

# MINISTERS AND MEN IN THE FAR NORTH.

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## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON THE FIRST EDITION.

“The work is interesting alike to the student of local history and of the religious side of human nature.”—*Scotsman*.

“Not only is this book pervaded by a genial tone, but the author has the faculty of writing in a graphic and racy style, and his pages are rich with anecdotes and sayings which are often as amusing from their quaintness and humour as they are suggestive from their shrewdness. To those of our readers who are connected with the far north, the book will be especially refreshing.”—*North British Daily Mail*.

“There is not a little humour in this volume, and the picture it gives of the life of Christian men, who were ‘Israelites indeed,’ would be incomplete if this phase of character were overlooked. But the aim of the writer is not to divert his readers, but to give them the benefit of a kind of Christian life and experience which is not common in our day, and which yet may be studied with profit. Mr. Auld, in short, has done for Caithness what Mr. Kennedy has already done for ‘the fathers of Ross-shire,’ and he has admirably performed his task. . . . We might string together many such gems of thought and felicitous expression. There is enough, however, to show the interesting and instructive character of the work.”—*Daily Review*.

“The book has a real historical and religious interest; it will be much read in Caithness and the neighbouring Highlands, and we think it likely to interest other readers also. Some parts of the book are admirably written.”—*British Messenger*.

“The earnestness of the author’s convictions is conspicuous in every page; and due allowance being made for his predilections, the book forms an interesting record of the state of Caithness during several generations, and more particularly of the ‘men.’ . . . Mr. Auld should print his book in a cheaper form, which would ensure it an extensive circulation. As it is, his volume is curious and instructive, and discloses a state of society which has all but disappeared in the north.”—*Inverness Courier*.

“We are highly pleased with this beautifully got up and interesting volume. We heartily thank Mr. Auld for laying such a treat before us, and for rescuing the sayings and doings of these worthies from sinking into oblivion. The volume is rich and full of variety.”—*Invergordon Times*.

“A reader who wants to know something of the spiritual condition of Caithness and the Reay country will find ample materials in this volume, which is carefully written, and deserving of commendation.”—*London Weekly Review*.

“Ministers and men of mark were several of those hard-faring and often original pastors and laymen at the other extremity of our kingdom. We have read this plain record, unadorned by portrait-taker or poet, with greater pleasure than some of the toned-paper, pictured, and feeble and nerveless biographies of ministers which have come before us. The volume is sometimes rich in character and anecdote. . . . Readers of the book must accept the author simply as he is. If they quarrel with his theology or modes of thought, they will not appreciate his portraitures. He has produced a curious book, which reveals to us in the south some pleasing traits of high character and genuine religion in humble life in the far north. The Rev. Alex. Auld has our thanks and best wishes. May he live as long as his pious grandmother, who died in the hundredth year of her age.”—*London Athenæum*.

“Mr. Auld’s sketches are for the most part graphic. Some of them are exceedingly so. The very anecdotes which he relates and the incidents he records, which have been pointed out as faults by other reviewers, constitute to our mind one of the beauties of the book. Here and there we find an expression to which we might take exception, or an opinion advanced, from which we might differ; but the book as a whole is one of great interest, and will endure for a long period to come.”—*London Morning Advertiser*.

From Dr. D. M. Loebe  
to  
Rev. Dr. D. Sage Mackay  
As a Reminiscence of his  
Grand Father Donald Mackay

MINISTERS AND MEN

IN

THE FAR NORTH.

Rev. Dr. Donald Sage Mackay

REV. ER. BOWEN & CO. BOSTON

# MINISTERS AND MEN

IN

# THE FAR NORTH.

*Second Edition.*

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER AULD,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF JOHN KENNEDY, D.D.," &c.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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THAT no permanent record exists of the more remarkable Christians of a bygone generation in this part of the land, has been a want much felt and often expressed by those who cherish their memories. The aim of the following pages is to meet this want, and to preserve some of the lineaments of an age and race of worthies fast passing away.

The materials I have employed are, besides my own knowledge and personal recollections, the information supplied by various friends—and by one in particular—intimately acquainted with the persons and events treated of.

I am conscious of the many defects of the work, but fragments of time—intervals in the ever-recurring calls of ministerial duty—were all I could devote to it.

If these imperfect portraits of Men, “who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promises,” be the means of stimulating any in the “following” of them, the work will not have been in vain.

F.C. MANSE,

OLRIG, 1869.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS book—although the first edition was a large one—has been long out of print. It is re-issued in its present form in compliance with urgent requests, and to supply applications for copies that continue to be received.

There is reason to fear that those who will welcome it are much fewer in number than when it first saw the light. But in the hope that the Lord will yet revive His cause in our land—when such records of godly lives of a former generation will be duly prized—I desire to add to the means of becoming acquainted with “the footsteps of the flock.”

A. A.

F.C. MANSE,  
OLRIG, *July*, 1891.



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## INTRODUCTORY VIEW

OF THE

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# EARLIER ECCLESIASTICAL STATE OF CAITHNESS.



CHRISTIANITY, which was introduced into the southern parts of Scotland in its pure Scriptural form by St. Columba and the early Culdees in the sixth century, was not established in Caithness until the tenth century, and therefore in nearly its most corrupt Popish form, superseding not Druidism simply, but that system combined with the Scandinavian superstitions of Thor and Odin.

Excepting the names of the successive bishops—fragments of their personal history—the part some of them took in civil affairs—their efforts to increase their power and possessions, or to regain these when abstracted by rapacious chiefs—there is no direct record of the ecclesiastical state of the county during the long supremacy of the Romish Church.

But in the civil history and traditions of the north it continually crops out that that system had little or no effect in mitigating the rudeness of the times, while it left the people immersed in idolatry and superstition. The state of religion was deplorable in the extreme. Divine truth was corrupted by heresy or overloaded with superstitious observances. The Scriptures were kept from the knowledge of the people locked up in a dead language. Every token of dissatisfaction was met by threats of the severest civil and religious penalties; the minds and consciences of the people were thus enslaved and degraded.

The county was divided into parishes long before the Reformation, but the places of Romish worship were not set down with any regard to these civil boundaries, but scattered in great numbers over the county, many of them being attached to the residences of the landowners. A list of these chapels and their localities is subjoined :—

PARISH OF REAY.—St. Peter's, at Lybster, near the mouth of the River Forss ; St. Benedict's, at Shurery.

PARISH OF HALKIRK.—St. Trostan's, at Westfield ; St. Thomas', at Skynet. On site of present Parish Church, called Torharlogan (hill in a hollow), stood a chapel where the bishop's chaplain officiated. Chapels also at Dale, Sibster, and Banniskirk. St. Magnus' Hospital, at Spittal (whence the name Spittal) ; St. Peter's, at Oldgrinbeg.

PARISH OF THURSO.—Chapels at Brims, at Pennyland, and at Claredon Head, on site of Harold's Tower.

PARISH OF OLRIG.—St. Coomb's, or Columba, near Thurdistoft ; Chapel at Kirkfield.

PARISH OF DUNNET.—St. John's, at south end of the Loch ; Chapel above Dwarrick Head.

PARISH OF CANISBAY.—St. John's, at St. John's Head ; St. Tristan's, on site of Parish Church, Lady Chapel at Duncansbay ; St. Medicis', at Freswick ; Hermitage, at Stroupster ; Chapels of Skara and Old Skail, in Stroma.

PARISH OF BOWER.—Chapels at Lyth and Scarmclet.

PARISH OF WATTEN.—Chapel at Scouthel.

PARISH OF WICK.—St. Tears', near Castle Sinclair ; Marykirk, on River of Wick, near Sibster ; St. Duthock, in middle of Moss of Kilmster ; St. Cuthbert's, at Haster ; St. Ninian's, at "Head of Wick ;" St. Martin's, at Ulbster.

PARISH OF LATHERON.—Bracra-highlish, on the Water of Langwell ; Chapels of Braemore and Glut of Berriedale ; Chapel of Dunbeath ; Chapel on Water of Clyth.

With one or two of these there are traditions associated. The

chapel at Skinnet was a large massive building, and near it stood a religious house called "The Abbey." A Halkirk man, it is said, being engaged at the chapel invoking the aid of John the Baptist in an emergency, a neighbour behind a wall over-hearing him, began—personating the saint—to cast up to him his many evil deeds, adding, "How can such a one as you expect aid from heaven?" "Ay, ay, John, that's just you," replied the other; "it was that ill tongue of yours that cost you your head." The priest of Skinnet complaining of the Calder people's neglect of public worship, they promised to amend if he would allow them to play at "knotty" going and returning. In general the people in their extremities invoked the saint of their own district. A Spittal man fishing one day on the Water of Dale, hooked a large salmon, and prayed to St. Magnus for help to bring the fish ashore. It slipped the hook, however, and got off, whereupon the fisherman roundly abused the saint, telling him, "that it was clear enough he would only help his own favourites."

The chapel at St. Coomb's, Olig, which stood near the "Burn of Mid sands," is said to have been suddenly overwhelmed by sand-drift.

The chapel on Dwarrick Head, called in an old record "Fanum Donati," is supposed to have been a place of penance.

The chapel of Ulbster still stands, and is used as a tomb. In this place, tradition says, a Danish princess lies buried, and a stone with some illegible characters marks the spot.

The Old Church of Thurso was not, as is commonly supposed, the cathedral church of the diocese, which was at Dornock, but was the mensal church of the bishop, the benefice being appropriated for the maintenance of the table (*mensa*) of that dignitary. A nunnery or monastery existed at a very early period at Murkle.\* Torfæus mentions that a queen of Norway died in it, and that an Earl of Caithness was buried there in 960.

A superstitious veneration was entertained by the common

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\* Murkle or Muirkil, or Killmuir.

people for these edifices long after the Romish religion had been abandoned, and acts of gross superstition continued to be performed at some of them until a comparatively late period. For instance, at St. Tears', Wick, meat offerings used to be laid, on the eve of the Saint's-day, among the ruins of his shrine—a practice to which the last laird of Wester had no objections, as his dogs thereby, he used to say, got many a good morsel. The traveller Brand observes, "There is a chapel in the parish of Konnesbie (Canisbay), frequented by some people about Candlemas time, who, after going round it on their bare knees, then proceed to a water close by and cast handfuls of it over their heads.

There does not seem to be any means of ascertaining whether the minds of the people of Caithness were prepared for the overthrow of Romanism; whether they hailed that event, regarded it with indifference, or sullenly submitted to it. Rumours of the dawn of Protestant truth further south may have reached them, and possibly some of its zealous advocates; but copies of the Scriptures we know were rare, and the bulk of the people unable to read them. The probability is, that in these times, when in the north the feudal system held such sway, the matter hinged very much on the will of the chiefs; and as evidence remains to show that they were little influenced by religious sentiment of any kind, and that some of them profited by the spoil of the church lands, the abolition of the Romish system, while it did not much chafe their religious prejudices, was made welcome by the prospect of secular gain.

After the Reformation, the county continued for years like the "house" of the man out of whom the devils went, "empty and swept." The greater part of it had no religious instruction. For this there were two reasons—the difficulty of getting qualified teachers immediately after the transition from Popery to supply so distant a district, and the difficulty of getting the means of their support wrenched out of the hands of the usurpers of the old benefices. And when at length this was got

it would be curious to tell—only it does not lie in our way—what kind of support was accorded to the ministry. Until some years after the beginning of the seventeenth century, a regular ministry was enjoyed only by the four parishes of Thurso, Bower (which was long conjoined with Watten), Dunnet, and Wick—the religious wants of the others being supplied by occasional readers or exhorters.

Nor have we means of ascertaining in what spirit the people of Caithness received the attempts of James VI. to impose Episcopacy on the country. It is not improbable that the will of the chiefs then, as formerly, exercised, though in a less degree, an influence.

A few of these, at the time of the second Reformation in 1638, seem to have been animated by the spirit of the nobles and gentry of the southern parts of the kingdom, who resolutely withstood the efforts made by the Government to quench religious liberty. After the Restoration, Innes of Thurster, James Sinclair of Assery, and William Bailie of Newton, were fined in £600 for their share in the troubles before 1660. At the head of these was the Master of Berriedale, grandson of the Earl of Caithness, who is characterized in the records of the times as “a religious, devout gentleman.” He stood by the Covenanters, and did good service to their cause. He was one of five commissioners chosen by the Scottish nobles, for the purpose of getting the Covenant subscribed throughout the kingdom, and Spalding says that “Caithness and Sutherland for the most part subscribed by the industry of the forenamed commissioners.” And from this circumstance—and from the fact that a band of Caithnessmen, headed by the Master of Berriedale, joined the Presbyterian forces at Elgin in 1638, as well as from the additional fact that, when he died shortly afterwards, another corps of Caithnessmen left the country to join Lord Sinclair of Ravensheugh, his successor in the command—we conclude that the people of Caithness generally favoured the Presbyterian cause at that period.

It was otherwise with the clergy; and the truth is, that during the various stages between Prelacy and Presbyterianism their consistency was often severely tried. In 1650, when the Marquis of Montrose landed from Orkney, to raise the Highlands in favour of Charles II., he seems to have had little difficulty in getting all the members of Presbytery to sign a document giving a favourable view of his designs. Mr. William Smith, of Watten and Bower, alone refused to do so; and in order to cool his Presbyterian ardour and bring him to Montrose's terms, he was, it is said, fastened to the stern of a boat, and dragged through the sea from Thurso to Scrabster. He did not yield however.

After Montrose's defeat, the other ministers were deposed by the General Assembly for their "compliance with James Graham (Montrose) excommunicat, in his rebellion, and shedding the blood of the countrie." Their parishes remained vacant for some years, receiving occasional supply from placed ministers and preachers sent north by the Assembly. Some of them were after a time allowed to "open their mouths." Mr. John Munro, minister of Reay, was permitted, after confession of his fault, to preach in the Gaelic language, "that he might be of use to his son who succeeded him."

At the Restoration of Charles II., the position of parties was again reversed, and those ministers who refused to conform to Episcopacy were ejected, and, among others, Mr. William Smith, already mentioned, who retired to Thurso, where he spent the rest of his life. He bore the character of a "godly and faithful minister." Being in straitened circumstances after his ejection, a friend who called on him is said to have remarked, "If the Lord regarded riches, there would be greater plenty in this house." During these persecuting years the Earl of Caithness—the unworthy son of such a man as the godly Master of Berriedale—with the view of gaining favour at Court—busied himself in suppressing any token of opposition to Episcopacy. In 1674 (Nov. 4th), there "compeared before



the Presbytery the Earl of Caithness, as one of His Majesty's honourable Privy Council, and by virtue of ane commission, granted to his Lordship, to enquire if there was any conventicles kept within the Presbytery or shyre of Caithness; and the brethren showed his Lordship there was none, neither did they fear any to be, for which they blessed God." At the same time he presented a bond, to be subscribed by all considerable persons within the diocese of Caithness, for preventing conventicles. Notwithstanding this declaration of the Presbytery to Lord Caithness, the people seem to have been so dissatisfied that an edict by the Bishop had to be read before the several congregations, "that all persons deserting public ordinances would be proceeded against as contemners of godliness and of ecclesiastical authority."

At the Revolution settlement of 1688, another change took place. All the ministers who had conformed to Episcopacy were either ejected from their charges or disqualified to some extent. Andrew Wood, last Bishop of Caithness, withdrew. Great difficulty was again experienced in filling the charges vacated. Some were not supplied as late as 1699. In that year the commission of Assembly constituted the ministers then in the county (three in number) into a Presbytery. These were Mr. Wm. Innes, who had been translated from Carnock to Thurso; Mr. John Munro, of Reay; and Mr. George Oswald, ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and sent to Dunnet by the Assembly. The Episcopal incumbents, as has been said, were disqualified to some extent, yet they do not appear to have been separated altogether from their charges, for we find that the Presbytery about this time resolved to visit the churches within their bounds—"both those vacant and those supplied by Episcopal incumbents." It would appear that, having taken the oath of allegiance to King William, some of them were allowed, because of the scarcity of Presbyterian ministers, to officiate in their own parishes, under the control of the church courts, though without a voice in them.

For example, in 1699, "the Presbytery order Mr. James Innes, of Canisbay, to preach four times a-year in Stroma, and rebuked him for neglecting catechising ;" and Mr. Beaton, of Latheron, is "summoned to the Presbytery to exhibit his session-book." He admitted that he had not administered the Sacrament nor catechised for sixteen years, and that he had danced, or, as he said, "gone up and down the room at a wedding." "The Presbytery suspend him."

Before proceeding to notice the state of religion in the county, subsequent to the Revolution settlement, we may observe that it appears from the foregoing pages :—

1st, That, up to 1638, the form of religion in Caithness was Episcopal, for any measure in which Presbyterianism subsisted before then was superficial and short-lived, and that from 1660 till 1688 Episcopacy again was in the ascendant.

2nd, That this was a semi-Episcopacy—not the fully-developed system in England—for it embraced, as we have seen, presbyterial action.

3rd, That for many years, on three several occasions, the county was almost denuded of a regular ministry, occasioned by denominational changes.

4th, That the history of the county, written or traditional, furnishes us with a view rather of the external frame-work of the church than of its internal life. There is no mention of the appearance of any remarkable evangelist or wide-spread religious awakening.

We subjoin a list, which to some may be interesting, of all the parochial Protestant ministers of Caithness, as far as ascertained, from the Reformation down to the Disruption. The dates prefixed denote the year of settlement :—

## PARISH OF REAY.

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1569. Hew Polson (reader). | 1723. Alex. Brodie (translated |
| 1637. John Munro.          | from Kildonan.)                |
| 1657. David Munro.         | 1734. Alex. Pope (relative of  |
| 1697. John Munro.          | the poet).                     |
| 1783. David M'Kay.         | 1835. Finlay Cook.             |

## PARISH OF HALKIRK AND SKINNET.

- |                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1567. James Scott (reader). | 1706. John Munro.      |
| 1576. Thos. Brodie.         | 1745. John Sutherland. |
| 1576. Alex. Cumming.        | 1766. James Nicolson.  |
| 1655. George Anderson.      | 1769. John Cameron.    |
| 1677. William Cumming.      | 1822. John Munro.      |

## PARISH OF THURSO.

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1567. John Rag (reader).     | 1696. William Innes.           |
| 1626. William Abernethy.     | 1738. James Gilchrist.         |
| 1655. And. Munro (ejected).  | 1752. Alexander Nicolson.      |
| 1682. John Wood (son of the  | 1786. Patrick Nicolson (son of |
| bishop).                     | Alex. Nicolson).               |
| 1688. And. Munro (restored). | 1805. William Mackintosh.      |
|                              | 1831. Walter Ross Taylor.      |

## PARISH OF OLRIG.

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1567. Fr. Wright (exhorter). | 1661. William Campbell. |
| Adam Allardyce.              | 1667. Robert Tarras.    |
| David Bryce.                 | 1699. William M'Beath.  |
| — Adamson.                   | 1735. David Dunbar.     |
| David Allardyce.             | 1762. Alexander Smith.  |
| 1656. James Adams.           | 1785. George M'Kenzie.  |
|                              | 1825. William M'Kenzie. |

## PARISH OF DUNNET.

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1567. J. Prouthocht (exhorter.) | 1668. John Beaton.     |
| 1576. John Dunnet (reader).     | 1682. James Fullarton. |
| Thomas Dunnet (do.)             | 1685. James Munro.     |
| Wm. Smith (ejected).            | 1697. George Oswald.   |

Parish of Dunnet—(*continued*).

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1654. Alex. Munro. | 1726. James Oswald, D.D.  |
| 1667. John Smart.  | 1751. George Traill, D.D. |
|                    | 1785. Thomas Jolly.       |

## PARISH OF CANISBAY.

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1567. Alex. Grammison   | 1705. Alexander Gibson.  |
| (exhorter).             | 1747. James Brodie.      |
| John Dunnet (reader.    | 1780. John Morison, D.D. |
| 1620. And. Ogston.      | 1799. James Smith.       |
| 1655. William Davidson. | 1827. William Milne.     |
| 1667. James Innes.      | 1833. Peter Jolly.       |

## PARISH OF BOWER.

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1567. John Anderson (reader). | 1701. Hugh Corse.     |
| 1613. Rd. Merchison (vicar).  | 1739. Alex. Oliphant. |
| 1668. Alexander Gibson.       | 1780. James Oliphant. |
|                               | 1789. William Smith.  |

## PARISH OF WATTEN.

- |                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1567. Thos. Brodie (exhorter). | 1701. Hector Munro.   |
| James Oswald.                  | 1733. John Sinclair.  |
| 1581. Thomas Brydie (vicar).   | 1754. James Taylor.   |
| 1654. Wm. Smith.               | 1779. Joseph Taylor.  |
| 1659. James Dunbar.            | 1805. Alexander Gunn. |
|                                | 1836. Alexander Gunn. |

## PARISH OF WICK.

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1567. And. Philip (exhorter). | 1676. Patrick Clunes.        |
| Thos. Keir (reader.)          | 1692. Wm. Geddes (restored). |
| Alex. Munro (do.)             | 1701. Charles Keith.         |
| 16—. Thomas Pruntoch.         | 1707. Mr. Oliphant.          |
| John Annand.                  | 1727. James Ferme.           |
| 1638. John Smart.             | 1762. James Scobie.          |
| Henry Forbes.                 | 1765. William Sutherland.    |
| 1659. William Geddes (ejected | 1816. Robert Phin.           |
| 1675.)                        | 1840. Charles Thomson.       |

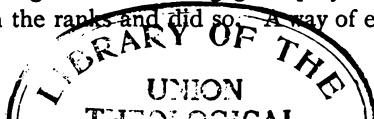
## PARISH OF LATHERON.

1567. R. Thomson (reader).	1681. Neil Beaton.
Mr. Munro.	1717. Andrew Sutherland.
1637. Gilbert Anderson.	1734. James Brodie.
1652. Alexander Clark.	1775. Robert Gunn.
1667. John Ross.	1820. George Davidson.

Of those in this list who lived before the period of the Revolution, there is little information handed down to us. It is said of Mr. Richard Merchison, vicar of Bower and Watten, "That his spirit was stirred within him when he saw the people so much given to idolatry," for in his time the image-worship of saints was still largely practised. Having gone to Wick, he in his zeal broke in pieces the image of St. Fergus, the patron saint of that place, whereupon the people in their rage followed him out of the town on his way home and drowned him in the river.

Mr. James Dunbar was admitted to the parish of Watten, upon the heritors engaging to "remove ninety-one persons having the Irish tongue allendarlie;" but in case the heritors should fail to do so, Mr. Dunbar is taken bound to learn that language within a year. From that date Watten became an English charge, and the inference is that the people who could speak no "Scots" were removed.

Of the ministers subsequent to the Revolution settlement we have fuller and more frequent notices. A few, who came into the county at or shortly after that event, seem to have been men of piety and zeal. One such was Mr. Wm. Innes of Thurso. His history is somewhat remarkable. During the war in the "Low Countries," an English regiment found itself in dangerous proximity to a superior force of the enemy. The commanding officer, at a loss how to extricate his men, and believing that the hand of God alone could help them, asked if any of the regiment would engage in prayer. A young man stepped from the ranks and did so. A way of escape presented



itself, which was taken advantage of, and thereafter the officer asked the soldier what he would wish done for him. The young man replied that he had a desire for learning and wished to prosecute it. A discharge from the king's service and some pecuniary assistance was procured for him, and after due preparation this young man entered the higher service of the ministry, and was not less useful to the church than he had been to his country. On his coming to Thurso, he, in a way more plain than pleasant, began to expose and rebuke the sinful practices of the people. This roused their ire, and the wives of the town mobbing him and shouting, "What was *he* that he took it upon him to find fault with them?" he next Sabbath answered them from the text, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Mr. Innes laboured diligently, not only in his own sphere, but in other parishes which were either vacant or occupied by Episcopal incumbents. To his efforts also the settlement of Presbyterian ministers throughout the county was mainly owing.

Tradition hands down likewise a good report of Mr. Hugh Corse of Bower. When he came to the parish he found in it only three families in the practice of family worship; when he died there were, it is said, only three households where it was not observed. These and other reformatations he strove to bring about, not only by Sabbath instruction, but by exhortations addressed to the people when he found them assembled on the harvest fields or elsewhere.

But, on the other hand, not a few of the ministers of last century seem to have been little influenced by a sense of the importance or sacredness of their office. There was one clique of them, that when one wrote a sermon the others got the use of it in turn. An old kirk-officer in Canisbay used to tell of his being the bearer of these always dry and often dun-coloured documents to and from his own minister. To the names of several the story is attached, that when told on a Sabbath morning by their wives that some of the parishioners were seen

setting out to hear ministers at a distance, they would reply, "Look if you can see any of them with my stipend on his back!" Some of them were ludicrously eccentric—a few were known as shrewd factors and farmers. Some perpetrated a little feeble literature, covering doubtful orthodoxy. Mr. Ferme of Wick it was who first among the Presbyterian ministers openly taught Arminian doctrine—a leaven which gradually spread and vitiated the teaching of almost all the pulpits of the county.

The truth is, that the long winter of moderatism that began to settle on the Church of Scotland about twenty years after the Revolution settlement, and continued almost unbroken for nearly a century, extended itself to the county of Caithness. There was, during that period, just one district of the north that did not share the general declension, but remained like a green spot in the desert. In that district, of which Alness, in the county of Ross, may be taken as the centre, and which extended on the north to the verge of the lowlands of Caithness, vital godliness then flourished as never before or since. Those "Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire" have passed away; but for our church and for our land it is well that a "Son" has perpetuated the fragrance of their memory. Outside that limit, most, if not all, religious teaching substituted human reason for heaven-born faith; common morality for gospel holiness. This long season of spiritual gloom was pierced in Caithness at some points and at some periods by rays of light. The parish of Reay was so favoured. Mr. Alexander Pope, who was settled there in 1734, was a man of rough edge, but vigorous and faithful—well fitted to grapple with the semi-barbarism of the times and with the prevailing ignorance of divine truth. His preaching was sound and evangelical, as is evinced by tradition and also by some of his written remains which we have had an opportunity of perusing. He was succeeded by Mr. David Mackay, who, although laid aside for many years, was regarded, while able to exercise his ministry, as one who preached the truth in purity.

Of greater repute than either of these was Mr. John Sutherland of Halkirk, who laboured there from 1745 till 1765. From all parts of the county, persons hungering for the "bread of life" used to gather to his preaching, which was distinguished both by fearless reproof of sin and by powerful exhibition of the doctrines of grace, and which was blessed for the conversion and edification of many souls. His ministry was brought to an abrupt close, in a way to which we shall afterwards have occasion to advert. About the middle of last century, moreover, godly dissenting ministers visited the county, and drew around them out of the lifeless establishment not a few of her best sons who never returned to her communion. Thus were formed the Secession churches of Newton, near Wick, and of Thurso. Of the latter, Mr. William Douie, was the first minister, and the sweet savour of his name still lingers there. Nor should we overlook the efforts of Sir Wm. Sinclair, of Keiss, who preached to a congregation of forty or fifty of his own tenantry for about fourteen years, from 1750. We have no means of ascertaining the character of his doctrine, but may infer what it was from the fruits it bore. For many years in that quarter a number of persons of the Baptist denomination adorned the profession of the gospel by a becoming life and conversation.

In 1797, the well-known Mr. James Haldane visited Caithness on a preaching tour. In his biography, the spiritual condition of the county at that time is described as most deplorable. The town of Thurso had not been catechised for thirty years, and in all the ten parishes there was scarcely an instance of the gospel being faithfully preached. Mr. Haldane states in his "Journal" that he had been informed that about fifty or sixty years ago many of the ministers were faithful preachers of Christ, whose transmitted testimony, along with the instruction and example of "humble individuals," had been blessed of God for keeping alive a spirit of real religion, and that those persons were in general such as met together by themselves for religious worship and conference on the Lord's-day.



Mr. Haldane, during this visit, preached at Wick and Thurso on the Sabbaths, and in country parishes on the week days. The town congregations he addressed numbered often 3000 or 4000 persons, gathered from a wide range of country. While in Thurso, he went one Sabbath to the Parish Church, where a sermon was preached, in which the minister cautioned the people against trusting for acceptance with God to the blood of Christ. "His peace-speaking blood was only for the holy and the good." In the evening of the same day Mr. Haldane preached in the open-air, and taking occasion to show the fallacy of the doctrine set forth during the day, some of the people called out, "Stop him, stone him ;" to which, however, no one responded.

At Wick, Mr. H. had also an opportunity of hearing the parish minister, who represented that men in becoming Christians first began to work out their own salvation, and then God wrought in them—doctrines which, in the evening, to a large congregation, where the minister himself was present, Mr. Haldane took occasion to refer to and to set aside. His preaching stirred the hearts of many in Caithness, and was blessed for the awakening of some and for the refreshing of others already in the faith. Indeed, it would appear, as his biographer observes, that no period of his life was distinguished by more unmistakable marks of the Lord's favour than the six weeks during which he laboured in Caithness.

One result of his visit was that many then also left the Established Church, and were formed into the Congregational churches of Wick and Thurso ; the former having for its first minister Mr. Cleghorn, and the latter Mr. Ballantyne—both excellent men, whose labours seem not to have been in vain in the Lord.

But, undoubtedly, the means most owned of the Lord for the creation and maintenance of spiritual life in Caithness, during this generally dreary period, was the mission charge of Achreny, in the parish of Halkirk. This and other such missions were a

singular blessing to the country during the last century, for there godly and gifted men, who were carefully excluded from parochial charges under the control of patrons, found refuge. The exact date of the establishment of the Achreny mission we are unable to ascertain, but the names of its ministers form a bright roll. Mr. Hugh M'Kay, afterwards of Moy ; Mr. John Robertson, of Kingussie ; Mr. John Macdonald of Ferintosh ; Mr. John Munro, of Halkirk ; Mr. Finlay Cook, of Reay—all successively occupied this sphere.

With the exception of these scattered and casual lights, the county may be said to have been "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of spiritual death." It was then that the Lord raised up the eminent man who is the subject of the following brief sketch ; and in attempting such a sketch, we cannot but express our regret that something of the kind was not long since done by some one better qualified. Thirty years—for it is so long ago since he was removed—is a lapse of time when the most familiar features become misty in the eye of memory, and when much that would make contribution to such a memoir must cease to be remembered. But, notwithstanding, no name looms larger in the religious horizon of Caithness than that of the late minister of Watten.

THE  
REV. ALEXANDER GUNN

WAS born at Lochend of Watten in the year 1773. His father was John Gunn, tacksman of Hestigrow, in the parish of Bower, who is still remembered as an upright, intelligent, and warm-hearted man. but with a somewhat keen temper, common, we believe, to all in whose veins runs the blood of the clan Gunn. One section of the clan claimed for John Gunn the honour of being their chief, and the matter, it is said, was formally discussed at a meeting in Thurso, when it was adjudged to a rival. He was descended from Donald Gunn of Braemore, who, on his death-bed, calling his sons around him, declared to them his last will and testament, thus:—"I bequeath Braemore to you. I gained it by the sword, and if you cannot retain it by the same title, you deserve to lose it." Thereafter the old chief was interred by his clansmen in a truly primitive fashion—

"No useless coffin enclosed his breast ;"

but, wrapping him in the skin of the red-deer, they conveyed him to the last resting-place of the Gunns in the burying-ground of Spittal.

John Gunn's wife was Jane Horne, daughter of John Horne of Scouthel, and sister of John Horne of Stirkoke, and James Horne of Langwell. She was in some respects a contrast to her husband, being of a very gentle disposition, and she discharged the duties of life always in a calm and contented spirit. The writer, her grandson, would fain dwell on her memory—it is to him a pleasing spot in the retrospect of the past. When he knew her she had retired a widow to Scouthel, the home of her ancestors. It was interesting to hear her tell

of old times in Caithness (for, when she was born, the agitation of the rebellion of '45 had not subsided), when manners were simpler and the habits of society kindlier. Her early religious life was associated with the ministry of Mr. Douie of Thurso, to hear whom she used to ride on Sabbaths a distance of twenty-four miles; and even until she was nearly ninety years of age she rode to the church of Watten. Fondly we remember her mild countenance and venerable form, as latterly by her own fireside she sat meditating daily on the Word of God. To that Word, as to what alone was worth the holding, she clung, when her failing faculties had lost their grasp of everything else. She died in the hundredth year of her age.

Of this worthy couple, the late minister of Watten was eldest son, and was born, as has been said, at Lochend of Watten, before they removed to Hestigrow. His mother used to tell that a godly maternal uncle of hers, named Sandison, took the child in his arms, shortly after its birth, and said that the Lord would yet make him useful in the advancement of His kingdom. And, indeed, in very early youth, Mr. Gunn gave indications of tastes and likings above those which usually characterize children. On a fine harvest day, for instance, his father, who was pressing all on the farm into the work of the season, sought for Alexander outside and inside the house, but in vain. He was absorbed by a book within a box-bed, with its doors shut, a beam of needful light passing through a hole left by the removal of a fir knot. At another time he was sent to the hill-pasture to mind some cattle. When evening came he returned, and cattle with him, but few of them his father's. The servants knowing their master's rather hasty temper expected to see the boy punished for his carelessness, but his father quietly said, "I suspect the Lord has other work for this boy than minding my cattle."

Mr. Gunn first left home to attend the Parish School of Wick, taught by Mr. William Milne, afterwards minister of

Canisbay, who doubtless little thought that his young pupil would so seriously cross his path in after life. Thereafter he was sent to the Parish School of Reay, where there was then a teacher of considerable repute, Mr. William Munro. Here he was school-fellow of the late Dr. Macdonald of Urquhart; and a friendship then began between them which grew in later years into a warm Christian fellowship.

When about eighteen years of age, Mr. Gunn went to college to Aberdeen. Travelling thither from Caithness was not an easy undertaking. The roads were often mere tracks; there were no public conveyances, and very seldom communication by sea—so students generally journeyed the whole way on foot. Mr. Gunn's father sent horses with his son across the Ord of Caithness. There were certain manses on the road where students met with hospitable entertainment. One of these was the Manse of Resolis; and there, during a temporary sojourn, Mr. Gunn first met his future wife. Her father was the Rev. Mr. Arthur of Resolis, and her mother daughter of Mr. Munro of Poyntzfield.

At the Divinity Hall of Aberdeen, in those days, the example set before young men and the instructions imparted to them were little fitted to profit them. Mr. Gunn used to say that if students entered it with grace in their hearts, they would, if that were possible, lose it before they left. Of the influence of this teaching and of the mould into which it cast men, we have examples in the Strathbogie ministers of the Disruption time.

During one of the intervals of a college session, Mr. Gunn was tutor in the family of the Rev. Mr. Gunn, minister of Latheron. Mr. Mackintosh, afterwards of Thurso, was then in the Bruan mission charge, and it was one day announced in the neighbourhood that the late Dr. Mackintosh of Tain was to preach in the meeting-house. Mr. Gunn attended. That day was a notable one in his history. For then it was that "a light shone round about him above the brightness of the sun;" that his eyes were opened to see the relation in which he stood

to God as a sinner under a broken covenant ; and that his heart was so stricken thereby that he was set upon the enquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" This question in his case obtained a satisfactory answer—one that met the requirements of the holy law of God, and the requirements of a living conscience, for these two agree in one. This answer—gospel deliverance—Mr. Gunn obtained before he began his ministry, although we do not say that he reached that assurance of having obtained it, which he afterwards so manifestly enjoyed, until after his settlement in Watten. The writer was told by Dr. Macdonald of Urquhart, that on the occasion of one of his visits to Caithness, passing a day at the Manse of Watten, he was so struck with his friend's unusual spirituality of mind and conversation, that he asked him the reason of so marked a change. Mr. Gunn replied, that after reading some time ago "Scott's Force of Truth," he felt that an attainment in the Divine life he needed such as he had not hitherto known—that thereupon he besought the Lord to lead him into this knowledge of Himself, and that before rising from his knees he got what he sought. We give this as we had it from the Doctor's lips.

Mr. Gunn was licensed by the Presbytery of Caithness in the year 1803 ; some members of which body looked on him and on Dr. Macdonald, who was licensed shortly afterwards, with no great complacency, characterizing them as "dangerous young men"—a character they both fully justified, for very dangerous did their powerful exhibition of true scriptural doctrine prove to the corrupt teaching of these men. What that teaching was may be inferred from the following incident :—One of Mr. Gunn's first sermons was preached in his native parish of Watten, and on arriving at the manse after sermon, the minister, who had been a hearer, sternly said, "You were not popular to-day, sir." "In what respect?" replied the other. "You spoke too much of the badness of our hearts. You had nothing to do with that ; if our hearts are bad, we ought to make them better !"

Mr Gunn began his public work in Orkney, having accepted an invitation to become assistant to the minister of Orphir. While there he opened a prayer-meeting and Sabbath-school; and these efforts, along with his pulpit services, were blessed, we believe, for the awakening of some persons to true soul-concern. Several of these used for years after he left the island to come across during the sacramental seasons at Watten.

This parish becoming vacant in 1805, by the translation of the minister (who was also factor on the estate) to Carnbee, in Fifeshire, Mr. Gunn received the presentation, and his first sermon, as minister of Watten, is said to have been indicative of his subsequent career. The text was, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."

Coming upon Caithness from the south, leaving behind the fertile woodlands of Ross and the birch-clad straths of Sutherland, a stranger sees the county lying before him a flat expanse, relieved by few prominent features; and should he unfortunately come upon it toward nightfall, its cultivated tracts are often hidden from view by the veil of mist which, from the peculiar dampness of the soil, hangs over its surface. Very similar to this, its physical, was the spiritual aspect of Caithness a century ago—a desert, diversified only by a few green spots, and these concealed by the mist of Arminian error which surrounded them.

But "the time to favour" Caithness "had come;" and the Lord's wisdom, in His way of doing so, was not less manifest than was His grace in doing so at all. Raising up from among her own people one who knew well their temper and training, the Lord gave him a heart right with Himself and consecrated to His service. He endowed him likewise with a greatness of mind and a fixedness of purpose capable of resisting error and of overcoming opposition, and He placed him in the centre of the "ong desolations." One well-meaning, but

weak, would not have suited this sphere ; one neither weak nor well-meaning would have harmed it ; but one who had the heart of a son, the arm of a servant, and the spirit of a soldier—such a one would suit it, and such a one was given to Caithness in the person of Mr. Gunn.

Mr. Gunn's personal appearance was striking. He was a man of marked features and of massive frame, with a majesty of manner and weight of bearing which we have never seen equalled. His habitually elevated tone of thought, his spirituality of mind, and the depth and earnestness of his convictions may account for this impressiveness of manner, which was such that those who had no special reason for approaching him never thought of doing so : yet, when he was known, he was found to be extremely affable. We need scarcely say, moreover, that the natural gifts of one who so powerfully swayed his fellow-men for good were of a high order. His intellectual powers, naturally strong, were disciplined by early and uninterrupted study ; his memory was stored with varied information ; and what we may call the emotional part of his nature was peculiarly susceptible of strong and abiding impressions. In him was much "deepness of earth ;" and divine grace not eradicating natural gifts, but sanctifying them, his character was one of rare moral power.

Of not a few of the solemn Sabbath services at Watten, in the closing days of Mr. Gunn's ministry, the writer, though then in early youth, has a vivid recollection, and having often heard these described by some of the most serious worshippers there, he may endeavour to present to the reader one of these days, which will also afford an opportunity of exhibiting the salient features of Mr. Gunn's ministry.

The old Parish Church of Watten, which stood nearly on the site of its present sharp-angled successor, was pleasantly and conspicuously situated high up on one of the slopes that overlook the loch. It was of the old cross shape, and, if not a very elegant structure, was a time-honoured one, and its undying



associations give it an unequally undying place in the memory of many, for of "this man and that man" it may be said "that they were born there."

Those few words *in memoriam* of the old church, such of these persons as still survive will not think out of place in this record, nor that we should remark that the various roads leading towards it were sheltered in winter and adorned in summer by unusually luxuriant hawthorn hedges; nor even that we should call to mind the old churchyard, now reduced, or rather raised to a dull uniformity, but which then, irregularly sloping from the church, was well adapted to the use made of it on sacramental occasions, when, on its grave-stones and hillocks, hundreds sat solemnly listening to the voices of the saintly ministers of Reay, Bruan, and Halkirk.

Along the roads leading to the church there might be seen such streams of people gathering, that one wondered how the building could contain them; and it only did so by every pew and passage being filled, the people of Watten of a bygone generation cheerfully obeying the injunction to "entertain strangers," in the way of accommodating them with seats—for many strangers (that is, non-parishioners) were there. Indeed, at the outset of Mr. Gunn's ministry, it was far otherwise. Very indifferent attendance on divine ordinances marked the county, and ministers and people thought little of it. This, however, was one of the things which in his own parish he at once rectified; and by and bye, to a church already well filled, persons from other parishes began to gather, for the fame of the minister of Watten began to spread. The matter of his doctrine was new (for, unhappily, as has been shown in the previous chapter, faithful evangelical preaching was then a novelty), and his manner of delivering it was powerful and stirring, and persons who had opportunities of hearing him at Communion occasions in the neighbourhood had such impressions left upon their minds as that they invariably felt, "We must hear thee again concerning this matter."

On these occasions he generally preached in the open-air, with a power and unction that captivated the hearts of the godly, drew after him the minds of any who had a spark of Divine life, and pierced the consciences of many a careless sinner. We have had special opportunity of hearing of one such visit that Mr. Gunn paid to the parish of Olig in the year 1816. On the Sabbath he preached in the churchyard. The text was one that dwells distinctly on the memories of men yet seemingly unconcerned who heard it—"Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man on whom is the mark"—(Ezekiel ix. 6); and his tones, they say, yet ring in their ears. This was a discourse evidently of extraordinary power. The congregation seemed spell-bound as he unfolded to them and enforced, in a way that they had never before heard, the authority of the Divine Lawgiver—man's responsibility—his position and character as a violator of God's law—the scheme of redemption originating in Sovereign grace, issuing only through the blood of the Mediator, and reaching man in the way of creating him anew through the incorruptible seed of the Word by the power of the Holy Ghost—that those possessing this new creation and manifesting its fruits were the men on whom "the mark" was set, and that all others, no matter how near the sanctuary they seemed to be—ministers, elders, or other professors of religion—lay open to the stroke of the slayer.

During the discourse the wind took the top off the tent, and the heavy hand of the impassioned speaker sent the book-board before him into fragments; but these incidents, which, on other occasions might have furnished matter of diversion, at this moment seemed but fitting adjuncts of this impressive scene. The language of the companies of people going home was, "We have heard strange things to-day." One man crossing the Dunnet Sands remarked, "Mr. Gunn has in one day broken down what others have been building up in Caithness for the last thirty years." We have heard that a lad in the parish was

so impressed by that sermon that his master, who observed his anxiety, said to him (hoping thereby, probably, to shake off his own convictions) "Never mind what you heard to-day, for, if what yon man said were true, nobody will get to heaven." So "some said he was a good man ; others, that he deceived the people."

Thus, as we have said, many who had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Gunn in neighbouring parishes, and to whom his doctrine became the "bread of life," could not longer put up with the spiritual fare dealt out to them at home, and so from the remotest parts of the county persons might be seen on a Sabbath morning traversing the distance between their own homes and the Church of Watten. Amongst these we cannot forbear mentioning David Budge—*venerabile nomen*—who for many years, in winter and summer, walked weekly from Barrack Hill to Watten. Starting alone from his own house, as he went on he would be joined by others, till, when they reached Bower, they formed a goodly band, which, on the Hill of Watten, fell into the stream of parishioners. Acquaintanceship sprung up between persons from different parts of the county who met at Watten, which ripened into the warmest Christian fellowships, so that ultimately one element of happiness in a Sabbath spent there was the satisfaction of seeing the faces of valued friends. Many a heartfelt greeting took place there when the streams of travellers met ; while, let us also say that often, after the services were over, such friends parted with merely a silent pressure of the hand, their hearts being too much occupied and exercised by what they had been hearing to allow of anything else. We have known of companies reaching the town of Wick without a word almost being uttered.

Our readers will think that our review of a Sabbath-day's work at Watten proceeds rather tardily, but we cannot help weaving these to us interesting reminiscences into the narrative. Nor will we overlook even the old kirk-officer, William Ritchie, who, when from the steeple-window he spied the

minister leaving the manse, which was about a mile off, began to ring the bell. When the minister arrived at the church-yard gate, William had a way of making the bell beat "quick time," and upon this signal every sound ceased, not merely the bell, but also the voice of Mr. John Finlayson, precentor, who, till that moment, according to ancient custom, had been reading the Scriptures to the assembled part of the congregation. The minister's grave step and thoughtful air, as he proceeded to the pulpit, always impressed the more discerning of his hearers, some of whom we have heard say that they had three sermons in Watten before the regular sermon began, viz., the minister's way of entering on the duties of the day, his manner of reading the Psalms and chapter, and of engaging in prayer. He left no doubt on their minds that he was one fully alive to the realities with which he was dealing; indeed, the very cast of his countenance showed how deeply he was impressed with the things "unseen and spiritual." If it was clouded and overcast, the dark side of truth would that day be presented; if on the other hand it was bright and beaming, there would follow a glorious display of the gospel provision with which his own soul was enriched.

Great fulness of doctrinal statement marked Mr. Gunn's preaching. Some work not exclusively, yet most frequently, a special field of truth: he wrought more equally the whole. During the earlier years of his ministry he preached a good deal what is called "the law." We do not, of course, mean legal doctrine, but a spiritual out-bringing of fallen man's condition before God. This is needful at all times, but it was specially so then, when man's present state and eternal prospects were so superficially dealt with as to be practically ignored, and when reconciliation by Christ Jesus, if referred to, was so mixed up with human merit, that it was like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, "part of iron and part of miry clay." To preach the law at that time was therefore doubly incumbent on a faithful minister—not only for the instruction and humiliation of his

fellow-sinners, but also for the overthrow of the errors referred to. And Mr. Gunn did this powerfully, exhibiting the purity and justice of God as reflected in His holy law, setting forth man's guilt and exposure to wrath everlasting, because of his breach of that law; and his being wholly powerless, because "dead in trespasses and in sin," to do anything whereby he might regain a standing in the sight of God. These, it may be said, are common doctrines—they were not so then, and they are not so at any time, in the way he handled them. Let it not be supposed, however, that his declaration of the gospel remedy was straightened. Far otherwise. The love of God the Father, the grace of God the Son—personal and mediatorial—and the power and fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, were not only declared, but also largely held forth; and towards the latter years of his ministry, these truths received from him singularly full treatment. Mr. Gunn at one time having had to go to Edinburgh to get an operation performed, he himself told Mr. David Steven afterwards, that he had then such a sense of the love of God dwelling in his soul that it entirely swallowed up his sense of bodily pain. During his absence the friend referred to had a dream to the effect that the pulpit of Watten church had been moved to the south end of the building, and on this dream he thought events cast light, for, when his minister returned his preaching was marked by a still greater richness and unction; and with this it continued to be imbued to the end of his course.

Mr. Gunn was also an experimental preacher. Christian experience we take to be the effects produced on the hearts of men by the operation of Divine truth, and experimental preaching must therefore consist in describing these effects and distinguishing them from spurious feelings. Both the Messrs. Cook excelled in this, and Mr. Archibald could scarcely be surpassed in his microscopic insight into the workings of grace in the heart. But we have thought that the Great Author of gifts used Mr. Gunn as an instrument in His own hand for the

*production* of Christian experience, and that He made use of the Messrs. Cook for the *delineation* of such experience. And this must have been the reason why Mr. Gunn's devoted hearers so gladly welcomed the Messrs. Cook when they came to Watten at sacramental or other occasions.

Evidence remains to this day that Mr. Gunn was diligent and careful in his preparations for the pulpit; that he took pains to present the truth in an orderly way, as best fitted to instruct the minds and impress the hearts of his hearers; and that he also clothed his thoughts in admirable language, which, while comprehensible by the most unlearned, could not be reckoned, even by the most fastidious, beneath the dignity of his subject. Thus, considering his natural gifts of mind—his spiritual acquaintance with revealed truth—its profound impression on his own soul—his power of thought and utterance—his zeal in his Master's service—his desire for God's glory and the salvation of souls—it may be conceived how telling his preaching was at all times; and when obtaining special enlargement of view and spirit, and bursting the bonds of prepared meditation, how he rivetted the attention of the careless and melted the hearts of the godly. Truly solemn, too, were the appeals he would frequently make to the consciences of all, declaring that he had set death and life before them; that not a drop of their blood would be found in his skirts at the "great day;" and that he took heaven and earth to witness against despisers of the "truth as it is in Jesus." As might be expected of one who so "went forth bearing precious seed," he "returned, bringing sheaves with him."

Mr. Gunn had many seals given him of his ministry; indeed, this is so well known among us as scarcely to require mention. For those brought into God's family through his instrumentality, and who received their spiritual upbringing by his hands, became almost all of them as the "sons of a king;" their Christianity of a living, solid, and scriptural stamp; so that they have been the religious leaders or "men" of the communities where

their lot has been cast, and of whom a very few yet remain—salt and light—in our generation.

Any notice of religious services at Watten at that time would be incomplete without referring to the communion occasions there. These were lively times, when the ministers were (besides Mr. Gunn), Mr. Munro, Messrs. Cook, and latterly Mr. Taylor, Thurso; when the “men” were not only those resident in the neighbourhood, but included many throughout Caithness and the Reay country; and when among the “people” might be numbered not a few of the Lord’s witnesses from all parts of the county. Now-a-days Satan, as an “angel of light,” is informing us that it would be more orderly and more for the comfort of those engaged in the ordinance, if persons not connected with congregations would stay at home; if every one would eat—as “his own supper,” so his own sacrament—at “his own home.” But the Lord’s people in former times, and we suppose still, were not of this mind. They thought that if the Lord was so pleased with the meetings of His saints, that where “two or three met in His name,” He would make one of the company; it was certainly not less likely that where a goodly number of them were gathered together, His presence would be “in the midst of them;” and His presence they felt it was that made an ordinance worthy of the name. Moreover, the apostle speaks of being “filled with the company of his brethren;” and those we speak of desired the same thing. Sacramental gatherings helped to bring this about—they were the only opportunities many of the Lord’s people had of knowing each other in this world, and of holding pleasant and profitable intercourse. It was also good for those young in the faith to have, on such occasions, opportunities of beholding the “walk and conversation” of fathers and mothers in Christ. Example and precept the young would receive from them, such as would mould their own characters, for if the Lord write “living epistles,” they are worthy to be “known and read of all men.” It may be argued that numbers attend

at communion seasons for no good end. But if even we had the power to prevent this, we would hesitate to use it. This is one of the numberless instances of the abuse of a good thing. True, such persons are no help to the ordinance, but they have precious souls; and where is it more likely that the "other sheep, not yet of the fold," may be ingathered, than in the "green pastures," where the Good Shepherd feedeth His flocks, and where His "remembrancers" are met together in His name and by His authority?

There were, therefore, as we have said, great gatherings at Watten. Ministers and people were helpful to each other. Critical hearing and sitting in judgment were not thought of, nor was there temptation to it—such soundness and power were found in the preaching, such spiritual desire marked the hearing. At the close of each day's exercises the leading Christian men and women and many others crossed the hill between Watten and Bower to the house of Mr. David Steven, where hospitality was extended on no limited scale. The wonder was how accommodation was found there for so many. Mr. Gordon, Thurso, used jocularly to designate this rendezvous "the barracks," and Mr. William Ross has told us that he has counted upwards of forty pious persons of note seated in Mr. Steven's apartment, which cannot be more than nine feet by twelve, but he would add, "love makes room." Of these almost all have gone up to the Father's house—Mr. Ross himself among the last—but their names are familiar and fragrant to some still surviving.

Evening meetings would be held by these men in Mr. Steven's stackyard, which would be crowded by a large congregation; and these often did not break up till far on in the morning—such tokens of the Lord's presence would be manifest in the spiritual liberty and enlargement of the speakers, and in the soul-refreshment of the hearers. These were the origin of the Sabbath night prayer-meetings, now held on similar occasions throughout the county. In regard to the



questionings by some as to the propriety of such, as unfitting the people for the exercises of the following day, we may remark that these meetings are a relic of times of higher spiritual life than now—times when such services were not a weariness to the flesh, the “joy of the Lord,” as one has said, “being found to be a sweet substitute for sleep.” But should this spiritual life utterly cease to characterize us—should the men of grace and gifts, who have hitherto led these meetings, be entirely removed, and others of a different stamp rise in their room, then reason would they be discontinued.

Although such numbers flocked to sacraments at Watten, Mr. Gunn was very far from admitting persons indiscriminately to sealing ordinances. Not only did he require to satisfy himself, more or less, as to the sincerity of the profession of the applicant, by examining closely his acquaintance with the power of godliness ; but he also conformed to the law of the church, that the person should produce a written certificate from the minister or session of his own parish. This was often with difficulty obtained, because of the aversion with which some of the neighbouring ministers regarded Mr. Gunn and all who were attached to him ; and a few carried this so far as to dispense with his assistance at their own communions, or fix these on the same day as at Watten. Before passing from noticing sacramental seasons, we may add that Mr. Gunn’s table services were always noted for faithful discrimination between “the precious and the vile.” One day at Keiss a minister having said, in serving a table, that he hoped no unbelieving Thomas was there, Mr. Gunn, who served the next table, said, with great feeling, “Would to God we had many a Thomas here : I fear few among us lament to-day, as he did, an absent Lord.” At another time, serving a table at Halkirk, and many worldly people being seated, Mr. Gunn solemnly said, “The greater number here, their communion is to be found in their earthly goods and store-houses, but not at the Lord’s table.”

Having thus briefly sketched the general character of Mr.

Gunn's preaching, we shall notice the manner in which he discharged other pastoral duties.

The responsibility of his office did not sit lightly on Mr. Gunn. He was a wrestler with God for souls and for the increase of his Master's kingdom, and was careful to walk in such a way before the world as that the ungodly "found no occasion against him save concerning the law of his God."

His method of dealing with his people, when catechising them, was faithful and edifying—faithful to those who might suppose that their rank or age exempted them from examination, and instructive as regarded the ignorant or timid. Such he would lead on to an answer by his way of putting the question, adding, "Just say what you think, that I may know how to speak to you." The writer remembers being on one occasion catechised by him—that was all right—but when his grandmother, to whom he looked up as the most venerable of catechists, was next catechised by the minister—and he, too, her own son—that seemed an inversion of the natural order of things that he could not understand.

An old woman from a distant parish, where she had been well primed with Arminian doctrine, and where she was a communicant, having come to live in Watten, happened one day to be asked the question, What is the Lord's Supper? She replied, "I cannot repeat the answer, but I know all about it well enough." *Minister*—"The heart is deceitful." *Woman*—"Yes, the hearts of the wicked; but I have a good heart." *Minister*—"There is none that doeth good, no, not one." *Woman*—"But there are many good people." *Minister*—"If you continue of that mind, I must withdraw from you the privilege of which this question speaks; and if you go to eternity as you are, you will perish—and, alas! yours are the sentiments of every human heart, although in you they appear without a covering."

