavour thus to point out the Saviour. His preaching, consequently, was such as to remind us of the walk to Emmaus, when Jesus joined the disciples and conversed with them by the way: it was a gladdening realisation of the promise, “Lo! I am with you alway.” With evident satisfaction he writes—

“*Saturday, March 10.*—Gradually I find the field opening out, although in an indefinite form as yet. Whatever my hand can find to do, I desire to do it with my might. I have had one or two interviews with the youth of the Institution, which have interested me much; but I desire to think and speak carefully on this subject. May the Lord send down his Spirit!

“On Sabbath last preached in the Scotch Church, from

Job vii.: 'The hypocrite's hope shall perish.' On this point I sought to be faithful. Whilst some evidently showed emotion, others were evidently displeased. O how contemptible a thing is man's judgment! Lord, help me on the morrow!"

His affectionate heart often reverted now to the friends and the flock whom he had left behind him, not with regret—no, not for an hour—but with placid joy, as he reflected on the intercourse of soul with soul enjoyed amid far distant scenes:—

"*Sabbath, March 11.*— . . . . I have had some sweet communion of spirit with distant saints this afternoon, especially with one dear father in Christ belonging to my dear late flock in London, J. Somervell. Many sweet hours of spiritual and heavenly converse have I had with him above all others. Christ and heaven were our theme. May the Lord bless him! May I meet him in glory! It seems strange to me how much I have been weaned from the flesh—how little I am distracted by its ties. O thou mighty Conqueror! thou hast been long conquering in me! O conquer wholly and speedily!"

—And on the next Sabbath, after recording his text, his topic, and his feelings in preaching on that day, he adds what explains his authority and influence—

"Oh! little do the men of this world know how little seem their persons, riches, fame, power, honour, learning, to the poor, humble ambassador of Christ! Christ revealed by his Spirit, and dwelling in the heart, shuts out and obscures all creature influence. Lord, dwell in me and bless me!"

But all that has yet happened is but a prelude to the work that awaited him in India. If hitherto he had been devoted as a pastor, and unwearied in

preaching the gospel, he is henceforth to carry forward the same work through strange or peculiar channels, but in a degree more conducive to the glory of God and the welfare of men than any that he had yet employed. At first, indeed, he felt it difficult to pass from his much-loved work of simple preaching; but a nature like his, plastic in all that is secondary, though stanch and immovable where principle was involved, soon adapted itself to its new position, and he rejoiced as before in the work of beckoning sinners to the Saviour. "In comparison with former times," he says, "he sometimes felt idle;" yet he was kept in peace, and cultivated the grace of patience, till he was in providence prepared for his work, and his work for him. In Calcutta, as in London, his prayer ever was, that the Spirit might breathe upon and quicken him; and, as he embraced every opportunity of preaching the gospel, his soul was made glad with the goodness of God's house. He says—

*"Sabbath, April 1.*—This morning again I had an opportunity of preaching the glorious gospel of Christ. This is indeed a rich refreshment to me in this dry and thirsty land. The subject was Rom. x., on Christ's righteousness—O how glorious is it! Here indeed is perfect peace—perfect righteousness! O blessed thought, unparalleled in the world! Here will I dwell under the finished work of my Redeemer. O for grace and for gifts to preach it to all, to every one! Did I but understand the tongue of this poor land, I could then go forth in the fulness of the ministry." . . . . .

He felt the monotony of his life at this period almost as he did when at sea, chiefly on account of



his inability to address the natives of Hindustan in their vernacular tongue, but he soon opened up channels of usefulness and influence for himself, and regarding one of these he writes (May 10)—

. . . . . "I have also in prospect to commence Sabbath evening worship in the Institution, on next Lord's day. . . . . Yet, now, when within a day or two of the simple and humble work of preaching to the few young men who may attend, I feel myself weak as water. I am ready to shrink, and to say once more, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' O who is able to preach the gospel of Christ as it ought to be preached? Not I. Lord, my help is in thee, as heretofore. Thy Spirit is my hope, and by Him I shall yet prevail. O breathe on me, Lord of Hosts!"

He afterwards records—

"*May 14.*—For the first time, last night had I the direct opportunity of preaching to the heathen as such. A few young men met together, about twenty, and heard attentively. The evening was unfavourable, having been stormy, so that there was an excuse for non-attendance. If out of these twenty, five hold on to attend on Christian worship and teaching of this avowed kind, I shall be well pleased. May the Lord help me! I preached on the first publication of the gospel to the shepherds of Bethlehem. Lord, I leave what was said wholly with thy sovereign grace. Empty and fill me more and more!" \*

But soon after this date, Mr Macdonald began to feel the effects of the Indian climate. While he strove to "win the wilderness for God," his health was affected, and for some time he was laid aside from active duty. He could say, at the end of his voyage, that the sea had been made to him as dry

\* He is careful to note that his first sermon to the heathen was on the anniversary of his last to his flock in London.

land, and he and his partner arrived "without damage to their persons in one hair, or to their property in one pin;" but the time for trial had come, though it was hoped, from the nature of his ailments, that they would rather tend to adapt his constitution to his new position than eventually impede his labours there. But whatever might be the result to his body, his mind was still active, and his spirit still growing in grace. In the midst of it all "he was enabled to rejoice and be very happy," and "to consolidate and rectify his plans in some matters connected with ministerial duty"—he was "searched and tried by the Lord—his willingness to suffer, and the sufficiency of divine grace to enable him to suffer, were put to the test"—he was freed from "some little pride and self-esteem," and taught "that the Lord had no need of him" to carry on His work. The gospel became more and more his rejoicing, and Christ crucified more and more his stay. As his illness was prolonged, he recorded that it was "better to be a prisoner by the Lord's will, than to be at large by his own," and added—

*"Sabbath, June 17.— . . . . O how unsteadfast is my will yet, in all the higher and more special acts of communion with God! When I read, it is all well; but when I would pray or meditate, O how wandering am I then!—I seem like a centreless orb.*

*"O for wisdom, patience, meekness, and faith, to throw myself on my Lord, and to acquiesce in His dealings, without asking a reason of His procedure. It is enough that He does a thing. Here will I rest. I have not asked thee to shorten this affliction. Do thy whole will. Lord, breathe!*

*"Sabbath, June 24.—Although I am not able to at-*

tend public worship this morning, I hope to be permitted this evening to address the young men of the school ; and my desire and purpose is to speak to them about ' precious Christ,' from Ps. xxiii. O this is a blessed theme—the all and in all of earth and heaven ! How little is that blessed One spoken of, even by his own !

“ I have many designs in my soul connected with the Lord's work, but I must wait on Him for two things : 1. For fit *opportunity* ; 2. For acting *grace*. Without these, and especially the latter, I cannot succeed. Lord, be thou with me ! Spirit of the Lord, be thou in me ! ”

“ *July 1.*—I hope to be able to preach the Word this evening again, and am therefore obliged to be at home this morning, under arrest of God's hand still. Now that I seem emerging from my imprisonment, I am concerned to find that I am not sanctified as I ought under it. Especially am I elated with pride, and a sort of unbecoming boldness *before God*. I am not in the dust, I am not on my knees, as I ought to be. My wonted inward communing with my blessed Lord Jesus is passed away. O Lord ! have pity on thy poor servant, revive my dead soul, humble my pride, reduce my boldness, commune with my soul, and draw forth its love towards thee ! O my shepherd, restore thy poor wandering sheep to the paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake !

“ Last Sabbath evening, we had but four or five young men ; yet I had much enjoyment in preaching to them about Jesus Christ, from Ps. xxiii. In missionary, as in pastoral work, I would begin with sowing the acorn, and let the oak grow as God pleases. But, O Spirit of the Lord ! give me the *true acorn* to sow ! ”

In the extract that follows, Mr Macdonald lets us see far into the heart of man, and all the dark chambers of imagery that are there. If superficial convictions of sin be the cause of a flimsy religion—as beyond all question they are—can we be at a loss

to explain the worldliness that eats into the Church like a canker, in Britain as well as Bengal?

“*Tuesday, 3.*—I was enabled to preach on Sabbath evening, from Matt. v.: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ and had much enjoyment in my discourse. Last night I was unexpectedly called upon to give an address at the missionary prayer-meeting (Isa. xii.) This morning we had in our house the meeting for conference of missionaries; the subject was, ‘The character of the primitive Church, as contrasted with the state of the native Churches.’ The results and details of this conference were very sad—the accounts given of native converts generally were indeed affecting—there seems nothing like life or holiness among them as a body. I cannot tell, nor record, how my soul has been saddened by this state of things. O for times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord! I feel as if I could die, could I thereby bring down a blessing; but no, that is not needed—the Son of God has died already for this end. But, O for faith to wrestle with the mighty One of Jacob! Lord, help me *myself* to be a living sacrifice, if I have no power over others. It was stated, and confirmed more or less by all present, that the first great point of deficiency in native converts was in *conviction of sin*: they seem devoid of this. How humbling a fact! how startling a sign! how fearful, if true!”

“*Thursday, 5.*—I have to preach this evening in connection with the dispensing of the Lord’s Supper on next Sabbath. The service is designed as one of humiliation, and I am sure I have much need to humble myself before the Lord: for some time past my soul has been rusting all over with heart-sin. Want of reverence for God, want of love to Christ, indifference to the Holy Spirit, wasting of time, neglect of prayer and the Word, a captious temper, insensibility to the eternal interests of men—all these sins, in various degrees and forms, have I had to complain of in this evil heart. Lord, come to my help against the mighty!

I confess their guilt—do thou forgive and destroy them utterly !”

In a letter to Mr Mackintosh, dated July 7th, he makes the following remarks on a system which, next to Popery, is perhaps the most perfect antagonist to the gospel that the ingenuity of Satan has devised—we refer to the system of caste, which stereotypes the mind of man, and dooms him to become a lordly oppressor on the one hand, or to grinding bondage and brutalization on the other. Omnipotence alone can break it, for its power is superhuman, and its downfall, come when it may, will be the signal for a wide jubilee among the abject myriads of India. Every effort of the Christian missionary should be directed against that mightiest barrier to the progress of truth, and all connivance at it in any form should be regarded as a truce with the arch-antagonist of the gospel in India.

“ I now am,” he says, “ quite at home here. Indeed, I felt so immediately on my arrival, to my own astonishment—nothing almost surprised me. The nakedness and personal wretchedness of the natives is at first disagreeable, but in a little time the eye ceases to be attracted or repelled by such appearances. Afterwards, when we become better acquainted, we are struck, and almost amazed, at the system of *caste*. The imperious, haughty, and oppressive spirit which it produces on the one hand, and the slavish, mean, and cringing spirit which it upholds on the other, are not the least of the evils that flow from it—it shuts out men from thinking, speaking or acting their convictions, and cuts them off from the very thought of that responsibility under which they lie to God. The dread of losing caste is the grand external barrier to the dissemination of the gospel in India. The knowledge of these circumstances

only presses on the mind after one has been for some time in this land." \*

But Mr Macdonald was not remiss in contending for the truth in other spheres besides the church or the college; for about this time he was drawn into a controversy † regarding the influence of education in promoting Christianity. Dr Duff, who was at this period in Britain, had assailed the Government system of imparting knowledge without religion to the subjects of the British crown in India, and his fearless assault had roused the hostility of the friends of such irreligious institutions in the East. At the same time, they would gladly have perverted his system to favour their own unchristian scheme of education; and in the absence of Dr Duff, Mr Macdonald hastened to the defence of the truth. The semi-infidelity which planned and presides over the Government system had wrested some phrases used by that friend of India, as if mere secular education were an essential pre-requisite, in every case, to the saving reception of revelation. This mischievous perversion, so long a stronghold of Moderatism, was disproved by quotations from the celebrated address to the General Assembly; and the truth was broadly announced to India and the world, that the confidence of the missionaries was "wholly placed on the omnipotent and gracious operation of the Holy Spirit." In short, the opportunity was obviously embraced,

\* In this letter, while lamenting the low state of religion, and pointing out much that was to be deplored, Mr Macdonald adds, "I must say of the Assembly's school here, that it is the most interesting and influential for Christianity, and useful of any in Calcutta."

† Carried on with the editor of a Calcutta newspaper, *The Englishman and Military Chronicle*.

not merely for vindicating Dr Duff, but yet more to testify to all Calcutta and the East as to the truth of God regarding the heart of man. It was proclaiming man's depravity by nature, demanding his conversion by grace, and proving that, till that was accomplished, no education could avail to the saving of the soul. Mr Macdonald announced his "true delight in being connected with an institution designed to disseminate Christian literature, in opposition to other infidel systems;" while he re-echoed the sentiment of Dr Duff, that "heart-persuasion" was beyond the power of man. "Benevolence to man, based on a system which excludes God," he repudiated as impious, and the controversy afforded an opportunity of testifying to that effect. But in truth, he was reasoning with men to whom conversion, as a spiritual thing, was foolishness; and the only immediate result of the controversy was to secure a wide and open arena on which to contend for various portions of the truth of God. His own remark on the discussion is—"I have endeavoured to cleave to the Word of God, and in that I am confident."

Besides discharging his duties in the Institution, where, he says, he had now "undertaken a fixed department in the Scriptures," he preached as often as opportunity was offered. In the Bethel, or place of worship for sailors, in the church of the Chaplaincy, in the Institution among the youths, and elsewhere, he resumed his former activity in proclaiming the truth of God, and soon had occasion to record that his time was as fully occupied as ever in these various departments. Yet he was still kept lowly:—

“August 7.—O that I had a heart in me that would cleave unto the Lord—a soul that would ever commune with Him! I am made to see much of the vanity of man, and to feel much how imperfect is the grace of Christians here. O for humility and meekness!—*humility* that will ever sit at Christ’s feet—*meekness* that will receive every thing at His hand. O how blessed will be the fellowship of the perfect saints above! Meanwhile, O Lord! let me live and die at my post.

“*Sabbath, September 2.*—By many things am I reminded of my wilderness state. O that I remembered it ever! My soul is slothful and sluggish in its movements—it cleaves to the dust. O Lord! I need many hints, and many sharp wounds, to awake me and to keep me awake; but I am in thy hands, and that sufficeth me. How much must Christ bear from His people! O wonderful patience that is never exhausted!—make me a sharer of it, as well as its object!

“I am going to address the young men this evening again; but how hopeless seems the result to my flesh! They are encased in prejudice, in spite of knowledge and conviction; they are living against their consciences, and rearing up refuges of lies to shield themselves against truth. O Lord! how long wilt thou try us thus? If the trial must continue, strengthen our faith, lest we fail and come short. O come and give us a blessing! But I confess that I am not worthy that thou shouldst do this thing by me. O no, I am not; but do as pleaseth thee.

“*September 9.*—Often would Satan tempt me by looking back on my past ministry, and contrasting its constant occupation with my present comparative inactivity. But I am satisfied that I am now in the Lord’s path; and what ground for doubt, then? nay, I will rejoice and be confident in Him.\* Indeed, I have already nearly as much

\* “Walking home I asked Dr Vanderkemp if he had repented of his undertaking. ‘No!’ said the old man, smiling, ‘and I would not exchange my work for a kingdom.’”—*Henry Martyn’s Diary.*



ministration as I can undertake. The Lord be with me! Preached in Bethel this morning from 'There is no peace to the wicked.'

On the 4th of November he refers to an event which evolved many solemn thoughts. Our deadness to eternal things makes such an incident appear commonplace or insignificant, yet how tremendous the issues that hang on it, issues that extend to hundreds of millions in heathendom!

"Amidst manifold corruptions and innumerable transgressions, the Lord is still preserving, and employing, and blessing me; this is the fulfilment of His covenant, and is all of grace. Many chastisements have I deserved, but they have been withheld—many falls have I merited, but I have been kept up. I have been to-day affected by an event in our household, as yet new to us here, *death*—the death of my bearer. Poor man! he had been afflicted with that grievous disease, dysentery; he had been gradually wasting away, and this morning died. Many thoughts have been in my mind since.

"For *what end* has this man lived? to what purpose? He never knew God, nor served Him. We can see no end fulfilled by his existence. Why did he live to die only, as to this present world? God knoweth.

"Into *what state* does he pass? I fear to think. He was a reasonable being: he could do *my* work by reason—could he not have done God's work? He desired to please me—could he not have sought to please God? He could know my character—could he not also know Him? Many such reflections come into my mind; but who can fully solve my doubts! I know he was a sinner, and 'without excuse,' and therefore he deserved to die, and to be punished; but what is the measure of his punishment?

"How needful to improve opportunities! I feared a few days ago that he was dying, and asked a native convert in the house to converse with him about Christ; which

he did. This is now a relief to my mind. It seemed to me an awful thing that a soul should pass into eternity out of a missionary's house without hearing of Christ. Lord, make me faithful!

“How needful to acquire the language of this country!—how can we be free from blood-guiltiness without it? O quicken me, Lord, in all duty!”

About this time, some misunderstandings arose regarding the precise nature of the position which Mr Macdonald was to hold in the Scottish mission at Calcutta. As one who had formerly been a minister of Christ, employed as a pastor in preaching the gospel, and finding his chief pleasure in that work, he felt scruples as to undertaking any department that might be considered subordinate to that. He was consequently more reserved than he might otherwise have been in taking part in what he deemed the merely secular element in tuition. In a correspondence to which his views gave rise, he again and again announces his approbation of the principles of the mission. “I have no desire,” he said to Dr Brunton, March 9th, “to oppose the principle, that ‘intellectual training bears directly on the subversion of idolatry.’ I am voluntarily identified with the Assembly’s Institution—I approve of it—I admire it—I love it;” but his sole difficulty arose from a misunderstanding as to the sphere which he was to occupy there; and so strong were his convictions regarding that sphere, that he felt as if he could not continue to labour with comfort, if the views which he cherished did not commend themselves to the Assembly’s Committee. That Committee, however, “readily acquiesced in the continuance of Mr Mac-

donald's present line of labour,"\* as he had described it, and we know with what pains and assiduity he continued to minister there as a missionary till the message came that called him to his reward.

We return to his Journal.

"February 1839.—For months past I have made no entry in this Journal. I know not why it has been so, on the whole; but I believe that, in part it has arisen from increasing indifference to what regards merely *myself*. I have also felt that the fellowship of a Christian helpmeet has taken away much of the necessary occasion that existed for self-communion of *this* sort.

"During the interval which has elapsed I have been employed in my usual way. I endeavour to do whatever little comes to hand, without looking to a distance. I have endeavoured to execute any little matter which might from day to day be presented. I am satisfied that this is the best and safest way for a Christian to walk in. May the Lord make me like himself! The pulpit, the Institution, the pen, and private intercourse, have all been open channels to me, and I have found the presence of God in the use of them. I have lately been subjected to much reproach for the part which I took against an Oratorio here. I was left to stand alone; but the Lord helped me, and gave me victory of a manifest kind. Who that knows thee would shrink from thy work, O thou blessed Jesus! I am meet-

\* Letter from Dr Brunton to Mr Macdonald, dated June 6, 1839. The assiduity with which he laboured in the Institution may appear from the following vidimus found among his papers:—

	TEN O'CLOCK.	ELEVEN.	TWELVE.
Monday,	{ Third Coll. class. Old Test.—Exod.	{ Sec. School class. New Testament.	{ Fourth Coll. class. Old Test.—Judges.
Tuesday,	{ Second Coll. class. Old Test.—Gen.	{ Fifth Coll. class. Old Test.—Kings.	{ Do. Barth's Church History.
Wednesday,	{ ...	{ ...	{ ...
Thursday,	{ Third Coll. class.	{ Fifth Coll. class.	{ Do. New Test.
Friday, . . .	{ Second Coll. class.	{ Sec. School class.	{ Do. Notes in Theol.

ing with much honour from man, and I know not what to think of it. May the Lord teach me how to use it aright! I have ever found 'good report' more difficult to bear than 'evil report.' Not only is the former more ensnaring to fallen humanity than the latter, but it is less favourable for the exercise of grace. However, good report is sometimes a sweet reward after evil report, and I would rejoice in both. After a year's residence in this land, I would magnify the Lord for his mercy to me during that time, and that he has set his seal upon my mission here."

He has just referred to the part which he took against an Oratorio at Calcutta, and it will serve to exhibit how zealously he embraced every opportunity for counteracting what he reckoned evil, if we briefly advert to it. It was Haydn's oratorio of "THE CREATION" that was at first contemplated, and he addressed a letter to a public functionary on the subject, characterised by high-toned Christian remonstrance against the profanation. But at a subsequent period, another movement of a similar kind was made, when he again appeared for the truth, supported by about thirty of its friends—among ministers, missionaries, and other Christian men—who resented the desecration of that Word which God has magnified above all His name. He knew that music is not sinful—as "a gift of God it is good"—but the desecration of Jehovah's truth, or the prostitution of his gifts, is so, and it was against such a profanation that Mr Macdonald reclaimed. One of his first movements in the matter was to address a note to the person who proposed to entertain the public at Calcutta, "by a selection of the words employed to describe the incarnation, the sufferings, death, and subsequent glory of THE

MESSIAH." From such a profanation, however patronised by royalty itself, or however clamorously demanded by the lovers of music, his righteous soul recoiled, and he kindly and affectionately remonstrated on the subject. "The Oratorio of JESUS CHRIST—for he is the Messiah," was what he could not pass over in silence, and he tried to prevent the perpetration of a multiform iniquity. In one of his letters to the projector, he pathetically exclaims, "O sir! can you not find other things by which to entertain poor, sinful, dying men, than God's creation or Christ's redemption?" But the usual sophisms were employed to defend the measure. Some of the heads of the English Church at Calcutta had formerly encouraged a similar proposal, and it was therefore reckoned right! An appeal from the heads of a Church to the Head of the whole creation of God was set aside; but, undeterred alike by the scoffer's laugh and the infidel's sneer, Mr Macdonald rested his advocacy on "the law of the eternal God, and appealed to the supreme and ultimate tribunal of MESSIAH THE JUDGE." A solemn and united protest was published; but the interference was resented as a repetition of the conduct of "Dominican inquisitors"—Pope's *Universal Prayer* was quoted as the model of charity, or founded on as a warrant for such procedure—and the sin was perpetrated.\*

\* In connection with the second proposal, Mr Macdonald published a pamphlet—*The Oratorio*—in which the subject is discussed on the principles and in the light of Scripture. He did for the musical exhibitions in Calcutta what John Newton did for those of Westminster, and protested against that desecration in a style like that in which M'Cheyne assailed Sabbath desecration amongst ourselves.

It should be added, however, that while the projectors of the first Oratorio were encouraged by the high patronage, and the corresponding success of their first attempt, they were baffled in their next endeavour. Two other festivals of the same kind were announced to follow at no distant day. The highest functionaries in India patronised them, for the world resented the assault that was made on its enjoyments; but the testimony and protest of Mr Macdonald and his friends had at last prevailed. The Oratorio was performed; but the musicians were now left to desecrate the Word of God, not to overflowing crowds, but to deserted benches. Shame had taken hold of many—none but the bold in ungodliness cared to partake in the iniquity; and, though ten years have since elapsed, the attempt has not been repeated. It is thus that one man can vanquish a thousand when he leans on the arm that is omnipotent, and takes counsel of “God only wise.” Natural conscience may be stirred and quickened, even though the heart be not renewed by such appeals, and by all this the friends of truth should be emboldened

In his professional life, bitter clouds occasionally threatened to darken our missionary’s path, “but the Sun of Righteousness dispelled them all.” He records—

“*April 11.*—My walk is even and peaceful at present. In my experience there is nothing to note. The Lord is ever presenting ways of serving Him, and is giving me a heart also to choose and love His service. I am to preach this evening, preparatory to our communion. O for the presence that helped me of old! My communion with my Lord Jesus is not as it ought to be. My soul is not devo-

tional—prayer is too much restrained—the Bible is not studied as it ought to be. O my God and Father, have pity on me! O Jesus, my Lord, visit me! Spirit of the Lord, come upon me and quicken me! Behold, I am thine!

“*May 12.*—I have enjoyed the privilege of preaching twice to-day—once in the morning in the Scotch Church, from Psalm xxv., ‘Show me thy ways;’ and in the evening to the youth of the Institution, on immediate submission to the Lord. I was made to realise much of the enmity and obduracy of human nature. O how stony it is!

“I have not, of late, enjoyed so much peace of soul as formerly; this arises from various causes, such as excessive occupation without devotional retirement. My soul is dry and withered in its graces. I feel not that contrite tenderness which is the sweetest state of mind. The love of Christ is low in me. My zeal seems dying! Lord, breathe on me!

“On this evening two years, I preached my farewell discourse to my dear River Terrace flock. How I love them still! Here I met with souls to pity, but not to love as I did them. Lord, bless my dear people, every one of them, wherever they may be!

“*June 16.*—Were I to judge of my present circumstances by the flesh, I should have much to depress me. I have been lately a good deal weakened by indisposition, the effects of climate, and a delicate constitution—which might well lead me to fear that, so far as physical strength may be necessary, I can never be much of a missionary in this land. But, on the other hand, even the flesh might be encouraged by the fact, that I have constantly presented to me as much work of a mental order as I can well accomplish; so that from morning till night I am scarce idle. I have many openings for the pen, and I have endeavoured hitherto to improve them. May the Lord seal my work!

“I believe I can say that the prospect of heaven, and of being with Christ, is very precious to me—that it is not less so with me than in many sweet past times. The absorbing novelty of my work here is now gone, and I am more free to rise again to my blessed Lord—my balance of soul is returning. O may the Eternal Spirit breathe upon me, and quicken, enlighten, and strengthen me, as of old!

“On looking back on my Diary for this day last year (Sabbath 17), I find almost all circumstances the same now as then. My spiritual complaints and my petitions are the same. One thing, however, is not the same—I am one year nearer my *rest!*

“*June 23.*—My indisposition has left behind it a degree of irritability in my chest which still confines me. This reminds me of former days of sickness, when brought near to the grave; and it reminds me also of the tinder-box of mortality within me, which may in a moment take fire, and speedily consume me to the earth! These are not unpleasant, but they are solemn thoughts; and during the last few days I have been led to indulge in them. My only question of doubt is, Will the Lord remove me *now*, after having brought me so far, and in so peculiar a manner, without *apparently* having accomplished any sufficient or worthy end? Thus, perhaps, the flesh speaks; but, if I mistake not, even faith whispers thy work is not yet *quite* done—there is still something for thee to do. Lord, is it so? I am contented: let this be the noon or the eventide of my days, as pleases thee! O direct me to thy will from day to day: my times are in thy hands—determine all, overrule all, bless all. Thine for ever, O God!”

Mr Macdonald had again been laid low by sickness, and much reduced by the visitation. “I am very weak,” he says after a brief entry, “too weak to write any more; but I love to record my sincere admiration of the dealings of Him who hath redeemed me. I am suffering much; but I have per-



fect peace and rest. I desire more retastes of glory." A brief visit to Burhampore was the means of recruiting his wasted energies; and while there, he had occasion again to regret his inability to address the natives, owing to his ignorance of their tongue—

"*Culna, Sabbath, July 21.*—We reached this place last night, and here we have anchored to keep the day of rest. I trust this forenoon has been sweet and profitable to us; we have had worship together, and the Spirit of the Lord was with us. We sung, read, and prayed, and meditated on Rom. v. 1–8, which was very sweet. I have seldom enjoyed such a time of rest. I have been much impressed with the duty of intercession to-day. Here I am in the midst of idolatry, directly opposite to a large city that is full of it, and yet I cannot interpose to speak to my fellow-men. I have the glorious gospel in my heart, and on my lips, as well as in my Bible, yet I cannot declare it! What, then, can I do? I can pray; I can come to God for this people, for this large city, in *prayer*. I can intercede and wrestle on their behalf. O prayer! thou blessed resource of the helpless willing, what should I do in this world without thee? I have laid the cause of Culna before the Lord this day, that He would speedily send a blessing to it.\* I am willing myself to be the messenger to proclaim the gospel to it, if he send me. I am much more impressed with the importance and duty of preaching in the native tongue. If it be the Lord's will regarding me, may He help me! O show me my way, as thou hast hitherto done! I desire to devote myself to a life of humiliation and self-denial more and more. . . . May the Lord keep me right!

