

THE
"APOSTLE OF THE NORTH"
—
THE
LIFE AND LABOURS
OF THE
REV. DR. M'DONALD



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THE LIFE AND LABOURS

OF

THE REV. DR. M'DONALD.

By

THE REV. J. KENNEDY,
Dingwall.



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THE
APOSTLE OF THE NORTH.

CHAPTER I.

DR. MACDONALD'S FATHER—GLIMPSES OF HIM DURING HIS LIFE—
HIS DEATH—HIS CHARACTER AS DESCRIBED BY HIS SON.

IN the gloaming of an evening in the year 1753, a young man, low-sized and strong-framed, whose face—round, swarthy, and expressive—was lighted up by keen, dark eyes, might have been seen approaching the door of one of the cottages in a hamlet, in the parish of Kildonan. That cottage is his lowly home. He is unwashed and uncombed; his dress is homespun and torn; and the lines which streaming tears have made still streak his face; but his countenance is brightened by the expression of a joy, which till lately his heart had never known. He is returning from the lonely hill-side, where he has spent the most of the day in prayer. Only a few days have passed

since he, for the first time, "tasted that the Lord is gracious." That young man was Dr. Macdonald's father, then in his eighteenth year.

A few years later, James Macdonald, now a married man, might have been seen among the worshippers in the church at Creich. Mr. Rose is in the pulpit. There is no gleam of gladness now on James' face, for the joy of his espousals has departed from his heart. He sits in darkness, and his downcast look tells how feeble is his hope that light shall arise on him again. But how fixed his attention has become! The preacher has described a case which he recognises as his own; and, having done so, added, "Thou art seeking Christ, but thou shalt not find him here. On thy return home, retire at once to thy wonted place of prayer, and He whom thou seekest shall there meet with thy soul. Satan will try to intercept thee; but beware of yielding to his temptation." The service over, James returned home, pondering by the way the advice which had been given. On coming within sight of his house, he observed two of his neighbours standing together before the door. Approaching nearer, he discovered that they had quarrelled, and heard in their angry utterances, threats of personal violence. Remembering the counsel given to him in the church at Creich, he hurried past the disputants to his praying nook in the barn, and ere he left it, he could say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

In the year 1770, James might have been seen seated beside a table, in a large barn, in the parish of Reay, surrounded by a crowd. He is engaged in examining the people, for he has been appointed catechist of the parish. All eyes are fixed upon him, for he never failed to arrest and sustain the attention of his hearers. How lucid is his brief exposition of the answer given from the Shorter Catechism! How apparent is the drift of his questions in cross-examination! How patiently he deals with that ignorant old man! How tenderly he treats that timid youth! How he rises in the series of questions put to that forward, self-confident fellow, till he has silenced him at last, and made him feel that he is wise only in his own conceit!

An emigrant ship had been caught by a storm off the Caithness coast. She was hastening towards the frowning rocks that fence the northern shore. Almost all on board were on their knees uttering loud cries for mercy, and some were driven by the storm to pray, whose oath had been the loudest in the calm. Sitting quietly among them was James Macdonald, unruffled, hopeful, and resigned. One of the passengers observing him, said, "You hardened, godless man, why don't you pray?" "I pity those," was James' answer, "who never prayed till to-night." The vessel was dashed on the wild lee shore, but all on board escaped. They were bound for America; and

thither James Macdonald had resolved to emigrate with his wife and family; but this was his first and last attempt to leave his native land.

On an evening, in the year 1775, James Macdonald, now a widower, is seated alone in his room, when a pious neighbour enters. His friend, anxious about James' comfort, has been praying to the Lord to provide for him a second wife. He has never broached the subject to the catechist, and he himself has never thought of it. But his friend is pressed and encouraged to speak about it now; and this is the object of his present visit. After a good deal of shying and fencing, the proposal is at last fairly made. "I never thought of such a thing," James said, "but I will consider it; call back again." After a few days his friend returned. "What now," he asked, "do you think of my proposal?" "I am quite ready to marry," he said, "if I got a wife from the Lord; but I know not where to seek for one." His friend was prepared to help him in his search, and proposed to accompany him to a certain family. Away they went together, and entered the house where the young woman lived whom his friend had set apart for the catechist. The mother is requested to call the daughter into the room. When she entered, James asked his friend, "Is this she?" "Yes, that is your second wife," was the reply. "She would require to be better than she looks," James said, after looking towards her. This was

said aloud ; and regarding the catechist's remark as the reverse of complimentary, the damsel in a huff left the room. But the marriage was arranged before they went away, and took place soon after. This second wife was Dr. Macdonald's mother, and he was her second child.