The many sinful social practices which he found existing in

his own parish, and, indeed, prevailed throughout the county, Mr. Gunn set himself resolutely to suppress. This was no easy duty. He met with long and bitter opposition; but by faithful admonition and firm exercise of discipline, he ultimately succeeded. Smuggling, for instance, was one of these practices. To persons who engaged in it he refused church privileges, and took pains to inform the people of the violation which it involved of the laws of God and man. Drinking and dancing revels also met with his unsparing rebuke. One of the landowners of the parish—not, however, resident in it—having attained his majority, the agent on the estate celebrated the event in a way which he knew to be entirely at variance with the feelings of the minister. He invited the tenantry to a great rout, kept up till daybreak. Many of the people attended more from fear than from choice, knowing that otherwise they would obtain no favour at the factor's hands. A great gun was pointed and fired off at the manse, in token of defiance. As might be expected, there was great "excess of riot." One man, unable to keep his footing on his way home, was found drowned in a stream he had to cross. These proceedings Mr. Gunn faithfully denounced as dishonouring to God and destructive to the souls of men. He also suspended the parish for that year from sealing ordinances. This raised against him a storm of reproach, and the factor urged the people to prosecute the minister for withholding church privileges. Mr. Finlay Cook, hearing of the matter, visited Mr. Gunn, and encouraged him, saying, that by the stand he was taking, he much strengthened the hands of his brethren in their efforts to oppose the sinful practices of the day; "moreover," Mr. Cook added, "I do not think that man (meaning the factor) will long trouble you." He died soon after.

When visiting persons in sickness, Mr. Gunn dealt with them faithfully and judiciously. To a pious man in such a case he said, "James, do you think you are to die at this time?" The other replied that he did think so, and mentioned something

he had read in one of Mr. Boston's works, which was occurring to him in regard to this. "I see, James," replied the minister, "you are not to be taken away at present, for, when that time comes, it will not be what Boston or what any man said that will be on your mind, but what the Lord Himself says to you in His Word." The man recovered.

A rough character in the parish, being taken seriously ill, sent for the minister, and began with tears to express great penitence for his past life. A friend who had accompanied Mr. Gunn remarked, on his way home, that surely a great change had been wrought on that man. He answered, "Well, if he be taken out of the world just now, I shall be silent regarding him; if he is spared, time will tell." His health returned, and with it he returned to his former evil courses.

If by anything Mr. Gunn was distinguished, it was by the entire subjection of his mind to the authority of God speaking in His Word. This was the principle that uniformly directed his conduct and explained it. It constrained him to oppose on every hand what was contrary to that authority. He quailed not before any threat or danger, if he believed the Word of the Lord was on his side. The limits of this narrative would be wholly overstepped if we should relate the many contentings he was engaged in on behalf of the doctrine, government, and discipline of the church. We may mention, however, a few of these. The Sabbath was then, as indeed it is now, greatly profaned, although not quite in the same forms. It was customary throughout the county, at the time of Mr. Gunn's settlement in Watten, to advertise in the churchyards, when the congregations were dismissing, all the rousps, markets, and public meetings of the ensuing week. Mr. Gunn put a stop to this in his own parish, and gradually it ceased elsewhere.

On the occasion of the election of a member of Parliament for the county, the usual proclamation was brought to Watten by a law-officer on the Sabbath, to be read in church at the conclusion of Divine service. This Mr. Gunn would not allow.

The Sheriff wrote, warning him that the consequences of his act were imprisonment and confiscation of goods. Mr. Gunn answered to the effect that, where the honour and glory of God were concerned, a fine of five shillings, or of imprisonment and confiscation, were all alike to him. The Sheriff again wrote demanding an explicit answer to the question, "Whether or not, if an officer were sent with the proclamation, he would allow it to be read?" Mr. Gunn replied that it might be read to the walls of the church, which were their own, but not to his people; and, accordingly, he intimated to the congregation that next Sabbath they would meet in the open air on a field near the manse. They did so, and in external comfort. At the beginning of the service Mr. Gunn rose to give out the psalm, with a joyful yet solemn countenance, saying, "Let us sing to the praise of our redeeming God." He preached that day with special life and unction—many tears were shed. He took no notice of the circumstances in which they were met. The Sheriff-officer came to the church during the day, but found it empty. On the day of election it appeared that the edict had not been duly served in the church of Watten, and the question arose, what was to be done with the refractory minister? Some of the authorities, in great wrath, advised severe measures; others objected to this, saying they had nothing to do with ministers of the gospel; others again remarked, that it was the unfaithfulness of the church herself that allowed such things to be imposed upon her—and, amid this variety of opinion, the matter dropped. Thus in His providence did the Lord defend His faithful servant.

When the next election occurred, again appeared an official for the same purpose at the church of Watten; and when the minister rose to pray before the afternoon sermon, the man rose also, and began to read the proclamation. Mr. Gunn stopped and said, "Put that man out." "That is all I want," answered the other, and off he set to Wick, thinking that Mr. Gunn was now involved in the deforcement of a law-officer in his duty.

But he discovered his mistake, and found that he had laid himself open to prosecution for the interruption of Divine service—a course, however, which Mr Gunn, when it was suggested to him, declined to adopt, contenting himself with the reflection, “They fall into their own pits.”

At a time when an augmentation of stipend was proposed to be sought for him, a relative of his own—a lawyer—who interested himself in the matter, directed him to cite the heritors from the pulpit on Sabbath, as was customary. Mr. Gunn replied, that if the subject was to be attained by a step so dishonouring to that holy day, he would not seek it. The lawyer bantered him for his scrupulousness, but seeing that Mr. Gunn would not be moved, cited the heritors himself by an official letter. This leads us to notice an unusual occurrence in the church of Watten on another occasion. A person, of whom the minister was heir-at-law, had died shortly before, leaving some property. One who also had some claim caused proclamation of the minister’s legal rights to be made at the church door on the Sabbath without his sanction. After sermon he stood up and took the Lord to witness that he had no hand in the proceeding. The person referred to died soon after, and before he had time to obtain what he was in such haste to possess.

The exercise of church discipline, according to scriptural rule, Mr. Gunn strictly adhered to. In this as in other matters there is a tendency at times to follow extremes. At the present day discipline seems to be falling below the requirements of Scripture. One cause of this will probably be found in the increased sections of the visible church, those of them that regard numbers as strength often receiving fugitives from the discipline of the others. In former times discipline was more rigorous than the rule of Scripture—not arising, however, from a higher sense of duty, but a remnant of Popish penance. And it would appear to have been sometimes used for very unworthy purposes. It might be compounded, however, by a

money fine, in proportion to the quality of the offender.\* This money was supposed to go to the poor of the parish. It is told, however, of the wife of one of those in a certain parish who had the handling of it, that, bitterly complaining on one occasion of the badness of the times, she said, "We will be ill off this year, there are so few defaulters!" To such a system Mr. Gunn gave no quarter, and this raised against him no small outcry, as cruelly leaving no door of escape for poor delinquents.

About the time Mr. Gunn was settled in Watten, the long night of moderatism, which had settled on the Church of Scotland, began to show signs of dawn. Witnesses for the truth had already appeared in the persons of Dr. Erskine, Sir Henry Moncrieff, and some others. These raised their voices against the corruptions of doctrine and government in the church. But men of like spirit now began to multiply, who were not only lights in their own individual spheres, but united themselves for the maintenance and spread of the truth. They originated the Bible Society, which has done so much to cheapen and circulate the Scriptures at home and abroad. Mr. Gunn took an intensely warm interest in this movement, and

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\* The meetings of kirk-session were held on Sabbath up till about 1808 or 1810. Delinquents were rebuked three times, and during last century were charged a fine of 16s. 8d., which about the beginning of the present century was increased to £2.

One of the elders, called the session bailie, held a commission from the Sheriff of the county, authorizing him to inflict corporal discipline on offenders. This was sometimes done in a strange fashion, viz., cutting off the hair, ducking in a pond, or driving out of the parish.

When a man wished to be married, and could not repeat the Shorter Catechism, the session required him to produce two cautioners to the amount of £12 Scots, that he would acquire it within six weeks after his marriage.

A hand-bell was carried and rung in front of funeral processions. The bell used in Watten bears the date of 1654. Watten had also a mortcloth for covering coffins, which all the parishes seem not to have had, as there are entries in the session record of small sums, such as 1s. 6d. or 2s., paid for the use of the mortcloth, or of the bell and mortcloth, when hired by other parishes.

sought to influence others to assist it by their prayers and contributions, forming, at the same time, an association in his own parish. These men also began to testify against the evils of lay patronage. 'This system had been the bane of the church ever since the Revolution Settlement, and had occasioned the many splits in her communion. It had in her history often been cast off, but as often put back, by the civil power, which seemed very much to regard the church as an engine to be worked for political purposes ; while patrons looked upon her as a means of securing comfortable livings for their relatives or dependents. The church thus became filled with men who valued their position mainly for its temporal advantages—"Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." The evils thus began, and perpetuated by patronage, the men of evangelical stamp, raised up by the Head of the church, did not fail to perceive. They resolved to seek its abolition, and formed an association for this purpose. Mr. Gunn was one of the number. He endeavoured early to move in this direction in the Assembly, and becoming known in the south as in the north in the character of a reformer of abuses, one parish—that of Lesmahagow—entrusted to him an anti-patronage petition to the Assembly. He sought to get a hearing before that court on the subject, but we understand in vain—the moderate party which had long reigned having crushed out all opposition.

But the tide began, at length, fairly to take a turn. Mr. Gunn used to tell how that in his first days the evangelicals were few and unknown to each other in the Assembly ; but by and bye their numbers grew, and they began to draw together for mutual support and co-operation, becoming a sore thorn in the side of the dominant party. We need not rehearse here what is matter of history—how the tide of spiritual life rose and spread over the land—how the number of evangelical ministers and elders in the supreme court of the church increased, until



it culminated in a majority—so that in 1834 the Veto Act was passed, which put a curb on absolute patronage, modifying it so far as to give the consent and call of the people a distinct place in the choice of ministers. But as the facts and principles involved in the Disruption controversy may be unknown to some of the younger readers of this narrative, we may state that not long after the passing of the Veto Act, certain preachers who, because of its operation, had been rejected by parishes to which patrons had presented them, applied to that court of civil law called the Court of Session, to set aside the Veto Act as an unlawful invasion of the rights of patrons, and to compel the Presbyteries to ordain them (the presentees) on the old footing. This application the civil court entertained, and decreed accordingly. There was one Presbytery, composed almost wholly of men belonging to the moderate party, who obeyed this civil mandate, contrary to the injunctions of the General Assembly. The Assembly suspended (and afterwards, for their contumacy, deposed them), on the ground that, in accordance with their ordination vows, they ought, in a matter so purely spiritual as the ordination of a minister, to have obeyed the church and not the civil power.

The church, of course, conceded that the civil power was supreme in its own province—could do with the temporalities, the stipends, manses, and glebes as it saw fit—these belonged to itself, but that Christ was king in His own house, and the civil power had no right to enter there and overrule its internal concerns any more than the church had a right to step into the province of the civil courts. These two spheres the Lord had clearly separated. It did not affect this position for the civil courts to allege that the church was not using her authority aright; for even were that true—which it was not, as was abundantly evidenced at the time—yet not to them was she responsible any more than they were responsible to her for their civil acts. She was responsible only to her Divine Head, who had committed to her the keys of His

kingdom. Nor, moreover, did it affect the position for the civil courts to allege that the church was violating the compact between Church and State—which also was disproved at the time—for though this might warrant the State to strip her of her temporal support, it did not warrant its stripping her of what no earthly power gave her, viz., perfect liberty in the discharge of her spiritual functions.

The civil court, however, paid no regard to these distinctions, and when the Assembly deposed these ministers, it supported them, and dared the Assembly, under threat of civil pains and penalties, to interfere with their ministerial status or work, and even interdicted all other ministers from preaching within their parishes—an interdict which was an infringement of religious toleration, if not of the liberty of the subject, and which, when instantly and intentionally disregarded, as it ought to have been, the Court of Session was prudent enough not to enforce.

From the Erastian decisions of this court, the church appealed first to the House of Lords, and afterwards to the Legislature, not as if she recognised any right in them to determine the principle of spiritual independence which was involved, but as appealing from a servant to his master, to ascertain if the latter would homologate the acts of the former. These higher courts of Peers and Parliament did homologate the decisions of the inferior courts, although many eminent statesmen and judges supported the claims of the church. The church had therefore to face the alternative of either bending her neck to the yoke of Cæsar, or throwing up the advantages of her State connection. By the former, although at the expense of selling her birthright, she would gain her thirty pieces of silver—by the latter, although she lost her temporal support, she would gain the answer of a good conscience and vindicate the authority of her Divine Head. The event of the Disruption declared her decision. She would not yield up what did not belong to her to dispose of, even the blood-bought liberties of God's heritage—she would yield up her temporal advantages; and, like Abraham,

being called to go out, she obeyed, and went out, not knowing whether she went. As for those who remained behind, they that day served themselves heirs to all the Erastianism that had tarnished the glory and spoiled the liberties of the Church of Scotland, and virtually agreed that the ultimate source of authority in an Established Church was the civil government. Mr. Gunn, as well as some others who were prime movers in this "Ten Years' Conflict," was not spared to see the termination of the struggle. He and such as he laboured, and we have entered into their labours.

A flagrant instance of the operation of high-handed patronage occurred in the Presbytery of Caithness in the year 1826. The patron of Canisbay presented to that parish a person whom the people, and, indeed, the Christian community generally, believed to be very unqualified. They determined to resist the settlement where law or custom left a foothold for resistance. They appealed to the patron, but in vain—to the presentee, but he would not listen—to the Presbytery, but with the exception of Mr. Gunn, they gave them no quarter. He supported their petition. The case made a great stir at the time, and strange scenes took place at the meetings of Presbytery. The majority who had prejudged the case would, one after another, make long speeches. Mr. Gunn would answer each in turn, sweeping away every argument advanced except the law of patronage—a pillar, behind which his opponents, when beaten out of every other retreat, took refuge. They would then appeal to him for peace sake to drop his opposition, when he replied, that the opposition was rather that of the people of Canisbay, which, if dropped, his fell of itself to the ground. They would next appeal to the people, who would say, that whatever Mr. Gunn might do, they would not yield. Feelings ran high, and stormy words passed between the Presbytery and the people. The right of one Canisbay man to interfere in the case being challenged, on the ground that he was a dissenter, although his family attended the Parish Church, he replied,

“Such dissent would never have been known except for forced settlements of the kind now threatened in Canisbay.” Another man was objecting to have such an inefficient preacher put into the parish, when an old minister started to his feet and said, “Oh, what is this we are compelled to hear ; I consider Mr. ——— a very good preacher.” “Ay,” returned the Canisbay man, “it’s no wonder *you* think so, for you yourself never preached the gospel all your days !” The Presbytery, however, determined, notwithstanding the feelings and opposition of the people, to go on with the settlement. An appeal was taken to the Assembly, and Mr. Gunn went to Edinburgh with the view of supporting it, hoping to get at the same time an opportunity of expressing his mind on the abstract question of patronage. But Lord Cockburn and other men of note, whom he sought to enlist in the cause, gave him to understand that, in the present temper of the Assembly, he would not even get a hearing ; and so it turned out just as godly John Grant had predicted, while the matter was pending, “Worthy Mr. Gunn,” he said, “will not gain his point at this time, but he will deliver his own soul.”

Although Mr. Gunn was a man of great gravity of mind, which showed itself in his external deportment, yet he could on suitable occasions unbend, and relatives and Christian friends knew him as an agreeable and profitable companion. Bacon has remarked that reading makes a full man, writing a correct man, and speaking a ready man. Mr. Gunn had these attainments gained in these several ways. Although the duties of his own sphere and office engrossed the chief part of his time and attention, yet his sympathies were extended to the cause of Christ throughout the world, and he felt deep interest in the social and political questions of the day which seemed to affect that cause, and took care to make himself acquainted with them. Moreover, his severe cast of mind did not hinder his apprehending keenly the humorous side of any subject. It may therefore be believed that he shone in social intercourse as well as in public duty.

As the father of a large family, Mr. Gunn was revered and beloved. From a peculiar abstraction of manner that he had strangers sometimes wrongly estimated the place his family had in his heart. On the occasion of the death of one of his sons, Mr. Gunn's composure in the presence of others might have been taken for indifference, but one who unawares entered his study found him stretched on the floor, struggling with an anguish of spirit that no word gave sign of. And that friend understood in some measure what the heart of the father had been conflicting with, when she heard him say a few hours afterwards, in prayer, at family worship, "Not only this one. Lord, we surrender, but them all, shouldst *Thou* call for them."

Mr. Gunn began to feel the infirmities of age comparatively early; indeed, his constitution was impaired by a serious illness while he was in the prime of life. To one who called to see him after his illness, he said, "You will be expecting great things from me after being in such a furnace, but I have just to say to you what I have ever done—'Follow on to know the Lord.'" In his failing health his amiable and excellent partner was peculiarly helpful to him. She had all along been to him a true helpmate, relieving her husband from all trouble and annoyance regarding secular matters, and standing between him and unnecessary interruptions of a mere worldly kind. Yet when she saw his health required it, she would herself urge him to relinquish that "much study which is a weariness to the flesh," and would interfere with his engaging in public work when she saw that it would do him injury. After his death, Mrs. Gunn removed with her family to Aberdeen, for the sake of their education. Some years afterwards, finding her health giving way, she returned to Caithness, and in the house of her son—Dr. Gunn, Thurso—died in the peace of Jesus. Mr. Taylor, minister, who often visited her, had much pleasure in doing so. One of the last things she said to him was, "Now I know as never before that God is love."

In the autumn of 1836 it was suggested to Mr. Gunn that his health might be the better of his going from home for a few

weeks, and accordingly one of his sons drove him up the west coast of Sutherlandshire. Calling at the Manse of Thurso on his way, his friends there were expressing the hope that he would return benefited by the change. "As to that, I cannot say," he replied; "but this I can say,—

‘ He will not be in glory  
And leave me behind.’”

On reaching the Manse of Farr, he said to Mr Mackenzie, "I cannot go further, as I do not wish to leave my bones among your mountains." He returned, but did not reach his earthly home, for, turning aside into the Manse of Thurso, he immediately went to bed, and that night congestion of the brain came on. When Mrs. Gunn, who was sent for, arrived, he did not seem to know her, and thus—as one whose labours on earth were ended—he continued until the following Sabbath evening, when his spirit entered on the eternal Sabbath that remains for the people of God.

He died in September 1836, aged 62 years. We may notice that it happened that also in Mr. Taylor's house, and in the same bed, Mr. Munro, Halkirk, died, and that these were the two ministers who officiated—the one in English and the other in Gaelic—on the occasion of Mr. Taylor's induction to the parochial charge of Thurso.

Mr. Gunn's remains were carried to Watten to await the day of interment, and a solemn day that was. Very many "devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." The following touching apostrophe, by Mr. David Steven, well expresses what were their feelings on that occasion and since:

“Thou hast left this dusky stage, and thou hast left behind thee many sorrowful hearts and tearful eyes. At the time of thy entering the vineyard, the hedges were broken down—thorns and thistles covered the face of it, and wild beasts browsed on it without interruption; but through grace thou didst faithfully proclaim the name of Zion's Lord and King, and didst earnestly contend for the honour of her laws and

crown rights. To thee was given much of the undaunted spirit and courage of the Reformers, so that thy fame spread abroad and shamed many lazy shepherds who heeded not the desolations and the reproach that had fallen upon Zion. By thy life and conversation, by thy example and instructions, thou hast left thy fellow sinners without excuse. What are called now-a-days harmless amusements, thou didst call by their true Scriptural names 'revellings and such like.' And when we read the Bible, and find there the texts from which thou, as a herald of mercy, didst declare the truth of God, for the admonishing and building up of souls, we are brought back to days long gone by. If we are lost at last, our blood will not be found in thy skirts. The memory of the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and truly thine is sweet and savoury to those thou hast left behind."

The following is the inscription on Mr. Gunn's monument in the churchyard of Watten :—

E R E C T E D

BY THE

INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF WATTEN AND OTHERS,

IN MEMORY OF

THE REV. ALEXANDER GUNN,

AN EMINENT MAN OF GOD, WHOSE POWERFUL AND FAITHFUL MINISTRY  
WAS MUCH BLESSED OF THE LORD; A STEDFAST WITNESS  
FOR THE HONOUR OF CHRIST AND THE RIGHTS  
OF HIS PEOPLE.

He was Born 1773; Ordained Minister of Orphir 1803;  
Translated to Watten 1805; Died 1836.

IN MEMORY ALSO OF HIS WIFE

ELIZABETH ARTHUR,

Born 1783; Died 1841.

"With him the partner of his joys and cares,  
Whom meek and modest virtues richly crowned,  
In the bright house of 'many mansions' shares  
That bliss which both in Jesus sought and found."

THE  
REV. JOHN MUNRO

WAS a native of Ross-shire, and by both his parents descended from worthy ancestors. John Munro or *Caird* of Kiltearn, of whom mention is made in the memoir of the Rev. Thomas Hogg, and who is also noticed in the Rev. Mr. Kennedy's "Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire," was Mr. Munro's great-grandfather, and the race downward from father to son were eminently godly. His mother also was descended from a family of "Israel's nobles," being grand-daughter of Andrew Sutherland, another Ross-shire "father," and who though poor in this world's goods, was rich in faith, illustrative of which we may here relate two anecdotes of him, often told by Mr. Munro.

A travelling merchant, who was in the habit of making Andrew's house a halting place, arrived there one Saturday evening. He was, of course, asked to remain over the Sabbath, and share with the family on that day the last meal that the house could furnish. Next morning, as the stranger was about to leave, his host said, "Stop, you must not go without your breakfast." Andrew's wife whispered to her husband, "Don't you know we have nothing left to breakfast upon?" He replied aloud, "Put the dishes on the table;" then retiring, he knelt down to pray, beginning thus, "Lord, emptiness is our side of the covenant; fulness is Thy side of it—here is our emptiness; where is Thy fulness?" and so continued, till interrupted by a knock at the house door, when a neighbour entered, bearing victuals, cooked and ready to be eaten. At another time, Andrew and a goodly company were journeying together on one of the mornings of a Ross-shire communion



towards the place of worship. It was raining heavily. One who walked alongside Andrew overheard him say, "Thou didst promise it would be dry by ten o'clock." The man quietly looked at his watch and found it wanted only a few minutes of that hour. But they had not gone a quarter of a mile when the clouds began to disperse, and it turned out a beautiful day. Mr. Munro relating this anecdote on one occasion to James Macdonald, Reay, added, "James, where could Andrew get that?" The other answered, "I do not know, unless he got it in the faith."

Mr. Munro's mother, as we have said, was grand-daughter of this Andrew Sutherland, and she and her mother also were partakers of "the like precious faith." Mr. Munro used to tell that on her death-bed she called her family around her, and after giving them suitable admonition to "follow on to know the Lord," she added, "My mother told me before she left the world, that she had obtained from the Lord a promise that none of her children would be the prey of Satan; and I have obtained a similar promise in regard to you my children"—then, bidding them farewell, she desired them not to come again to her room until she had entered the Father's kingdom. This is, indeed, a striking instance of the value of the prayers and wrestlings of "mothers in Israel."

The expectations of Mr. Munro's mother regarding him were early realised, for, while yet a child of nine years of age, the Lord began to deal with him. Being one day at play, he was unexpectedly called to attend a catechising, which chagrined him so much that he felt his heart rise in enmity against God and all divine things. This feeling immediately gave rise to a sense of guilt and hardness of heart, in which state of mind he entered the meeting. But the Lord did not give to one of his tender years some view of his own soul's sinfulness and misery, without giving him also some glimpse of what such a soul may through grace be brought to. The question put to Mr. Munro was, "What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the

resurrection?" and he gave the answer, "At the resurrection believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity." As he repeated these words, thoughts of the blessedness of God's people, as contrasted with his own felt unhappiness, melted his heart; the obtaining of this blessedness his whole soul desired, and from that day he began to follow after that to which, through grace, he has now attained—"the full enjoying of God to all eternity."

It was about this time that his father was removed by death, and his mother insisted that it now devolved upon him to take his father's place in the conduct of family worship. This, however, he shrank from. But there was in the parish a godly man, though of weak intellect, who, in seasons of family distress or bereavement, the people used to send for, that he might read the Scriptures and pray with them. It occurred to the boy to send for the fool, as he was called, and get him to go through the exercise, so that he might learn the right method of it. The fool came, but when worship time came he would do nothing, but took the Bible and placed it before the boy, saying authoritatively, "You must go on." "Now," thought the latter, "my unfitness will be found out." On their rising from their knees, however, the fool laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and said impressively, "You must be a minister, sir." Speaking of this period of his life to young people, Mr. Munro would say, "I had then as great delight in reading the New Testament as I have ever had since."

But although the Lord was thus early fitting him for the sphere he was afterwards to occupy, his preparation in other respects for the ministry began at a later date; for after receiving in his native parish an ordinary elementary education, he was put to the trade of a carpenter, and after having served his apprenticeship, he went to the city of Aberdeen to work at his business. He occupied, however, his spare hours in study,

acquiring some knowledge of the languages. Ultimately becoming fonder of books than of tools, he gave up the latter entirely, and entered the University, and after going through the due course of literature and divinity, was licensed to preach the gospel.

He came to Caithness in the year 1806, to occupy the Achreny mission. This charge was at that time a most laborious one. It included the three preaching stations of Achreny, Halsary, and Halladale, extending over upwards of twenty miles of hill country destitute of roads; but Mr. Munro entered on his work with that cheerfulness which characterized all that he subsequently did in his Master's service.

As has been noticed in the introductory chapter, the gospel had been preached in this mission in purity and power by a succession of able ministers, during a period when the county was ecclesiastically a wilderness. Their labours had been largely blessed, and fruits of their ministry were spread over the district. In this sphere Mr. Munro was greatly beloved by his flock. A dry eye, it is said, was not to be seen in the Halladale meeting house the day he preached his farewell sermon there. To the godly fathers and mothers, of whom in the north in these days there were not a few, Mr. Munro specially endeared himself by his frankness and simplicity of manner, and general warmth of heart. Visiting one day an eminent woman in the Reay country—Mrs. Catherine M'Kay, better known as Kate Lewsach—he became very animated in telling her anecdotes of Ross-shire Christians he had known. He laughed so heartily that she at last said to him, "My dear Mr. Munro, I'm afraid you did not get enough of 'the law.'" He replied, "Kate, my father is in heaven, and my grandfather is in heaven, and I got more of 'the law' than them both." "Well, well, my dear," she rejoined, "I'll say nothing more to you as to that." Writing afterwards to this woman, he makes this striking remark, "Christ, with reverence be it said, is the Father's compliments to a lost world."

Mr. Munro continued in the mission for about ten years, when he received a call to the Edinburgh Gaelic Chapel. There he remained until 1825, in which year he was presented to the Parish Church of Halkirk, through the influence of the late excellent Lady Colquhoun, much to the joy of the parishioners, who, fifty years previously, had as a minister a man possessed seemingly of not a single aim in life, but that of securing his own worldly comfort and advantage.

In the middle of last century, however, a manifestly remarkable man—Mr. John Sutherland—was minister of Halkirk. Fearless reproof of prevailing sin, clear exhibition of the doctrines of grace, and powerful appeals to the conscience, marked his preaching, which was blessed of the Lord to the spiritual profit of many. Mr. David Steven remembers hearing his grandfather say, that people would be arriving at his house from the distant parish of Canisbay by daybreak on Sabbath morning, on their way to hear Mr. Sutherland. But the enemy of souls, jealous of the inroads thus made upon his kingdom, stirred up some vile persons to fabricate a charge, affecting Mr. Sutherland's moral character. It was industriously taken up and circulated. Much distressed by this, Mr. Sutherland went to Ross-shire to visit his father, a well-known Christian, and in his absence three proprietors in the parish, who had an undisguised dislike to the minister for his faithful reproofs of such ungodly ways as theirs, hastened to lay the matter before the Presbytery, who, taking it up rashly, came, without reliable evidence, to a conclusion adverse to Mr. Sutherland, and declared the church vacant in his absence. Mr. Pope, Reay, the only other evangelical minister in the Presbytery, failed to oppose this unjust decision. Shortly afterwards he was struck with paralysis, and had to be wheeled into church in a chair, from which he preached ever after. He regarded this chastisement as a manifestation of the Lord's displeasure for the hand he had in Mr. Sutherland's ejection, and in speaking of his affliction used to say, "Oh! that black Presbytery."

Tidings having reached Mr. Sutherland in Ross-shire of the action of the Presbytery of Caithness, he said "It will be many years before the parish of Halkirk again enjoys a gospel ministry, and before then none of these three lairds—my persecutors—nor their heirs shall possess a rig in the parish." And thus it actually turned out. The incumbency of the totally inefficient minister referred to continued for more than fifty years. The laird of Dale and Toftingall lost his estate in a law suit; Ban-niskirk changed hands; and the laird of Calder sold his property a few years before Mr. Munro came to Halkirk. To a friend who told Mr. Munro the above facts, he replied, "When I was a lad, working at my trade in Aberdeen, I said one day to a person who came from the Highlands of Caithness, "Surely Mr. John Sutherland, Halkirk, was not a good man?" "If you say so again," my friend answered, "I will lay hands on you. He was an eminently good man, pursued by Satan's subjects for his opposition to their ungodly ways." And Mr. Munro added, "Mr. Sutherland was my grand-uncle, my mother's uncle, and son of Andrew Sutherland." This is the Andrew Sutherland already mentioned; and how remarkable the providence of God, that when again Halkirk enjoyed the privilege of a gospel ministry, it should have been in the person of a descendant of his persecuted servant.

Mr. Munro, in personal appearance, was not above the middle height, but of portly figure, fair complexioned, and his countenance beaming with benevolence. That his mental power—although not his predominant feature—was uncommon, was evident from the position, weight, and influence he attained in the ministerial office. One that knew him well—the late Mr. Sinclair, Thurso—wrote of him, "that he knew no man who, without premeditation, could so edifyingly enlarge on any portion of Scripture"—a power which could not have been possessed by one of mediocre gifts, although equally gracious. The facility also with which he used to clothe his thoughts in the garb of verse, which at times rose into the region of true poetry

evidenced a mind of unusual capacity. His memory was a rich store-house, whence were readily reproduced those facts and truths that he felt an interest in. Surviving friends doubtless remember what a flow of anecdote and interesting reminiscence enriched his godly conversation; and they will also remember, that though he did not hesitate to repeat these whenever occasion suggested them, yet that his heartiness and delight in them, on account of the principles they embodied, perfectly preserved them from the staleness of a tale often told.

Probably the most distinguishing feature in Mr. Munro's character was his large and loving heart. His affections flowed out plentifully in every appointed and appropriate channel, and on the "household of faith" they centred with peculiar strength and constancy. At communion seasons the joy it gave him to greet the brethren in the Lord, and the pain it gave him to part from them were very manifest. With what depth of feeling he would say in prayer, at the conclusion of the Monday's service, "Lord, fit us for the place where no foe enters, where no friend departs, and where the word farewell shall never be heard!"

Since penning the above, we have fallen in with a brief sketch of Mr. Munro's life and labours written and published shortly after his death by the Rev. Dr. Taylor, Thurso, and we are glad to reproduce here the estimate formed of Mr. Munro's character by one who knew and could appreciate him so well:—

"In the several situations which he occupied his ministrations were highly acceptable to his hearers. They could not fail to recognise in them the instructions and exhortations of a man of God, who knew and felt the truth and loved their souls. He evidently spoke from the heart—spoke what he believed—what his own soul was full of, and was daily feeding on with delight. This gave a fulness, richness, and heavenly unction to his exhibitions of the truth, which made his person and ministry to be highly prized, especially by experienced Christians, both in his own congregation and elsewhere. The effect thus produced was greatly heightened by the power and charm

which accompanied his presence and conversation in private. His Christian walk was eminently holy and heavenly. What was spiritual was his constant element ; and, at the same time, his piety was of the most cheerful and engaging character. He was indeed a delightful companion, and never failed to enliven, in the most edifying and agreeable manner, the domestic and social circle. Happy himself in the enjoyment of the consolations of the gospel, he diffused gladness wherever he went. His store of unpublished anecdotes respecting the worthies of Ross-shire and the other northern counties, during the last century and a-half, was remarkably choice and extensive ; and his happy manner of introducing and telling these, can never be forgotten by those who had the privilege of being much in his society. At communion seasons his presence was much sought ; and on these occasions he was most of all in his element—whether engaged in the public services, or unbosoming himself among his brethren and other friends, when the labours of the sanctuary were concluded. He was always particularly happy in his addresses at the communion tables—entering with his whole heart into his subject, and speaking with much fulness and feeling of the Saviour's death and love, and of the hopes, and fears, and encouragements of His people."

As a preacher Mr. Munro had a method peculiarly his own. He would set death and life before his hearers at almost one and the same time—death by the first Adam ; life by the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Depicting forcibly man's guilt, and pollution by reason of original sin, and his slavery and misery by reason of actual sin, he would over against that set forth a free, full, and holy salvation, in a way alike edifying and satisfying. Man's utter depravity and helplessness he never lost sight of, and the suitability of Christ to such he delighted to exhibit. His own faith was so lively, and his love so fervent, that of this theme he never wearied. Unfolding the dignity of the Saviour's person and the grace of His surety-ship,

he would go on to trace the steps of His incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, with rare solemnity and tenderness. Then proceeding to speak of His resurrection, ascension, and intercession, he would enlarge on these doctrines in a way singularly fitted to exalt the glory of the Mediator, and to encourage the believer in his risen Lord, who (to use one of his favourite expressions) was, "He who never had lost, and never would lose, a battle." Turning then to the sinner, he would seek to win him to this glorious One by every gospel allurements, "Christ," he would say, "is this day coming to Satan's family in quest of a spouse, and vile and destitute though she may feel herself; yet have her He shall, that he may save and sanctify her, and present her to His Father as His ransomed bride."

The want already noticed of an early and continuous course of education—never almost retrieved in after life—and his devotedness to the study of Divine truth, to the comparative disregard of other knowledge, were probably the reasons why, at times, Mr. Munro's preaching did not attract a certain class of hearers. Christian persons, on account of their confidence in his personal godliness, and because of his uniform weight of doctrine, heard him not only patiently but pleasantly in his least attractive moods. But those among his audience who were captivated rather by the accessories of the gospel message, the language in which it was conveyed, the variety of illustration, and rigid sequence of thought, were too ready to undervalue him. There were times, however—and these not a few—when such a rich tide of thought flowed in on him, such majesty of manner and force of expression appeared in his preaching, as not only swayed the hearts of believers, but impressed the most unconcerned.

It has been some times thought that Mr. Munro was not sufficiently exact in his preparations for the pulpit. This was a mistake. His discourses were not only carefully thought out, but much of them were often cast into the form of verse. He



had no doubt a happy way of extemporizing when preaching, and such enlargements were accounted for in his case on the principle that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and were much prized by the more discerning of his hearers. For instance, on an occasion when Dr. Macdonald, Urquhart, was expected to preach in Pulteneytown, Mr. Munro went from Halkirk to see and hear him. But the Dr. had been unexpectedly called away, and Mr. Munro, on arriving, was asked to preach. To this he at once agreed, and after announcing as his text the 2nd verse of the 45th Psalm, "Thou art fairer than the children of men," which he had previously sung—he began his sermon in this way, "Coming here this afternoon I was struck with the loveliness of creation. The green fields, the sparkling brooks, the blossoming hedges, were all smiling and rejoicing in the sunshine. Seeing the fairness of creation, I thought of the Fair One who made and upholds all things, and who, while fair in His work of creation, is infinitely more so in His work of redemption. I remembered the fairness of His divinity, and the fairness of His humanity. Was He not fair in the manger, fair in the cradle, fair in His life, fair in His death? Yea, so fair is He, that my whole soul was led captive of Him, and I began to preach Him to the birds of the air, and now I will preach Him to this congregation."

One Monday of a sacramental occasion at Thurso, Neil Macpherson, Mr. Munro's catechist, taking a walk early in the morning in the direction of the manse, met his minister, who was that day expected to preach. Neil expressing his surprise at finding Mr. Munro out so early, he replied, "I am seeking a text for to-day, Neil, and have not got one." "Well, 'tis time you had," said the other, and thus they parted. Some hours after, close upon the time of worship, Neil called at the manse, and asked for Mr. Munro, and being shown to his apartment, found him on his knees, praying for direction. On entering, he repeated that passage in the 2nd chapter of Solomon's

Song, "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys," adding, "That's to be your text to day, Sir, and may the Lord be according to His word." Within an hour Mr. Munro was in his pulpit, and gave out these words as his text. Some who heard that sermon have not yet forgotten it, and at the time discerning persons who heard it agreed that it surpassed in liberty and unction all that they had ever heard from Mr. Munro.

Mr. Munro was pre-eminently a man of prayer. He prayed without ceasing, and in his prayers he had much of a public spirit, and evidence was not wanting of the intimacy to which he was admitted to a throne of grace. In the spring of one year the snow lay so deep and so long upon the ground that cattle began to suffer for want of food, and fowls were falling dead in great numbers. Mr. Munro set apart a day for public prayer. On the following day a thaw set in, which continued until the ground was cleared. At another time, in harvest, it daily rained so heavily that the crops, it was feared, would perish in the fields. Mr. Munro appointed a day of humiliation and prayer in his own parish, and that very evening drought began, and the crops were got in safely.

Mr. Munro was preaching in Gaelic, in the open air, at a communion in Thurso; a rain cloud hung over the congregation, and heavy drops began to fall. He paused in the service, saying, "We will engage in prayer," and thereupon besought the Lord to bind up the heavens, so that His people might wait upon him without distraction. The cloud passed to the west, and discharged such a torrent on the other side of the "Brown Hill" that the road thence, which passed the preaching field, was flooded with water, while not a drop fell on the congregation. In his concluding prayer that day, he gave thanks thus—"Lord, we have been asking, and Thou hast been answering."

The Lord's goodness in bestowing favourable weather during a long series of Sabbaths in the year of the Disruption, when

so many congregations had to worship in the open air, was very manifest. The Sabbath morning of the Halkirk communion in that year was cold and windy, with occasional showers of rain. One of the elders expressed to Mr. Munro his fear that they would have a disagreeable day, referring to the threatening look of the sky. "No, Donald," he replied, it will be a good day; what the Lord gives will be good; many a good day He gave us, and he will give us a good eternity." About the hour of worship the sky cleared, and the air became so tranquil as not to affect the flame of the candles required at the evening service.

The writer was told by a gentleman who once travelled with Mr. Munro in the mail coach, that on that occasion one of the fore-wheels took fire, which was quenched with difficulty. At the next stage where they dined, his fellow-passengers were struck with Mr. Munro's manner of asking the blessing, and especially when they heard him say, "Lord, keep safe the little wheel." On the Monday before the meeting of "Convocation" at Edinburgh, in 1842, Mr. Munro was preaching at Thurso after the Communion, and as there was some fear that the coaches to the south might be full, and that he and his brethren who were to set off next morning for Edinburgh might not get forward, he prayed after sermon that their way might be cleared for them, and those who accompanied him at that time could not fail to observe how strikingly this prayer was answered, as well as how much of the Divine presence was enjoyed during that journey.

Mr. Munro having heard that an esteemed friend at a distance had been taken seriously ill, regularly prayed for him at family worship for some time. Mrs. Munro observing that he had not done so for a day or two, asked the reason. "I am thinking," he said, "that he does not now need our prayers." They afterwards received intimation of his death, and Mrs. Munro noticed that the date of it was exactly the day on which her husband had ceased interceding in his behalf.

At a time when Mrs. Munro was herself so ill that she was not expected to survive, Mr. Munro, after praying beside her, rose and said, "Although you are now, my dear, so weak, yet I shall be in heaven before you." She outlived him more than a year. Mrs. Munro was sister of the late well-known Mr. Forbes, minister of Tarbat, and was highly esteemed for her prudence, amiability, and piety.

On the event of the Disruption, Mr. Munro was one of the foremost of the outgoing ranks. On that subject he had no misgivings. His view of the duty of the church seemed clear as noonday. To one who asked him if he had Scripture warrant for that step, he replied, "I can answer you that at once—'And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Now, those who infringe on this kingly prerogative touch a jewel of Christ's crown, more precious than the life of the universe!" Nor was Mr. Munro much concerned as to his temporal support in relinquishing the emoluments of the Establishment. The factor on the Scotscladar estate said to him, "I am surprised that you have left the Establishment." "Why?" "Oh, because the people will not give you sufficient means of subsistence; you won't get £40 a-year." "And do you think," returned Mr. M., "that they *will* give me £40? Why, I would preach the gospel if they did not give me forty pence." This suggests to us one or two of those significant and prompt replies for which Mr. Munro was remarkable. A bitter lay partizan of the moderate side, on meeting him in Edinburgh, said, holding out his hand to him, "I suppose, Mr. Munro, you will not be willing to shake hands with me now." "Oh, yes! why should not one sinner shake hands with another," was the rejoinder.

Sir George Sinclair, who did not see his way to join the Free Church until a few years after the Disruption, sent a message by a friend to Mr. Munro, to the effect that he was sorry he could not follow him in the step he had taken. "Well, tell Sir George," was the reply, "that I am going to heaven, and let him be sure to follow me there."

The following further account of Mr. Munro, and especially of the closing scene of his life, we quote from the narrative already referred to :—

“Notwithstanding his advanced age, his public ministrations were continued to the very end of his days. He usually preached three times every Sabbath ; and he did this on the Wednesday of the national fast—the last day he was in the pulpit. He was no less indefatigable in the discharge of all his other parochial duties ; and as the result of his abundant and faithful labours, it is trusted that not a few have to acknowledge him, not only as their instructor, but as their father in Christ Jesus.

“On the 25th March, the day after the fast, he came into Thurso, to attend a meeting of Presbytery, and being suddenly taken ill, was brought to the house of Mr. Taylor, Free Church minister, where he remained till his death, which took place that day week. During his illness, his mind was quite collected to the last ; and the manner in which he endured his sufferings, and looked forward to death, was such as might be expected from the tenor of his life. On the evening of the 25th—that on which he was taken ill—he suffered much pain, yet his exclamation was ‘He hath done all things well ; He never did anything wrong, and He never shall.’ ‘You have much pain,’ it was said to him. He answered, ‘John Knox said that he needed not regret the pain which would bring the battle to a close.’ He then mentioned that, before leaving home that morning, he had read in course, in secret, the last chapter of Revelation, and that he had found much more than usual of a heavenly impression in the words, ‘Behold, I come quickly.’ During the days that followed he did not speak much, but what he said showed that his mind continued to be kept in a calm, resigned, and heavenly frame. Speaking on the text, ‘They shall mount up on wings as eagles,’ he said, ‘I am not mounting up as I would wish, but I am mounting up so as to make me wonder.’ At another time, repeating the text, ‘Though Abra-

ham be ignorant of us,' &c., he went on, commenting on it thus, 'Though my faith is not like the faith of Abraham, though I am not a wrestler like Jacob, yet *Thou* art my father.' Being asked one morning how he was, he replied solemnly, 'My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, but God doth fail me never.' Again, being asked if he felt comfortable, he answered, 'Yes ; I have a good hope through grace.' At one time he exclaimed, 'In what state would I be had I never thought of eternity till now ; but here I am, lying as easy as if I had the promise that the thief on the cross had.' It was said to him that it was believed he had that. He replied, 'Well, well, if I have one, I have all.' Afterwards, speaking of the glorious prospect before him, he exclaimed, 'Oh, I shall be ashamed when I enter heaven ;' but then as if correcting himself, he added, 'But there shall be no shame there.' To Sir George Sinclair, who called to see him two days before his death, he said, 'Sir George, you know Daniel O'Connell. It has occurred to me that you should write to him, and advise him to give up everything but the Bible.'

"The night before he died he suffered much. Nature's struggle with death was evidently severe. It was said to him, 'You appear to be very uneasy.' He replied 'The Lord's will.' Reference was then made to the Saviour's sufferings, when he exclaimed very distinctly, 'He trode the wine-press alone!' and then, in connection with another observation made to him, he said, 'I shall soon be at my rest.' A few hours after, after breathing peacefully for some time, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus, on the morning of Thursday, the 1st April, 1847.

"Thus died this venerable servant of Christ, in the seventy-ninth year of his age and forty-first of his ministry. His body was conveyed next day to his own house, and was interred in the churchyard of Halkirk on the Monday following, amid an immense concourse of mourners. His loss is much felt, and will be felt long, not only by his beloved widow, and relatives, and flock, and by his brethren in the Presbytery of Caithness,

but over the county generally ; and doubtless this feeling will be responded to wherever he was known throughout the church.

“In proof of his decided and unswerving attachment to the cause of the Free Church, it may be mentioned that one of his expressions on his death-bed was that he would not be comfortable were he in the Establishment. But not the Free Church merely—the Church Universal has sustained a great loss in his removal. Those who knew him intimately believe this, and feel cause to exclaim with the prophet, ‘My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.’”

THE  
REV. FINLAY COOK

WAS son of a respectable farmer in the island of Arran, where he was born in the year 1778. Of his early life we do not know much more than that he was one of the fruits of the revival of religion that visited Arran about the beginning of the present century. That his first religious exercises, in respect both of convictions and deliverances, were unusually deep and thorough, might be gathered from hints occasionally dropped by himself in after life. But, indeed, the character of his personal religion, and of his ministry of the gospel, abundantly manifested this. We may mention, however, one instance of his early experience, which we have heard him relate. Being engaged one night in secret prayer in a solitary place, he obtained such a discovery of the new covenant way of salvation, that it seemed "spread out like a map before him."

He was at this time in the habit of regularly frequenting the ordinances of religion and the company of the people of God, and the spiritual refreshings then enjoyed he used to speak of with freshness and fervour to his latest days. Besides his own minister—the Rev. Neil M'Bride—there were other two who were specially useful to him—Drs. Love and Balfour of Glasgow—and his way of alluding to these "first three" showed, that in and through them he had derived much spiritual profit. When a student in Glasgow, there was at a communion occasion there, ministers officiating whose services he little relished; but hearing that Dr. Balfour was expected on Sabbath afternoon, he was looking forward with expectation to his coming. He did not appear, however, and the last table being about to be served, he deemed it his duty to go to the



table. On sitting down in heaviness of spirit, he began to soliloquize thus—"Just so; it is man you are looking to, and it is with man, I fear, you will be left at last." At that moment the voice of Dr. Balfour, who had come in unperceived by Mr. Cook, and had taken his stand at the place where he sat, broke over his head; and his soul's state and wants were so clearly spoken to, that, through the messenger and the message, he was led to transact with the Lord Himself, and he came away saying, "How dreadful is this place; this is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

Being desirous of serving the Lord in the work of the ministry, he pursued the usual course of study at the Glasgow University; and it is remarkable that, during the summer vacations, he was employed as missionary or evangelist at the Lanark cotton mills, then the property of the famous Robert Owen. This man at that time made a profession of religion, but, subsequently taking up the views called "socialist," he set up a society of this kind, first in Lanarkshire, and afterwards in America; but which, as might be expected, "came to nought."

After receiving license, Mr. Cook's first appointment was to the Achreny Mission in Halkirk, in 1817. He had, as we have previously stated, very distinguished predecessors there—the last of whom was Mr. Munro. But Mr. Cook seems to have been behind none of them in acceptance. In the mission district, at that time and beyond it, were not a few notable Christians. They looked upon the regular ministry with suspicion, and not without reason. They had profited little by it in either their spiritual outset or progress. Many of the parochial charges were occupied by men put in by the strong hand of patronage, and in few respects qualified for the office. They fed themselves, and not the flock, having indeed nothing wherewith to feed it. The just dislike therefore with which these earnest Christians regarded such cold and carnal men, extended itself in some degree to the office which had been so long and

so frequently associated with them ; and when a minister of a better stamp appeared, that stamp required to be strongly marked in both his life and labours, before the prejudices referred to yielded. But they did yield before Mr. Cook, even more than before his predecessor, Mr. Munro. The reason of this will probably be found in the fact, that in Mr. Munro's religious experience, what is called the objective element predominated. Grace gave him great light and delight in the gospel provision. It was the almost absorbing matter of his meditation and of his public proclamation. All who knew him knew this ; and how he enlarged often exclusively on the person, work, and offices of the Saviour. Not that he was unacquainted with the wants and woes of the human heart, and exercised deeply under them ; if so, he could not have been the man he was—could not have prized a Saviour as he did. But by grace he so seldom lost his view of the gospel remedy, that he was rarely subjected to the depressions and despondings of many of the Lord's people. In fact, he was one who, like the Ethiopian eunuch, "went on his way rejoicing," in the well sustained assurance of faith, delighting to contemplate and exhibit the believer's privileges and prospects. Now, this is most blessed exercise in itself, and "happy is the man who is in such a case." But there were times when it did not meet the straits and perplexities of disciples, who, while they revered Mr. Munro, and admired his large hearted faith, would sometimes feel more helped by one who, while far from omitting the objective element, was also minutely subjective, and spoke closely to the varying phases of the believer's heart. Such a one they found in Mr. Cook. He and Mr. Munro were like two children in one family—both bearing their Father's likeness, but each possessing his own distinctive cast of features. Mr. Cook's faith of the gospel, not less stedfast, was yet less manifestly exulting ; his assurance of his own personal salvation he rarely, if ever, directly expressed. The contrast between them was sometimes practically and pleasingly exhibited. Mr.

Munro one day observing that Mr. Cook was unusually depressed, asked the reason. "How could it be otherwise," he replied, "with one who feels his heart harder now than it was forty years ago?" "Harder! I hope it is so," returned Mr. Munro (referring, of course, to the *sense* of hardness), "why, our hearts are like the sea; those who 'go down to the sea in ships' come back telling of some monster they have seen—but who ever came back saying he had seen *all* the sea monsters?" Another time they were returning by steamboat from the General Assembly, when Mr. Munro, with that fatherly authority no one thought of disputing, gathered the passengers, evening and morning, to worship; and as was his wont in singing, gave out the line, and sung loudly and heartily. When they landed, Mr. Cook playfully challenged him for his boldness in conducting worship in such a place and among such a mixed multitude, and, moreover, singing so loudly; adding, "Indeed, I could not have done it." "Oh! friend," returned Mr. M., laying his hand affectionately on the other's shoulder, "You and I will soon be singing in glory." Illustrative of this reticence of Mr. Cook, we may add, that to a well-known evangelist from the south, who enquired of him how many persons he had been the means of converting, his reply was, "Oh! I'm sometimes afraid I am not converted myself." This reminds us of how Donald Lamont, a west country worthy, once adroitly—to use a military phrase—turned the flank of the minister of Reay. The latter had said to Donald, "What have you to say to me, who have been preaching so long to my fellow-sinners of the necessity of the new birth, and perhaps myself not yet born again?" "I have this to say," returned Donald, "that if you are not yet born again, there is little chance for you now." This unexpected reply so gratified Mr. Cook, that it led to an amusing occurrence between them, which we need not here relate.

After some experience of the man and of his message, the Lord's people in and around the district where he began his

labours drew warmly around him, as we have said. There was also another way that the Christians of that time and place had of estimating the character of one to whom they were attracted. They referred the matter to the Lord, and His word, impressed upon their hearts with Divine power, that their faith accredited and their action was guided by. For example, on the morning of the first Sabbath that Mr. Cook preached in Halladale, as James Macdonald, catechist, is engaged in private prayer regarding the stranger, that passage of Scripture, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," &c., comes to his mind in the self-evidencing way referred to. "Then, Lord," said James, rising to his feet, "we will go and hear it." James, it may be noticed, took this further way of "trying the spirit" of the new minister. He confronted him one day at the Bridge of Reay, as he was riding homewards. They had never before met, and Mr. Cook knew not who the man was who enquired at him, "Are you the new minister?" "Yes, I am; what do you want with me?" "I want baptism from you." "For whom?" "For myself." "Well, I will baptize you if you tell me who is your father." This ready reply—one more searching than to many may appear—gave James much satisfaction.

The Achreny mission was at that time, as has been stated, a very extensive and laborious charge. The roads were mere tracks, traversing moor, mountain, and water-course, and in many places wrought into mire by the rains of winter. Means of conveyance, too, were scanty, and Mr. Cook and his predecessors often walked the distances, and forded the streams on foot. But they bore all this discomfort ungrudgingly—doing their Master's work to the great edification of Christ's flock and to the profit of others. Mr. Cook and Mr. Munro, talking one day in their later years over their experiences in the mission (which was supported by the "Queen's Bounty"), agreed that there they had their pleasantest days. Mr. R. M'Kay, afterwards of Bruan, who was present, with considerable *naïveté* remarked, "Perhaps the reason was that you then

lived more on the *Royal Bounty*." Mr. M'Kay, we may add, has lately passed away, and with him a large amount of interesting information and anecdote regarding Christians of a bygone generation.

If, however, the field of labour was toilsome, Mr. Cook was physically fitted for it, having a robust frame, capable of enduring great fatigue, which stood him in good stead in many a long and wearisome journey, and during the labours of many a communion season. To friends who at the conclusion of such occasions would sympathize with him in having been engaged publicly every day, he would reply, "I wish it were just beginning again." His body was not exhausted—his spirit was refreshed—and he would gladly renew work to him so congenial. One Monday evening, as the congregations were dispersing, he was overheard in this soliloquy, "I am glad I am not a farmer, nor a merchant, nor such like, but that my business—my 'lawful calling'—is afresh to meditate on the word of the Lord, and anew to tell of His grace."

In personal appearance Mr. Cook was about the middle height, of dark complexion, and of manly air and gait. He had a remarkable eye, black and brilliant, giving unmistakable evidence of intelligence and thought.

Mr. Cook's natural gifts were very superior. His conceptions of truth were clear and unconfused, and in language of great simplicity and terseness they were expressed. Indeed, at times the compactness and pith of his sentences gave them the shape and force of proverbs. In preaching he abhorred mere garnishing, presenting his weighty thoughts in words—apt and comprehensible by all who heard them. His Gaelic, we believe, was faultless for the sphere he occupied. That language has many dialects. Those knowing one of these often regret their difficulty in understanding a minister who uses another. A complaint of this kind was rarely, if ever, heard against Mr. Cook. To one who, struck with his cosmopolitan Gaelic, asked him where he acquired it—"Oh, it is,"

he said, "a hotch-potch gathered from Arran, Lewis, Inverness, and Caithness."

Mr. Cook's method of preparation for the pulpit was somewhat peculiar. Though close and careful in meditation, he did not formally commit his thoughts to writing. A friend who had access occasionally to his study used to say, "Those who seek Mr. Cook's literary remains will be disappointed." A writing-slate received his thoughts as he studied, and when the slate was needed for fresh matter, a drop of water and a sponge obliterated all that was there before. The writer said to him jocularly, when he was confined by illness, "You don't need to study now; the old study will do." "No, no," he replied, "I study every day diligently; cannot but do so; must have my train of thought; once lost it in the churchyard of Watten, and much missed it; but after all what is our study but 'dry bones,' unless the Holy Ghost breathe on it from on high."

In the pulpit there was nothing inappropriate in Mr. Cook's gestures or mode of address. He was gifted with uncommon good sense, and anything that traversed that he could ill tolerate. Whatever quaintness there was at times in the matter of his preaching, there was none in the manner of it. His appearance in the pulpit was manly, masterly, dignified. You saw at once that he feared not the face of any man—that he was the "righteous man bold as a lion"—and that where truth was to be upheld against human prejudice or pride, he was the one fitted to do so. Were it not that we might be tedious, we could enlarge on this prominent feature of his character—how he seemed to say in every look and word, "I must be about my Master's business"—how his sense of the Divine authority, and of the absorbing importance of the things unseen and eternal, made him comparatively regardless of the things seen and temporal, and estimate very lightly the opinions of ungodly men or formal professors. He knew the truth, felt its power, and he freely and boldly declared it, "impugn it whoso list."