"I have had much correspondence with my beloved wife during my absence. Blessed be God for such a help-

\* The Free Church has now a mission station at Culna.

meet. Lord, bless her more and more, and make us both eternally happy in thy love! Amen."

On the 9th of October his eldest child was born; and at her baptism he wrote what we cannot sufficiently commend to the study of all who realise parental obligation on the one hand, and gracious privilege on the other.

"*Sabbath, November 24.*—This day, in the kind providence of God, have I been permitted and enabled to dedicate my little offspring to my covenant God in baptism; and for this I give thanks. O what a privilege is it! I trust I have had communion with the Lord in this deed, if ever I had it. Many encouragements have I felt, and no misgivings as to infant baptism in its faithful form. Yea, I praise God for such an ordinance. I know God's willingness to bless infants. I know that he did of old receive them into His covenant by seal. I know also that infants are capable of enjoying the blessings of the covenant of grace—that the want of faith in those who are incapable of faith is just as applicable to salvation as to baptism, and therefore constitutes no argument against it. I believe that the seal of the covenant will be just as valid to the child when it afterwards believes, as if baptized when adult—that it is a great privilege to have it externally united with the Church, and for a parent to say, 'This, my child, has been solemnly and publicly given to God—it is federally holy.' I believe that the commission of Christ included the children of believers, and that the apostles baptized such; and I know that the holiest of men in all ages have had communion with their God in this ordinance. But why enlarge? O my Lord! I bless thee for saving me from falling into the cold and forbidding doctrines of antipædo-baptism! O give me grace to improve thine ordinance! Look in mercy on my little Catharine! O Spirit of the Lord! inhabit her, regenerate

her! I have given her to thee—make her thine own! Bless mother, father, and daughter. O bless us! All glory be to God!”

—Some of his most valued friends were Baptists. He loved them for their zeal. He admired them—and who would not?—for their missionary ardour; but admiration did not blind him to the nature of their distinctive tenet. He reckoned it unequivocally opposed to the doctrine of salvation by grace. He deemed it “cold and forbidding”—a remnant of a spirit which early appeared, and is still mournfully present, in the Church of Christ, rather than a portion of the truth; and he on all occasions opposed it with the mildness of a thorough catholic, but yet with the firmness of one who felt convinced that he was maintaining a truth disclosed by the holy God—a privilege of the well-ordered covenant. The chief argument against the sacrament as administered to infants, is founded on the abuses of the superstitious and the ungodly: observed in spirit and in truth, it is one of the most consoling of the Church’s countless mercies.

His next entry is dated “January 1840.”

“O how fast are my years pressing on!—how soon, how very soon, will the end come! Blessed be my blessed Lord, I am not sorry for this now, as I once would have been. Eternity is now my country, heaven is now my home, God is now my father, and Christ is now my brother, and the Holy Spirit is now my indwelling friend, one with myself! Angels and saints are now my society, and sinless service is my chief and ultimate desire. O thrice blessed Triune Godhead, who hast called me to enjoy such mercy!

“The *providence* of the past year has to me been full of *God*—full of all His attributes and glory. O how much of divine manifestation has been lavished on me!

“The *conduct* of the past year has been full of *sin*. My heart has been in a low and dead state. I have not been holy and joyful in heart as I ought to have been. External work I have been enabled to do, and God has prospered me therein; but internal work has been neglected, and I have suffered in soul.

“Lord, my sin is before me. O take it away in thy Son’s blood for ever!

“Give me now this one thing—*humility*! I ask it of thee in thy Son’s name!

“Let the Spirit of my Lord be upon me, and within me, and let Him work by me!

“Bless with me my beloved wife, and my beloved child. Amen.”

—No one can read these sentences without feeling again that he who wrote them is gradually ripening for glory. What a gulf between his present state of mind and that in which he questioned whether there was a God, or even that in which he struggled, and prayed, and wept, in the hope that by these he would win his way to the favour of his Judge! He is going on unto perfection, and growing up unto Him who is the Head in all things. He has had his alternations, but like Rutherford he has discovered, that “as nights and shadows are good for flowers, and moonlight and dews better than a continued sun, so is Christ’s absence of special use—it hath some nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humility, and furnisheth a fair field for faith.” In short, the temple which is by nature in ruins, was in course of being rebuilt, and the primal inscription,

“Holiness to the Lord,” becomes more and more legible on its front. Man has been called the keystone of the arch of creation. Detach that stone as sin did, and creation crumbles—the scriptural phrase is, “It groaneth and travaileth together in pain.” But replace the keystone—as Christianity, the religion of Father, Son, and Spirit, does—and beauty begins to reappear—a beauty in which the whole of redeemed creation will yet be radiant. How exquisite indeed, the skill which could restore the ruins of Tadmor to their primitive proportions and grandeur!—yet a far nobler restoration is advancing in the soul of the believer—the temple of the Holy Ghost—and we see it in progress in the case of him whose pathway we are tracing to his grave.

Mr Macdonald sometimes felt it difficult to let patience have its perfect work regarding the conversion of sinners. As a devoted missionary, he was so anxious to see them turned from darkness to light, that he “mourned in his complaint, and made a noise,” like the man after God’s own heart, when the work was not advancing. He used the means with diligence and in faith. One of his maxims was : “Man is one, sin is one, the devil is one, here as in Scotland—teach and preach, preach and teach”—and he acted upon it. But perhaps his ardent love and longings in this respect induced him in some degree to overlook the distinctive character of the mission at Calcutta. In the language of logicians, it is not an adequate definition of the Institution there to say, that it is a college for imparting a Christian education to idolaters, important as that end is : it is more than that—it is a seminary whose

grand and avowed object is to train up native preachers of the truth as it is in Jesus, for Hindus; and when that is overlooked, the Calcutta mission is not fully understood. But amid his chafing delays and "the breakings of his soul" for the conversion of idolaters to God our Saviour, Mr Macdonald knew where to find consolation, and he thus writes to a friend (June 6, 1840):—

. . . . . " May the Lord enable you to enjoy the sweets of labour, and then sweet will be the final sleep in the Lord! I know you have a rugged, a very rugged field to plough up, and with many a hard and tough root to shake the mind and shatter the body—but behold the host of ploughmen now on the whole field: what is not done in one place, is done in another—it is but one work. This often animates me. ' Well, ' I say to myself, ' God is working somewhere—their turn now—mine may be next. Souls are one and the same. He may come in a night, when it cannot be said that I brought Him. If not by me, then, Lord, work by another. If thou wilt not at this time use me, then will I stand by, and sing psalms of praise because thou art working by others. Go on, thou Mighty One—do as thou wilt.' " . . . . .

At the period which we have now reached, the condition of the Church of Scotland had become critical and trying. Civil authority had encroached, by a series of unconstitutional and unscriptural aggressions, on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of Christ, till fears were entertained that men in power would never be satisfied until the divine institution had become a mere " creature of the state," controlled by Cæsar, and not by Christ. Encroachment after encroachment had been made,



and rulers, utterly unacquainted with Presbyterian principles, urged on by ministers as little acquainted with the true constitution of a Church of Christ, were hastening to enslave one of the freest institutions that our earth had ever beheld. Mr Macdonald was no indifferent spectator of these stirring scenes. Both in India, and by his correspondence with Scotland, he sought to encourage those who were bearing the burden and heat of the day in struggling for the crown-rights of the Redeemer. "The condition of the Church at home," he says, early in the year 1840, "is a very fiery one; but I anticipate deliverance for her. I rejoice to see the prerogatives of Christ asserted." In his own sphere, he at the same time adopted various measures to promote the cause which he loved. Among other things, he proposed that "an address of sympathy to our Church, in her present trial and noble struggle," should be transmitted to Scotland from the representatives of the Church at Calcutta; but his proposal was unsupported. He regarded the Head of the Church as the Head of the mission, as indeed he is "Head over all things"—and, strong in that conviction, he would have adopted a measure which, by honouring the Redeemer, would have ended in a blessing on the cause. He was ready to hazard every thing at the bidding of duty, and it was with some difficulty that he could refrain from publicly sending in his adherence to the cause of spiritual freedom in his native land, at a time considerably anterior to that at which his brother missionaries felt it to be their duty to declare their adhesion. With him spiritual independence had all

the force of an axiomatic truth. He could not wait to reason regarding the axiom: he always founded upon it as a first principle, and before its authority all argumentation must give way. As King in Zion, as well as Prince of the kings of the earth, the Redeemer's was the only will which he would recognise, and whatever conflicted with that, was at once, and instinctively, repudiated and disowned.

But in every direction he sought to operate for good. Not long after his arrival in Bengal, Mr Macdonald became the originator, and an active member of what was known as "THE CALCUTTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL-BOOK SOCIETY." He noticed the lack of proper means of instruction for the myriads of that vast country, and his object in this new projection, was to furnish books for the natives, thoroughly Christian in their character, and such as would bring the mind in its earliest stages in contact with the truth which saves. The avowed and leading principle of the society was to aim "at the conversion of men from sin to God by Jesus Christ;" and for that purpose the endeavour was made to supply such information as bore directly on the soul's salvation. The elementary works which were prepared by its means were mainly, though not exclusively, religious; and thus we see another machinery employed, which, in the end, might be blessed to pull down the strongholds of Satan in the land where spiritual death is reigning. The basis of the society was, "Love thy neighbour as thyself"—its warrant, "Go and teach all nations"—its directory, "Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it;"



and, guided by these principles, it proceeded, without ostentation, to act for Him in whose name and for whose glory all should be done. What has made Britain what it is? The gospel of the grace of God disenthraling the soul, and giving expansion to mind. The same power is as mighty for India as for our island; and eagle-eyed faith, anticipating the day which will assuredly come, employed this additional agency to hasten the advent. Mr Macdonald, whose hand and spirit can be traced in the rules and publications of the society, was its corresponding secretary. It was one of his sayings, "There are some men, of whom it is evident at once that they are all for God"—he was himself a memorable exemplification of the remark; and in framing the regulations and managing the affairs of a society in India for "promoting education on Christian principles," he was at once subserving the grand object of his life, and extending the basis on which the Missionary Institute with which he was connected had been laid.

We cannot help submitting a specimen of his pleading for this society.\* Referring to its basis, he says—

"We found it in the book of truth, and we carry it into a world of error; we found it in the book of God, and we carry it into a world of sin. And why?—that all men may be completely blessed. Is not ours the Christian dispensation, and shall we not seek to make every thing Christian? Is not this the age of Christ, and shall we not, as his redeemed people, strive to concentrate all in Him? Yea, we would have all men love Christ—we would have all books

\* We are indebted for these extracts to Rev. Dr Wilson of Bombay, with whom Mr Macdonald corresponded on the subject.

serve Christ—we would have all things lead to Christ—we would have all societies confess Christ—and this is what we call *Christianity*: if it be not, show us from the Word of Christ that we err. Our hearts are surrendered to this, that by all Christian means India shall be Christian. And what are those means? Love, reason, truth, and grace. We will act with love; we will use reason in argument; we will teach the whole truth of Christ; and we will pray for, and trust in, the grace of the Holy Spirit. Philosophy and literature, the languages, the arts, the sciences, and all secular influences, shall be but as the camels, dromedaries, and elephants of burden in this enthusiastic service: we will not bow down and serve them; but they shall bow down and serve Christ. This, this is the true order of things; and this is that which shall yet be owned and done over every land. In this work let us spend our days; for this work let us sanctify our resources; to this work let us dedicate our property; by this work let us ever stand, in good report and in bad alike; through this work let us seek to fulfil the compound law of love to God and man; and from the very midst of this work let us answer our Master's summons, saying to us, 'Come up hither!' And when we go, may many a Hindu, blessed by us, in due time follow us, and attest for ever the blessedness of Christian education; and above all, attest eternally the unflinching truth and immeasurable importance of this fundamental Christian proposition—'Christ is the Light and Christ is the Life of the World!'

—And again he says, next year—

“Is not our object Christian?—do we not lay all literature at the feet of Christ? Is not our end Christian?—do we not seek to convert all to Christ? Is not our Christianity simple—to obey Christ's command? Is not our Christianity catholic?—does it not include every one who follows Christ, under whatever human banner? And is not catholicity of spirit and work more sweet than diversity?”

India sees the catholicity of death in its universal agreement to sin : shall she not also see the catholicity of life in the universal agreement of grace by one Jesus Christ ? Shall not the Christianity which demands the whole world to be one Church, stand forth in its own self as one ? And if all Christians cannot co-operate in every thing, shall they not the more gladly, on that very account, work together wherever they can possibly unite ? The habit of uniting on earth in the service of Christ prepares us for our everlasting union in the presence of God in heaven."

In conducting the business of this society, Mr Macdonald carried on a correspondence with H. Carr Tucker, Esq., a civilian who had held some offices of trust under the Government in India. At a period somewhat subsequent to that to which we now refer, he received an appointment from Government to visit and report on all the schools in a district which he was traversing, and that gave ample scope for his zeal, at once as an educationist and a philanthropist. "Moral and religious vernacular works" for the young were the objects on which his heart was set, as the instruments of emancipating mind and Christianizing souls ; and more than one of these were prepared by Mr Tucker, and submitted to the society for publication. A glance at his correspondence with Mr Macdonald is exhilarating, for it shows the agencies which the only-wise God is employing to subvert the colossal system of superstition under which mind and soul have alike been entombed for some millenniums in India. Mr Macdonald was thereby encouraged in his work, while endeavouring to pre-occupy the rising mind of India with the truth as it is in Jesus.\*

\* In one of his letters to Mr Tucker, Mr Macdonald says—"I am

But Mr Macdonald was unwearied in well-doing, and he even tasked his ingenuity in discovering new channels for doing good. So early as 1839, Mrs Macdonald had opened a seminary for native girls, which continued steadily to prosper. It was taught in her own house, with the aid of a female assistant, and the annual expenditure of about £80 was for some time "defrayed entirely from his own private purse." About forty-five pupils attended, and received an education as thoroughly Christian as their capacities admitted. Many difficulties had been felt as to the practicability of female education in India, but our Missionary deemed it a duty so imperative, that every obstacle must be faced that that duty might be discharged; and his faith was eventually rewarded. The initial difficulties which existed when his operations began, have disappeared, to a large extent, at the touch of experiment, and the arguments urged against such an attempt are now confined mainly to those who fear human obstacles more than they trust in superhuman power, who make expediency their rule, or who bend duty into compliance with what is reckoned interest.\*

When matters regarding female education were farther matured, a proposal was made to place Mr Macdonald's seminary under the superintendence of the Financial Board appointed to aid in supporting

sorry that your views of Popery do not permit you to 'hate' it. I do not, and I did not, speak of Papists, but of Popery; and I rejoice to say that I hate it with my whole soul, and I pray God I evermore may abhor it as evil; and the more I hate it, the more am I able to pity and compassionate those who are its victims."

\* Mr Macdonald's attention was very much turned to Portuguese children, "who," he says, "are as much natives, and who are as ignorant and unchristian as the Hindus."

the mission at Calcutta. He was, however, wisely on his guard against the mere secular element thus interfering with the spiritual, and objected to place the religious training of the native girls under any superintendence but that of the Presbyterian body in that city. The missionaries had always declined any interference in spiritual things on the part of a mere financial committee, and the year 1840 was not the time for cancelling their opposition.\* He and Mr Mackay formally dissented from the unpresbyterian innovation, and the matter was eventually arranged in harmony with his views.†

Nor was this watchfulness unnecessary. A secretary of the Scottish Society for Promoting Female Education in India, in reference to Mr Macdonald's dissent from secular superintendence, wrote that the society "regretted that such questions should ever be allowed to encumber, or in any way interfere with so good and holy an undertaking." It was the plea often used by the undecided and the time-serving at home while the Church's constitution was at stake, and proceeded on the assumption that a cause might be good and holy though the Church's foundations were thereby sapped or destroyed. In his answer Mr Macdonald says—"Such is not the manner in which I had hoped that Christian friends would have replied to a scruple which involves one

\* Dr Brunton said, in a letter to Mr Macdonald, announcing the Committee's sanction of his position, that "he wondered how any one could have interpreted the constitution of the financial board otherwise than Mr Macdonald did."

† Mr Macdonald had been clerk of the Presbytery of London for some years before he proceeded to India, and there his clear business talents, as well as sound views of Presbyterian Church order, were both exercised and matured.

of the most important questions (as will one day be seen)—Who is to superintend the work of the Lord? And has it not been seen, during the eight years that have since elapsed, that that question was “most important?” Had the watchfulness which he exercised been at all times observed, much that once threatened disaster, but which God has overruled for good to the Church, might have been prevented.

In reviewing the year 1840, Mr Macdonald writes—

“What shall I say in retrospect of the past year, 1840? Just what I have said heretofore—God has been full of goodness to me. I have been full of sin to Him! On the side of my income I write, ‘All grace’—on the side of my expenditure, ‘All sin.’ My debt is mounting up over my head, and for this I have no alternative but the sweet one of abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is always sweet to me.

“During the past year I have enjoyed fair health, so that I have been but few days laid aside. My beloved wife, also, and little daughter, have been favoured with much health, so that it has been the easiest of our Indian years.

“I have been enabled to minister regularly at the Institution five days of every week, instructing four different classes in the Word of God, delivering two theological lectures, and reading the evidences of Christianity. This has been my regular weekly work throughout the year.

“In the Bengali language I have made but slight progress, owing to the increase of work at the Institution. This I have much regretted, and would wait on the Lord to alter it, if it please Him.

“In various other works of the general ministry, especially among my countrymen, have I been enabled to occupy myself. In the floating chapel every fortnight, on Sab-

bath morning; on Tuesday evenings (save one in the month), the usual exposition at Mr Hawkins'; on every third Wednesday evening, my turn in the Scottish Church prayer-meeting; and, on many Sabbaths, public preaching to the various congregations of Calcutta—Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist. For all these opportunities of usefulness do I bless my Lord and my God!

“ Besides this, my pen has been much in my hand, and I have written not a little for various ends, public and private. Among other things, I have been enabled to extend a few notes of discourses for my London friends, which they will probably publish.

“ I have resigned the Secretaryship of the Tract Society, but still continue the corresponding secretaryship of the Christian School-Book Society.

“ These things look large when written, but O how deficient in reality! My time has been filled up, but not satisfactorily. Over every thing I write, ‘ Pardon! pardon!’

“ Now, to my covenant God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all love and glory! Amen.”

His abundant labours in the cause to which his life and energies were devoted, may be understood from the retrospect now given. It was not conventional routine, it was, “ Give thyself wholly to these things,” that regulated his department. Certain meetings, for the purpose of fostering devotion, held at the house of his much-loved friend, J. A. F. Hawkins, Esq., now one of the judges of the Sudder Court,\* were among his favourite opportunities for doing good, and it is on record † that, on the minds of many, an indelible impression was produced. Such was the unction that pervaded Mr Macdonald’s min-

\* Since the First Edition was published, Mr Hawkins has returned to his native land.

† In Mr Wylie’s sketch, already referred to.

istrations in public and private, and so near to the throne did he guide those whose devotions he led, that if they were the children of the King, they rejoiced in that nearness; if they were still aliens, they were awed, solemnized, attracted, and, by the grace of the Spirit of Life, sometimes taught to rejoice in the liberty which Christ imparts. His own house, moreover, was pre-eminently a place where prayer was wont to be made. Once each week it was open to all who would come to seek with him the blessing of communion with God, while on another evening weekly, the friends with whom he lived in closest intimacy, because he saw in them the greatest resemblance or devotedness to his Lord, assembled at his house, to stir up each other's graces, to bear each other's burdens, and foster each other's faith. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another" there; and need we hesitate to add, "The Lord hearkened and heard?"

While he was thus assiduous in season and out of season, as a servant of the Saviour, and was, in consequence, treated by many with that reproach to which the best friends of the world have ever been exposed, he was not left without some counterbalancing benefits. All who loved the truth loved him, and unequivocal tokens of affection were often imparted. Some members of his flock, about this time, presented him with a pair of horses; and, in acknowledging the costly gift, he said to the friend whose note accompanied it—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—If you have access to know those kind friends who have acted so munificently towards an unworthy servant of their Master, as your note of this



morning, with its accompaniment, shows that they have done, permit me, through you, to tender to them my sincere thanks.

“My path in this land has been strewed with kindness by the friends of Christ—in His members He has manifested himself to me.

“Be assured that I am not insensible to kindness so considerate and substantial as that manifested on the present occasion ; and I pray my Lord and Master, that He may grant a disciple's reward unto those who have done with the right hand that which their left hand knew not. May the Lord bless you and them !—In Christ's love, yours sincerely.

“JOHN MACDONALD.”

But his home affections were neither dried up nor chilled by his engrossments as a missionary minister. About this period he wrote to one of his sisters, and said—

. . . . “How do you spend your time, my dear A——? I hope not, like most young women, in gadding, gossiping, and trifling. O do not so! When I look back on my own little life, it seems to me fearfully wrong, and I see no way of accounting for it. Every retrospect of time makes Christ more precious to me, as one who covers me with His righteousness. Are you, my dear sister, united to Christ? Has he the chief love within you? There has been much of the Lord's work and love around you of late : do you remain untouched by it? Then, how is it so? The longer I live, Christ is more an exceeding joy. O receive Him, and be joyful! What is —— about? Has grace reached her heart? And my brothers, are they growing up for Christ, or for the world? Whose servants are they? Ask them for me.

“Although people at home think it not, India is just as monotonous as Scotland under ordinary circumstances, and Calcutta is usually as unmoved as an inland mountain-girt lake. Day after day, in domestic life, in social life, in

ministerial life, in missionary life, passes on as with you in your corresponding home spheres ; and those who expect any thing strange here, except a burning sun, a half-naked people, and rupees instead of shillings, will find themselves soon and much disappointed. Alas ! I might have added as another strange thing, or rather I might have mentioned as the *one* strange thing, the *worship* of objects sillier than children's toys as the one living and true God, the creator, preserver, and ruler of all things ! But really, my dear sister A——, idolatry, when you see it, is so very childish in its externals, that it is a most difficult thing to maintain in the soul any thing like a sense of its internal and intrinsic enormity. Children's dolls at home are not only beauties as compared with the images of India, but also children's sports with them are matters of gravity, compared with the grotesque or rather burlesque worship of idols here. But with this subject you are now all familiar at home, only I can assure you, that on the spot every thing looks meaner than in books and speeches—the Ganges itself but a *large dirty river* ! You see I am no sentimentalist, and that all my poetry has run into prose ; and so much the better, for I am never disappointed since I became a matter-of-fact man. I have now been several years in this country, and they have been with me happy years in all respects except *one*, the seeing every day myriads of sinners whom I cannot reach or deliver, and for whom all that we do seems comparatively nothing. I have ever had full occupation for my time, and one door opening after another. My work, too, has been of a very varied sort, so that my mind has not been allowed to flag, nor my natural spirits to weary in my Master's work, nor have I been without tokens of acceptance from my God in various forms ; and though my name is still, and ever will be (what is safest), unknown in the published lists of popularity, and most of my work has been without any further notice than an occasional worldly abuse, yet on this account has my work been sweeter, and my spirit happier. Christ's eye, Christ's ear,

Christ's acceptance is enough for me ; so that with these alone, I have far more enjoyment than some others possess who have every thing else beside. The wise Lord whom I serve has seen it good always to keep me down in the eyes of the world and of the Church ; and many times have I sincerely thanked Him for the peculiar care He has thus taken of me." . . . . .

Mr Macdonald was again brought low by sickness, and obliged to leave Calcutta for a brief recess, to recruit his wasted strength. At Gussery, near that city, he says—

. . . . . "On Sabbath, 21st [February 1841], I felt unwell, but preached twice—morning, Bethel ; evening, Scotch Church : 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' That night became ill, and so continued worse and worse for the rest of the week—painful days, sleepless, tossing nights. My mind was worse than my body, from nervous and cerebral affection. About 28th became better, and have been slowly improving since. On Monday, 8th [March], came here for change of air, and have much improved. But, alas ! my dear wife, who had recovered so well, has been ill again since the 27th, suffering extreme pain ; and still does she suffer. Thus hath the Lord afflicted us very sorely at the very time when, in so kind a manner, He bestowed on us a son. Oh ! there was need that He should chasten me. I was far from Him, although I was in the very midst of His work. O Lord ! if thou art again sparing me, grant me this request, that my life may be in conformity with thy will. O for a life of divine pleasure ! . Open mine eyes to delusions, and give me grace to do that only which I ought to do. . . . .

"*May 17.*—God hath much to say to me I know, and of late he hath much spoken to me in his providence. He hath raised me up from much sickness, and my wife hath

He restored from much suffering ; but our little daughter hath He laid very low. In the midst of our parental delight over her opening soul, the Lord hath, in a manner that is wise, and good, and just, come into our dwelling and said, 'She is *mine*, and I *may* require her!' Truth, Lord, she is thine : I gave her to thee in baptism by a solemn oath, and shall I draw back ? Nay, my blessed Lord, thou art her Father in heaven, and do thou as seemeth thee good. Yet, hast thou not made me a parent, and wilt thou not now condescend to hear a parent's petition, that thou wouldst spare his child, and permit her to live to thy glory on this earth, if so be it please thee ? She *may* be thine on *earth*, even as in heaven ; but, Lord, thou knowest best what is best, and do thou *that*.

"My soul hath been much exercised in this matter, and I bless God that he hath thus shaken me. O for more depth and steadfastness of spirit ! Many are the trials of earth. O for more of the comforts of heaven ! Lord Jesus, help thy poor servant ! I am poor and needy—think of me, and aid a miserable sinner ! By thy Spirit aid me."

—He had laid his daughter "bound on the altar of his Lord, and waited, expecting that he would take her away," but adds—

. . . . . "O how kind and tender art thou ! Still the child is thine ; so are they both, both thine, in every way, without any limit ! O bless them as thy children ; and, as their supreme guardian, do all things for them—when it is needful to displace me, do thou take them up. Help me this night to preach on 'glorying in tribulations ;' for thou hast been teaching me—help me to teach others."

It was in the year 1841 that some souls in the north of Scotland, and especially in Tain, were stirred up to spiritual earnestness, and freed from the stupor into which so many in our land of profession collapse. In referring to these awakenings

and seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, Mr Macdonald says in a letter to Mr Mackintosh, "If but one little boy would believe, and be baptized now, how glad should we be!"—and that cause of gladness was not long denied, for when reviewing the year 1841, he records, among other mercies, the following:—

. . . . . "He has granted me the still greater mercy of seeing two young Hindus in my daily Scripture classes converted to Christ, I hope sincerely. For this sight I do indeed bless Him."

It had been Mr Macdonald's practice, from year to year, to transmit a "Missionary Letter" to his former flock in London, to subserve the double purpose of perpetuating their connection, and deepening the interest of the congregation in missions. The benefits of such a course are too obvious to need enumeration; and we know that some of that flock, who still revered him as their pastor, or loved him as their father in Christ, felt themselves annually refreshed by these communications, so obviously the productions of a heavenly mind—of one who rejoiced to spend and be spent under the constraining influence of the love of Christ. We now submit his Missionary Letter for the year 1842:—

"CALCUTTA, *February 15, 1842.*

"MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! This is my heart's desire and prayer for you, for those whom I formerly knew in the flesh, and for those whom I can only know in spirit. Let me also have your affections and supplications. Once your pastor, I still regard myself, in part, your missionary to the heathen, and I am ever glad to respond to those

claims of spiritual relationship which must long dwell within my heart. May the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, sanctify us all, day by day, and make us all more and more 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light!'