In James' day, in Caithness, a true follower of Christ had, ecclesiastically, a difficult part to act. His safe course was a narrow one, between two opposing parties, both of whom would try to draw him to their side. If he remained in the Establishment, he was in danger of countenancing men, who craved the office of the ministry, merely that thereby they might earn a stipend, and who employed the stipend in degrading the office by which they had acquired it. If he joined the Separatists, who had ceased to hear the ministers of the Established Church, he would forsake his "mother's house," where he had been born again, and fed with "the sincere milk of the word." In either case he would encounter a double opposition. The two classes of ministers would oppose him if he seceded, and if he remained in the church, and was faithful, both the Separatists and the Moderates would be against him. He chose to remain in his "mother's house ;" and he so conducted himself there, as to secure the confidence and affection of the godly, and the respect of the ungodly, ministers around him ; and at the same time to retain the respect, as a tribute to his un-

doubted godliness, of those who were loudest in denouncing the abuses of the church.

On his way home, after joining in the communion services in a neighbouring parish, he called for John Grant, the acknowledged leader of the Separatists, for whom he cherished the most affectionate respect. John, knowing where he had been, received him very gruffly. James resolved to have "the first word of flyting," asked him, why he had not been at the communion. "Because," he replied, "the Lord told me not to go, and if you would take my advice, you would not go yourself." "Well, John," James said, "when you are asked, at the last day, why you were not there, you can look up to the Judge and say, 'Thou thyself didst forbid my going;' but if I remained at home, I could only reply, when asked the same question, 'John Grant told me not to go,' and this you will allow would be but a poor apology." And he added, "When my coat gets some dirty spots upon it, I count it too precious to cast it, on that account, aside; I rather stick to it, and strive to make it clean. You must allow me to count my church more precious than my coat; and though I see many stains upon it, I will not cast it off."

His son often quoted an advice once given by James to a pious man who had wearied him by a tedious prayer. "If you have liberty in public prayer," he said, "be short, for there will be few to follow you; and if you are in bondage be short, for

if not, you will weary yourself and others." "Then you would have me to be always short." "Just so," James said; and his own practice invariably accorded with his counsel.

He lived to see his son a minister, and even his son's strength began to wane before his father's death, which took place in 1830. His age was then ninety-five, and seventy-seven of these years he was in Christ. During this protracted Christian course, his garments were kept unspotted, the dew of heaven kept fresh the savour of his godliness, the vigour of his intellect remained unbroken, and the Lord continued to employ and bless him in His service.

During the last eight years of his life he was quite blind. His second wife had died before this darkness fell upon him, but the blind widower retained his cheerfulness, and the joy that reached his heart from heaven kept its wonted gleam upon his face. An elderly woman attended on him, with whom he could maintain the closest Christian intercourse. She was much given to prayer, counted it an honour to do what she could for the aged saint, and when he was removed from her, she pined and prayed for the summons to follow him, until the hour of her departure came.

A few years before his death, Sir John Sinclair wished him to come to Ulbster Castle, promising to give him quiet apartments for himself, where he might spend his last days in comfort. James, although

grateful for the baronet's kindness, declined to leave his own lowly cottage, saying, "Where I sinned, there must I die." When seized by his last illness, he said, "If it be the Lord's will, I would like to be on my death-bed just as long as my Saviour was in the grave." And so it was; on the third day after he was taken ill, he died.

His connection with Dr. Macdonald would justify a fuller account of the worthy catechist of Reay; and could it be given, it is due to his own worth and eminence. It would be the more interesting, but at the same time the more unnecessary to do so, because the father's character was reproduced in his son, though seen in him in a different position, and modified by change of circumstances. It is interesting to trace a resemblance between the faces of a father and his son; if their forms are like as well, all the more pleasing is the result of the comparison; if, besides, mind resembles mind in sire and son; if the disposition of the one finds its counterpart in that of the other; if, moreover, both parent and child are alike the sons of God; and if, withal, the Lord hath dealt with both according to the same mode of operation in dispensing to them his grace, a resemblance almost unique is then discovered. It was so in the case of this father and this son; so that much would be anticipated, that must be written in describing the son, if a sketch of the father's character were attempted. Instead of doing so, the

following translation, in unrhymed and unfitting English, of his son's description of him is given. Most unconsciously, but most faithfully, did he portray some features of his own character, while giving us this portrait of his father, in his Gaelic poem entitled, "The Christian on his Way to Jordan."