As a preacher Mr. Cook was like his brother—Mr. Archibald—a master in Israel. Those who could in some measure appreciate both, if they attempted to determine which was the greater, felt a difficulty. If on hearing the one to-day they preferred him, they gave up the preference on hearing the other to-morrow. If we may be allowed to regard ministers as the “horses in Pharaoh’s chariot,” drawing the everlasting gospel, then these two ran abreast with equal pace. In respect of personal godliness, no one ventured to set the one before the other. But yet they differed. There were certain departments of doctrinal truth on which the mind of Mr. Archibald specially centred—in particular, the sovereignty of Divine Grace, as exhibited in all the arrangements of the new covenant. His brother, again, treated in general a greater variety of topics. He had a large and clear grasp of truth, and perhaps more expansively exhibited the adaptation of the Mediator to sinners of all classes and characters. Mr. Archibald, in his treatment of the believer’s experience, had a marvellous power of discerning and describing the minutest marks of gracious exercise, and of seizing the most fleeting phenomena of thought and feeling. Not unfrequently after he had exhibited the Christian as he ought to be—and in such a way as to arouse the self-jealousy of the Lord’s people—he would suddenly (striking a lower key and bringing out evidences of grace where they could see none) inspire them with fresh hope. Mr. Finlay was not less experimental. He brought the truth practically to bear on every class of his hearers. All received from him “their portion of meat in due season.” He had a special tenderness in dealing with anxious souls—tenderness of language and manner that could scarcely be surpassed. In modes of expression peculiar to himself, he would sympathise with such, and feed them with the food most convenient for them. Keen also was his discernment of character. Where he saw pretension and hypocrisy—withering were his rebukes; but where he saw tokens of true soul-concern—“gentle among such, as a nurse cherishing her children.”

His ministry, we may add, was singularly and widely useful. His knowledge of divine truth and masterly way of handling it ; his attainments in the Divine life and sympathy with all who sought to know it ; his unfeigned love to his Master and faithfulness to souls, attracted to his ministry all within the districts where he laboured, and not a few beyond it, who sought the way to Zion. And we are justified in saying, that there were few Christians in the Highlands of Caithness and Reay country whose spiritual life, in respect either of its origin or special after-impulses, was not associated with Mr. Cook.

About the year 1829, Mr. Cook accepted a mission charge in the island of Lewis—one in many respects difficult and undesirable. The people were only beginning to emerge out of ignorance and rude social habits ; and as to religion, Moderatism held almost undisputed sway. A friend tell us, that when a lad in his native parish of Uig, he had gone under pressure of religious convictions to seek instruction from his minister. One such visit was enough, for next time he came to the manse he found the door barred against him, and the servants looking in terror at him through the window—the minister having told them that the lad was “out of his mind.” Mr. Cook’s ministry there, though on these and other accounts personally uncomfortable, was, there is good reason to believe, owned of the Lord.

After being there a few years, he was called to the East Church, Inverness.

During nearly half a century, Mr. David Mackay was minister of the parish of Reay. For many years before his death, he was laid aside by illness, and the people were dependent for the preaching of the Word on occasional supply by members of Presbytery. Becoming dissatisfied with this state of matters, and thinking that Mr. Mackay required an assistant, their desires fixed on Mr. Cook. To this arrangement, however, Mr. Mackay could not be persuaded to agree. But, although this bar stood in their way, the people, in hope of ultimately



obtaining Mr. Cook as their minister, establishing a prayer-meeting, having this as its main object, and which was kept up in the house of the Laird of Sandside, and headed by him for the period of eleven years. This gentleman, the leading proprietor of the parish, was regarded as one that feared the Lord, and was a "lover of good men."

In 1835, Mr. Mackay died. The Crown, which held the patronage, on the petition of the people of Reay, presented Mr. Cook to the vacant charge. Glad news was this to the hearts of the Lord's people in that parish and surrounding districts. Worthy Janet Macleod, Sandside, in the fulness of her heart, lifted up her hands, and exclaimed, "Lord bless the whole earth!" Mr. Gunn, Watten, and Mr. Munro, Halkirk, presided at Mr. Cook's induction. With these fathers he maintained warm and constant Christian fellowship while they remained on earth, and he has now joined them in the church above.

His pastoral work, especially the catechising of his people, Mr. Cook carried on with much care and faithfulness. The remoter straths, now desolate—then considerably peopled—he used to visit by remaining two or three days at a time, gathering the various townships together for public worship and catechising. These meetings, especially when held in the long winter evenings, many persons attended; and the fortnightly fellowship meetings, held in the house of Janet Macleod, Sandside, were also to the Lord's people very refreshing and strengthening.

During the controversy that resulted in the Disruption, Mr. Cook, in his own way, was making known to his people the questions at issue; and when that event was impending, he and Mr. Taylor, Thurso, were empowered by the Presbytery to visit the various parishes of the bounds, and inform the people of the importance of the principles involved. This they did, and it had no small effect in enabling the people to judge as to the course they ought to take. To his own people, when addressing them on the subject, just before setting off to the Assembly in 1843, Mr. Cook concluded by saying, "And should none of

you go with me, I shall go to the fields with my testimony." Speaking to them when again they met, of their newly gained freedom, he said, "Well, people of Reay, I have long been saying hard things against you, and you have now the power, if you choose, of turning me about my business." But whether they had the power or not, they inclined not to use it. Two of the leading members of his session did not at this period join the Free Church, which from the warm attachment hitherto subsisting between them and their minister, was much felt and regretted by Mr. Cook. But we need not rake up the ashes of this dead difference—for dead it is—as they have now rejoined fellowship in the land where all "see eye to eye."

In the intercourse of private life, Mr. Cook was truly a lovable person. Ardent in his own affections, he reciprocated warmly that of others; and being peculiarly susceptible of the kindly feeling of those he esteemed, he was much pained by any manifestation of the contrary. To young persons his manner was winning and endearing, especially if there appeared in them "any good thing toward the Lord God of Israel." To the humblest of the Lord's people he was kind and condescending. He never lost sight, in any circumstances, of the one thing needful, walking circumspectly, "not as a fool, but as wise." When urged to remain with a marriage party, after he had performed the ceremony, he declined, saying, "I always see those going into the mill come out with dust on their coats." This reminds us of what John Grant once said to Mr. Cook, "Your soul never cost me a prayer, but your coat (meaning his office) many a one." One principle that actuated him in the discharge of his office appears in the reply he gave to a newly-appointed catechist, who expressed to him his fears in having to speak to others what he might not himself have savingly experienced:—"Speak," said Mr. Cook, "of what you know, as of what you know; and speak of what you fear you do not know, as of what needs to be known."

While Mr. Cook was in the Achreny mission he married

Miss Elizabeth Sage; daughter of the Rev. Donald Sage of Kildonan. Mrs. Cook was an intelligent and judicious Christian. Her comparatively early removal, in the year 1838, was felt as a bereavement by many Christian friends, and her husband deeply and lastingly mourned his loss. "In no way could I see," he once remarked to a friend, "that my wife's death was of the 'all things that shall work together for my good,' except the Word of the Lord had said so." Their family was three in number, but two of them dying in infancy, one only (a son) survived his parents, and he, three years after his father's death, was, in the prime of life, called to his rest. This son, Alexander, except that he was dark complexioned, resembled more, in appearance and in disposition also, his mother than his father. He early gave indication of superior intelligence—even in his boyhood there was about him a maturity of thought and judgment that was quite observable, as was also the fact that he early chose as his God, the God of his father. The period of his education he passed through with success and distinction, for his mental acumen gave great finish and exactness to his scholarship. Were it not that a fastidious and cultivated taste fettered his vigorous powers of mind, he would have attained no mean standing in literature and theology. After qualifying for the ministry, he was called to become minister of the Free Church, Stratherrick, Inverness-shire, where he laboured with much acceptance until his death, which took place in the year 1861, at the early age of 37 years. His delicate health prevented his paying to his father in Caithness but short and occasional visits. This many regretted; but his gentlemanly demeanour, and his humble holy bearing, have, along with his public services, left a hallowed recollection of him in his native county.

Some years before his death, Mr. Cook was seized with a complaint which never afterwards entirely left him. He often suffered great pain, but the grace that had sustained him all his life long, manifestly sustained him in the furnace. Those who

visited him saw this. They saw also his increasing conformity to the mind of Him who said, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt;" and felt that he was fast ripening for the society of "the spirits of just men made perfect." Not less manifest was his increasing heavenly mindedness, and his desire for the spiritual welfare of the rising generation. Concern, too, for the cause of Christ, as associated with such a wide-spread nominal profession, was a matter that weighed heavily upon him.

The writer, one Sabbath that he was to preach for him, said, "And what am I to say to your people?" "Tell them they are sinners." "What more?" "That they need the Saviour." "Anything more?" "Yes, yes; that they must be born again." On that occasion, referring touchingly to his solitude and suffering—his partner removed—his only son at a distance—himself tossed with pain—he added, "But no wonder, for I am a great sinner—the greatest sinner in Caithness." The other said, "The people of Caithness don't think so." "No," he replied, "because there is a veil over it."

Mr. Cook's bodily weakness was, about two years before his death, aggravated by a fall, which made it necessary for him when walking to use crutches. But a complication of ailments, which would have set ordinary men aside, did not deter him from publicly labouring to the last." "Preaching is my medicine," he would say to his medical attendant. Till within two Sabbaths of his decease he went to the pulpit, and there, when animated in declaring the unchangeable love of God to His church, and His willingness and ability to save the "chief of sinners," no one would suppose he was encumbered by bodily infirmity. At length, from the service in which on earth he alone delighted, he, on the 12th June, 1858, passed into that service, as it is before the Throne. "What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

A great concourse of people, from his own and the surrounding parishes, followed his remains, a few days after his death, to the churchyard of Reay, where "his body, being still united to Christ, rests in the grave till the resurrection."

THE  
REV. ARCHIBALD COOK

WAS born in the island of Arran, in the year 1788, and was, like his brother, the minister of Reay, a fruit of the well-known revival of religion that took place in Arran about the beginning of the present century. The reality of this spiritual change was, in the case of both abundantly manifestly in their long after life and labours. Mr. Cook also, like his elder brother, seems to have been early animated by the desire of serving the Lord in the ministry ; but their parents do not appear to have been in circumstances to bear the expense of giving them the needful course of education. They, however, faced the difficulty in dependence on the providence of Him whom they sought to serve, and ultimately overcame it. Mr. Archibald used to tell that on one occasion he seriously thought of abandoning his studies, but that when in the very act of finally referring the matter to the Lord, assistance arrived from an unknown hand—so that he “thanked God and took courage.”

During his stay in Glasgow he much valued the ministry of the eminent Dr. Love, who seems to have recognised in Mr. Cook the deep spirituality and close walk with God that distinguished him in after life—taking him into close personal friendship, and unbosoming himself to him in a peculiarly intimate way. To this period of his life we have heard Mr. Cook refer with much solemnity and feeling. One of his reminiscences of Dr. Love we may mention. Serving a communion table one Sabbath in his own church, his countenance suddenly assumed such a death-like hue as to overawe the whole assembly. Mr. Cook afterwards venturing to speak of it to the doctor, he told him that he had obtained such a view of the

Lord in His majesty, at the head of His own table, as to be for a few moments completely overpowered.

Shortly after receiving license from the Presbytery of Glasgow, Mr. Cook came to Caithness, and was ordained minister of the conjoined mission stations of Bruan and Berriedale in the year 1823. The providence of God in sending two such men as the Messrs. Cook to this remote county of Caithness, at a time when His cause there was very low, is worthy of remark and of acknowledgment. Many now enjoying the "better country," and a few "following on"—remembering the way whence they were led—will find matter on this behalf of everlasting praise.

To those who hold merely men's persons in admiration, Mr. Archibald Cook may have been disappointing. Below the middle height, of slim figure and shrinking manner, he had not an imposing personal appearance. But we venture to say that that small dark man, with light step and downward look, would, on entering any assembly, create a feeling and command a deference never given to mere bodily pomposity. There sat upon him an air of heavenliness and of spirituality that others felt awed by. His eye, too—deep-set and piercing—was remarkable, and when he became animated, it flashed like fire. It has been remarked that a minister among his people should be like a Sabbath among the week-days. This truly Mr. Cook was. Few men came more closely up to the Divine Exemplar in being "holy, harmless, blameless." The attachment—we might almost say the devotion—of some of the Christian people of Caithness to Mr. Archibald Cook has excited the astonishment and even the ridicule of many who knew him not, or, knowing were incapable of appreciating him. But the manifestly close fellowship with the Lord, the constant prayerfulness, the sensitive tenderness of walk, and the watchfulness against all fitted to grieve away the spirit of God, that marked his personal religion, together with the fascination of his preaching, sufficiently accounted for their feelings, and told against those who withstood the attraction, rather than against those who were

overcome by it. Illustrative of Mr. Cook's uniform watchfulness of spirit, we may mention that he and some friends were on the evening of a communion season at Halkirk enjoying pleasant and profitable intercourse, when, to their regret and surprise, Mr. C. suddenly withdrew. Next day, however, they discovered the cause. Mr. Cook, in preaching, made this remark, "You, the people of God, may and ought to enjoy one another's society, but when you feel the Spirit of God departing from your spirits, it is time for you to separate." In the pulpit also, no less than in private, Mr. Cook impressed one with the conviction that he realised the eye of Omniscience, and the awe that consequently rested on his own spirit was doubtless one reason of his singular power in fixing the attention of his hearers, and placing them in their own feeling in some measure under the same eye.

Thus, Mr. Cook's ministry in Caithness was, from its commencement, highly prized; and what Watten was to the English-speaking, Bruan became to the Gaelic-speaking Christians of the surrounding districts, the place to which on Sabbath, by an instinct of the new nature, their hearts and steps were turned. And we suppose that some who knew both languages would, before setting out, be at times in a strait as to which of the two directions they would take, and that the question would be determined by the complexion at the moment of the religious feeling of the individual. If the teaching he felt he required was of the subjective kind, Bruan would gain the day; if otherwise, Watten; for Mr. Gunn, although richly experimental, was, as previously stated, pre-eminently doctrinal, both in respect of law and gospel—in law, largely exhibiting man's conditions, character, and prospects under a broken covenant; in gospel, unfolding the person, work, and offices of the Redeemer. Mr. Cook, again, though richly doctrinal, was pre-eminent in his analysis of the human heart—regenerate and unregenerate. In this department he had almost unrivalled power. What others passed by, he picked up and put a value on. It was his delineation



of graceless human nature—"holding unflinchingly the mirror up to nature"—that roused against him so often and so bitterly the resentment of the "seed of the serpent," and made them strive to discover in his speech and manner matter of ridicule. On the other hand, it was his power of seizing and depicting the varying phases of the believer's feelings and experience—of helpfully dealing with their cases and mental exercise—that won their admiration and affection. Genius is said to consist in observing what no other man observes, but which, when brought to view, all are ready to say, "I wonder I did not see that before—it is so simple, so clear now." Mr. A. Cook had that genius in Divine things. We never heard any preacher who, in describing the beginning of a work of grace in the soul, would detect effects of that work—seemingly so little and lonely. It begins, he would sometimes say, with a thought, and he would then proceed to deal with that thought.

The tendency of his preaching to gravitate, on the one hand, towards the cases of believers, and, on the other, to the higher doctrines of the covenant of grace, necessitated a sympathising audience. When he found himself otherwise situated—with few earnest hearers around him—he soon felt it on his own spirit, and sometime freely expressed his sense of it. When, on the other hand, surrounded by warmly sympathetic hearts—by anxious enquirers or hungerers for the bread of life—his liberty and personal enjoyment would be conspicuously great.

But, besides this power of describing soul-exercise, he had an elevation of view and subtlety of distinction in handling doctrinal truth that ranked him as a great divine. The appended discourses show somewhat of his apprehensions of the majesty and purity, as well as the grace and condescension of God, and his manner of eliminating from religious profession and exercise whatever did not bear the stamp of grace.

Mr. Cook's exercise of catechising were scarcely less prized than his Sabbath ministrations. He dealt faithfully and closely with the understandings and consciences of his people, both as

to their knowledge of the doctrines of religion and the daily practice of its duties. Many of his pregnant and pointed sayings on these occasions are still remembered. Having asked a person a question, and urged him to give an answer, but in vain, he said, "I never saw one who had a good tongue for the things of this world, but that he was dumb in religion." "What," he said to another, "was the highest mountain you ever climbed?" "As for myself," continued Mr. Cook, "the highest I ever met with was to believe there was a God." "You," he would say, "who borrow your religion from books and other Christians, on the great day of the Lord, when every book will get its own, and every Christian will get his own, what will be left with you?" "Satan may say of many a communicant, after an ordinance is over, 'I have lost no ground; he will be mine to-morrow.'" "When Jacob was a worm, he threshed the mountains; but when he became a mountain the worm threshed him." "When through spiritual concern, one forgets his worldly business, the Lord takes care of it for him." "There will be many an enlightened head at the left hand, but no broken heart." "Children may often say to their parents—'Father, your prayers in the family are not very good; but if your life was half as good, we would be the better of you.'"

In the year 1836 Mr. Cook was translated to the Gaelic Church of Inverness, much to the regret of his attached friends throughout Caithness; and after being a few years in Inverness, the people of Daviot, on a vacancy in that parish, wished to get him as their minister. The law of patronage—as then rigorously interpreted by the civil courts—for a time stood in their way. This was one of the famous cases of the Disruption controversy; but in that year of the church's liberty they obtained their object.

We are unable to furnish any account of Mr. Cook's life and labours in Daviot, further than that they were distinguished by the same excellencies as in Caithness, and that he gained the esteem of all in that quarter who had the grace of discernment.

His heart was in his Master's work, and he would send messages to his friends in the north that he prospered most in body and mind when most occupied in it.

He occasionally visited Reay, to assist his brother at communion seasons. At two such seasons in the parish of Dunnet, in the years 1861 and 1862, he was present. These were his last visits to Caithness. He was then about 70 years of age, but, as was amply shown, "his eye had not waxed dim, nor his natural force abated." These occasions are, of course, fresh in the memories of hundreds. His friends were elated at the prospect of seeing and hearing him once more, and the expression of their feelings excited widespread curiosity and expectation, so that great multitudes gathered to the Free Church of Dunnet. His preaching was marked by the same features we have endeavoured to describe. His solemn manner and striking way of presenting Divine truth drew and rivetted the attention of the people. On the Sabbaths of these solemnities it was matter of astonishment to every one to see his life and vivacity, which seemed to increase rather than diminish, as the services (all of which he conducted) ran far into the evening. The table services were specially memorable. He addressed the whole of them, the other ministers present shrinking from interfering with one who was so marvellously borne on from one duty of the day to another. Many will remember the flow of elevated yet appropriate doctrine delivered at these tables, the deep yet helpful experience, the striking illustration, the many remarkable anecdotes, and particularly the glow and animation of the speaker, who at length so wrought on the feelings of the congregation that he, standing at the tables, became the centre of a dense mass of people, the outer rows of which stood on the backs of the pews.

Not long after Mr. Cook's last visit to Caithness, he was affected by a stroke of paralysis, which was succeeded by others of the same kind at intervals, unfitting him gradually for public duty. The following account of his last days on earth is taken

from the letter of a near relative :—“ After the fourth stroke he recovered some strength, so as to be able to walk a little through the room ; but we could not leave him night nor day. He was so resigned and cheerful, that it was quite a pleasure to wait on him. He always prayed at family worship, and though his speech was much affected, we could understand a few precious words. The day before he had the last stroke he went, with our assistance, outside for a little, and seemed much delighted, taking a look all round. In the evening, at worship, he joined in the singing, and prayed so loudly and distinctly that he seemed quite enraptured. Next morning he experienced another attack, from which he never rallied, but became and continued unconscious till, peacefully breathing his last, he departed about 8 o'clock on Saturday evening” (6th May, 1865.)

THE  
REV. JOHN SINCLAIR

WAS a native of Canisbay, Caithness. His parents were John Sinclair, farmer, Brabster, of Canisbay, and Anne Cooper. They were a worthy couple—the wife, in particular, was widely known for her piety. Being in the habit of attending religious ordinances in other parishes, the neighbours would say to her husband, “How can you put up with your wife going so often from home?” “Put up with her!” he would reply; “the wonder is that she comes back and puts up with me.” But John (who had at all times been an agreeable neighbour and an indulgent husband) became at length the subject of a work of grace. His convictions of sin were such that often he would not go to bed, for fear of awaking in a world of woe. His wife would sit up all night with him, and encouragingly say, smiling, “Oh, man, you will have better days yet.” “Wife, how can you smile at me,” he would reply, “more likely you would weep for me.” When, by the word of the gospel, he ultimately got deliverance, he felt—to use his own words—like one raised from the dead, or ushered into a new world, and thought that sin would never again trouble him. In the midst of his joy his wife would say, “Oh, John, you are on the mount now, but you will not always be there; you must in the Lord’s time come down to the wilderness,” which, he has been heard to say, “I had to travel many a day.”

The family of this excellent couple received from them an example which seems to have been lost upon none of them. Donald, younger brother of the subject of this brief sketch, grew up to be an amiable and accomplished man, and was well known in Caithness, and afterwards in Aberdeenshire, as a

successful teacher of youth. Some years ago he emigrated to Natal, where, much to the regret of his many friends, and to the loss of that colony, he met his death by a fall from his horse. Other members of the family still survive, and adorn their station and profession.

John, the eldest, early became the subject of religious impressions, and was remarkable, from his childhood for his tenderness of conscience and regular performance of secret prayer. One who was his school-fellow tells us that there was near his father's farm an old sheep-cote, to which he used regularly to repair for this purpose, and which was styled by other boys "John Sinclair's *cree*." When his father would be thrashing in the barn, John, quite a child, would, sitting down beside him, put to him such questions regarding experimental godliness as would make the father shed tears when the boy was out of sight. Thus the Lord was training him from his youth, and fitting him for after service in His vineyard.

He, as well as the rest of the family, got the best education that country schools then afforded, and in the winter of 1819-20 he was engaged as assistant teacher of the Parish School of Bower. When there Mr. David Steven became intimately acquainted with him, and he says "a youth of his godly life, attainments, yet self-denial, I almost never knew." Thereafter he taught on his own responsibility a school in Thurso, and made many friends among the pious people of that town. From Thurso he went to be master of the Parish School of South Ronaldshay, and when there he met with some trouble; for, having opened a Sabbath school, others besides children began to attend it, receiving from Mr. Sinclair instruction in Divine things very different from what they were in the habit of getting from the pulpit. This excited the jealousy of the minister, who threatened to bring Mr. Sinclair before the Presbytery unless he discontinued his Sabbath evening teaching. Failing to put his threat into execution, a parishioner asked him the reason. "Well, you see," replied the minister, "the lad is so

well acquainted with his Bible that it's not easy to establish a charge against him." But he contrived to make the place so uncomfortable for him that he was anxious to leave it, and wrote a friend in Caithness that he intended doing so. The latter, however, dissuaded him from this, until the Lord in providence should open for him a door elsewhere, for until then it appeared there was work for him to do where he was. After a time the Parish School of Latheron becoming vacant, some friends applied to the heritors on behalf of Mr. Sinclair, who heard nothing of the matter until he got the letter announcing his appointment to the situation. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation."

After going through the usual literary and theological course, Mr. Sinclair was, in 1837, licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Caithness; although, as one has said of him, "he was taught divinity in both law and gospel before he entered college or hall." When, in the same year, the Rev. Archibald Cook removed from Bruan to Inverness, such was their appreciation of Mr. Sinclair's character and gifts, that the Bruan people cordially called him to be their pastor, notwithstanding his ignorance of the Gaelic language, which many of them at that time were best acquainted with, and which had always hitherto been used in Bruan church.

The Bruan mission had been frequently favoured with an able ministry. The late Mr. Mackintosh of Thurso began his work there in the opening years of this century, and in days of spiritual darkness preached the gospel in purity and power. Mr. M. had a felicitous way of unfolding gospel truth out of the types and shadows of the Old Testament dispensation. His method of holding out offers of the Saviour also, was so large and liberal, that a hearer of his used quaintly to say, "Mr. Mackintosh is a man that makes free with his Master's goods." His ministry was honoured by not a few seals, one of these being the late worthy John Sutherland, Badbea. After his settlement in Thurso his preaching was said to have lost some-

what of its power. One of his attached Bruan hearers went to Thurso to judge as to this for himself, and having told his errand to Mr. Mackintosh, the latter replied, "It would be no wonder, William, if what you heard were true, for I left most of my library (meaning his exercised hearers) behind me when I left Bruan." In the monthly prayer meetings, both in English and Gaelic, he frequently invited any one who had a "question" on his mind to propose it, in order that it might be spoken to by judicious persons present. If no one responded, Mr. M. would say, "Well, we will continue in the exercise of prayer, for in harvest one day's inputting is equal to three days' shearing."

Mr. Sinclair's ministry was a brief one, but bright in respect both of zeal and faithfulness. He seemed to have an impression that his time would be short, and he lived and laboured as one who thought so. From his childhood the subject of Divine grace, and habituated to deep self search, he had gained an unusual acquaintance with the human heart, which, in dealing with the consciences of his fellow-men, he made powerful use of. Trained also by grace to maintain a life of nearness to the Lord, he had much insight into the "mystery of godliness," and preached "Christ crucified" with much tenderness and unction. Indeed, his superior mental power, matured by long study, his varied acquirements, and his previous acquaintance with Divine truth and experience of its power, enabled him from his first entrance on the work of the ministry to take a prominent position. His bearing, grave at all times, was in the pulpit strikingly solemn. To those living without God in the world, his appeals were most arousing, and left, we believe, in not a few instances, impressions of a lasting kind. His exposure of the groundless hopes of formal professions was peculiarly thorough, and at times excited against him on the part of such no little hostility. But to the Lord's people he commended himself as a "good householder, who brought forth out of his treasures things new and old."



The labours of Mr. Sinclair, who never seems to have enjoyed robust health, were, after being a few years in Bruan, much interrupted by bodily ailments, and at length, in the autumn of 1843, at the comparatively early age of 42 years, he departed this life, and with what regret to the people among whom he laboured, appears in the following epitaph on the memorial stone, placed by them over his remains in the burying-ground of Bruan :—

TO THE  
MEMORY OF  
THE REV. JOHN SINCLAIR,  
LATE MINISTER OF THE FREE CHURCH, BRUAN,  
WHO DIED 22ND AUG., 1843, AGED 42 YEARS.

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HE WAS A BURNING AND SHINING LIGHT ; OF EMINENT GIFTS AND  
GRACE, DEEP EXPERIENCE, AND HOLY LIFE ; POWERFUL, ZEALOUS,  
AND SPIRITUAL AS A PREACHER AND MINISTER OF THE  
WORD ; FAITHFUL, AFFECTIONATE, AND BELOVED AS A  
RELATIVE, FRIEND, AND PASTOR.

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The people of his charge, while erecting this tribute to his memory,  
desire to give all the glory to Him to whom it pertains.

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Rom. v. 12-13.

## THE "MEN."

HAVING briefly, and, as we feel, very defectively, sketched the lives and labours of the leading ministers in this county of the last generation, we proceed to notice some of the leading lay Christians of Caithness and the Reay country. Those yet surviving who had an intimate acquaintance with some of the latter will doubtless regard our account of them as meagre and unsatisfactory. We can only say, by way of apology, that the size of this volume and our means of information are limited ; and, moreover, that if any of those more competent for the work of perpetuating the memories of these worthies have this work in view, it has been so long in making its appearance as to be now reasonably despaired of.

The "Men" were so styled—as an able and estimable biographer of some of them in another part of the land has said—"not because they were not women, but because they were not ministers." What were the "Men?" The true answer is a simple one. They were the most gifted and godly among the Lord's people, who had enlarged views of Divine truth, and deep experience of its power—who had also the capacity of edifyingly expressing these views and feelings, and whose conduct was in substantial unison with their profession. They were not only Christians, but eminent Christians—"Men" *par excellence*. They had nothing but what is to be found, in germ at least, in every true Christian, but in them it was marked and manifest. They therefore, necessarily and naturally, came to the front. They were not only exercised, but profoundly so, under a sense of personal unworthiness—the chief of sinners in their own esteem—much acquainted with the deceitfulness of the natural heart and the depths of Satan. But while thus

habitually self-abased, they were led into exalted apprehensions of the mystery of godliness displayed in the covenant of grace.

They were pre-eminently, also, men of prayer, and were admitted at a throne of grace into singular intimacy of fellowship, evidenced not only by the unction resting on their own spirits, but in their obtaining special direction in the perplexities of themselves or others, and in receiving intimations of the Lord's mind as to present and future events in providence. We are aware that here we occupy debateable ground, and that some of our readers will consider, that if we expect them to credit this feature in the religion of the "Men," and the instances in illustration of it that may hereafter be given, we draw too largely on their credulity. But, by way of vindication, let us briefly say, *first*, that for us—as taking in hand a description of these worthies—to eliminate from it all reference to this matter, even though we ourselves were among the sceptical, would be neither warrantable nor fair. But not being affected with such scepticism, we would invite those who are so to consider, *secondly*, that these were men, as already mentioned, of close walk with God, and in the habit of committing to Him, in a way minute and intimate, their temporal and eternal interests. *Thirdly*, that the grounds of their belief in such cases they did not, and, we suppose, could not, formally demonstrate to others—a circumstance that no true believer should wonder at, knowing, as he does, the impossibility of conveying to others that self-evidencing excellency which the truth presents to his own soul, and on which his persuasion reposes; the which, if he was able to convey, he could bring his fellow-men into the same attitude of soul as the Spirit of God brought himself in the production of saving faith. Possibly this accounts for the reticence of the late Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie of Lochcarran, who, when asked how he knew an event which, previous to its occurrence, he had foretold, he replied, "I said it, the Lord did it, and there's an end of it." *Fourthly*, there was no miracle in the case. These men, like

other Scottish worthies of former days, sought to know the Lord's mind as to events that deeply interested them, and obtained it in connection with revealed truth ; for we contend that there is no event of Providence, as there is nothing in the sphere of grace, that the principle on which it proceeds is not laid down in the chart of Scripture. "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God ;" and so in a most important sense "there is no new thing under the sun." And, besides, since "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," who can venture to affirm that he will not represent to the sanctified imaginations of some of those "greatly beloved" even the details of "coming events?" We do not, of course, say that this is an attainment essential to personal salvation ; many without it live godly in Christ Jesus. There is no reason however, for the disbelief of its existence, in the face of the incontestible evidence supplied both by the reliable character of the men who obtained these intimations and their well authenticated fulfilments.

Another characteristic of these godly persons was their caution in dealing with those beginning to make a profession of religion. Knowing something of the greatness and all-importance of a work of grace in the soul, the proneness of the natural heart to accept and be satisfied with a counterfeit, and the desireableness for God's glory, and for the welfare and comfort of the church, that her communion be kept pure—these worthies did not give instant credit, nor receive into instant fellowship those under religious impressions. They required the trial and test which is afforded by time. But while they so acted, none watched more assiduously over such, remembered them more constantly at a throne of grace, or welcomed more gladly in them the appearances of a real work of God. This stands in striking opposition to the practice of many, even good men, now-a-days, who receive with open arms persons in the first flush of religious feeling—often to their own after regret, and to the exposure of the cause of Christ to unnecessary ridicule.

The "Men" have been, and still continue to be, largely reviled and "spoken against." The reason is plain. "All that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." They were the chief marks for the shafts of enemies—as in warfare marksmen select the *officers* for their aim. Their characters were closely scanned, their conduct narrowly watched, and their motives often misconstrued. If they visited their friends they were accused of being "idle"—if they were entertained by those who loved and looked up to them, they were called "gluttonous men and wine-bibbers"—if others sat at their feet to listen and learn, they were charged with "lording it over men's consciences;" and their accusers were to be found not only in the openly ungodly, but also in professors of religion who could not bear the light of their doctrine and lives, and even in ministers to whom they declined to give credit and commendation, which, being desired, was not deserved. "But wisdom is justified of her children."

It may be asked, "How has such an 'institution' or body of Christians as the 'Men' been found only in the north?" We express our belief that in the same class of society, in other parts of the land, men of equal piety and parts do not exist, carrying the same weight of Christian character. If they did, the Christian people would draw around them, and although it may be under another name, they would obtain the same place, and do the same work, as the "Men" of the north.

From the summit of the Drumholisten Hills, which separate Caithness from Sutherland, one travelling westward gets the first view of the Reay country. To those accustomed to the tame flats of Caithness, it presents a singular contrast. An endless tumult of hills—heather-clad and rugged—is seen, over which, here and there, mountains of great elevation stand like sentinels. This rugged land is intersected in parallel directions by noble straths, which seem as if left by the hand of the Creator as paths for the rivers that flow through them, and which, in their winding course, are fringed by fertile banks of

more or less width. These straths lie like gems in the setting of the surrounding ruggedness. Into these the population of the Reay country were gathered until a period within the memory of living men—a population including many of the "excellent of the earth," and remarkable as a whole for their social virtues. But by the besom of the ruthless clearance system these valleys—the natural abodes of men in that country—were swept of their inhabitants, who were left scattered along its barren shores, to gather a subsistence as they best might from a stormy ocean and a hungry soil.

Before the days of this desolation these were blessed valleys. There the Lord had in successive generations many witnesses, and among them not a few of patriarchal weight and almost prophetic standing. When one listens to the traditionary accounts of the characters, lives, and attainments of these worthies, he is struck with the dwarfed proportions which even living Christianity has now assumed, and at the audacity of some professors of religion, who, with a little more letter learning and modern light, affect to sneer at these men as mere enthusiasts. There were Christian giants in those days and in these districts, and the kind of professors referred to they would have "disdained to set with the dogs of their flock." Their names are fragrant to some, and their sayings—pregnant with Christian wisdom—are still rehearsed, the only matter of regret being that these were not gathered up, and given as a precious legacy to the church before the greater part of them had passed into oblivion.

It concerns us, however, at present, to say that in this district resided for the greater part of his life,

JOHN GRANT—a name that we believe will, by the consent of all competent to judge, be placed at the head of the "Men" of the far north. In endeavouring so brief a notice of him as this must be, we feel, *first*, the difficulty of conveying an idea of the veneration in which he was held by the religious people of a large section of the North Highlands, and *second*, the difficulty

of adequately exhibiting the grounds of this sentiment. The type of Christian character of which he was one of the most notable instances, is something so different from that of a modern date, that were we fully to furnish some of its manifestations, these would, there is little doubt, be treated by many with incredulity, although by others, who claim some share of common sense and Christian intelligence, our account would be received as one of truth and soberness.

From all we have heard of John Grant from those personally acquainted with him—some of whom still survive—he does not seem to have been possessed of those gifts of mind or utterance that enabled others of his brethren to shine as public speakers. But he had qualities that gave him greater weight and influence. He was intimately and spiritually acquainted with the Scriptures, and his views of the mind of the Lord, as therein revealed, were singularly original and striking. The varied experiences of the believer were in his case profound and marked, enabling him to read these off to others—as he frequently did—in a way that solved their perplexities and cast light on their spiritual conditions. His life and conversation were distinguished by uniform gravity of demeanour, by great prayerfulness and watchfulness, and by the tenderness of one who has the fear of the Lord always before his eyes.

He was a native of Kildonan, but in consequence of the clearances there made by the first Duchess of Sutherland, he removed to Strathy. In personal appearance he was above the average height, of spare figure, with a superior address, and such an intelligent expression of countenance as betokened mental power. Indeed, of the "Men" as a whole, it may be said that their minds were richly cultivated in the highest form. In three books they were deeply read: two without—the Bible and God's Providence; the other within—the human heart. The first two filled their minds with the loftiest and most elevating of all themes, and lifted them, as they do all Christians, above the tinsel refinement of the schools. The other habituated

them to keener, closer, and more sustained observation than can be looked for in mere scholastic cultivation. They were the true metaphysicians. Theirs was the metaphysics not reached by nature casting introspective glances on herself, merely to classify into dry science the facts and phenomena of mind, but that got by observing with an eye touched with heavenly salve the workings of the whole inner man, and to which they were impelled alike by the authority of Scripture and the necessities of the Divine life; for thus they attained the self-knowledge needed to humble, warn, and guide them, and also that knowledge of their possession of a work of grace fitted to stimulate and console.

John Grant underwent a saving change in early life. A friend writes us "that before leaving his native place, he was for a considerable time under such deep convictions of sin as to be almost driven to despair, in which state of mind he attempted to ford the river of Kildonan while in flood. That his life was preserved was a miracle, and that he landed on the opposite side a 'new man' was still a greater miracle. This circumstance is graphically and beautifully described in a Gaelic elegy, written shortly after his death by Mr. Joseph Mackay.

At the time that John Grant withdrew from public ordinances—which it is well known he did, and in which course he continued till his death—he was an elder in the church of Kildonan. He had urged the session to put down the practice then prevalent of advertising on the Sabbath-day in the churchyard the secular transactions of the ensuing week, and which weighed on his conscience. They declined to interfere, whereupon he resigned his office, and withdrew from the congregation. Whether or not he then resolved to become a non-hearer altogether, this he ultimately became—a course in which he was doubtless strengthened by the too frequently exceptionable ministrations of the time.

Shortly after removing to Strathy, he began a Sabbath reading at his own house. He grew to be a burning and a shining light.



Many of the Lord's people sought his counsel in their spiritual perplexities, and obtained through his instrumentality, deliverances wonderful in the manner and in the measure of them. Many others sought his counsel in their temporal straits, much on the principle on which Saul's servant suggested to his master when the asses could not be found that they should enquire at the seer. As an instance of the former, we may mention that an aged female Christian of our acquaintance, whose sobriety of judgment and well-trying religious character places her testimony beyond doubt, has told us that on one occasion she was much troubled by some considerations connected with this passage of scripture—"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." It occurred to her that John Grant might be the means of giving her relief. She accordingly went to his dwelling—distant above twenty miles—where she remained all night without making known the object of her visit. Next morning John's wife expressed to him her wonder as to what could be the cause of the seeming dejection of the stranger. He replied, "I know that;" and thereupon, calling the woman, he opened the Bible and read those words in Solomon's Song, "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me"—then, enlarging on the appropriating faith there expressed, touched and met her precise difficulties, so that her bands were loosed, and she "went on her way" homewards "rejoicing."

John Grant was careful in admitting to Christian fellowship only those of whose sincerity he was persuaded, as he himself used to say, "I do not receive those beginning a profession from what I see with my eyes or hear with my ears, but only when I get them from the Lord at a throne of grace, in which case I find that Satan does not take them from me, as otherwise he would." It appears that at times he saw fit to assume considerable austerity of manner. Mrs. M'Kay, Melness (Peggy M'Diarmid), who was widely known as one of the most lively and lovable Christians in the Highlands, called on him, and was bluntly asked, on telling her name, "What brought

you here?" "Just to see a man of whom I am afraid," was her reply. "If that is your errand, you have lost your pains," returned John, "for I shall say nothing to frighten you to-night." For where he found evidences of Divine grace, no one could exceed him in tenderness of dealing, as one who knew him well has said, "He was a lion and a lamb." Speaking of the communion of saints, John remarked, "It is not when the Lord's people are together that they have closest fellowship, but when they separate; for then I pray for you and you for me; I get a promise for you and you for me; so you live on my grace and I live on yours until we meet again."

In reading the words of Agur, in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, John was commenting on the great mystery of godliness, and showing that every man was "brutish" in his own esteem when attempting to "learn" the "knowledge of the holy." At the verse, "Every word of God is pure," he paused, saying, "What is this? Is this the language of one that is 'brutish?' Verily, thy speech bewrayeth thee." Another observation made by him in connection with Caleb and Joshua was, "That of all who came out of Egypt, none but two should, in the case of the individual believer, enter the 'promised land' together, and these two were Christ and the soul."

His knowledge of the English language was defective, but when occasion demanded he endeavoured to use it. A person who accosted him in that language, and received rather a blunt reply, said, "John, you are a very independent man." "Independent!" he rejoined; "there is no such creature in heaven, earth, or hell, but I am independent of you and you of me." Then, turning to a friend who was present, he asked, in Gaelic, "Did I say that right?"

John, like others of his brethren, never remained long in any company without giving the conversation a profitable turn. In the house of Christian Mackenzie, a pious woman in Kildonan, he and the catechist of the district were, with two other men, met together. "You ought to be exercising your office here,"

John said to the catechist. "I will do so," replied the other, "on the two conditions—that you tell me what questions to ask ; and also, that if any one refuses to answer, you do so for him." To this John having agreed, the other said, "Well, what question shall I put to this man ?" pointing to one of the two others, in whose Christian character they had confidence. "Ask him, whether, seeing that fodder is at present so scarce, he would rather get provender for his cattle, or grace for his soul ?" "I fear," answered the man "I would rather get straw for my cattle." "Does that answer satisfy you, John ?" said the catechist. "Yes, for I believe it to be honest." "And now you will ask the other man (of whose sincerity, it appears, they were more doubtful), 'Whether he would rather grace for himself or for his wife ?'" No answer was given. "Well, John," said the catechist, "according to our agreement, it falls to you to give the answer." "Then I will do so. At his own fireside he would prefer grace for his wife, in order to his own comfort ; but at the Friday meeting, grace for himself, that he might shine in public." "And now," continued John, "ask the mistress of the house how many beds she has in her house, and who occupy them ?" She replied, "Three—one, that of my affection, in which are the Lord's people ; a second, that of my hope, in which are those of whom it is written, 'They shall be willing in the day of Thy power ;' a third, that of my compassion, in which are the unregenerate world."

In the year 1820 John had to leave Strathy, and went to reside in Thurso, his farm being thrown into a large sheep-run. The day he was leaving he said, "Within three years, the party who has been the immediate cause of my removal will be bankrupt, and his stock sold off on this very ground." Mr. Gordon, Thurso, who had come to bring John with him to town, chid him for saying so. "I am certain of it," he repeated ; and in two and a-half years from that time what he said was exactly accomplished. Some sheep belonging to John's successor having destroyed the crop of a small farmer in the neighbour-

hood, the latter sought damages, but to no purpose. He therefore went to law with the other, and the case was appealed to the Court of Session. It there being given against the sheep farmer, he, to meet the costs, had to sell off all his effects.

At a time when James Macdonald, catechist, Reay, was about to be removed from his farm, and no other suitable place turning up, he sent this message to John, "Tell him there is no room for me on earth, and that I am unprepared for heaven." After a little John said to the bearer, "You can tell James, that until he is ready for heaven, there will be room made for him on earth, though it should be by the removal by death of another." A few weeks afterwards a man in the neighbourhood having died, his farm was given to James.

In the year 1816 there was a great scarcity of food. Donald Mackay, Clashcreggan, being in destitute circumstances, called for John, and expressed to him that he felt this a trial for himself and family, and also a temptation to his soul. "But," added Donald, with all the sincerity for which he was distinguished, "if it be the Lord's will that I should die of starvation, ought I not to be resigned?" "Are you honest in saying that?" said John. "Yes, so far as I know my own heart." "Well, I tell you, you shall never die of want." Donald lived till the year 1848—the Lord giving him neither poverty nor riches; but he was then taught a lesson of resignation he never forgot.

After being a year or two in Thurso, John went to reside at Brubster, Reay, where he continued till his death. The following reminiscence of his last illness we lately heard:—A neighbour yet surviving had gone to watch all night by John's bedside. Becoming drowsy towards morning, he fell asleep in his chair, and dreamt that he saw John going along the road, and that an appearance as of the Evil One tripped him, but that a Shining One came to his rescue. On awaking he told John the dream, adding, "I thought no enemy would, at this time of day, be laying wait for you." "Is that what you say, man," replied John, "it is more than fifty years since the knot of espousal

was tied between Christ and my soul ; but Satan hasn't given up hopes of me yet." "When, seeking soul," John would say, "did you find Christ?" "Was it not when you thought you would never find him?" "And when did you lose him?" he would add. "Was it not when you knew that you had him?" "Poor soul," he would say, "Christ put the corrupt affections of your nature under lock and key the day that you and He joined hands. That being done, he unlocked them again, that you may be kept a poor, needy sinner till the day of your death."

John Grant died at Brubster on the 26th May, 1829, aged 77 years, and was interred, according to his own wish, in the Reay churchyard, in the grave of George Miller, catechist, who had been useful to him in the Lord.

JAMES MACDONALD.—One Sabbath morning, in the middle of last century, Mr. John Sutherland, already mentioned, is preaching in the church of Halkirk. Clusters of persons around each door show that the church is filled to overflowing, so that late comers have to take their stand at the outside. Among these is a young man, rather under the middle height, but of vigorous and well-knit frame, and of intelligent and expressive countenance. His air does not show that he is specially interested in the opening services of the day ; but as the sermon proceeds, his attention is arrested, and before it is concluded an arrow of truth has entered his heart, imparting to him a new and Divine life. That young man is James Macdonald ; and if Mr. Sutherland was instrumental in giving no other gift to the church than James Macdonald, his work was not in vain. James himself used in after years thus to allude to his obligations to Mr. Sutherland. "I knew a young man standing in the doorway of the church of Halkirk, hearing the godly Mr. Sutherland, and the Holy Ghost sent the sermon right over the people's heads into the heart of that lad."

James Macdonald was no ordinary man, but one of those

who leave a deep foot-print on the sands of the time in which they live, and the memory of whose ways, words, and works echo down to generations following. Most of the Christians of his day he excelled in point of mental vigour, if not also in width of spiritual knowledge and depth of religious feeling. The powers of mind which his eminent son displayed in a more extensive sphere were possessed, perhaps in no inferior degree, by the father, although the latter lacked the advantages of early culture and education. His acute and comprehensive mind, sanctified by Divine grace and applied to Divine truth, enabled him to form his ideas clearly and to express his views forcibly. This was observable alike in his public devotional exercises and in his teaching of others.

He also came largely up to the practice of the apostles of the Lord, who "gave themselves continually to the Word and to prayer." This made the personal godliness of James Macdonald and others of his day so thorough-going—this was the secret of their attainments and usefulness. Like Moses' rod, which swallowed up all the other rods, their souls' growth in grace and their own and others' spiritual prosperity swallowed up all other concerns, at least obtained manifestly the foremost place.

Although James received the beginning of his spiritual life in Caithness, where also he spent the most of his years, he was a native of Kildonan, Sutherland, and while resident there was in the habit of going occasionally to Ross-shire, which was then highly favoured with ministers and "Men" of rare worth. Some still surviving remember that he used often to speak of these visits, particularly of a famous sacramental season in Mr. Porteous' parish of Kilmuir. On the Friday Mr. Porteous asked for a "question ;" but none being given, he said, "Is there no one here has anything to say for Christ?" Still getting no response, he said, "Is there any one here then who has anything to say against Him?" A soldier in uniform got up and answered, "Yes, I have ; He won't take me on my terms,

and I won't take Him on His." A soul's closure with Christ then formed the subject of the day's exercise, Mr. Porteous selecting an appropriate passage of Scripture for the guidance of the speakers. Twenty-five men spoke, the "power from on high" resting obviously on all of them; and "they expressed more," James would say, "in five words, than men in our day would do in five-and-twenty."

About fifteen years after his making a public profession of religion, he was appointed catechist of the parish of Reay, for which office his gifts, not less than his piety, admirably fitted him. It may be thought strange in the case of such a man holding such an office, when we state that James had never learned to read. But at that time, in the Highlands, a regular course of education was almost unknown, and the cost of the Gaelic Scriptures was such as to make them beyond the reach of persons in humble life. But so richly replenished was the mind and memory of James with Scripture, that he would repeat it as exactly as if he were reading, and, moreover, any mistake made by one quoting a passage of Scripture in his hearing would be instantly detected. No doubt modern scribes and pharisees coming in contact with such a man might have made the discovery, which those before them made regarding Peter and John, "that they were unlearned and ignorant men." But learning is a relative term; and if learning be acquired for the purposes of widening the sphere of human happiness, of elevating man's moral nature, of enabling him to answer the end of his creation by teaching him to fulfil the duties of this life and fitting him for that which is to come—then the learning possessed by these "Men" must take the foremost place. And looking at their religious habits and exercises as a means merely of mental education, if those who affect to look down on them had the opportunity, or rather privilege, of hearing them from the book of revelation, unfold the mystery of God's reconciling of the world unto Himself—and from the book of the human heart unfold the mystery of

its gracious or godless workings—if those did not, as Paul says, "fall down and confess that God is in them of a truth," they would at least see the effects of Divine truth received into the heart in raising those who had otherwise been undistinguished to a high platform of mental power.

Notwithstanding the too frequent incapacity of the public ministry in James' time, he did not, as some others of his Christian brethren, absent himself from public worship, but regularly attended it, and urged others to seek there, what he himself sought, communion with the Lord in the ordinances of His own appointment. "Those who go out seeking Christ," he would say, "will get Christ; and those who go out seeking a name and credit among men will get that, for the consciences of all in a gospel land will yet be constrained to acknowledge that God is a just God, that He has been the giver to all of all that they sought." To those making a profession of religion he would say, "See that you bring not down to the world a bad report of the good land, but seek to press so near the 'Tree of Life' as to taste of its fruit, so that others perceiving about you the flavour of Zion's provision may be induced to go thither also."

James, as is well-known, purposed at one time emigrating to America, and carried his resolution so far as to have set off; but a storm overtaking the vessel, she was cast ashore on the Orkney Islands, and James came back, never again to leave his native land. After returning, he married a second time; and when his wife afterwards gave birth to a son, James said to a friend who had accompanied him home from a catechising in which he had that day been engaged, "Go to a secret place and enquire of the Lord regarding this child." By and bye the other came in again, and James asked, "Well, what news?" "Good news," replied his friend; "a child of the covenant has this night been born in this house." Often, when looking at the infant, he would say to friends, "Do you see that child in the cradle? You will yet see him in the pulpit." When in



course of years this turned out to be true, the people of the district were prepared to receive favourably as a preacher Mr. John Macdonald. On his father's account and on his own he was deservedly highly spoken of; and the words of one who had said something disparaging to the popular young man being repeated to his father, James feelingly remarked, "From my heart I thank that man he has taken the 'woe' off my son," referring to the words of the Lord, "Woe unto you when *all* men speak well of you." This suggests to us what is told of William Calder—James' successor as catechist of Reay. Returning homewards from a sacramental occasion in Thurso, where he had been shown much kindness, he began to soliloquize, as was his wont, and say, "There is a woe on you, William Calder, I am afraid, for all men seem to think well of you." Then looking upwards, he said, "But what dost *Thou* think of me, Lord? Thou thinkest that I am a poor sinner. Blessed be Thy name, Thou hast taken the 'woe' off me."

James Macdonald was a "father" in the church of Christ long before his son became a minister, and his having a son in her high places did not lessen his interest in all young men of promise. When the well-known Alexander Gair was beginning to be an able and edifying public speaker, James, after hearing him pray in a house where many eminent Christians were during a communion season lodged, said to him, "I have three faults to find with your exercise. You mention the Divine name too often, and not with sufficient reverence. You have too many repetitions, and you continued too long." "I will take these hints from you, James," returned Alexander; "but you must remember that when Christ enlisted you, it was gold pieces were going, and one could count down a large sum in few words; now-a-days we have but copper coins. However, if they bear the king's stamp, I hope you won't throw them away." James, we may add, was himself remarkably brief in public. The first time he spoke to the question in the parish of Reay—the subject being marks of the grace of watchfulness—this was

what he said, "I knew a man who went out one frosty day, and carefully guiding his steps, got safely back to his own fireside. Thinking himself now safe, he heedlessly sat down too near the fire, when a live coal fell on his foot and burnt it."

Long before his strength began to fail, James had an impression that he would in his latter years be deprived of one of his bodily senses, and he was in the habit of praying that the Lord would not take from him the faculty of *hearing* His blessed word or of *speaking* to His praise. His impression proved a correct one, and his petition an answered one, for he became quite *blind* some years before his death, but carried on his public work as formerly. And although he lived to the advanced age of 95 years, his mental power and spiritual exercises retained to the last their freshness. His bodily health, too, was excellent. He would be up and out by daybreak at secret prayer, and when friends would remonstrate with him as to this, he would say, "I like to put my letters into the post-office in good time." One day, after he had become blind, he was sitting by the fire-side, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! what means all this?" "What?" said the pious woman who kept house for him, seeing nothing wrong. "What but Satan," he replied, "casting up to me all the sins of my youth, thinking to make me despair of Christ. But," he added, "this only makes me to need Him the more, and to cleave to Him the closer."

His son, Dr. Macdonald, accompanied by Mr. Sinclair, Thurso, visited him shortly before his death. They found James in a remarkable frame of mind. His views of the glorious provision of the everlasting covenant, and of its unchangeable stability, he was expressing with great fulness and delight. Then he began to complain of himself and of his own spiritual poverty—when his son playfully challenged him as to the inconsistency of his saying there was such abundance in the covenant, and yet he so sensibly empty. "Inconsistent," replied James; "these are just the two things that *are* consistent, and if either were otherwise, they would not be consistent."

The week before his death, although others saw no sign of an approaching change, he ordered a supply of household stores to be laid in, and when his housekeeper enquired why he did so, he said, with a smile, "They will be needed for those who will attend my wedding." Each day thereafter he became more joyous in spirit, and only two days before his summons came he lay down to rise no more. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace."

JOHN TAIT.—In a house near the village of Halkirk a master tailor and his apprentices are sitting busy at work. In the immediate neighbourhood Neil Macpherson has begun a diet of catechising. Suddenly stopping, as if something had crossed his mind, and looking round on the assembled people, he said in the Gaelic language, "Where is John Tait? I cannot proceed without him. Call him." This was done. "Tell the catechist," replied the tailor (John Tait), "to mind his own business, and I will mind mine." But in a few minutes better thoughts prevail, and John and his assistants join the meeting. That day marked the beginning of the spiritual life of one of the most venerated "fathers" of Caithness.

Scripture and observation show that the Christian graces are in different degrees developed in the members of Christ's mystical body. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." John Tait possessed these graces, not only in large measure, but also in remarkable equipoise. Zeal in him was tempered with discretion, faithfulness with tenderness, high attainments in godliness with lowly walk and bearing. His brethren used to say that they knew no man of such superior light who yet dealt so unoffendingly towards others, while the completeness of his Christian character won for him the esteem of all who knew him. When the kirk session of Halkirk were discussing the merits of various persons, with a view to the appointment of a catechist, after the death of Neil M'Pherson,

Mr. Cameron, the minister, an old school moderate, urging the claims of John Tait, who he knew had little regard for him, and did not attend his ministry, wound up his argument by saying, "No one would question *John Tait's* being a Christian." The office, however, John did not accept. One who had the best opportunities of knowing, having lived in the same house with him for five-and-twenty years, said, at his funeral, amid a flow of regretful tears, "I never saw about him a single look or action, or heard from his lips a single word, that I could say did not proceed from grace."

Not less than his personal character, his public teaching was fitted to edify and to attract. That "unction that teacheth all things" gave him deep insight into the mystery of iniquity in the natural heart, and also an extensive knowledge and comprehensive grasp of the mystery of grace—light that shone out brightly in the regularly recurring fellowship meeting held at his house, and to which the godly from all parts of the county were drawn, John being there *facile princeps*, although in his own esteem "less than the least." Nor was this light without heat—without the fervour of sanctified affection. "Speaking the truth in love," for the edification and increase of the body of Christ, was the object of these meetings, and growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was the result. We have met with few elderly Christians in this quarter who have not grateful recollections of the Drakries meetings.