"Last year, at this time, and at your request, I wrote you a letter in regard to the state of missionary work in this part of India, within my own little sphere of observation. I wrote the truth in sincerity, as my own mind saw, and my own mind judged. Some have not been well pleased with me, I find, both at home and here: but that is of no consequence; for I have had, on the other hand, the expressed satisfaction of *all* my missionary brethren here, except one or two, who are either more sanguine or more cautious than I can be.

"I now again comply with your request, and write you another epistle. Have I any thing in last year's epistle to amend or alter? Nothing. In fact, I might almost write it over again to you this year, with a few slight, very slight, additions. I know of no very important change or event to record. Active monotony is one of the trials of the Bengal missionary—there is a vast amount of work to be done, and no variety of incident to stimulate the dull flesh. Were it not for that blessed grace of *faith*, 'which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,' ours would often be a heavy and unenviable work. But I feel it to be the *best*, and *noblest*, and *happiest* of all employments; and the humble, unknown, and unnoticed trials of a missionary are to me more lovely and desirable than the splendid temptations of a popular and public life. To be alone with Christ, in the midst of spiritual trial, is one of the tenderest and purest of our earthly enjoyments—the consciousness of pleasing Him is a happiness to which there seems no present addition but to know that He loves us.

"The Bengal missionary body has been much weakened of late; a large number of missionaries, from various causes, have gone home during the year: I can count ten who

have done so. The greater part of those we hope to see after a year or two, but, in the meanwhile, they are withdrawn from the field, and their places are unsupplied save by young men, who are not yet able to fill the places of the old. A man does not become a missionary in a year, no, nor perhaps in five years, unless he have perhaps a very sound and strong judgment. No man who has not been here, can well believe how much one has to *unlearn* as well as to learn, how much to put off as well as to put on, before he can be an effective missionary in India. The theories of the committee-room and platform are very different from the realities and exigencies of the missionary field, and much injury has been done by unripe ministrations and crude theorizing. A man may start at once in his own country, because he has known it from his childhood, and its very character runs in his blood; but here it is far otherwise, in a strange land; and it is to be feared that a good deal of the fruitlessness at the beginning of our undertakings, is to be ascribed to unfitness of agency more than to the 'sovereignty of grace.' I have experienced, and am experiencing still, what I write, and I have observed the same in others to a painful amount. Societies should expect nothing for three years from their missionaries, but should leave them to settle down into a knowledge of the country, and an understanding of their work. There may be an exception in favour of schools and institutions conducted in English; but then this is no great exception, for if a man begins here with his *home* manner, and home diction, and home expectations, he will soon find that old India is too strong for the young missionary, even as 'old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon.' I have been four years in India now, and yet what have I grown in but in a sense of ignorance and insufficiency? Yet this I account as mercy; and especially as it compels me to live on Christ in heaven, and he does for me what I cannot do for myself.

"Here I may observe, that I trust there is growing up

amongst us a greater spirit of humility, more of that 'poorness of spirit,' which Christ has blessed, and to which he has promised the 'kingdom of God.' I trust that we are becoming more willing to know how poor we are—how poor in every respect for our work—and especially poor in grace. May the Lord grant unto us more of this most favourite grace, which accepts of not even a garland for itself, but turns every thing into a crown for Christ! When every society claims its share, when every missionary claims his share, alas! how little is left to the Lord of glory, who hath done the whole!

“ I have with sorrow to mention, that even in this distant land some have risen up, proud of an assumed apostolicity, and exclusive in their own fellowship, denouncing as *no* ministers those ministers whom Christ has owned; and seeking to convert to themselves those who have been already converted to God. Their day of power here is not yet come, however, for their influence is small and largely neutralized; but, in the mean time, they do mischief, by stirring strife amongst the converts of peace. How beautiful these words of Moses, when Joshua would have silenced Eldad and Medad, 'Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!' As to our own particular mission, concerning which you made inquiry, you see the most of what I can communicate in the *Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, provided you are readers of it. During the past year, two young men in our Christian Institution, one from the lowest college class, and one from the highest school class, have declared themselves Christians, and were baptized. They evinced great seriousness of mind and resoluteness of purpose, and we have every reason to believe in the sincerity of their profession. Thus, while continuing to sow in tears of sorrow, it has pleased God to grant us fruits of joy; and we desire to glorify Him who has granted to us to see even two souls yielding themselves to Christ the Saviour. We are the



more thankful for this addition to our number, because of a previous circumstance which it would be dishonest to conceal. The oldest convert, who was preparing for the ministry, fell into gross sin, for which he was expelled from the Institution, and suspended from ministerial probation. We are not without hope concerning him, and we trust he may yet fill some sphere of usefulness in our Christian community. Such a fall pained us much; but the severe example made, and the impartial conduct manifested, have done much good evidently in our Institution. It has shown to many that we consider the sin of the Hindu and the Christian to be alike evil, and that we respect not the persons of men. This fidelity God has mercifully recompensed by granting *two* gained instead of *one* lost, and that one, we trust, only for a time. There has been, on the whole, an improved spirit in the Institution during the past year, I think, although it be far beneath what we desire. Arrangements have been made so that all the junior classes may be brought several times in the week for religious instruction under the several missionaries who conduct the Institution. This was no very easy work to accomplish where there are nineteen classes; but the effort was made, and the result good. The knowledge of the Word of God which some, even junior, classes display, would delight and surprise you. On this one fact my mind rests with much satisfaction; whilst still we have to mourn over present unbelief, and over the departure from us of many sunk in sin and impenitence. Ours is a mixed affection—we rejoice in our work; we glory in our cause—we give thanks over our few, our very few; but we mourn over the many, as they *now* are. So do all faithful ministers at home—so must we here also; for in India there is no romance—all is sober reality.

“ You inquire about my personal share in the mission. Let me first remind you of my colleagues, and commend to your spiritual regards and remembrances my brethren, Duff, Mackay, Ewart, and Smith, who all of them labour in the

same missionary Institution. We form a corporation of the most harmonious kind, walking together in peace, unity, and kindness. I regret to say, our youngest brother, Smith, has been laid aside from active duty for the last six months; and, while I now write, he is on his way to the Cape of Good Hope for the restoration of his health. My own special work during the past year has been as follows:—*Monday*—second college class, Old Testament reading; third college class, New Testament reading; first college class, Old Testament reading. *Tuesday*—second college class, New Testament, Bengali; first school class, New Testament. *Wednesday*—second college class, Lecture on Christianity; third college class, Old Testament; first college class, Bengali New Testament. *Thursday*—second college class, Old Testament; first school class, Bengali New Testament. *Friday*—second college class, Old Testament, Bengali; third college class, outlines of Church History; first college class, Old Testament. *Saturday*—studying Bengali and general missionary work. On the Sabbath evening I alternate with Mr Ewart (since Mr Smith's illness) in conducting our worship and lecture at the Institution with the young natives; and on the Sabbath mornings, fortnightly, I continue to address the seamen at the Bethel chapel. This last I hold to be most important and direct missionary work—there are no presbyters of the sea—no bishops of the ocean!

“Alas! my friends, who can overtake all the work that is to be done in this or any other land of fallen men! For my own part, I am ashamed to write of my services, and especially with any minuteness; but you have asked me to do so, and you have an affectionate right to expect that I will comply with your request.

“Allow me here to thank your ‘*Ladies’ Association*’ for the kind supplies of useful articles occasionally forwarded for the use of the native female school, superintended by my wife, and taught under our roof. All the things sent were found most useful for helping on the poor

children who come to us, and we shall be glad to receive any aid of this kind, to forward a work of charity and grace. There are, at this date, forty children in attendance, poor, ignorant, and generally, at first, *wicked*. Some of them are much improved, and many of them a little, and we trust that this little work is not in vain in the Lord.

“There were some other subjects which I had thought to touch upon, but must for the present leave. Again I say, that I am ashamed to have said so much about myself; but some of you complained last year that I was silent on this subject, so this year I endeavour to satisfy such. But, above all, my dear brethren, remember the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ upon you. O that I had power to keep *Him* continually before your eyes and my own! How different persons should we be! I sit loose to persons and places more than ever: that is the *best place* which is most full of Christ, and that the *best person* who manifests most of Christ. Christ is *all* in home missions, Christ must be *all* in foreign missions also—Christ was with me in London—Christ is with me in Calcutta. May he be with you in your River Terrace assembly! May the Lord quicken, sanctify, unite, edify, increase, and uphold you all! Be not easily separated one from another, but stand by each other while the gospel is amongst you. What a great and glorious struggle for the honour of Christ is now going on in Scotland! The Lord help his Church! Remember me in your prayers. The Lord bless you all, my dear friends!

“Yours in Christian love,

“JOHN MACDONALD.”

In this letter, which strongly reminds us of Solomon's desideratum, “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?” Mr Macdonald has mentioned the growth in humility which he saw around him. He next

enables us to see the process by which He who doeth all things well accomplished that result—

“*March 12.*—Last Lord’s day I preached in both the Baptist chapels; it is a time of affliction with them—cholera has been busy. Whilst I was preaching in the morning my dear little girl had an attack of that sad and fatal disease; for this I was not wholly unprepared, as she had ailed during the day. What refuge had I, but to lay her before the throne of God, the great Physician, using remedies, and watching over her? It was a heavy and solemn night; but God was merciful, and raised her up. She has suffered much since that time (six days), and still suffers; but this I feel, that God has made that child an instrument of much good to me. O how wise are the ways of the Lord! He can subdue a father by his child, and cause an infant to help a minister. Doubtless, in this way have many little children, speedily or early removed to heaven, served a most important end on the earth first. Lord, if it please thee as good, do thou still spare this child, and strengthen her for thyself; and O make me more holy, wise, faithful, and gracious in thy service!

“I lately wrote a tract on the ‘Theatre,’ which brought on me the scorn, and anger, and abuse of some wicked men. But the cause has been advanced even by their enmity, and now what I wrote is being propagated by others. I have of late found the pen to be an effective means of serving God; and by the aid of His Spirit I will employ it still more: it suits my constitution and mind.”\*

He continued from time to time from this period to assail the world in some of its favourite strongholds, and ribaldry was his reward; the world deemed him its enemy because he told it the truth; and the

\* The tract here referred to was published as No. IV. of *Pastoral Tracts, by ministers of different denominations in Calcutta*. Its title is *WHAT IS THE THEATRE?* and it should be circulated in thousands at the doors of every such resort in the empire.

initials of his name, attached to his pungent tracts, became the topic of scornful merriment among the unthinking in Calcutta. He was not one whom they could lightly despise as a fanatic. On the contrary, in consequence of the moral weight of his character, his assault was felt, and it was resented by reproach. "I have had plenty of the vilest abuse," was his remark; "but the Lord hath turned it into precious stones." Is not this the true descendant of him who was rebuked at the bar of the General Assembly for preaching the gospel to men who rarely heard it?

He records on October 23d—

"*Sabbath.*—I am detained at home to-day, more in the way of precaution than of necessity. Yesterday I received a severe blow on the head from a falling screen; and although I do not seem to have sustained any injury, yet, knowing the sensitive nature of the head, I have deemed it better not to expose myself to the heat of the sun. It is a communion Sabbath; but, alas! I do not feel being absent from ——'s ministrations as a great privation. Alas! no. I am not idle, and the Lord is with me. How nearly was life gone yesterday! or, rather, how easily might I have received a mortal wound! But I am in God's hands, as in the hands of my heavenly Father—in His Son's name, and through His Spirit's grace. This is surely *enough!*"

He thus opens the eventful year 1843—

"*January 1, 1843.*—'Hitherto hath the Lord helped me;' and O how great hath the help been which hath brought such a sinner so far, so happily, so safely, on the way to heaven!

"In the past year there has been nothing of peculiar interest in the way of variety or novelty. My life has moved on evenly. I have had no very evident afflictions before the world, but yet I have had much of the Lord's

secret rod. For all that he hath done I thank him most truly and sincerely, on my own behalf and that of my dear family.

“In my ministry I have been moving as heretofore—almost every day of the week teaching God’s Word to the young two or three times, and also several times a-week preaching and expounding to the old. In the Institution I have had much satisfaction in teaching, and have seen two pupils converted to Christ; and in the other extra work among my country people, I have had testimonies that the Lord is with me.

“I am at peace with all men; but I have suffered much persecution from some ungodly men, who have been enraged at having their strongholds attacked. The votaries of the play-house and of the ball-room have been fiercely upon me; but the Lord hath caused me to smile at them, in the conscious triumph of Christ Jesus my Lord; and I would here fix and record the prayer, which I have often offered up for these bitter, bitter enemies, ‘that the Lord may forgive and save them.’ O may they be made trophies of that very grace which they have so cruelly blasphemed!

“*January 22.*—I have many little attacks of ailment, which often lay me aside for a day or two; and yet they generally prove a great relief to my soul as well as to my body. Such are the claims of this place, that I can scarcely find room for retirement, save by the intervention of a little sickness. This, at least, I know and feel, that my Father is good and wise; and that his Son, my Lord and Master, is one with Him, and also faithful and true; and that my indwelling guide, the Spirit, who is one with the Father and the Son, is most mighty and effective to give me the fruit and benefit of all that befalls me. To the covenanted Three, the One God, be thanks and glory for ever!

“This is the Sabbath-day, and I am confined at home. I was not, however, engaged to preach, and therefore I have incurred no ministerial disappointment—and I do

not, as a hearer, enjoy the ministrations under which I am placed in this city. The Lord has not granted to me to find rest as a *hearer* of the Word; and for this I thank Him, for it shuts me up to preach (a higher function) whenever I can get a practicable opportunity, so that I have been brought into a fuller discharge of my ministry than some others of my brethren. . . . I certainly could desire a fuller discharge of my preaching ministry, if it pleased the Lord whom I serve; but I cannot enter on any such if it involve any diminution of ministry to the heathen, for to their conversion I am chiefly dedicated. My grand desire would be to be in such circumstances that I could now be master of the native tongue, and able always to minister and preach the gospel of salvation every day and every where, any day or any where. Lord, 'is this thy will?'

On the 12th of April Mr Macdonald wrote to his friend at Tain on the subject of the approaching Disruption. He says that he "loved the very pains and sorrows" connected with the cause that was then at stake, and adverts, in the spirit of one actually engaged in the conflict, to the probable results of that change, destined to be so mighty in its issues, in stirring men up to renewed vigour in the mission and elsewhere. In doing so, he thus pours out the full ardour and admiration of his soul:—

"What shall I write about? What is there, in the form of *events*, to interest us *now*, save the condition of our poor old Church? I look with intense interest to the way by which your *wise Lord* has led on His servants of late in Scotland. Step by step drawn on, step by step built up, on the right and on the left—Providence in the van, to open the way—conscience in the rear, to prevent retreat—thus do you seem all to have been going on; and, to me, the light of a *divine necessity* seems so strong and clear that

you have not so much as an alternative. You *must* go out of Egypt. But why should I write thus to *you*? It will be *June* before you receive this letter, and probably by that time all may be decided. And yet I would write upon the subject, to show that I sympathize with you all at home in this most glorious struggle—not only as a spectator, but as one both spiritually and temporally interested. This tide of principle must roll round the globe, and we in this remote East must prepare for consequences. My brethren in the mission seem all of one mind on the right side of the question, and, of course, the mission property will go with the Establishment at home. What the result may be we cannot foresee. Dr —— wrote out a coaxing letter, which in fact was but a *feeler*, as he wishes or hopes to be convener of the *New Missionary Committee*. I am not sorry to see our nest stirred up for a little. We were all too proud and speculative—now we must be humble, laborious, and practical. May the Lord visit us according to our time! ‘*Jehovah-jireh!*’”

It was about this time that there was published in Scotland a work already referred to, ISOBEL HOOD'S MEMOIRS and MANUSCRIPT, with a sketch of her life by Mr Macdonald. The picture which that volume presents of the dreary desolation which Moderatism had spread over some parts of Scotland, and yet the bright reflection of Him who is altogether lovely that was maintained in some of His hidden ones, amid the palpable gloom that prevailed, are made equally remarkable. If men of spiritual discernment would understand why a Church, long reputed the most thoroughly reformed of all, was rent in twain, let them read that narrative, and see how ruinous was the system that had erased, or at least exiled the truth from many a district. Or, if they would discover the principles which guided and



sustained men during the Disruption of 1843, let them study the teaching of "Ronald Bayne," and the "Life of Isobel Hood," as they are illuminated by the exquisite comments of John Macdonald; and neither the power of Moderatism against the Church, nor the grace that taught men to separate from it when it became enthralled, will require farther illustration. In none of his productions does Mr Macdonald's peculiar spirit appear to have been more copiously poured out than this. The sentiments come glowing from the heart, with a pathos so touching, and a degree of spirituality so high, as at once to indicate the holy attainments of the author. "To Isobel Hood," he says, "the Bible was a universe, and Christ its universal glory;" and as that was just a description of his own spiritual views, the work was thoroughly congenial, while he rejoiced over every new-traced lineament of the image of God restored to the spirit of man.

On June 25th he says—

"How great is the mercy of God towards me, in thus maintaining within me spiritual life—thus uniting me to his Son—thus inhabiting me by His Holy Spirit! Year after year passes over me, and still He keeps me—trial after trial, and still He gladdens me—duty after duty, and still He guides me through—temptation after temptation, and still He preserves me—danger after danger, still He delivers me—sin after sin, still He forgives me—failure after failure, still He accepts me—evil after evil, still He upholds me—corruption after corruption, still He sanctifies me! Such is my God!—such the Father!—such the Son!—such the Holy Ghost!" . . . . .

—But while thus upheld, he had frequently much

affliction to endure. His clear perception of the will of God in regard to what is pure, and his prostrate deference to the truth, brought him often into collision with those who either entirely deferred to the world, or at least were swayed by its opinions and maxims. He records, for example, the "painful struggle" which he had to maintain at this period, in opposing some such proceedings on the part of those with whom he co-operated beyond the walls of the Institution. The measures referred to appeared to him calculated to desecrate the house of God, by making it a place of monuments and of honour to the memory of men whose lives had been in opposition to the standard of eternal truth. At one time he feared that his opposition would be fruitless; but when he saw it eventually crowned with success, he devoutly exclaimed—"O that I might always persevere unto the *end* of every duty, for it is specially at the *end* that the Lord is found *waiting* for us!"

Anticipating the events which happened in Scotland in May 1843, but which were not announced in Calcutta till the month of August, he says in the month of June—

. . . . . "The very serious disruption now expected in our Church at home, and which probably has taken place before this time, will soon affect us here, and, so far as temporals are concerned, very deeply. We have reason to believe that it will take away nearly half our income—it may be so. Now, why do I set *this* down *here*, and *now*? For this simple and only reason, to record beforehand my most perfect confidence in the goodness and faithfulness of my heavenly Father—to attest that such is the power of His grace that I have not an anxious thought within me. This morning, when thinking of the subject, and looking on my

dear wife and children, I said to myself, ' Let the worst come—I shall then be one of God's "lilies"—one of Christ's "ravens"—His "birds of the air!"'

—This has reminded some of M'Cheyne's proposal to go to Australia to preach to the convicts there ; and of various other devices proposed by ministers to meet the poverty and neglect which they feared would follow the Disruption. But even while many were limiting the Holy One of Israel, and forgetting that the valley of Achor is our door of hope, He was preparing to prove by another exodus that His power was not diminished, and by another journey through the wilderness, that He could still " give vineyards from thence." Mr Macdonald, in the prospect of these things, was confident of that result—in the retrospect, we can only adoringly exclaim, " What hath God wrought !"

In his Diary for July, we find an entry which we dare not transcribe, so mingled are the feelings which it evolves. He had by that time become merely a private worshipper in the Church, for incidents had occurred which induced him to resign his office of elder ; and his emotions on a communion Sabbath (July 9) are so peculiar as to indicate at once the lowliness and the spiritual grandeur of his soul. " I was enabled," he says, " utterly to forget the man who administered the sacrament, and to substitute Christ himself. How strong and sweet was such communion !" It is the right action of faith, when dispeace from man only presses the soul nearer to Him who is the Prince of peace, and renders it not stoically unfeeling, but spiritually superior to the vexations and sorrows of earth.

But intelligence of the Disruption at last reached Calcutta, and amid the jubilee which the number of the ministers who withdrew from the Establishment occasioned, none more cordially joined than Mr Macdonald. He saw truth maintained in its integrity. He beheld the Redeemer glorified as the unchallengeable Sovereign of Zion. While the subsidiary questions involved in the testimony were not overlooked, it was in the demonstrated love to the Redeemer, and determination to uphold the glory of the King, that he chiefly exulted. Indeed, we believe he was one of those who would never have engaged in the controversy, had he not seen that it vitally affected the glory of the Redeemer. He at least could not be blinded to that fact either by interest or partisanship; and on the subject he said—

“ Events of providence, when so designed of God, try men, in character and system, to the uttermost. Coming like the rolling avalanche, with the force of a present, urgent, and irresistible necessity, they compel men to say yea or nay, to flee or fall, to escape or die: deeds, not words—actions, not theory—conduct, not profession, must be, and then are, the sure result.

“ Such an event pre-eminently has been the late Disruption of the Established Church of Scotland. It has accomplished a separative and discriminative work, such as no insight of men could have planned, and no human convention could have executed. After gathering for years, and incorporating elements bearing on every class of society, it has at last come irresistibly down and spared no one: it has tried every one. It has tried the governor and the governed; it has tried the judge and the judged; it has tried the nobles and the populace; it has tried the

landlord and his tenant ; it has tried members of the same family, communicants of the same Church, elders of the same session, brethren of the same bonds. No such event, in searching power, in discriminative effect, in separative result, has occurred in our day—none such may again happen in the days of even our children. It was thus mighty, because God made it so ; and so the work which it has begun has yet farther to go on : the end of it is not yet."

—The closing sentence of this extract is prophetic—what was anticipation then is history now, and Beza's remark to the King of Navarre is found as true in our day as it was three hundred years ago: "The Church is like an anvil, on which many a hammer has been broken." The principle has rolled round the world, and from every land and every Church—except the Churches of Rome, of England, and Socinianism—that principle has been approved, and its advocates eulogized. Men, who either could not see its reality or would not yield to its power, have laboured to obscure and efface it ; for wherever the Saviour of the lost is not regarded as a present and presiding Lord, the notion of the Church's spiritual independence is regarded as the dictate of enthusiasm or the dream of a visionary—interest or ignorance calls it an ecclesiastical delirium. A Church in thrall has so much affinity with the world, and a Church in freedom so little, that all the sympathies of the myriads whose hopes and aspirations are bounded by a cradle on the one side and a grave on the other, are in unison with the former. But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. If the Son make us free, men are free indeed ; and all who have tasted

that liberty are ready, with the promptitude of intuition, to avow, that though a Church placed under the stringent control of the state may subserve the purposes of statesmen, it is not the institute which the Redeemer founded, and against which the gates of hell never can prevail. Christendom, with the exceptions which have been mentioned, adopted that sentiment, and the addresses that were showered in such numbers upon the Church of Scotland, when by the grace of God it became free indeed, prove beyond the reach of controversy how sound at heart the Churches are regarding the Headship of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. There are still not a few institutions called Churches which compromise that principle, which is indeed the heart of the Church universal. The Establishments in this island and elsewhere are based on the exclusion of Christ's supremacy—the state is their supreme; but that vicious element will eventually prove the ruin and overthrow of all such institutions. It is a truth that Christ is King of nations as well as of Zion, and for these kindred doctrines the Church of Scotland for a long period resolutely contended; but the Established Churches have compromised both of these truths, by consenting to forego the latter; and so assured may we be that these institutions will eventually crumble, because they have obscured an organic principle, that the liberated Churches can calmly wait till the obstructing barriers shall be taken out of the way.

“ I clasp'd the phantom, and I found it air,”

will be the conviction of all at last.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Effects of the Disruption in India—Mr Macdonald becomes Interim Pastor of the Free Church at Calcutta—His Tracts—Addresses the Indian Government on its Patronage of Idolatry—Tokens of Affection—His Correspondence—The Death of Koilas Chunder Mookerjee—and Others—Baptism of Eight Converts—His Scrupulous Consistency—Sickness—His Catholicity—His Views of Popery—Residence at Serampore—Rev. J. Mackail, Pastor of the Free Church, arrives at Calcutta—Is Inducted—Mr Macdonald's Sermon—The Congregation's Bounty—The Church's Address to the Retiring Pastor—His Reply—Popery—His Last Entry—His Last Illness—And Death—His Widow—His Funeral and Grave—His Manner of Life—His Spirit—His Grace—Addresses sent to his Sorrowing Partner and to the Missionaries at Calcutta—Behari Lal—Guru Das Maitra—Umacharau Ghosha—Mr Macdonald's Character—Conclusion.

It is well known that the missionary band in Calcutta, as well as throughout India, among the Jews, the Caffres, and elsewhere, were animated by the principles which led to the Disruption of the Church of Scotland. Men, some of whom had hazarded their lives to spread the savour of Christ's name, could not easily brook the dishonour done to the King of kings, when his Church became what a judge declared it to be, "an institution deriving its authority from statute alone, which cannot be argued to possess any inherent right to any power or privileges except what the legislature has conferred upon

it." "The Church," it was said, "is the creature of the law, and every power which it possesses is derived from law." From such an institution, falsely called divine, those men of God withdrew, and left it for a season without a single missionary in its service—thus providentially identifying it with that portion of the Church which, half a century before, had solemnly voted that Christian missions should not exist. A separate communion and separate worship were forthwith set up at Calcutta, and Mr Macdonald records—

"*Sabbath, August 13, 1843.*—This has been a day which I ought to note down in the record of God's providence. Again have I begun to be a temporary *pastor*, whilst yet still a missionary, and again begun to minister regularly to a Christian congregation, contrary to my expectation, and even to my desires. This day my brethren and self commenced public worship in connection with the 'Free Protestant Church of Scotland,' separating ourselves from the local communion in which we had stood, and declaring thus openly for Christ and his supremacy in His own Church; and I feel that the Lord was with us."

—After that service, it is well known that Mr Macdonald baptized a native convert, Lal Behari Singh, who is now employed as a catechist by the Free Church congregation at Calcutta.

When our Missionary thus became a pastor again, it was on the express stipulation that the duties of the pastorate should not interfere with his avocations among the heathen. To these his heart and soul were consecrated; and though the congregation would unanimously have called him, he consented to be pastor only till a stated minister could be ob-



tained from Scotland. But his own words most exactly describe his position :—

“ *November 12.\**—Three months have elapsed since my last record. During that time I have enjoyed the high honour and the rich happiness of preaching the gospel twice every Lord’s day : and I trust he has been with me. To-day, for the first Sabbath, I am a prisoner, having been laid up with sore throat for a few days past. And, doubtless, not without a cause, has my mouth been shut to-day. I must be humbled—I have been as the war-horse, pawing the ground to preach ; but is it not so, that I have recurred to the *habit*, not to the SPIRIT of preaching ? Oh ! who could cut up my sermons as I could do myself ? Spirit of preaching, that is, Spirit of Christ, come down upon me—breathe the breath of the gospel into me, and give me preaching *power* ! This I feel as if I had never yet received ; or, having received it, I know not how to use it. There is an artificial character about my addresses,† which may interest, but does not affect : I fear that men are satisfied, but not persuaded. Alas for me ! how much of time is gone, and how little real and solid work have I done ! Bustling about many things, and all of them (as in my conscience I believe) connected with my Master’s service and honour, yet how little have I done of His great work ? And yet, I sometimes think it was never his design to honour me with much of His chief work—I am too vain, wicked, and proud to be used in that—I must be confined

\* Between this date and the previous one we have no record of his proceedings. He was occupied in controversies and measures deemed necessary at that crisis, by the friends of the Church’s freedom in Calcutta.