"I remember, for in the young morning of my day I knew, men famous in the life and fight of faith, whose hearts would accord the crown to the great Captain of salvation, and give to him the undivided glory. Among those blessed ones who ran the race unblemished, there was one of whom I am now to make special mention. It were well my part, and it is in my heart to do so; for he was my father according to the flesh, and my stay in the days of my youth. To him the Lord was early very merciful in regenerating him, and giving him the knowledge of Christ. Before the age of twenty years, he poured out his Spirit on him; putting on him the seal and the beauty of holiness never to be removed.

"His natural endowments were remarkable. His intellect was lively and vigorous; but strong and active though were his mental powers, it was grace that turned them to account. This sharpened and shaped them, and raised them heavenward; and, as the water does to the well-adjusted machinery of the mill, set them a working. Many boast of their talents; but of what avail are they if the warm

breath of life be not in them ; they are but as the bones which lay scattered and dry on the valley—the largest no better than the meanest of them all. But let the genial breath come on them from the four winds of heaven, and lo ! the scattered bones come together, and rise up a living army. So are eminent gifts under the praiseworthy working of the Lord.

“The Lord unstintingly dealt out to him the oil of grace, and on his soul it continued to descend from day to day—the portion always doubled when he was on his knees. Often each day were those knees bent, and his soul refreshed before the throne of grace, for the Spirit of prayer kept him near the throne. Well do I remember how he was wont to kneel on hill and vale. The anointing which came on him from above, kept his spirit tender and contrite, and seasoned his speech. This, too, gave him spiritual alertness in religious duties, and kept him steadfast in the cause of Christ.

“In his office as catechist, he for many years was faithful, assiduous, and untiring in his work. Never slow to begin, and never tedious when he did begin, none could sleep when he was speaking. How lively and clear his expositions were ! Never posing with hard questions, he gave suitable and profitable instruction. Capable of conceiving clearly the idea before his mind, he never failed to give it clear and fitting expression. Well chosen and apt were his words, and always fraught with wisdom.

“He was a cheerful Christian. Whatever his own state of feeling might be, none saw a frown upon his face. His desire ever was to commend Christ to others, and to exhibit the beauty of godliness. Often has he told to some that it was his prayer to heaven to be enabled to keep a cheerful face over a hard heart. Many could testify that as he asked, so it was given him; and verily this was the means of increasing his usefulness in the vineyard of the Lord. An affectation of seriousness—the grim face, and the querulous, heartless groan—he never could endure. He could distinguish between the fragrance of a broken heart and its counterfeit, and those who savoured of it were always dear to him. Clear was his discernment of a work of grace, and of the difference between death and life; but he was always charitable in his judgments, leaving it to Him to whom alone it appertains to make a perfect separation between the precious and the vile. He never loved to winnow with too strong a wind, lest wheat might be scattered with the chaff. He preferred to leave some chaff among the wheat than to send the seed away with the husk.

“He learned to live by faith, and not to walk by sight, or to lean upon experience. Christ as revealed in the truth, and not his own attainments, was the foundation of his faith. To be lively in his feelings he always desired, but he counted it but poor fare to live upon them. But when faith was receiving, the

flesh was always pinched, and experience feasting. His was indeed the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit, which cleaves to Christ on the warrant of the word, which goes out to him with the empty vessel through the press, and never returns without good news. This was the faith through which the saints bare trials and endured to the end, that would receive no voice or vision instead of the written word, but found rest in the truth and came nigh to God. This faith in him prevailed against guilt, corruption, and temptation, contending till it triumphed in many a fierce conflict, and withstanding every storm that broke upon his soul. That he was no stranger to unbelief he himself would acknowledge, yet he did not cherish it nor listen to its lying tales. He confronted the lying prophet with the truth of the promise, before which he always played the coward and was dumb.