John Tait was also one of the most relished speakers in the North Highlands at the communion Friday meetings. Some of the leading men in his day would frequently diverge from the "question" to make reflections on the presiding ministers, simply for this reason, that under the system of patronage men had been put into parishes whose doctrine was often erroneous and always feeble, and whose conduct was for the most part extremely lax; and the "Men" having on the Friday an opportunity of testifying against such to their faces, took advantage of it. But this practice

John Tait never indulged in or countenanced, and was in the habit of warning young speakers against it, believing that it turned aside the Friday exercise from its proper purpose, and raised sometimes a prejudice against it. His opinion was that these meetings ought to be an employing of the spiritual gifts of Christians of experience and standing, for the solution of cases of conscience, in a way fitted to relieve the anxious, strengthen the feeble, and confirm the timid. Yet, although the practice above referred to was not followed by John, no man of his time was more deeply grieved at the defections of the day, and the cause of Christ everywhere, especially in Scotland, was a thing he bore on his heart before Him who hath promised to arise "for the oppression of the poor and for the sighing of the needy;" and he failed not, wisely and weightily, to reprove ministers and others when he came in contact with them in private.

John Tait was also remarkable for the prudence with which he dealt with young persons who showed signs of soul concern. Knowing well the craft of Satan and the subtlety of *self* in its varying forms, he was at pains to watch over their conduct, directing and counselling them, yet not receiving hastily into avowed fellowship. Mr. David Steven we have heard compare John Tait to a skilful gardener, pruning off in his dealing with young professors whatever did not necessarily belong to the Christian in principle and practice, and at the same time fostering and strengthening in the very weakest what was vital. A few of the practical advices John would sometimes give in metaphorical language to young people, were—"Don't be kemping (striving to get before others) in the harvest field, lest you cut your fingers and spoil the corn. Don't be throwing stones at others, lest you dislocate your own arm. Don't appear in public in either such tawdry or such gaudy garb as will make others look twice at *you*. Don't carry the big drone of the bagpipes on your shoulder; it makes much noise, but gives no distinction of sound."

Many years before his death John removed from the village

of Halkirk to a spare room in the farm house of Drakries, in the same parish, which was tenanted by a humble God-fearing man, Francis Swanson. He it was who bore to John's character at his funeral the high testimony we have narrated. They maintained close Christian fellowship, John keeping family worship alternately with the landlord for the twenty-five years they resided together. Morning and evening all upon the farm were assembled, and the house door was then locked, to secure that there be no interruption. One morning, on rising from their knees, they were surprised to find Mr. Sinclair, Thurso, one of the worshippers. He, knowing the Drakries custom had come in unperceived at a window. The late James Mackay, Gerston, an intelligent Christian, who had also a good deal of genial humour, used to tell, as illustrative of Francis Swanson's care over those under his roof, that he (James) when a lad, had the charge of the Drakries *ield* cattle, and another lad of the milking cows. Their master, understanding that they retired to rest without engaging in secret prayer, had seriously challenged them for not doing so. Next night the boy who herded the cows went to an empty stall in the shed where the *ield* cattle were kept—there to perform the enjoined duty. James followed, and finding the other there before him ordered him to remove to his own domain among the milking cows, as this stall was his. His companion refusing, to fighting, instead of to praying, they fell, until their master came and separated them. The "manner of life," however, at Drakries had upon James Mackay—although as regards those who knew him it is unnecessary to say so—a lasting influence. The consistency and sincerity of his Christianity was not less manifest in his upright walk before the world, than it was in his steady and cordial friendship towards the "household of faith." In his recent removal, the church, and the congregation in which he was an office-bearer, have been bereft of a man of faith and prayer, and of great practical sagacity,

John Tait brought his friend Francis with him on one occasion

to a sacrament in the West Highlands, and friends there asking him what sort of man was the stranger, John said, "Well, he is just the same every day of the year as you now see him." Being urged to rise on the Friday—the question being marks of the true fear of God—Francis' only utterance was, "I think that a man who had the true fear of the Lord would, were he alone in a cave in the heart of the earth, there dread sin as much as in the presence of his fellow men."

A few years before his death, John Tait, who, highly favoured by grace, had been kept in close communion with the Lord and in enjoyment of the light of His countenance, was visited in sovereignty with a season of sore soul-desertion, terrible to himself and trying to others. The trial was so deep and so prolonged that it undermined his bodily health and laid him low. Mr. Munro, Halkirk, who often visited him, used to say, "All the doctors in the world cannot cure John, until the Sun of Righteousness anew rise on his soul with healing under his wings." He did not speak much of his experience at that time, but to two friends who went to see him he said, "Many seas have passed over my soul of late, and although I would not wish to discourage you, let me tell you, that much that passes in the world for religion will not be found to be so under the light of eternity."

At length when the trial of his faith was completed, its victory was made known to him by the Lord Himself, and the peace of God anew filled his soul. "Don't you think," he one day said to Mr. Munro, "that 'Christian,' at the sight of the cross, feeling his burden fall off might well give three leaps?" "Why, John?" said the minister. "Because of the love of a three-one God entering his soul," he replied—"the electing love of the Father, the redeeming love of the Son, and the sanctifying love of the Holy Ghost." In such frame of mind did John Tait, at the age of 60, enter on the everlasting enjoyment of the "love that passeth knowledge."

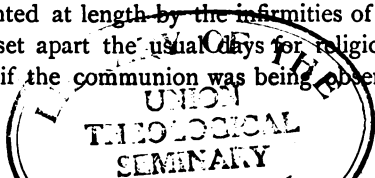
DONALD MACKAY, Clashchreggan, was one of whom it might truly be said that his "conversation was in heaven." One thing was needful to him, and all else was counted comparatively loss. From his outset in the Divine life he was remarkable for sensitiveness of conscience and carefulness in keeping his garments unspotted; and as the eye can never rest as long as the mote in it is unremoved, Donald's conscience could not rest under sin in himself, or sin unrepented in others. He kept close sentry on the workings of his own heart, and when corrupt affection lifted its head, the sin of it he confessed to God—the Tempter he would anathematize in a peculiar Gaelic phrase, which his friends well remember—and on the flesh he took revenge by rigorous self-denial. In the room where he slept one night, in the house of the late Mr. James Sinclair, corn merchant, Wick (a large-hearted and liberal-handed friend of Christ's cause and people, and who sought not to let his right hand know what his left hand did), some refreshment was left for Donald's use before his early start homewards in the morning. The thought was suggested to him that he might partake of a double quantity, as there was plenty of it and no onlooker. The temptation, however, he soon detected, and, without tasting the refreshment, he hurried out of the house—some of the family overhearing him as he did so imprecating his usual curse on the Tempter. With this enemy Donald had many a hand to hand conflict, and carried the war into his territory more than most professors of religion. The battles were more frequent and fierce in his experience because the enemy was met at more points. Donald's great weapon was "all prayer;" and the place of his retirement, chiefly the heather hills around his own dwelling, whence his "strong crying" might often be heard. A friend who slept in the same apartment with him at a communion season in Thurso was startled at midnight by the voice of Donald, on the floor, ejaculating his usual anathema against Satan, and saying in Gaelic—the only language he knew—"Stop, stop, till I get to the hillocks with you." A member of



family having expostulated with him for rising one cold night, and keeping out of bed praying till morning, his vindication was, "Did not the enemy think he would take James Elder from me?" *i. e.*, cause him to entertain unfriendly feelings to the person named—an intelligent and judicious Christian in the same parish. Indeed, he was extremely averse to anything that savoured of discord among the brethren, which he felt so keenly, that he remarked it almost affected his reason when he heard of variance among them. He deplored how little long-suffering, lowliness, and forbearance was manifested by many professors of religion, and said that the most satisfying evidence he himself enjoyed, of being in the spirit of unity with the brethren, was found by him on occasions on which some of them found fault with him.

In prayer in public Donald's brevity was singular. He would often be on his seat again before others had got well into the bodily attitude of prayer. But his words, if few, were pregnant; and, moreover, it is not to be inferred that this brevity extended itself to his secret exercises. Far otherwise. He exhorted others to what he himself practised—a continuing "instant in prayer." A man whom he asked to pray at family worship in his own dwelling, having continued long and to little purpose, Donald, who was naturally of an ardent temperament, which, by grace, he was enabled in general to keep well in hand—seized him when he was done and put him out of the house; plainly expressing his abhorrence at such an improper mode of worship. Asking a blessing at food in a house where one of the inmates had died, all he said, was, "Glory to thy Name, Lord, for the shortness of Time and for the length of Eternity. Amen."

Like Sandy Gair, he broke off from public ordinances for many years, but returned to them at the Disruption. He frequented the sacramental occasions in various parishes; and when prevented at length by the infirmities of age from being present, he set apart the usual days for religious exercises as carefully as if the communion was being observed in his own



parish. A small rivulet ran through or alongside his farm, and being in flood on one occasion, it threw up some refuse on the border of a piece of grass land, which, when Donald saw, he removed. The day happened to be the fast day of the Reay communion—nearly thirty miles distant. Donald's conscience smote him, and he went and restored the refuse to the place he found it on the land.

By prayer and supplication in all things he made his requests known unto God. His pony, with a load on its back, sank deep in the moss, as Donald was leading it across the hill. Such an occurrence often took place when good roads were fewer than now. Donald seeing that "vain was the help" of a single man, at once retired to a recess in a peat bank, to ask the Lord to send another. While thus engaged, a voice shouts over his head, "What is the man doing here, praying, and his horse smothering in the mire?" "Oh!" exclaimed Donald, "you have come already, have you? Well, we will go and take him out."

His antipathy to the varying and vain fashions of the day in dress and adornment was strong, and sometimes practically expressed. One of his daughters had begun to his grief to imitate a prevailing mode of dressing the hair. While she was sleeping one night, Donald stole softly to her bedside, and with a scissors mulcted her of a particularly offensive ringlet. The girl, on awaking and discovering her loss, was not a little indignant. Shortly afterwards, being seized with fever, her head had to be shaved. Donald standing by her, after this had been done, lifted up his hands and said, "Glory to Thee; I only took a little, but Thou hast taken the whole."

Donald was a native of Sutherlandshire. He appears to have been taught of the Lord from his youth. He was employed when a lad in keeping the young cattle on hill pasture; and when the sacrament was dispensed in the parish of Reay, about twelve miles distant, concluded on Sabbath morning, that it was his duty to go to the feast, although he

had not taken the precaution of providing another keeper for his charge. Accordingly, Donald repaired to the public ordinance, and finding it good to be there, he remained till the conclusion of the service (Monday), and then returned to look for his charge. On obtaining the first sight of the ground on which he had left the herd, he saw that not one of his cattle was there. In this difficulty Donald had immediate recourse to prayer, after which he again looked, and saw one of the cattle approach across the edge of the hill, and on his proceeding in that direction, he found all his cattle safe, in which he acknowledged the Preserver of man and beast. In after years he made it his practice, whenever he had occasion to travel the same ground, to kneel in prayer on the spot in which he had that day cast all his cares upon Him who cared for him.

When Donald married, he built a thatched house of the kind then in use—the wood which served for a roof, having been dug by himself out of the neighbouring moss, on the estate. It was customary then for proprietors to require a certain number of days' work as part of the rent paid by the tenants, and Donald was called to this service, and being late in arriving, the proprietor made use of an oath in finding fault with him, whereupon Donald immediately reproved him for profane swearing ; and the proprietor, who had been a military man, and not accustomed to be so freely dealt with, struck him on the side of the head, and threw him down. As soon as Donald could rise, he stood up and presented the other side of his head, inviting the proprietor who had smitten him on the one cheek to smite the other also. This was, of course, not done ; but Donald was summarily dismissed, and that day went to Mr. Gordon of Swiney, and got leave to build at Clashchreggan, and occupy a plot of ground there, which he held till his death.

On proceeding to build his new dwelling, Donald considered himself entitled to take away such of the timber of the former house as he himself had dug out of the moor ; but this being

contrary to the regulations of the estate, the proprietor caused him to be arrested, and marched to jail at Wick; but after being brought to Wick, he was allowed to return home without further molestation.

Donald was spoken to about this encounter with the laird several years after it had taken place, and he remarked, "That blow was better to me than twenty pounds." "How so?" said the person to whom this remark was made. "Because whenever I felt the least rising of anger at the recollection of it, I was compelled to go and pray for the proprietor, and I could not get peace until I had done so." This was overcoming evil with good.

Donald was married to a true yoke fellow, and left sons and daughters. On the occasion of his partner's death, he, in a brief address to the Hearer of prayer, noticed a distinction with a difference which Christians under bereavement would do well to observe—"Lord, thou knowest I am grieved, but not *angry*."

Notwithstanding his straitened means, Donald was always a cheerful giver. When the Free Church congregation at Lybster was deprived of the *Quoad Sacra* Church, by decree of the Court of Session, the congregation met to take steps to erect another building. Donald was among the first to appear, and when a subscription was commenced, he wished his name put down for £1. After the meeting the minister told him that he thought his subscription too much for a man in his circumstances. Donald immediately replied, "My dear, I'll get it." Very soon thereafter the minister received £1 for Donald from a friend in the south, and on handing the same to him, he immediately referred to their former conversation, and said, "Did not I tell you that I should get it." So, without further delay, Donald went to the treasurer for the congregation, and handed him the £1, which was one of the first subscriptions paid; and that out of the abundance of his joy in believing that freely having received it, he should freely give, "for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

Every returning Saturday was chiefly occupied by him in prayer, for preparation for the Sabbath, and few walked more closely, according to the rule of the Word, "calling the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable," than this humble, watchful and prayerful Christian, of whom it might well be said that he was an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile.

He died in 1848. The stone over his grave has the epitaph that he was "an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity."

ALEXANDER GAIR, although equalled by many of his brethren in weight of Christian character, probably excelled them all in the variety of his gifts, and certainly his fame extended most widely over the Gaelic speaking districts of Scotland. His knowledge of doctrinal truth was mature and sound, being, we need scarcely say, well versed in the Scriptures, and also largely acquainted with the standard works on divinity; while no one questioned the depth and variety of his experience of its power on his own heart. To a lively imagination, that gave often to his utterances the elevation, if not the expression, of poetry, he added a singular power of illustrating and illuminating the hidden history of the believer, by parallels drawn from Old Testament events and narratives, as well as by similitudes taken from tales, legends, and the varied phenomena of nature. And being gifted with remarkable eloquence in the Celtic tongue (which, though not possessing the flexibility that fit it, like some others, for the speculations of the head, is yet said to be a wonderful vehicle for touching the emotions of the heart), we see some of the reasons not only of his standing among the Christians of his day, but of the sway he exercised over the minds of multitudes of persons making no profession of religion, and of the spread of his name far and wide.

In regard to his personal appearance, we had opportunity of seeing him only when far advanced in life; but even then his

form, though attenuated, retained the traces of a man of imposing presence, and in his eye the fire of intellect appeared not yet exhausted, while his whole manner betokened the unconscious authority of one accustomed to lead.

He was a native of Tain, in Ross-shire, and learnt and for many years wrought at the joiner business. He lived for some time in the parish of Loth, and it was there he broke off from the communion of the Established Church, the general reason, though not the immediate occasion, being the same as we have more than once mentioned as having influenced the minds of several of the "Men" in taking the same step—the unsatisfactory pulpit teaching in the places where they lived. He joined the Free Church at the Disruption, and used to say, in regard to his doing so, that the only difference between him and other Free Church people was that he had left the Establishment before them.

The meetings which, after he had thus withdrawn, he held in his own dwelling in Loth, he continued, on coming to reside first in Achow, and afterwards near Dunbeath, in the parish of Latheron. These meetings were numerously attended, and were, we believe, means of spiritual profit to not a few. But this practice did not prevent him from attending the sacramental occasions in various parishes, and it was at the Friday meetings that those characteristics already referred to were remarkably displayed; and there, we may add, he failed not to employ the powers of irony and scathing sarcasm that he possessed, against those whom he considered the representatives of error in doctrine or defection in practice—a habit which some thought gained too much ground, so that friend and foe were sometimes not sufficiently distinguished. Moreover, there is reason to think that those who, when he was removed, strove to imitate him, succeeded only in copying this peculiar style of testimony, and even in regard to that—like the attempts made to reproduce the works of great masters in art, that result only in caricature—their attempts, wanting his basis of talent and elevation of aim,

degenerated into mere censoriousness, that harmed chiefly its authors.

Not the least useful and laborious part of his life was that devoted to the spiritual welfare of the Gaelic speaking people gathered in such numbers at Wick during the herring fishing season. Before the Disruption no regular provision of means of grace was made by the church for this multitude ; and for many years Sandy Gair, almost single-handed, but with much ability and acceptance, did among them the work of an evangelist. When, at length, such provision was made, he was not set aside, but continued to take a prominent part as long as his bodily strength allowed.

Of his many *piquant* sayings we are enabled to give the following :—One among the train of followers he often had from place to place asked Sandy if he thought there was anything in the history of the believer, or of the church, now answering to the occurrence spoken of in the Book of Samuel—when the Philistines sent back the ark of the testimony in a new cart, drawn by two milch kine, which went up the way to the land of Israel, but lowed as they went, their calves being kept behind? “Oh, yes,” replied Sandy ; “the new cart is the Free Kirk, that contains the testimony for the church’s spiritual independence ; the kine are the ministers that are leading the kirk and its testimony up from among the Erastians and Moderates to freedom from State control. And duty constrains them to do so, but like the kine that lowed for their two calves, they are very sorry to leave their *stipends* and *glebes* behind them.”

When a minister of the class from which he saw fit to withdraw asked him, “How dare you to expound Scripture who never studied the original tongues?” the reply was, “How dare you to do so who never studied original sin?”

How closely nominal profession will approximate in appearance to true godliness, he illustrated by the following hypothetical dialogue between Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac, to show the superiority of his standing, said to Ishmael—“I have Abraham

for my father." *Ishmael*—"So have I." *Isaac*—"I am the child of many prayers." *Ishmael*—"So am I." *Isaac*—"I have received the seal of the covenant in circumcision." *Ishmael*—"So have I." *Isaac*—"But I got a deliverance from heaven." *Ishmael*—"So did I." *Isaac*—"Yes, but I got my deliverance *through sacrifice*, and you by a drink from your mother's bottle." (Gen. xxi. 19.)

He supposed that one having met the children of Israel after they had crossed the Red Sea, harnessed and in good heart, marching to the land of promise, asked them, "What people are you?" "Oh, we are the Lord's people, whom He has delivered from the land of Egypt, for whom he has divided the Red Sea, and whose enemies he hath drowned, so that we will see them again no more." "And where are you going?" "To the land of promise—the land flowing with milk and honey." "And when do you expect to get there?" "Oh, very soon; in six weeks at farthest." Thus they parted. But nearly forty years afterwards the same person, meeting a great multitude of people, somewhat like those he had met before, said to them, "Surely you are not the people that expected to be in Canaan in six weeks?" "Yes, the same, and here we are yet, and it will be the greatest wonder if we ever see the good land." The application of this to the believer's experience we suppose to be sufficiently apparent.

"Saul," he remarked, "would not let the people taste food until *after* they had avenged themselves on their enemies, so if it were not for this cursed 'Saul' that is in even believers, that will not let them taste the refreshing honey of the promise, they would make greater slaughter of their spiritual foes than they often do."

Sandy sent word to the writer, who was a theological student at the time, to beware of the "great pot" out of which the sons of the prophets get their pottage, for there is "death in it" (2nd Kings iv. 40), which can only be cured by getting the handful of meal." "The pot is the college; the death in it," he added,



“is learning without grace, and the meal is the good food ground on Calvary between the millstones of law and justice, which can be gotten only by the hand of faith.”

In the course of conversation with a Roman Catholic priest, who urged that the Pope sat in the chair of St. Peter, Sandy admitted that Peter did sit in that chair *once*, viz., when he denied his Master, and that the Pope had continued to occupy it ever since.

He remarked, in connection with the succession of the seasons of the year, that the change after winter was at first better known by the increase of light than by the increase of heat, and he held that it was so in the case of individuals and nations when times of reformation began. “On the other hand,” he said, “when the days began to shorten, night was felt to come on more suddenly than any one expected ; and so when backsliding commenced, men came more quickly under the power of darkness than themselves or others looked for.”

Another illustration was taken from eclipses, to which he frequently referred. “Philosophers,” he would remark, “tell us that whenever the earth comes between the sun and the moon, the moon is eclipsed. I believe that to be true. Christ is the sun, and the church is the moon, and whenever the earth comes between them, it is sure to be followed by an eclipse.”

On going to a funeral in his neighbourhood, Alexander found an aged pious man, William Gunn, and a number of young men, met and sitting in silence. “Why are you not giving these young men some advice suitable to the occasion ?” inquired Sandy. “Just because they would not take it,” replied William. “Have you,” said he, “not seen children throwing stones on ice so hard and thick that none of the stones would go through ; but, stop till the thaw came, and then every one of these sank to the bottom ?”

Referring to the brazen serpent, he said, “That a child had been bitten by the fiery serpents ; and there were many

attempts made in various ways to induce him to look to the brazen serpent, but all in vain, until some one observed that the child had a toy in his hand. The toy was snatched from him, and the child lifting its head got a sight of the brazen serpent, and was healed." From this legend he drew the obvious lesson that bereavements are necessary at times, in order that men may look unto Jesus. "In their affliction they will seek me early."

He could become all things to all men to gain their souls. In the course of reading the last chapter of the gospel by John, he remarked, "That when the disciples who had 'no meat' came ashore, their risen Lord showed His wisdom and compassion, not by preaching a sermon to them in these circumstances, but by saying, 'Come and dine.'"

Speaking of the humbling effect of the believer's experience of inward corruption, he would refer to Noah's Ark, and say, "That the ballast which kept it so deep in the water was the number of unclean beasts which it contained."

On the last occasion on which he spoke at the Friday meeting in Latheron, he gave warning of the danger of 'speaking of exercises through which the speakers themselves had not passed. He said it reminded him of his school-boy days, as on one occasion he had got a question wrought for him by an older pupil, and presented it to the master as his own; but the master told him "to go through that," and finding him unable to do so, sent him to his seat in disgrace.

He spoke also that day of the "charity which is the bond of perfectness," taking Jacob and Joseph as examples of its exercise. He said that Jacob was mourning for Joseph as dead, and that Joseph's first question to his brethren was, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?" But he continued, "Love was alive in both, and the living love got the living object in the case of both—Jacob got Joseph, and Joseph got Jacob."

In about fortnight thereafter he was seized with his last illness,

which was but of short continuance. A few days before his death he was visited by the Rev. Mr. Davidson of Latheron, and said, at parting, that his last advice to the Free Church should be that of Joseph to his brethren—"see that ye fall not out by the way." He had a dark view of the signs of the times, and stated that he was glad his sun was not rising, but about to go down.

He lies buried in the churchyard of Latheron, and his funeral was one of the most numerously attended that took place there during a quarter of a century. John Sutherland, Badbea, remarked to the crowds assembled at the house, that the occasion of Alexander Gair's death should be "a grievous mourning to the Egyptians"—*i.e.*, regarded as a loss even by the ungodly.

\* JOHN SUTHERLAND, Badbea, was born at Ousdale, near the Ord of Caithness, in 1789. His father was one of eight tenants who, eight years before the introduction of sheep farming occupied that place. A solitary tree, on the west side of the present farm house, stands below the rising ground on which his father's house stood. He had an only brother, who entered the army, and fell at Waterloo; and as his father died while the family were young, the care of the household devolved upon the subject of this memoir. The prudence and affection with which he continued to discharge his duty to the others, until they were provided for, and to one sister who continued with him (a patient sufferer, under much affliction during the last years of her life), showed him a pattern of brotherly kindness. It is probable that his sense of duty to the other members of the family may have been one of the causes that induced him to continue unmarried.

He occupied a small plot of ground on the edge of the rocks,

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\* We give this notice of John Sutherland, as well as the two that follow, of William Calder and John Mackintosh, as kindly supplied to us by the late Rev. Mr. Mackay, Lybster.

about three miles eastward of the ord, in a secluded spot called Badbea, and as, like Goldsmith's village clergyman, "he never changed nor wished to change his place," he was known for nearly half a century as "John Badbea," and under that title his memory will long be cherished.

From his youth he was a lover of good men. William Sutherland, Braemore, then catechist of Latheron—a man who left his mark on the young disciples brought up around him—was one for whose memory John Sutherland cherished the highest regard. To him and to Peter Stewart, and others of that generation, John was indebted for sentiments and views of truth to which he referred with frequency till his dying day.

His own gifts and graces so shone in early life that he was at once received into the friendship and fellowship of those whose companionship he prized as one of his greatest privileges.

He was a speaker at the Friday fellowship meetings at communions for upwards of forty years ; and from the commencement to the close of his Christian course he drew his inspirations from one source, and was eloquent on the one theme—"the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The daisy opening its breast to the rays of the sun, and contracting and drooping its head when these were withdrawn, was a favourite emblem used by him to set forth the opposite effects of the light, and of the hiding of God's countenance.

He was always solemn and judicious in his observations, choice in his language, and tender and affectionate in his spirit. His appearance was tall and graceful, his voice melodious, and his utterances fluent and winning, while the speaker appeared so filled with his subject as to be altogether unconscious of the power he was exercising over the minds of others.

He made good use of the education he acquired in youth under disadvantages, and which amounted only to an ability to read and write. He read much of the old theology, both for his own and others' instruction. As he was several miles from any place of worship, his house was open on the Sabbath, and

several of the neighbours stately assembled there, to whom he read the scriptures, making occasional remarks, and also the writings of our best divines, commencing and closing such exercises with praise and prayer. In this way his lips fed many, who retained a sense of their obligation after removing to distant lands.

He was an intelligent adherent of the Free Church, and well acquainted with the principles for which she was called to contend. He carried on a considerable amount of correspondence with Christian friends in different parts of the kingdom, and was known and prized as a correspondent by some who had never seen his face. A number of John's letters, sewed together, constituted, in the case of one known to us, a highly prized part of the reading, and on a bed of sickness, of one who was looking for a better country. The value and the amount of the services which he rendered in this way will only be known at the great day. The correct blamelessness of his life and conversation, and the spirit of love and of a sound mind by which he was animated, added weight and impressiveness to all that he wrote or said.

He was one to whom the reproach of Zion was a burden ; and while duly appreciating the attention given to the outer business of the house, his great desire was the spiritual prosperity of the church—the life of God in the souls of men.

A few years before his death, dulness of hearing prevented his enjoying public ordinances ; but he was enabled to conduct religious services in his own house till within three weeks of his death, which took place on the 30th August, 1864. The sickness which proved to be unto death, but not the less to the glory of God and his gain, was rheumatic fever.

His remains were conveyed to the burying ground at Berriedale on the 2nd September, and numbers were present who travelled great distances, to show this last mark of their respect to the memory of one who had lived beloved and died lamented. A friend, who knew him well, suggested for his

epitaph, what we understand has been adopted—"In all things showing himself a pattern of good works ; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that could not be condemned."

WILLIAM CALDER.—In a sermon preached by Dr. Mackay, Harris, in the Free Church of Tongue, on the occasion of the re-interment of the Hon. Mrs. Aylmer, daughter of the late Lord Reay, the following tribute is paid (page 16) to the memory of Mr. Calder :—"There must be some here present this day who remember your venerable catechist, William Calder. A frequent visitor was I in his dwelling while attending your Parish School ; and on the day I was called to leave it, when calling to take leave at that blessed house, I trust I shall never forget, while God spares me on earth, the parting words of William Calder. And if it please God to accept me in the great day as one of his own, redeemed by sovereign grace, I trust to carry the remembrance of what I now tell you into the kingdom above. This memorable patriarch-like person, leaning upon his spade while he laboured in his harvest field (and full of chastened dignity, was that person in stature and expression wherever he appeared), in solemn accents, and with loving looks of fatherly kindness, said—' My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the Lord searcheth all hearts and all the imaginations of the thoughts ; if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee, but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever.' A word spoken in season how good it is."

Mr. Calder was one in whom the word of Christ dwelt richly ; and teaching and admonishing in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in his heart to the Lord, was his constant practice. The memory of the just is blessed, and the above reference to it awakens recollections which are pleasant to recall and to record.

Mr. Calder was a native of Croy, in the neighbourhood of

Inverness. He appears to have known the Lord from his youth, and his early education was so well attended to that he was soon judged worthy of being appointed a teacher of others, which was his first employment in Lord Reay's country. Mr. William M'Kenzie, the eminent and excellent minister of Tongue, was, we believe, the party who brought him and Mr. Robertson, afterwards minister of Kingussie, to attend to the godly upbringing of the young in that part of the county of Sutherlandshire, and in so doing he did incalculable service to a wide district of country. The lips of the wise feed many, and these men, though dead, yet speak. The gathered fragments of their instructions still furnish travellers Zionward with "bread, which strengtheneth their hearts."

Soon after Mr. Calder's coming to Sutherland, a considerable amount of division and confusion sprung up in the west end of the county, where the Rev. Mr. John Kennedy, late of Redcastle, was then labouring. Norman Macleod, who afterwards removed to Cape Breton, and died not long ago in Australia, was the leader of the opposition. Mr. Calder was the firm and consistent supporter of order in the church of God, and the following incident will show the self-denial and decision of character with which he uniformly acted. To one who stated to himself on that occasion that such and such persons were not pleased with him, his answer was, "I daresay it; I am far from being pleased with myself." "But the question," said the man, "is, who is right—the minister or Norman?" "On that point," replied Mr. Calder, "I have no doubt; the minister is right."

Mr. Calder was united in marriage to a party who proved a helpmate for him, and he became the head of a family, which he ruled in love and in the fear of God. Having occasion to chastise one of his sons, he first retired to pray, and then made use of the rod, and concluded with the utmost composure, saying, "May the Lord bless this chastisement to you." Being trained in the way they should go, his children, when old, did not depart from it. One of his sons went to America, and

succeeded so well that he proposed sending £50 annually to his father. Mr. Calder, who had been accustomed to live in a plain and simple way, became afraid of receiving his "good things" here; and he kissed the rod and Him who had appointed it, when he soon afterwards received the sad tidings of the death of that son, he having been drowned on one of the American lakes.

After having experienced this and other bereavements, he attended the funeral of a youth who was expected to prove the stay of his parents, and remarked to them, "I have myself experienced similar sorrow on several occasions, but I grieve most this day that I cannot enter more deeply into sympathy with you."

His labours as a catechist were so appreciated and extensively employed that he latterly gave himself wholly to that work, and on sacramental occasions he was one of the most esteemed and judicious speakers to the "question" at the Friday fellowship meetings, and usually asked to pray at the conclusion. In this exercise he was a true son of Jacob—a worm and a wrestler. He lived to a good old age, but did not outlive his usefulness. He continued catechising till within a few weeks of his death. While engaged in his much loved work, in Strathhalladale, on the last occasion on which he visited that district as catechist, he was overheard at secret prayer, addressing his soul and body as two that had long been together, but must part till the resurrection, and imploring God's blessing upon them both.

On the subject of dreams he remarked, "When I have a pleasant dream I thank the Lord for it; and when it is unpleasant, I thank him it was *only a dream*."

Having some orphan grandchildren depending upon him for support, he said, "If it were the Lord's will to spare me a little longer for the sake of these;" but he immediately added, "Not my will, but thine be done."

On becoming so weak that he fell back into the chair after an effort to rise, so far was he from repining that the first words



spoken by him were, "Glory to God; I shall soon be unable to attempt rising at all." The last words which he uttered were "The law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Like Abraham, he died full of days—a shock of corn fully ripe. His remains lie interred in the churchyard of Reay, and his memory is fragrant in the surrounding district.

JOHN MACKINTOSH, Crash, was a native of Edderachillis. He enlisted into the Reay Fencibles, and served in that corps in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798. While in the regiment a Methodist minister preaching was the means of bringing him and several others to enquire, "What they must do to be saved?" And while John freely acknowledged his obligations to this minister, his views of Divine truth, when matured, became decidedly Calvinistic; and all the more so, as his training at that time, by one whom he believed to be a man of God, compelled him to study the doctrine of election and of the saint's perservance more deeply than he might otherwise have done. He himself remarked that it was by secret prayer in his father's *sheep cot* that he got clear of the *Irish* divinity.

When the Reay Fencibles were discharged, in the beginning of the present century, John Mackintosh returned to his native county, and received the right hand of Christian fellowship from Sheriff Macculloch, Dornoch, and others, eminent for gifts and godliness, among whom he soon occupied a distinguished place.

He was by and bye employed as a catechist in the neighbourhood of Inverness, and in the parish of Latheron in Caithness, and latterly of Farr in Sutherland—in all which his labours were highly prized, and continued to be so until the infirmities of age rendered him unable to carry them on. His natural disposition was cheerful and confiding, and in his hours of sunshine few could excel him in enlarging upon his favourite subject—"the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

While catechising in Latheron on one occasion, he became seriously unwell, and sent word to some friends whom he wished to see, that he believed his end to be near. George Mackay, Golticlay, on arriving, told him that the tree from which his coffin should be made was still growing, and that he should not leave the wilderness until he was better taught that Christ must increase, and he decrease.

He lived many years after this, making it the business of his life to die daily, and it seemed remarkable, in connection with his being so much in that exercise, that at last he had nothing to do but to die. His death was sudden, but his end was peace. It took place while the sacrament was dispensed in the neighbouring congregation at Strathy, where the brethren assembled acknowledged that a prince and a great man had that day fallen in Israel.

JOSEPH MACKAY, son of a worthy catechist, was a native of Strathhalladale. He entered the service of his country on two occasions—first as one of the Reay Fencibles, with which he went to Ireland, to assist in quelling the rebellion there in the end of last century. The regiment being disbanded, he returned home. Shortly after, if not before this, he became the subject of Divine grace, and for some years he continued a close attendant on the public means of grace, sitting at the feet of the many Christian fathers then to be found in his native district. He became connected by marriage with one of the most respectable families in the Reay country, and whose liberality to the household of faith and others was proverbial. Some years thereafter, and when now a recognised leader among the Christian people, having received a commission, he entered the army a second time, towards the close of the French war. He was engaged, and received a wound in the memorable battle of Waterloo. It is said that the thought came forcibly into his mind in the thick of the battle, that James Macdonald, Reay, was at that instant engaged in prayer in behalf of the British.

forces ; and that on comparing notes together afterwards, in less stirring times, he found that such had been James' occupation. While lying among the dead and wounded, Mr. Mackay resolved that, if spared, he would divide the compensation which, as an officer, he would receive for his wound, among the Lord's people at home—a resolution which he carried into effect.

When peace was proclaimed, he retired from the army, and some years thereafter was harmoniously called to the office of a catechist in his native parish, and also in a part of Inverness-shire, and in which he continued till the close of his life.

Mr. Mackay was a man of superior *physique*—tall, well-proportioned, with a benign intelligent countenance. Being a scribe well instructed in the law of his God, able also from personal experience to unfold and sympathise with the cases of exercised Christians, of great warmth of heart and tenderness of feeling—these qualities, when combined with ready and appropriate utterance, rendered him a powerful and very pathetic public speaker, engaging the affections and esteem especially of discerning persons. And the influence he thus gained was not lessened by the kindly reception and entertainment that friends met with in his hospitable dwelling, where many called, counting it a privilege to enjoy his society ; for, as “iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.” He had, as may be supposed, occasion to entertain at times persons of some social position ; but while always acting the part of a kind and liberal host, he was enabled to act at the same time the part of a consistent Christian. He was on one occasion remarkably preserved from causing offence to one of this class. While Mr. Mackay was staying at the house of his father-in-law, Mr. Gordon, along with Sandy Gair and other friends, a sportsman, who had considerable influence in the parish, sent a message to his house that he would breakfast there next morning. Mr. M. having received notice of this, rose early to get home in time for breakfast. But in going to take leave of his

friends, and among others of Sandy Gair, the latter said, "You will not go till after family worship, and breakfast too, and I will take the risk of the consequences," and on this footing he remained with them. It turned out that while the sportsman was on his way to Mr. Mackay's house, two of his dogs wilfully scampered off to a great distance, in the very opposite direction, and could not be recovered until it was much too late to continue the journey.

Mr. Mackay had great sympathy with Christian friends in their temporal straits, and was not slow to give practical expression to it. He has been known to take off one of his own garments on the road, and clothe a poor brother with it. Two others who had been evicted from their farms he supplied with dwellings, fuel, and grass for their cattle, till otherwise provided for. Having heard that a worthy man of his acquaintance was on the point of having his worldly substance attached for debt, Mr. M., while on his way to visit him, meeting with some of his own cattle in the hill pasture, singled out one of them, which he sold on the road, and with the price relieved his poor friend out of his strait.

The following are a few of his many memorable sayings, supplied to us by one who frequently heard his public addresses:—

"Have you heard the mornful cry of the bee on getting no honey from flower after flower? Even so gracious souls mourn when, in the various means of grace, they fail to meet with Christ."

"If you have no other rest on the Sabbath but that of the horse or ox that cease to work, they as much glorify God as you."

"Moab was 'David's washpot,' because the filthy conversation of the Moabites made him more circumspect and tender in his walk."

"Have you ever seen the wicked one? When you see men strolling about the fields and shores on the Lord's day, then you see him."

“Have compassion (he said in prayer) on thy poor ones encompassed with their corruptions; but was not Thine own tabernacle covered with badgers’ skin?”

“The day of grace is not past with any who rejoice to meet with any of the Lord’s people; nor would I give over hope regarding any who would say, ‘I wish I were like them.’”

“In the times of the prosperity of the church, the Lord’s servants ploughed with four horses—faith, love, discernment, and zeal; but as the church declined, faith became lame, love got sick, discernment lost the sight of an eye, and zeal died, so that many do the work with the two horses of carnal reason and human learning.”

“When any of the godly are removed by death from the place where you live, if you miss them, you shall receive a part of their mantle.”

“‘Thou hast asked a hard thing,’ said Elijah to Elisha, when he asked for a double portion of his spirit. It was not hard for the Lord to give, but hard to endure the double portion of trouble and afflictions that it brought along with it.”

“Where are the ‘many other things which Jesus did’ (John xxi. 25), besides those recorded in the gospels? They are written upon the experiences of the Lord’s people to the end of the world, to declare to others.”

“The wicked one would rather have one’s taste for spiritual things corrupted than get him to transgress all the commandments.”

“I never saw any one truly turned to the Lord but ‘the boldness of his countenance was changed.’”

“I have heard that Mr. L. Mackenzie, Lochcarron, said ‘that the eagle, when sickened by a gorge of carcase, tries to cure itself by swallowing sand and stones, but it remains uncured till it get a draught at the blood of a lamb;’ so when carnal persons indulge in sinful gratifications, and, to ease the smart of conscience, have recourse to their own duties, these can never give relief—that can only be found in the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb.”

"The 'wise men' lost the 'star' when they went into Herod ; so you will lose the witness of the spirit when you go into vain company."

Speaking on Isaiah xlii. 19, "Who is blind as my servant, or deaf as my messenger that I sent," &c., he said, "Christ was 'deaf' to the accusations brought against His own people by the ungodly, and 'blind' to the failings they saw in them."

Mr. Mackay died in the year 1847, when on a visit to Inverness-shire, and was buried, according to his own wish, in the grave of the well-known Peter Stewart.

HUGH CAMPBELL, whose father was regarded as a discerning Christian, was born in Strathhalladale, in the year 1744. He had religious impressions in very early youth ; and, although they frequently wore off, were, while they lasted, so strong, that he used to go every Sabbath from Thurso, where he was at school, to Halkirk, to hear Mr. John Sutherland, many of whose observations he retained, and used to repeat in after life, saying, at the same time, "The distance to Halkirk was in those days short to me—I was generally in a flood of tears going and returning."

While Hugh was yet a boy, his mother insisted that he should ask the blessing on the family breakfast in the absence of his father, who used on Sabbath to leave home early, to hear Mr. Pope of Reay. To this Hugh was averse ; but as the other horn of the dilemma presented to him by the resolute mother was the loss of his breakfast, he set about composing a form of "blessing." Shortly afterwards he used to say, "A wave of the holy law coming over me, swept my 'form' away ; but there was a herd boy about the house at the time, who picked it up. I knew him till he died of old age, and he sowed and reaped fifty crops repeating that 'blessing.'"

He seems to have been long and deeply exercised under conviction of his sinful state by nature before he obtained those clear views of the gospel remedy that afterwards distinguished

him. "I trust," he would say, "I will not feel eternity half as long as I felt the interval between the knowledge of the words, 'Thou hast destroyed thyself,' and the knowledge of those following 'In me is thy help.'"

He entered and served in the army for many years. When stationed at Fort George, *en route* for Ireland, he was exercised by a severe temptation, that special calamities were in store for him of both a spiritual and temporal kind. On the morning of their march, as Hugh was engaged about the baggage, the husband of a woman in the neighbourhood, to whom he had given profitable counsel, came to him, with a lantern in one hand and a Bible in the other, with his finger upon a particular verse, which he said his wife had charged him to point out to him, with her good wishes. It was Genesis xxviii. 15, "And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." On Hugh reading the words, his temptation fled, and never again troubled him.

When he retired from the army, he lived many years in his native district, enjoying the refreshing fellowship of the many worthies to be found there at that period, revering and revered by them. At one time, being in a case needing special spiritual help, he went to hear the ministers of many different parishes. Having heard one minister, whose name we forget, but who was generally esteemed, Hugh waited on him after sermon, and was asked, "What brought you to this place?" "To hear the gospel." "And did you hear it from me to-day?" "I cannot deny that, and that your doctrine will be taken off your hands at the final account; but I did not to-day hear the gospel that I am in quest of." "What is that?" "The transactions that take place between Christ and a soul." "Oh, poor man," concluded the minister, "you will have to travel far before you hear such gospel as that!" This aspect of teaching used afterwards by some to be styled, "Hugh Campbell's gospel."

His son, Mr. William Campbell (now residing in Halkirk, whose services the Free Church, at the Disruption, secured as a catechist in the West Highlands and Islands ; but where his health was so much impaired by privations and fatigue that he had to retire from the work), tells us, that when a youth, he was awakened one Sabbath morning, at daybreak, by his father, then in extreme old age, saying to him, "Rise, and get the pony ; Mr. Cook is to preach in Halladale to-day, and perhaps I may get one offer of Christ yet."

He was then in his 82nd year, and a stroke of paralysis soon after deprived him of bodily strength. Nevertheless, such was the warmth and freshness of his feelings, that when any Christian friends called on him, he would hold them in an embrace from which they had difficulty in freeing themselves. His words, in bidding adieu to one, were, "I hope well of you ; but if at the great day it turns out that I am mistaken, remember I shall only lose my opinion, but you will lose your all."

ALEXANDER SINCLAIR.—At Kirkton, in the Strath of Halladale, lived, in the beginning of this century, William Sinclair, a godly man, of rare simplicity of character, "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." He and one of his brothers differed one day about something, and next day, observing the latter pass the house without coming in, as usual, William expressed his surprise to a member of his family, who reminded him thereupon of the altercation of yesterday. "Oh," replied William, "the difference of yesterday would he remember till now?" On the occasion of a sale of his farm stock, William's conscientiousness showed itself in a degree, we suppose, not very common. He would now and then interrupt the bidders, exclaiming, "Oh, you are giving too much for that animal ; it is older than you think." Several of William's kindred, and of his own family, were distinguished for their piety. The most prominent of these was his son, Mr. Alexander Sinclair, Thurso.

Mr. Sinclair's first outset in life was as one of the Reay



Fencibles, in which he became a non-commissioned officer. This body was sent to Ireland, to assist in suppressing the rebellion of 1799. While on their way thither, being stationed at Fort George, Mr. Sinclair had the privilege of hearing the late Rev. Ronald Bayne, and appears to have profitted lastingly thereby. On his return to his native district, he sought to associate himself with the godly people in the neighbourhood. The countenance they gave him aroused the fears of his single-minded father, who, in a tone of lamentation, and holding out his hands alongside one another, would say, "They are carrying Alexander so, and they will certainly spoil him." But that Mr. Sinclair was not spoilt was abundantly manifested by his rare humility of heart and life throughout a long Christian course.

Having left the regiment, Mr. Sinclair, yet quite a young man, began business as a merchant in Thurso. His progress in true godliness became marked. At that time the parish of Halkirk could boast of not a few notable "fathers"—Colin Campbell, Neil Macpherson, John Tait, and others. Mr. Sinclair cultivated their acquaintance, and sat at their feet, thus serving himself heir to the promise, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." One that knew him well has said that he could discern something of the peculiar stamp of these worthies about Mr. Sinclair to his latest days. Not that he imitated them, but that masters imprint more or less of themselves on admiring scholars.

In person Mr. Sinclair was large and portly, fair complexioned, with a soft and benign expression of countenance. He had not a little of the gravity of deportment and solemnity of manner that we have noticed as remarkable in the late minister of Watten, and was in both the result of their minds being habitually freighted with thoughts of eternal things. The writer, when a student, had never seen Mr. Sinclair until one evening, in Free St. Luke's Church, Edinburgh, he observed an elderly gentleman, who, from the combined gravity, and benignity of his appearance, answered the impression he had formed of Mr. Sinclair. Although it was most unlikely that, in

the middle of winter, and at a time when there was no steam communication between Caithness and the south, Mr. S. should be in Edinburgh, he nevertheless, after the congregation dismissed, made up to the stranger, and appealing to him as to his supposition, had it confirmed.

In respect of natural gifts, Mr. Sinclair took his place in the foremost ranks of the Christians of his day. He was distinguished by superior understanding and judgment, by great maturity of opinion and weight of practical counsel. He had, besides, a wide range of information on all topics connected with the cause of Christ on earth, and was conversant with the history of the church—not only that branch of it with which he was himself connected, but with all sections of it that held the Head (Christ); and he had a large correspondence with Christians of varied stations and denominations throughout the kingdom. But whatever Mr. Sinclair was in intelligence and attainment, he was not behind in qualities of the heart. He was truly large-hearted, loving, and benevolent—weeping with those that wept, and rejoicing with those that rejoiced. The sorrows or sufferings of his fellow-men he seemed to make his own, failing not to drop words of counsel into their ear, and words of tenderness into their hearts. Indeed, his affable manner and circumspect walk won for him the esteem of those who were not influenced by his religion. We remember, on board the steamboat that trades between Wick and Granton, hearing a company of commercial travellers discussing the characters of parties in the north with whom their business brought them into contact. Some of these they handled pretty severely, but all united in commending Mr. Sinclair, Thurso, as a thoroughly excellent and upright man.

It was, however, to the Lord's people that Mr. Sinclair's sympathies flowed in full stream. Fervent and constant was his attachment to them, cheering and valuable his friendship; and towards young persons, who made a profession of religion, faithful and tender was his dealing, not giving them at once to

know that they had place in his regard, yet never acting in a way that indicated they had not.

For many years Mr. Sinclair had the lead of the religious fellowship meetings in Thurso, which he conducted with great prudence, and much to the edification of others. His own addresses and public prayers evidenced his life of nearness to the Lord and his experimental acquaintance with the cases and conditions of exercised souls. Full of wisdom and encouragement were his counsels to those who were following on to know the Lord—full of weight and pathos his appeals to the careless. In that town, in which he was long the leading lay Christian, and in the congregation in which he was an office-bearer, he has not left his like.

At sacramental seasons his heart and house were thrown open to the many pious strangers who frequented Thurso, and at such times he exercised not only the hospitality of the Celtic race from which he sprang, but also that of the Christian. Some may yet recollect the way he would, when asking a blessing at his own table, sometimes begin, "The Lord of us hath mindful been, and He will bless us still."

Mr. Sinclair's lot in life was a good deal chequered by trials, by losses and crosses in his business, by the removal by death of some of his family, and latterly of his partner in life. But, notwithstanding, "the path of the just being as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," these were the trials of his faith, which, accordingly, was "found unto praise, and honour, and glory." Mr. Sinclair died in July, 1852, and the following reference to his character was made in the Free Church of Thurso on the Sabbath after his funeral, by his minister, the Rev. W. R. Taylor:—"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."

"Here, then, we see what comfort surviving friends have in regard to those friends and brethren who have died in the

Lord. They have not to sorrow as those who have no hope, while they sorrow over the loss they themselves have sustained, and seek to be humbled under God's chastening rod.

"The application of this is very obvious (and I doubt not you anticipate me in it) to the heavy bereavement with which we have been visited, in the removal from among us of our beloved 'father' and friend, an office-bearer and ruler in this congregation, and whose remains we yesterday committed to the dust in much heaviness of spirit, yet in full hope of a glorious resurrection.

"Of course our object here is not to give glory to man, or to direct your view to any earthly friend, however esteemed and honoured ; but to the praise and glory of Divine grace we are allowed, and it may be found profitable to direct your thoughts to what the Lord did for his departed servant in blessing him and making him a blessing. His was the blessedness of one who, to the praise of Divine grace, lived and died in the Lord. You know what evidence his life gave of his being in the Lord—of his faith in Christ, and his love and devotedness to Him. And as he lived, so he died ; yea, we may say that his dying testimony, which we were privileged to hear, was peculiarly strengthening, consoling, and edifying, being to the effect, and in these very words, that 'the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he had a goodly heritage'—that the Lord had made with him 'an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and that this was all his salvation and all his desire'—that he had 'a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better,' though to abide in the flesh might be more needful for us—and that he committed his spirit into his Saviour's hands, in the confidence that he had redeemed him ; or, to use the words as he used them, 'for thou art He (oh, thou Jehovah, God of truth !) that has redeemed me.'

"Thus peacefully, thus triumphantly, thus delivered from all fears and doubts, and animated with the full assurance of hope, he died in the Lord, and rested from his labours of faith and

love. What these labours were you all know more or less, and some of us are called very gratefully to remember. The Lord fitted him in many ways for usefulness in His church, and gave us to experience how faithful was his friendship, how cordial his sympathy, how judicious his counsels, and how loving and heavenly his whole deportment. At the same time we saw how anxious he was and how well-fitted on every occasion and in every company to direct discourse into a profitable channel, and to say something for God and His glory and to the good of souls. It is well known also what his labours were, and how highly they were appreciated—in houses of sickness and houses of mourning, and in social meetings for prayer and religious conference, and in the more private walk of directing and counselling enquiring, anxious, or tempted souls. Nor are we to forget those labours in which he manifested his interest in the cause of Christ at home and abroad ; his love to the saints ; and his concern for the honour and credit of a Christian profession—that the name of Christ and His doctrine might not be blasphemed.

“ But from these and other labours, whether in the church or in the world—in the family, the closet, or in the social circle—he has now rested ; and while doubtless the fruit of these labours remain and shall remain, these labours themselves are now at an end, and we have to mourn over the great loss thus sustained.

“ We mention these things, and much more might be mentioned, to the praise of that grace which made him so eminent a witness for Christ in the midst of us. We mention them also that we may be stirred up to seek grace to follow on in the same path. The Scripture says, ‘ Remember them that had the rule over you, that have spoken to you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.’ We are to follow their faith, that we may die the death of the righteous ; and we mention them that we may lay to heart the

great loss we have sustained, and may be brought to consider more seriously the chastisement with which we have been visited."

CHARLES GORDON was son of John Gordon, farmer, Strathnaver, said to have been a pious man. In his youth Mr. Charles Gordon taught a school in the heights of his native parish, and the Gaelic phrase, "that a good twig bends early," was exemplified in his case. William Macrobb, or Mackay, lived close by the school, and the teacher endeavoured to get William morning and evening, to pray with himself and his pupils. Many of us still remember William Macrobb. He was a sincere and self-denied Christian, and largely possessed of the "charity that hopeth all things, believeth all things."

Afterwards Mr. Gordon came to Thurso, and served his apprenticeship in the shop of Mr. Alexander Sinclair. While there he associated with the eminent Christians then in that neighbourhood, and became deeply imbued with their spirit. At a fellowship meeting at Halkirk, Neil Macpherson, who presided, asked Charles Gordon to pray. At the close some one expostulated with Neil for asking such a stripling when so many "fathers" were present. "He is to have a brief but bright day," replied Neil.

Mr. Gordon presented, in personal appearance and in cast of mind, a striking contrast to his friend, Mr. Sinclair, with whom he was, while living, closely and lovingly associated, and with whose memory his own is now entwined in the hearts of surviving friends. Mr. Sinclair was, as we have stated, a man of fair complexion, grave deportment, and gentle address. Mr. Gordon was dark complexioned, slight in figure, and active and alert in body and mind. His intellect was keen, going at once to the root of any subject; his judgment was sound and swift, and his utterance apt and ready. When his advice was asked, it was given unhesitatingly, and always found to suit the emergency. He was characterised likewise by an independence of

thought and straightforwardness of action that made him—his heart being gained to Christ and to His cause—ardent and unswerving in his Christian course.

Yet, although his piety and abilities gave him early a position in the church, no man could be more tender and condescending towards those weaker in the faith than himself. Having early begun the Christian warfare, he had a power of adapting his sympathy at the various stages of their progress to others fighting the same good fight; and this must be one reason why his removal, thirty years ago, is so lastingly lamented by the Christian community in the far north. Meeting a young man one day in a downcast frame of mind, whom he had known to have been in the reverse lately, Mr. Gordon said to him, "Come, I am to teach you to march—stand. Now, advance a step with your right foot; now, take another with the same foot." "I can't," said the learner. "No, you cannot; neither can you in your spiritual march, for the foot that was foremost to-day must be behind to-morrow."

But to those whose knowledge of Divine things he feared was merely speculative, and who seemed puffed up by it, Mr. Gordon showed no favour. A newly-licensed preacher, observing him avoid him on the street, exclaimed, "How are you, Mr. Gordon? I suppose you are afraid of me?" "Afraid of *you*, sir," was the reply; "why, there's not as much of God, or of the devil, or of the man about you, as that any one need be afraid of you." Another of the same class, who had a high opinion of himself, but suspected Mr. Gordon did not share it, said to him, "Truth is the same." "Yes, it is," replied Mr. G.; "but it is not the same in every man's mouth."

A remarkable Providence which befel him at one time we may here mention. A company of strolling players had come to Thurso during the week of the Marymas Fair, and established themselves in an unoccupied building opposite Mr. Gordon's shop. The crowd they attracted so blocked up the street, as to be not only an annoyance but a means of pecuniary loss to

Mr. G., who applied to the public authorities for redress. The strangers were ordered to remove, but, failing to do so, their two leading men were seized and put into jail. This so enraged the party that, founding a plea on some informality in the proceedings, they sued Mr. Gordon for damages, before the Court of Session. Mr. Gordon's agent writing him, that on a specified day the case would be decided, and probably unfavourably for him, he went out to Brubster to acquaint John Grant with his critical position. John said to him before leaving, "You may go home with an easy mind, for before the case is tried the prosecutor will be in eternity, and no one else will follow it up." Tidings that week came to Mr. Gordon that his opponent had had been killed by a fall from the top of a coach, on his way to Edinburgh, to attend the disposal of his case; and so the matter ended.

Mr. Gordon's health became seriously affected about the year 1836. The following year he went south and consulted an eminent physician, who told him that he had not many weeks to live. He received the intimation in a Christian spirit, and wrote to a friend at home somewhat in these words:—"Oh! eternity, eternity; what a solemn position is mine, having the near prospect of entering eternity; but you will find my anchor cast in the 17th chapter of the gospel of John."