† When in London, it was his practice to resort from time to time to the Court of Chancery to hear the pleadings ; and the reason which he assigned was, that he there saw how earnest men could be, how direct and business-like in pleading—qualities which the pomp and circumstance of the pulpit too often obscure in the preacher, but which he systematically aimed at.

to the work that is least appreciable, that I may learn humility. And, Lord, I will learn if thou teach me! I am glad that I feel no desire to desert my missionary work for pastoral occupation, now that it might be in my power to do so. No, I wish to live and die, if it please God, a missionary among the heathen, and be more truly a missionary in the full sense of the term—a vernacular missionary—than I have yet been; and my hope is, that my Lord will yet open my door, and make my way open also to fulfil my heart's desire. O Lord! it is my desire; but how to fulfil it, as I now am, I know not. My mind is at present almost worn off its hinges by work of every kind, and yet there is but one form of work which secretly my soul most loves; I will wait on the Lord, as a servant on his master, and what He presents me ever, that will I seek to do—for, after all, what He gives me to do is *His work!* Spirit of Christ, be with me! I thank thee for this day's breathing time: thou givest me what I could not take, and I gladly now, perhaps sullenly before, accept this Sabbath of silence. Bless all who are *mine* by thy gift, O Lord! make them thine wholly, and like thyself perfectly—my wife, my children—O Lord! And let this *Free Church* cause in which we have embarked be dear to thee! O come and help us, and grant us many souls to be saved! And our mission—O let it find favour in thy sight—let thy Spirit be upon us, and work by us! For *Christ's* sake, bless us all!”

“*December 31.*—I now record, at the close of the year, that my God has been gracious, my Saviour faithful, my Comforter tender and gentle towards me, during the past twelve months. I thank Christ that He has saved me, the Spirit that He has led me, and my Father that He has received me: to the One covenant God be the praise of all grace, the glory of all works, and the blessedness of all excellency! My trials have not been small, as the Lord knoweth, nor my sins few; but He has blessed me until now. Praise the Lord!”

The excitement occasioned by the Disruption in Calcutta, and his temporary tie to a flock as their pastor, did not tempt him to relax in other departments of labour. "Why separate?" was the question often asked by men who did not understand the principles which led to the Disruption; and in a brief pamphlet it was answered by Mr Macdonald.\* But another tract which he published, entitled, *May I go to the Ball?* again drew down the world's obloquy, because it unmasked the hollow vanities of those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The ravages of sin are not less remarkable in the effects produced on the reason than on those wrought in the conscience. How unreasonable, for example, to prefer the smile of man to that of God—the pleasures that perish in the using, to those that are for evermore—and not only so, but to revile and hate those who would break up the delusion! And yet that is what the wise of this world instinctively and invariably do. Undeterred, however, by such animosity, he resolutely proclaimed the truth, and left it before his Lord till the day when all results shall be made patent to an assembled universe. When near his close, the apostolic Schwartz could say, "My joy, though not extravagant, is calm and abiding, and my great aim is to know that I am the Lord's through Christ." Even in the midst of the world's opprobrium, Mr Macdonald was enabled to maintain that frame, except when he sighed and cried over a world that forsook its own mercies.

\* At two subsequent periods, he published two other tracts, the one entitled, *What have you Gained?* and the other, *Why not Help us?* Their grand excellence is the spiritual-mindedness which they betoken.

But he now began to aim at higher objects still. He was, about this time, the means of inducing Christians in Calcutta to approach the Governor-General, the Earl of Auckland, with a view to prevent some practices in the offices of the government which led to the desecration of the Lord's day; and in 1844, he published a bold and vigorous pamphlet, entitled, "The Government of India Charged with Spiritual Treason; or, Idolatry and Mohammedanism Patronised in the Resumption Laws." These laws related to the management of certain lands bequeathed for the support of mosques, of Hindu temples, and colleges. For some time, the objects meant to be promoted by such bequests had been lost sight of; but new effect had recently been given by the measures of a government called Christian, and the spirit of Mr Macdonald was stirred within him when he heard such purposes as those now referred to called "pious and beneficial." He, in consequence, addressed the government in a high moral tone, "impeaching it of treason against God over all, because it knowingly and wilfully, not merely connived at, but patronised, the Hindu Pantheon, and the Mohammedan Antichrist." His facts were so carefully selected that they could not be challenged, and his arguments so scriptural that they could not be refuted, except on the principles of infidelity. The pamphlet was scattered far and wide over India. It found its way into high places, and proved, let us hope, like another blow from "the little stone cut out of the mountain," which is eventually to fall on, and grind to powder, every principle

and every practice that is opposed to the sovereign will of Jehovah.

But he knew of a still higher felicity than either the hallowed intercourse that obtains between heart and heart, when they are knit together by a common love to Christ, or the satisfaction that ensues when we are enabled by grace to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints:"—

"*January 7, 1844.*—To-day I have been privileged to dispense the Lord's Supper for the first time since I left my beloved flock in London, and in connection with the 'Free Church' of our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not think that ever I felt the honour of being permitted to perform this office more highly than on this occasion. Every thing seemed real and palpable to me. I felt that the Lord was with us—as indeed He was. To Him be thanks. My text was, 'They crucified Him' (Luke xxiii. 33); my table service, on glorying in Christ's cross. O that I were more thoroughly crucified with Him, and had His meekness and gentleness! Lord, fill me with thy cross! Spirit of God, possess me!"

To his valued friend, Macleod Wylie, Esq., he wrote about this period as follows: and we submit these notes as specimens of the unction which pervaded his most ordinary intercourse, rather than because they exhibit Mr Macdonald in any peculiar or unusual phase:—

"*February 16, 1844.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The step you have taken \* is one peculiarly serious and solemn, and I trust will not be unacknowledged of the Lord. I have not forgotten you in your present circumstances, but have said little, because I knew that a transition would bring you, or might bring

\* Leaving the Church of England.

you, under *my* ministry ; and, alas ! alas ! I feel how inadequate that is.

“ O what a poor helper am I, at this critical time of my Lord’s cause in this place ! May He make weakness strong, and turn helplessness into might !

“ The Lord be with you, my dear friend, and with your partner. You *did not* misrepresent me—I know you *would not* do that ; but I think you somewhat misunderstood me. But our Lord knoweth us all—that is our resting-place.—Yours ever in HIM affectionately,

“ J. MACDONALD.”

“ *March 22, 1844.*

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall be happy to receive you and your partner, ‘ our sister,’ into a participation of our communion ; and in a case where we have had many pleasant conferences and pleasant evidences, we need not seek to have formal examinations. The Lord be with you both, my dear friends, and sanctify and gladden you amidst your trials and difficulties of secular and spiritual life, and may you find it a good thing to draw near to the blessed Jesus at His hospitable and bountiful table of grace.—Yours in the Lord affectionately.”

—Again—

. . . . . “ Your subjection to such sickness, my dear Christian brother, is but another form of divine tuition, for the Lord’s people have their private tutors, as well as they have their Great Teacher ; and the subordinate instructions prepare the soul for its grand and leading lessons. May you be healed of your sickness, if it please our holy and good Father ; and may your soul be enabled to glory in tribulations, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

“ The blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit be with you, your partner, and your dedicated babe.—Yours affectionately.”

It is well known that the missionary Schwartz secured, by his devoted life, such an ascendancy over the counsels of some of the Indian princes, that his word was wellnigh law in their dominions, and to be under his protection was to be safe from all aggression. Perhaps no missionary can ever attain to that position again; but Mr Macdonald's influence and the weight of his character were now so great as to induce some of the friends of truth and of man, in various parts of India, to apply to him for counsel, as to the likeliest means of improving the people in their social and moral relations. His correspondence indicates the confidence that was thus placed in him by the judicious and reflecting who knew him, amid all the sneers and taunts of those whose sins he endeavoured to repress. Along every available channel he continued to do good to men as he had opportunity;\* for though his life was consecrated to missionary labour, he did not find it uncongenial to aim at the welfare of India by all practicable and Christian means.†

A large chasm occurs at this period in his Diary, to which he thus refers—

“*July 20, 1845.*—How do years seem to pass away as months once did! It seems almost incredible, and certainly strange to me, that eighteen months should have passed away without any special record from my pen; yet so I

\* His correspondence shows that, when any thing offensive to the interests of truth appeared in any of the reputable papers, he sometimes wrote privately to the editors, that the evil might not be repeated. Pleasing evidence exists that his endeavours were not always in vain.

† The Free Church of Calcutta was now formally organized; elders were ordained, and the goodly order of Presbytery adopted, though a minister had not yet arrived from Scotland. About this time he published an *Address at the Ordination of Elders*.

see it to be. I have now so lost the habit of registering thoughts and events, that it seems irksome to me to do that which once was my solace and delight; and yet I cannot say that I feel this to be my *sin*. I have not now my time so much at my disposal as I had years ago. I have the peculiar but happy engrossments of family life to fill up what was once a vacuum within me. I have also a larger variety of official and spiritual occupations than I was in former years called to; and I think I can sincerely say, that I am every year feeling myself to be a *less important and more insignificant being* in God's world, in Christ's Church, in man's affairs, and in my own sphere, so that I am really less inclined to notice myself, or any thing that befalls me, and am more disposed to despise myself, and to forget every thing that would tend to make me think myself anything. There is but one thing that makes me feel that I am something, and that is the 'sprinkled blood' of Christ. In virtue of this relation to 'the precious blood,' I feel myself to be somewhat precious; so that, whilst in Christ I am 'something,' I feel that apart from Him I am nothing. Blessed, peaceful, and restful thought—in its shade, which is the shadow of Christ, I am happy!

“ Yet let me say, that, since my last record, I have been graciously, and wisely, and wonderfully upheld in the midst of much internal weakness, and many outward wanderings. Besides my usual missionary work (with the exception of one day of the week devoted to pastoral visiting), I have been enabled to preach to our Free Church congregation twice every Lord's day, and expound the Scriptures almost every Tuesday night; and, instead of being weakened by all this, I have felt myself refreshed and revived, and kept in a more spiritual state of mind than I had experienced for a long time before. What blessing God may have granted to my ministry, I cannot tell. I know that I have deserved none; yet this much at least I have gathered—that the few who are the Lord's people amongst us have owned themselves much fed and helped by my



temporary ministry. This is *much* for *me*. I had hoped that by this time the Lord would have sent another and a permanent minister to take my place; but we have been disappointed. My dear brother T—, in Edinburgh, to whom first the congregational call was addressed, has declined coming to us; and who may be sent, or *when*, I know not. Meanwhile, it will be my post and privilege to go on as I have done since August 1843, ministering to this congregation as the Lord shall enable me. O that the eternal and omnipotent Spirit of my God and of my Christ would own his gospel by *me*, and make me in word and deed what the ambassador of Jesus Christ should be! . . . . . These things I have written to-day, being shut up a prisoner by the hand of the Lord for a fortnight past. I feel that I am righteously and needfully chastened; also wisely and graciously. I leave here again my testimony that *God is good*—that He is good, and that He doeth good—even the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, blessed for evermore!" \*

Early in the year 1845, his friend, Mr Hawkins, had occasion to leave Calcutta, and his absence gave rise to a correspondence remarkable at once for its ardour and its Christian tone; it exhibits in a remarkable manner the clinging affection of Mr Macdonald to all in whom he traced the love and the image of his Lord. When the time came that those like-minded friends should separate for a season, Mr Macdonald fell back, as he ever did, on "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and said—"In Christ is our ALL. This I find more and more, and

\* Under the same date he says—"I have sought this day to dedicate unto the Lord my *eldest son*, who has been my companion this forenoon, if so be the Lord will convert and call him to His *ministry*, especially the *missionary* ministry, that he shall be His Lord, accept and perfect the gift; so do I give all unto thee!"

for this the Lord be praised ! O what should we do without Christ ! O blessed and blessing One, yet despised One ! ” And in another note without date, writing to his friend under the ardent sun of India, he says—“ I have often thought of late how easily God could turn this earth into a hell, with scorching days and still more tormenting nights ! But O how contrary His mercy ! How much of heaven hath He given us, through the blood of His Son ! ”

It was soon after Mr Hawkins had left Calcutta that the mission was deprived by death of Koilas Chunder Mookerjee, one of the converts, who had for some time acted as catechist to the Free Church congregation. So early as the year 1838, when Mr Macdonald commenced his lectures to the young men of the Institution, Koilas had become solemnly impressed by the truth, although his state of mind was then little known. Eternity was felt to be a reality ; and salvation demanded and obtained some of his attention. He was thus gradually drawn to the Saviour ; and Mr Macdonald, who, with Mr Ewart, had been his instructor, prepared a memorial of the departed youth. Cut down in opening life, with the prospect of usefulness before him as a minister of Christ, his departure formed another of the mysteries in providence which we may mourn over, but cannot solve. And the mystery has deepened as one after another of the converts has been removed, just when they promised to be useful in promoting the regeneration of their country. Madhab Chandra Basak, Koilas Chunder Mookerjee, and, after a very brief interval, Mahendra Lal Basak, were all summoned hence, as first-fruits of

the mission, to the Church above, calling the Church on earth to a simpler faith in Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But the sorrow that followed them to the grave was not the sorrow of those who have no hope. "Koilas has gone to his rest," Mr Macdonald wrote to Mr Hawkins, "leaving a savour of life behind him. His end was most easy and happy, and his last articulated words were, 'I am hungering after Christ and His righteousness.'"

During Mr Hawkins' residence at the Cape of Good Hope, Mr Macdonald had occasion to communicate the joyful intelligence that no fewer than eight converts had been baptized at the Institution. The particulars connected with their case are already known to the Churches, as occasioning a joy to the missionaries which rewarded all their labours; but the opening of that letter is characteristic:—

"*Calcutta, June—July 1845.*—The Lord be with you, my very dear friend, and bless you ever, in and with himself! The receipt of your brotherly letter afforded me very great pleasure, and stirred up within me *a sense* of the *communion of saints*—as one in spirit, although in different bodies—one in mind, though in different places—one in love, even though in different worlds. Surely this is our privilege, that in Christ Jesus you are present to me, and in the same I am present to you. In Him both are one, and with Him are we every where to each other. And should it be objected that one of the two may be *dead* and the other not know, then from that it only follows, that the departed one may be in a better condition than his companion supposes, and that the only mistake *can* be in supposing him less holy and less happy than he really is—by thinking him on earth, instead of in heaven. Blessed be the Lord for this sweet privilege!" . . . . .

But many who are strict and punctilious in regard to high doctrines and profession are lax in applying them for the government of life. How careful Mr Macdonald was to avoid compromising his position, and to have a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, will appear from the following note:—

“MY DEAR MR——, —When I accepted yesterday of your very kind offer, I was not aware that the —— was an *opium* ship. Since then I have understood that she is so, and freighted with that article for China at present. Now, if it be so, such are my feelings and convictions in regard to the *opium trade* with China, that I could not consent to sail in a vessel engaged in it; and therefore you must now, with equal kindness, excuse me, when I beg of you to accept of my declinature to accompany you in the —— . I feel that I could not ask the blessing of God on my trip in connection with that which I felt was carrying *death* to China, as opium openly does. Excuse me, my dear sir, and believe me that I write with *gratitude and regret.*”

But this upright and consistent servant of the holy God was at this time much tried by sickness, both in his person and his family, which brought them very low. Withal, however, he could exclaim—“I give thanks for what I have endured: I only wonder that it has been so light, and that the Lord so soon seems to say, ‘It is enough.’” While greatly bowed down, he wrote thus to Mr Hawkins—

. . . . . “Yet, my dear friend, the Lord has been gracious in the midst of all this. I have enjoyed much vivid realization of divine things—much close communion with Christ as a Saviour and a Lord. I trust I have been introduced further into the necessity and reality of the Comforter’s work of grace, and into the anticipation of heaven

place of holy rest. For these, and such mercies, all praise and thanks to the covenant three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

—And of the mission he says, in the same letter—

“ We had no addition to our number (of converts) very lately. The shower has gone: may the fruits remain. How great trials had the apostles to encounter in their early congregations! Yet surely we have much cause for thankfulness; for to have these immortal souls brought within the gospel fence, under Christian training and culture, is an inestimable benefit to them, and privilege to us.”

—Is he not visibly in training here for a home on high? Can we not trace in his own language the truth of one of his own aphorisms—“ The believer’s desire for a heavenly country is the desire of God’s grace within for God’s glory without?”\*

The next entry in his Journal is as follows:—

“ *Lord’s day, October 19.*—Again am I in bonds, the Lord’s captive. After recovering from my late confinement in July last, and about a month’s freedom, I have been again afflicted, and my ailment is likely to prove a troublesome, perhaps, in some degree more or less, a permanent one. It has been ascertained to be the result of an accident I met with more than eighteen months ago. One day, at the Institution, an infirm chair gave way under me, and I had a severe fall on the lower part of my frame. I felt some aching for a week or two afterwards; but it passed away, and I entirely forgot the circumstance. But the effects of the fall have since shown themselves, and

\* During this year he published a funeral sermon, entitled, *The First-Fruits of our Flock in the Grave*, and *A Discourse on Duelling Spiritually Considered*, occasioned by a fatal duel which was fought at that time. The discussion is singularly able, and exhausts the subject both in its religious and social bearings. For a list of his works, see Appendix, No. III.

seem to have been the cause of my late indisposition, and certainly of my present, as far as human skill can discover or determine: and how much future pain and trouble may arise from the same source, the Lord alone, who arranges and determines all things, knoweth; but I have prepared my mind to expect not a little, for such an ailment cannot easily be removed. Nor am I unreconciled to it; for I see in it a provision for 'keeping my body under'—and this were no small blessing.

“ Meanwhile, it is no small trial for me to be laid aside from active public work, especially the preaching of God's Word, in which my soul delights. Yet is it some satisfaction for me to be stripped of my pride, and to feel myself to be what I really am—a being of whom the Lord has *no need*. This feeling makes me more tranquil in leaving His work in His own hands, believing that He will lose nothing by me, or by any one. Indeed, as some saint has said, the Lord has more need of our *weakness* than of our strength: the latter is too often His rival—the former His servant, drawing on His resources, and showing forth His glory. 'Therefore,' said an inspired one, 'will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me!' O let me have but this spirit in me, and how great shall be my gain under this present bodily affliction, and every other such trial that may come upon me! I can at least say, that I am happy in mine afflictions, and that I enjoy much peace and contentment of soul; so much so, that I am sometimes inclined to be suspicious of it, lest there should much of it be mere passive indolence of soul, or mere spiritual crouching, as of a dog when beaten: and yet I must say, that in my most tried moments I feel most inclined to thank and bless the Lord for His mercies, both positive and negative; and that whilst laid upon my couch, when I cannot do *pulpit* service, the earnest desire of my soul is at least to do *couch* service. Spirit of the Lord! who knowest the design of my Father and of my Master in this dispensation, per-

fect that design in me ; overcome me when I am resistful, enlighten me when ignorant, lead me when uncertain, strengthen me when weak, and help me to apprehend that for which Christ hath apprehended me. Bear with me, O inward Comforter ! bear with me ; and, whether by suffering or by service, make me conformed to the heavenly pattern, ' the first-born amongst many brethren ' ! ”

It may evince the catholic, or as some might suppose the latitudinarian, character of Mr Macdonald's mind, to advert to his conduct when one of his flock chose to be rebaptized, though still continuing a member of the Free Church of Scotland. When the purpose was intimated, he wrote, regretting that his correspondent's mind had been unsettled in regard to her early baptism, so as to seek in adult age a repetition of the ordinance. He stated his “ firm belief for himself, and for his children, that infant baptism, when consistently administered, is, as well as adult baptism, *spiritual, valid, and acceptable before God* and our Saviour.” At the same time, he threw no obstacle but that of scriptural statement in the way of rebaptizing, and expressed his readiness as a pastor to retain the party, whom he deemed to be misguided, as a member in his flock. To one of the Baptist brethren at Calcutta who addressed him on the occasion, he replied in the same spirit, declaring, that “ the subject of baptism was far more agitated than important ; ” and thus the measure, which some would have characterised as capricious, and others as sectarian, created no breach in Christian affection—it scarcely ruffled the current of intercourse between brother and brother. “ They walked together wherein they were agreed.”

The following extract, though instructive, is not wonderful, from one who could say, amid many troubles, "In Christ is ALL. This I find more and more, and for this the Lord be praised!"

"*Lord's day, October 26.*—Still a prisoner. If my ailment be better, it is but little so. I do not suffer much pain; but the process of treatment and the situation of my ailment cause me much discomfort and irritation of body. The Lord knoweth how to choose my chastisements; and in this respect His wisdom is most marvellous. How easily, how speedily, does He bring our rebellious, foolish, wandering hearts to terms, when He pleases! He touches the inmost springs of action as with a needle's point, He restrains some absorbing habit of activity, and leaves us helpless and dependent, wondering at the reason of all this. And what better reason can there be, even when we can discover none else, than *this*—'Be still, and know that I am God'? We may trace a river to the ocean into which it empties itself, even when we may not be able to discover the mountain-spring from whence it first flows: and even *that* is useful and satisfactory knowledge. So, in regard to the dark and troubled river of affliction, well is it when the course of its waters carries us on to this grand and satisfying, because ultimate, result—'Thou art God!' Now, *this* I do feel in my present strange and peculiar trial of body and soul—'I would be still before Him, and would know (as the *ultima ratio*) that He is God!'—'I Am!'—'I Am that I Am!' alone!

"But I have one accessible consolation in the *sympathy* of Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh, my near and dear divine kinsman. I am His, and He is mine. O that I could realise the glory of that truth, that felt fact! My trust is, that He is preparing me for something, or purging me from something. Complete thy work, good Lord, and by thy Spirit and Word help me to bide thine and the Father's time!



“ *November 2.*—Yet once more must I write in bonds. It surprises myself how easy God hath made to me this confinement, so that really I have come to enjoy it. And that which I have been made to enjoy chiefly in it is *rest*. For years I have been without, I may truly say, one day's rest; and for the last two years I have been in a perpetual whirl of activity, involving solemn responsibilities of the highest kind, as well as a multitude of petty details, so that neither my soul nor my body has once rested. Nor could I, with such claims around me and upon me, take rest: and I often felt as if the Lord would, some time, interpose for my relief, just in this very way: but I never asked Him to do it; for, has He not promised me rest in heaven? But He has interposed, and whilst righteously chastening me, He has made me to rest in the season of my chastening. I praise the Lord for His mercy towards me in this matter.

“ To-day (Lord's day), in my confinement, I have been thinking of the *unconverted* portion of my temporary congregation. I have lifted my heart to the Lord for them, and have formed the purpose of dealing somewhat more with them, as a class, than I have yet done. I shall probably soon have to render up charge of the congregation to him who seems likely soon to come and minister amongst them; and I would wish, like Samson, to pull down the pillars and temple of the unconverted about them, before I render up my stewardship. The Lord help me to accomplish this! O that I could pluck those brands from the burning! How awful to think of any of those whom I am addressing being *in hell for ever!* Alas! can I doubt that some of them will? Lord, let not their blood be on me!”

One of Mr Macdonald's first and firmest principles he thus described in a note to Mr Hawkins:—“ I may be *unfruitful* (alas that I am so!), but *indolent* I cannot be in the service of such a Master as is

our Master;" and the next extract is a comment on the words:—

"*Lord's day, November 9.*—Again am I liberated, and again to-day have I been permitted to preach the gospel of my Lord. But alas! how inadequately! My subject, 'Praise ye the Lord.'—(Ps. cl.) But how unworthy of the subject was my poor, weak address! The Lord revive my soul unto faith and prayer, and make me to be more in earnest for the salvation of my hearers! I have in my mind at present several plans of usefulness, but I want energy to carry them out. O how much have I lost, how much good have I *not* attained to, from the want of energetic devotedness! Yet would I thank my Lord that He keeps me sincerely attached to Him, and that I have a uniform and earnest desire to serve Him. I trust I can truly say that I think of little but His cause, and that I do wish and endeavour to keep every thing subordinate to that. I fear, however, that at present my great failure lies in *this*, that I *pray* not as I ought. I am not honouring God's ordinance of prayer as I ought. I know it—I feel it. Yet how gracious is the Lord, who gives me so much with so little asking! 'Turn thou me, O Lord God, and I shall be turned.' I thank and bless thee for all that mercy which I have abused: what should I have been but for that mercy? and what may I not become by the aid of thy grace—by the energy of thy gracious Spirit? Even yet I may become what I would desire to be, but am not—a useful missionary to the heathen. O for that day! If the day may but come when I can preach thy gospel to the heathen, in their own tongue, *effectively*, I feel now as if that would be my earthly coronation-day."

In a letter to Mr Mackintosh (December 8, 1845), Mr Macdonald dwells on two topics, to which much of his attention had been turned—the work of the

Spirit, and the necessity of rebaptizing converts from Popery. He says—

“The Disruption — that blessed event — has laid a heavier burden on me than on any one else in *this* place ; but it is the Lord’s own burden, and it is light—joyfully light. I have not enjoyed any period of my life more, perhaps none so much, as since the boon of Church freedom visited us ; and I know that in this I am not alone. It seems as if at the outset of this great work, it were the Lord’s pleasure to grant peculiar manifestations of Himself to His friends and servants, setting a seal on their hearts and on their arms ; and some measure of this happy feeling we have enjoyed even here. But there is another and mightier manifestation of His glory in the enlarged *conversion of sinners*, which we have *not* seen, yet long after. O that He would take pity on our perishing adherents, many of whom are apparently about to fall into hell, with the words ‘Free Church’ on their lips ! Still I must not deny that our people are a more *serious* people than they were formerly, and that they seem, most of them, to have more satisfactory views at least of what they ought to be. I know that you at home feel much in the same way, and that you are longing for a greater boon even than that of Church freedom—*the effusion of the Spirit*. In this we are at one. It seems to me that, in a country where you have all so large a field of concert and co-operation as in Scotland, you ought all to agree to devote a month or two, in common concert of all the ministers, to preach entirely on the *work of the Holy Spirit*, in its essential relations to the Church and the salvation of sinners. The subject is not sufficiently taught nor understood, save by a few men, and in a few places ; and who can tell what good might come were this blessed agent thus glorified, and the multitude of minds thus set in order, and prepared for His return ? For my own part, my only comfort in Indian work is the thought of the

*Holy Spirit*, and I wish I could infect every mind around me with my feelings on this subject." . . . . "Yet I do not wonder that the Lord does not visit us. I have but to look to myself, and my mouth is shut. I can assure you, my brother, that the longer I live, the more do I wonder that the Lord has ever permitted me to open my mouth to utter His message, and that He has ever condescended to use me for any thing. Indeed, I am at times tempted to doubt whether He ever did perform any real work of grace by my ministry, and whether occasional appearances of any such work so wrought were not *mere* appearances. But whether He did or not, I cannot doubt, and will not deny, that He has set His seal on my conscience and heart that I am His; nor can I withdraw from declaring His message, without sin. Now, do not think that such thoughts as these make me unhappy; no—they only lead me to peace and joy, by constraining me so to live on Christ as that I may not think of myself as existing without Him. Then my littleness is lost in His greatness, my meanness in His majesty, my unworthiness in His excellency, my sinfulness in His righteousness, my nothingness in His *All-ness*! These, at least, are the things which I would aim at, and can sometimes reach in the distant view; but I desire to press after them, that is, after all things *as in Christ*. In this pursuit I know you join me; and who ever failed pursuing Christ—Christ in His soul, or Christ in His ministry? 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

"There is a subject which to me seems a very important one, on which I desire to obtain your mind and co-operation. We are now on the eve, apparently, of a final and deadly struggle with the Antichrist of *Popery*, and it seems of the utmost importance that we should carefully choose and define our ground of contest. Now, have we not, ever since the Reformation, been guilty of a great oversight, a great religious blunder, in *acknowledging Romish or Popish BAPTISM*? If Rome be Antichrist, the

Man of Sin, the Whore of Babylon, ought any of her ordinances to be acknowledged as Christian, valid ordinances? Ought her baptism to be acknowledged as *Christian* baptism? Do we not in vain call her *Antichrist*, whilst we admit her baptism to be *Christ's* baptism? Do we not in vain declare her people (as such) to be the whore's children, or the harlot's paramours, whilst yet we admit that her initiatory sacrament is the same, in effect, with that of the true spouse, the Church of Christ? Is not Rome to us 'as a heathen man and a publican?' Can she (as a *body*) baptize into that Christ who rejects her—into that God who has divorced her as an adulterous strumpet? That we *do sustain* her baptism is evident from this—that when a man is converted from Popery, he is, without any baptism, received by our Church (as well as other Churches) into Church fellowship, as one who has already been baptized, whereas a heathen man or a Jew must first be baptized. Now, my friend, my reflective friend, do think of this matter, and give it a thorough consideration, without respect to any thing but the Scripture view of Rome (as in Rev. xvii.), and the right reason of things; and if you should come to the same result to which I have come, *do move your brethren* in presbytery on the same subject—move for an *overture* to the General Assembly of the Free Church for a declaration on the subject. I have written to my father on the matter, and if you meet, confer on the subject, and do what you can to help on the *casting out of Antichrist*; for surely we have not cast him out whilst we hold *his* and *our* baptism to be ONE. 'One baptism' (Eph. iv.) is one of the bonds of the unity of Christ's true Church. *Is Rome to share with us?* It is now about ten years since I came to the decision that all converted Romanists or Papists ought to be baptized; and, whenever I had it in my power, I have acted on my decision. Two converted Papists I have, within the last two years, baptized. Some of my brethren differ from me as to the propriety of this step; but this I

am not sorry for, as it leads to a more thorough discussion of the subject. Observe, my suggestion does not bear on other Churches, but simply on what *we* ought to do with those who come from Rome to *us*. But '*Sat verbum sapienti*,' and I shall now leave the whole matter with you, to do your best. I feel that such a movement is a vital one in our approaching campaign; and that Rome would lose a mighty fortress when her baptism is denied. Then the armies would be drawn up, with the clear valley of '*no compromise*' betwixt them. Pray, do not overlook this."