“With steadfastness, peace, and earnestness he walked on in the life of faith, watchful, and giving no offence by word or act. In secret and in public communing with God, he was much loved by, and he greatly loved His people.

“He did not forget that, as were his fathers, so was he a pilgrim on the earth; that his rest was above; that his day was shortening and would soon come to an end; and that his great business was to prepare for his eternal home. Many days were given him to make up his life—for his age was ninety-

five years—but his strength was not abated to the end; and as death came near, his soul, ripening fast for glory, was longing much to reach it. Much had the Lord done for him since first he met him, preserving his mental vigour from decay, and from reproach his name. His light shone brightly throughout all his course, and no dimness paled it as he breathed his last.”





CHAPTER II.

HIS BIRTH—BAPTISM—SCHOOL DAYS—COLLEGE DAYS—CONVERSION—
HIS FAVOURITE MINISTER, MR. ROBERTSON.

MR. MACDONALD was born on the 12th of November 1779. On that day his father was from home, being engaged in his work as catechist in a distant part of the parish, and the young folks took advantage of his absence to join in the out-door amusements of Halloweven. The mother was thus deserted by all the members of the household, and the only one present with her when her second son was born was a pious widow, one of her neighbours. Such was the interest this woman felt in the child so early dependent on her kindness, that as soon as he was weaned she insisted on taking him to her own house. His parents gratified her wish, and he remained for five years under her care. Each night, before putting him to bed, she knelt beside him, and in an audible voice prayed for the child. These prayers left such an impression on his memory that even in his last years he could recollect some of her petitions.

The parish of Reay being then vacant, James

Macdonald was obliged to apply to a neighbouring minister for the baptism of his child. On a cold December day he and his wife went with the infant to that minister's manse. On reaching it they found that the parson was from home; he had started in the morning on a shooting excursion, and was not expected to return before sunset. Instead of waiting for the reverend sportsman, they started across the moor on their way home again. They had not gone far when the minister, in his shooting attire, met them, and at once decided to make short work of it by baptizing the infant on the spot. They were standing beside a frozen pool, and after muttering a few words of prayer, the minister broke the ice with the butt end of his gun, and fetching water from the opening, sprinkled it on the face of the infant as he repeated the solemn words of consecration. Such a baptism, if an early earnest of the treatment awaiting the Apostle of the North at the hands of the Moderates, seems now a presage of his future work as the great field preacher of his day.

The minister's conduct in this affair may give an idea of his character. He was no inapt specimen of a class who found the office of the ministry tolerable only when they acquired facility in ignoring its responsibilities, and in casting its restraints aside. On one occasion, being anxious to ascertain in what estimation he was held, and meeting a man to whom he was unknown, and through whom he expected

the *vox populi* to speak, he resolved to elicit his opinion. The result did not encourage him to repeat the experiment. Not wishing to single out himself, he first asked him his opinion of two other ministers. "What do you think of Mr. R.?" he inquired. "Mr. R. is an honourable minister." "And what do you think of Mr. M.?" "He is tolerable," was the reply. And then coming to himself, he asked, "And what is your opinion of Mr. C.?" The answer to this was, "As for him, he is just abominable."

John Macdonald derived his name from his two grandfathers. His paternal grandfather was an eminent Christian, much given to prayer, the author of several Gaelic hymns, and known as "the man who would fight only on his knees." A misunderstanding arose between him and Mr. Gunn or M'Homish, his landlord, who not only threatened to eject him from his croft, but actually laid violent hands on his person. John Macdonald quietly bore his landlord's blows, and said good humouredly, "I will not fight with you standing, but come and I will try you on my knees." Hearing this, Gunn went away in a great rage, conceiving himself to be highly insulted. Meeting another of his tenants, he complained to him of the insult John had offered him by proposing to fight him on his knees. "He will do it too," the tenant said, "and I fear you will have the worst of it." "How so?" asks M'Homish. "John Mac-

donald," he replied, "has much to say with heaven, and he usually gets whatever he asks from the Almighty. It was in this way he proposed to encounter you on his knees, and if he does so, you will be sure to lose the day." On hearing this the landlord took fright, never rested till he had asked forgiveness from John Macdonald, and was very kind to him ever after.

His maternal grandfather, John Mackay, bore a high Christian character, and his two grandmothers also feared the Lord.