In about a month thereafter he was removed in accordance with the prayer of Him who said, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." He died in October, 1837, aged 47 years.

Since writing the above we have heard of the death of his eldest son, the Rev. John Gordon, at about the same premature age. He did not closely resemble his father in either personal appearance or natural disposition, but was regarded as a partaker of "the like precious faith." Mr. Gordon laboured acceptably for several years in Edderton, Ross-shire, and afterwards in a Gaelic charge in Glasgow, whence he has been removed, to the loss of the church at large and to the regret of many friends.



GEORGE BROTCHE was a native of Dunnet. While yet a somewhat reckless lad, he had experience, as the writer has heard him say, of such strong impressions of spiritual things and awakenings of conscience as drove him to the caves of the rocks that bound his native parish, to cry to an unknown God. These, as frequently happens, after a time subsided, leaving him unconcerned as before. Having come to Thurso to follow the trade of a shoemaker, he there became the subject of such thorough soul concern as could not be shaken off or soothed by any of his former subterfuges, and he was brought to the verge of despair. "He rushed," says one, "into my dwelling one day, as if pursued by a wild animal, and in the most frantic manner bewailed with tears his undone condition." Falling in, however, shortly after this, with a volume of the writings of the well-known author, Mr. Flavel (who in after days continued to be his favourite author), it was the means, in the Lord's hand, of opening his eyes on the salvation provided for sinners, even the chief, and in a way so clear that his deliverance became as signal as had been his previous depressions.

This sharply defined personal experience of law and gospel was the occasion—not the cause—of his being afterwards not easily satisfied with the religion of those whose steps of spiritual exercise did not correspond pretty nearly with his own, and of perhaps too much exclusiveness of judgment. He was not ready to pour in the wine of gospel consolation where he thought the wound had not been sufficiently probed. What he said to one who sought his counsel regarding his spiritual condition may seem strange to those never "hurt," or who have got their "hurt healed slightly"—"May all the curses of the law light on your conscience before you cross the bridge of Thurso." To another who opened out his case to George, he said, "You seem to me like a cork in a vessel of water, kept at the bottom by some temporary pressure, but which starts up again as soon as that is removed." Comparing one professor

to a builder, he said, "You are busy, I see, with the chimney tops, but I would recommend you to try and get the ground cleared for laying the foundation stone." These are but samples that occur to us of his frequent and fitting use of metaphor. In that way he was wont to express his mind, and generally with great point and pungency. To one who appealed to him to remember her in her wilderness journey, he replied, "Wilderness journey! I did not know that you had yet been brought out of Egypt." At the same time, his acquaintance with spiritual exercise fitted him to be the counsellor of those in "deep waters." To such his warmest sympathies were extended, and to not a few proved useful.

Having been led in the way mentioned, and being a man of great vigour of mind, he got a leading place among the Christians of his day. His public addresses were distinguished by firm grasp of truth, and manifestly deep feeling of its power, with undaunted bearing when testifying in behalf of truth or against error. He excelled in prayer, at times attaining really wonderful largeness of heart and liberty of utterance. "I have heard George Brothie, on one occasion, so great in prayer," says a friend, "that if the visible heavens had opened, I would not have been surprised." In such exercises, also, were manifested his enlarged sympathies with Jew and Gentile—his desire for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, for the true wellbeing of his native land, "Britain," and for the downfall of Popery and every form of error.

George Brothie was the means of doing some damage to Satan's kingdom; his light had been helpful to many groppers in the dark after the way of life; his bold testimony for the truth often abashed his enemies; and his telling rebukes often checked the openly ungodly in their course. Rebuking a man one day for a fault, the other said, "You are not my judge." "No," returned George, "but I may yet be *one* of them." It might be looked for, then, that the enemy should seek to tarnish the lustre of his profession, and that the seed of the serpent

ignoring the luminous points of his character (which, indeed, they were incapable of appreciating), should magnify his infirmities, ignorant as they are of the fierce assaults to which the believer is exposed (and some of them more than others), of the advantage that temptation obtains from the yet unrenewed part of their nature—of the oft prolonged and severe conflicts waged in the hidden man of the heart—and ignorant, above all, of the tears of bitter repentance that follow their falls and go before their certain uprisings—sorrows that strangers intermeddle not with.

Satan harrassed George Brotschie in three marked ways, which we shall mention—though at the risk of exciting the scorn of those who think there is nothing in heaven or earth beyond what is dreamt of in their philosophy. In the first place, when engaged in exercises of religion, Satan would so vividly present to his imagination scenes of a carnal kind, that he would have extreme difficulty in overcoming the temptation. He has told us that his strong musical tastes became a snare to him this way, that when sitting with greatest enjoyment under the preaching of the gospel, suddenly musical airs would be so distinctly struck up in his hearing as to drown the voice of the speaker. One morning, being allowed unwonted liberty in secret prayer, he heard below his window the beat of the drum that called to parade the militia of which he was one of the fifers ; and so he had to rise summarily from his knees. On getting to the street he found no muster of the men, and on making enquiry no one had heard the drum.

In connection, too, with his special gifts of mind, the Tempter sometimes gained upon him. We have alluded to his keen insight into human nature, and to his power of putting truth in a way sometimes more plain than pleasant. Having also a ready wit, he easily found the "joint in the harness" of others—the weak point of their character. But while "faithful are the wounds of a friend," George sometimes was led to make the arrow pierce too deeply. His Christian brethren overlooked

this ; but when his shafts were aimed at nominal professors of religion, the lasting resentment of some of them was excited against him.

His social disposition and love of intercourse with Christian friends was a side of his character that the enemy moreover sought to make the most of—endeavouring to draw him off at times from that watchfulness against all appearance of evil, which is often most needed when the believer is most under the influence of gospel peace.

The pious John Berridge, writing to Rowland Hill, at a time when the latter was beginning to give promise of usefulness in the church, compared him to a ship under sail, and said, "If you need a little ballast, the world will be allowed to throw it in ; if a good deal, Satan will be allowed to do so ; and if much, the Lord Himself will throw it in." George Brothie, under the full sail of spiritual light, zeal, and courage, was not left without ballast from these three sources. As we have hinted, Satan and the world pursued him close and hard, and the chastening hand of the Lord was upon him at various times—in his family, in his worldly estate, and lastly in his bodily health ; for he was the subject of a painful disease, which terminated ultimately in his death. But he was, nevertheless, victoriously kept afloat, never striking his colours, and with the motto on his lips, "Salvation through free grace," he entered the haven of rest. Just at the close appeared "the ruling passion strong in death," that of hitting at the display of high-toned experience, for when a friend standing by, who overheard him say, "Thanks be unto God," added the words, "who giveth us the victory." "No," said George, turning sharply round, "Go and beat that if you like on your own drumhead. I say, 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.'"

**WILLIAM MACBEATH.**—A worthy man named Magnus Taylor, a wright by trade, lived in Thurso many years ago. Being an excellent tradesman, as well as a man of strict integrity, his

services were in frequent demand. He had the domestic trial of a bad wife, which he bore with Christian patience. When working from home on one occasion, one came and told him that his wife, who had been ailing, was dead. Magnus dropped the tool out of his hand, remained silent for a little, and then said, "No, she is not dead; a man's cross never dies before himself"—which, in this case, proved to be correct.

An itinerant preacher came the way of Forss, near Thurso, at a time when Magnus was employed there. The proprietor, who had a respect for Magnus, wished his opinion of such persons, when he replied, "Mariners do not guide their course by wandering stars."

William Macbeath was a native of Dunnet, but resided in Olig the greater part of his life. Being a mason to trade, he used to be often associated with Magnus Taylor in house-building, and on such occasions the latter would drop words of warning and counsel to his neighbour—words that were not lost—but like bread cast on the waters, were found after many days, and fastened ultimately on William's heart and conscience. But whatever was the instrumentality, the change that William Macbeath underwent was so clear and decided that, to use the phrase employed by his Christian brethren to describe it, he got "a clean cast." Vivid was his realization of things unseen and eternal; small his estimate of things seen and temporal; deep his sense of the value of immortal souls; earnest his desire that Christ would widely reign, and that Satan, the great enemy of souls, might lose no less than all his subjects.

For many years he generally attended the ministry of the late Mr. Gunn of Watten, and the road thence from Olig was watered by many of William's tears, and consecrated by his supplications. One of the sons—then a boy—of William's landlord asked him why he went to church to Watten. While he hesitated what to reply, the other suggested that perhaps it was because Mr. Gunn was a poor man's minister. This idea at once relieved William. "Ay, ay, that's just it, my dear,"

said he, eagerly ; "it is because he is the poor man's minister." We doubt whether both agreed in the meaning they attached to the expression "the poor man."

We had only one opportunity of hearing William Macbeath engaged in public religious exercises ; but we believe we may say *ex uno disce omnes*. It was at Thurso in the Sabbath night meeting of a communion season. His brethren, as they were wont to do on similar occasions, refrained from asking him to take part until late in the evening, knowing that at whatever hour he was engaged he would give freshness and interest to the proceedings. He rose at their request, and engaged in prayer, the most prominent matters that occupied his mind in that exercise being the value of souls and the all-importance of eternity. After earnest and tearful supplication for a time, he, without any formal closure of the prayer, turned abruptly to the audience, and began to urge them most impressively, especially the young, to flee from the wrath to come, and to seek a Saviour. In most persons this would appear strange, but William's transparent single-mindedness and godly sincerity divested this unusual method of any appearance of irreverence or even of irregularity. He would then turn again in the same informal way to prayer, and so he went on for fully an hour, alternately importuning God on behalf of man, and man on behalf of God, sustaining the attention and arousing the minds of the people, by the solemnity of the matter of his discourse and the manner in which he delivered it, and manifesting by his tears and tones of voice his own intense feeling. Near us sat a young woman much overcome, and we believe the impressions then received have since ripened into a consistent profession.

Those who lived in William Macbeath's neighbourhood, as they had no little privilege, had no slight responsibility. They were within the range of a threefold testimony, for, *first*, there were few with whom he came in contact to whom—whether in or out of season—he did not address words of exhortation as

to their spiritual interests ; *second*, his “strong crying” in prayer—which, as regards that of an ejaculatory kind, was almost literally without ceasing—was to be heard for more than a mile around his dwelling ; and, *third*, they had before their eyes the example of his godly life and conversation.

A friend residing in Wick has told us that it was no easy task to go through the crowded High Street of that town with William. The sight of multitudes of human beings ever suggested to him the eternal interests they had at stake, and such thoughts urged him to pray loudly in pressing through them, and personally expostulate with them about their souls, so as to bring upon him and his companion something of the same kind of astonishment as befel the “Christians” at “Vanity Fair.”

Another has told us that he was one of a company of persons, including William, whom a friend conveyed in his cart from Wick to Odrig at the conclusion of a communion season. As they approached the end of their journey, one of them remarked that they were indebted to the Lord’s providence for getting so safely and comfortably home. This reflection fell on William like a spark on tinder. He instantly dismounted, and required his companions to do the same, that they might give thanks on their knees by the roadside for undeserved mercies. To kneel and pray by the roadside, in parting with friends, was with him nothing unusual. Two friends from the Highlands, after parting with William, hearing his voice, looked round, and saw him on his knees in earnest prayer, no doubt on their behalf. “Grace,” said one of them to the other, “has kindled a lively spark there.” Many persons William has brought to their knees who probably were never before in that attitude of prayer. When he entered any dwelling he kneeled and prayed, and again did so before he left, his conversation on such occasions being always seasoned with the salt of grace.

He died in 1848, in the 77th year of his age.

GEORGE MACBEATH.—Who that saw the diminutive form of this man, with its habitual stoop and downward look, would have thought that it was the casket of such a choice spirit? And yet it was a fitting emblem of the inner man in some of its aspects—in its lowliness and self-abasement. Indeed, these graces rendered him comparatively little known, and kept from general view his attainments in the Divine life; for his words, though comprehensive and weighty, were few, and his public exercises were usually brought to a close just as the attention of hearers began to be arrested.

And yet this humble tender Christian was in the early part of his life a professor of religion, ignorant of its power. The "house built on the sand," however, was in his case laid low by a "wind" from heaven, and the fall of it was great—so great that, after a struggle as for life among its ruins, its inmate found no rest till he was brought out to the "Rock" (Christ). In the day of his distress George was so prostrate in mind and body as to be unable to do anything for his own or his family's temporal support, and it was hearing of his straits that led the late Mr. Gunn, Watten, to visit him. Mr. Gunn, John Tait, Drakries, and Hugh Campbell, Strathy, were specially useful to him at this time, and gradually the "light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ" dawned upon his soul. It was long before he afterwards made an open profession of religion; but when he did so, and began to take part in public duty, to which he was urged and encouraged by "fathers" in the church, it was evident that he had got deep insight into the mystery of godliness. The Divine compassion which, touched by the misery of sinners, had provided and brought near redemption, was the view that of all others seemed to have broken in on his mind with special power. He never engaged in public prayer without alluding to this with great feeling and tenderness, and often he would be quite overcome when pleading the "infinite compassion that could not allow its objects to perish." While "growing upwards," he also "took root down-



wards," in a knowledge of the mystery of iniquity that was in his own heart. Not that he was a greater sinner than others—far from it; but he had a greater sense of the sinfulness of sin than most have. He had a peculiar sensitiveness of conscience, which, because of his earnest aspirations after holiness, made him alive to his own shortcomings, and thus he bewailed his heart plagues more than most do. The severest exposures of the depravity of the human heart George never resented, having deeper impressions of it from his own experience than words of man could express. A minister coming along the road one day, and seeing him a yard or two before in his usual attitude—his eyes fixed on the ground—said, "A penny for your thoughts, George." Instantly, without looking at his interrogator, he replied, "rank poison."

He was clothed with humility. The following instances of the activity of this grace in him may seem trivial, but a feather cast up into the air will show how the wind blows as well as a more elaborate experiment.

Although he loved all the places where God's honour dwelleth, and the society of his brethren in the Lord, they found it no easy matter at any time to induce him to take part in public exercises. The late Mr. Finlay Cook, asking George to pray at a Friday meeting, added, "And speak out, George, or I will put you out." "Ay," replied George, *sotto voce*, "liker to it, indeed," referring to the friendly threat of putting him out. As he was refusing to pray on another occasion, George Brotchie, promptly said, "Rise, George; rise and walk." "Ay," he replied, "it is easy for those to walk whose bones were never disjointed."

In a friend's house in Wick, Mr. Cook, who liked to tease him, refused to shake hands with him along with the rest of the brethren. George humbly asked the reason. "Because you were not praying for me to-day while preaching." "You see," said George, turning to one of the others, "we will be found out at last." On another occasion George resisted all impor-

tunities to return thanks after dinner. At length, when James Macadie made a special appeal to him, he replied, "James, I am surprised at you above all the rest of the company, for you, my next neighbour, should know me better."

George was an elder in Watten some years before the death of the late Mr. Gunn, who held him in much esteem, both for his Christian worth and for his sagacity and soundness of judgment in the conduct of the business of the session. He lived for some time in Clayock, but afterwards removed to Toftingall, where he died in a good old age.

WILLIAM ROSS was surpassed by no one of the worthies of his time in clear and scriptural views of the doctrines of grace. He was besides a man of remarkable soundness of judgment, of much prudence and caution, of great tenderness of feeling, and of rare humility and self-denial. He was much beloved by all capable of appreciating him.

Mr. Ross was a native of Sutherland, but he lived for many years at Clyth, Caithness, and was teacher of the "Society" school there. In the year 1844, he would have been entitled, on account of his long service as a teacher, to a retiring allowance from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; but because of his adhering to the testimony borne for Christ's Headship by the Church of Scotland in 1843, he was deprived of this, and also thrust out of his situation. However he, with many other godly teachers, made the sacrifice cheerfully, for the sake of Him who for their sakes had to say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." For a few years after the Disruption Mr. Ross taught the school of Brabster, Canisbay; then the school of Reiss, Wick; and, lastly, the school of Broadhaven, Wick, where he died.

It was through the instrumentality of the well-known and worthy Sheriff Macculloch, Dornoch, that Mr. Ross was brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. His love and admiration

of the Sheriff were unbounded, and making due allowance for the influence of the spiritual relationship between them, he must have been no ordinary Christian who held the place the Sheriff did in the esteem of such a judicious and far-seeing man as Mr. Ross.

He had many interesting reminiscences of the weekly prayer meeting conducted in Dornoch by the Sheriff. "These meetings," he would say, "turned the week-day into a Sabbath on me. I would often be so solemnised that on coming out I would be shocked to see worldly business going on on the Sabbath, as I felt it was, until I recollected myself." One day the Sheriff called on John Grant, Strathy, to rise and pray, and when the countenances of the people showed signs of surprise, no one supposing that John was in that quarter at the time, he added, "I have an impression that John Grant is present, and just look about to see if he is among you." John was discovered, and came forward and took part in the day's exercises.

Mr. Ross's peculiar gifts fitted him for controversial discussion, and he did not avoid it, but carried it on in as prudent and amiable a spirit as was possible, aiming at truth rather than victory. Slowly but surely he unfolded his views, and almost invariably established his positions. He and Sandy Gair had once a famous encounter in argument. Sandy, who was fond of paradox, stated one evening in a company of Christians that man was saved by works, covertly meaning the works done by the Head of the Church in the room of His members. Mr. Ross, who was present, could not let this pass unchallenged, and they argued the question until break of day in a most instructive manner, it is said. Sandy at last yielded, paying a graceful tribute to his friend's knowledge and gifts.

Although Mr. Ross was highly superior as a man and as a Christian, his extreme unobtrusiveness made him less known publicly than was desired by his friends. The common saying, "Many a flower is born to blush unseen," has often occurred to us in considering the course of this worthy man. Calmly,

quietly, and patiently he went on life's way, enduring its trials with submission, and looking forward to the "recompense of the reward" with humble hope. Having at one time been brought so low by sickness that his recovery was not looked for, he said, on getting better, to a friend, "What new trial is it that I have been raised up to go through? In a very short time he received tidings of the sudden death of his only son.

The mystery of God's providence in regard to His people was brought to view not a little strikingly in the case of Mr. Ross. Gifted with an acuteness of mind, a penetration of judgment, and a refinement of thought that by grace were kept in constant exercise on the most elevated of all subjects—the things which angels desire to look into—he was yet in his worldly circumstances and lot in life straitened, tried, and kept down. But just as from some plants *pressure* brings out the aroma, so the graces of submission, meekness, and patience were brought out obviously in him. And when the last pressure had come—when partner and family had all been removed—when bodily strength had begun to fail, and bodily toil had begun to be a burden, the gentle spirit that had borne all unrepiningly was released from these trying surroundings, to exercise its adoration and render its homage in the kingdom of eternal light and love.

ALEXANDER STEVEN was a native of Orlig, whence, while young, he removed with his father's family to Wick, where he learnt the trade of a cooper. He afterwards ventured on the business of fishcuring, but with such indifferent success that he gave it up, and having received a good country education in his native parish, he accepted the situation of teacher of the Assembly School of Keiss. Here he remained for seventeen years, until he was called to undertake the office of missionary in the Canongate of Edinburgh, where he continued till his death.

It seems to have been while learning his trade in Wick that

he became the subject of religious impressions. There were in that town at that time two classes of zealous professors of religion—one consisting of elderly Christians, of whom John Doull was the centre figure—the other consisting of a band of young men, of whom Mr. Steven was one. Of the latter some afterwards “fell away,” some were removed by death, and some have “endured,” and it is believed “will endure to the end.”

Mr. Steven was in many respects a remarkable person. His outer man, in its imposing proportions, was something rarely to be met with, and seemed a fitting tabernacle for the large heart that dwelt within it. Of his mental gifts, perhaps the greatest was his power of memory. What it acquired it ever after retained, and when engaged in religious exercises, its usefulness was most striking. We never saw in any one an equal facility of appropriately and exactly quoting Scripture to support and illustrate truth. The writer was for some time associated with him in conducting a prayer meeting in Edinburgh, which was held within the precincts of the New College. A student of some mark—afterwards a missionary in India—asked us one day to enquire at Mr. Steven what plan he had taken to gain such a ready use of Scripture, for, said he, “I never heard any one so mighty in this respect.”

His large affectionateness was scarcely less remarkable. Children would draw to him instinctively, and in his work in the Canongate, where he encountered sceptics, scoffers, and such like, his kindly bearing would get him access to homes and hearts when others—perhaps more fitted to grapple with such intellectually—would be repulsed. We are aware that some in his native county, who had not opportunities of looking below the surface, at times thought there was too much boldness or sternness in his manner; but our way of accounting for this was that those of warm and sympathetic temperament, when they meet the cold edge of suspicion or distrust, are thrown into an attitude of mind quite unnatural to them. Moreover, truth—the cause of Christ—was to him everything.

When that was touched, he was touched, and this accounted for some of his strong displays of feeling in public, about the time of the Disruption. He was then on fire, and the ardour of his feelings vented themselves in proportional vehemency of language against those who he believed were conspiring to dis-crown the Head of the Church, and rob His heritage of her privileges. Men of more phlegmatic temperament could not sympathize with him, but he was not to be measured by the cool gauge of their heat. The "Intrusionists" in those days had the same place in his esteem as the nations who fought against Israel; and some will remember how in public he used to characterize them as

"Gabal and Ammon Amalek,  
Philistines, those of Tyre  
And Assur join'd with them, to help  
Lot's children, they conspire."

But, besides these qualities of mind, Mr. Steven had clear and comprehensive views of Divine truth and experience of its power. His spiritual concern having begun in youth, he seemed to have been led almost imperceptibly to himself, to a saving reception of the gospel; and this want of a marked transition in his history from darkness to light was to himself often a ground of doubt and depression as to his vital union to Christ. But however fearful he himself might at times be as to his state, those who knew him knew that if "a tree is known by its fruits," then he was a true fearer of the Lord, for they could not fail to see his heartfelt relish for the Word of God—his love to ordinances and to the "brethren" his habitual prayerfulness—and his singularly unblemished life and conversation. If he spent an hour socially with a friend, it was sure to be varied by prayer, Mr. Steven proposing to the other to "bow his knee," though it generally ended in his engaging in the exercise himself. In this want of much of the assurance of faith one might see, perhaps in his case, the finger of Divine wisdom—it may have been a needful equipoise to

one of his ardent temperament, and thus we have known him, after engaging in public with unusual earnestness and freedom, return to the privacy of his home, there to seek for himself, with tears, what he had been pressing on the acceptance of others.

One possessed of Mr. Steven's Christian acquirements, gifts, and ready utterance, we might have supposed, was designed for public usefulness ; and occasion of this turned up in due time. At the Disruption, the minister of Keiss having accepted a call elsewhere, the charge remained for a long time vacant, and Mr. Steven not only taught the week-day school, but managed also their congregational matters, and often preached to them on the Sabbath, to the edification of some, there is reason to believe. On his removal to Edinburgh he found a sphere where his public gifts and large sympathies had full scope. He taught and toiled among the ignorant and depraved masses of the Canongate zealously and heartily. And we may mention, as an instance of his acceptance as a public speaker, that he often occupied the pulpits of ministers in and around Edinburgh, and that deputations from vacant congregations have waited on him, requesting him to become their pastor, not knowing that he was no licentiate of the church, and had never entered college or hall.

His friends often observed what he himself sharply felt, but was enabled patiently to endure—the straitenedness of his worldly circumstances. This arose latterly not from inadequate support, but from the call he had in Providence to support a widowed sister and her family, which his natural affection, as well as his Christian principle, would not allow him overlook. But he was honourably carried through, the Lord often interposing unexpectedly on his behalf.

After being some years in Edinburgh, that manly form that had been kept in vigour by the fresh sea breezes that blow around the shores of Keiss, began to droop under the foul air and hard work of the alleys of the Canongate. Loving his

Master's work, and never so much in his element as when engaged in it, he toiled on as long as nature held out. At length he turned his steps to his native county, cheered by the prospect of seeing the faces of his old friends, and with the expectation that it might please the Lord to bless his native air for the re-establishment of his health. But it was otherwise determined—he gradually succumbed to his complaint, yet becoming more mellow in spirit, and riper for the rest that remaineth, until, surrounded by the Christian friends he loved, he fell asleep in Jesus in October 1854.

DAVID STEPHEN.—In the year 1789 David Steven's father, who was a miller, and a tenant of land now merged in the farm of Murza, in the parish of Bower, Caithness-shire, on opening the sluice of his dam one frosty morning, slid over the embankment into the out-going rush of water and was drowned. Three months afterwards David was born—a twin child. The widowed mother, left with the care of several young children, found a home with her parents in the neighbourhood.

As soon as David was big enough for the occupation, he went, as was very customary for country boys, to the *frien'* to herd cattle. He used to tell with much interest, till his latest years, of the various worthy dames who then took an interest in him. They not only attended to his bodily comfort, but to his religious instruction, requiring him daily to commit to memory portions of the Psalms and of the Shorter Catechism, under penalty of losing his dinner. He never lost his dinner on this account but once—he failed in the Second Commandment. Education of this kind was nearly all, we suspect, that he got in his youth, and probably the recollection of what he owed to these kindly wives was one of his inducements to bestow the same care on the young persons that were afterwards in his own service.

During his herding days, the Messrs. Haldane, and others associated with them, came, in their preaching tours through



Caithness, on several occasions to the parish of Bower. David, whose mechanical turn showed itself thus early, used, with curiosities he would carve in wood, to hire other herd boys to mind his cattle, while he went to hear the preaching. A substitute failing on one occasion, he gathered his charge to as near a point as possible to the place of meeting in the open air. While he gave his ear to the speaker, he behoved to give his eye to the cattle. Strange to say, they all lay down but one red ox, which kept standing, and was a mark to him that the rest were there. It was a matter of gratification to him ever afterwards that, although then so unfit to appreciate them, he had the opportunity of seeing and hearing those worthy evangelists. The following remark of one of them stuck to his memory—"A fish can no more live out of water than a believer can live without prayer."

David's intelligence thus began to show itself at this early period of his life. He had more "speculation in his eyes" than other boys. He could not only identify the cattle he tended, but mark their habits; could not only find the nests of birds and *bykes* of bees, but observe their instincts. When an old man, he kept singing birds in the neatest of cages of his own construction, and only a year or two ago we got from him a pair of choice songsters, with minute directions as to their treatment. Then if a burn flowed through his summer haunts, he would utilize it in turning a miniature mill, whose ingenious formation was the wonder of all on-lookers.

But his mechanical genius was not long allowed to waste itself on child's play. It soon bore useful fruits. It did not escape the eyes of the housewives of the district, who put it to practical use. Their *lefters* and tubs would be leaking or losing a hoop, and as coopers were only to be found at a distance, the canny boy would be set to try his hand at repairing these articles. The art throve in his hands; his services were more and more drawn upon, so that on reaching the age when the herd boy merges into the farm servant, he had acquired such

knowledge of and reputation for this craft, that he ventured to begin business on his own account, and entered into the occupancy of that well-known dwelling in Halcro from which he never removed until he left the world, and where his mother, and afterwards his sister, found a home with him.

But David possessed also, in liberal measure, what in learned phrase is called æsthetical tastes, and especially for music. It was drawn out by the sounds of the violin, the musical instrument then most practised. He began to learn the art ; and although he may have got lessons from others, we believe he was mainly self-taught, and soon out-stripped all competitors. He used the fiddle at first for his own gratification ; but when his skill became known, and a musician was wanted at the gatherings for dancing in the neighbourhood, David was pressed into the service. And at length, drawn by the love of his art, and by the gain of the occupation, he became the leader of the music wherever weddings or other pleasure parties took place throughout a wide district of country.

We think it right to say that in those days entertainments of this kind were almost universally countenanced, and met with little or no disfavour at the hands of most of the religious teachers of the people, and therefore the tone of sentiment regarding them was different then from what it is now. The employment, however, of his talent in the way indicated caused David, in after years, great regret.

The spiritual change he underwent was too marked to allow any of his old associates to doubt its reality. Yet many who used to dance to David's music sought to evade the force of his subsequent godly example, and to salve their own consciences by persisting to link his name with these youthful frivolities. Some, however, who became, like himself, partakers of divine grace, would, when he and they met at religious ordinances or elsewhere, refer with grief to those by-gone days, and join their thanksgivings at having been led into a new course of life. A nervous tremor affected his hands in his

later years ; and as, in the solitude occasioned by his infirm health, he was thus deprived of the solace of corresponding in writing with friends at a distance, he used to say—" By throwing this shake into my hands, the Lord is chastising me for the use I made of them in shaking the fiddle bow."

We may appropriately insert here a few written observations by David, in our possession, on the subject of—

"AMUSEMENTS."

"All creatures, both mankind and the lower animals, have a desire for amusements, especially in youth. The wise man, speaks thus to young persons—' Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' Eccles. xi. 9. Remember, young people, these words are ironical. They mean that although we walk now in the practices of sin and folly, yet when we are brought to meet the Judge of quick and dead, our sins shall find us out, and although sweet to us now, they shall be bitter to us as death. It is when a drop of God's wrath touches the guilt of sin in the conscience, that a sinner will know what is meant by 'the worm that dieth not.' The conscience must therefore be purged by the application to it of the blood of the Lamb of God that taketh away sin ; and this is done by the Holy Spirit sealing the word of God concerning Christ on the sinner's heart and conscience. Then we have peace with God. Rom. v. 1.

"Yet after the prey has been taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered, they still need daily washing and upholding, because of sin dwelling in them, called in Scripture 'the old man.' And had it not been that they have, by the Holy Spirit, been united and grafted into Christ, the true Vine, and are the Father's husbandry in Him, and have by Him their spiritual life fed and nourished, they could not live in the life of grace one hour. For although they have good pasture, they are so unwatchful and unruly that they hide good things from

themselves, and cannot often find one crumb of the bread of life to satisfy their souls, although the Bible is full of it, and of rich treasure such as the whole world cannot afford. Indeed, this treasure is in general despised by the world, yet thousands have there found crumbs of the hidden manna—bits of the gold tried in the fire—and feel their need of the eye salve to annoint their eyes that they may see to lay hold of the Good Shepherd, and to follow him through good report and bad report."

After working for some years as a cooper, he began to try a more difficult branch of trade. In his boyish days he had made a clever attempt at clock-making, and also, it is said, getting hold of his employer's watch, had taken it to pieces and successfully set it up again. This desire to master the mechanism of the watch remained with him, and no doubt other watches were experimented upon as opportunity offered. At all events he gained such knowledge of their principles of construction, and such skill in workmanship, that he could understand to repair and clean them. The people of the district began to employ him for this purpose, and gradually the watch-making pushed aside the coopering. In order to qualify himself for executing the finer parts of his work, he accepted the offer of a competent tradesman in Wick to give him further instruction, and he ultimately became in this department a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. David's watches and clocks were faithful reflectors of his integrity and skill.

Mr. D. Stephen, Thurso, who learnt his trade with his uncle, thought for a time that he bestowed too much time on the construction of his clocks, until he found that he could clean those made by his uncle in half the time required for many others.

After David had become known and esteemed throughout the county on higher grounds than those of trade, business flowed in upon him. Many assumed that they would find in him a conscientious workman, and their expectations being realized, they spread his reputation, so that his hands became

full. His gains were in proportion, and he acquired as much capital as enabled him to go to Edinburgh (the only time he was so far from home) to purchase a larger stock. He used to tell that when, after his return, the goods came to hand, he set them up in his workroom with as much display as possible, but that on surveying them with great complacency, his conscience smote him, and, to use his own words, "it was the last sight I got of them."

When David's business increased, he had to make an addition to his dwelling; and while this was in course of erection, he met with an accident, of which he ever retained a vivid remembrance, and often adduced as a remarkable instance of the preservation of his life while he was yet without God. He had gone up to look at the mason work after skew stones had been laid on the gable. Missing his footing, he slid downwards, and a large stone after him; but happily he fell on the outside of the wall, and the stone on the inside. "Otherwise," he was wont to say, "it would have fallen upon me and killed me, and then where would I have been this day?"

The preceding narrative of the early part of Mr. Steven's life makes it evident, we think, that he was possessed of unusual mental vigour and of superior tastes. But these qualities are not so rare as that it would be worth while to preserve a written record of them, were it not that his after eminence, in a higher sphere, reflects an interest on such particulars of his early life as can be gathered up, and that it will be gratifying to those by whom his memory is cherished.

In the year 1815, and when about 25 years of age, he became the subject of thoughts and reflections of vastly higher importance than the occupations and amusements that had hitherto interested him. Conscience began to awake, and to charge him with his sins, and with his responsibility to God. Began, we say, for the decision of Christian character that afterwards distinguished him was reached only after a long previous process. The steps of this process we have heard him relate—how at

times, during his life of levity and worldliness, he would meet with striking checks from passages of Scripture suggested to his mind, and how he would combat his convictions and shake free of them. After a time, however, these returned with greater force. He then endeavoured to compromise the matter by joining a fellowship prayer meeting in the neighbourhood, while he still continued to be musical performer at the dancing parties. This compromise was broken up in a very unexpected but effective way. He was one day, with his instrument under his arm, on the road to a ball. A woman in the district, who had earned for herself—we know not how—the awful name of "Maggie Hell," meeting David, accosted him, and, in strong terms, upbraided him for his inconsistency. "You worthless fellow," said she, "going on in this way; praying ae day, and playing the fiddle to the dancin' folks the ither day—a bonnie kind of religion, indeed." David stood like one petrified. What! thought he; is it to come to this, that I am the scorn of even Maggie Hell? He turned on the spot; went home, and laid up his fiddle. It was never again taken down to be used in public—the dancers that day finally lost their musician.

There was one circumstance that about this time forced religious matters on the attention of a large section of the county, and was the means of either awakening or stimulating the minds of not a few. The ministry of the late Mr. Gunn of Watten, which from its commencement was remarkable, had now ripened into commanding power. As we have elsewhere recorded, the God-fearing were drawn to Watten from the surrounding parishes; and, as might be expected, the minister of Watten and his style of preaching became the theme of much speculation. Thus an interest in spiritual things was stirred, and truths were dropped into many minds that were little conversant with such formerly. The result was that many besides professing Christians began to betake themselves to Watten on the Sabbath, and David Steven among others.

When he came under Mr. Gunn's ministry he was in an

unsettled state of mind, and had been so for some time previously. He was exercised under a sense of his condition and character as a sinner. That was all ; but it was much. It put him at once into the attitude of an attentive and interested hearer. He had not been many Sabbaths at Watten until, as he used to say, " Mr. Gunn found him out "—*i.e.*, laid bare his spiritual state. And with such increasing vividness each returning Sabbath, that David, thinking it was he the minister had in view, took his place in the furthest corner of the church. But he scarcely found himself comfortable there, for the minister's delineations of character so closely corresponded with what he felt his own to be, that, thinking the likeness must appear to others as well as to himself, he would bow his head under the book board to escape the general gaze he expected to be turned upon him.

The first effect of the preaching at Watten was to deepen his sense of bondage, and to grind down his self-righteousness to very small dimensions. It was some time before he came to apprehend the new covenant way of reconciliation with God ; and it would seem that, as his transition from a state of indifference into that of concern was gradual, so it was with his deliverance out of a state of legal bondage into gospel liberty ; and that, while there were seasons when, under the hearing of the Word, he got such glimpses of the truth as it is in Jesus as gave him hope, these alternated with seasons of much depression.

But one day at Watten he got a signal deliverance, and the bonds that had been loosening fell off. That day he never forgot. He used to speak of it as if it stood out in his experience as his first sensible entrance into the liberty wherewith Christ maketh His people free. It left a lasting impress on his character and spiritual history. The sermon of the day was from the text—" God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life " (John iii. 16), and the point

of doctrine Mr. Gunn chiefly enlarged upon with unusual power and fulness was that of the antecedency of the love of God the Father to the mediation of Christ. "I used to think," David would say, "that the love of God was procured by the work of Christ, but, oh! the view I that day got of the love of the Father from eternity, and that it was *because* of that love that the Saviour was sent into the world. My heart was filled, and melted with a sense of God's love to lost and guilty sinners in giving His only begotten Son for their salvation. How I longed, when the congregation broke up, to get home, that I might find a secret place in which to give vent to my feelings; and when I did reach my own dwelling, I could not well contain, but felt as if my bodily frame could not hold such measure as I had received, and went stumbling over what lay in my way into the barn, and there poured out my heart in adoration of the Lord's love and mercy, and I had there a sweet word of promise given me—'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.' Rev. iii. 8. Many a miserable and perplexing hour has gone over my head since then, but that was a time I can never forget."

Those accustomed to hear his public addresses could easily observe what a place in his heart the truth referred to occupied, and how often he would advert to it. And although it is a doctrine that stands out plainly enough on the page of Scripture, yet we well remember with what importance and interest he would invest it by his tenderness and depth of feeling in handling it. We see the reason. He had a rich experience of its power, and it was associated in his mind with the love of his espousals.

This may be considered the first clear starting point of David's long after life of consistent Christian profession. In the varying soul exercises that preceded it, we cannot doubt that the Lord was preparing him for future usefulness. He was thereby enabled to sympathize with the difficulties of anxious souls, and to speak a word in season to those that were weary.



After this era in his spiritual history, David felt at liberty to seek—what before he shrunk from—fellowship with the Lord's people. He became personally acquainted with the minister of Watten, who was not slow to perceive his superior mental endowments and spiritual attainments. A warm life-long friendship followed. Mr. Gunn found David a wise counsellor in various emergencies, and a zealous coadjutor in schemes of usefulness. On the other hand, David, who was steadfastly attached to Mr. Gunn's ministry till its close, held him in the highest esteem, and it rarely happened that one would be long in his society before it became manifest that, although there were other ministers whom he loved, yet that his admiration for Mr. Gunn's personal and ministerial character was peculiarly intense. The fearless front that the minister of Watten presented to those practices in the church or in the world which he believed to conflict with the rule of Scripture made David to regard him as possessed of much of the public spirit that animated the Scottish reformers.

“For more than twenty years,” David would say, “I got the sincere milk of the word at Watten. There my judgment was informed, my case cleared, and my heart warmed. Many ran after what they call experimental preaching, and such is good and useful in its own place, but I was brought up on doctrine—the sound doctrine of the word.” When any of the worthies who used to attend at Watten was commended in his presence, he would say humorously,—“Ay, he was one of Mr. Gunn's fosters.”

Among those who attended Mr. Gunn's ministry at Watten might be found not only several eminent Christians belonging to that parish, but many of the same character from the surrounding districts, while at communion seasons not a few came from the most distant parts of the county, and beyond it. These persons not only received David into fellowship, but accorded him a front place in their ranks—a circumstance remarkable among a class very slow to receive young professors without a

probation long enough to test their sincerity, much less to give them a leading place, and only to be accounted for in the case of so young a man as David then was, by their perceiving his attainments in the divine life, and his possession of gifts eminently fitting him for public usefulness.

The meetings and greetings of these brethren at the Church of Watten, on each returning Sabbath, were refreshing to them. A closely-knit band, after the congregation broke up, took the direction of Bower homewards. David was the central figure. The time was occupied in recalling and enlarging on the doctrine they had been hearing, to the great edification of the company.

Few now remain who can speak from personal knowledge of the communion seasons at Watten—seasons of great interest to the Lord's people, who came from all quarters, and enjoyed, in the ministrations of such esteemed ministers as the Messrs. Cook, Mr. Munro, and Mr. Gunn, much of the divine presence. An esteemed father among us, then young in the ministry, has told us that one of the seasons of greatest spiritual enjoyment he ever experienced was on the Monday of a communion at Watten. David's name is intimately associated with these occasions. Each day many of the esteemed fathers and mothers accompanied him to Bower, where he kept open house, and out-house too, for the company overflowed. His hospitality so largely drawn upon was most heartily bestowed. Family worship was conducted in the open air. On Sabbath evening quite a congregation assembled in the stack-yard. The exercises were continued till past midnight, enlivened by the gifts and graces of the most eminent persons in the north. One who was often present says:—

“Persons would come to the Sacrament at Watten from every parish in Caithness, and also from the Reay country. I have seen there William Macrae, Strathy; John Macintosh, Farr; Joseph Mackay and Janet M'Leod, Reay; Mr. Sinclair, Charles Gordon, and George Brotchie and Mrs. Macbeath from Thurso, and also Miss Reid, Thurso, who went out as a missionary to

India. Every corner in David's house (which had five apartments) would be occupied. Straw would be spread on the barn floor for sleeping accommodation, and blankets spread lengthways. I remember one night, after every place was occupied, David and myself lay down on a little straw, while his sister lay on the ground with her head on a stool. The meeting in the evening was in the corn-yard; a tent put up and a light placed in it after nightfall. The meeting was kept up till after midnight, and the exercise was in English and Gaelic by turns—Joseph Mackay leading in the latter language, and David in the former. The day would be breaking before the men retired to rest. These were days of fellowship and union."

An event which serves to illustrate David's character, and affected to some extent, but far from unpleasantly, his quiet domestic life, took place about the year 1834. A near relative of David supplies the following narrative :—

THE LATE ALEXANDER STEWART.

Any sketch of the life of David Steven would be incomplete if it did not include some notice of Alexander Stewart, who lived for many years with him, and died at his house more than twenty years ago. Mr. Stewart was a native of Perthshire, and was for some time a schoolmaster in the vicinity of Murthly Castle. He had a great desire for knowledge, but at length he felt that other, and weightier matters, were being neglected. To him the question was an important one, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" So deeply was he impressed with the necessity of giving all up for that which he felt to be *more enduring*, that he found he could no longer continue as a teacher, and insisted on being relieved of his charge, and would not be shaken from his purpose. Immediately thereafter he might be seen, on the Sabbath, wending his way, now to one church, then to another, in the hope of hearing from their pulpits something to satisfy his longing soul. Thus he wandered northwards, and found himself one day in the company of that aged servant of God,

David Budge, Barrock, who took him to hear the late Mr. Gunn of Watten. After the service, and on their way home, David Budge addressed his friend David Steven as follows: "David, there's a man here that you'll take home with you to-night." At the time, David's mind was preoccupied, and he gave no answer; but, while walking along, these words came forcibly to him, "Let my outcasts dwell with thee, Moab." He knew the command, and obeyed, and from that night, and until his death, which took place eighteen years after, Mr. Stewart dwelt in the house of David Steven.

Possessed of a refined and sensitive nature, it often occurred to him that he was burdensome to his benefactor, and on this account he wished to leave the house. At one time, so deeply was he impressed with this idea, that he resolved to quit at all hazards. It was on a Sabbath morning—stormy, rough, and cold. That he should leave the house of David Steven was a thing out of the question, for all the inmates loved and esteemed him. A messenger was, therefore, soon on his way with a few lines to the late Rev. Mr. Munro of Halkirk, requesting him to pray for Mr. Stewart, and from that day the cloud of despondency never hung so heavily upon him as it had formerly done.

We have often looked upon it as a kind leading of Providence towards this worthy man, that he fell into the hands of one who not only kept him beyond the reach of bodily want, but also proved to him a wise spiritual guide and companion.

At an early period in David's religious life he began to frequent the communions in the Gaelic-speaking parishes of the county, and to which he was much drawn by the opportunity thus afforded of fellowship with the many godly men and women then to be met with there. The first time he went to Reay he had the satisfaction of seeing the well-known James M'Donald, then aged and blind. Mrs. Munro, wife of the minister of Halkirk, who accompanied him, and also acted as interpreter (James having no English and David no Gaelic), said—"I have brought a stranger from Bower to see you."

“Where does he attend on Sabbath?” asked James. “At Watten,” she replied. Desiring his attendant to bring some refreshments, Mrs. Munro, by David’s desire, requested the host to ask a blessing, which he did in the following words—“Lord, they are here at the market of free grace; give them the market *farin*.”

We are here reminded of the way in which James M’Donald’s son, Dr. M’Donald, Ferrintosh, began his ministry, which David used to relate. Mr. M’Donald had just been licensed to preach, and the Achreny Mission being then vacant, the people were anxious he should get the appointment. Mr. Cameron, minister of Halkirk, who had supervision of the mission (it being within his parochial bounds), wished that another—a relative of his own—should get it, and had sent him to preach there for several Sabbaths. On the day of election, Mr. Cameron requested the people to express their opinion of the young man they had been hearing; but no one responded to the invitation. At length, Mr. C., addressing Colin Campbell, the catechist of the district, said—“Come, Colin, let us hear your opinion.” “My opinion is,” said he, rising to his feet, “that I would not take the poor creature’s judgment on a worldly matter, far less on a soul’s case.” Thereupon the people rose and, to a man, left the church; and Mr. Cameron went home in a very indignant mood. Seeing, however, that they were intent on getting their favourite, he at last yielded, and intimated this in these words—“Well, well, since James M’Donald’s son makes the best kail, you can sup the more of it.”

A warm friendship was formed between David and Mr. Munro, Halkirk, for, as his business required his going for several days once a year, or oftener, to that parish, Mr. M. would secure his company when the day’s work was over. With such a congenial spirit, Mr. M.’s well-known delight in “notes” and reminiscences of the worthies he had seen or heard of found full scope. “We would begin in the evening,” David would say, “and the conversation never flagged till the

small hours of the morning." One evening, however, was an exception. Mr. Munro withdrew to his own room ; but, before retiring to rest, he explained the cause. " I got," he said, " to-day an anonymous letter, which, although a child might have written it, yet I saw it was the work of the devil. It was to the effect that my presence at the ensuing communion at Latheron was not desired. I spread the matter, however, on my knees before the Lord, and before leaving my room I could call God my Father ; and now I will go and preach at Latheron should they stone me." And Mr. Munro found such pleasure and profit in David's society, that he occasionally went to Bower, and remained for a day or two, during which time, we suspect, the watch-making did not receive much attention.

Mr. Munro and David met unexpectedly one day on the road. " Where are you going to-day, David ? " " To the market, sir, to buy a horse, if I can get one." " Did you pray before you left home that you might be furnished with a suitable animal ? " " I cannot say that I did." " Well, you will not get a horse to-day. You will get one, but not to-day. You should have made it a matter of prayer." David went on his way, without Mr. Munro's words making much impression on him ; " but," he used to say, " they turned out to be true. I found a horse on the market which I thought would suit me, but the seller and I could not agree about the price ; and so I went away as I came. Next day, however, the person I had been trying to bargain with came to my door with the horse, agreeing to take my offer. And so I got a horse, and a useful animal he has proved to me." It lived for thirty years in David's possession, and after it died he had no occasion for another.

Less frequently than to Reay and Halkirk, David went to Latheron. But though many of the godly in that quarter spoke only the Gaelic language, and David only the English, he managed to become more or less intimately acquainted with nearly all of them. " Donald Mackay, Clashcreggan," David would say, " greatly helped me on one occasion. I was in

deep waters—in great anxiety about my spiritual state—when a woman, with whom I had no acquaintance, called to say that she had brought this message to me from Donald, viz., ‘Tell him that I have found him among the brethren.’” The Christians of that day in the north, we may say, were much guided in concluding whether others whom they did not know personally were partakers of divine grace, by the way in which they found their minds exercised regarding them in secret prayer.

David was also knit in close bonds of fellowship with the many worthies then living in the town of Thurso. One day in the year 1831, having gone to Thurso on some business, he was about to start homewards when Mr. Charles Gordon urged and succeeded in inducing him to remain for a few days, that he might have an opportunity of seeing a young minister who was expected to arrive that evening from the south, with the view of preaching on trial the following Sabbath in the Parish Church, then vacant by the death of the Rev. Mr. M’Intosh. A number of the leading Christians in the town, and David among them, were gathered in a room in the hotel at the hour when the mail coach arrived, bringing the expected minister. Not long after the latter had been ushered into the room, and the usual greetings had passed, this passage of Scripture occurred to David’s mind with peculiar significance—“Arise, anoint him ; for this is he.” After the stranger retired, David’s friends urged him to say what he thought of him. “No matter,” he replied, “my friends, what I think of him ; I tell you this is to be your minister.” And so it turned out, for the young man—Rev. Mr. Taylor—was shortly thereafter settled as parish minister of Thurso.

There was one sphere of usefulness to which David devoted himself with peculiar interest and perseverance—the instruction of the young of the surrounding district. He began in the early part of his Christian life to teach a class, not only of mere children, but of young men and women, and continued to do so until his death—a period of more than 50 years. It met on

Sabbath evening in his own dwelling—a building of the old fashioned kind, where one room opened into another, and which could accommodate a large number of persons. He stood generally in one of the doorways, and could be seen by most, and easily heard by all. Each night the class repeated a question of the Shorter Catechism, which he analysed and enlarged upon. They had also to prove from Scripture one of a connected series of leading doctrines, so regulated as that the whole was gone over in three years—the average time of attendance of the young people.

Those well qualified to judge have always said that David never appeared to more advantage than in conducting this class. There he felt at home. He had often a lively spiritual frame, and much liberty in unfolding the truth, and in exhorting the young. Old disciples, too, regarded it as a privilege to be present, and found it edifying and refreshing. What a blessing to that district! How many successive sets of young people were thus largely imbued with the doctrines of religion? How many were savingly profited the day of account shall declare. But some assuredly were; and of all we think it may be said that they carried with them, at least a feeling of love and esteem for their teacher. Even in extreme age David never faltered in this work. When so enfeebled that he could not attend church, he not only continued his Sabbath evening class, but looked forward to it during the week with expectation, as a time of hoped-for refreshing to his own soul. When at the gates of death, he would pray that if it was the Lord's will, he might stand once more on the *hearthstone* "where," he would say, "I got many sweet drops from the fountain of life." We are gratified at being able to furnish, from an old Sabbath scholar of his, the following recollections:—

"I well remember the godly man coming from his room with his Bible under his arm, his face beaming with heavenly love, and his heart full of love to souls, pressing his way along the passage through a crowd, many sitting on the cold stones of



the floor, when every seat in the house would be filled. Taking his accustomed place, he would begin with praise and prayer. Then the youngest classes were heard their Bible lessons, till, ascending according to age or experience, the whole were gone over. Young and old next had to repeat a question of the Shorter Catechism, the doctrine of which was explained. We had also a course of doctrines to prove from Scripture, beginning with the Fall of Man, for he would say, 'We must begin where sin began with us—where you and I got our loss; then man's ruin by sin, the corruption of man's nature, the curse he lies under; then promises of salvation, the first promise in Eden, the promise to Abraham; then the types and prophecies of Christ's coming throughout the Old Testament, until He appeared in the fulness of time; then the history of Christ's life on earth: His birth, life, miracles, teaching; His death, resurrection, ascension; the New Testament thus fulfilling the Old; then His work on high, mediation and intercession, issuing in actual deliverance to sinners, in their being born again by the Word and Spirit; and, lastly, the actings of a new-born soul: faith, repentance, humility, love, self-denial, hope, assurance, &c.'

"A striking feature in the meeting was the solemnity. No noise or whispering among the youngest, nothing to be seen or heard but the exercises for which we were met. So strict was the discipline, that no levity, even in attire, was allowed. If a female, who had been at Church, had not gone home before the class met, her bonnet was laid aside until the meeting was over. Before closing, David gave a short address each evening on the subject we had been proving. I have often heard him expound the Word in other places with much fervour and freedom, but never more so than among the young in his own dwelling."

And yet David always spoke with diffidence of the results of his labours. We have heard him say—"I fear the Lord never blessed a word that ever I spoke; and yet I should not say

that, for there are a few of my old scholars in whom I have more confidence than in myself, some of them in America, and some in Australia."

The following, also from an old Sabbath school scholar of David's, gives interesting evidence of the fruits of his teaching, and of his discreet dealing with the spiritually anxious :—

"In the beginning of the year 1834 I was a farm servant in David Steven's neighbourhood, and attended his Sabbath school. Soon afterwards I became concerned about my soul, and that increased so as to put me from my sleep, and from my food and also from vain company. I was in this state for weeks and months, and if I fell asleep, would re-wake with a scream that would frighten every one in the house. At length I went to David, and told him the state of my mind, and that I was going to wander through the world. He said—'Where will you go? The evil is in yourself; it will follow you wherever you go, and you will find no place better than another.' I remember he asked me how old I was. I told him I was 16. 'Well,' said he, 'the Lord has waited 16 years and not cast you to hell, and it is a question if you ever waited one hour on him; now, I will give you my hand, if you wait on the Lord in the way of commanded duty as long as he has borne with you, you will not be as you are at present. So take my advice, and go back to your work until the term, and if you cannot stay with your work-fellows all night, I will give you a bed, and you can either sleep alone, or with Sandy Stewart.' This I did, and was many a night under David's roof.

"The evening before the first day of 1835 was a night I can never forget. The people of the house were lightsome and cheerful, preparing for New Year's Day, so I was forced to retire to the barn to conceal my misery, and had strong temptations, which I will not mention. But the enemy was disappointed that night, for, when alone trying to spread my distress before the Lord, that passage of Scripture was set home with power and light upon my soul—'But when the fulness of

the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Galatians iv. 4, 5, and 6. This produced a calm in my soul, and I was enabled to meditate on the words, and got a glimpse of Christ's engagements in the covenant of grace on behalf of sinners, and of his fulfilling of these in time in his active and passive obedience, until He could say, 'It is finished,' and before I came out of that barn, I thought, were the world on fire, I could go through it for the love of Christ. I went that night to David Steven's, and he soon discovered my change of mind, and said, 'Glory to His name, He has not kept you 16 years,' and I spent New Year's Day with him as happy as the people I left, although in a different way. David was to me as a 'father' in the Lord, and kept a special eye on me wherever I went, and whenever I came to see him would enquire as to the state of my soul. One day he asked me, 'Was I growing in grace?' I said, 'What is it to grow in grace?' He answered, 'To grow in grace is to grow in knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Sin is an infinite evil, because done against an Infinite God; to grow in knowledge of your own helplessness; and the longer one lives he grows more in knowledge of this—that he can neither will nor do any good. You may think just now you can do much good, but if you live to be as old as I am, you will think very differently, and your good deeds, in point of justification before God, will be on a level with your bad deeds. They grow, too, in knowledge of the preciousness of Christ and in dependence upon Him. Oh! man, if you were taught to live a life of dependence on Him, He would do all for you; He would make ditches and drains for you; He would rock the cradle for you; He would buy and sell your cattle for you. I remember once I had a cow to sell, and as there was a market in the neighbourhood I intended to go there, but there was a

Sacrament in a neighbouring parish, and as I was considering what I would do, that Scripture occurred to me, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Matt. vi. 33. So I set off to the Sacrament, trying to forget the other matter, and a few days after I returned, a man came to my house and asked if I had a cow to dispose of. I said I had, and he wished me to come out and make a bargain with him. But as I was engaged repairing a watch, I said the animals were in the field, go and look at them, and let me know which will suit you. He went, and came back in a little while, and said he would prefer one, and offered for it. This was the one I intended to sell, and so I got free of it without rising from my bench. They grow also in humility and self-denial; in heavenly desire; hunger and thirst after righteousness; in faith and repentance; in fighting the good fight of faith against the devil, the world, and the flesh. They grow in love. I cannot say much about this, except that it is their burden that they cannot love Him more. But when the Spirit blows on their garden and the spices flow out, then they say, 'Set me as a seal upon Thine heart, as a seal upon Thine arm.' Canticles viii. 6.