The strong and decided views which Mr Macdonald has announced in this letter were held by him with great firmness, and urged with great frequency. In his presbytery, in his correspondence, and some of his publications, he pressed and reiterated the subject; nor can it be denied that there is, at least, much verisimilitude in the principles which he advocates. Conventionally, the question was settled at the Reformation, and has not perhaps been thoroughly sifted since that period. Knox is known to have felt difficulties regarding it. He wrote to Calvin, and was so influenced by that Reformer's opinion that his difficulties disappeared, or, at least, his inquiries were closed. It were not to be regretted, however, though the matter were resumed. As a new, and we think a scriptural, mode of assailing Rome, we may yet be forced to consider it, and inquire, not, What have the Churches settled? but, What has the Word of God decided regarding Antichrist and the mystical Babylon?—what is the validity of her ordinances, and what the basis of her proud pretensions? Before such a scrutiny, the foundations at once of Puseyism and of Popery might be weakened or overthrown.

Two circumstances had occurred to try the congregation of which Mr Macdonald was now the temporary pastor. Rev. John Mackail, then labouring at Malta, had been called to Calcutta, but was unable to proceed thither so speedily as the congregation desired. Then, the foundations of the place of worship which was in course of erection as a Free Church there, suddenly gave way, and it became requisite to rebuild it at a double cost, almost from the base. Though the large contributions of liberal men readily met the demand, yet the difficulties of the Disruption there were thus greatly augmented. These trials of their faith, however, did not pass wholly unimproved. Mr Macdonald wrote—"The hand of the Lord is in it, and with that we have chiefly to do. I am afraid that we did not sufficiently commit the building to Him, and so He has chastened our human confidence—

' Except the Lord do build the house,  
The builders build in vain.' "

His family had now to be removed for a short time to the neighbourhood of Serampore, in the hope that the change might be blessed to recruit the invalided among them, and the separation developed Mr Macdonald's family affections in some beautiful forms. The blank occasioned in his loving heart, by the absence of his partner and his children, was filled up by a still closer walk with God ; and his cry when nearest the throne was this—"The Lord bless them, and make them all his own ! May we yet be a whole family in heaven !" That and a subsequent residence at Serampore were blessed to produce nearly a perfect recovery.

On the 20th of December 1846,\* he says—

“Again am I approaching another change in my life. Since August 1843, I have been exercising the full ministry of my Lord Jesus Christ, as temporary pastor of the Free Church congregation in this place, and much have I enjoyed this work, especially of late. O how much, how very much, have I enjoyed of the Divine presence during the last three and a half years, and especially during the last few months of that period! The Lord be thanked for all His mercy and loving-kindness towards me!

“Now, at length, the pastor-elect of the congregation, the Rev. Mr Mackail, has arrived, and it will devolve on me, in a few days more, to transfer to him the ministry with which I have been favoured. I trust he is a man of God, and in this belief I feel no hesitation in making this solemn transfer. May the Lord bless him, and may I, who have been sowing, and may he, who will reap, rejoice together! I lay down what to me is a most pleasant and gladsome work, because it is my Lord’s will, and I am His, and at His service. May He now again guide me to what He would have me specially to do, that in some form or other I may ever be found fulfilling my ministry to the very end!”

—It had been Mr Macdonald’s anxious endeavour so to preach the truth that his successor might “find something like a foundation laid—a foundation of spiritual religion and congregational life;” and the most adequate judges have declared that he succeeded, although he himself was far from being satisfied. He rather continued to feel like a cumberer of the ground; but others knew that in some cases the worldly had been arrested, the unthinking solemn-

\* During this year he published one of his most vigorous pamphlets, with the following graphical title—*Hindu Holidays, the Festivals of Devil-Worship—Ought Christians to Observe them?*



nized, while the children of God had been fed upon the finest of the wheat. With that spiritual discrimination which he ever cultivated, he was far from supposing that all the flock were believers; nay, in one of his letters, we have heard him strongly expressing the fear that some were passing on to perdition, "with the words 'Free Church' on their lips." Aware that "the nature of God is the source of our obligation to duty, and the will of God our sole directory in it," he was not satisfied with the cry, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we." First conversion, and then holiness, were the ceaseless burden of his message from God to man. Hence many of his deep complaints, and some of his more saddened moments. Still, however, it is true that his place of worship was the birth-place of souls. This man and that man were born there.

On the 10th day of January 1847, Rev. John Mackail was inducted as pastor of the Free Church at Calcutta; on which occasion Mr Macdonald presided. His topic was "THE MINISTRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE GOSPEL;" and the discourse, which was forthwith published, is rich, unctious, and full. It is a felicitous compound of doctrine for ministers to preach, of directions for ministers to walk by, and of graces for flocks to cherish.\*

When relieved from these duties, he was "in the enjoyment of health as good as ever he enjoyed;" and on the 17th of January he wrote in his Journal—

\* It should be remembered that, amid all these labours, Mr Macdonald was for some time editor of the *Calcutta Christian Observer*, and from the commencement till his death, he edited the *Calcutta Free Churchman*.

“ I am glad to snatch a little space of this blessed day of rest, the first of my vacant Sabbaths after transference of my late pastoral charge, in order to set down a few thoughts connected with my present position. And may the Lord sanctify me by His Spirit, and accept of me through His beloved Son, in all that I think, write, and do! It was on this day 1830, seventeen years ago, that I preached my first public sermon in the little Abbey Church of Pluscarden, and I have just been reading over the record of my feelings which I registered then. I would not go back to those days, but there were ardent and fresh feelings in my bosom at that time which I could wish again to possess, were it not that they were all so much tinctured with careful anxiety. But, by the grace of God I am what I am!

“ On this day fortnight I administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to my flock for the last time as their pastor, and I had much happiness and fulness of soul in addressing them from ‘ What think ye of Christ ? ’ Last Sabbath, I presided at the admission of Mr Mackail as minister of the congregation. I preached (with much divine communion) from the text, ‘ How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious ? ’ My object was to glorify the Spirit of God, and I trust I was helped to attain my aim in some small degree. I afterwards addressed the pastor and flock with considerable enlargement of soul towards both of them, and was strengthened to go through the whole service in a way which I had not anticipated. I felt no doubt as to the propriety of my own decision not to be permanent pastor of that flock. My conscience was free, and my heart enlarged.

“ Since that time the members of the congregation have, in a private but most kind and considerate manner, testified the warmth of their feelings towards me, by presenting to my dear wife and children the sum of five thousand rupees. The Lord bless the doers of this deed, and let Himself receive the glory of having put into their hearts to do this thing for His servant! We have trusted Him in

many straits, and struggled against wilful debt as against sin, and now hath He helped us. To Him be glory!

"Another event has occurred this week, of much interest to me and mine. My dear wife has become the mother of twin sons. So largely hath the Lord committed immortal spirits to my charge. Alas, that I so little understand their value! Lord, visit my soul now, as the soul of a *father*, that I may be like thee in this thy relationship to myself, for thou art my *Father* in heaven!

"And now, as to my second closed pastoral ministry, what shall I say this day?

"I thank the Lord that He granted me again this privilege, for three and a half years, of ministering as a pastor in His Church.

"I bless Him that He granted much of His presence and countenance during that period of service, so that I have myself been made happier, and, I trust, better by it.

"I beseech Him to forgive the multitude of my official transgressions committed during that time, by which my prayers or my ministry may have been hindered.

"I wait on Him to make effectual for His own ends, all that I have said or done in conformity with His mind during that time.

"And I now commit my way unto Him, and wait upon Him, to direct me, and use me, and sanctify me, and perfect me, through Christ, and by His Spirit, unto eternal life. Amen."

The gift to which Mr Macdonald has referred was thus intimated to her to whom it was presented on January 11th—

"DEAR MRS MACDONALD,—In fulfilment of a trust reposed in us as members of the Free Church congregation in Calcutta, we have opened an account at the Bank of Bengal in your name, with the sum of 5000 rupees; and we now accordingly beg leave to forward you a bank and a check-book.

“In accordance with the directions given to us, we request your acceptance of this sum for yourself and your children, ‘as a free-will offering from the congregation which owes so much to your husband,’ and which felt, in the anticipation of the induction of our new and esteemed minister, that they had to sustain a loss in the cessation of Mr Macdonald’s pastoral relationship, ‘which could not be contemplated without solemnity and sorrow, nor allowed to occur without some manifestation’ by the flock which he has cherished, of the affection which his conduct has excited, and some memorial of the gratitude he has won.

“With Christian regard,

“We are your sincere friends,

“J. HAWKINS.

“JOHN CAMPBELL.

“R. C. WILLIAMSON.”

--This Christian man had early imbibed the maxim, “*Cui nihil sat est, eidem nihil turpe*,” and was ever open-hearted and generous, according to his means.\* He had declined all remuneration for his services, except his salary as a missionary (for he continued unremittingly to labour in the Institution), and he had his reward; but when the donation was announced his feelings were moved † to an extent that

\* Referring to a case of charity, he says in a note, “I have told them to reckon on 300 rupees, but I hope to get more. So I am about applying to two or three friends to take *shares* in this joint-stock concern of Christian love, and I give my best friends, yourself and Dr N——, the first chance of the spiritual profits in this love investment.”

† In a note to Mr Hawkins, his attached and untiring friend, he says, “I will not trust myself to say any thing now concerning your most unexpected communication to my dear wife, and on behalf of my children. The *manner* in which this Christian deed has been done is sufficient in itself to affect the *man*. How much more shall not the substance of the deed affect the *Christian*! The Lord bless you all in His own fulness.”

we have noticed only once, except in connection with things purely and exclusively spiritual.

The Church addressed the retiring pastor thus—

“REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—The arrival and the induction of the Rev. Mr Mackail as the stated pastor of the Free Church congregation in Calcutta, terminate that connection with it which, by request, you assumed at its formation, after the Disruption of the Scottish Church, and the duties of which you have ever since faithfully discharged. It becomes us, therefore, at this time to convey to you an expression of our gratitude, both for your compliance with the desire for your ministerial services, and for the patient zeal and uniform faithfulness with which you have approved yourself to us, as one who ‘needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.’

“We believe that your labour has not been in vain in the Lord, and that much fruit of it will be known in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. Your ‘record is on high.’ By a manifestation of the truth, you have commended yourself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God; and we feel that your ministry has been a privilege of which all who enjoyed it must, at the last, render a solemn account. You have not shunned to declare unto us all, the whole counsel of God, but have testified to us, from the beginning, the same great truths of repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the absolute necessity of holiness. You have opened to us the rich provisions of the covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure; and have illustrated to us, in the life and character of our Redeemer, the proper temper and practical habits of those who profess to be his disciples. In your conduct we have recognised an example of consistent non-conformity to the world, and from your ministrations we trust that some of us have received enlarged apprehensions of the excellency of the Scriptures, the blessedness of communion with God, the greatness of redeeming love, and

the infinite worth and power of 'the precious blood of Christ.'

"Our obligations to you, therefore, are of the highest sort, and we feel it to be a duty publicly to acknowledge them. We desire for you the fulfilment of the promise, that whoso watereth others shall be watered also himself. We affectionately commend you and all your family to the grace of God, and to the word of his power, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. May you enjoy in growing abundance the peace which passeth all understanding, and the joy which is unspeakable and full of glory! May you long be spared in the Church on earth, to promote its great end of man's salvation, and finally, may an abundant entrance be ministered to you into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!—With cordial affection and respect, we subscribe ourselves, reverend and dear Sir,

"Your grateful friends"—

This address was subscribed by about a hundred members of the congregation, including nine or ten native Christians; and the reply is so characteristic that it should not be withheld:—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I received, a few days ago, your very kind and affectionate address; and although I had previously been made aware that it was in course of signature, and would soon be presented to me, I have not yet been able to overcome the difficulty which, from the first intimation, I anticipated in making any adequate reply. Experience does not serve me on an occasion so rare to me as the present, nor can I venture to draw on the mere conventional phraseology of the world on an occasion so serious and so spiritual. I have but the alternative, then, of recurring to the sincere emotions of my heart, and of simply expressing what truly I feel: and what answer would *you* either desire or expect from me but the genuine

expression of my heart? Those services which you have been pleased so kindly to acknowledge—but which were really such as no minister of Christ, in the emergency of the case, could decline tendering to His Church—have indeed been richly recompensed.

“ My first reward has been in the happy and blessed character of that work of grace and love in which I have been privileged to minister. My second reward has been in the conscious assurance of my acceptance by that Lord whom I serve, and who has ever treated me with indulgence so great and mercy so tender. And now, thirdly, am I completely recompensed by the kind thanks and affectionate remembrances of almost every one of those to whom, during three and a half years past, I have had an opportunity of ministering in the gospel of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I can only wonder, and I *do* wonder, that services concerning which I myself have ever been constrained to entertain so poor and so discouraging an opinion, should have been so highly estimated as they seem to have been by so many whom I so highly esteem, whether as friends or as brethren in the Lord. God alone knoweth what I am—how unfit for His service—how unworthy of the least of His manifold mercies; and were it not for the superabounding flood of His grace towards me, unknown and unseen by men, this token of regard would never have been addressed by you to one of the chief of sinners—one of the meanest of servants. One thing only can I say for myself, and even that is not of myself—that I love Christ, and have sought, and would seek still, to bring every one of you to Christ. And I may sincerely add, that the chief retrospective joy of my ministry amongst you is, that I never felt weary of preaching Christ to you, even as some amongst you never seemed to weary in hearing Christ. May that Spirit under whom I ministered, and under whom you attended, now render effectual His own word, and perfect His own work, both in your souls and in mine!

“ I cannot help, in faithfulness, adverting to the fact, that I see appended to this most interesting document before me, the names of a very few, from whom I could not have expected any spiritual announcement so peculiar and so solemn as that to which they have set their seal by their present deed and signature ; and for this reason, that they rarely or very irregularly attended the ministrations concerning which they so strongly express their minds. My hope, however, would be, that they now regret past neglects, and that they are desirous now of laying the blame of their own inconsistent conduct, not on the preacher, who could not but tell them the truth, but on themselves, who loved not to hear it told. My prayer is for such, that the Lord may speedily convert them, lest the time may come when the things which concern their peace shall be forever hid from their eyes ; and that they may soon be made acquainted with spiritual happiness—that happiness which I would fain have communicated to them if I could, and which is still to be obtained freely, through faith in the gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“ And now, my dear friends, that I have retired to my usual and chosen work, suffer me to mingle my joy with yours, that you have now obtained what you so much needed, a minister entirely your own, as well as one who is truly an ambassador of Christ. May your pastor long be spared to you, as the medium of eternal blessedness to you all ; and may you ever be found loving, honouring, cherishing, and maintaining him, as your devoted pastor in the Lord. When my own special duties permit, I hope ever to join your assembly as an humble worshipper of the same God, and a willing hearer of Christ’s word as spoken by your stated minister ; so shall my sympathies for you be constantly fed, and my prayers on your behalf, as well as yours on my behalf, be constantly maintained before the same throne of grace.

“ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.—  
Yours ever in Christian affection,

“ J. MACDONALD.”



Never, perhaps, was a more solemn reply made to such an address. Instead of being seduced into mere compliment, as the occasion might have suggested, this man of God would "rightly divide the word of truth," even in circumstances so peculiar. He thought of some of those who had approached him in the language of Christian friendship, while yet they had rarely honoured his Master by waiting on His ordinance of preaching. At such conduct Mr Macdonald could in no circumstances connive; and he, as honestly as affectionately, made his appeal on the subject, for he would "in any wise rebuke his neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Will the wise man's aphorism be verified in any who were so affectionately addressed: "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot?"

We now recur to his Journal:—

"*Sabbath, February 28.*—To-day our twin children were publicly (as all our children have been) baptized by the Rev. J. Mackail. They have been named Thomas Chalmers and Robert Gordon, after those two distinguished servants of the Lord in Edinburgh who were so much honoured in our great Free Church movement as fathers in our Israel. The Lord grant that these dear children may yet, if spared, have the Spirit of grace that is in those servants of the Most High! I do not think that on any previous occasion my soul has had stronger faith in God's acceptance and appointment of infant baptism than I have had to-day. These two scriptures afforded me much enjoyment—'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God;' and also, 'The promise is unto you and your children;' and I was enabled to commune with the Lord freely on the

principles involved in them. My respect for many of the Baptist body has sometimes been a slight snare to me in less spiritual hours ; but on this occasion I felt nothing but peace, rest, and certainty. The Lord bless these children, and teach me how to train them !”

In a letter, dated April 7th, addressed to a friend in Scotland with whom he continued to correspond, Mr Macdonald resumes a topic which he had formerly opened up to Mr Mackintosh. It is obvious that his whole soul was embarked in the matter, to which, perhaps, the attention of the Churches has not been turned as it ought to have been ; and, even at the risk of repetition, an extract from the second letter is now submitted :—

“ By the way, my dear brother,” he says, “ there is *one* subject on which I wish much to have your sympathy and co-operation—a subject which has much interested me for a long time, and which, I believe, vitally affects the issues of that conflict with the Roman Antichrist on which we have already entered. I refer to the subject of *Romish baptism*—ought it to be deemed *Christian* baptism ? that is, ought it to be deemed *baptism* at all ? or, in other words, ought not every *member of Antichrist*, on being converted, or transferred to Christ, to be baptized, in token of washing away his Popish abominations, just as a Hindu or Moham-medan, on putting away his previous heathen pollutions and uncleanness ?

“ Is Rome a *Church of Christ* at all ? Is she not *dis-owned* as an *harlot* ? Are *her* acts *Christ's* acts ? If not, do we not wrongly in owning *her* baptism as *Christ's* baptism ? which, of course, we do, if we admit it at all. We are commanded to ‘*come out of her.*’ Have we *yet* ‘*come out of her,*’ when we *own* her initial seal of *communion*, baptism, just as we do our own baptism ? Is not ‘*one*

baptism' a mark of the Church's unity (Eph. iv.)—do we hold this as to *Rome*? Many more cognate queries would I suggest, as an opening up of the subject. Do, my dear brother, consider it *seriously*. Ten or twelve years' thought has made me believe it to be a very serious matter. Even in London, I think in 1835, I brought the subject into presbytery. Since then, in this country, I have made up my mind as clearly as it is made up as to any thing subordinate to Christ himself. I have baptized two persons converted from Popery with much inward satisfaction at the time, and with the most clear and continued conviction that I did rightly. I cannot read the 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation without wondering how any reflective Christian can continue to regard the 'great whore's' ordinance as Christ's baptism. I have been most miserably disappointed in one or two consultations or conferences I have had on this subject, to obtain no answer but a reference to *Luther and the Anabaptists*, our own *John Knox*, and such-like human precedents and authorities, instead of a reasoning on the point from Scripture, *Is Rome a Church? Is her ordinance baptism? Can we 'come out of her,' and yet hold her baptism?* Do not put aside the question; leave *Reformers* and Church *practices* out of the inquiry, and take it on Scripture ground. Oh! it will be a great and a good day when the Free Church shall boldly declare, '*Rome is no Church; her baptism is no baptism—it is an Antichristian abomination. Let it never more be owned!*' Such an announcement would soon clear up the field of conflict—our *last* article of truce with Rome would be broken up, and our Church would come forth as consciously free from *Rome* as she now is from the *State-world*. If I could but enlist you on this subject, I would not fear but that one day we would see the question carried. I know that you now are all *against* me; but I have no more doubt that, one day, Christ's Church will all be *for* me, or at least for the principle I am contending to maintain, than I have doubt that in the Church of Christ *all truth* will

ultimately prevail. Do not hastily conclude against me, my friend; there may be more in the matter than you now think. So strongly do I feel the matter, that I feel I could give my life freely for it, if need were. I say this to show you I am in earnest. Well, but I am wearying, and perhaps teasing you." \*

The following is the last, and as such the appropriate, entry which Mr Macdonald's Journal contains :—

"June 27 (1847).—Life flows in a gentle current of mercy and peace towards us as a family; yet are we not without our trials connected with the things of this world, teaching us constant dependence on Him who is Lord of all. But these trials I had rather cherish than repel. Trials we *must* have to chasten us, and if we reject those that are sent, O how much *worse* may come upon me! The Lord might lay His hand on my dear wife or children, and what then might not happen? No, Lord! I am satisfied. It is infinitely better to be *thy* meanest *debtor* than the *world's* chiefest *creditor*!"

Between this period and that of his departure to his rest and his Lord, Mr Macdonald reverted to his full duties as a missionary minister, and in season and out of season urged forward the work of his Master. His influence in a large sphere was now thoroughly established. The contumely with which he had formerly been assailed was in a great measure hushed, and, to man's dim eye, it appeared as if long years of usefulness stretched out before one who was still only forty years of age, and busy, in the

\* This subject was very fully discussed among the brethren at Calcutta. Mr Macdonald published a pamphlet regarding the tenets of Rome, entitled, *The Doctrine of Divine Grace perverted by Romanism*, which should be reprinted.

full vigour and maturity of manhood, working out the purposes for which the Saviour died. He held that "the Bible is the mind, and providence the work of one God, and when these two meet, light will arise upon the soul;" and in that light he joyously walked. "O how rich, how blessed, how glorious is this land of faith! how manifold the objects of our communion!" was his exclamation; and in that communion he was happy, in a measure, as unfallen Adam was in Eden with his God. But, while his friends rejoiced in his counsel, and his own soul thus grew in grace, the messenger was on the wing that was to summon him away from the world of faith to that of fruition. His incessant bodily and mental activity, in such a climate as that of India, had, we cannot doubt, affected a physical system which had never been robust, and gave to whatever ailment might be sent an advantage against his constitution. Perhaps the symptoms of that malady which came to call him hence favour that opinion. It commenced on Wednesday the 25th of August, on which day he appeared as usual at the Institution, and prayed, with a fervour which was uncommon even in him, that "the youth assembled might be delivered from the aggravated sin of continuing to reject the Lord Jesus Christ and his freely-offered salvation." On the afternoon he visited an afflicted friend, and, on his return to his residence, prepared for the duties of the prayer-meeting of that evening. He felt feverish, however, and unwell, and was induced to remain at home. Next day, also, he was confined to his house, though in the evening he was able to receive a visit from a valued brother in the ministry, the

Rev. A. F. Lacroix, who has for many years been a zealous missionary of the London Society at Calcutta, and who in referring to that visit, says—

“Little did I think then that it was for the last time I enjoyed this advantage! He then spoke much of his venerable father, and his unwearied labours in the cause of the Redeemer—of the treatment of native converts—of the necessity of missionaries to be living proofs to the natives of the truth of Christianity by the holiness of their lives—and other topics of the same nature which will never be effaced from my memory.”

On Friday and Saturday, Mr Macdonald was worse, and his mind began to be occasionally unsettled. On the Sabbath, however, he was better, and, on that and on the following day, his own impression was that the violence of the attack was spent. But in the course of Monday he relapsed into his former state—his mind again began to be disturbed, and refused to obey his wishes, or rest on the topics on which he desired to meditate. At night his fever continued; towards the morning of Tuesday it abated, but unfavourable symptoms returned with greater violence than before, and, though he himself had no apprehension of danger, those about him, especially the anxious partner of his sorrows and his joys, began to be alarmed. He enjoyed some sleep on Tuesday, but that sleep passed into a stupor, and, except in a single word, he never spoke again. All that medical skill, stimulated by personal affection, could devise, was tried, without success, and Mr Macdonald sank into a comatose state. His breathing became deep and difficult, and, in

spite of the incredulity of affection, it was too apparent that death had been commissioned to do his work. As he lay, apparently unconscious of all that was passing, the friends who fondly loved him gathered round his dying bed, while the silence of that chamber, in which death was preparing to triumph, was broken only by the loud sound of the sufferer's labouring respiration. Towards midnight on the 31st, his fever returned, and that appeared to render the breathing more easy. It gave a deceitful gleam of hope. Life was ebbing fast. The help of man was signally vain. Soon after midnight he fell asleep—and was satisfied when he awoke in the likeness of the Lord whom he had loved so intensely and had served so well. Christ was then completely and for ever his ALL.

The woe which his departure occasioned was felt in many a household with the poignancy of a domestic bereavement. To some he stood in the relation of a spiritual father—to many he had been a spiritual guide and comforter—and to all a friend. His demise was, therefore, like the fall of a standard-bearer. To the eye of man it had appeared as if his sun were still only in mid-sky; but it suddenly went down, and, while many were anticipating a long career of influence for good to India from one who had secured a moral position in many respects influential, all was suddenly eclipsed. He who kills and makes alive asserted his prerogative, and taught us to be still and know that He is God.

The news soon spread throughout the city, and thence to the other sections of India, startling seri-

ous men, and paining the attached, wherever it was made known. We dare not tarry to speak of the bereaved partner, with no husband now but Him who is the husband of the widow—and her seven children, with no father but Him in whom the fatherless find mercy. Her loss was irreparable; her grief is sacred. For a time she felt like the mother who could not weep for her departed son, yet dropt a corpse upon his bier from the violence of suppressed emotion. But He who had wounded healed, and all His promises were redeemed. Her honoured partner was followed to the tomb, on the evening of the day on which he died, by natives and Europeans—by men of all Christian denominations and of every rank. A crowd of native youths who had been under his instructions,\* followed him to his resting-place. Scarcely a dry eye was seen in the large assemblage; and when the pastor of the Free Church, who prayed beside the grave, was unable to proceed, from deep and overpowering emotion, it has been observed that he was in that, as in the prayer which he attempted to offer, only leading the sorrowing multitude assembled. It is amid scenes such as these that Jehovah enforces the declaration, that when laid in the balance man is lighter than vanity. He shows that our deepest sorrows flow from our best-prized objects, and proclaims at once the insufficiency of the creature as our portion, and the havoc which sin has wrought among the best affections of men.