Before entering school he was three years in his father's house after being restored by the pious widow who took charge of him during his first five years. During that time we must think of him as a smart active little fellow, with a merry leer scarce ever away from his quick black eyes, and a face which a cheerful smile seldom failed to brighten, dressed in the kilt, barefooted and bareheaded, the active if not careful herd of his father's cows. His ingenuity in inventing plays, his musical propensity, and his even temper, won for him the place of leader among the boys who met on the herding ground. But even in these early days he had his fits of seriousness. It is seldom that children, having such instruction as he received from the lips and life of his father, are able entirely to evade anxiety as to their state as sinners. John Macdonald, amidst the levity of his early boyhood, was seized at times with a sense of his guilt

and danger. He would then betake himself to his knees; and on one occasion, using his influence over his companions, he persuaded them to join him in prayer in the place where they were accustomed to meet to play. He has told that, in those days, he often spent an hour in prayer, and on rising from his knees the young Pharisee was disposed to say, "What a good boy I am now. The Lord will surely be pleased with me to-day."

In his ninth year he entered the parish school of Reay, then taught by Mr. William Munro, of whom he afterwards wrote—"He was my first and last teacher, and under Providence my best friend in prosecuting my education. I entered his school," he adds, "June 1788, and commenced Latin May 1791. He taught me without a fee." His father wished to give him only an elementary education, content if his son could read, write, and reckon; but the school-master, knowing that the catechist's son would do him credit, and acting on the parish minister's advice, began in 1791 to teach him Latin. In the same class with him were two sons of the Laird of Big-house. They proved a drag rather than a stimulus to John Macdonald, but the teacher could not venture to promote the son of the catechist and leave the sons of the laird behind. Their mother ascertaining this, engaged the dux of the Latin class to go to the mansion-house every evening to assist her sons in preparing their lessons. The privilege of being brought in

contact with more refined society and habits counter-balanced the disadvantage of his having to drag two dunces after him through the difficulties of the Latin grammar.

After entering on his teens he became known as the cleverest scholar in the parish school, and he was in consequence often employed by the neighbouring farmers in making up their annual accounts. An anecdote connected with this work he has often told. Being asked to make up the accounts of a farmer in a distant part of the parish, he was under the necessity of remaining for several days in his employer's house. The farmer had always kept up a form of family worship, though well known to be fonder of pence than of prayers, but he had never ventured, when on his knees, beyond repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, on any former occasion. Thinking it necessary to get up something *extra* when the catechist's son was present, as he knew him to be a sharp youth who would be sure to mark the difference between his prayer and what he was accustomed to hear at home, he resolved to paraphrase the form which had stood him in such good stead before, that it might be decently long at any rate. Beginning with the invocation, he added to it the words, "and also on the earth," and an eke to each of the first three petitions; but having repeated the fourth, "give us this day our daily bread," there was a long pause. He evidently seemed to feel that this

was but a very scanty allowance to ask, so, with an earnestness in which he let out the deepest desire of his heart, he added, "but if Thou wilt give us more, we are quite ready to receive it."

Such during his school days was his eagerness to learn that, with the assistance of a neighbour who was "the cunning craftsman" of the district, he built a room at the end of his father's cottage, to which he removed his bed and his books, and where he used to spend a set portion of each day.

Mrs. Innes of Sandside, hearing of the catechist's clever son, took a great interest in him, employed him in keeping her accounts, and procured for him a bursary, which helped him through his course at college. She was very religious in her own way, and rigidly tested by her standard all with whom she came in contact. Her son was a major in the army, and his irreligion continued to be for many years a source of great anxiety to his mother. In one of her letters to her *protégé*, she writes—"Oh, I don't know what to think of poor dear William; he has no sense of religion whatever." But William became a true Christian; and in a letter thereafter his mother writes—"I am distressed about poor William. I fear he will turn out a Methodist or rather a fanatic." There was no pleasing the mother; her son distressed her before because he had no religion at all, and now he distresses her no less by having too much.