"Another time I came to see him he asked me, 'How was it with me now?' I said, 'Poor indeed.' 'What's wrong with you?' 'I am not getting in the Bible, in the closet, or in the means, what I used to get.' 'Has your sense of need of Christ left you?' 'That is what I am missing. I thought once I was finding Christ in His ordinances, but now they are empty.' 'Oh!' he said, 'your sickness is not unto death. I wish there were more troubled with your disease; your enjoyment will be like the ebbing and flowing of the tide, as He sees meet, but if your sense of need of Christ had left you, I would be afraid of you.'

Another field of usefulness which David long occupied, with pleasure and profit to many, was afforded by his finding himself, after the Disruption, at liberty to attend the communions

in parishes where, from want of sympathy with the ministry of the Establishment, he was formerly shut out. His presence in such places was welcomed by the godly, and regarded with satisfaction by all. The late Mr. Gunn, Watten, to whom he was one day saying that he feared he was not getting good of the means, and ought not so early to have begun a public profession, replied—"You began your profession, did you? I hope it was the Lord began it and He will carry it on; go not only to seek good, but to do good." David was by far the most edifying and attractive public speaker of the English-speaking Christian laymen in the county; and at sacramental gatherings, opportunity was afforded for the exercise of his gifts. His brethren instinctively gave way to him as the leader at such times. Sandy Gair, observing him one evening in a Gaelic meeting, asked him to engage in English. He replied, "I have spread my wings far enough, should I be silent here." "If it is yourself has spread your wings," returned Sandy, "you will be left to fly; but if it is the Lord has spread them, He will put weights to them to keep you down—go on." And, indeed, he was kept down, as respects self-confidence, till his latest day. It was his manifest child-like humility that made others delight to honour him. Besides taking part in the meetings held each week-day evening of the communion, there was a prolonged meeting on the Sabbath evening. There he would often speak for hours, with much tact and wisdom, to large congregations, comprising all sorts of persons, who listened with unvarying attention. The secret of his attractiveness lay doubtless in his manifest grasp of doctrinal truth, held in the solution of a lively experience of its power on his own heart; while his addresses, clear in thought and simple in style, ranged over themes of practical interest, unfolding the exercises of the Christian—the danger of nominal professors—and the sad condition and prospects of careless hearers of the truth.

The same friend adds—"I remember hearing David address a meeting in the Church of Halkirk, in Mr. Munro's time, on

the Sabbath evening of a sacrament, and before concluding, he said—'Some of us were at the Lord's table to-day. What did we get there? Each soul got something. It is a sealing ordinance, and if believers are rightly exercised, and can draw their breath in the faith, they have something to seal in this ordinance. What is that? Christ in them the hope of glory. O, my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God. This is sealed in the court of heaven.

"If believers cannot draw their breath in the faith, they came as lost and undone sinners, under a sense of their own vileness and their need of pardon, and praying that the Lord would not chide continually, nor keep his anger still. Many a time poor ones have gone to the Lord's table with a load of guilt, and have come away with a sense of pardon, and then they engage, in the strength of grace, to walk more humbly and watchfully. This is their resolution, however far they may come short.

"Some, again, are seeking some evidence in themselves that they had a right to be there. I am afraid they will not find that, but I would say this to such—How did you come to Christ? Was it not as a lost sinner, without righteousness or strength? Well, it is thus you are to come to the table. I know no difference between coming to Christ and coming to His table but this: that you are to come to Christ first. And if you have cast yourselves on Him, and on His finished work, as your only ground for time and eternity, you are a welcome guest at His table; but if you are a stranger to such exercise, you have no right to be there.

"Formalists go to the Lord's table under some feelings of concern at first, but, by continued coming, the concern they had dies away. The world has a sharp eye on you, communicant, and will say—Such a man was at the Lord's table; see him now worse of drink at the market, or cheating his neighbour. Such are a stumbling block to others. But you, poor souls, that have a desire to remember Christ's death, let not this keep you back; for although there was a carnal devil on

each side of you, you, coming in dependence on His grace, may get communion with the Lord of Glory.”

The following are a few notes, taken by the writer, of an extempore address by David, at a Friday meeting in the Free Church of Orlig, some years ago, the question being—What are the discouragements to which believers are exposed in their course?—the reference being to Numbers xxi. 4—“The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way:”

“This is a typical journey. A people brought out of Egypt—‘All baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.’ We read what it cost to bring them out. Pharaoh would not part with them until judgments were sent upon him—until the death of the first-born procured their deliverance. Consider if we have been brought out of the Egypt of our natural state—passed from death unto life. Every soul must appear before the tribunal. We have precious souls, and time is precious; and a time, such as the present, is precious in which we hear that we have immortal souls, and in what state these souls are. Divine truth tells us this, and conscience echoes the verdict.

“*Discouragements the believer meets with.*—They are innumerable, and arise from many causes; but whatever they be, and from whatever causes they arise, they are not from the Lord, but from themselves. ‘O that they had hearkened to His commandments; then had their peace been as a river.’ But even, notwithstanding that they are the authors of their own misery, He often brings good to them out of their evil, for this is the promise—‘All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *His* purpose,’ Romans viii. 28.

“*What do their discouragements arise from?* From their *own rebellious natures*—often murmuring at the Lord’s dealings, as in the case before us, where the people murmured for want of water, and called the manna ‘light bread.’ And where do you go with your discouragements? To broken cisterns, either trying to grapple with them in your own strength, or seeking by

performing religious duties, to engage the Lord to deliver you. No, no, that will not do ; for when the Spirit teaches it shows all our own efforts and duties to be but shining sin. For our best deeds have hidden in them this fallacy, that we would bribe the Lord to give us substance for them. It is impossible for a fallen sinner to feel himself otherwise than complimenting the Lord by his approaches to Him, instead of coming as a beggar to the throne of grace. It is impossible for him to feel but as if God should give deliverance for his seeking, instead of looking for it only in the right of the Mediator. It is through Emmanuel—through His obedience and sufferings—that alone mercy flows. This is the channel through which every drop must flow to a sinner. Only in the face of His Anointed is God well pleased. ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And every sinner—be he who he may—must come in before God as it were at Christ’s back. Here come with your discouragements ; here go with your troubles, and when the Spirit leads, He brings them here, to Him who is the equal of the Father—the fountain of power and fulness—the head of all gracious influence.

“ They have likewise discouragements daily because of what is *in their own evil hearts*. They learn by sad experience that they have a Judas in their own bosoms. From this corrupt heart springs innumerable evils. *Pride*.—We would be something, and only sovereign free grace can crucify this. *Legality*.—Another bar in our way. We are good Christians, doing good things worthy of imitation. This makes us independent in spirit of the Lord. *Carnality*.—Another evil, making religion a weariness, and causing wandering in heart from the Lord. *Self*.—much discouragement by reason of this, for it eats up all and leads to utter barrenness of soul.

“ Discouragements, too, from the *suggestions of Satan*. O, tempted soul, do not grapple with these in your own strength. Parley not with temptation. Adam did and fell. Satan tries to gain your consent to sin, and if he succeeds, you will succumb.



Go to the Lord with your temptation, whatever it be ; plead in secret before Him for grace to overcome.

“ Another discouragement arises from the *hiding of God's countenance*. A shut Bible—a prayerless heart—an absent God. All the world cannot give them soul-comfort in this case until God return. ‘He hideth His face, and they are troubled.’ The late Mr. Gunn, Watten, speaking from the passage—‘To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet’—remarks ‘that the soul's cry in this state was, Lord speak to me, although Thou shouldst say bitter words, yea, though Thou shouldst give me bitter correction.’ ‘Cast me not away from Thy presence,’ said the Psalmist ; ‘take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.’

“ *Unbelieving fears* also give rise to much discouragement. These keep us from Christ, and make us take the care of our spiritual and temporal concerns over on ourselves. This is stupendous folly. Some poor ones will be taking next year's vexations into this year ; but cast *all* your care upon Him. ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ Some will take to themselves the burden of their spiritual supplies, as if faith, repentance, humility, could be spun out of their own bowels. No, no ; my friends, look to Jesus, who has all treasure of grace to be communicated to His mystical body. He is the fountain of grace. His blood must be applied to the soul to purify its guilt—His light and truth must be shed down on the soul to lead and to guide it. Mr. Cook used to say, ‘Satan does not care how far you go in religion, if only you come short of transacting with the crucified Saviour.’ O, how we love to keep away from Him, although He is more minute in His care for souls than ever was physician in his care for his patients. ‘I the Lord do keep it,’ &c. Isaiah xxvii. 2-3.

“ O ! young people don't keep away from Christ. Satan is deceiving you with sinful pleasures, and he is also doing so in your coming here to the place where Christ's death is shewed forth, and yet despising His truth. You who think lightly of a Communion Sabbath, you fill up the cup of wrath to yourselves

more on that day than in a whole year. But we hope He has some of His own among you, and you will yet read your conduct with pained hearts.

"And you, poor believer, amid your discouragements, remember that grace in the soul is the begun image of God ; it originated from heaven, and is not of this world, therefore all that is not of God tends to your discouragement. And as one in a strange country longs for home, so grace in the soul will long for its home. Keep near to Himself, and let no hindrance, from whatever quarter, keep you from Christ."

We have already referred to David's acquaintance with, and interest in, the history and position of the Church of Scotland. It is now matter of story how, when in 1834 the evangelical party in that Church became a majority in her General Assembly, the Veto Act was passed, modifying patronage. In the agitation and discussions connected with this step David took a lively and intelligent interest. He had long seen and deplored, not only the unwarrantableness of the law of patronage, but also its practical evils. During the ten years' conflict between the evangelical and moderate parties in the Church, and between the evangelical party and the courts of law, he and many like-minded throughout the land were not only deeply interested, but were stirred to make the efforts on behalf of the liberties of Zion a matter of their most prayerful sympathy. And close observation of the progress of the controversy which, beginning with the question of patronage, became developed into that of the spiritual independence of the Church, prepared him and others for the event of the Disruption. He saw the path of duty, and, although he grieved over the separation of the Church from the State, made the sacrifice, believing that the honour of Him who is Head both of Church and State required it. He was specially useful at that time in enlightening the people by holding meetings to explain the nature and position of affairs ; and the consequence was that the parish of Bower, almost to a man, left the Establishment—David at their head. He was after-

wards foremost in the work of providing suitable buildings for the congregation, and kept them together by conducting the Sabbath services until a minister was settled among them. When exhorting the people in their altered circumstances to the grace of Christian liberality, he would say—"You will be no losers by giving to Christ's cause; the Lord will not allow Himself to be in your debt. You, people of the world, that give, He will pay you back in your own coin; and you, child of God, although He may not do so to you, yet you and He will agree about it through eternity."

The controversy that sprang up in the Free Church in regard to the union proposed in 1863 between the non-established churches of Scotland, caused David many an anxious hour, and embittered the closing years of his life. He feared from the first that it would lead to strife within the Free Church, and used to say that his apprehensions as to this were not the result of merely what was thought or said throughout the Church, but arose from this passage of Scripture having been applied to his mind regarding it—"A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse." Jer. iv. 11.

As the negotiations for union went on, he became more and more opposed to it. He believed that the position of the U.P. Church, in regard to the relation between the civil power in a nation and religion and the Church, involved a denial of Christ's supremacy over nations. Of course, that Church disowns such interpretation of her views; but "there is a thread of Atheism," David would say, "running through the Voluntary doctrine that is hidden from themselves." There is no doubt that the influence of his Christian character, and his well-known acquaintance with the history of opinion in the Secession Churches, gave weight to his views on this subject among the adherents of the Free Church in the north, and was thus of appreciable account in arresting the movement.

About six years before his death, David's health began to be

seriously impaired. He seemed to be affected not with any special disease, but rather with general functional weakness. After this, he rarely went from home. The visits and attentions of friends were during this period highly relished by him, and they were gratified and surprised to see that in the obvious decay of bodily strength, his mental powers shewed no decay, but continued in undiminished vigour. This was specially remarkable in the faculty of memory, which so frequently fails in old age. In David's case, it retained its wonted grasp and recollective power to the last. Nor was less observable his growing spirituality, and manifest ripening for a better world. The view of truth that seemed specially to support him latterly, was the infinite value in Jehovah's sight of the Redeemer's atonement, wherein all the perfections of the Godhead were glorified. Like many aged saints, his prayers became more and more marked by their child-like simplicity.

About a week before his departure, signs of that event appeared. "He seemed," say those who were in close attendance on him during his last illness, "to be continually watching and praying, 'afraid,' as himself expressed it, 'lest Satan should get between him and the sweetness and support of the word.'" A day or two before the end came, in the midst of difficult breathing and much weakness, his voice, in prayer, was heard through the house, rehearsing the Lord's goodness to his soul. These words are remembered as then uttered by him, "In November, 1817, Thou didst bring me to the mouth of the pit, and shewedst me that there I deserved to be, but, in Thy redeeming love, Thou saidst to me, 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut.'" He did not, however, escape a final conflict with the great enemy, as was evident from his depression of mind for a time, and from his occasional utterances. "O! what a day I have had—Satan casting up to me all that I ever did;" while in this case, he asked that the 45th Psalm should be read to him; "for," said he, "I used to get a crumb out of that psalm." After it had

been read in both the prose and metre versions, "O," said he, "nothing for me yet. If the dear friends I had in 1819 were yet on the earth, they could let me know the Lord's mind regarding me, as one of them did in that year, when I was lying ill." At length, he gained the victory in this struggle. "I have good news to tell you," he exclaimed to those around him—"I have got over the temptation; never a good word that the Lord spoke to me did he fail in fulfilling. Surely, I am the vilest of the vile, and as a beast before Him, in complaining"—whereupon he repeated the 23rd psalm; and then these passages of Scripture, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us, He will subdue our iniquities, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

In the evening of the 22nd December, David Steven peacefully passed from earth, in the 84th year of his age.

His earthly remains rest in the churchyard of Bower, and in that part of it where he signified he wished to be laid, beside the grave of Sandy Stewart, "for," as we have heard him say, "I believe he will have a glorious resurrection."

Mr. Donald Duff, Stratherrick, writes as follows:—"Although I have before my mind, in thinking of David, a most excellent picture of a truly godly man, yet I feel if I were to apply my brush I would certainly spoil it. I may say, however, that the first time I came in contact with him I felt a wonderful power of attraction about him, and as much at home in his company as if he had been my familiar friend for years. There was also a solemnity in his presence, and a dignity in his manner, which, along with his piercing intellect and soundness of judgment, made me feel as a dwarf beside him, and that I would willingly sit at his feet. We were not long in conversation when he said 'My dear son, let me assure you we must be again and again emptied of ourselves.' He then told me of some of the Lord's

dealings with him, which appeared so scriptural that I thought they might be a kind of commentary on the work of the blessed Spirit in applying salvation. He also told me his exercise of mind in connection with the Disruption, and the passages of Scripture through which he was viewing the state of affairs then. I thought that in him I saw some of the fragments left on the beach that showed how high the tide of true godliness had risen at one time in Caithness ; and, indeed, if the class called the 'men' were of David's stamp, I would defy all the world to say that they were not pillars of the Church."

Dr. Kennedy, Dingwall, whose able and laborious ministry David followed in spirit with prayerful interest, says :—"What a blank his removal has made! I cannot tell you how I feel it when I miss him out of my prayers, and when in thinking over the state of the cause of Christ, I have him no longer to put into the scale in which I usually place the tokens for good when weighing them against the signs of judgment. Many a sweet moment have I spent in spirit in David's cottage. A chill comes over my heart when I visit it now, for death has been there, and his place is empty. But Christ has another mansion filled, another sheaf in his garner, another singer in his choir, another spouse in His palace, another jewel in His crown. Oh, for a heart that grudges not what is gain to both, and for the hope which shall pass into the enjoyment of fellowship with them."

DONALD MILLER, Wick, by trade a shoemaker, was a Christian of singular attainments, yet clothed with humility. Being no stranger to deep spiritual conflicts and to harassing temptations, he was much given to secret prayer, and was not satisfied with his wrestlings in this exercise till through grace he obtained the victory. Walking softly all the days of his life, cautious in unbosoming his spiritual experience, reproving others not readily yet wisely, he was much looked up to as a private Christian ; and in public his words being few, yet weighty, left a salutary

impression. In prayer it was apparent that to the Lord he spoke and not to man. To one who asked him, when the bodily complaint by which he was afflicted began, he replied, "My bodily infirmity and my soul trouble began together, and it is likely they will end together." "This is a very troublesome world, Donald," a neighbour said. "I have nothing to say against the world," was the answer. "The world never hurt me when I did not hurt myself with the world; all its troublesomeness lies at my own door."

One of his most intimate friends was Magnus Bain, farm manager at Noss—a steady, judicious Christian, of whom we may mention, that when on his deathbed, he was overheard praying thus:—"Lord, so empty my heart, as that nothing but Thyself can fill it." To this friend Donald Miller was one day expressing his fears regarding his spiritual prospects, saying, "I am afraid, Magnus, the Lord is about to leave me. I am not getting the spiritual refreshings and enlargings in ordinances that I was wont." "Has your sense of your need of Christ left you, Donald?" "No, I cannot say that." "Then, while that remains, your case is hopeful, and what you are missing in ordinances will go and come like the ebbing and flowing of the tide, in the measure that the Lord sees meet."

Accompanying another friend out of town one evening, Donald, after they had parted, turned aside into a field and knelt down to pray behind a large stone. There he got such intimacy of communion with the Lord, as to be unconscious of the lapse of time. A whole night resolved itself in his feeling into a few minutes, although, when he rose to go home, the larks were singing in the morning light.

During a severe illness he was visited by a professor of religion, who seemed to think believing in Christ an easy matter. He asked Donald whether any pious persons came to see him; and being told that some did, and who they were, he began to reflect on these, saying, they were gloomy people who would not do him much good. "I would not," said Donald,

"give their gloom for your faith. You are the author of your own faith, and will get leave to be the finisher of it, for Christ will not be the finisher of any faith of which He is not the author."

ANDREW RUGG, Keiss, was a fatherly Christian, and one whose spiritual affections were deep and tender. He could scarcely hear or speak of the love of Christ without being melted into tears. His sympathies flowed out to all who bore the image of Christ. He used to give the following account of the way in which his denominational prejudices were broken down—"For a time after I came to the knowledge of the Lord," he would say, "I did not feel inclined to hold intercourse with Christians who did not belong to our own (the Baptist) communion; but one night I dreamt that I saw an angel come down from heaven, at whom I asked, 'Were there any Church of Scotland people in heaven?' 'No,' was the reply. 'Were there any Seceders?' 'No.' 'But certainly there are Baptists?' 'No.' 'Alas! then, where are they with whom I held sweet fellowship on earth?' 'None in heaven,' said the angel, 'are known by such names as you have mentioned, but all those there from earth are sinners saved by one salvation and filled by one Spirit.'"  
"From that day," Andrew would add, "it was the measure of grace that I saw in one that endeared him to me, not his particular denomination."

Two of his acquaintances who lived at same distance once sent word to Andrew that they were coming to visit him. "To visit me!" he said; "what will they find with me—a poor empty sinner?" But as he afterwards told a friend, when he got the message the passage occurred to him regarding the man of whom the Lord spake in the parable as going out at midnight to seek three loaves for a friend who had come to him in his journey, and he began to think what were the three loaves. Into the mystery of the electing love of the Father, the redeeming love of the Son, and the sanctifying love of the Holy Ghost,



his soul was so led that for a fortnight he had a feast of communion with the Lord on these "three loaves."

When on his deathbed he had great bodily pain. Mr. A. Stephen often visited him, and saying to him one day "You are in great pain, Andrew," he replied, "Yes; but I know not which is greatest—my bodily pain or my soul consolation."

DONALD SUTHERLAND, Saddler, Thurso, was, especially at the outset of his Christian course, no stranger to spiritual depths and perplexities; but he came out of the slough of despond on the side farthest from the city of destruction. He was well known as a devoted follower of Christ. He was careful to keep his garments unspotted, and wherever he went his testimony for the truth went with him. Whatever value denominational differences had in his eyes (he was a Cameronian), they were not allowed to be a wall of separation between him and those in whom he saw the image of Christ. He had a large heart for the interests of Christ's kingdom—earnestly desiring the downfall of the "man of sin," and whatever opposed that kingdom. One of his friends used to say, "Many a bomb Donald has thrown into Rome that will explode yet."

Many of the intimations he had of the Lord's mind in regard to individuals, and also in regard to events in Providence, are as well vouched for as they are remarkable. A pious man, John Doull, Pulteneytown, who was the leader in a fellowship prayer meeting and a bond of union among those who feared the Lord in that place, was laid aside by sickness. Donald Sutherland arrived at John Doull's house from Thurso during this time, and said that he had this Scripture from the Lord regarding him, "Prepare your victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan" (Josh. i. 11.), and during the next three days Donald retired to a closet, and rarely showed himself. During this time John seemed to be getting better, but towards the close of the third day he showed symptoms of relapse, and then, too, Donald appeared among the brethren

assembled around the sick bed. They asked him to engage in prayer. "No," he replied, "we will sing him over Jordan in the 45th Psalm." While they were thus occupied John departed this life.

During a prayer meeting in Pulteneytown Free Church, at a communion season, Donald was observed to rise and go out, and when the meeting broke up none of his friends could ascertain how he had disposed of himself. A few hours afterwards, a young woman recognising him going along one of the streets of Thurso, ran up to him, saying, eagerly, "Oh, Donald, I am so glad to see you; we were longing much for your coming home, for my mother has been taken very ill." "I know that," he replied, "and that is the reason why I am here." The woman died shortly after Donald's interview with her. When near his own end he was overheard saying, "Hold on, faith and patience—hold on, till we see what will come."

GEORGE MACKAY, Golticlay, was an eminently godly person. He had a quaint metaphorical way of giving expression to his thoughts, but, as the late Mr. Gunn, Watten, said, "George's parables were full of meaning." The present Mr. Gunn remembers, when a boy, a little man advanced in life gliding into the room in the manse of Watten, when family worship was going on, and seating himself near the door. No one knew who he was. But the minister, who seemed to see something about the stranger that warranted it, asked him to engage in prayer. He instantly did so, and in a striking manner, one petition being that the Lord would bind the devil and make his chain short.

Some of the Newtown Secession congregation, of which George was an elder, were much taken with a young preacher who officiated for a time, and began to express their admiration to George. "Ay, ay," he replied, "powder without shot." This coming to the preacher's ears, he challenged George on account of it, and demanded that he should drop his parables,

and say plainly what fault he found with his doctrine. "I have to say," said George, "that you can link passages of Scripture together very well, but that not a drop of grace ever went through your soul. Is *that* plain?" It is believed that this person was so affected by George's faithful dealing that he gave up the work of the ministry.

George used to say, "If this generation go to heaven, they will go by an easier road than those that went before them. They have good roads to travel to the public ordinances, and bridges over the rivers instead of uncertain fords, and good beds and full tables, none of which we had. But though our outward comforts were less, our clothes being often wet on our backs, and our feet nearly frozen in our shoes, yet under the lively preaching of the gospel our hearts would be so warmed that we would not feel the cold of our bodies."

A friend who was a little behind him as he was going along one of the streets of Thurso, overheard him saying as he came near the Secession meeting house, which had lately got a new roof, "Ay, ay, you have got on your new coat. We saw better days with you when you had on your old coat, but famine is in your face now."

Several of his cattle had died in quick succession. After taking off the skin of the last that had died, George, speaking to his Maker, said, "Lord, if it be Thy will, I am ready to flay the last one of all Thou hast given me." He used to say afterwards, "When I was thus enabled to give up all, the Lord sowed the things of the world about my feet in greater abundance than before."

Shortly before his death he made a round of all his Christian friends, telling them he should soon be taken "home." They said to him, "George, we have seen you in worse health than now." "Yes," he replied, "but He has been saying to me, 'As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee;' and I know this is the last rebuke I shall get." He died shortly afterwards.

GEORGE MACKAY, Rowens, in the parish of Watten, was a Christian "father" in his day. Keenly alive to the necessity of the operation of the Holy Spirit on the human heart, he was very sensitive to due prominence being given to the doctrine of it in the preaching of the Word. To friends on the road to religious ordinances (which he most sedulously attended, often at great inconvenience, on account of the remoteness of his dwelling and his bodily infirmities), he remarked, "We soon sin away what the Lord communicates out of His fulness, and then we may as easily put our hand on the sun in the firmament as bring ourselves back to that frame till the Lord return."

He was induced to be present at the wedding of a son of a godly woman in his neighbourhood. One of the company, who gloried in getting matter of reproach against professors of religion, tried hard to induce George to drink much by giving many toasts. George, however, escaped the snare. On his way home these words of Scripture came forcibly to his mind, "I will turn their dancing into mourning." Shortly afterwards a member of that family suddenly died.

In the winter of 1835 he had a severe illness, which lasted three months. To one who visited him afterwards he said, "During twelve months before my sickness began these words were continually sounding in my ears, 'I will correct thee in measure, and not leave thee altogether unpunished.' In the beginning of winter I began at length to reflect on what was I, that the Lord should take such notice of me, an unworthy sinner, and I melted down in self-abasement. Then my bodily trouble began, and though it was severe, I was sustained in a comfortable sense of my interest in Christ, in spite of Satan's temptations and my own unbelief. When spring came round I got stronger. But on going out of the house one day on my staff to take a look at the fields, I felt the world take such a hold of me that I hurried in again, and I have not yet recovered what I lost that day."

COLIN CAMPBELL, Halkirk, was eminent for personal godliness as well as for efficiency in the discharge of his office of catechist. To one who asked his opinion of the state of religion at that time, he said, "I don't see that the Lord is doing much at present, but on one occasion in my youth I saw the people under the preaching of the Word in the churchyard of Thurso melted into tears. I do not say all these were savingly wrought upon, but there was a remnant." "But, Colin," replied the other, "the Lord is the same and the Bible is the same." "True," said Colin, "and if I had the same music as then, though I am now old and stiff, I would dance yet."

NEIL MACPHERSON was catechist of another district of Halkirk, and not less distinguished. Much of the majesty of grace appeared in his bearing and countenance. His labours were owned of the Lord to the ingathering of souls, and to the refreshment of those already gathered. The parish of Halkirk, indeed, for more than half a century before the latter half of the ministry of the late Mr. Munro, was like the garden of the Lord, in the number of lively and gifted witnesses of the truth to be found there, and who were unable to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

DONALD MURRAY, Olgrinmore, catechist of a district of Halkirk, was one who obtained much of mind of the Lord in answer to prayer. His addresses in the Gaelic fellowship meetings were distinguished for their savour and humility.

JOHN SUTHERLAND, Banniskirk, was a self-denied man, who lived in close communion with the Lord. His customary place of resort for secret prayer was a small barn near his dwelling. With almost his last breath he was overheard saying, no doubt in reference to what spiritual blessing he had got there, "O blessed barn."

ROBERT SUTHERLAND—not the least among the "fathers" of his day—was one who, from deep personal experience, could speak a word in season to cases of conscience. When in some trouble, the Scripture expression, "Jehovah Rophi," was occurring to his mind. He applied to Rev. Mr. Robison, then in the Achreny mission (he himself had never learnt to read), for the explanation of it. Mr. R. used humorously to say, "Oh, Robert is learning Hebrew now!" He sent a message to a friend still living to come and see him without delay, as otherwise it would be too late, and with the message this Scripture, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." "I was struck," says that friend, "with the suitability of the passage to my state of mind at the time, being engrossed with a worldly speculation."

DONALD GUNN, mason, Calder—a godly and very humble man. John Tait said of him, "I never saw the bagpipe of *self* under his arm, and I would rather meet him at the plough than a talkative professor at the Bible."

DONALD CALDER, Brawl—long an elder with Mr. Munro, and one who, as required of an elder, ruled well his own house—was of an amiable disposition, and given to hospitality, his house being a place of resort to those attending sacramental occasions at Halkirk.

\* ALEXANDER BUDGE, farmer in Brabster, Bower, was a godly man, humble and self-denied, and very judicious in his words and actings. He was a man of much prayer, and his wise counsels in matters spiritual and temporal were always valued by his acquaintances.

The Lord began to train him in youth, and he had early

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\* This and the following notices down to that of Adam Bain are given as supplied by Mr. David Steven.

experience of the fleeting and unstable nature of earthly things, which was sanctified to him by his being led to carry his troubles before the Lord.

On the occasion of some of his family being removed by death, it was said to him—"Yours is a trying case." He replied—"This is not all yet. I got a view in my youth of what was before me of trouble; and I know there is to be more yet." And so there was—much affliction and death in his family after this.

Shortly before the Disruption he moved from Bower to the parish of Reay, where he died, deeply regretted by all who had the favour of his fellowship.

THOMAS ANDREW, farmer in Clayock, was one of the "fathers" of the Secession Church—a man of much godly sincerity. I served him one season, and cannot forget how he dealt with his servants. If he heard any light or unbecoming words among them, his countenance instantly altered, but he said nothing till he got the person or persons alone, and then with what reverence he would point out to them the infinite majesty of God, to whom they were accountable, and the infinite evil of sin and its awful consequences. He took great pains with his children and servants, making them repeat a portion of God's word, and of the Shorter Catechism, at the evening family worship. Neither did he omit this exercise every forenoon, at breakfast time, should it be the busiest day in harvest. I remember, too, that we would overhear him in secret prayer during the night. Behold true greatness in a man who had no outward show: his inward garment was of "broidered work."

WILLIAM DURRAN, Stemster, was an eminently pious man, and faithful in reproving sin, but in such a Christian spirit that it did not give offence, but left a witness in the consciences of the most ungodly. In life and conversation, and in all transac-

tions with his fellow-men, he evidenced that he had ever before him the fear of God.

When his family came to the years of understanding, he took them, one by one, and after solemn prayer, told them the vows he had taken for them in baptism, explained to them the meaning of their being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and admonished them to walk accordingly. Let this be an example to careless parents.

He and his neighbour, Alexander Waters, held a prayer meeting in the district for many years. The latter also conducted a Sabbath school. Their removal by death made a sad blank, for they were the salt of the place in their day.

PETER FINLAYSON, Smerral, was not a man of many words, and had some difficulty in expressing himself, but what he did say showed that he had in him "the root of the matter," and that his delight was in meditation on spiritual things. When alone in the fields, he was generally singing psalms. He was for a long time in straitened circumstances, but went off the stage "owing no man anything." His memory is savoury to his family and friends.

JOHN BAIN, Reaster, was a witness for Christ in a place where there was nothing around him but what led to the ways of sin and death. He was a man that worked and prayed. His love and care for the well-being of young enquirers was evident in his fatherly instructions and admonitions. In my younger days, when I began to be concerned about my soul's interests, I happened to be in his neighbourhood, and remained with him all night. But we slept none, for after I made known to him my state of mind, we had much profitable conversation; and sweetly did he enlarge on the priestly office of Christ, so that I had reason to regard him as a father in the Church.

Before his death, being so much oppressed with asthma, that he said, "I was afraid I would have been choked last night,"



one who was present said, "I thought you would not have been afraid to die." He replied, "I am not afraid of death in the way you mean; but do you not know that nature has an aversion to its own dissolution?"

MAGNUS BAIN, Wick, was a man of sound judgment and of rich experience, which made him very useful to others in their Christian course. He was a member of the Established Church, but when the Messrs. Haldane visited the county he felt so revived by their preaching that he took an active part in assisting those who became their followers to have chapels erected in Wick and Thurso. When these congregations were first formed, they observed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the same way as the Established Church, with the four days annexed. But they began to think that this was taking too much time, and that masters would grudge it to their servants, and so they called a meeting to consider whether it would not be better to observe the Sacrament each Sabbath-day, and have no week-day service. Their friend, Magnus Bain, was present, and asking his opinion, he said—"As long as the children of Israel followed the Lord closely, although all their males went up to Jerusalem so many times a year, yet the enemy was not allowed to invade the land while only the women and children were at home; but when they departed from the Lord, all their armies could not keep the enemy at a distance."

When one would meet him casually and say, "What's doing now, Magnus?" he would answer, "Sinning."

When on his death-bed, a friend came into the room unperceived, and heard him in secret prayer, thus—"Lord, wilt Thou not make such a hole in my heart as that nothing but Thyself can fill it?"

JAMES COGHILL, merchant, Wick, was an elder of the Secession Church there, and one who knew what religion was in its life and power. He had many difficulties in his lot,

among others that of bringing up his family from an early age, his wife having died when they were very young; and it was instructive to see how in small domestic matters his faith in the great Over-ruler of all was exercised for his support and comfort.

He told me he had a heavy domestic care pressing him at one time, and hearing that the Sacrament was to be dispensed, he thought it was out of the question his acting in his office then. "But," said he, "my office in His church was of more weight to me than anything, and casting my care upon Him, I engaged in His service, and if ever I got a feast to the full, it was at that time."

One day that I was complaining to him of a cross I was likely to meet with, he said, "Fy, fy, man; it's ill on your part or mine to complain on the Lord."

Some time before his death a bad fever broke out in the town, and many young persons were cut off. He used to say, "I am afraid it is a special judgment when the young—the hope of the church—are taken away before being allowed to witness for Christ." A relative of my own was seized, and was unconscious, not knowing her own husband. James Coghill came across to the house about 4 o'clock in the morning and said to her, "Do you know me?" She made no reply. He then prayed, after which she looked up, and he said, "I came to tell you that you have as good a right to mercy as the Apostle Paul, and on the same ground—that you are a sinner." He then conversed with her, and as long as he did so, she answered distinctly. When leaving, he said, "The enemy was tempting me to believe that myself and others would not, before leaving the world, be allowed to avouch their interest in Christ or to leave a recommendation of Him behind them, but he will, after all, be disappointed."

DONALD MACKAY, Wathegar, was a godly "father," who feared the Lord, and eschewed evil. His house was often a warm home to strangers, his hospitality being shared by many,

especially those of the household of faith. In this respect, he was much missed when taken to his rest.

In divine things he had a refined judgment, and did not relish doctrine that was not in strict analogy with Scripture. His friend, George Mackay, Rowens, resembled him in this. A minister in their neighbourhood had preached from the text, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." The late Mr. Gunn asked George his opinion of the sermon. He replied—"What was said was not wrong, but what was omitted spoilt all that was said, for although I should hear that the Father gave a people to Christ to be ransomed by Him, and that Christ finished the work of their redemption on the cross, yet, if I knew no more I might perish, for want of knowing that redemption must be applied to my soul by the Holy Ghost."

WILLIAM MACKAY, Roster, was a wise and judicious Christian, and very exemplary in his life. He did not lay on others burdens he himself did not touch. So jealous was he for the sanctity of the Sabbath, that if he thought any of his neighbours slept too long on the morning of that day, he would go and put them up. On Saturday evening he was in the habit of breaking all the peats required for next day's use, that the stillness of the Sabbath might not be disturbed.

It gave him much concern to see professors of religion mingling spiritual and temporal things; and he was particularly grieved on one occasion at seeing a shoemaker, who had been at a communion in a neighbouring town, carrying home a bundle of leather on his back on the Monday evening.

ALEXANDER MOWAT, weaver in Lynegar, Watten, was a very loving man, of more deeds than words—very active in his office as an elder—useful to Mr. Gunn in secular matters, and in suppressing Sabbath desecration through the proclamations of worldly business at the church or near it. He was so affected at Mr. Gunn's death, that he lived only about half a year after him.

ALEXANDER ALEXANDER (ELSHERSON), Bridge-end, Watten, was a lively Christian, faithful in particular to the young. He was one of the fruits of the late Mr. Gunn's ministry, and brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd about the year 1814. During all his after life, and also on his death-bed, he expressed firm faith, and experienced much enjoyment of the Lord's presence. He died shortly before the Disruption.

ALEXANDER ANDREW, Sibster, Halkirk, was a man of gifts as well as grace, a bold champion for Christ's cause, and very helpful to those who were under the temptations of Satan. A friend meeting him one day, said—"I have been much distressed of late by sleep coming upon me under the preaching of the word." "Has this been a habit with you?" enquired Sandy. "No; I was never troubled with it before, even if I had been awake two successive nights with sick people." "Were you wont to be angry with others when you saw them sleeping under the means of grace?" "Indeed, yes; so much so, that I used to make my wife, who was liable to sleep at family worship, stand on her feet during the exercise." "Well, man, it has come on yourself now, and take yourself out of it if you can." Some time afterwards the same man came to Sandy and said, "I was in a sad state about what I told you of before; but one day when bemoaning the matter, the Scripture came into my mind regarding King David's being told to choose one of three kinds of judgment for the sin of numbering the people; and then I said, 'Lord, I cannot choose, but will take what Thou art pleased to send.' From that day the spirit of sleep left me; but I got a spirit of covetousness to fight against. But a covetous devil is not so dangerous as a sleepy devil, for I believe that sleep, under the means of grace, is as sure a temptation of Satan as the grossest sin, for how can one who is laid asleep get good from the word?"

DONALD STEWART, teacher, Thurso, was a humble and deeply exercised father. Having himself gone through the

wilderness, he could sympathise with and wisely counsel those exercised under soul difficulties. When taken home in old age his removal made a great blank.

EDWARD MACKAY, Thurso, came to Caithness in the year 1802, and was appointed shortly afterwards minister of the Independent Church, Thurso, in which he laboured with much acceptance for some years, until, adopting Baptist views, he joined that denomination.

Having in his youth learned the business of a baker, he supported himself by that trade, at the same time preaching occasionally through the county. He was a godly man, and had experience in his own soul of the truths he declared. One day preaching at Bower, he said in reference to believers getting refreshment in promises brought home to them by the Holy Spirit, that they would again have recourse to these, thinking to find in them what they found before, but often were disappointed. The promise was then to their experience, like a house taken down, but the believer could say of it—"I had a good night's quarters in that house once."

The late Mr. Gunn asked him to preach in Watten, but he said "No; the parish of Watten has the gospel. I must go where it is not."

JOHN MACKINTOSH, Farr, was deeply imbued with the love of Christ and of His people. He was catechist of various districts in Sutherland and Caithness. While catechising at one time in Dunbeath, he was brought so low by sickness, that he himself and his friends around him considered him dying. George Mackay, Gulticlay, hearing of this, went on horseback to see him. On entering the house, George found a number of pious persons assembled. Speaking to John, he said—"Ay, ay, lad; you think you are to die just now; but the tree is not out of the wood yet that will make your coffin. Before you die, a generation will rise up that will care little about you or

your doctrine, and then you will be taken home to your rest. Rise out of that bed, and come along with me." To the persons near, he said—"Get his clothes." The landlady of the house remonstrated at what she called such a cruel proceeding, as to order a dying man to rise. But George insisted, saying, "No, no ; he is not dying." John used to say that every time George ordered him to rise, he felt new strength enter his frame. He rose and dressed. George put him on his own horse, and would not allow any of the friends to accompany them. As they were going through the hills, George said, "Come, John, sing us one of Donald Mathieson's pious songs." This he did, and thus, and with godly converse, they journeyed to George's home in Latheron.

The Donald Mathieson alluded to was known as an excellent Gaelic poet, only inferior to Dugald Buchanan. He had a son Samuel, whom I knew—a worthy man—and a peacemaker in the Church. When his friends met him, they would, in a way of joke, say, "Have you still the needle and thread, Samuel, for sewing up rents?"

Worthy George Mackay's quaint manner appeared on another occasion. He had been at the Monday service in the Secession Church at Thurso at a communion time. The preacher, a man from the south, said in the course of his sermon, "My friends, there are some who believe that the world will be very different in the days of the Millenium from what it is now. The saints will then all have large farms, and people will be very comfortable." George, drawing his plaid tightly around him, and moving out, said loud enough to be heard, "Ay, ay, yersel' an' ——— (one whom he thought loved pre-eminence) will get a farm a-piece then, but I pity them that will be your next neebours."

ADAM BAIN, Farr, was a man eminently pious, highly esteemed by his brethren, of singularly godly life, and who bore the stamp of sincerity even in his countenance. When

speaking in public on one occasion, he said, "One ounce of sincerity is better than a pound of knowledge."

DAVID BUDGE was a prominent figure among the men of his day. A native of Halkirk, he removed in his youth to Barrack Hill, in the parish of Dunnet, where he occupied a croft in which he continued till his death.

He was early the subject of religious impressions. Evangelical preaching was then rare in Caithness, and for some years David used to go every Sabbath to Thurso, to the ministry of Rev. Mr. Macintosh. But when on his way there one Sabbath morning, hearing that Mr. Macintosh was from home, he turned his steps towards Watten to hear the late Mr. Gunn, of whom a good report was abroad. He never left Mr. Gunn's ministry as long as it lasted, and his attachment to it was of the most fervent kind. Speaking sometimes to friends of that first hearing of Mr. Gunn, he would say—"Mr. Gunn's text that day was those words of Paul, 'Whose I am, and whom I serve,' and he showed me this, that *I was no servant.*" Every Sabbath morning, winter and summer, David might be seen on the road to Watten, which was about fifteen miles distant, and when Mr. Gunn died he used to say that such was his poignant sorrow, that something (physically) went out of his heart and never returned.

But it was regarded as a remarkable Providence, that at the Disruption, the new Free Church was erected quite close to David's dwelling, and such a minister settled there—Rev. David Campbell—as satisfied him, so that the privileges he travelled so far in his youth to enjoy, were now brought to his door.

David was a man of superior mental power, very grave in his deportment, impressing those who came in contact with him as having a mind freighted with deep views of unseen realities. Novelties in worship or opinions that seemed to trench on orthodox doctrine were his abhorrence. His life was a useful

one. For some years he was catechist of the parish of Canisbay and acceptably conducted the Sabbath services there during a ministerial vacancy. His presence was always gladly hailed by the Lord's people at sacramental gatherings, and his addresses on these occasions were remarkable for solemnity and faithfulness. In prayer he excelled. His delight was great in extending hospitality to those who came yearly to the Communion in his own parish, and often beds were extemporized in every available corner in the dwelling and outhouses—a hospitality still exercised by his respectable family. Full of age and of respect he departed this life in the year 1874, and was followed shortly after by his brother John Budge—long an office-bearer of the Free Church, Thurso, and whose memory is held in esteem in that town.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, was the son of Hugh Campbell, Strathy, whom we have already noticed. In early life he showed an aptitude for learning, and became a teacher in his native district. Not a few in that part of the country who afterwards distinguished themselves were his pupils. One of these—the late Rev. John Mackay, used sometimes when he met his old teacher, humourously to refer to the connection between them and say that he had not yet mastered the precept inculcated on him at school—“*Poenitet me peccati.*” In course of time Mr. Campbell was appointed to the school of Melness in the parish of Tongue, where he continued till the Disruption.

This district was at that time adorned by the presence of that remarkable woman Mrs. McKay, Shegra, of whom a pretty full notice is given in Dr. Kennedy's “Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire,” and with her Mr. Campbell became intimately acquainted, and her character, for which he entertained the deepest admiration, made a lasting impression on his mind. It was no small privilege to hear him recite in after years anecdotes of her and of the many eminent Highland worthies in whose society he delighted.



While in Melness an incident occurred which much affected his future life. His dwelling was picturesquely situated on the shore of one of the creeks of the Kyle of Tongue. One stormy evening, at a time when he was ill with a cold, and in bed in a state of profuse perspiration, he heard the sounds of cries proceeding from a vessel that had stranded just below his dwelling. He knew what these meant, and regardless of his own condition, got up, and rushed half dressed to the shore, when he plunged into the sea and gave a helping hand to the rescue of the struggling sailors. It may be conceived what a shock this gave to his constitution. He was a man of great physical strength and stature, and this under Providence bore him through the trying ordeal, but the seeds of disease then took root which rendered his future one life of constant conflict with impaired health.

Having joined the Free Church at the Disruption he was ejected from his school, but the Church gladly availed herself of the services of so able a layman, and appointed him one of its catechists. He was stationed in the Western Isles, and it was interesting to listen to his descriptions of the social and religious condition of these islands at that period, and the privations and hardships he had to undergo, both in respect to what was necessary for his own and his family's livelihood, and for carrying on the duties of his office.

These hardships told further on his health, so he had to remove from that toilsome sphere, and went to Glasgow, where he conducted religious services for some years among his Gaelic speaking countrymen. Ultimately finding himself unable for continuous duty, he retired in the year 1860 to the north, and took up his residence in the village of Halkirk. For some years he did the work of a catechist, both in that parish and in Strathy. He was an admirable catechist, being thoroughly grounded in the doctrines of religion, deeply exercised himself under their power, and practised in the art of communicating instruction to others. In his latter years, when unable for

active employment, he took a wide and prayerful interest in all that pertained to the cause of Christ, and was much concerned in the recent contendings of the Church as to the integrity and authority of the Word of God. There were a few in his neighbourhood of kindred spirit in these matters, in whose society he had sympathy and satisfaction, of whom we may mention the late William Murray, and the brothers Sandy and William Elder. As indicating the interest taken by these fathers in the public witnessing for the truth, Dr. Kennedy has told us that on one occasion when wavering in his mind about taking a prominent part in a controversy that had arisen in the church, he received a note in the following words:—"To Dr. Kennedy. 'Curse ye, Meroz, saith the Lord, yea, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' Judges v. 22. Alexander Elder, Caithness." That note decided Dr. Kennedy's resolution.

In private life Mr. Campbell was "given to hospitality," and was a judicious and faithful friend. Altogether, he was an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity. Departing this life in September, 1881, his remains await in Halkirk churchyard the "resurrection of the just."

JAMES MACADIE, a native of Watten, was a well-known worthy, who long and faithfully upheld the cause of Christ; a most loveable character and a very Nathaniel for Christian simplicity and guilelessness.

To few Caithness people James will need an introduction, for his name was a household word over all the county. At sacramental gatherings he was a prominent figure, and in his own parish of Watten where he was leading elder both before and after the Disruption, he abounded in Christian labours.

The peculiarity that specially marked him was engrossment of mind in Divine things. If addressed on any worldly topic, he seemed to have to turn aside from his train of thought to attend to what was said, but if addressed on what belonged

to spiritual life, or to the church, he was at once attention and vigour. Becoming the subject of religious impressions in early life he used afterwards to tell that when a child of six years, he would on the road to church try to put his feet in the steps of those whom he knew to be the Lord's people.

His love to the truth could not be hid. If he entered a house as a visitor, he engaged the attention of the young as much as of grown people by his winning manner and exhortations. "Seek the Lord," he would say, "Seek Him early—He will do all for you, will keep you from evil, will take away your sin, will make you like Himself, will rebuke the tempter;" and the assured smile that passed over his face as he spoke, showed his *felt* realization of what he said.

James' prayers in private as well as in public were usually audible. The following uttered by him as he retired to rest in the writer's dwelling was overheard by one of the family, "Oh! Lord, Thy goodness to me this day! Oh! Thine everlasting love that looked on sinners! Now, Lord, keep me throughout the night, clothe me in Thine own righteousness, dwell in me by Thine own spirit, cleanse me from my sin (oh! the fountain of iniquity in my heart.) Preserve this house and family, and be pleased to take charge of my concerns at home—wife, children, house, and cattle; I cannot be in my duty to them, but Thou art everywhere and Thou art gracious. And oh! be near Thy church and family throughout the world. Glory to Thy name that ever Thou took to Thyself a family out of the lost race of Adam! And to the Three in One, Father, Son, and Spirit, be praise for ever. Amen."

In public worship James was as living an epistle as in private. When Dr. Kennedy, or any minister whom he highly esteemed, went on a little way in the sermon, James would sometimes unconsciously rise to his feet, and as the preacher increasingly rivetted his attention, he would gradually become thoroughly absorbed, his moving lips indicating his prayerfulness of spirit and responsiveness of mind, and when some specially precious

statement, or impressive personal appeal was made, James would cast a glance over the congregation as if to evoke from others a sense of satisfaction such as he himself enjoyed.

Another marked feature of his piety was the strict watch he kept over his heart. One instance of this may be given. He had addressed one evening with unusual liberty the writer's weekly prayer meeting, and was behind in reaching the manse after the service. "What became of you, James?" it was asked when he appeared. "Oh, my dear, I had such a battle with him on the road." "With whom?" "Oh, with the enemy—did he not come to me whispering 'You got on well to-night.'" "And what did you say to that?" "Well, at length I got the victory in these words—'When ye have done all ye are but unprofitable servants.'"

When feeling his end approaching he suddenly got up from the bed he usually occupied and walked on his staff to an adjoining room, saying to his family that it would be more seemly his remains should lie in that room. A few days thereafter he said, "You will have no more trouble with me beyond this night," and before another day had dawned he had entered his eternal rest.

THE name of WILLIAM SINCLAIR, Wick, although of a younger generation than any of those already mentioned, the writer feels constrained to introduce not only an account of intimate acquaintance with him, but also because of the place he early and justly obtained among these worthies.

The following is the substance of his first religious experiences as taken from a memorandum of his own:—"So far as I remember I had chidings of conscience, and fears of punishment during my youthful years, and was often stirred by alarming dreams about judgment and eternity, and by hearing awakening sermons. But these were not sufficient to restrain my love of sin. One Sabbath-day while occupied about something against the strivings of my conscience, these words were suddenly flashed

through my mind with an overwhelming force, 'Neither hath the Lord chosen this,' which I took to mean that the Lord had a chosen people but that I was none of them. Fears now began to overtake me of being left to be a reprobate, and justly so, for I had been despising and trifling with the means of recovery. Impressions of the Sovereignty of Jehovah in choosing whom He would, were borne in upon me while the words 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' pressed me so heavily, that I felt I must be forever debarred from the Lord's favour. But what shall I say? One Sabbath afternoon when prostrate before God, helplessly and hopelessly confessing that I had destroyed myself, the words, 'He made intercession for the transgressors,' and 'Him the Father heareth always,' came in on my mind like life from the dead, and gave me room to hope. I then got a view of Him who was 'able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him,' and was filled with wonder and adoration at the grace of God in revealing His Son, Christ Jesus, to my soul. After this the word of God and secret prayer were my desire and delight. I was also desirous that my former companions should know the blessed reception the greatest rebel will receive from a sin-pardoning God. But I found it was not ignorance of the gospel was their loss, but want of a heart for it, which in them as in myself, I was powerless to remove. I then attached myself to the people of God, resolving that the Lord's people should be my people, &c."

And at this time there were in Wick a goodly band of God-fearing men, of whom we may mention the names of Daniel Loutit, George Dunoon, Donald Dunbar, Donald George, William Gow, James Loutit, ex-provost of Wick, and others.

That Mr. Sinclair had undergone a saving change, was soon abundantly evidenced by his consistent Christian life. He was "a lover of good men given to hospitality," the followers of Christ ever finding a warm welcome in his dwelling. He had an open hand to the calls of the poor, and was ever ready to

relieve such of them as were of the household of faith. Being endowed with much mental ability he was useful in the eldership of the church in holding forth the Word of Life in season and out of season. His daily conversation was in the fear of the Lord, he was diligent in visiting the sick, and for many years he conducted a prayer meeting on Sabbath evenings, when many found spiritual refreshment. At Communion gatherings he took part in the fellowship meetings, and was regarded as a lively and unctuous speaker. On one such occasion at Odrig, after a number of worthy men had spoken in connection with the Scripture, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick." Mr. Sinclair, on being called, said, "but is there anyone here to-day saying 'my sickness has gone on unto death,' spiritual death has overspread the faculties of my soul—is there a physician for the dead? Yes, friends, there *is* balm in Gilead, there *is* a physician there even for the dead! 'I am, the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on the Son, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Believest thou this?"

Mr. Sinclair belonged to a family many of whom were witnesses for the truth in their generation, and a few of whom still remain. The following letter to his widow from the late Dr. Kennedy shows the esteem in which he was held by that eminent minister:—

*March 31, 1884.*

"MY DEAR MRS. SINCLAIR,—And so it has pleased the Lord to take your husband from you, and to cause you to feel the loneliness and the sorrow of widowhood. And He intended you to feel this, not because He wished you to have pain without profit, but because He desired that you should have profit through pain. There is much pain in the world without profit, but there is no profit without pain. He who gave you the pain did not afflict willingly, but 'wisdom to profit by it' He giveth liberally. I cannot enter fully into your feelings. A widowed

wife has a sorrow all her own. But I feel keenly your dear husband's death, and his removal has caused a blank which I do not expect to be filled. To me there is an added wasteness in the desolation within the visible Church, but what I ought still more to deplore is the removal of a faithful witness from the cause of Christ in our day. When I think of his rare gifts, and his love to the Lord's people, of his power of utterance, and of his faithfulness in defending the truth in a day of declension, I feel as if a cold wave brought a chill over all my spirit when I realise that he is gone. Dear Mrs. S——, remember that when Christ says, 'I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am,' it would be ill on our part to grudge to Him what He claims. And what is Christ's due is His people's gain, and love to them should combine with love to Christ in moving us to say, 'Thy will be done.' Yield up even your husband without grudging, for when He does not ask us to part with Himself, we can never lose by all He takes from us. I have been seeking to cast you on the love of the divine Husband, between whom and His spouse death can never come in, and who can support, and heal, and comfort you till your wilderness journey is over.—Yours in sympathy."

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ALTHOUGH this volume professes by its title to treat only of "Ministers and Men," yet, at the risk of being charged with a solecism, and as in Christ Jesus "there is neither male nor female," we must not overlook noticing a few of the mothers in Israel—women who, although their sex prevented public exercise of their gifts and graces, possessed these in remarkable degree, and were witnesses for Christ and useful to his church.

CATHERINE ROSS, Reisgill, was perhaps the greatest Christian

in the day and district in which she lived. The secret of the Lord was with her, and the intimacy of communion into which she was admitted was manifested by her attainments in the Divine life, and also by the remarkable answers to prayer which she obtained on behalf of herself and others. Mr. David Steven and others have told us many instances of her usefulness to private Christians, which it would be out of place here to record. She and Isobel Grant, and Isobel Polson, were women whom Ministers and "Men" used to speak of as "helpful to them in the gospel."

CATHERINE TAIT, wife of James Budge, farmer, Quarry-crook, Halkirk—himself an eminently pious man—was another of the foremost worthies of the far north. She was deeply experienced in the life of godliness, and a wise and ready counsellor of all who were in spiritual concern or perplexity. Her heart and house were open to the Lord's people.

James Macadie tells that the first time he saw her, George Brotchie had brought him to her house. "Who is this?" she said to George. "Is that all you know, woman," replied George in his characteristic way; "this is the pillar of the church of Watten." "Then I hope the roof may soon fall on his head," was her remark. After this, James says, she and George began a most interesting conversation on the beginning and progress of the Divine life, comparing the believer to a child in a family nursed and cared for, but by and bye sent out to the herding, with a dry *piece* in his pocket.

She and Anne Sutherland, Banniskirk, and Margaret Douglas, Banniskirk, and Margaret Sutherland, Brawlbin, were a bond of union among their brethren, and exemplary in their life and conversation to all with whom they came in contact.

MARSHALL DOUGLAS, Forsie, Reay, and her husband, George Macdonald, lived together as heirs of the grace of life. They had such mutual respect that they would contend as to



which of the two should engage in prayer at family worship. When both were unwell at one time, they were overheard in the following dialogue :—"Would, George," said the godly woman, "I were partaker of such grace as you." "Oh, woman," he replied, "I am afraid of myself, but I wish I were like you." "George," she returned, "if my soul were in your soul's stead, I would not care if I died to-night, and they buried me in the nearest pool."

Marshall's love of the brethren has not often been surpassed. Some manifestations of it may appear to border on weakness to those who know not the depth of principle from which these sprang. A Christian friend, on leaving her dwelling, had to cross the river near it. Marshall insisted on carrying the other across, but her proposal would not be listened to. "Then I will stand in the water till you are over," was her next thought, which she accordingly acted on.