\* One of them, his favourite, shut himself up for two days after his spiritual father's death, refusing to see any one, and partaking of only a little bread and water.



The following inscription is placed over Mr Macdonald's earthly resting-place :—

IN MEMORY OF  
 REV. JOHN MACDONALD,  
 MISSIONARY MINISTER OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,  
 WHO WAS BORN IN EDINBURGH ON THE 17TH OF FEBRUARY 1807;  
 LANDED IN CALCUTTA ON THE 4TH OF FEBRUARY 1838; AND WHO  
 FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS ON THE 1ST OF SEPTEMBER 1847;  
 THIS TABLET IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
 BY HIS TENDERLY ATTACHED WIDOW.

" Christ sent me . . . . to preach the gospel."—1 Cor. i. 17.

" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—  
 Acts xvi. 31.

On the following Sabbath Mr Mackail and Dr Duff attempted to improve the sad event to the mourning flock of the Free Church, and after the second sermon four Hindu converts were baptized—the latter a service which formed the most appropriate memorial that could have been raised in memory of him whose departure so many were deploring.\*

We agree with those who still cherish the desire that some parting lesson had been uttered from Mr Macdonald's death-bed. — Such things have often roused the unthinking, like voices from the dead. Yet does not his whole life proclaim the lesson which would restore the world to blessedness, were it accurately learned? His was singularly a walk of faith—his conversation was in heaven; and what could his death be but the commencement of his better life? It was no less remarkably a life of love, strong, devoted, unquenchable affection to Him

\* Many wished the remarkable sermon which Dr Duff preached to be published, but the preacher spoke from the fulness of the heart, without formal composition, and could not easily recall it.

whose love to His Church is to be measured by the agonies of the cross on the one hand, and the glories of eternity on the other. From the day at which the love of Christ savingly constrained him, amid the quietude and seclusion of Westerton, to the hour when the king of terrors so suddenly assailed him, amid weeping friends at Calcutta, love was the presiding principle in his soul—love to Christ first, and then to the souls of men, for Christ's sake. In such a case, then, it is the life rather than the death that we regard; and in his loud and fearless protest against every departure from God's simple truth—in his intolerance of sin, finely tempered with yearning affection for the sinner—all who have ears to hear, and a heart to feel, may find a lesson such as no death-bed can surpass; nay, the death-bed might have become a mere scenic representation—it was by the walk and conversation becoming the gospel—by the life hid with Christ in God—the rejoicing in Christ Jesus—the superiority to this world, and the realising of a world to come, that he preached yet more winningly than by his lips; and all these conspire to render Mr Macdonald's life one of the most impressive and solemn that even the history of missions supplies. At one period he could record, "I believe I can say that the prospect of heaven, and of being with Christ, is very precious to me." At another, when referring to the lapse of time, he could say, "My spiritual complaints and my petitions are the same as they were a year ago. One thing, however, is not the same—I am one year nearer my *rest*." And at another still he wrote, "My indisposition reminds me of the tinder-box of mortality within me,

which may in a moment take fire, and speedily consume me to the earth"—“I am contented, let this be the noon or the eventide of my days, as pleaseth thee. O direct me to thy will from day to day; my times are in thy hands—determine all, overrule all, bless all.” And once again, “O how fast are my years pressing on! how soon, how very soon, will the end come! Blessed be my blessed Lord, I am not sorry for this now, as I once would have been. Eternity is now my country, heaven is now my home, God is now my Father, and Christ is now my Brother, and the Holy Spirit is now my indwelling Friend—one with myself.” He was thus familiar with death and the eternity that lies beyond it; and in all that he did he acted with the coming world in view. His actions were habitually those of a dying man—his beautiful and heavenly life proclaimed what many others announce only when they come to die.

As soon as the minds of Christian men had recovered from the shock which his sudden departure occasioned, wherever his worth and holy devotedness were known, they began to give utterance to their feelings in various ways. It was long ere his widowed partner could realise the extent of her bereavement; but she was enabled at last to say—

“A Father’s hand has mixed the bitter cup, and He has enabled me to drink it, I trust, submissively, if not willingly; trusting where I cannot see, confessing that in faithfulness He has afflicted me, and rejoicing in the blessed assurance that my beloved husband is in glory. My tears fall fast and heavily, it is true, but the prevailing feeling of this aching heart is thankfulness for the grace that made him so perfect; and my chief desire is to follow him as he followed Christ.”

Towards her, thus bereaved, but not disconsolate, the affections of many were turned. In Mr Hawkins, the ardent and long attached friend of her husband, as well as a generous friend of the cause of Christ in India, she found a sympathizing counsellor and guide; while many others hastened at once to testify their affection for the departed, and their fellow-feeling with the survivor. Various public bodies in Calcutta recorded and expressed their sense of Mr Macdonald's worth. The Seaman's Friend Society, to which he had been corresponding secretary, recorded their sorrow at his loss. The members of the Mission Conference at Calcutta, composed of missionaries from all the Churches, in conveying their sympathy to the widow and father of their brother so suddenly departed, thus expressed their views of his character :—

“ In the performance of this act of fraternal affection and duty, the vivid remembrance of the many distinguished excellencies of their late brother's character cannot but present itself to their mind—excellencies conferred both by nature and by grace—which gained for him more than an ordinary share of the esteem of his ‘ brethren and companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ;’ and which also raised him to a foremost rank among the standard-bearers of the gospel of peace. His mental powers were of a high order, and, through careful cultivation, were enriched with abundant stores of varied knowledge. As a Christian man, he entertained a supreme regard for the gospel of Christ; and, drinking deep into its spirit, consecrated himself and his all to the service of his Redeemer. How entire that devotion was, and how thoroughly he submitted himself to the will of God, both his private and public life unequivocally testify. Hence it was, and from

no lower principle, that, when the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland proposed to him to leave a pastoral charge in London, and to engage in their mission in this city, deeming their overture the call of God, he consulted not with flesh and blood, but cheerfully surrendered himself for the Lord's service in this land ; and here, by unwearied and manifold labour, proved how hearty that surrender was. Without under-rating the value of secular knowledge, his heart was set more particularly on communicating that which is divine ; and in the Institution with which he was connected, it was to this department that he specially devoted himself. It was, however, by his pulpit ministrations that he was more generally known. In these he engaged steadily for some time to the Free Church congregation, until relieved by his present respected successor. To proclaim, indeed, the unsearchable riches of Christ was his particular delight. Hence he was ever ready, when called to dispense the word of God, as well to the smallest and humblest congregation, as to the larger and more respectable in worldly standing. Of his great acceptance, both as a minister of the Word and as a pastor, the most unequivocal proofs have been given—proofs too well known to require specific mention. His discourses were marked with a rich unction of evangelical truth. The depth and variety of his thoughts, as well as the whole structure of his sermons, showed with what diligent care they were prepared ; while the seriousness and pathos of their delivery made it always evident, that not to please but to profit the souls of his hearers was the one object of his preaching. His pen also was largely engaged in the service of his Lord. For several years he was the joint editor of one, and the sole editor of another, of our Calcutta religious periodicals. In this sphere of labour, as in others, his only aim was to do good ; and hence his writings were eminently practical. Three articles which he wrote may be mentioned as particularly seasonable, and as highly useful to the cause of public morals, namely, on the theatre, on duelling, and the

attendance of professing Christians at heathen festivals. For these he did not escape the vituperations of an ungodly world ; but he was unmoved thereby.

“ As a member of the Missionary Conference, his removal will be long and deeply felt. He approved thoroughly of its catholic constitution and spirit, and contributed much to the life and efficiency of its meeting. As long as uninterrupted health permitted, he failed not to be present, and seemed always much to enjoy the Christian intercourse which prevailed. His demeanour was without ostentation or reserve ; he was always kind and cheerful in his intercourse with others, and thus secured for himself affection and esteem in every heart ; while the extent of his knowledge, the soundness of his judgment, and the appositeness of his remarks, gave him an influence in council which perhaps few attain.

“ Such, then, and more than this, was the public character of our departed brother ; nor in his private life was he less eminent. While, therefore, we feel that we have abundant cause to deplore his loss, we would comfort ourselves, his sorrowing widow, and immediate connections, with the thought that, as to him to live was Christ, so to die is eternal gain. As a tree richly laden with blossoms and fruit, he has been transplanted from the garden of his Lord below to the Eden that is above, to flourish there for ever. ‘ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Amen ! ’ ”

The Baptist brethren in Calcutta, with whom Mr Macdonald, as we have seen, lived on terms of Christian amity, were prompt with their sympathy towards the bereaved. A portion of their address to Mrs Macdonald will show the estimate in which he was held by those zealous and devoted men :—

“ We shall not attempt to delineate the character of one

whom you know so much better than we did ; but we may be permitted to remark, that we doubt not of his having been welcomed to heaven with the loving expression of his Master, ' Well done, thou good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Oh ! what must have been the delight of our friend to see Him face to face whom he loved on earth, though he could not see Him ! And who would not rejoice with him, now that he rests from his labours, and is privileged to be for ever with the Lord ?

" We feel it to be our bounden duty to acknowledge with gratitude the kindness of your late husband, shown to us in many ways, but especially in being so often willing to supply our own lack of service in preaching to the two English churches and congregations in this city with which we are more immediately connected. We have reason to know that this kindness was highly appreciated by those who heard him, and to believe that, particularly in the year 1840, his labours contributed not a little to maintain the stability of one of the Churches referred to. And although we are unable to point out any special conversions that may have resulted from these occasional services, yet we know that the prayers and discourses of your late husband were always highly prized by those members of our Churches whom we consider as the most spiritually-minded.

" We sincerely pray and trust that the Lord, who breaketh not the bruised reed, may give you the assurance of His constant presence, and cause the light of His countenance to shine upon your heart day by day. We also unite in best wishes for the dear children which God has given you, and hope that the many prayers which have been, and will be, offered up on their behalf may be accepted and answered, so that they may be led at an early age to acquaint themselves with the God of their father."

Instead of extracting the sentiments of Dr Duff

and Mr Mackay of Calcutta, or Mr Anderson of Madras, all of whom expressed, in various forms, their most cordial admiration of their departed brother, it may suffice to embody the address from the missionaries at Bombay to their brethren in the Bengal Mission. It fully exhibits the position and the ascendancy which Mr Macdonald had been enabled, by the grace of God, to secure, and the influence for good which that grace taught him to wield:—

“ BOMBAY, *September 24, 1847.*

“ DEAR FRIENDS,—It is some days since we heard of your great loss, and our own, in the decease of Mr Macdonald. You have many fellow-mourners around you, whose sympathy must be precious and consoling. But we, from this distance, would join the train, both for our own comfort and for yours. John Macdonald's goodness was at once extensive and pervasive; and he is lamented by the many of every name where he laboured and died, and by numerous friends in every quarter of the world. His goodness was of the most unmistakable kind. It ever pursued the plainest and most important objects, and that with a mingled energy and benevolence which delighted friends and disarmed enemies. He is one of those men who are more beloved in their death, than during their life. He was a troubler of the world, and a disquieter of many in the Church; but now the pain he gave is forgotten, and the love he showed and the good he sought are remembered with approbation and gratitude, if not with sympathy and tender affection. The general mourning over his death is the more remarkable from the distinctive place he held in the Church of Christ. His own position and opinions were most clearly marked out and defined, to the exclusion, with abhorrence, or disapprobation, or non-approval, of every other. They were so marked in private and in



public, and in his writings before the whole world. Yet, that circumstance has not limited or restrained the sorrow that has every where burst forth on his decease. His simplicity and earnestness, his candour and kindliness of heart, have averted every grudge and suspicion, and left every heart to the natural movements of love and respect on so sad an occasion.

“Our dear departed friend’s career was comparatively short, and his departure was sudden. But he compressed a long life within a short space. He did much, and he did it well. He hath ‘finished his course,’ having ‘kept the faith,’ and now he is where his Master long ago promised he should be. ‘Where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.’ He hath rendered a good service, and hath received a great reward; he is with the Son, and honoured by the Father. Suddenly summoned, he did not receive the summons unprepared. It was not a judge that called him to his tribunal, but a Father that called him to his house. He knew the voice, and did not fear. He had often said, in the spirit of his Master, ‘Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God;’ and then it was easy and natural to add at the close of all, ‘Lo, I come to be with thee, O Christ!’ ‘into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, God of truth!’

“In regard to bereavement, the Scottish Mission in India, since its commencement in 1821 or 1822, has enjoyed sparing mercy to a considerable extent. To this day, Donald Mitchell and John Macdonald are the only two of its missionaries that are not still in the land of the living. This peculiar favour ought to be received with peculiar gratitude, and call forth peculiar devotedness. To Him who is our ‘life and the length of our days,’ let us live more unreservedly than ever. Let us follow in our life the bright example that has just been left us, and ‘die the death of the righteous’ man who has gone before us. Let us follow Him whom he followed, ‘looking’ continually ‘unto Jesus.’

“ While the excellence of our friend is a source of consolation, it is also a cause of deeper sorrow and regret. The greater his excellence, the greater our loss. The greater the ‘wisdom and spirit’ of Stephen, the larger his ‘faith’ and the mightier his ‘power,’ the liker he was to an angel of God, the ‘greater the lamentation the devout made over him.’ Our only consolation is, that ‘our God will supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.’ May He fill up every void out of His own fulness! and there are great voids here, in the family, in the Church, and in the community. May He repair the vast desolation of the widow’s heart! May He comfort the fatherless, and provide for, and educate them for Himself! May He pour into the breast of the aged and loving parent the peculiar consolation it requires! May he support and quicken his mourning fellow-labourers! May He feed those over whom His servant watched as a pastor, and may He hear all his prayer, and grant all his request, on behalf of those whom he left his native land, and beloved kindred and people, ‘to seek and to save.’

“ Our dear brother was privileged to see and to share in not a little of the good work of the Lord among the heathen, and his record of some of it will remain part of the history of the Church for future ages. It was well that, with a heart more akin to sorrow than to joy, he was privileged thus to contemplate the power and glory of Christ upon earth. But how enlarged and brightened his visions now! The kingdom of Messiah is all before him—his fears are gone—his tears are wiped away—he ‘expects’ with his Lord, ‘till all his enemies are made his footstool’—he ‘sees of the travail of his soul,’ and with Him is ‘satisfied’—he inherits the angelic joy of rejoicing over repenting sinners; with angels he inherits it, but with a deeper and more penetrating sympathy than they can ever know—he ‘joys in Jehovah’s strength’—he greatly rejoices ‘in His salvation’—he is ‘made most blessed for ever’—‘exceeding glad’ with the Divine ‘countenance.’

“The place Mr Macdonald occupied from 1843 till 1846, in the English congregation of the Free Church, was a most important one, and could scarcely have been held by a better occupant. His memory will be blessed among its members for generations to come. His position, as one of the editors of the *Free Churchman*, was also most appropriate and beneficial. It is remarkable that, in both these positions, he not only worked, but seems to have performed a *finished* work. And we doubt not that, in other departments of his labour, similar designs and ends may be observed. This gives a peculiar emphasis to the words already quoted in reference to him: ‘He hath *finished* his course.’ Blessed servant! whom his Lord, when He came, found waiting, because his hope was active—found ready, because his work was done. . . . .

“We rejoice to see, at the very time of your bereavement, such tokens of the Divine love and goodness as may well cheer your saddened hearts. May those you have baptized prove a lasting comfort to you—an ornament to the Church, and a light to the world!

“Accept of the renewed expression of our deep sympathy with you as a Church and mission, and with the beloved wife of the departed. May she know more than ever the compassion of Jesus, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost!

“We are, dear brethren,

“Yours in Christian affection,

“ROBERT NESBIT.

“J. MURRAY MITCHELL.

“ALEX. GARDEN FRASER.

“WM. HENDERSON.”

—But the most instructive of these addresses yet remain. He is a stranger to the feelings of that missionary man whose career we have been tracing, who cannot read in the following letter, addressed to the mourning widow by Behari Lal, one of the con-

verts, who regarded Mr Macdonald as his spiritual father, a sweet reward for all the toils and the trials of his Indian life :—

“ DEAR MADAM,—The sudden and unexpected death of Mr Macdonald has affected not a few of his Hindu converts, and has stirred them up, I trust, to earnest prayer to God, that He, under whose providence this dispensation has taken place, may be pleased to visit them with the sanctified use of this striking event.

“ The inroads of death are always calculated to arrest our attention.

“ It is not only when the king of terrors enters our house, cutting down those who were our all on this earth, that the realities of a future state are forced upon our attention.

“ When he exhibits his awful power in our city, converting a house of joy into that of mourning, lamentation, and woe, a solemnizing influence can scarcely fail to be produced.

“ This is particularly the case when those who were the honoured instruments in the hands of God of rescuing us from the grasp of Satan, and filling us with the love of Christ, are taken away from the midst of us.

“ I earnestly pray to God to sanctify this sudden and crushing stroke to my soul.

“ It was the delight of my dear spiritual father to impart unto me those gifts and graces which are a savour of life unto life.

“ It was his wish and prayer that I should consecrate myself to my Saviour, by an entire surrender of my all to His service.

“ It was his wish and prayer, that I should live in close and intimate communion with my God, and walk soberly, righteously, and with godliness. It was an act of extreme condescension, on his part, that I should be benefited by his private conversation and prayers.

“ It was my greatest delight and honour to find, that he

would at times pour out his heart to me with the confidence and affection of a father.

“It humbled me once to the very dust, to hear from his lips such words as these—‘Behari, I thank God that I have not baptized many, but that I have been the humble instrument in the hands of God, of admitting you and Koilas into the Church of Christ.’

“Who am I, or what am I, or what is my house and desert, that I should have the privilege of bearing such things from the mouth of this man of God? And now that my dearest father in the Lord has been taken away from the midst of us, it has become my duty to think whether I have laid to heart all those instructions which he instilled into my mind—whether I have rendered myself worthy of those acts of kindness which he showed unto me above all others.

“I am afraid I must own that when ‘he called I refused, when he stretched forth his hands I did not regard, and that I would but few of his instructions.’

“I earnestly pray to my Lord and Saviour to grant me grace, that I may be enabled to devote myself with increased earnestness towards making my calling and election sure.

“I earnestly pray to my God that the effect of this event may not be limited to you and to me, who have greater cause to mourn over his loss, but that it may extend throughout the length and breadth of this land, where many missionaries, not to speak of others, would do well to imitate this pre-eminent servant of the Lord.

“With my best wish for the welfare of the dear little ones,

“I remain, as ever,

“Your affectionate son in the Lord,

“BEHARI LAL.”

If possible, the following is still more gladdening, though the talent which it displays may be less. It

contains a very exact appreciation of Mr Macdonald's teaching, as ever pointing to the cross :—

“ October 15, 1847.

“ DEAR MADAM,—My object in this letter is to acknowledge to you what I have owed to your dearly beloved, and now sainted husband.

“ When I first entered the Institution, about six years ago, I had the privilege to read with the Rev. Mr Macdonald the Scriptures, till his removal. I read with none other of the missionaries the Bible. Almost any thing theological I learnt from him, at least before my conversion, except Evidences, which I read with the Rev. Mr Smith.

“ His lucid explanation, and soul-penetrative exposition, had so great an influence over me, that the long-tied fetters of superstition and prejudice were broken asunder.

“ I was first explained by him the blessed doctrine of justification by faith, which I was not able since to gainsay. It has, by the blessing of God, a firm hold of me. God be thanked for it! He infused into my mind a spirit of inquiry. Once he was explaining in the class the credibility of Gospel history, and was alluding to a work of five volumes—I suppose Lardner's. I then asked him to read to us how we prove that Gospel history is credible. He said, ‘ I will take all that labour if you promise you will be a Christian when convinced. Now, try; your sincerity is at stake.’ I was then more under the influence of the ‘ prince of this world,’ consequently said, ‘ I will so.’

“ If this had no other influence then, it bred in me a spirit of inquiry.

“ In teaching and preaching, he always directed the minds of his pupils and hearers to the cross. He brought the convictions of sin, the necessity of a Saviour, and Christ as that Saviour, before the eyes of every individual's mind. In his teachings he gave proofs of the divine origin of the Scriptures, from Scriptures themselves, with all the clearness, perspicuity, and penetrability.

“ In the whole course of our study we bear this testimony, that he *never* was out of temper, although his pupils gave just occasions for it.

“ I was thunderstruck when the tidings of his last illness reached my ears. The surprise was doubled when Dr Duff's note announced the removal of our much-beloved teacher and father in the Lord.

“ A mournful tidings! No. Why should we call it mournful?—for a change so glorious cannot be mournful—a change from earth to heaven!—from a sinful and miserable world to a sinless and happy one!—and there none die, none weep, and none say ‘ Farewell!’

“ He was not ours, but he was his Lord's, in whose service he had been spent delightfully. The Lord employed his ‘ faithful and good servant’ to spread tidings of all holy things, gladdening our souls as with the morning's wings; and the servant has executed his office faithfully. The talents given to him were doubled, and so a kingdom has been prepared for him as a reward and recompense for his faithfulness by his Master.

“ His Master had no more need of him in this earth, therefore ‘ away the Happy called him,’ and he might not stay; therefore we cannot and ought not to mourn, but entirely resign ourselves on God. Rest on Him! Cast all our cares on Him, for he careth for us! Cast our burden on Him, and He is faithful to sustain us!

“ May we speak in, and feel also, the language of one of God's sore-afflicted but patient servants—‘ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!’ May I, then, follow his steps, as he followed his Lord's! May we learn whatever is intended by Providence from his sudden removal from us! May no earthly fetters tie us to the world! May we watch and pray, and live continually in communion with God! Pray for me! Accept the accompanying book, as a mark of Christian love to you. That you and yours may be guided in this world of wilderness—that God may bless you and fill you with the

consolations of the Spirit—that your children may be brought up in the fear of the Lord, and from the days of their youth know their Creator, and may have a double portion of the Spirit which was measured to their beloved father, is the earnest prayer of

“Your most affectionate son,

“GURU DAS MAITRA.

“*N.B.*—After I have written the letter, a young man has come to take shelter with us, since he has left his heathen and idolatrous relatives and friends. He is a Brahman, and he was a student of Hindu College, but he has, for some time ago, attended Dr Duff's Bible class every Sabbath morning. He has also attended, every Sabbath evening, lectures at the Institution. God be praised for such manifestations of his grace and mercy to his rebellious and sinful subjects! Let our prayers be that He would awaken many more, and cause them to look unto Jesus their Saviour.

“This, I believe, is another answer to the last prayer of our beloved friend at the Institution. Pray for him, that he may be steady in his faith, and may resist the influence and assaults of the devil, in the strength of God, and by the blessing of His Spirit. His friends are behaving very gently. They are trying all kinds of persuasions. May he be able to withstand these!\*

“Your affectionate son,

“GURU DAS MAITRA.”

Nor can we withhold yet another proof of the clinging affection of these Christian Hindus to their spiritual father. One loves to linger over such tokens.

“DEAR MADAM,—The difficulties and straits which Christians undergo are not in the least without the know-

\* This youth has since been baptized.



ledge of Him who is the Creator of the universe, the Redeemer of mankind, and the Sanctifier of the elect. Oh! if God has visited us, what ought we else do than be resigned to His will, and humbly lay ourselves prostrate before the footstool of the throne of His grace, and say, 'Reconcile us sinners unto thee, O our God! for Jesus our Redeemer's atoning blood;' then turn to our souls, and say, 'Bless the Lord, O our souls! and all that is within us bless his holy name?' Oh! it is heart-rending to consider that one who is so needed by the infant Church of God in India—that one who was the instrument of bringing many sons and daughters, even me, the biggest of biggest sinners, unto Christ Jesus, our High Priest and King—that one who, by his good stewardship, brought me safe into the harbour, so that I now anchor in Christ, from perishing for hunger and thirst of spiritual knowledge in the ocean of this world, the ups and downs of whose waves would have dashed me to pieces, and sent me to the bottomless abyss of destruction in the twinkling of an eye—that one who was loved much, even by many of the enemies of his Master, should be taken from us by a single stroke!

"But, blessed be our God, who has given us this consolation, that 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' My deceased father is in heaven, before the Almighty's throne, singing 'Hallelujahs' to Him. O the degeneracy of the human heart! 'It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' in that I, a living monument of the labours and self-denials of my deceased father, was not in the least thankful to him. Oh! it is too late now. And to these are added my deep, heartfelt sorrow of not having any private conversation with him—of not appreciating the value of him—nor ever will I be able to do. But there will come a day when we shall 'meet to part no more.' Dear madam, O do not forget in your prayers to recommend me to God, whether you be at home or abroad! To God be glory, honour, dominion, and majesty for ever,

world without end. Amen, amen.—I am, your ever affectionate

“UMACHARAU GHOSHA.”

The tokens of respect to her husband's memory did not terminate while Mrs Macdonald remained at Calcutta. Not only did the munificence of not a few flow forth to the widow and the fatherless in a way that verified the Divine assurance, “The memory of the just is blessed,” but line upon line was, moreover, given to evince the power of what Guru Das Maitra called the “heart-penetrative” influence of Mr Macdonald. To those who loved him, it was well-nigh like a second death to leave the land which contained his ashes; but the Lord graciously alleviated that pain also; for, on the eve of the family's departure from India, the following letter was sent to the mourner :—

“CALCUTTA, *February* 14, 1848.

“RESPECTED FRIEND,—In troubling you on the eve of your departure, we need to apologise for the trespass on your time and attention. The subject, however, on which we address you appeals with strong interest to our feelings, and dictates to us to venture on the solicitation of a favour we sincerely hope will meet with your kind acquiescence.

“The past history of the progress of the Church to which we belong is so inseparably connected with the memory of our respected and dearly-loved minister and friend, the late Mr Macdonald, and that memory so revered by us, that we feel we cannot refrain from soliciting of you the favour of being permitted to constitute ourselves guardians of the tomb which now contains all that is left to us of him, even the dust which was committed to the earth when the Spirit went to God who gave it.

“ We engage to keep the monument in proper repair, and to pay all necessary attention.

“ With Christian wishes for your welfare, both spiritual and temporal,

“ We remain yours sincerely,

“ G. LAMB.

“ HENRY BURROWS.

“ DAVID ANDERSON.

“ S. F. SEYMOUR, for self and

“ C. BLAKE.

“ NICOL MACNICOL.”

—And, with this recorded, our work is nearly done. We do not tarry now to narrate the effects produced on some of the Lord's people in London when the tidings of Mr Macdonald's departure arrived. It was intimated from the pulpit of the Scots Church in Regent Square, and many wept at the sad announcement. But he is equally beyond our eulogy and our tears; and the delineation which his Journals afford of his heart, and soul, and mind, is so ample, that formally to analyze his character were superfluous now. From the date of his conversion, in every sphere in which he moved, there were three cardinal graces which constituted at once the basis of his character and the ornament of his beautiful life. These were, Faith, Love, and Humility. His faith was of the most direct and simple kind; and, even in the most unlettered believer—in those who

“ Just know, and know no more, their Bible true ”—

we never beheld more implicit or more confiding repose in the written Word as the warrant, and the incarnate Word as the object, of faith. Animated by that principle, he was ready to live or to

die, to enjoy or to endure, provided he were sure that he had the mind of God to guide him. If he laboured much, and sacrificed not a little—if he was much in prayer, and instant at all times in the service of his Lord—it was because he so simply believed; for that threw a vigour into his efforts which often made him more than a conqueror. In consequence of this simple faith, there was a buoyancy, a healthful joyousness in his soul, which carried him through every difficulty in peace, and made him, as a friend in trial, “one of a thousand.” To him the scriptures were all instinct with spiritual energy—the words which Jesus spoke were literally “Spirit and life.” His religion was therefore a vivid reality, not a dim and shadowy phantom, and in its *reality* lay the secret of his walk of faith.