One for whom she had much regard sat down on a stone near her house one summer day, instead of going inside. The stone immediately became sacred in Marshall's eyes, and she gave it a place inside the house.

Her husband was, as we have stated, extremely self-denied. Speaking one day to the "question" at a Friday meeting, and obtaining unusual liberty, he concluded by saying, "But though I speak of these things, I am myself as blind as a mole." To a friend who remonstrated with him afterwards for so expressing himself, when he had got such enlargement, he replied, "Well, if you were to put me on oath, I would affirm that such was my feeling at the time."

JANET MACLEOD, Sandside, Reay, was a well-known and worthy woman—of great warmth of heart, and, although confined by bodily infirmity for many years, of large public spirit. It was her habit to set apart days of private fasting and prayer on behalf of her Christian friends when in trouble, and of the church at large. Her house, which stood near the line of hills

that separate Caithness from the Reay country, was a halting place, where many turned aside and received from Janet a heartfelt God speed.

"I had a passage of Scripture in regard to you the last time you were in trouble," she one day said to John Grant, as he called to see her. "And why did you not let me know of it at the time," he replied. "I didn't like ; and, besides, I knew the Lord would be as good as His word, and bring you out of your strait." "Fie, Janet," he returned, "you should not have kept back what would have strengthened Christian love."

MRS. MACKAY, Thurso, was a native of Sutherland, and came of a race many of whom were witnesses for the truth. In the earlier part of her life, until she was married, she lived with her uncle, Major Mackay of Hope—a man of great worth, of whom some record is given in "The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire." And it is probable that while she was under his care her spiritual life began. She and the young professors of her day and of that district had peculiar advantages. They enjoyed the example and counsel of a generation of Christian fathers and mothers of such attainments as were not known before or afterwards in the far north. That Mrs. Mackay profited by these, her after life of consistent godliness manifested.

Mrs. Mackay, and all those whom we have previously mentioned, were of that class of Christians sometimes described by the expression the "old stamp." It was the right stamp, because the Scripture one. It included those who, as a worthy catechist used to say, were "put out by the law, and brought in by the gospel ;" and who, moreover, were quick to discern the difference between the "letter" and "spirit"—the word in power and the word wanting it—and who were not satisfied without experience of that power.

For some years after her marriage Mrs. Mackay lived at Melvich, Sutherlandshire, where, however, the cares of a young

family and other business did not prevent her frequenting means of grace at great distances and at much personal inconvenience. She used to tell, that on one occasion being anxious to be present at the communion at Thurso, she rode there on horseback, over the rough mountain tracks, with her infant, three months old, which she could not leave at home, bound across her bosom.

Her love to the Lord's people was remarkable, and when they were involved in difficulties were then all the more the objects of her sympathy. To Isabel Ross, Janet M'Hamish, Margaret Stewart, and other godly women in and around Thurso, Mrs. Mackay was a steady and helpful friend. When she came to reside in Thurso, where she long and prudently conducted the hotel, she lived in close fellowship with the Christian "fathers" there—Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Gordon, &c. She and they, occasionally leaving business behind, went out to John Tait's fellowship meeting at Drakries. On the road they generally spoke to a "question," and one day Mrs. Mackay being asked, gave the question which was the very same as John Tait proposed when they joined the meeting.

Mr. Charles Gordon used to say there were three things about Thurso in which he never found any change—Holborn Head, his own heart, and Mrs. Mackay's friendship.

Christians who came at any time to Thurso from a distance found in her house a ready refuge and a warm welcome. And if by grace she was a succourer of many spiritually and temporally, she had her reward even in time. When, for instance, John Grant was evicted from his dwelling in Strathy, Mrs. Mackay gave him a room in her house, where he lived for two years, until he got another place at Brubster. About that time Mrs. Mackay was left a widow, with a young family, and felt very helpless, having to meet many heavy claims, and was, on the advice of friends, about to give up business. John Grant, however, urged her to face the difficulties, encouraging her by saying, "You will get honourably out of them all," which came

to pass, for her circumstances gradually improved, and she lived to see her son (who was not wanting to her in filial duty), one of the largest farmers in the north.

There was a singular motherliness in Mrs. Mackay's appearance, in her large figure and kindly intelligent countenance ; while her love to the truth, and experience of its humbling, yet comforting power, and her widespread acquaintance with the Lord's people, made her a living witness for Christ, a cheerful and instructive companion, and to young people who sought the way to Zion, a tender guide.

MRS. MACKAY (PEGGY M'DERMID), Melness, was a very accomplished Christian, spiritually-minded, and truly godly. She excelled many in the answers she got to prayer. One day she said to a friend, "You hear what is sometimes taking place (referring to some unpleasant attacks at the Friday Sacramental meetings on the ministers by lay speakers) : and I hope you will not go in with this practice. Oh ! what a sad world would it be if we had not a gospel ministry. The Lord sent some ministers, and those whom he did not send, He permitted to take the office, so we should let them alone." Being at dinner in a manse on a Monday evening after a sacrament, she felt that there was too much conversation of a worldly kind after such solemn duties and made a remark about it. Dr. Ross, Lochbroom, who was present, replied that the Apostle Paul said—"Women were not to speak in public." "Indeed, sir," said she, "if the Apostle Paul were here, no woman had need to speak."

On her death-bed she said--"Many a one I unbosomed myself to, to whom I knew Christ had not unbosomed himself, but I did it because he could do far above all that I could ask or think."

MARION MACKAY, Strathtongue, was a woman eminently pious and self-denied, and useful in instructing young persons.

At one time a few godly fathers had gathered at the river-side, not far from her house, for then "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." She, observing them, drew near, when John Grant, seeing her, said—"There is Marion. I could put my soul in her soul's stead, and yet no one will get her to confess that she has saving faith." Mr. William Calder, catechist, who was one of the company, said—"What if I should be able to make her to do so?" "Well, if so," replied John, "I will give you a good dinner." She came and sat down beside them. John said to her—"What brings you here, when you say you fear you will not be with us in eternity?" "I will be with you as much as I can here, though I should be separated from you hereafter." Mr. Calder then asked her—"Do you believe, Marion, that you must be saved by the shedding of the blood of Christ, and that you must be washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness?" "Oh! my dear," she replied, "if I believe anything, I believe that," whereupon John Grant acknowledged that Mr. Calder had made good his point.

CHRISTINA MACKAY, Achanaa, was a widely-esteemed Christian. During the Sutherland clearances, the factor said to her—"You will have to remove." She replied—"No; I have a life rent of the place." "Indeed, woman; who could give you that?" "I have a promise of it from my heavenly Father, which neither you nor another will be able to break." He remarked to one standing by—"Surely she is speaking nonsense." "No," said the other, "she would not speak in this way without good grounds, and you will do well to let her alone." "O! well, we will not trouble her." Her husband, William Mackay, was one like-minded with herself.

JEAN MACKAY, Armadale, was one of the most intelligent and deeply-exercised Christians of her time, and a great wrestler in prayer. Having met with much trouble in her youth, she

could comfort others with the comfort with which she herself had been comforted. "When I was very young," she said, "I asked my father, was there a church in heaven? He said, 'Yes; there is a church in heaven and a church on earth. They are both one; but the church in heaven has got the victory; that on earth has not got the victory. They are agreed in everything but one thing—the church on earth is not willing to part with any of the Lord's people, and the church in heaven will not want them when they are ready.'"

When Mr. Finlay Cook came to Caithness in 1817, having heard about this godly woman, he went to see her. When he entered her dwelling, as he had a shepherd's plaid on him, she asked him if he was a shepherd. "Yes, I am," said he. She placed some food before him; but he said—"I will not taste this unless you ask a blessing on it." This she did, and he left without making himself known to her. Next time she went to church to Strathhalladale, she saw, to her surprise, in the pulpit the shepherd who had been in her house. Great was the love and harmony between them ever afterwards.

APPENDIX.

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SERMONS AND LETTERS.





# SERMON

BY

REV. FINLAY COOK.

1st JOHN 1. 7.—“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” \*

WE are met together professing to thank God for His goodness—for our privilege in having got another opportunity of renewing our vows, and of binding ourselves afresh to Him in a well-ordered covenant. We must soon separate each to his own home, and these words in the text are very suitable for the meditation of Christians going out again to the world—“If we walk in the light, &c.” We are walking on the way to eternity. You and I will soon be there. Where shall we meet in eternity? What shall be our dwelling place? Who shall be our companions? What shall be our portion? Now, some are going to heaven and some to hell; and how shall we know which way we are going? The text and the verse preceding give the character of both parties. In the sixth verse it is said “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not speak the truth.” We lie to God, and we know that all liars shall have their portion in the lake of fire. But says one, “I am a Christian.” Then do the truth; do not walk in darkness—in the darkness of wickedness—darkness of worldliness—darkness of error. Sin, alas! hath brought us all into darkness. In the seventh verse it is said, “But if we walk in the light.” This, then, is the way in which those who are

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\* Preached in the First Free Church, Thurso, on the Monday of the Communion in June, 1855, and taken down at the time by Rev. W. R. Taylor, now of Kelvinside.

going to heaven walk : they walk in the light as Christ is in the light : they have fellowship one with another ; and, being poor sinners, they have the blood of Jesus cleansing them from all sin. Take your choice now. Here are both ways set before you—light and darkness. Which do you desire to walk in ? “ Well, I’ll think of it, and begin to-morrow.” Long since *that to-morrow* was looked for. It will ruin many of us. When to-morrow comes, I fear it will not be known that ever we read the Bible, heard of God, or had an offer of the Saviour. Now, let us look for a little :—

*First*, at the character of believers. They walk in the light as Christ is in the light. They are, indeed, often in darkness in their own experience, but never in the darkness of the world.

*Second*, consider their fellowship. They have fellowship one with another. The sheep do not care to keep company with the goats.

*Third*, consider their encouragement. Whatever of sin is in them, yet the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all sin.

*First*, they walk in the light. Christ Himself is the light. He is the true light that shineth in darkness. He is the life, and the life is the light of men. John i. 4-5. The Apostles saw Him personally. “ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” But they had eyes to look further. “ We beheld his glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.” They saw Him thus by faith. By faith as well as by sight they saw Him, heard Him, looked upon Him, handled Him. Oh ! the blessed eye of faith, that sees the beauty of Jesus ; the blessed ear of faith, opened to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd ; the blessed touch of faith—“ Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands.” It is easy to speak about faith—to prate about it like parrots—not so easy coming to the blessed experience of it. We shall not see Jesus by sight until death ; but we must now by faith get some glimpses of the King in His beauty, and of the land that is very far off. We must now behold as in a glass darkly the

glory of the Lord, if we would be changed into His image. Oh ! you who are looking to and living in worldly conformity, you shall yet take fully on the image of the devil. But you walk in the light, believer. Who gave you this light ? God Himself. What gives you the light of the sun ? The sun himself. Until God says, "Let there be light," the light that is in us is but darkness. And when He comes as the light, He gives us to believe that He is, and that He demands our worship in spirit and in truth. Then we begin to go to prayer, to preaching, to those who know the Lord ; but even in these means we cannot rest. Many, indeed, whom the Lord never set a seeking in quest of Himself, thus get some notions of religion. Yes, I have people in my parish who can talk about God and about faith, and who could preach, too, very well about these things, but who are really ignorant of them. And you, too, believer, were ignorant of them till God came. You remember your ignorance of a soul, of sin, of God, and how Satan took advantage of your ignorance, and made you live like the rest of the world, till God came and revealed Himself to you, and set you seeking Himself. Now, you believed there was a God—a God in creation and in providence, and a God in redemption. You believed that this God revealed Himself as one God in Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—each Person having His own office in the salvation of our lost race, and each Person equal in power and glory. You believed that you could get no rest, no satisfaction, till you knew Him as reconciled ; and hearing him making offer of Himself to you, you rested your soul upon Him alone for salvation, as He is freely offered in the gospel. Knowing the Lord, you now know the way wherein to walk. "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me," says Paul, "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." There is now a walking in the light—a renouncing of the works of darkness. "I am the way," says Jesus ; "no man cometh to the Father but by Me." Coming into this way by the gate of regeneration, we now walk in the

light of the living, and renounce every thing that would keep us walking according to the course of this world. Happy ye who have thus been taken one of a city and two of a family, and brought to Zion! Will you not this day bless Jehovah for having not left you in the darkness of the world—for having brought you into the footsteps of the flock? Perhaps you remember some one of the Lord's people through whom you were brought to leave the broad way. You will have fellowship with that soul yet in heaven, though now you can perhaps but weep at at his grave, remembering his conversation and prayers, and fearing you will never be like him. Yet the light gains ground. Drops from heaven fall on the soul like rain upon the mown grass, and keep you following on till you shall appear before God in Zion.

More particularly as to this walking, I observe that in order to it we need *light upon the way, and strength to walk in it*. There is, therefore, wrought in the soul dependence upon the Good Spirit that leads to the land of uprightness. In His light faith turns earth's midnight into heaven's noonday. "I press toward the mark," says Paul. The mark is before me; I see it; so I must press forward to reach the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is true that I have met with many mercies and deliverances, but these are behind me, and much of the wilderness, and Jordan is also before me; so I must press forward in face of all opposition, giving up everything that would keep me back. The believer has, indeed, many sins that beset him, but these must be set aside by faith and repentance. Without this there can be no true walking. Tell all your lets and hindrances to Him in whose way you are walking. He is the blessed Shepherd, who will suit Himself to your case—sometimes leading, sometimes drawing, sometimes carrying you. "He feedeth his flock like a shepherd."

Again, this walking is *a walk in the fear of God, and with a tender conscience*. "I will put my fear into their hearts, and

they shall not depart from me." "Walk before me," says God, "and be thou perfect." We must walk, believing that His eye is upon us. God sees me at all times—in company and alone—and he sees my heart. Is my heart right with Him? Am I in His fear all the day long? Parents, how do you conduct yourselves before your families? God's eye is upon you. Masters, how do you deal towards your servants? From God's presence whither can you flee? Ministers, you and your people, remember it is before Jehovah that you are.

This walking is also a *walk in humility*. What makes you humble? The light of God that has entered your soul. What is the cause of all our strifes and divisions? What but pride! Oh! this must be destroyed; God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble, to keep them in the way. So when pride gets up in those who are walking in the way, they may look for the whip—"a rod for the fool's back." You were at the table yesterday—what doing there? Setting Christ before you? And did you get a glimpse of Him in His humility, poverty, lowliness, love; yet with ever an eye to His Father's glory? And will not that crucify your pride?

Lastly, as to this walking, I remark, it is a *walking in love*, as Christ walked. "Be ye followers of God, as dear children." Walk in love, as Christ loved His church, and gave Himself for it. Follow Him; imitate Him. A child will imitate his father; a scholar his master—not that he will come up to the master, but he will write the copy after him. His fellowship will now be your chief desire. "Saw ye Him that my soul loveth." Did you ever meet a poor wife in the street who had lost her husband? At every one that passed by she would ask—Did you see my husband? So with you, believer. No one will fill his place with you but Himself. No one else would satisfy Mary. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." "I know my sheep," says Jesus, "and am known of mine." This fellowship engenders holiness of heart and life. Christ is holy, and they drink into His

spirit. Drops of holiness drip into their souls through this fellowship. Secret sins thus get loss, and victory over lusts of the flesh and of the mind is thus obtained. Oh! then, walk in the light, as He is in the light. Satan, indeed, will be setting baits for you, both in the world and in the closet; but He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in thy weakness." Oh! sinner, will you not be persuaded to walk in this way—you who are walking in the world as if you were never to leave it? But the time is not far off when the world will be glad to get rid of you, and heaven's doors will be shut upon you. Oh! think of this. And you who profess the Lord's name, see that you indeed walk in Him. If I walk not in the Light, as Christ is in the light, though I be an apostle, yet I will be with Judas at last.

*Second*, consider what is the special mark given in the text of those who walk in the light. They have fellowship one with another. They have the same God, the same Saviour, the same indwelling spirit, ay, and the same devil. They have been enabled to break fellowship with the world, and to say, as Ruth to Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Do you say so? Well, our fellowship truly is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Will you come into this fellowship? "Our Father which art in heaven." You must begin here. You may join yourself to the people of God, but you will be as the foolish virgins till you know something of this. A child, if among strangers, will cling to his father, so you must have fellowship with the Father before the world can be empty to you, or heaven be longed for. Now, there can be no fellowship, no communion, without first union. What unites to Christ and to God in Him?—Faith. What unites to His people?—Love. First be united to Christ, and love, which comes out of the womb of faith, will then unite you to the brethren. By union to Christ you and they will now be branches growing on the true vine. The Lord is indeed cutting down the fruitful branches, and, oh! to see young ones rising

in their room. What a blessed sight to see young people reading the Bible, praying, conversing about eternal things ! I have seen this, but I fear it is now out of fashion. When I see young people meet together, I see them—yes, even on the Lord's day—walk and talk as lightly as if they were at a fair. Oh ! young people, remember you have been baptized in the name of the Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and you shall know that yet either in mercy or in judgment. But as to this Christian fellowship ; being, as we have said, united to Christ, the blessed Spirit of God that dwells in your brother now takes possession of you, and you are now joined in heart, like Ruth and Naomi, or like Jonathan and David ; and when you meet, you will be better of one another. I like to meet my fellow Christian, to have him tell me of the Lord's dealings with him—of his trials and of his deliverances. Indeed, if we both knew the Lord as we ought, we would not want a subject. I like to have my fellow Christian praying for me, giving me a promise, telling me of my evil heart, for I have one. I like also to see him mourning over sinners that are going to hell, and to see him wrestling with the Lord, that he would revive His work in the church, and raise a seed to do Him service. These are the things we will have in common. There are some, indeed, who are like a bird I have heard of—that whatever birds it met, it took feathers to suit theirs. Take you care of that—suiting yourself to the worlding, to the pharisee, to the hypocrite. You know your own heart. Be watchful. Have a sense of your own weakness, always afraid of yourself, remembering you have a deceitful heart, a corrupt mind, a tempting devil. Now, in our fellowship there are two duties not to be forgotten—*one*, that we must bear with the infirmities of one another ; and so we may, when we know something of our own hearts. We need not expect to find a perfect Christian on this side of heaven, and the more forbearance the more sympathy. *Another*, we must be helpful to one another. Has your brother burdens ?—help him. Is he in

worldly trouble?—do what you can for him. Is he in spiritual trouble?—try and be useful to him. Alas! when through pride and self-seeking our fellowships are broken—when mutual prayer is neglected—when one will not encourage or reprove another, but when every one goes his own way! Woe to the church that day! Oh! people of God, keep up fellowship. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.” And see that you bear a rising generation upon your spirits. You parents, you like to see your children getting on in the world, but would you not rather see them begging from door to door if Christ were formed in their souls the hope of glory, than see them crowned heads if without the Saviour? Let us walk, then, as for eternity, in fellowship with Christ, and with one another in Him. But I am a sinner, and how can I do this? I who am shapen in sin, how can I walk thus? Well, this leads us to speak of,—

*Third.* The encouragement here presented. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” Oh! believer, this is your mercy!—your cause of rejoicing? Do not say, “When I am in better frame I will follow Christ, and walk with Him.” There is no remedy for—no destruction to the works of darkness but the blood of Jesus. He took flesh and blood. Oh! how is it that we do not love Him? How is it that we can let Him a moment out of our thoughts, when He took our nature? The blood is the life. “The life of the flesh is in the blood.” Lev. xvii. 11. Jesus shed His blood. He could not as God die, but He took our nature, and shed His blood—hence it is called the blood of God. This makes it meritorious; puts value on it. Is not this wonderful? Jehovah, who created all things, and upholds all things, taking flesh and shedding His blood. Here go, oh sinner! if out of hell—if soul and body are yet together—go to the blood of Jesus Christ. There is enough in Him to cleanse from all sin. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” And what follows? If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good



of the land"—that is, a blessing with everything you enjoy, through the virtue of the blood of atonement. Atonement has been made by this blood. God's broken law required a sacrifice, and Jesus gave the sacrifice. The blood was sprinkled on the book and on all the people, to show that it satisfied God and purged the sinner. Therefore, as surely as it has been offered up to God, it must be applied to your conscience. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Nothing else will do. This is the only shelter from the wrath to come. It is also peace-speaking blood. It speaks peace in heaven. The speaking of this blood brings the Spirit to your soul. Abel's blood brought death to Cain. Christ's blood brings mercy, pardon, love to your soul—brings faith, repentance, and every grace—all comes through this blessed channel. The blood of bulls and of goats, of saints and of angels, could not bring one sinner to heaven, nor bring the pardon of one sin; but the blood of Christ brings the remission of all sins. It is said here, "cleanseth us from *all* sins"—from little sins, from great sins—from sins of omission, from sins of commission. Do not hide your sins from this blood. Before the Lord began to deal with you, you had buried your sins out of your sight; but now there will be a resurrection of them, and this loads you with the burden of guilt. And, oh! what a burden that is to an awakened conscience. But the precious blood of Christ can remove it. Turn not away, then, from this blood. Every time you reject it, you leave a sting in your conscience, which shall be to you yet the worm that dieth not. You have secret faults. David said, "Who can understand his errors?" Oh! bring them to the blood. Let them give you errands to Christ. This will keep you little in your own eyes, and make Him precious to you. Are you more afraid of sin than of hell? Are you saying, "Will ever I get free of sin?" Well, you will get it removed in this blood—even now, and at length you will be as free of it as if you had never known it. But I cannot continue.

I must leave it with you. You are now going each to the world. Will your families and neighbours take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. Go not out in your own strength. "If thy presence go not with us," said Moses. "My angel shall go with you." Oh! no, even an angel will not put up with us. Come with us Thyself. Well, my presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest. Depend on the Lord alone, and beware of grieving His Spirit from your soul. I read of a lady of whom it was said she was an angel in church, but a devil at home. Be not so; but set the Lord before you at all times. You know not what troubles, what trials, what crosses are before you; but you know that such *are* before you, for His people are a people who come out of great tribulation. Oh! but what of the tribulation? It leads them to wash their robes, and to make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore shall they be before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. Shall we be among that company? Well, they were sinners once, but sinners led to the blood. Therefore say you, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." The hyssop of the promise dipt in the blood of Jesus, and sprinkled on your soul, can alone fit you for glory. "Now are ye clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you."

# SERMON

BY

REV. ARCHIBALD COOK.

LUKE XXIV. 29.—“ But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent ; and he went in to tarry with them.”

OUR time in this world is represented as a shadow, as a hand-breadth, and as nothing. When we consider that endless eternity depends on the few moments we spend in this world, surely they ought not to be spent in vain. If persons were as unconcerned about their bodies as they are about their souls, they would soon die of starvation ; yet put the question, and all will acknowledge that the soul is the more precious part of man. This shows that many only took up this by report, and know nothing of the value of a soul but by hearsay. But, my friends, eternity will show the soul to be another thing than a mere name, and woe to the man who in eternity, and not till then, finds out the value of his soul ! Those who cannot live without Christ here, He will not live without them through eternity ; but those who can do without Him here, He will do without them through eternity. I intend, as the Lord shall aid, to show at this time :—

1. That the Saviour may be constrained to abide with a sinner.
2. Something of the nature of this constraint ; and,
3. A few marks whereby we may know if the Saviour abides with us.

1. *That the Saviour may be constrained to abide with a sinner.* My friends, it is one of the wonders of eternity that ever Christ abode with a child of Adam, and the soul with whom He abides is more honoured than although he got the richest earthly in-

heritance, even though he be a poor beggar going from door to door. The Saviour may be constrained to abide with a sinner, *first*, from His love to the fellowship of a soul. One of the "fathers" asked the question, "What was the employment of the Three Persons of the Godhead before the world was created?" and answered it himself, "That they had an infinite delight in their own fellowship, and in contemplating the fellowship they would have with men." Christ has an infinite delight in the fellowship of a soul. We read that a husband should love his wife as Christ loveth the church. What is this love? The church, or a soul, is the only object on which His love is so fixed that it takes away His heart. "He gave himself for it." Love, we know, is an affection that must have some kindred object to call it forth. You cannot love a serpent, a viper, &c. Now, man is represented by these things in Scripture. Was there anything, then, in man to call forth this love of the Saviour? Was there anything in man to draw it out? No. It arose, then, in and from Himself alone. It was a love that had not a beginning any more than His own Being had a beginning. It was in the heart of the Eternal Father, of the Eternal Son, and of the Eternal Spirit from everlasting. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jer. xxxi. 3. Therefore let the worst soul here, look and hunger after the Lord. He may be constrained because of His own love to souls.

*Second.* He may be constrained because He has in Himself what will fit the soul for fellowship with Him. The soul in its natural state cannot enjoy fellowship with the Lord. No. You unregenerate may think that if your sins were pardoned you would get to heaven, but if that were all, you would be but a serpent in glory. You cannot in your natural state have fellowship with the Saviour. Christ is God—is as holy as the Father—as holy as the Spirit, and has the same hatred to sin. But there was a furniture set apart by the Three-One-God for fitting a soul for the fellowship of Himself, and this furniture was put into Christ for the benefit of His church; hence they say "Out

of His fulness have we received, and grace for grace." Christ has a regenerating spirit, to regenerate and fit the soul for enjoying himself. The poor wretched sinner has a heart open to sin, open to evil thoughts and carnal imaginations, but shut against Christ; yet Christ may be constrained, because He has what will change the heart, and fit and incline it for His own fellowship. Indeed, the lower the state of the soul is, the more it may constrain Him, for in such a one there is room to give a display of His glory, of His sovereign rich grace. In proportion to the lowness of a soul is magnified His condescension. If a king went to see a lord or a great man, it would be esteemed a condescension on his part and an honour to the other; but if he went to visit a poor beggar in a smoky hut, his name would be praised throughout the kingdom. There is the same nature in this case. But here the High and Holy One, inhabiting eternity, comes to dwell with a poor, polluted, filthy sinner, and this exalts His glory, mercy, and free grace through eternity. Where He comes the Father comes, the Spirit comes, the angels come, the saints come—all heaven comes to dwell in the soul where formerly sin and carnality were reigning. Will you constrain Him this day? You have a bad companion in an impenitent heart—it is worse to you than the devil. It is a bad companion in worship, at the Lord's table, on a death-bed; and if it go with you to eternity, you will find it worse than the devil himself. And yet very few weep for it!

*Third.* The Saviour may be constrained because of His very nature—because of the compassion of His nature towards sinners. There is infinite compassion in the Three Persons of the Godhead towards sinners, and this is revealed through Christ. We read that even when the rod was on Israel, when he was scourging them, that the soul of God was grieved for the people. That is a wonderful thought. Again, we read that after Ephraim bemoaned himself, the Lord said, "My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him." You who have a sick child, you know how your compassion is

moved by his distress. Yet it was not his sickness that created this compassion in you. You had it naturally, but the child's distress touched and moved it. Thus the misery of sinners does not create compassion in the Saviour (for the devils are miserable enough, but He has none on them), but this compassion is in Himself eternally, and the misery of sinners touches and moves it. Yes ; the fears, the sighings, the groanings of a poor humble soul move and draw out the compassion of the Saviour, so that He is constrained to abide with that soul. Indeed, every common mercy we receive is a fruit of the compassion of God, and so is the natural sympathy of man towards man ; for was there no pity in God, there would be none in man. Think, natural man, on the way to hell, that perhaps heirs of glory are to spring from you, and that therefore there is in you natural compassion to take care of your offspring. Now, this compassion in Christ was the very disposition in Him which moved Him to undertake the case of sinners, and to will that their sins should be imputed to Himself. He could not see the objects of His love go to hell—He could not let them perish—so He undertook to bear and atone for their sins.

*Fourth.* The Saviour may be constrained—when we consider the promises He has made to His people—to poor sinners. We may make promises, but something may come in the way to hinder our fulfilling them ; but with God all events are foreseen, and indeed the things we may think would hinder the outmaking of His promises, just tend to their fulfilment. Again, when we consider that He allows His people to plead His promises, surely He may be constrained. See how often Moses took hold of the promise. My friends, the Lord would sooner let heaven and earth go to staves than break one promise to a soul—than break one little promise to a poor broken-hearted soul. He permits them to plead His promises. “Remember the word unto Thy servant, on which Thou hast caused me to hope.” Has the Lord never given you a word on which to take hold ? It is a bad sign. Has he never been

but silent to you? It is a sign He cares very little about you. But, O eternity, eternity! O that soul then that never got a word from Christ! We have some who never heard a word from God. They go to the Lord's table—they never get a word there. They go to prayer—He is silent to them there. As one said, their prayer may say to them, "How can I go to heaven? I know not the way; I came not from heaven; never was there, and know not how to go there." What ascends must first descend.

*Fifth.* The Saviour may be constrained because He has come near to us; and this He did, in the first instance, by taking our nature into union with His divine person. He being in the form of God—equal with God—yet made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. This is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh. Hence he is called Emmanuel—God with us. Hence Solomon says, "Shall God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth?" Now, one particular object in His view in taking our nature was that He might have fellowship with a soul. We know that the same nature delights in itself. Thus a dove loves a dove—even serpents live together—and thus graceless people love the company of graceless people. So the Scriptures say, "A man shall be a hiding place"—"I will draw them with the bands of a man." The soul could not endure views of the Creator in His original glory. This must be veiled, so the second Person of the Godhead veiled His glory by taking human nature. Hence in every revelation of Himself which He made to the Old Testament Church, he appeared in the form of a man. He appeared to Joshua as a man, and when from Mount Sinai the Lord spake to Moses, the Israelites said to Moses, "Let not God speak with us, but speak thou with us;" and the Lord said, "They have well spoken that which they have spoken—a Prophet shall the Lord raise up unto them like unto thee—Him shall they hear." A saint said that the Lord in these days appeared as one trying on new clothes,

which He was at last to wear. At length He came near—took bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh ; and you see the blind, the lame, the leper coming about Him, and saying, “Jesus thou son of David, have mercy on us.” He was so low that they could whisper in His ear, and He was so high that He could speak to the Father in their behalf. He also took on Him not only our nature, but the humiliation of that nature. When you think of the Creator suffering hunger and thirst, weariness and grief, affliction and temptation, depending on Providence, calling Himself a worm, and no man—despised of the people—surely He may be constrained. It was here He got a fellow feeling with sinners. Thus He knows the difficulties and bruising of a poor tried soul. He knows the buffetings of Satan, and the hiding of the Father’s countenance, and thus He may be constrained to abide with a soul. In His humiliation He became a servant to His people, and He is the same still. Sinners have this need and that need, and He serves them. Oh ! you are worse than the devil, who can live comfortably without Him ; and you that can do so will get a deeper hell than the devil, for there will be guilt on your head that never was on his.

*Sixth.* When we consider the nature of His death, it is evident He may be constrained. That death was a voluntary act—a sovereign act of free rich grace. It was a voluntary act, death having no claim on any but transgressors. Death is the wages of sin. When they came to take Him, He said, “Whom seek ye ?” and they said, “Jesus of Nazareth ;” and when He answered, “I am He,” they fell backward to the earth. He might have let them fall into perdition, but His infinite power supported them, to be the instruments of doing His will, and made them the instruments of executing His purpose. Now, this purpose He was set on from eternity, and this shall be the matter of His people’s wonder throughout eternity. This death of His was a death in the room of His people. He was their death ; so the believer may say, “I was Thy death—



Thou art my life ; I was Thy shame—Thou art my honour ; I was Thy hell—Thou art my heaven.” And they being thus the fruit of His death, surely He may be constrained. We hear that the more a mother suffers, the more she loves her children. Now, His sufferings are not the cause of His love to the elect, yet they give Him a peculiar interest in them. There were two women came to Solomon with a child. The one wished to have the child divided ; the other said, “Divide it not.” Why did she say so ? Because it cost the mother much, but cost the other nothing. So the Saviour has an infinite regard to the fruit of His own death, and will have infinite delight and enjoyment in them through eternity. This was the joy that was set before Him when He endured the Cross. This is very wonderful. Oh ! will you not constrain Him to abide with you ? One soul for whom He died is more to Him than the whole creation.

Hence we may say that His own sufferings intercede with Him to abide with a soul. Every groan, every sigh, every wound, every temptation, every drop of wrath He endured intercedes with Him to come and dwell with the soul—to support, to refresh, to comfort it. It is His own death—the compassion in Himself as the living Head of His church—that moves Him to come to pardon, to revive, to dwell with, and at length to glorify the soul. Yea, He so loves His people, that whatever men or devils do against them, He feels it done to Himself. “Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it unto me.” Further, although the Saviour is exalted at the right hand of God, yet He may be constrained to abide with a soul, for He has the same nature there as here. Not having laid aside His human nature, He cannot forget His church. He has the same heart, the same nature, the same fellow feeling there as here. The wounds of His fellow feeling are open, by which He is touched with a feeling of their infirmities, and He shall be so till the last of His elect are gathered home. Men think that in His intercession He speaks

before the Throne, but their notions are carnal, like themselves. In a foreign country a great man was to be put to death. Another great man, his brother, who had lost his arm in fighting for his country, came into court, and held up what remained of his arm, as much as to say, "I gave you my arm—might you not give me my brother?" The man was successful. And this is the nature of Christ's intercession. All that He became, all that He endured intercedes for His elect before the Father.

*Lastly.* He may be constrained because they are committed to Him; and so He may be constrained to abide with them. They are His inheritance. Oh! you who can give your heart to the world, no wonder though God's people are empty to you. But yet they are His inheritance, His members, His jewels, His crown. And because many enemies, temporal and spiritual, are seeking to rob Him of His crown, therefore He may be constrained to abide with the soul, so as to preserve it in Himself. It is the aim of the devil to get possession of the soul, so Christ must be about it day and night to guard it, and must be in the soul by His spirit, graciously to uphold it; and so surely He may be constrained.

2. *Consider something of the nature of this constraint.* Those who are advanced in years have grey hairs. The day is far spent with regard to such. Yet when we go among old people, we often find them the most careless of any. Some poor old people, who can do almost nothing in the world, will yet scarcely bow a knee to God. They have no relish, no desire for prayer. Still, people put them to heaven after all. Poor creature, what will you say, people praising you after you are gone as being in heaven, and you in the place of torment? "It is towards evening." We are going to eternity, and as sure as the angels are about the deathbed of the believer, ready to carry his soul into glory, so devils are about the deathbed of the unregenerate, waiting to carry his soul to hell. It is easy to go through the world without Christ, but when death comes, who will stand for you? Many now have the name of Christian whom the Lord

will never own. When your beast dies, you take off its skin, and cast the carcase to the dogs. Take care the Lord does not strip you of the name of Christian, and cast your soul to hell. In speaking on the first head of this discourse, we endeavoured to show that the Lord may be constrained to abide with a soul. Now, observe shortly the nature of this constraint, and what the having of it implies. I remark that this constraint implies,—

*First.* That the soul has obtained spiritual views of the infinite majesty of the Godhead. Every notion regarding Jehovah that arises in the mind of the unregenerate is carnal; so the unregenerate have carnal notions of God, of a soul, of sin, of hell, of heaven. They would indeed like to go to heaven at death, in order to escape misery, but otherwise they would be content to take body after body in this life—when one body was spent, to take another. Why? Because they are spiritually ignorant of the Lord. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” There is infinite distance between the nature of God and the nature of creatures as such, as having their being from Him; and there is likewise infinite distance between the moral nature of God and the moral nature of fallen man, and a sense of this must be begotten in the soul before God comes to dwell in the soul. A child, when it comes into the world, the first object it fixes its eye on is the light, and in the measure in which it has and apprehends light, in that measure the child sees. So it is in spiritual things. In proportion as Divine light enters the soul, in that proportion the soul apprehends God. A view of God in His own light is at the foundation of all true religion, and though the soul has it but as a grain of mustard seed, yet if it has it, it has the germ of what will cause it to shine as a star for ever and ever. Where this is wanting, God is not dwelling. This is at the root of all the graces of God’s Spirit—at the root of faith, of repentance, of humility, of spiritual mindedness—of all. From this spiritual knowledge of God we have fallen, and the Spirit of God in anew implanting it, gives the soul to

know that it has it not naturally. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself." Here God was not far from coming to dwell with the soul. Isaiah says, "I saw the Lord high and lifted up, and one said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts;" and I said, "Woe is me," &c. The soul now sees that in coming to dwell with it there is infinite condescension on the part of Jehovah, and that it is an infinite act of sovereign grace. It was an infinite act of free grace in Jehovah to give a revelation to man, but infinitely greater is it His coming to dwell in a fallen soul; and a soul alive to its own unholiness and nothingness sees it to be an act of infinite condescension on the part of Jehovah. You who have come to this step are not far from His coming to dwell with you. The unregenerate think that by their own efforts they will move God to bless them. But the soul made alive to its own utter unworthiness sees that not for his sake, but for His own holy name's sake, the Lord may reveal Himself graciously. For His own glory, and for no other reason, He may do it; so the sinner comes to have his hand on his mouth and his mouth in the dust.

*Second.* This constraint implies that there is an esteem of the least drop from Jehovah created in the soul. In Scripture we see that before the Lord revealed Himself to any, He created need and desire in the soul. The Lord knows His own excellence and preciousness, and knows what mean thoughts men have of Him; so before He comes to dwell with a sinner, these thoughts of Him must be taken out, and other thoughts put in, so that the sinner is content to get the least drop at the Lord's hand. Hence before He comes to dwell with a soul, you see that soul lying very low before the Lord. You know one may be a little hungry, and another may be dying of hunger. The latter would take a crumb picked off the street; the other would not—his need was not extreme. So many profess to hunger after the Lord, but yet they can do without Him; but where He has a purpose of dwelling, He

makes that soul so to hunger as to esteem the least crumb from the Lord. Yes, a poor soul in that state would rather get one word from the Lord than millions of millions of worlds.

*Third.* In constraining Him, it is implied that there are wants in the soul answering to the character of the Saviour, for there is nothing in the Head but what is needed by His members. The soul made alive has three plagues, which need Christ in His three offices. Its ignorance needs Him as a Prophet, its guilt needs Him as a Priest, and its hardness of heart needs Him as a King. These plagues must have Christ—nothing else will do. These wants of the soul cry to the Lord in its behalf. The unregenerate pray with the tongue. Take the tongue out of them, they are worth nothing. The poor man who fell among thieves, what a cry his case had to the heart of the good Samaritan. Lazarus in the grave, who could not utter a word, how his case touched the heart of the Saviour. Most Christians now-a-days know nothing of this, and show that they do not, for they are strong and self-sufficient—the same to-day as yesterday. But a poor soul lying abject and helpless at a throne of grace, has a cry that reaches the heart of Jehovah.

*Fourth.* The soul who will constrain the Lord has been broken off from other comforts. Such a one says, "I have food, raiment, family and social enjoyments, but I have not Christ, and I cannot rest ;" and, moreover, things that are felt to come in between Christ and the soul, though dear as a right eye, it will now be made willing to give up. Rather go to heaven with one eye or one foot, than with two to be cast into hell. The least sin in the heart that keeps Christ at a distance will be hated. I knew a gentleman who once got a serpent, and thought to preserve it under glass. A friend told him that if the creature breathed upon him, he would feel the consequences ; but he said he would take care. Shortly after, however, the serpent breathed on him, and his head became pained and began to swell, and he exclaimed, " Kill it, kill it."

So when sin is discovered, and stings the conscience, the cry of the soul to heaven will be, "Lord, slay it." And who can do so but the Saviour? Many deal with sin like people who have the care of children, who will caress them to-day and punish them to-morrow. To-day they will be confessing sin before the Lord, and to-morrow indulging in it. But the soul bent on constraining Christ will be brought to hate the sin that is hateful to the Lord. *Lastly*, in this constraint a spirit of prayer and wrestling is imparted to the soul, so that, like Jacob at Peniel, they cannot let the Lord go till he bless them; and the objects of his love He permits thus to wrestle with Him. I will never constrain Christ to abide with me till it comes to this; yea, till it comes to be as the pangs of a travailing woman, that *must* have deliverance. This arises from some knowledge of the Lord and of His excellence, and from love to his fellowship. Oh! to come to these words—"Set me as a seal upon Thy heart, as a seal upon Thy arm." This is grace in the soul that cannot live separate from the fountain; yea, that longs to be swallowed up in it, always seeing some sin while here—needing crucifixion—some vain thought needing overcoming, and so needing and constraining the Saviour.

3. *One or two marks of those who do constrain the Lord to abide with them.*

*First.* Such believe that they have a soul, and they remember this wherever they are—whether in company or alone—whether in prayer or at their work—whether at the Lord's table or at the market; and they will remember that this soul is to exist through eternity, and that nothing can make it happy but God Himself.

*Second.* Such know that they are accountable beings. Conscience will be made tender; a sinful thought will give them pain, and the nearer God comes to the soul, the more tender does conscience become.

*Third.* Such are kept sensible that they are sinners, and a spirit of repentance will accompany them. They will be

grieved and distressed because of sin that cleaves to them, and cannot be but penitent. This may come so high as that they will wonder Jehovah is not destroying them, and thus they must be always at the feet of Jesus.

*Fourth.* There is a communication kept up between Christ and their souls through his word. They will not be willing to awake in the morning, or go to bed at night, without Christ revealing Himself to them in His word. Christ does not deal in this way with the world, but He does with them.

*Fifth.* These persons and spiritual temptations will not be strangers. The devil does not trouble the world, so that he may awake them in flames; but those we are speaking of, every devil is pursuing them. Oh! if the Lord were not near them! And it is ignorance of such spiritual conflict that makes professors of religion so dry and sapless—sapless preaching, sapless praying, sapless professing—a sapless religion. Again, these will have crosses, and things will be crosses to them that are not so to others. Their worldly calling will be a cross. Few go their worldly calling afraid of there losing a spiritual frame. Why? Because they never had one. But these will have crosses that they cannot speak of to any but to the Lord and to Him they will go with them as a child to his father. Indeed, it is a cross to me to-day to see your hard hearts appearing in your very eyes.

*Lastly.* These will obtain nearness to the Lord's bosom, and will find themselves strangers here. At this stage they begin to know something of heaven, and to live in more or less view of a near eternity. Now, all that they engage in, they do as for eternity. Their souls, their bodies, their families, their circumstances, they treat and deal with as for eternity. If I were in an inn, amid noise and bustle, the thing that would give me most comfort would be the thought that by to-morrow I would be away; so these, they feel that eternity is fast following up behind time, and they rejoice to think so. Thoughts of eternity bring a calm into the soul. This is a blessed and precious state.

Many go to eternity, and if they knew what was before them, the rocks would hear their cry; yet people say, "They fell asleep." Oh! if they knew that sleep, they would rather live in time for ever than enter on that sleep! Oh! eternity, eternity, that shall never be *spent*, and yet *must* be spent!

But I must conclude. Consider, gracious soul, the infinite love of the Saviour in allowing thee to constrain Him. Oh! think much and often of His wondrous love. What wast thou? In what state didst thou live? Thou couldst break every commandment of God—couldst do without prayer—couldst break the Sabbath, take a walk on His holy day—couldst take God's name in vain—couldst tell a lie; yea, perhaps there was not an actual sin but was in thy purpose, in thy desire. Wast thou better than the devil? Oh! can you cease to wonder that ever He permitted such a one as you to constrain Him? If people were to take a saint and set him up before the world, and say that he had been the greatest sinner that ever lived, he might blush, but let him be set up in glory as the greatest debtor to free grace, and all heaven would rejoice over him; and, indeed, now his own feeling will be, "Since I obtained mercy, no sinner need despair."

And you unregenerate, consider it is toward evening. Oh! don't go to hell, and eternal glory in your offer. Cast yourself on the Lord. Give up your vanity. What will it do for you when you come to grapple with eternity? "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." "Behold my servant whom I have chosen." "He that believeth shall be saved." Old people, young people, think of your souls—think of eternity!



# SERMON

BY

REV. JOHN SINCLAIR.

MATTHEW XI. 28.—“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

SIN is the cause of all the restlessness in the creation. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” It is true that we often see the wicked enjoy much comfort and worldly ease, and the godly chastened every morning ; but this is a dreadful rest to the former, and a blessed chastisement to the latter. This brought the Psalmist to a stand till he went into God’s sanctuary, and saw the end of the two states. The rest of the wicked is worse than the rest of a beast. “God has placed him on a slippery place,” near to destruction. There is no rest to his soul. “God is angry with him every day.” Should his house be full of silver and gold, there is a sad inhabitant along with it. “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.” God is the source of every drop of true happiness that ever existed. When man forsook that fountain of living waters he lost his happiness, and none shall ever again taste of that happiness except those who are brought back by the Mediator to take up their begun rest in the Divine attributes by faith on earth, and who shall be in due time made to enter that rest which remains for the people of God.

1. Consider Christ’s qualifications to give rest.

*First.* He is God. “Look unto Me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved ; for I am God, and there is none else.” Now, there were several things in the Godhead which pursued the sinner, and required his eternal restlessness, which none but one who is Himself God could remove. There was (1st) *His*

*justice.* Justice demanded full satisfaction for the injustice which sin had done to God. "His righteousness is like the great mountains." This was a mountain between God and the sinner, which no created arm could remove. But the Son of God, who here invites poor sinners to come to Him, removed this mountain by rendering complete satisfaction to Justice, till it could say, "I am well pleased for His righteousness' sake." So well pleased was He that I may say that Justice, which before pleaded against the sinner, now pleads for him who comes to Christ by faith. Viewing the sinner in Christ, Justice is so satisfied that it will never rest till the sinner believing in Christ be as sure in rest as He is. (2nd), *Truth* pleaded against the sinner. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Now, in the death of Christ this was fulfilled, and truth was vindicated; so that the promise of life implied in the threatening must be fulfilled; and we may say (to speak with reverence) that God would be found a liar if He did not admit to eternal life those for whom Christ died. Hence it is said, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." O! get into Christ. Come to Him, and your salvation is as sure as the truth of God can make it. (3rd), *The holiness* of God was against the sinner. Now, no blood of bulls and of goats could wash away this stain. He gave His own blood to wash the souls and bodies of those for whom He died, that they might wash their robes in it, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Now, being God, He could speak to God on their behalf, and that on a footing of equality. Though His Divine glory was veiled on earth in His humanity, He remained equally God in all His attributes as before; so that when you come to Him, and put your case in His hands, you may trust His authority and dignity with it as surely as you could trust the other persons of the Godhead. While He became the Father's servant as Mediator in the execution of His office, He healed in His own name, cast out devils in His own name, gave pardon of sin in His own name,

promised heaven in His own name, and, in short, exerted all the prerogatives of Divinity on earth. And so,

*Second*, "All power is given to Him in heaven and on earth." "All things are delivered to me of my Father" (verse 27.) If He promise rest, none may gainsay it in heaven or on earth. Are you afraid that the Father may refuse you though you come to the Son? Oh! no. He does always those things that please His Father. If He had not the authority of His Father for offering rest, you had never heard of such a word as this from His mouth. Whatever things He heard with His Father, He makes known unto poor sinners. He can teach them to know the Father (verse 27.) Would you like to know what is in the heart of God? Come to Him, and He will tell you. He reveals the Father, having been in His bosom from eternity.

*Third*. He is the Father's Prophet. "A prophet will the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you." Under Moses, when an enemy invaded the land, they went to the Prophet whom the Lord raised up, and he consulted the Lord, and then told them what means to use to get deliverance from their enemies. He told them what was the controversy for which the Lord was letting their enemies loose upon them, and what means to use to have the controversy removed. Now, my friends, there is a controversy between God and our souls for sin, and this is the only prophet in all the creation that can tell how that controversy can be removed. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." There are some people very anxious to know others' secrets. Oh! were you never anxious to know that great secret—what shall become of your immortal souls through eternity? Well, come to Him, and He can tell you; and, for your encouragement, I tell you that never did any come to Him but they got a good report of their case—never any but found that He had their names in

the Book of Life. Perhaps He did not tell them this at first. Perhaps they had an old estate of self-righteousness, like the young man who had great possessions; but come to Him as the poor heavy laden, and as one that has not a crumb, and He will let you see a rich treasury of mercies, of pardons, of peace, of soul-refreshing cordials. And He is no churl over this treasury. Nothing gives Him more pleasure than to be dealing out the finest of the wheat and honey from the rock. You would fain know whether you are elected. Well, come to Him. That is the only way to know it; that is a secret only known by coming to Him. He never bade any wait till they knew that. Then they never would come. Secret things belong to the Lord; things revealed belong to us. This secret of the Lord is revealed only to them that fear Him, and there is no true fear till one comes to Him. He tells His friends—none are friends till they come to Him. But you think you desired to come, and yet He has never told you. Well, remember He knows best what is good for you, and He is Sovereign—wait upon Him. Have you determined never to go to another? Well, “they that wait for Me shall never be ashamed.” He has written one of the names of His elect upon you, and ye did not know it. “Lord, to whom shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life.” “My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger will they not follow.” They are His sheep, who keep about His fold, and do not follow strangers.

*Fourth.* He is a Priest. \* \* \* \*

*Fifth.* He is a King. \* \* \* \*

*Sixth.* He is meek and lowly. Never one so lowly. He has no pride. It never touched His heart. We often cannot get access to one on earth who could give us rest outwardly, on account of his pride. We cannot get a word of him. Now, Christ is never so busy attending the rich but He can speak to the poor. I may say if there is a poor one in the company, He must be there. Did you see Him in the house of Simon, the Pharisee? He is engaged with poor Mary,

washing His feet with tears of godly sorrow for sin. Oh! are you poor in spirit?—can get nothing from the sermon, because He is not there? Can you tell to whom He is nearest in the company? To the poorest, most needy. He knows they have most need of rest, and He must be there. It is His office. If you had seen Him with His bowels yearning over Ephraim when he was chastised—behind the door, very dear to Him, though chastised. We may say He wept most of the two. Ephraim thought his tears very bitter, no doubt, but Christ's bitter tears were the source of Ephraim's tears, or he never had shed one drop. Is He not, then, well qualified to give rest? He wove a covering of His own righteousness; He washed sinners in His own blood; He gave them the fine wheat of His promises; He made a bed on His own bosom, and perfumed it with the fragrance of the rose of Sharon; and think you not that they have rest?

2. Consider who are invited to come. "All ye that are weary and heavy laden."

All are included in this call who have the word of the gospel. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; he that hath no money, come; why do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Here they are labouring, but have not the proper object in view. Ever since man went out from the bosom of God, he was labouring. "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread." Now, he invites all, even those who are seeking in a wrong way. He calls all present here to-day to come to Him. Do you shut yourself out? We offer Him to every individual here, and pray you to come to Him. You came here this day for various reasons, but all are seeking happiness and rest. Some have come from curiosity; some thinking they get good by going to church, but they know not what way; some from superstition, yet He says, "Come unto me all that are seeking rest," by whatever means. "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth." But now, though all are invited, all are not sensible

of burdens, but are dead and feelingless, and therefore do not come. They shall come who are made sensible of their burdens.

Who are labouring? and who heavy laden?

*First.* Those who have got their soul's salvation for their burden. "What shall we do to be saved?" is their question. They had souls before, but they did not know it. All their care was what shall we eat, &c.? But when they get their souls laid on their back as their burden, I may say their bodies go out of sight. They lose concern about their bodies. Were they in sickness, it is not the pain of the body, but the fear that on its dissolution the soul would enter eternal suffering, that makes them distressed. Christ said that one soul was of more value than the whole world. They are taught to be of the same opinion. Oh! have you an immortal soul laid upon you? Come to him with it, and He says, "I will give you rest." Are you afraid of hell? Aye, if you seem to be one foot in hell, come to Him? Oh! you cannot come. Well, look to Him? You cannot look. Breathe after Him? "Hold not thy peace at my breathing, at my cry." If you come, the burden of your soul will be taken off your hands.

*Second.* They have got a sense of sin upon them. Their sins were formerly light to them as a feather. They would own that they had sin, but it never gave them a heavy heart. Perhaps cheerful company or worldly gain would relieve them of all their trouble for sin; but when the Holy Spirit comes in saving conviction, sin will take such hold that nothing but the gracious communications of the Spirit through the Word, showing Christ in His all-sufficiency, and His atoning blood applied to the soul, will ease the burden. Have you seen sin in its vileness? The holy Jonathan Edwards was wont to say that during the revivals of religion in America, some would come and say they were as black as the devil. He would say, "If that be all, you are nothing to me. My sins are infinity added to infinity."

*Third.* Besides old sins, some have burdens of corruptions.

“Iniquities prevail against me,” says the Psalmist; vain thoughts foolish thoughts, sinful thoughts, perhaps directly against some one of the commandments, prompting to break it—perhaps blasphemous thoughts. Oh! my friends, there are more murderers than ever hung on a gallows, more unclean persons than ever stood before a congregation, more thieves than ever lay in a jail, more liars than ever were thought so among neighbours, more covetous persons than he who seized Naboth’s vineyard. Were the spirituality of the law to search this congregation, I believe that there would not one escape the charge of having broken every one of the commandments. Well, come with your heavy burdens to Him, and He will give you rest.

3. What is implied in coming. “Come unto Me.” This coming and believing are the same thing. “He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Now in this coming there are several things implied. It is a believing on Him as He is held forth in the gospel, as a Saviour every way suited to our cases, and, as the Catechism expresses it, “a receiving and resting upon Him as He is offered to us in the gospel.” It is the motions or movements of the soul quickened by the Holy Ghost, going out after Christ, and of various degrees of strength, according as the Spirit works on the soul to exercise that faith. But since it is represented here as a coming, we may mention a few things which it is a coming from.

*First.* It is a coming from unconcern. You are labouring under the Divine wrath—under the curse of the law. God’s arrows are, as it were, set against you—the bow bent, yet nothing moves you. What if He bend the bow? Where will you land?

*Second.* It is a coming from open sin. Oh! give over your drinking, dancing, lewdness, &c. If ever you meet with Him, He will take you out of that mire of sin in which you are. He cannot dwell in such a stable as your heart.

*Third.* It is a coming from worldly company. I think the

godly do hurt to themselves and to the world when they court its company for other ends than lawful business or profit to the souls of men. They injure themselves. I am sure they cannot enjoy God in a worldly company into which they enter causelessly. I think if they have not some special call in Providence or from the Word, if they go without an errand, they shall come back with one. They will likely have need enough of the "fountain opened" by the time they return. And they injure the company, by making them think there is little more in godliness than they have themselves.

*Fourth.* It is a coming from sloth. There are some who labour and are heavy laden; yet sloth folds their arms. They cannot move. Now, He will have means honoured as His own appointment. Oh! who can tell but some poor soul would have been delivered long ago by use of the proper means, for they are fitted for the end? Were the ceremonies under the law fit for their end? Yes, till He that was typified came. And He that appointed the means under the gospel knew that they were fit under the work of the Holy Spirit.

*Fifth.* It is a coming from self-righteousness. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Prayers, reading, meditation, hearing, are all defiled, and must be given up as ground of justification.

*Sixth.* It is a coming from your own faith. You cannot have belief without the Holy Spirit. Well, despair of self, and seek and cry till He lift you and lay you on Christ's bosom. In all your reading, and hearing, and praying, remember that there is not a word of it acceptable to God further than as it is moved by the Holy Ghost. This will make you to wait upon Him, and depend upon Him more every day. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." The prophet saw that nothing would be done till the Spirit should be poured out from on high. No more will it be with us. What is the reason that means and ordinances are so barren among us that scarcely do we hear of a single case of conversion in a year, aye; it may be



in many years? Why, we compliment the Spirit with mentioning His name, but we honour Him not in depending upon Him; and we are so untender in our walk that we grieve Him away from our hearts and souls. Oh! mourning, burdened, heavy laden person, try to wait for the Spirit. Luther says that a cry of "Abba Father" by the Spirit of Adoption can go further than all the howlings of despair; and so it can.