And out of that faith sprang, as we have seen, love to the Saviour first, and then to the saved and the lost in their order. It was not a mere natural emotion, which is passing as a summer cloud—it was “the fruit of the Spirit,” which is vigorous, enduring, elastic, and could therefore repay hatred with affection, and contumely with prayer. Beginning in the bosom of Jehovah, and flowing down along the cross of Christ as a conductor for its power, it subordinated all to itself, and formed at last the element or atmosphere in which Mr Macdonald lived and rejoiced. In many portions of his Journal we have seen that grace presiding in his life, insomuch that he was prepared to endure all things for his Lord, and in bringing others to him. He had heard the question, “Lovest thou me?” He ventured the appeal oftener than once, “Thou knowest that I love

thee;" and then he joyously obeyed the command, "Feed my sheep"—"Feed my lambs."

Withal, however, meekness or humility eminently signalized him. It was his earnest endeavour and frequent prayer to cultivate that grace, as the favourite of Him who was meek and lowly; and none could even casually meet him without discovering that, in this respect, he had sat much at the feet of Jesus. "My constant prayer needs to be—humility, humility—Lord, give me humility," were his words soon after he had passed from death to life, and the sentiment pervades the entire history of his soul. The care with which he ascribed every thing he did to free and sovereign grace, was an indication and a proof of this. He gazed so intently upon the Saviour in faith, or lived so near Him in love, that he was slowly transformed into His image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. The scriptural maxim was a favourite one with him, "Christ must increase, I must decrease;" and he was ever ready to be reputed the least, if the Redeemer was exalted as the Highest, even as God over all. He deemed "contrite tenderness the sweetest state of mind;" and that contrition clothed him with humility. His acquiescence in the Divine will—his uncomplaining patience—his actual satisfaction with trials, when he felt that his Lord had sent them—are all modifications of the same attractive grace. Is he imprisoned by sickness, and obliged to spend a silent Sabbath?—he feels it; but he looks on the bright side of the dispensation, and says, "Such are the claims of Calcutta, that I can scarcely find room for retirement save by the intervention of a little sickness;" and

then he thanks God for the rest thus afforded! Is he confined to his couch by a vexatious disease?—then he passively says, “When I cannot do pulpit service, the earnest desire of my soul is to do *couch* service;” and he sought grace to do it—he waited on the Lord, and renewed his strength. In his case “the work of righteousness was peace, and the effect of it quietness and assurance for ever;” and the serenity, the joyousness, which that diffused through his own soul, sun-like, imparted its influence to all within his reach. Indeed, it was one of his distinguishing characteristics that his religion was always joyous, genial, and gladdening. The legal was so fully supplanted by the evangelical, that no gloom hung upon his mind. He dwelt by Mount Zion, and not by Sinai, so that the “perfect peace” of the gospel often lighted up his heart and his home with some rays of the radiance of heaven.

Nor should we fail to notice what might be called his passion for preaching. He once likened himself to an impatient war-horse pawing the ground for the battle, when he would exhibit his eagerness in regard to the duties of the pulpit. In his case that was an hereditary passion; and no one that takes the Scriptures for his guide can doubt that in this he was like-minded with his Lord, for it is “by the foolishness of preaching that the wisdom of the world is at last to be brought to nought.” Under that impression, Mr Macdonald was unwearied in the work of beckoning sinners to his Lord—he has addressed the Sanctifier as the “Spirit of preaching;” and explained himself by adding, “Who art the Spirit of Christ.” And in his style of address we are

to notice how direct, explicit, and personal he was. We cannot pronounce whether he was better qualified to edify the godly or to arrest the careless. Though he studiously avoided, or did not possess, what is usually deemed eloquence, he had something better, which he wielded with equal precision and power—we mean the sword of the Spirit; and some now in glory, and others still alive, know with what success he did so. His convictions on this subject were precisely those of Brainerd: “When ministers feel a special gracious influence on their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come to the consciences of men, and, as it were, to handle them; whereas, without it, whatever reason and oratory we make use of, we do but use stumps instead of hands.” He might be reckoned strict, severe, uncompromising; and he was so to sin, but not to the sinner. If men were not prepared, at the bidding or on the invitation of Christ, to abandon the world for Him, they could expect neither leniency nor hope of escape from this ambassador of the Cross. The duty of instant submission to Christ, and its correlative, the instant forsaking of sin, were two of his favourite topics; and these are always offensive to the worldly mind, which seeks scope and verge for cherishing its delusions. Would the gospel and its advocates, in spite of the Saviour’s teaching, leave a border territory between life and death, a neutral space between Christ and Belial, the world would acquiesce in such a system, but the Saviour’s demand for a surrender as instant as entire, the world cannot comprehend. But would the captive be set free? would the diseased be healed? would the dying live?—then the De-

liverer, the Physician, the Life of souls, was preached as freely and as winningly as the words of love could do. He sympathized too deeply in the woes of sin-laden men, whether they were unconverted Britons or idolatrous Hindus, not to yearn over them, and, "even weeping," to "beseech them to be reconciled unto God." Trained first in the school of his father, whom he regarded, perhaps, as, upon the whole, the chief of living preachers, and then moulded or largely influenced by the profound and spiritual views of John Owen, John Howe, and Jonathan Edwards, who were his favourite authors, his theology was massive and substantial, while in opening up its treasures he was fearless and undaunted, but never harsh. In brief, if unswerving deference to the Word of God, and ever-growing love to His Son, be elements of true grandeur in the Christian character, John Macdonald stands high among the foremost. He was not permitted, like David Brainerd, on his death-bed to exclaim, "My heart goes out to the burying-place—it seems to me a desirable place; but, oh! to glorify God, *that* is it—that is above all:" but his converted life was one continued proclamation of the same ennobling truth. We may not, perhaps, rank him among the

"Starry lights of genius, that diffuse  
Through the dark depths of time their vivid flame;"

but he belongs to a far higher order of minds, those, namely, who have been raised by the power that descends from heaven to an affinity with the sinless there.

It is as a Missionary, we believe, that he would wish to be remembered, if such a desire were che-



rished by him at all; and his whole life and history confirms the remark. Scarcely had he felt the sword of the Spirit in his conscience and heart, when he began to long to tell the heathen what the Saviour can do for the soul. Like a rising, irrepressible tide, that desire continued to flow in upon his spirit. Neither could engrossments overlay it, nor home affections weaken it, nor success in winning souls elsewhere turn it aside. It acquired at last the ascendancy of a passion, and urged him to that entire surrender to the work of a missionary, of which we have seen such abundant proof. It was true that trials might await him; but he knew that the Redeemer triumphed in dying, and felt assured that a missionary like his Lord would triumph most signally when he suffered most severely. He consequently gave himself wholly to the work, and cooperated in harmony with his like-minded brethren of the mission, in showing to disconsolate men how "God could supply all their need out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." In writing to his former flock in London, in January 1843, he says of the missionary band, or rather of the Church on earth, "Our grand contest is not with Paganism, but with Satanism—not with Hinduism, but with sin—our grand enemy is man's enmity against God;" and while he buckled on his armour, he rejoiced that he was privileged to take hold of weapons that were divine. Surely it was an appropriate termination to such a career, when she who now mourns over her loss, caused to be inscribed upon his tomb—

"CHRIST SENT ME . . . . . TO PREACH THE GOSPEL."

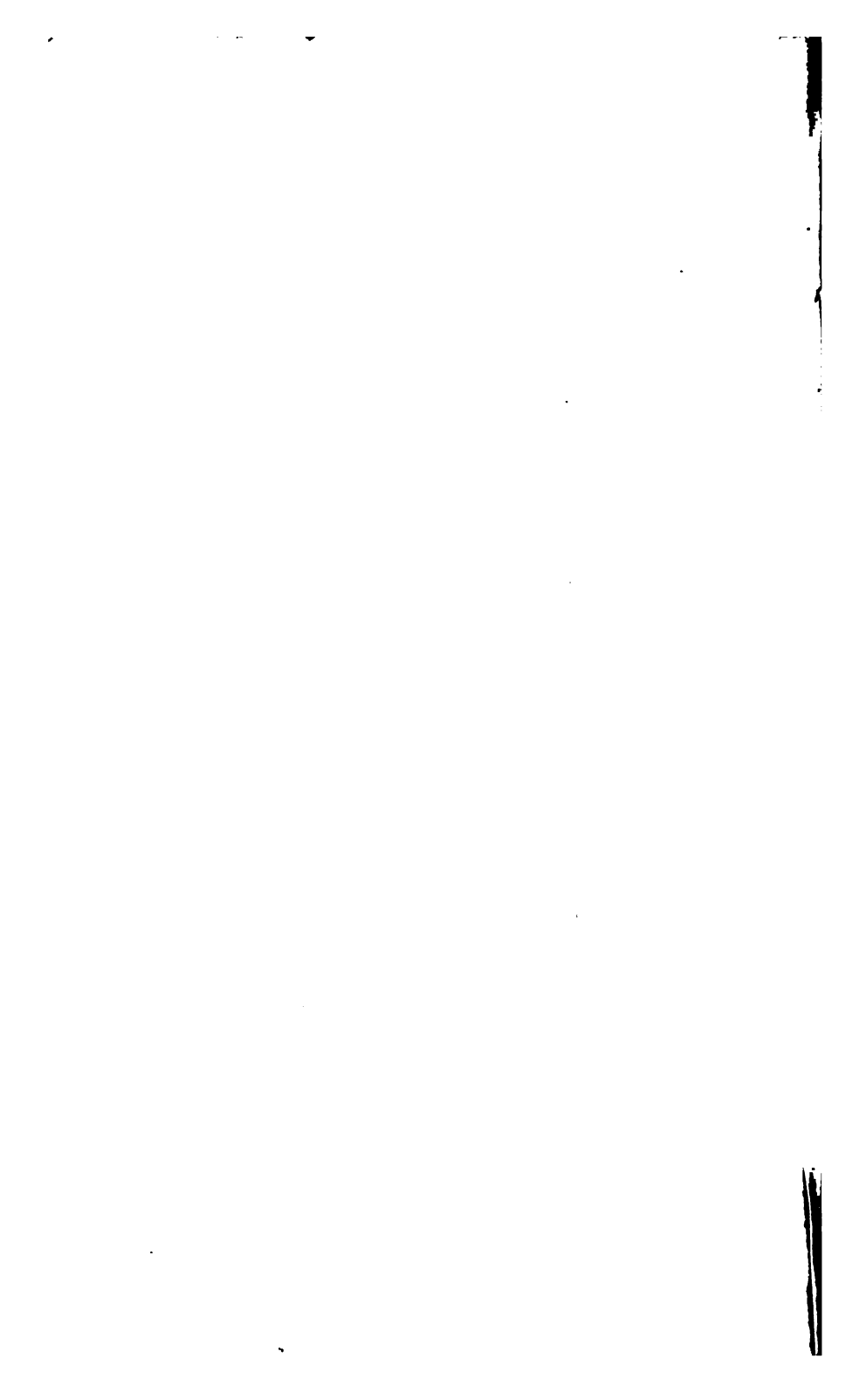
Was Mr Macdonald, then, a faultless man? Let every page of his LIFE evince the contrary. In the sight of God, he was ready to lay the hand upon the mouth, and the mouth in the dust. Some of his fellow-men deemed him too unyielding in defending ground which he had once taken up; but in such cases, he himself, at least, was convinced that the position was tenable when the Word of God was the criterion. It is supposed that he was not sufficiently compliant to worldly men in the hope of winning them to Christ; and it has been argued, that, had he been more ready to become all things to all men, he might by such means have won more than he did. But he who would compromise God's truth, or deal with worldly men as if they were not worldly, in the hope of attracting them to the Saviour, will speedily find that he is only entangled in their snare instead of leading them to the Lamb of God—he has sunk to their level instead of elevating them to his.

We need not dwell, however, on his imperfections now. He is for ever "complete in Christ." He has been "presented unto God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." He is "holy and without blemish." He has "washed his robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." He "follows Him whithersoever he leadeth." In the touching words of one of his spiritual children, he is "where none die, none weep, none say 'Farewell.'" And the review of his life, and the meditation of his closing hours, cannot but suggest the prayer to be uttered in a better spirit than Balaam's—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It is often our lot, in the journey of life, to visit scenes which we approach with high-wrought joy, and leave with as deep regret. As the traveller gazes his last on the domes and the ruins of Rome, he sometimes feels like one that bids farewell for ever to a friend—so much do the sorrowful thoughts connected with what Rome was, and the sadder that flow from what it is, depress and pain the mind. Or, deeper and more saddening still, the pilgrim to Jerusalem, who has felt his faith grow stronger, and his love more constraining, amid the scenes which God our Saviour sanctified by His presence, has sometimes looked through tears at the widowed and woe-worn city, when he was to gaze on it no more. Similar feelings now possess the mind, as we turn from contemplating the character of that man of God whose pilgrimage we have traced from his cradle to his grave. But though it may be through tears that we look at his departure, or watch his ebbing life, these tears are to our faith what the rain-drops are to the sun in forming the rainbow. Brightness and beauty emerge from the whole—a brightness which shall never be eclipsed, a beauty that shall never fade away. The believer's sorrow becomes thus the handmaiden of his joy; and the sure and certain hope of being together "for ever with the Lord," may be at once an antidote to our tears and a foretaste of our blessedness.



APPENDIX.



# APPENDIX.

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## No. I.

*(Referred to at page 111.)*

THE following document will illustrate with great minuteness the process by which Mr Macdonald passed from darkness to light, and is printed here at once to exhibit the accuracy with which he watched the progress of his own mind in spiritual things, and as a guide or an encouragement to those who may be exercised as he was. It is dated 10th July 1828; but on the 17th of January 1829, he prefixed the following note, as if he had meant the Record for publicity :—

“The following pages were an attempt at a narrative; but in the midst I was compelled, by the state of my mind, to change them into an expression of immediate and bitter feeling. But it is a faithful delineation of the breaking in upon my soul of that peace and comfort which, I trust, will only alter into a brighter day. In it I can trace my bitterest pang, and my first and sweetest ray of hope.

“Thanks be unto Thee for thine unspeakable gift!”

“*July 10, 1828.*—A variety of circumstances have led the way to my forming the wish and intention which I have now formed, if spared, of becoming a communicant next Lord’s day. It is needless for me to recapitulate at length the scruples which have hitherto deterred me from this most urgent duty, I have so often mentioned them in my Diary; but they chiefly arose from the belief early imbibed by me, and from the abuses I have often witnessed, and also from an overstrained interpretation of Scrip-

ture. In the mercy of God, I had the benefit of being brought up under the ministry of one of His chosen, most zealous, and most judicious servants. He dealt faithfully with souls, and gave no one false encouragements; and with regard to this ordinance he drew a searching distinction between the worthy and unworthy receivers. I heard this confirmed so often by others of God's faithful servants in Ross-shire, that I was led to entertain high ideas of the qualifications necessary for a worthy participation; but as I was little more than a boy when I left home, I had not exercised my judgment properly, and had not made a proper discrimination or estimate of what was said. My notions were perhaps too strict and severe; for I believed that no one had a right to participate but one who was conscious of loving Christ with all his heart, and of being saved by Him, and was in all respects an experienced Christian, and was in full possession of the perfect hope of the gospel. The abuses, also, which I often witnessed, particularly since I came to this country, shocked me so much that I still more dreaded an unworthy communicating, for I saw that it proved no restraint, and I dreaded lest it should only harden me the more.

"That passage, also, which has proved an obstacle to many, 'eating and drinking *damnation*,' proved so to me. This, I see now, arose from an injudicious taking of the word in its common acceptance, and not according to the immediate meaning of the apostle; and, indeed, in the whole of that passage (1 Cor. xi.) I did not keep this properly in view.

"Last year a friend wrote me asking my advice about communicating. In reply, however, I said, that I would neither persuade nor deter him, as either of these might incur a serious responsibility; but I gave him an account of my own feelings and conduct in the matter, and left him to judge for himself. I was afterwards glad I did so. Since that time, however, I thought a little more seriously of the subject, and resolved to make up my mind before the sacramental season should return; and also to consult my father, or any pious friend in whom I could confide.

"I may here state the things which made me anxious in this matter, and make me, I am afraid, come to it not in a proper spirit. I have felt myself at different times urged by such *external* motives as these: My circumstances, as a distinguished clergyman's son—as having many eyes upon me—as making a profession of religion stricter than most of those around me *here*



—as studying for the Church, and now approaching near to the goal—as knowing that, from the custom of the country, friends for whom I have a respect seem surprised at my conduct—the secret uneasiness I feel at not doing it, and the glaring inconsistency which my own conduct declares it to be. I cannot in sincerity take to myself higher motives in my former anxiety in this matter, and I am afraid that even now, when I consider well, they do not amount to more. I held out in spite of these; and I must, to my shame, confess that I even have found my heart priding itself in a sort of superior sanctity to some others in abstaining from the profanation of this solemn ordinance. O from what will not my heart draw matter of self-exaltation! even from its greatest depths of pollution: and, instead of being humbled because it has been habitually guilty of a sin, it gathers applause to itself because it now may, or does, refrain from it.

“When I met with Mr Gentle, some months ago, I was very much struck with his piety, and entered into close conversation with him. Among other topics, I introduced this of unworthy communicating, but not with any mention of myself, or with reference to my own conduct. However, I obtained his sentiments, and what in some others I had viewed with a jealous eye, I received from him with candour and confidence, because I believed the Lord to be with him. He explained to my satisfaction that passage which I have already mentioned as having been one *great* obstacle to me. And since then I have in various ways received or met with what fully sets my mind at rest with regard to it. In the beginning of June last, I met my father and mother on their return from Edinburgh, and accompanied them as far as Nairn, where my father was to assist at the sacrament. I remained over Sabbath, and had a few minutes’ conversation with both of them regarding this duty. They both approved of my conduct in formerly not rashly advancing to this solemn ordinance; but seemed to think that I might now safely do so. I felt much humbled at their good and unmerited opinion of me, but was conscious in my own mind that they did not know the state of my heart, or they could not have expressed themselves so favourably. Still, however, what they said gave me some comfort, and I could have wished to have had a longer conversation with my father. I, however, said, ‘that there was nowhere I could have wished to communicate for the first time so much as in his

church; but as that, however, could not conveniently be done, did he think that there was any harm in my selecting for this purpose the clergyman in whom I could have most confidence? I knew that the instrument was nothing in itself, but I could wish to receive the sacrament, for the *first time* at least, from the hands of one whom I believed to be a sincere minister of Jesus Christ. He approved of this, and we both agreed that if I could make up my mind to come forward at Alves, my friend, Mr Gentle, was one in whom I could place the fullest confidence. We were here interrupted, and this was all that passed.

“A week after this I went to Alves, and on the Sabbath evening told Mr Gentle all the circumstances of the case—my scruples, and my wishes, and all. We then read over the passage in Corinthians regarding the institution, and he explained it to me in a modest, feeling manner. I said that I believed there was no danger of my profaning the ordinance in the same manner as the Corinthians did, but still that I was not satisfied that I could communicate worthily, for that I had not those feelings which I believed to be necessary. And I then endeavoured to explain myself in a very confused manner, confessing my total insensibility to all divine things, and so on, as I have done in my Diary; and that, in consequence, I was unfit to partake of such an ordinance. I was sorry to see Mr Gentle take up all I said as if they had been the workings of a mind in a state of temporary despondency, and treating me as if I had been such as he himself, a sincere Christian. He said that, in his opinion, humility was the true spirit in which this ordinance ought to be approached—that there was a table furnished, and the question asked, ‘Lovest thou me?’ And every humble soul who felt his sins as a heavy burden upon him, and who was conscious of having, or desiring to have, a love for Jesus, however small in degree, was invited to come and partake, that this love might be increased, and that his soul might be more elevated—that such feelings as I described myself as having were designed to bring me to this test, ‘Lovest thou me?’—that they were intended to lead me to fix my eyes on the great object of faith, and to contemplate Him. He then opened to me much of his own experience, and I felt for a time as if heaven were opened before me. He seemed to feel much diffidence in treating my case; but I shall not soon forget that night. He gave me along with me *Henry’s Communicant’s Compassion*, as containing the most just and encouraging view

of the subject of any he had met with, and one that would not break the bruised reed.

“But though I have now come to a resolution of communicating very soon, it is not because my mind is changed with regard to the *kind* of qualifications necessary; but only I seem to have obtained a more just view of the *degree* of them necessary; and I feel my desire of communicating now laid on an entirely different foundation, or at least different, though in a very feeble degree.

“I shall here state what has led to this, I sincerely trust, under the blessing and superintendence of God.

“For some months past I have felt my mind somewhat more inclined *at times* to inquire after the truth, and to relish it more; and I particularly felt my mind affected when I met with truly pious persons, such as my father and Mr Gentle: I may specify these particularly. The holy, glowing zeal of the one, and the sweet heavenly-mindedness of the other, forcibly pressed on my heart, and convinced me for a moment that there was an intense reality in these matters which I knew nothing of, and I never met them but my heart burned within me. I also felt *humbled* when I met with them. I dreaded the idea of deceiving them by adducing my merely speculative and superficial knowledge of spiritual matters; and I saw how the simplicity of the cross led them to an intensity of the excellency of knowledge, which no natural genius could comprehend. But these were mere momentary glows of feeling. They, to be sure, may have led me to my knees, but O how vainly! I sometimes also prayed with more earnestness. I prayed, also, oftener, and seldom did any thing more than ordinary without seeking the blessing of God, and several other things, which it is needless to put together. I have kept my Diary for about three years, and the greater part of it is occupied with religious reflections, &c. I never performed any duty, nor did scarce any thing occur to me which I have not there set down, and regarding which I did not examine myself somewhat closely. But here lay the mischief—I was perpetually examining and cutting my own heart, and endeavouring (so far as I knew my own mind), when I had in this manner obtained a conviction of the sin which I knew I had, then to *compel* myself to come to Christ.

“But how vain have I found it to endeavour to attain a knowledge of sin without coming to the cross of Christ! I have en-

deavoured to attain a knowledge of it without this; but I have uniformly felt it a knowledge that puffed me up, and which I could not feel. My Diary seems a perfect picture of the workings of a self-righteous spirit, acknowledging itself sinful, but still endeavouring to acquire such an acquaintance with its sinfulness by its own exertions, as might compel it to flee to Jesus—an alternative to which it would never be brought whilst it had the means of resistance in its own hands. I was always recriminating myself, but never making any active exertion to attain to a knowledge of what belongs to my everlasting peace. I was worshipping myself in all these matters; and whilst in my prayers I recognised that *all* must proceed from God alone, still I was under no habitual or sincere sense of this upon my mind. When instructing others on these subjects, I was feeding my pride; and when conversing on religious subjects with those who I thought could detect or admire originality and genius, I found myself almost invariably taking those views of the gospel by which I could best show off, and which I endeavoured, by wisdom of words, to remove far from that simplicity out of which babes and sucklings are ordained to bring praise. But I did not escape qualms of conscience; and often have I been brought to my knees by the dread lest I should be misleading others, and giving them such views of the gospel as might tend to harden them, as they did myself. But why should I thus be dwelling on what I *once* was, as if I were *now* changed? O how ready am I ever to deceive myself! May not my case be now worse than ever, if I speak 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace?' I am stopped short, perplexed every moment by the thought. But let me proceed to say what has tended to produce even a little change. On that evening which I spent with Mr Gentle, before we entered into earnest discourse, he gave me one or two religious tracts, not seemingly for my own perusal, but, as it were, for the use of others. They were three in number, and all excellent. But I cannot now but think that he was directed by the hand of God to give them, for one of them was just the very thing I needed; and, whatever my present state of mind may end in, to the perusal of this tract I must trace much indeed that might have ended well but for the sinfulness of my own heart; and I think I must at least see the kind mercy of God in sending me such a messenger in the midst of my indifference about Him. The Tract is called *Brief Thoughts*, and has only twenty-four

pages. 'Part I. Concerning the Gospel, and the hindrances to believe it. II. Concerning the way in which a Christian obtains true satisfaction respecting his state towards God.' I read it next day oftener than once; and altogether it arrested much of my attention, but particularly one short paragraph, in which the writer meets this objection to the free reception of the gospel—'Faith is necessary to salvation. Now I cannot find faith in me. I cannot exert the act of trusting aright; I am not able, I have not strength to believe.' If I had myself expressed my feelings, it could not be more exactly than this—this had been long my stumbling-block—and can I indeed say that it is yet removed? O let me not deceive myself in this matter! For the first day or two I felt like one bewildered—a new train of ideas was struck out to me. I was told that I had been all along looking into my mind for faith, intending, if I first found it, to come with it to Jesus—thus making faith a condition, and therefore an obstacle to the acceptance of the free offers of the gospel. I saw this indeed to be true; but my conviction that I had been doing wrong only now left my mind a perfect blank, for I could see nothing in the gospel to which to direct my attention, or on which to build a hope. The self-righteous labour which I had been prosecuting was rent from me, and I saw not now what to do but sit still; but that I could not do, and I saw also that it was dangerous.

"I began to struggle hard with my mind forthwith—to turn it to think seriously—to contemplate Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel. I found a confirmed repugnance to every such thing in my heart. I could bend it to nothing. I got up earlier in the mornings, sat up later at night, walked much by myself, read more of my Bible, prayed more, meditated more, conversed more on religion, &c. &c., but with no success that I could be sensible of. But why? I was all this time also considering what my own mind was about, instead of endeavouring steadily to contemplate the object, Christ Jesus. I felt brought down to the necessity of acknowledging—and I trust it proceeded from feeling—that I could do nothing—that the gospel was so simple that my utmost exertion could do nothing. I prayed to God to do every thing for me; and in my prayers and in reading the Scriptures I endeavoured as much as possible (and I prayed God to do it more) to keep before my eye Christ as 'the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.' I now began at times, as I thought,

to get a glimpse of divine things; but it seemed, and still seems, in the least possible degree—a little light now and then breaking in upon me that I never saw before. I feel that I have no genuine or deep contrition for sin—that my views of salvation are weak, exceeding weak—that my love for God seems in the least possible degree—that my sense of His presence is at times scarcely perceptible, and I dread lest the whole of what I have said and felt be a thorough deception. But I see sin in many things where I saw none before—not sin in the things themselves, but in allowing them to come in any degree between my soul and the solemn inquiry now before it. I have renounced my literary pursuits, my amusements, even theological reading, not as a sacrifice, for it gave me no pain to do it. I felt a thorough disrelish for them, and I found them fostering the pride of my intellect or my heart. I disrelish all worldly company or conversation; and when I must endure it, endeavour to have my thoughts engaged on something better. I see causes of thankfulness to God in matters that formerly never struck me; and altogether, at times I feel as if I were in an altogether different world from what I formerly saw. But it is dangerous for me to persist in this. Let me not think that I stand, lest I fall—or, have I indeed risen? I feel my mind constantly prone to carry the same principle to different extremes; and that principle can be nothing but a self-righteous one, and deserves the rewards it meets with.

“*Thursday, July.*—This is the fast-day in the parish where I mean to attend on Sabbath, and I would desire to keep it as a day of humiliation before God; but oh! I cannot. Last night and this morning have been miserable times with me. My mind is a perfect blank. I was engaged for some hours last night in writing what is immediately before this; but no sooner was I done, than it seemed altogether a self-righteous attempt, a feeding of the same sinful pride which ever besets me. I saw that it was an abuse of the time which I might better have spent in directing my mind immediately to the great truths of the gospel; and I therefore leave it unfinished. I spent also the rest of the evening in a vain unprofitable manner—so that the result of the whole left my mind in a most cold and hostile state. I felt my mind as completely benumbed as ever it formerly was. I could not think one serious thought. I prayed for a considerable time, but I wrestled in vain. And yet, though miserable, it

was not on account of sin. I did not see the evil or guilt of my conduct. This morning I felt, and still am, in the same way. I cannot think one sincere thought of the evil of sin. I cannot humble myself before God.

“*Evening.*—I know not what to say or think; I am indeed miserable; I feel my mind as it were a helpless object, which I cannot drag along. I have prayed and read—I have read and prayed—I have done all that I could think of—I have endeavoured to believe—I have declared to God that I put all my confidence in Him; and for the moment I thought I did so, but it cannot be that I did so, for I feel no consciousness of having done it in sincerity. At one time I think I believe—at another, I am plunged in despondency. O that thou wouldst deliver me from this, Almighty God! If there be a particle of sincerity in my heart, thou art privy to it, and from thee it must have come. Thou knowest whether I have any degree of faith, even as a grain of mustard-seed—if there be such in my prayers, O fill up the measure, and help my unbelief! I have received already from thee benefits—a greater knowledge of sin, but oh! how infinitely short of what I see that I must need; a less degree of liking to it, but, alas! not a hatred, a detestation for it. But give thou as may seem good unto thee; for truly I deserved not even to be thus partially aroused from my total indifference. How insulting do I see that it must be to thy majesty, to be thus approaching the free, unconditional offers of thy gospel with unbelief—those offers which are founded on the gift of thine own Son, unto the death—which thou hast given me a Bible to inform me of, and hast given me so many opportunities of knowing and accepting of. But I feel that thou must do the whole for me; I know I cannot ask too much of thee in the name of Christ—‘Whatsoever I ask in His name, *believing*, I shall receive it.’ I cannot ask more than thou art able and willing to give. But thou must even make me to believe. Faith is thy gift—I ask it of thee in the name of Him who is the author and finisher of it. I know thou canst not refuse it if I ask it aright. Teach me to ask it. Again and again I plead my conviction, that I cannot advance one step without thee. I come helpless to the foot of the cross. I appeal to thee, who knowest my heart, if I have not some desire to see Him who is upon that cross as the object of my faith—if I have not some faint wish to love Him—to see sin, and to hate it—to renounce the world. If thou seest

these, take to thyself the glory that they are there; but O fulfil thy promises to such as have these, however faint and feeble!

“*Friday*.—O I am miserable and unhappy, and none but God knows it. The world around me seems as cheerful and happy as ever; but so is not my soul. O for a holy, pious friend to commune with. If I write here, I feel as if ever deceiving myself; but I see it not until the extreme progress of it strike me. I spend some time in prayer, but O how painfully! It is but one continued scene of struggling with unbelief. Never shall I forget the state of my feelings last night. I dread such a time again, and yet it was succeeded by a moment of sweeter peace than I have yet experienced. But how delusive! I even found relief in tears then—that will not do for to-day. Vainly do I endeavour to make my lips say that I put confidence in the promises of God, and that though now I see it not, yet that I believe he will fulfil them. My heart does not go along with this confession. I am tossed between hope and despair—now building upon the change in my feelings, views, &c., and tracing them to divine operations and a saving change—then in a moment, remembering that I neither love God nor hate sin, I am plunged into absolute despair. O wretched unbelief! Why can I not rely on the promises of God? What business have I with what I feel or think?—it is with the gospel offered to me that I have to do. Sin besets me in a thousand forms, and deceives me—but yet I feel no sorrow for it as in God’s sight. God does not make this a condition of receiving the gospel, that I feel sorrow for sin—‘Whosoever *thirsteth*, let *him* come.’ Lord, thou knowest that I *thirst*, though I scarce know for what—at least for happiness. I come to thee, though again I scarce know for what. O give me to drink, as thou hast promised! Now might I have joy and peace, if I could trust in thy faithfulness—but then every moment runs into this, I know He is faithful, but do I come unto Him aright? But does He say this? All He says is, ‘Come.’ O what is the matter with my mind, that I cannot lay hold of this? He accuses Laodicea of being cold and indifferent, and threatens to spew her out of his mouth; and then, ‘*Because* thou sayest I am rich,’ &c., ‘and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; *I counsel thee to buy of me,*’ &c.—it is because she is so, that He counsels her immediately to come and buy of Him. And how? ‘Without money and without price!’ O that I could come to



thee, Lord Jesus, with all my coldness, and sinfulness, and pride, and self-deceit, and every stay and bulwark of unbelief, and say, 'These are thine enemies, slay thou them!'—'Thy Word is as the fire, and as the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.' O apply it to my heart! But may it not be that thou art dealing, or to deal with me, in *thine own way*? Oh! I will not dictate to thee. I will receive with all the thankfulness which I can muster, or which thou mayest give me, any crumbs of thy love which thou mayest let fall—and O let thy love and consolations be manifested in that breaking of bread in which I hope soon to participate. I am unworthy, and I have no love to thee, but I think that I do desire to love thee—and I do also desire, if I know my own heart, to have then a consciousness of being clothed with thy righteousness, and sometimes I feel a little more; but oh! it is only the flash of a moment—and it has no warmth. I sometimes feel as if God should be present at the feast, and, inspecting His guests, should say to me, 'Friend, how camest thou hither, not having a wedding garment?' What shall I answer if thou be not there to cover me from the indignation of the Master? But what am I doing?—again am I deceiving myself! 'Watch!' O why can I not leave the work in thy hands with confidence?—why not rather be looking to thy faithfulness for the fulfilment, than to my own feelings? The former cannot deceive—the latter may give me joy when I ought to sorrow, and sorrow when I ought to joy. O that thou wouldst give me in sincerity to say, 'My waiting eyes are towards thee—my hope is in thee!'

"*Monday Morning.*—'Tis now over. I have participated, and yet I can scarce believe it. It is the most important moment of my past life, and yet I can scarce form any other idea of it than as a dream—some impressive event unconnected with the rest of my life. But oh! how hard and insensible is this heart of mine! Nothing affects it. How daring and presumptuous has my conduct been! Have I not insulted God in a most daring manner? Have I not made a most presumptuous approach to His most Holy Table, with all my senses about me, and my eyes perfectly open to the true nature of the service? Is it the deceitful depravity of my heart that would palliate my conduct, by saying, 'You have endeavoured to prepare yourself as much as you could—you have been praying and reading much—you endeavoured to have no intermingling with worldly pleasures or

pursuits—and you were endeavouring to force yourself into holy or serious frames and feelings, and confessing the weakness of your nature and begging assistance from on high, both in the view of this service, and when engaged in it, and after it was over; and what more could you do, on account of the weakness of your nature?’ True; I deny not that I was engaged in these exercises. But was my heart in them? were they not indeed forced work with me? And how could I, in the face of these feelings of unworthiness, rush on into such a holy service? Pride, nothing but pride, made me advance. Pride would not allow me to retreat after advancing so far; and I began to think of my *former* feelings, though then gone, and to encourage myself on this ground, ‘That, if I had not the proper qualifications, at least I had a desire to have them;’ and it was easy, whilst under this influence, to satisfy conscience by summoning up what seemed like such desires, and thus impose upon myself. I much fear that such was the case. God alone knows the exact state of my feelings, for my mind was confused. If it be so, how ought it not to stir me up to the destruction of principles that can thus trepan me into the most presumptuous sins? O how coldly and indifferently can I reason with myself on so awful a subject! My heart this day seems tenfold more hardened than ever. I was warned of this yesterday, but I persisted. I dread futurity—that I am now to become worse than ever. I have been now initiated into the solemn part of the mysteries of the faith, and I have felt it as if it were nothing more than any other external ceremony. What may I not next do?

“But let me a little more coolly reflect. Would I, if it were now in my power, draw a thorough blank through the scene which took place yesterday? Would I wipe it out of the records of my existence, had I this in my power at this instant? I would tremble to do that either—it would be renouncing a profession which I am not ashamed to have made *before the world*; and I know not, though my communion was indeed comfortless, whether I would renounce the profession I then made to the *Searcher of hearts*. I much deceived myself if, beforehand, I did not think that my motives did not spring from merely external circumstances, but that I was desirous to come forward on grounds which at the time did not to me seem entirely inconsistent with the nature of the ordinance. I had wished to bring my mind to a determination with regard to that dependence

which I felt my mind inclined to place in the merciful declarations of God; and I had hoped that, perhaps, it might be His will to reveal Himself to me in a more impressive and clear manner than I have yet experienced—that there might be excited in my mind some feelings to which I was yet a stranger; and, in some measure also, that I might bind myself down to a more holy and consistent practice. But, alas! I deceived myself. I formed too high notions. I forgot what I really was, in what I would wish to be. I was endeavouring to exalt myself, and therefore I have been mortified and humbled.

“ I am much perplexed about this matter—sometimes hoping, sometimes the reverse—sometimes thinking that I am acting with base ingratitude towards God in not acknowledging more from Him—sometimes with presumption, in tracing too much to Him; and yet all that is good must come from Him.

“ On Sabbath there was certainly a rich spiritual feast spread out for all who had a relish for it. Mr Gentle preached from Rev. xiii. 8: ‘ The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world;’ and a discourse in which there was more genuine, simple, unornamented beauty I do not know if I ever heard. He had no formal division, but there was a concealed one. He considered, 1st, *The Lamb*—in the human nature of Christ—his childhood—every movement, every feeling, with him alike holy and innocent—and so on. The human mind revolts from punishing innocence—nay, more, benevolence. In slaying a lamb it is—‘ it must needs be.’ *Wherefore* did this lovely innocence suffer? *wherefore* those hands which, &c.? *wherefore* those feet which, &c.? *wherefore* was that voice which, &c.? *wherefore* was its last accents breathed forth in these words, ‘ My God, my God, *why* hast thou forsaken me?’ Has this question ever been answered? Yes—day of Pentecost—apostles—early Christians—succeeding ages—and *now* also, and this very day and that very table—(Here he pointed out the doctrine of the atonement.) Here, then, was the 2d thing: *The Lamb slain.* 3d, *Before the foundation of the world.* Incomprehensible to human reason—incomprehensible how a race was created but to fall—a means determined, ere they were created, for their restoration—ere the guilt was contracted, it was in the Eternal counsels removed. But this is certain—and if I find in it that which strongly draws forth my affections, whilst my faith is directed towards it, I ought to look to it, and be grateful—this is a mark of the friend-

ship of God, to reveal his counsels to us, and in this manner we ought to receive them.

" This is a very imperfect outline of a very pathetic discourse, in which the only great defect to me seemed his dwelling very little on the second, and much on the first part, which was less applicable to the services of the day.

" In fencing the tables, he did not follow the usual manner of specifying characters, but laid down *broad principles*. His table service was from the words, ' Behold, I stand at the door, and knock ; ' in which he described the feelings of a Christian in looking back on his past life, and remembering the innumerable instances of God's forbearance, and the innumerable instances of His knocking at his heart's door for admittance—still persevering, still refused. The concluding part from, ' I will come in and sup with him, and he with me. ' But I cannot say that I recollect any of this, my feelings were in so disordered a state.

" Mr Grant preached the evening discourse from Isa. xxxv. 10: ' The ransomed of the Lord shall return, ' &c. It was a beautiful discourse, and I seldom have listened to one with more greed, nor, from the peculiar circumstances, to one from which I felt myself derive so much refreshment. I cannot, however, do any justice to it now. He showed that it had a reference to gospel times. 1. ' *Ransomed shall return,* ' implied *captivity* and *exile*. In what respects these: *Captive* to law and justice—to their own sins and lusts, &c. ; *exiled* from the favour and love of God, &c. *Ransomed of the Lord*—either *by* the Lord, or *belonging to* the Lord—how *by* Him, or how *of* Him. 2. Their *feelings* and *prospects, joy* and *rejoicing*—Why? For ' the highway, the way of holiness '—' No unclean thing shall meet them '—' God shall be with them '—' They cannot err therein '—' No ravenous beast shall be there. ' It is the way to their everlasting *home*, and they are approaching near it, where they know they shall never have sorrow nor sighing any more. He concluded with a discursive but impressive application to the ransomed of the Lord—especially to remember that they were *ransomed*, and not *their own*, and also at what a *price*. Let them ever remember these two things.

" Thus ended the services of this day of the gospel, and may I never forget its vows nor its services.

" In reading through St John's Gospel, the following passages

arrested my attention, some more or less, as applicable to the state of my feelings at present:—

“ Chap. i. 29. ‘ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ! ’

“ And is not this what I need ? I am afraid I have no real sense of the *guilt* of sin, nor sorrow for *itself*; but I feel the *misery* of it, for it makes me unhappy and restless. I feel in a measure ‘ *wearry* ’ of sin, because of its *consequences* within me. I feel also *galled* by it, as if I were ‘ heavy laden.’ Does not Christ, then, apply the promise (Matt. xi.) to me as such ? and may I not contemplate the truth contained in this passage, ‘ Behold,’ &c., as the means by which it may be effected ? Is it not comfort to me to believe that He has already so borne the sins of the *world*, that whenever I *really believe* this truth, I shall find that my sins have also been *already* taken away, though now I cannot ?

“ Chap. i. 36. ‘ And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he (John) saith, Behold the Lamb of God ! ’

“ Again does John point out Jesus as the *Lamb*. Surely there must have been something very ecstatic to him in this view of Jesus, for he *stood and gazed earnestly* (*ἰμβλιψας*) on him; and then his earnest gaze broke forth into these words, which surely were the concentration of his feelings: ‘ Behold the Lamb of God ! ’ And why can I not sympathize with him in this transport ?—why do I not see something in Jesus as a Lamb, innocent, lovely, and slain for sinners, to absorb all my soul ? My soul cannot be congenial with John’s—he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb, still he found transporting delight in contemplating Jesus as a Lamb: how much more ought I, who am dead in trespasses and in sins, to feel joy in viewing Him as the propitiation for sin through faith in His shed blood !

“ Chap. iii. 2: Nicodemus saith, ‘ Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’

“ And have not I had a belief like that of Nicodemus, nay, has it not perhaps gone farther, inasmuch as my advantages have been greater ? But still, does it not appear to have been of the same kind, a dead inoperative one ; or rather is it not a worse ? for

his belief seems to have been the result of some conviction from miracles, but mine from early habit, education, and other inadequate causes. But does Jesus reckon this belief of Nicodemus sufficient? And do I feel mine sufficient? No. But where consists the deficiency? The evil does not lie in the *kind*, but in the *degrees* of our belief; at least it seems to me so. And is not this implied in our Saviour's reply? He does not say, 'Thou art wrong in thy belief;' but he immediately proceeds to state the grand thing which was wanting, and without which any extent of a merely *intellectual* assent could be of no avail. 'A man must be born again. Let me consider this. What must be born again?' Is it the intellectual powers? They are mere instruments which, in themselves, cannot do good or evil, but only as they are directed by the moving power, the fountain of activity, the heart. It is not they, then, though they need a new impulse to be given them. Whence do I myself feel the great obstacles to proceed in my attempts after divine things? It is in the want of that very impulse which carries me on with vigour into other pursuits, that powerful principle which sways my *will*—in short, what the Scriptures call the *heart*. This I feel I cannot command, for it is, in fact, that which commands me, and I feel it to be indeed enmity against every good suggestion; and when conscience, which seems to be acquiring a little more power in competition with this tyrant, or (may I hope at times?) some merciful suggestions of the Spirit of God, would prompt me to think seriously, I feel the powerful opposition of my heart contravening every attempt. Oh! then, my heart must be born again, and without this nothing will be of any avail. But this is *evidently* beyond my own power, as it will not enlist against myself; and I must pray to God for it, for He made my heart at first, and can remake it. And how does he do this?—by the Spirit. And how does the Spirit effect it?—by 'testifying of Christ.' And what of Christ? Need I ask this? O let me plead more and more with God, that He may lead me to Christ; and let me strive more and more to look to the *cross*, that I may have my heart renewed, and then my salvation shall be secured.

"Chap. vi. 28, 29: 'Then said they unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye *believe on Him* whom He hath sent.'

"Then, have I a disposition manifested on the part of certain

individuals, and leading to a particular inquiry? is the disposition or the inquiry any thing like mine? Have not I for a short time felt a disposition to know, in a measure, how to work the works of God? Have I not felt a little anxiety about my past life, and a little about the change of it for the future? Is not my mind filled with a strong anxiety about *working*, the very thing which ought to fill me with despair? Am I not taken up with my prayers, and reading the Scriptures, and meditation, whether these have been rightly conducted, &c., and what more have I to do? and what is all this but a degree of the spirit that was in these inquirers? But what says Christ? '*This is the work of God*'—what, in fact, is no work at all, but a simple act of the mind, 'to believe on Him whom He hath sent.' Here am I again, as always, turned back to the same point as the sum total of what I have to do—'Believe.' But by this simple precept I am bewildered—it seems in itself so simple, and yet so unattainable. If it were said, 'Repent' only, then I would find some way of *setting about* it, though I would be in tenfold more danger of deceiving myself, and though it is just as unattainable. It is the mercy of God that He has appointed terms to which, if man adhere, he cannot for a moment err. Belief can only be produced by convincing evidence, and a newness of heart, in a sinner. Then there can be no mistake. I wish I could concentrate my thoughts on the cross of Christ, and put my whole confidence on the faithfulness of His promises, and their suitableness to my case!

"Chap. vii. 37: 'Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.'

"This was said by Jesus at the close of the festivities of a great feast; and can all the festivities of the greatest feast satisfy the thirsty soul? Ah no! they are but a weariness to it. And can I appeal to Jesus and say, 'Lord, I thirst.' Yes, I may, it seems to me, with sincerity. My soul is dissatisfied, seeking after something it knows not what, to satisfy it. But can I say, 'Lord, I come to thee!' for here is the important concern on which all hinges. If I do this, the promise shall be fulfilled. But what says He elsewhere? 'No man cometh unto me except the Father draw him.' I feel unable to go unto Him; but this very inability I would desire to plead with Him. I think I desire to come unto Him. But, O for a thirst to come unto Him! But let me take hold upon the spirit of this promise. Is it not the tender encouragement given to a humble, penitent soul to come

to Jesus? is it not to draw forth the tender regards of the soul towards Him? 'And drink.' Of what? Of what Jesus has to give. I need not dictate that, for it will be something that will satisfy the soul, that will make it not thirst any more. These are sweet words of David's—

'Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek:  
*My soul doth thirst for thee;*  
My flesh longs in a dry parch'd land,  
Wherein no waters be:  
That I thy power may behold,  
And brightness of thy face,  
As I have seen thee heretofore  
Within thy holy place.'

"O that I knew what it was thus to thirst!"



## NO. II.

(Referred to at page 151.)

“THIS day brings to a close my twenty-second and commences my twenty-third year, and on it I sincerely desire to humble myself before my God, to cast myself on His mercy, and to pledge myself to Him in the strength of His own grace. I have for some time past kept before my mind the resolution of binding myself on this day to be the Lord’s in a more formal manner than with the confessions of my lips; but now that the time is come, I feel myself weak as water. I am full of fears. I cannot bring myself to recede, and yet I am filled with a feeling of weakness and insufficiency, and have not even strength to cast myself on the Lord. Oh! my Lord and my God, thou even now witnessest these feelings. I appeal to thee that the desire of my heart is towards thee. O let thy grace be sufficient for me, and thy strength be perfected in my weakness! Forgive the wanderings of my heart. Forgive me that I cannot watch with thee one hour. Thou knowest that I am dust. Thou knowest that when the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. Thou seest my enemy even now at my right hand—take pity upon me, and deliver me. For one moment give me my heart into my own hands, that in that moment I may give it unto thee, to retain it for evermore. All my hope is in thee, Lord Jesus, who art the friend of sinners; and in the effectual working of thee, O Holy Spirit! who proceedest from the Father and Son. Amen.

—“Before proceeding further into the solemn part of this transaction, I would desire to have my views clear with regard to—

“I. *The nature of this transaction.*—It is to be between the Supreme and Holy Majesty of the universe, and a puny, guilty, worthless, but reconciled, creature of His hands. It is to be a total submission and surrender of the latter—a promise of un-

conditional and sincere obedience to the laws of that Sovereign—a humble pleading for mercy and grace—a trust in these alone for fulfilling the engagement; and this for life.

“II. My *motives*.—It has been suggested first to me in reading the lives and works of those who had themselves so done, and had cause to rejoice in it. It has been confirmed by reading in Scripture of similar covenants with God by individuals (Jacob, David, Josiah) and collective bodies—from a feeling of the utter weakness of all internal resolves and oral confessions—of the propriety of somewhat more solemn, firm, and abiding—and from a feeling of the propriety of influencing the many weaker principles of my nature, which are carnal, by somewhat also of a carnal and earthly nature.

“III. The *grounds* of my procedure—I rest it on this: I am the creature of God, sent hither for His service. He clothes me, feeds me, supports me, and manages what concerns me—therefore, I desire to bind myself to serve him faithfully, to obey him sincerely, in my day and generation. In the years that are past, I have been disobedient, rebellious, and unfaithful, and brought, therefore, upon myself His anger; and in the end must have fallen a victim to a just curse. But he was pleased to pity me (as I humbly trust)—to lead me unto Jesus, his beloved and crucified Son—to enable me to plead for mercy in Jesus’ name—to pardon me—to accept me in the Beloved—to call me again into life and His service—to promise me a glorious recompense of reward if I continue faithful unto death—to offer me constant supplies of grace for attaining to these things—to leave with me most gracious promises with which to plead before Him. All these proceed from the redemption wrought by my beloved Saviour Jesus Christ; and on the grounds of all these things, as proceeding from Him as Mediator, do I rest my obligations to devote myself, body and spirit, unto the Almighty God and Father of all spirits.

“IV. The *spirit* in which I would desire to perform it.—Convinced of the innate corruption of my nature—of the imperfect, the wofully imperfect, degree of my sanctification—of the small degree of spiritual life in me, and my consequent weakness—knowing the awful strength of the allurements of the world,

Satan, and the flesh, when presented to such a nature, and the absolute impossibility of my holding out in my own strength—believing in the richness, sufficiency, and freeness of the divine grace—relying on the truth of the divine promises—and desiring, as a returning sinner, to appropriate all these as they are in Christ Jesus, yea, and amen: in this spirit it is my sincere desire and prayer to draw near to God in this solemn transaction.

“ In the name, and depending on the mediation, of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, do I now desire to come before thee, O God of heaven and earth! On no other ground than that of the atonement dare I approach into thy presence. My purpose is to give myself up unto thee in a solemn personal covenant; but trusting only in thine own grace, as it is in Christ Jesus, for ability to do this. I have endeavoured, as in thy sight, and after earnestly imploring thy divine direction, in a former part, to lay down the motives and grounds of this my conduct. I have laid them before thee, and sought thy inspection, and have found nothing to retract; and now again, trusting that they were consistent with thy will, and further imploring the light of thy countenance, faith in thy dear Son, and the powerful working of thy Holy Spirit, do I proceed. And I do solemnly, and totally, and eternally devote myself unto thee, and do vow, in the strength of thy promised grace, henceforth to strive to walk worthy of that high vocation wherewith I am called; and also do vow that I shall ever desire to seek thy glory as the great aim of all my conduct, and shall also seek to promote that glory among my fellow-men to the utmost of my ability. My *heart* I surrender unto thee; and I vow to have a jealous watch upon it, and, if I find any object whatever acquire an undue ascendancy over it, that I shall not cease until I bring it down. My intellectual faculties I surrender also. I vow to employ them most in thy immediate service, and ever (as far as my weak nature will permit) for thy glory—that I shall strive to subdue every lust and desire inconsistent with thy holy law—that I shall endeavour to guard against all unnecessary losing of time, but shall strive to improve it to the utmost of my power. And I also vow that, for these purposes, I shall be much engaged in prayer to thyself—much engaged in reading thy Word—that I shall strive to make a diligent and faithful use of all means of grace within my reach, consistently with other duties—that I shall ever consult thee in

all the circumstances of my lot, and seek only that which shall be most for thy glory, and shall endeavour to follow the leadings of thy providence.

“All these things, and whatever more may be included in making myself wholly thine, I do at this moment, in the presence of a three-one God, humbly resolve and promise to perform ; but not in my own strength, but only in dependence on the grace that is in Christ Jesus. I know that I cannot do one of these matters of myself : I therefore cast myself unreservedly on thy mercy as a God in Christ, reconciling the world unto thyself—praying and beseeching thee that, for His sake, thou wouldst grant me the gift of thy Holy Spirit, that He may work in me to will and to do of thine own good pleasure. And, O merciful Father ! if at any time, through the corruption or weakness of my nature, I should break through any part of this solemn bond, if it be thy will afflict me not grievously with thy chastisements, but lead me into a sincere and deep repentance, and restore me to a more fervent devotion of heart to thee.

“Forgive my presumption, if in this matter I have acted presumptuously. In my Redeemer’s righteousness and blood lie all my plea and hope. Through a lively and constant faith in Him do I desire those supplies of grace that I ever need, and in a simple reliance in Him shall my strength be.

“And now, unto Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the only living and true God, my Lord, my Redeemer, and Sanctifier, on the ground of the most sacred obligations, and in the faith of promised grace, do I bind myself to be sincere, faithful, obedient, and persevering in all above laid down.

“JOHN MACDONALD.

“Westerton, February 17, 1829.”

## No. III.

(Referred to at page 431.)

THE following is as complete a list as we have been able to compile of Mr Macdonald's various publications, in the order of their dates. We omit the articles which he furnished to periodicals in England, and his contributions to the Calcutta *Christian Observer* and the Calcutta *Free Churchman*, though the last, we believe, were voluminous:—

1. The Suffering Saviour. 1829.
2. Statement of Reasons for Accepting a Call to go to India as a Missionary. 1837.
3. The Oratorio. 1840.
4. A Pastor's Memorial to his Former Flock. 1842.
5. What is the Theatre? 1842.
6. May I go to the Ball? 1843.
7. Isobel Hood's Memoirs and Manuscript. 1843.
8. The Government of India Charged with Spiritual Treason. 1844.
9. An Address at the Ordination of Elders. 1844.
10. The First-fruits of our Flock in the Grave. 1845.
11. Duelling Spiritually Considered. 1845.
12. Memorial of Koilas Chunder Mookerjee. 1845.
13. Thoughts on the Observance of Hindu Holidays. 1846.
14. The Ministration of the Holy Spirit. 1847.
15. The Doctrine of Divine Grace Perverted by Romanism.
16. One of the *Instructors* used in the Mission-school.

In addition to these, he published a considerable number of Tracts. "Why Separate?" "What have you gained?" "Why not Help Us?" speedily followed the Disruption, and bore directly on that event; while others, under the title of "Church Notes," "The God of My Righteousness," "Thoughts on Time, and on Dying," "Brief Outlines of Christianity," and several

others, appeared at different times. Of his pamphlets and tracts a volume could easily be compiled, at once furnishing edification to the Church, and manifesting the goodness of God in the graces bestowed on His servant.

Reference has occasionally been made to some of his works that are in MS. Of a portion of these we need not speak in this place; but we cannot omit a passing allusion to what amounts nearly to a treatise, written to satisfy the doubts, or silence the scepticism, of one who stood high in the Company's service. It contains some fine thoughts on the *spiritual* evidences of Christianity. While we bow before the Judge of all the earth, who took him so early away, the mysteriousness of the dispensation is increased, when we notice the influence which he had acquired in some of the highest quarters. But his work was done.

THE END.

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