4. We remark briefly regarding this rest, that it is.

*First.* Rest with God. \* \* \* \* \*

*Second.* Rest of conscience. \* \* \* \* \*

*Third.* A sweet rest. \* \* \* \* \*

We conclude with a word of application. Here is a call to all to come to Christ. There may be some great sinners here, and if we were to ask such of you what is the greatest sin that ever you committed, some would be thinking of one and some of another. Well, I can tell every unbeliever what is his greatest sin. It is his refusing to come to Christ. The work of God is to believe on Him whom He has sent. This is His commandment, that we believe on Him. We lay His invitation before you, and we pray you to be reconciled. We lay his promise before you, and plead that you believe it. We lay His complaint before you—"And ye will not come," &c.—and beg you to remember it will appear again. We lay His sovereign command upon you, and ask how you shall meet Him with a refusal? You shall be welcomed if you come, however guilty, however polluted.

If you do not come—if you persevere in standing out, the time is coming when you shall no more hear "come," but "depart"—Oh! sad word—who can describe the misery implied in that sentence? He has sent it down that you may study it. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." I shall not enlarge upon these words, but leave them before you, and beg you never from this day let the sentence out of your view, till this text, or some part of Scripture, deliver you out of that sad number who

shall be told to depart. He now says "come," and to those who come now He will say at the great day, "come"—I may say an everlasting "come." May He who can open the ears of the deaf make us all to hear His voice, saying, "Come."

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WE regret our inability to publish any of the written remains of the late Mr. Gunn of Watten. The following letter from his son and successor in the ministry will explain the cause:—

WATTEN FREE CHURCH MANSE,  
31st March, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR,—In accordance with your request, I have made a careful examination of my father's MS. sermons, and have now to inform you of the result.

Among his papers I found a small memorandum book, in which, from 5th May, 1801 (when he was licensed to preach), to the 8th January, 1815, he had entered the text and date of every sermon he preached; and from the session records of Watten I have been able to continue the list down to 17th September, 1826. The session record in his time of a later date is in the Register Office, Edinburgh.

I can thus speak with certainty as to the dates of the MS. sermons; and I have to say, that while a large proportion of those dating from 1801 to 1810 are extant, and a few from 1810 to 1814, there is not one sermon, or even a scrap of notes or heads of sermons, from 1815 and onwards, in existence. We have therefore no written record whatever of my father's ministrations in by far the best and most useful period of his life, from 1815 to 1836.

In looking over the sermons which remain, one cannot help noticing the clearness of thought, force of expression, and moral earnestness of tone which they exhibit; but I do not think it advisable to publish any of these, as they give a very inadequate idea, on the whole, of his ministrations in after years. All his hearers, I believe, whose recollections go so far back, agree that

there was a remarkable advance in the spirituality and power of his preaching from about 1815 or 1816 and onwards; and it is a singular fact, that just at that date, his private record of sermons delivered breaks off abruptly, and is never resumed, and that nothing remains to indicate that he ever afterwards committed even notes of a sermon to writing. Another fact worth noticing is, that in many instances, while, so far as can be ascertained, only one sermon on a particular text was written—the same text in preaching occupied several, or even many, successive Sabbaths. I send you a few detached papers, to which I can assign no date, but, judging from the handwriting have no doubt that they date before 1812.

Had you asked me a year ago for letters, I would have supplied you largely—both with very interesting letters to my father from departed worthies, and with letters of his own on public matters, of which he kept copies; but these, with hardly an exception, were unfortunately burnt about a year ago.

With best wishes for the success of your forthcoming volume,  
—I remain, yours very truly,

ALEX. GUNN.

The Rev. Alex. Auld, Orlig.

# LETTERS

OF

REV. JOHN MUNRO.

*To Rev. David Mackenzie, Farr.*

HALKIRK, 10th Nov., 1831.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hear the venerable minister of Tongue is getting very feeble—I mean in the outward man. It is a comfortable reflection that at the time when “flesh and heart faint and fail,” it is then that the Christian obtains his most signal victory, being made “more than conquerors through Him that loved him,” saying (or the same as if he had said, whether he says it or not), “Oh death! where is thy sting? Oh, grave! where is thy victory?” The believer rests in a conquered grave, and will not leave anything there but his corruption, the worst thing he ever had. The Captain of his Salvation was there before him, lodged there three days and three nights. The grave won nothing by its Prisoner. Death and the devil reigned there uncontrolled before, but Jesus destroyed death and him that had the power of it, even the devil. He then lost the keys of death and hell, and let him do or say what he may, he shall never regain them; for the Conqueror is on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is in the midst of the Throne who says—and He says the truth—He cannot lie—“Fear not, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.”

“ Though Jordan’s streams be sadly dark,  
O’er flowing oft its banks,  
The flood must stay when comes the ark,  
For pass must Israel’s ranks.

Our ark has stood in Jordan once,  
 And cleared a passage through ;  
 Come, hear a voice—it cries, ‘ Advance,’  
 To all the ransomed now.”

Excuse me saying this in my own kind of verse. I beg, however, you will remember me to my venerable father at Tongue, offering him and Mr. Hugh, and Mrs. Mackenzie and Miss Russell, my kind regards. The Lord has been pleased to make a breach in the Presbytery of Tain. The Rev. Dr. Mackintosh has been called to his rest. The Lord strengthen and comfort his successor, and the widow and fatherless children. Time is rapidly passing. The Redeemer says, “ Be ye also ready.” Let us reply from the heart, “ Lord, make us ready ; Thou who workest in them who wait for Thee both to will and to do of Thy good pleasure ;” so shall we say, “ Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

I, Mrs. Munro, and Alexander unite in offering our kind regards to yourself and Mrs. Mackenzie. Tell Adam and Christy that we do not forget them, and that I am far from thinking I have got ahead of my work. Nevertheless, let us say, “ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, to whom be glory and honour, now and ever. Amen.”

My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

JOHN MUNRO.

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(*To the same.*)

HALKIRK, 5th Jan., 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,

I was favoured last week with your acceptable letter of the 25th ult., and am glad to find that you, Mrs. Mackenzie, and family are well. I was glad likewise to hear that my friend the

minister of Tongue was able to attend the funeral of Adam Bain. I am much obliged to you for the particular account you have given me of the illness and exercise of this departed friend. You and I feel the loss ; the Lord make it up. He has removed this vessel of mercy to glory, yet he can fill another with the same grace ; for the fountain is inexhaustible, and can not be diminished by imparting. While there are vessels on earth such as was our friend, the oil shall not be stayed. The streams that proceed from the water of life heal wherever they come, and rise from being ankle-deep till they are "waters to swim in." The water which Christ gives shall be in him who receives it "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Christ must see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied ; yea, He is seeing daily of this travail what satisfies Him, and yet we have to say, and it is our duty to say it, "Who hath believed our report ?" The Lord commands us to pray, "Thy kingdom come." Therefore His kingdom is coming. The Apostles would say as heartily on the evening of the Pentecostal Conversion Day, "Thy kingdom come," as they had done in the morning, although they had their thousands gathered in since the morning. And I have no doubt this shall be the prayer of the church of Christ even when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. For until the sound of the last trumpet, souls shall be effectually called, added to the church, made perfect in holiness, and brought to glory. Then believers being raised from their graves, the conclusion of the whole shall take place, their being called to rest with Christ in eternal glory. He that sat on the Throne said at the beginning of the Economy of Redemption, "Behold, I make all things new ;" and it is when He shall say "It is done" that the church militant shall cease to say "Thy kingdom come." Then, too, the petition shall be granted, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Offering you and Mrs. Mackenzie the compliments of the season, in which Mrs. Munro joins, and wishing to be remem-

bered to family at Tongue Manse, and to Christian Mackay, Achina, and the other friends in your parish,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

JOHN MUNRO.

*P.S.*—Tell Christian to be still saying, “The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.”

J. M.

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*To Mr. Alexander Sinclair, Thurso.*

EDINBURGH, 30th March, 1821.

MY DEAR SIR,

No person lacks something to say about the present world ; all feel deeply interested in its affairs. But there is no enjoyment of which it can boast without an alloy—no possession however well secured, of which its owner can say assuredly, “It shall be mine to-morrow.” An unsettled fluctuation pervades all that is earthly. “The world was made subject to vanity.” The voice from the Throne of the Eternal is, “Arise this is not your rest ; it will destroy you with a sore destruction.” “Arise, saith Jesus, let us go hence.” However, the Creator will have His revenue from His footstool until all the redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion. The Old Testament Church was in travail to bring forth the child of immaculate conception, even from the first mysterious announcement of his advent in Eden until the angels sang to the shepherds of Bethlehem the “glad tidings of great joy”—until the “Man compassed by a woman,” the hope of the whole church of God—was seen in the weak but invigorated arms of old Simeon, who, beholding the faithfulness of infinite love, exclaimed, as he gazed on all that was glorious on earth, “Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Now, Christ

laboured as the servant of the Father, bringing many sons unto glory, from the day that the virgin was removed from the inn to the stable, until, as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering, and said on the cross, between a blaspheming and a penitent thief, "It is finished." Then rising by His own mighty power from the grave, He returned and comforted the drooping-hearted disciples, remaining with them forty days, and removing every doubt as to His being He Himself. Thereafter He invested them with their commission, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature," and then ascended triumphantly in our nature into glory, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion," the Father addressing Him thus, "Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." The Father was well pleased with His undertaking to which He engaged in the Eternal Counsel. He was well pleased with His incarnation; He was the "proper child;" human nature became Him well. He was well pleased at His baptism, well pleased at Calvary, and well pleased as He appears in the midst of the Throne—the "Lamb as it had been slain." He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who alone opens the seals. To Him are addressed the words, "Gird thy sword on Thy thigh, O Thou Most Mighty." The Father is well pleased also with His reward. He has souls, ay, and bodies, too, given Him as His hire, and with them the Father is well pleased, and all that they do under the tuition of His own Holy Spirit is acceptable to Him. He is well pleased when they pray, well pleased when they sigh. He is the Shepherd—they shall not want. He is the door—they shall not find it too long shut. Are they languishing on beds? He will make their bed, and turn it all in their sickness. He has them here often tortured, not accepting deliverance, having trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, yet still well pleased with them—well pleased when they are wandering in sheep's skins and



goats' skins—destitute, afflicted, tormented. He calls them “those of whom the world was not worthy,”—“comely, through His comliness put upon them.” They shall at last come out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and He shall present them to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Their places are waiting them. He is gone to prepare their mansions, and He will be always with them on their journey. His word and Spirit will not be removed from the world till the wife has made herself ready to be for ever with the Lord.

Mrs. Munro and I offer kind love to yourself and Mrs. Sinclair. Remember me to my friends everywhere, and believe me,

My dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

JOHN MUNRO.

LETTERS  
OF  
REV. FINLAY COOK.

*To Rev. W. R. Taylor, Thurso.*

REAY MANSE, *October, 1841.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I intended writing you before you left Ross, but having put off from day to day, I heard at last that you had come home.

I ought to sympathise with you in your present distress. Although it is just what is common to man, yet it is not for the present joyous, but grievous. Flesh and blood must feel the stroke. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. You were not only a witness to the death of your parent, but it was a stroke with which you could not fail to be very deeply affected. However, I trust you can say, through grace, that though father and mother be taken from you, yet that the Lord liveth, and blessed be your Rock. It is a great mercy for the people of God that when they get chastenings, like others, they get theirs from a beloved Friend, who makes all things work together for their good. When He is pleased, in His holy providence, to visit us with the death of dear relatives, we must be "dumb, and not open our mouth" in rebellion against His dispensations. Let us be humbled for our sin, which is the cause of all our miseries, yet not be discouraged because of chastening; but by faith, patience, and supplication, draw strengthening grace from the fulness of Christ. It is thus that the people of God have got peace and safety in midst of their "great tribulation"—that they have got "meat out of the eater and honey out of the strong." Jesus knows how to feed His flock better than they do themselves. He knows how to give them rest in the time of trial,

when they are afraid of being mistaken as to their being on the way to Zion. He makes them first "come to themselves,"—"search and try their ways," as to wherefore He contends with them. He then brings them near Himself, comforting them, and showing them that He is the rest for their weary souls. He thus wins their hearts, so that they find it easier to love Him under the Cross than to love the world, and when the world cries, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," they cry, "Hosannah to the Son of David." The Lord has as much love to His people when he is chastising them as when He is comforting them. They are His purchase. His own image is upon them. They are the only persons in the world that glorify Him, and when He has no more to do in them, or with them, here, He gathers them home to His Father's house without spot or blemish, or any such thing.

The Lord prepare us for this great change, and make Himself better to us than friends or earthly relations. Kind regards to Mrs. Taylor.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

FINLAY COOK.

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*To Mrs. Taylor, Thurso.*

REAY FREE MANSE, *July, 1844.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I expect a visit from you at this time. I am here in a lonely part of the vineyard, but I have a large house,\* and a good many rooms in it. The first room I have is, "Who can tell?" This is a very large room, but a very cold one, and I would not advise my friends to stay long in it. The second room I have is, "Good hope through grace." This is a very

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\* Written on his taking possession of the Free Church Manse.

fine room, and I like to sit in it ; but through my neglect the robbers come in, and put the furniture out of order. The third room is "Love." This is a beautiful room, and there is always a fire in it, but I can seldom get access to it. The fourth room I have is "The secret chamber." The King Himself sits here, and we cannot get in till He opens the door and brings us in, and makes His banner over us to be "Love." Grace be with you all.

Yours affectionately,

FINLAY COOK.

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(*To the same.*)

REAY FREE MANSE, 17th Nov., 1856.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I take this opportunity of dropping a few lines to you, and beg to tell you (though you know it already) that Jesus Christ came to the world to save poor sinners, such as you and I are—that He purchased the church with His own blood, and now is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, these are the best news I can send you. As for myself, I have no good account to give. I am here like a pelican in the wilderness. I have a sickly body, a deceitful heart, and corrupt nature. I find the devil is busy, the world is cold, and myself walking in darkness, and having no light. I once thought to get to heaven on the wings of faith and love, but now I am convinced, if ever I get to that happy place, I must cut off first a leg, then an arm, after that pluck an eye out of my head ; also, all my lovers must be divorced. Lord, search me and try me ; leave no wicked way in me ; empty me from vessel to vessel, until Christ is made all in all.

I would be glad to hear how you are all at the Free Manse. You would be busy at the Communion time, so that you would find it difficult to keep the heart in a proper frame. However, the Lord is a present help in every time of need. I hope the

priests were clothed with salvation, and the saints shouting aloud for joy. It is indeed a great mercy for poor pilgrims that opportunities are given them to renew their vows and engagements, for those who are in proper exercise on such an occasion receive new strength from Christ to run the race set before them, and to fight the good fight of faith.

I cannot say there is any improvement in the state of my health. The leg is no better, and the complaint is still very troublesome ; but I have been enabled hitherto to preach on Sabbath, which is my greatest comfort in the world. All is well that ends well. There remaineth a rest for the people of God. It seems the road is very rough to that rest. But Jesus says, "In me ye shall have peace."

Will you write me a few lines at your convenience.

I remain, yours affectionately,

FINLAY COOK.

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*To Mr. David Steven, Bower.*

REAY, 12th October, 1840.

MY DEAR DAVID,

I have no news that's worth telling you. I was preaching yesterday to the poor people of Reay from Colossians 3rd and 1st,—“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” What is implied in being risen with Christ ? That they be made spiritually alive by regeneration—be partakers of His resurrection, begotten again to a lively hope—be members of His mystical body, as they are by nature branches of the old stock. They have now the Spirit of Christ in them, applying the redemption to their souls ; they are now spiritually minded, the carnal mind being partly destroyed. All that are risen with Christ are set on a sure foundation—made lively stones in the building—have on the righteousness of Christ ; and being thus brought into the family of God, the Holy Spirit

carries on the work of sanctification, until the heirs of glory are wholly prepared for their Father's house. They are now to seek their happiness above. Where their Head is, there the members must be also. Their Friend is above, and He will have all his friends there with Him. Their Brother is above, and all the brethren must be there also. Their Father is above—all the children must be there also. Their Husband is above, and having gained their hearts and taken them to heaven with Himself, and left His heart with them here, they cannot be happy till they get where He is, for "where the treasure is, the heart will be there also." There is a mansion above for every one of them—life above without death, light without darkness, joy without sorrow, health without sickness. But the poor believer has but a mixture of all these things while in the world. Again, it is their *duty* to seek the things that are above, and for this the spirit of prayer is necessary; and they are to seek in faith, which is the substance of things hoped for; they are to seek in hope, that at last they shall obtain mercy, notwithstanding their many difficulties, because they only seek the blessings that Christ purchased for them; they are to seek with patience, which must have its perfect work; they are to seek with perseverance, and not by fits and starts, like the world; and they are to seek under the Cross, for Christ sees it to be good for them to be under the Cross here, that they may be longing for the "rest that remaineth for the people of God." And those that seek the things that are above must here be fighting with the devil, the world, and the flesh, but their strength is in the Captain of Salvation; yea, they must seek the things that are above when they feel themselves dead, and plagued with an evil heart of unbelief, and with the corruption of their nature, in spiritual darkness, and shut out from God, as it were, in the belly of hell. When you read this, burn it.

I remain, yours truly,

FINLAY COOK.

*To Mr. Sinclair, Wick.*

REAY FREE MANSE, *July, 1851.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I long to hear from you, and to know how you all are. Friends are ready to forget one another when absent in body, unless they are by the grace of God kept at the throne of grace; and even then they are ready to become formal, lukewarm, and satisfied with words—no better than the Papists counting their beads. Oh! what need we have of the unction from the Holy One that teaches the Lord's people the mystery of the kingdom, keeping them poor in spirit, and making known their requests at a throne of grace "with groanings that cannot be uttered."

We live in a dark and cloudy day. All seek their own—not the things of Christ. "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed," is the cry, instead of "What shall I do to be saved?" But I need not put it from myself. "There is no place clean." Yet Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is the Good Shepherd, who takes care of the flock, that none of them shall be lost but the son of perdition. The mark of the sheep is that they know the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him. He keeps them always needy—sensible of their state as poor lost sinners—less than the least. Humility is just the badge of God's people, for He wishes to have all His family like His own Son, who was meek and lowly in heart.

Dear friend, time is fast passing. We must be diligent, working out our salvation with fear and trembling. "Oh! but," says the sinner, "how shall I do this? I am such a guilty creature." "Come to me," says Jesus; "I have power on earth to forgive sins." "But I have nothing to come with—nothing to bring with me but filthy rags." "Come to me," says Jesus, "and you shall have the best robe in the Father's house." "But I am a filthy creature, altogether as an unclean thing." "Though your sins be as scarlet," says Jesus, "they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool."

“But I am afraid He will not take *me*.” When did that fear arise? Was it when you began to have a concern for your soul? When does one begin to fear that the object of their affection will not regard them? Is it not when they begin to love that one? So is it with the poor soul thirsting for Christ. As soon as love to Christ is wrought in the sinner, he begins to fear that he shall be rejected at last. “But what if my day of grace is past?—what if the Lord has been provoked to leave me to the will of my enemies?—what if I have sinned the unpardonable sin?” “Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence to me.” This is mine infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.”

My love to all my and your friends, with your wife and child. Grace be with you. Pray, pray.

Yours affectionately,

FINLAY COOK.

*To Mrs. Auld.*

REAY FREE MANSE, 18th Dec., 1854.

MY DEAR CHRISTINA,

Your kind letter I duly received. Many thanks to you for remembering an old friend. I really thought that all my sweet-hearts had forsaken me. They are getting so cold and so shy that I am afraid I'll have none by and bye to look at me—only your dear mamma writes a letter occasionally for her debt. I should not indeed be complaining of others, for I am a very bad correspondent myself. Oh! if Jesus was as forgetful of us as we are of one another, what would become of us? He may be called the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end.” The beloved Saviour has been here seeking a wife for many years, and I have been speaking to them, sometimes coaxing them, sometimes threatening them, saying, “Will you or will you not go with the man?” but the answer I



get from them is "to-morrow." Alas! that to-morrow is so long of coming that we shall have nothing at last in the parish of Reay but poor withered old maids, so that the beloved Bridegroom will be forced to take up His flitting and remove to some other corner of the vineyard, where He may get a Rebecca that will willingly go with the man. Alas! I find myself and others so wedded to the first husband that I am convinced the old man must die before I give my consent to be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Now the bride has made herself ready when she hears the Father saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." Now the Bridegroom is received by faith, and love joins hands. Then the knot is tied so tight that nothing shall be able to separate the spouse from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now she is to remember that she is married to crosses, temptations, persecutions, &c. All her former lovers must be divorced. They will, indeed, often try to get back to the bed of love; but it is guarded with valiant men. "All hold swords in hand, being expert in war"—not only the former lovers disturb the poor spouse, but also the ghost of the old husband often appears like to frighten her out of her wits. These things make her weary of the world, wishing to be home to her own beloved husband, "when with gladness and rejoicing she shall be brought, she shall enter into the King's palace." But I am tired. I cannot go further. I cannot sit any time to write. I was rather poorly last night. I did not sleep much since two o'clock in the morning. I had a letter from Alick this morning. He is getting well again. I had also a letter from Mr. Walter not long ago.

Pray, pray. Grace be with you.

My dear Christina,

Yours affectionately,

FINLAY COOK.

*To Rev. A. Auld, Orlig.*

REAY FREE MANSE, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov., 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,

I was favoured with your kind letter long ago, and indeed I should have answered it sooner; but better late than never. But being poorly in health, and besides both indolent and forgetful—and looking on you as a friend, I trust you will forgive a poor sickly old man, ready to drop into the world of spirits. My journey through the wilderness is now near at an end, and the time is close at hand when I must give an account of my stewardship, which ought to be my great concern. I am very forgetful of this one thing needful; therefore it is now no wonder that I should forget my friends at Orlig. I am now thinking if the dear Saviour was as careless about us as we are of one another, what would become of us? But He has to do with poor sinners. Our help is laid upon One that is mighty. We then should take courage, going on in the strength of the Lord, making mention of His righteousness, praying for wisdom from above, that we may be kept in the path of duty, with a single eye, giving no offence to any, so far as we can. But if they are offended at the truth, we cannot help it. "Our rejoicing is this," says the Apostle, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." We may look for trouble, both external and internal, but the Lord keeping us near Himself, in the exercise of faith, in a praying frame, always afraid of grieving the Holy Spirit, we would at last come off more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. We may look for opposition in our profession; "but the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men—apt to teach, patient." There was a worthy man in Ross heard his son preaching one day, and after the service was over, the old man said to his son, "Is that the way you preach, Charles?" "I do the best way I can," said the young man. "No, no; that will never do. Send them all to hell, but do

not leave one there." It is now near fifty years since I began to preach to my fellow sinners the glad tidings of salvation. When I look back, I see cause to make me wonder at the Lord's goodness in bearing so long with such a cumberer of the ground. But I must be done. I may be called off the world soon. May the Lord raise up faithful witnesses for the good cause. Let me hear from you as soon as you can. My love to Mrs. Auld.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

FINLAY COOK.

LETTER  
OF  
ALEXANDER GAIR.

*To Mr. Joseph Mackay.*

REISGILL, 21st Jan., 1824.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Solomon saith, "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out;" and on reading your letter, I am happy to understand, by your account of your own case, that the messenger of the everlasting covenant hath in mercy visited you with the refiner's fire, to purify your soul and to burn the stubble of corruption that is in your heart.

He that hath his fire in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem, knows that Satan hath hampered the heart of mankind with all his infectious plagues and deadly pollutions. Now, the righteous soul that Lot got in regeneration was grieved every day at seeing the unlawful deeds and hearing the blasphemous words of the Sodomites, especially when they surrounded his house on the day that the holy angels came for his delivery and their destruction. So when grace is implanted in the soul, corruptions in the unrenewed faculties begin to stir to a terrible degree. I see in Scripture that the manner of the Lord's dealing with His people is that He brings them to a wilderness to prove them, and to let them see what is in their hearts. "The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light, as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house, and a serpent did bite him." I think the "lion" is the guilty conscience, the "bear" the blasphemous heart, and the "serpent" is the flesh that warreth against the spirit. The soul is the field of battle, the battle being pitched in the valley of experience. Conscience

sounds the alarm, and Christ orders the combat on the very ground on which Satan gained the victory. In the 5th chapter of Galatians you will see Satan's seventeen pieces of artillery levelled at the breast in which Grace is lodged, the commanders-in-chief being Ignorance and Unbelief. Satan as surely tempts gracious souls in a state of grace as he tempted Adam in the state of innocence, and although he did not prevail, yet I fear I am not truly mortified to corruption. If so—if we would give up our Benjamin—Joseph's presence would be with us in all our doubts and fears; for I have to tell you that when the prophet prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened, it was to see the mountain surrounded with chariots of fire. Every drop of Christ's blood is a chariot of fire, and He promises to be a wall of fire around them and in the midst of them, and that wall of fire will preserve them from being consumed by the fire that is within themselves. The spear pierced sweet Jesus side, that blood and water might flow from His heart—blood to redeem their souls, and water to drown the fire of sin and Satan in their hearts.

The brazen serpent was the only remedy for the fiery serpent, and we must be brought to the foot of the Cross, there to have our soul's enemies laid low, to have our "Absaloms" slain with "Joab's" three darts—the dart of prayer, the dart of repentance, and the dart of faith.

Yours, &c.,

ALEX. GAIR.

LETTERS  
OF  
JOHN SUTHERLAND.

*To Mr. Sinclair, Thurso.*

BADBEA, 12th July, 1838.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have nothing particular to write you—only I know that you are lonely, and I have heard that you are poorly. You need not expect to get free of these as long as your pilgrimage will be in this weary wilderness—neither will I. Although I cannot put myself among the true sojourners that are going Zionward, mourning as they are going, and enquiring for the way, yet I know that the heritage and weariness are connected with each other, and cannot be separated as long as we will be in the valley of tears; but happy are those that it is said of them, “They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Alas! alas! poor me—my sighing and mourning are not running in the true channels. Christ was the fountain or well of sorrows in this wilderness—“a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” My proud heart will not submit or bow so low as the stable or the manger, to see the blessed Babe in Mary’s lap. The wonderful sight caused the wise men to open their treasures, and pour forth frankincense and myrrh; but I have Herod in my bosom, that slew all the children, that slew every tear and sigh. I cannot weep now, and no wonder. He knoweth what I was doing with them. The gentleman (pride) wanted tears to satisfy self, seeking self-interest, self-credit from the church, and to be esteemed in this cold day; and that made my fleece dry, when others are wet and full of dew.

Give my kind respects to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. Tell Mr. T. that I am farther from what he was wishing me to do than I

was when he saw me.\* Let him look for another. I believe that there is not any man so miserable as the man that would take a public call in the church, and not be called from above. Best wishes to Mrs. Mackay, Hotel. I hear that her son is very poorly. "In patience possess ye your souls." I would be glad to hear from you. My afflicted sister is in great distress.

I am, my dear Friend, your affectionate,

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

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(*To the same.*)

BADBEA, 9th June, 1846.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am missing that I am not hearing from you. I acknowledge that it was you that wrote last, but I am slow at every commanded duty. I am frail and tender in body. He is showing me, as it is said in the blessed Rule, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord showed me, saith Peter. But, alas! the more I am approaching the world of spirits the more I am hardened and more careless and negligent, as if void of true concern for having my calling and election sure. I may be shaping many things, and have some marks, as if He had dealt with me effectually by the Holy Ghost; but, alas! I may be deceived, for to enter the world of Spirits is another thing—more so than I can conceive. Some of the eminent fathers said, at the Straits of Jordan, what they were formerly taking for gold was now brass, and what they had as silver was now copper. Oh! to have a mint of the gold tried in the fire—the gold that was tried by heaven and hell, by hypocrites, by men and devils; yet the Father's Beloved kept His blessed weight and currency.

Now, please write soon to your ever-attached friend,

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

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\* John was wished to become a catechist in Thurso.

LETTERS  
OF  
WILLIAM CAMPBELL.

HALKIRK, *October 26th*, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your kind favour of the 19th inst. When lying awake last night I was thinking of the power and grace of Him who is called "Emmanuel" the origin of whose mercy to sinners is to be found in the Divine mind, and who in the fullness of time and in the capacity of a servant, began, carried on, and finished the work of redemption. This is called the "mystery of godliness," and surely the treatment He receives at the hands of sinners who despise and refuse His grace, may be called the mystery of ungodliness. The Jews preferred a murderer to the blessed Saviour, and I need not look down upon them, for there is in me what prefers that murderer to the Prince of life and peace. What need that the Holy Spirit would begin and carry on a good work in my lost soul so that I could in some measure prize Him whose name is Emmanuel. I believe it will be the exercise of the redeemed in Glory, to be eternally travelling between four extremes to be found in the name of Emmanuel; the unsearchable riches of His mediatorial glory—the unsearchable poverty to which He in His humiliation subjected Himself—the unsearchable poverty from which He rescues them, and the unsearchable riches which by reason of His imputed righteousness they possess. But my loss is that I am far from reaching what I would be at as a debtor to this infinite grace, although when I consider how truly in earnest the



great adversary is for securing his prey ; I should wonder I am still on the earth where the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins \* \* \*.

Yours sincere friend,

WILLIAM CAMPBELL.

HALKIRK, *June 12th*, 1872.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am not in a mood for writing to-day, although surrounded with outward mercies, and if not deluded, I would not wish to have these as my only portion. If I could say in sincerity, "I am less than the least," or as a west country worthy once put it, "I never saw one that I thought had a spark of grace but I would put him *before* myself, yet I would not like to see myself put *behind* a hypocrite."

I have a houseful of spiritual foes ; unbelief, formality, vain glory, pride, carnality, &c., yet it is part of the ways of Him whose ways are past finding out, that although He could rid me of all these, He often allows those to whom He has a love without bottom or shore to be trodden down and trampled on by these foes. You heard what godly John M'Kain said to a neighbour who met him very early one morning returning from a lonely spot in the hills where he used to retire for secret devotion. "You are out very early, John," said the man. "Yes I am," was the reply, "and I'll tell you the reason. I have a heart as black as the devil, but I have a conscience made tender by the blood of Christ, and I was out trying to preserve my conscience from my heart."

The good-will of Him that dwells in the bush be with you and yours.

Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM CAMPBELL.

LETTERS  
OF  
DAVID BUDGE.

BARROCK, DUNNET, *28th March*, 1869.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am here a burden on the earth through infirmities and old age. But you are yet in the golden days of youth, when the mind is lively and active, and the body vigorous. So improve your season. See if you can do anything unknown to Satan, if you can bow your knee unknown to him, or meditate on the Word unknown to him, although what is in ourselves is worse to us than he is. For my part, sin has so overspread the faculties of my soul, that Satan has no need to leave his den for me. But seek you to learn something of the love that brought the Son of God from heaven to earth to destroy the works of the devil, and which is shed abroad in the hearts of God's children. By that love Christ draws sinners to Himself, yea, it drew even a lame Mephibosheth to the King's table, and although he wanted the "feet" of an assured faith to stand upon, yet he had two hands—hope and fear, and what hope would be getting fear would be throwing away; so it is from hand to mouth Christ's family live—they have no storehouse in themselves but in Him who loved them, and he can cause the fruits of love to grow in that soil of love which He has implanted in their hearts, for love will only grow in love and will not grow in the soil of old nature. Satan's crop can grow well there, and he is not at a loss what to sow. Oh! that I could tell you more about the love of Christ, for He has given me many proofs of it, so that I see it is the same to-day, as on

the day He entered into Covenant in a past eternity on behalf of His family. Oh! that I could love Jesus, that I could do something for His glory and cause and people. Oh! that I could lay hold of Him in love, for love will keep hold. It was love in Him moved Him to take hold of them, and sin in them did not cool that love. Oh! to get such love to Him as would stand in the face of unbelief within, and of opposition and reproach without.

My cold love to you all.

Yours,

DAVID BUDGE.

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BARROCK, *Nov.*, 1871.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I suppose by this time you are back from Thurso sacrament. I hope you got Benjamin's portion, and the New Testament Joseph to carve for you, and He that wrestled with Jacob to sit at the head of the table and bless you, then you would have a feast indeed, and would be left little in your own eyes. Oh! the love of Christ to sinners; when I try to think of it I forget myself; it would make a weak man strong, a poor man rich, a proud man low, yea, he that was everything in his own eyes to be nothing, and he that had nothing in himself—to have something and to spare. Now, go to this fountain of the love of Christ, and seek to draw; but when you go, leave pride behind, and send self on another errand, for if either of these are about, you will come back as poor as ever, Oh! be content to creep as a lost sinner to the edge of the ocean of love like her that would take her place among the dogs below the table to get a crumb from the hand of love. But alas! how backward I am to this. When Jonah displeased his Father he was sent to the sea and to the whale's belly, and although he was brought out again, he did not leave his sin behind in either

the sea or the whale's belly. I think I would be content to go even to the whale's belly if I could leave my sin behind me there, so that I would get one day on this earth to praise the Lord for His wonderful love to my soul, without sin or self destroying my attempt, and robbing Christ of His glory.

Write a note soon. We are all in a measure of health.

Yours,

D. BUDGE.

LETTERS  
OF  
DAVID STEVEN,

*To John Sutherland, Badbea.*

BOWER, 23rd September, 1863.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry I did not see you when at Lybster. But I was afraid to be so long from home, as my aged sister is liable to sudden attacks which threaten her end ; and I am still the fool that cannot trust Him that rules all. I long to see you for my old friends are mostly all home at their rest, and those that are taking their place think themselves so wise with a head full of knowledge and noise, that the soul exercises of the flock of Christ are foolishness to them. There were a few men in this neighbourhood very agreeable and exemplary, but they are taken away, and I am left alone with a carnal mind, a prayerless spirit, a shut Bible, and, alas, a stranger to the *true* knowledge of what I know of the letter of the Word ; so that my ignorance lies closer to my heart and soul than my knowledge.

I like to think of the godly remnant that I saw, and am glad I saw them, although I often fear they will see me on the left hand on that great day.

I was in Thurso lately at the ordinance, and felt it refreshing ; but my wretched corrupt nature soon poisons all, and then I am back in the mire again. But who can tell but I may get mercy and pardon yet ? You will say, that is not much, "Who can tell ?" But it is much to one that is hundreds of times in the dark as to his state for eternity, and himself the cause of his darkness. There are not many to whom I could unbosom

my case—yourself and William Ross. As to the most of the rising professors I may say, as Kitty Tait, Quarrycrook, used to say, “There are many that will tell me of their white things, but few to sit down with me in the mire.” . . . .

Your attached Friend,

DAVID STEVEN.

*To Mr. Daniel Loutitt.*

BOWER, 4th Jan., 1866.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

A Good New Year to you and Mrs. Louttit and your whole household, and as many returns of years as the Good Shepherd of Israel has determined, and that you and yours may get a spring-time after a dark winter. May you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd that calls His own by name and leads them out from the world that lies in the wicked one, who think to reconcile what God has separated in His word, and expect to go to heaven when they die.

Satan got the lie put into the hearts of our first parents—“Ye shall not surely die;” and, oh! how that is in the heart of each of us by nature until the Lord in His redeeming love put truth in the inward parts. Satan is pouring a flood of error out of his mouth through the press in order to swallow up the Church. Christ and Belial are mustering their forces, and Satan has men of great natural talent in his service, for when he goes to ride, he does not take the worst horses. But who will gain the day? This is not doubtful; the Church of Christ is founded on a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. But this is a sleepy time; the wise and foolish virgins are slumbering and sleeping; fathers and mothers of former times are away from us at their rest. I saw some of them that had the spirit of prayer and wrestling like Jacob, and

were not ignorant of Satan's devices. But we are at ease in Zion. Alas ! I cannot cast a stone at any for this ; I feel it to my cost.

I have had a cold, and cough, but am getting better. But I find that although put into any furnace, unless the Blessed Refiner do His work, we will come out worse and harder than before. May the Good Shepherd bring into the green pastures of His blessed word, and give foretastes of the river of life, that makes glad the Church militant, and also the Church triumphant, where they have pleasures to the full for evermore.

Yours, &c.,

DAVID STEVEN.

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(*To the same.*)

BOWER, *11th April*, 1866.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind note. If I could do anything to oblige you, it were well my part, but to go to the General Assembly in your stead would be very assuming indeed. I wish that the Good Shepherd of Israel may overrule all their actions.

I fear something will be brought before this Assembly that will be a bone of contention in the Church. The Psalms are old and old-fashioned, and something new must take their place, although multitudes of Christ's flock, now singing before the throne, have been by them fed and nourished. When the northern counties were in heathen darkness and black Popery, the Lord sent the tide of the Gospel north, which brought fertilizing power to God's husbandry in Christ. What precious crops of wheat were raised for Heaven's granary in the northern counties ! But now the wind and tide, coming from the south, is not to fan and to cleanse, but to corrupt. Old sinful pleasures are re-modelled under new names.

Well does Satan know how to bait his hooks, and spread his

nets. I am sure that those who saw better days, if they have a well-grounded hope, need not regret that their sun is so near its setting. \* \* \*

Yours affectionately,

DAVID STEVEN.

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*To Mrs. Auld, F.C. Manse, Odrig.*

BOWER, 17th Oct., 1863.

DEAR MRS. AULD,

I received your kind letter, for which I heartily thank you. A note from a friend is like a mouthful of fresh air to one living in sickly confinement. I am much troubled with a carnal mind, so that I am like one bereaved of his judgment, wandering on the mountains of vanity. They are happy that have got a spiritual mind ; it will make one to sow to the spirit, whereas the carnal mind keeps one sowing to the flesh.

Dear friend, I have been reading the letter of the Bible for a very long time, and I thought I got some jewels in it about 45 years ago. But I find I must be brought back to the A B C, to learn to find the pearl of great price, that I may sell all my jewels, and buy this field in which the person of Christ is so infinitely and incomprehensibly set forth. The Lord's people have got cabinets in which to lock up their jewels, and it is their wisdom to be doing so. But it is not at all times they can open this, and view what it contains. Sometimes experience is so dark that they cannot see that ever they got a token for good from the Lord. But the next time the light of His countenance shines on their souls, it will take off the covering off all the former, and they will see the unchangeableness and faithfulness of Him whose gifts and callings are without repentance.

May the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush be with you.

Yours affectionately,

DAVID STEVEN.



(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 4th May, 1864.

DEAR MRS. AULD,

I received your welcome note this morning, for which I thank you.

I am glad you have your feet on the ground. In England you know there is a Vauxhall, from which people go up in balloons ; but O ! how many Vauxhalls are in our own country, yea, in our own hearts. I hope you are not allowed to do what is natural to you—to lie down on a Laodicean couch and take rest.

I was thinking last night of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, washing His feet with her tears, and wiping them with her hair, although, alas ! I had none of her feast. In her feast there was sorrow, godly sorrow, and joy unspeakable. This is a paradox, yet true. There was more joy in her sorrow than all the joy the world affords, because of an infinitely different kind. She was a pardoned sinner, and He had pardoned her who alone had a right to do so. She was given to Him of His Father, and He was about to shed His heart's blood for her.

Dear friend, there is no true sweetness in legal hope or merit ; true happiness must come through the same channel whence Mary received it. Go with all your wants and doubts, and fears, and perplexities, and endeavour to pour them all out in secret ; as the late Mr. Cook, Reay, used to say—"Count down your sins to Him, and He will count down His grace to you."

I daresay you have heard that the people of Bower, along with other friends, have given me a mark of their esteem. I am ashamed of myself ; so utterly unworthy of it, it has quite overwhelmed me.

I remain, yours with much affection,

DAVID STEVEN.

*(To the same.)*

BOWER, 27th March, 1865.

MY DEAR MRS. AULD,

I received your kind letter on Saturday. I am glad to inform you it is not the small-pox that has laid ———— aside, but an influenza, and he is recovering. It would be a mercy if affliction would shake us out of old Adam's rags, and that we would get the coat that is without seam, woven from the top to the bottom. It cannot be pieced or parted; and He that created heaven and earth, and that holds all things, divested Himself of heaven's glory, and became so poor that He had not where to lay His head, when He was working out this garment. And more amazing, He did this for rebels, who deserved to be cast into hell; and for them He shed His blood on Mount Calvary, that in this garment they might appear white and clean. The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush be with you.

Yours,

DAVID STEVEN.

*(To the same.)*

BOWER, 13th May, 1865.

DEAR FRIEND,

I was not worse either in body or spirits for being at Orlig. If not deluded, my bodily frame is better when I get any warmth of spirit. I have nothing at any time when speaking publicly but confused matter, being an unlearned man. But as for recommending Christ to others to cast all their burdens on Him, I would desire when expedient to do so, and also to say that the Lord is not a God afar off to those who seek Him. I had a storm of temptations before going to see you; but the stork, that unclean bird, makes her nest in the fir tree. That thought encouraged me. Oh! to fly to the

clefts of the Rock that is higher than we, there to taste the love of God in Christ ; otherwise, we cannot have true rest or enjoyment here or hereafter.

In thinking that you run to broken cisterns in wishing others to pray for you, it is not so at all ; it is just going to the one Fountain, seeking there to obtain communion with God and with fellow-believers. I am far behind in this ; far behind the fathers and mothers I was acquainted with. Although the Lord has a small remnant yet in our land, what a poor generation of professors we are ! We are like a few coals lying scattered on a hearth covered with ashes, hardly any signs of life in them. The vital spark of true godliness, as it appears in a spirit of prayer wrestling for ourselves and others at a throne of grace, is away. There are some ministers and others angry with us for speaking about the fathers and mothers we saw ; but we cannot but do so, when we see and feel how far we are behind them in this and other exercises of grace. O ! wonderful that we are left on His footstool, bearing His name, and yet trampling on His goodness and long-suffering.

And that bright star in our church has set—the Rev. Archibald Cook—one of deeper acquaintance with Divine things than has appeared for many a day.

The Lord be with you and yours.

Yours with much regard,

DAVID STEVEN.

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*(To the same.)*

BOWER, 20th July, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have been much hindered, through many temptations, from writing to you. When in our difficulties we consult only with our own wisdom, no wonder that every small straw stumbles us. No poor sinner's standing is in himself ; we must be kept

near the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for His sheep. When we lose sight of Him, we wander in a wilderness where there is no way.

You were lately at the communion at Thurso. I was not able to go. I hope you got the hunger that the poor woman got, who did not think she was ill-named when she was compared to a dog. O, to be brought to this low ground ; then Christ would be precious to us.

I am thinking of going to Watten sacrament, if permitted. I am like a poor man I remember to see when I was a child. He used to beg, and people were harsh to him for this, saying he had plenty of the world, and had no need to beg. Now the poor man was the worse of having the name of riches, when he had them not. I am like that poor man, carrying the name of a Christian before the eyes of the world ; and, oh, it is sad to want the spirit of Christianity, and to be carrying a hard and stony heart, a carnal mind, and a dumb and prayerless spirit. You will find my case truly in Psalm cii., verse 11.

My dear friend, pray that I may get drops out of the river of life, for I am like a poor prodigal, who has mis-spent all. As one of the godly fathers said, "When the Lord is pleased to give us some refreshing, we soon sin it away, and then we may as easily put our hand on the sun in the firmament as bring ourselves back to that frame of soul." Yet, if we could ask, we would receive, according to His promise, who hath said, "He will turn again," &c.

Yours, with much regard,

DAVID STEVEN.

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(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 30th December, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind note of the 25th curt., and was glad to hear from you. You speak of lukewarmness. I can shake

hands with you in that any day, and have also to complain of such carnality and stupidity, as that I am not able to wonder at the Lord's long-suffering and forbearance with my leanness and barrenness. Alas! we are at ease in Zion, taking rest in the form of godliness.

It is very natural for believers to be more taken up with the gifts and refreshings flowing from Christ than with Christ Himself. The wonderful person of the Redeemer, as set forth in the Old and New Testaments, was what the faith of the saints centred in and rested on. It was the infinite dignity of His person that gave infinite value to His glorifying of the Father, in finishing the work He gave Him to do. Woe is me that I am such a stranger and alien, that I cannot love Him who is and will be the desire of all nations. It is in the person of Christ, in His finished work, that the law is magnified, and that justice is satisfied, so that God is just when He justifieth the poor sinner that believeth in Jesus. It is in the person and work of Christ that the Father hath declared Himself to be well pleased, and it is there that rest is to be found when all else is dark. But you say, how shall I get into this rest? In the record of the Old and New Testaments Christ is set forth, and it is your duty and interest to read and to meditate on the wonders of redeeming love there declared; the poor sinner thus spreading his little sails, the blessed Spirit of God may some day breathe upon him, and sail him into the harbour of rest.

I have been confined to the house lately with a cold, but am better, and was out last Sabbath. My days of going any distance from home are fast drawing to a close.

Yours, with much regard,

DAVID STEVEN.

(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 18th Feb., 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am always troubling you with my complaints, but I have cause above many to wonder that I was not long ago cast out of the Lord's sight. If I were right, I would find these words sweet, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." I believe it is because we are not brought low in ourselves that Christ is to us as a root out of a dry ground. O, how blind and hardened I am—cannot look on the Bible but with carnal eyes—cannot meditate but with a carnal mind—cannot draw the contrast between what a vile sinner is in himself, only fit to be cast out of God's sight into everlasting misery, and what redeeming love makes him, in pardoning and sanctifying, and making him fit to be among His jewels at last. It is for want of beholding this wonder that I am kept so dead. Alas! the fault is my own. His hand is not shortened that it cannot save, but I sin and grieve His Holy Spirit. I am slothful also, and need a spring time in my soul—a latter growth before the long winter. I long to hear from you. Remember me to Mr. Auld.

Yours, my dear Friend, sincerely,

DAVID STEVEN.

(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 30th August, 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind and welcome letter. A note from a friend is next to seeing them face to face, "As iron sharpeneth iron." I think I am in your debt two letters, and I am deeper in debt to Him who made all things. O, wonderful that He

should heap coals of the fire of love on the head of a vile rebel ! This is indeed what breaks the sinner's heart, and lays him at Christ's feet. But these experiences are golden hours—seldom realised.

When the sacrament was in Wick last time you looked very poorly, and things looked dark, but I got that word—"He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind," and I knew there would be a calm, and that the frail vessel would come to the shore once more. I feel for you, and sympathise with you. Your burdens will be made up of many kinds, some of which you cannot tell to the nearest and dearest in the world, and many things that whole professors would laugh at as weakness. Sometimes things that are nothing to some will trip you when you have to grapple with them, and at other times greater things cannot do this, which shews us that our standing is not in ourselves, but as the Lord upholds us. Many black mouths you must listen to—your own heart, the tempter, &c. Many wildernesses you will have to go through, but when the wilderness is within you, that is the most doleful of any. But go with all to the Lord, whatever it be. As to temporal things, we must put a blank in the Lord's hand, asking, with submission to His will, that he would give us what He sees best for us, as we know not what is most for our own good ; but as to spiritual things, He has willed in Christ Jesus to give us all that pertains to life and godliness, and invites us to cast all our cares and burdens on Him, spiritual and temporal. I would not think much of the Christian that can do anything without the Lord's care, for we are unholy, unruly, unwatchful, and untender—there is no life like one of dependence on Himself.

As to trials and temptations, do not sit brooding and poring over a difficulty, or parleying over a temptation, otherwise you will come off the loser ; and when you cannot utter the matter in words, as is sometimes the case, lie in the attitude of prayer before the blessed Advocate who knows their need better than they do themselves.

I am afraid you cannot read this, my hand is so unsteady. No wonder, many a shake it gave in serving Satan.

May the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush be in you and with you, and then you shall not want.

Your attached Friend,

DAVID STEVEN.

*(To the same.)*

BOWER, 22nd October, 1867.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I try this day to write you, the first time since I have been laid aside in the wonderful providence of Him who is the incomprehensible Jehovah. O that I could say, as it is written in the 7th chapter of Micah, "Who is God like unto Thee?" I have cause to wonder that I am not cast out of His sight. When the Bible is shut and sealed, and is not speaking to me, what hard work it is to open it in private and in family worship. O what sad work does my unbelief make them, and with what evil questionings does Satan pursue me! O, what can come up in our souls but thorns and briers, until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high.

I have again been going to the old hearthstone, where I have had many a sweet Sabbath night among old and young. Widow Waters and family, the Bower Tower people, and others, are still coming, although I am now useless to myself and to them.

I have a great many things to say, but cannot until I see you; and I am afraid you cannot get up just now, with the forming of the new road.

Dear friend, yours with much regard,

DAVID STEVEN.



(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 18th December, 1867.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received yours of the 11th. I regretted that the Sacrament was observed in Odrig and Halkirk the same week ; but the Good Shepherd could lead His poor sheep to the green pastures in both places at the same time ; yet I know it makes a blank to be deprived of the company of those who would wish to be with us.

The passage of scripture you had spoken to on Friday has put many a soul to deep thoughts and searchings of heart, when they feel the strivings of a body of sin and death, and the deep depravity of their fallen nature. Saving faith makes the sinner one with the first Adam in his fallen condemnation, and one with Christ in His obedience, death, resurrection and triumph over death, hell, and the grave. Read Romans, chaps. 5 and 6. I am sometimes looking into them ; but, oh, my ignorance and my want of the sanctifying experience of the truth there contained ! Yet, what can we do but go to the field where pearls are to be found, and where many have got what they will never forget here or hereafter.

Send me a few lines as soon as you can.

Yours with much regard,

DAVID STEVEN.

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(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 16th January, 1868.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In your note of the 25th ult. you expressed a fear that Mr. Kennedy might get a call to London. Mr. Kennedy gives evidence that he is a minister of the Lord's making, and He

will send him with His message wherever He has work for him to do. The poor North of Scotland has need of him ; and were he to go elsewhere, he would find he left much of his "library" in Scotland, and would miss them. Alas ! minister's libraries are very thin, compared to what they were in his young days, although the general cry is that they are on the increase, and if noise is to be taken for substance, that is true. I am to leave the case with Him who ruleth all, and bid you to read for yourself regarding it Isaiah xxx. 20—"And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

I have had some trying temptations lately from Satan and the world and my own heart, which unhinged me a good deal ; but it was all kept within this sinful bosom of mine, which has been long a battle-field. We are strong Christians untried ; but when we have trials to meet, we do not find it child's play. We then may see that our standing is not in ourselves—that we need Him who said to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still"—and that it is when He keeps the heart that enemies will not gain the victory.

Satan is a subtle enemy. If a poor soul gets a drop of the water of life, or a crumb of the bread of life, they are apt to think that their mountain stands strong, and Satan takes advantage of their ease to lead them astray. O ! that we were wise to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

I hope you got no cold after being here. Remember me to Mr. Auld, and tell him to hide the corn from the Midianites till he gets a commission to go forth against them to battle.

My love to you all, such as it is.

Yours,

DAVID STEVEN.

(*To the same.*)

BOWER, *May 14th*, 1868.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I would have written you sooner, but we had some people labouring our little farm. I have been much grieved also lately by seeing so much fighting and cutting one another down in the public prints. To see the ungodly world do so would not be strange; but to see professing Christians doing so, is truly sad. I wish that the one thing needful may not fall through the fingers of many professors of religion, and be lost as to them. We live in times more critical than we are aware of. Vital and practical godliness is very low. We have grieved the Holy Spirit, and what can come up but thorns and briars? O that the poor remnant in His church might yet experience the sweet fragrance of the Rose of Sharon. This would set our affections where He is.

I was obliged to you for sending me the notes of your father's sermon. It was precious, and I was the better of it. As godly Mr. Sinclair of Thurso used to say of him—"He is a good carver, and gives each one his portion on his own plate."

Last Sabbath evening I got a little reviving to my withered heart, from that precious little book, the Shorter Catechism, when considering with the young people the Second Petition—"Thy kingdom come." That small compendium of divine truth is much neglected by the rising generation, and likely to be more so.

The Good Shepherd of Israel keeps His sheep at short counts with Him—making them need daily throughbearing; at night committing soul, body, and family to Him, and in the morning thanking Him for His care through the night, and imploring His blessing for themselves, for the church of God, and for poor sinners. We never read of any coming to Him

under a sense of need, that He put away ; so He keeps them living a dependent life on Himself for time and eternity.

Yours affectionately,

DAVID STEVEN.

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(*To the same.*)

BOWER, 14th November, 1868.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have been too long in writing you, but it is not neglect of you or yours. I am daily in your house, although you may not be bettered by that. I hope you were at the Thurso communion, and got some longing for the breathing of Him who is the feast Himself, and finished it on Mount Calvary.

I was right glad of the few words you sent me from Mr. Kennedy's sermon. I hope you got a crumb of the bread of life ; but we must look further than earthen vessels, when hearing His faithful servants—to Himself who has all fulness, that we may get drops from the fountain to enable us to follow Himself, and glory only in the Lord. Unless we get our anchor cast within the veil, every blast from earth or hell will toss us as chaff before the wind.

Alas ! I am full of spiritual diseases, destitute of true humility, of true faith, and of the mainspring, love to the Lord Jesus. But the Good Shepherd changes not, and supports and upholds, else we could not keep our grip of Him. Unbelief often says that it is presumption for such as we to flee to Him, and some strong professors, on the other hand, think to brow-beat all doubts and fears—thinking that to do so is faith. But true faith makes the poor sinner flee to Him who is the hiding-place, and to lay all their doubts and fears and diseases at His feet. In hope of hearing from you soon,

Yours very sincerely,

DAVID STEVEN.

(*To the same.*)

BOWER, *January 24, 1869.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Although you were brought near the gate of death, it was shut, because He that destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, had not signed your passage-warrant, nor given you what would pay your fare over this Jordan. Glory to His name! He never gave a promise but He fulfilled it. Don't attempt coming to Bower too soon ; but I will be glad to hear from you as soon as you like.

I have had several siftings and searchings since I wrote you last. Many sparks have been thrown into this body of sin, some of which, I believe, you have felt ; but it has been the lot of many in their wilderness course. "Think it not strange," the Apostle says, "concerning the fiery trial that is to try you ;" and when this is the case, the poor soul cannot live on old cost, but needs fresh food for new labour and trial. Our loss is that we are slow to seek this, and grapple with trouble in our own strength ; then Satan, the forger of lies, works on our weakness and unbelief, casts a dark shadow on every dispensation of Providence, and even gets us to misconstrue the dealings of the Prince of Life with our tossed souls. O, what need of wings to flee to the stronghold! "He giveth power to the faint." You say, "I can't take hold of that." I know you can't, in my sad experience. But look at it, think of it ; and if it take hold of you, you will take hold of the faithful Promiser in the promise.

Last Saturday, I got a breathing as in Psalm xciv. verse 19— "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul ;" and again Sabbath evening, in reading the 10th chapter of John, was led to think of the marks that characterize Christ's true sheep, and what is implied in hearing His voice and following Him. The field was wide and glorious ; but oh, my blindness! And yet the savour of the field is much

to one when faint. Indeed, I thought I was like a child that its mother would be feeding. The day was—in its youth—it must have this and the other dainty with its piece; but wait till poverty and hunger and cold pass over it, it will be glad to get a crumb of what once it thought little of. I should wonder that I am yet in the place where others obtained mercy.

Yours affectionately,

DAVID STEVEN.



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