A shock of the same kind was afterwards given her by her *protegé*. She lived to hear him preach, and was disposed to think him extravagant; but though she regarded his doctrine as rather wild, she did not make this outrage on her religious sobriety a ground of quarrel with her early favourite. On one occasion she induced an English party, then on a visit to Sandside, to go to hear him preach. He was at the time suffering from a sprained ankle. The sermon was one of those fervid discourses which he then usually preached. Mrs. Innes' friends were exclaiming loudly against the alarming doctrine and the vehement manner of the preacher after the service was over. Mrs. Innes' apology for her *protegé* was—"You must make some allowance for my John; his sprained ankle spoiled his usual good humour to-day."

In his eighteenth year Mrs. Innes sent him with a letter to the house of a neighbouring proprietor. There happened to be a recruiting party there at that time, and in those days most unscrupulous measures were resorted to in order to enlistment. There was music such as young Macdonald had never heard before, and dancing, in which he was not slow to join in the evening, and before the reels were over the catechist's son had the bounty money in his pocket. The recruiting serjeant, when parting with him at night, said to him—"You are now enlisted to serve your king and country, and in the

morning you must come along with me to a justice of the peace to be attested." This was rather more than the youth had reckoned on when he became Mrs. Innes' messenger, and was a price he did not expect to have to pay for his evening's fun. Next morning at breakfast the Laird spoke of the smart recruit whom the serjeant had enlisted on the evening before. The minister of Olrig was present, and inquired if the recruit was the young man who came with the letter from Sandside. On ascertaining that it was he, he said—"He must be released; he is the son of James Macdonald, the Reay catechist, and his parents intend to send him to college." He then importuned the officer in charge of the recruiting party to release him, which he agreed to do, and John Macdonald was allowed to return to Sandside. Thus narrowly, as it seems to us, did the Apostle of the North escape from being a soldier.

The following anecdote connected with his residence at Sandside he has often told. As Mrs. Innes was starting for church on a Sabbath forenoon, Mr. Dunlop, a neighbouring farmer, called. "Are you not going to church, Mr. Dunlop," Mrs. Innes asked, after they met and saluted. "No, ma'am," was his reply, "I have not been in church for seven years, and I enjoy good health, and feel as happy as those who attend regularly there." "That might do very well for this world," Mrs. Innes said, "but what are you to do, sir, for the next?" "Oh, as to that," was

his profane reply, "in five minutes I can make my peace with God." Many years after this conversation Mr. Dunlop, who continued the habit of which he then boasted, was reading a newspaper on Sabbath, apparently in his usual health, when in a moment he dropped down dead on the floor. When Dr. Macdonald was informed of the circumstances of his death, recollecting the conversation at Sandside, and referring to it, he said—"Poor man, he did not get the five minutes on which he reckoned for making his peace with God."

He early manifested an intense love for music, and even in his boyhood acquired considerable skill in subduing into melody for Celtic ears the wild sounds of the bagpipe. This was his favourite instrument; and on leaving home for college in 1797 it was carefully packed in his trunk, and doubtless furnished many a pleasant interlude amidst the busy studies of the session. In leaving home the next year the pipe was forgotten, but recollecting, after reaching Thurso, that he had left his favourite behind, he returned to his father's house to fetch it. Before the following session higher matters began to occupy his attention, and the pipe was that year left purposely behind. His father, in order to try him, wrote to inquire what would be done with the pipe. "Just what you think right," was his answer, well knowing what treatment his idol was likely to receive at his father's hands. The old man no sooner received this

license from his son than he went to fetch the pipe from its place, and laying it on the block, he plied with right good-will the axe on its chanter.

In one of his journeys to college he reached the north side of Invergordon ferry during a gale of wind. The ferrymen would not venture on sea till the wind subsided, and he walked on the shore waiting for a quieter hour. There was then no inn beside the ferry, and even if there were, he could ill afford to pay its charges. Hector Holm's house was near. He was the "Gaius" of "the Men" of Ross-shire; and right welcome was any stranger to food and lodging in his hospitable home. Mrs. Holm, observing a youthful stranger sauntering along the shore, went up to him and invited him to her house. Her husband was from home, and was not expected to return till a late hour; so after giving him the best her presses held, she asked the stranger to conduct family worship, which he at once agreed to do. Just as he had begun the prayer Hector Holm entered the house, and hearing a strange voice he stood at the door to listen. The prayer opened his heart to the youth who offered it, and he took him in, and when they met he saluted him very warmly. The feeling then produced deepened in Hector's heart as the student visited him year by year thereafter on his college journeys. In later years it grew into an affection of peculiar strength. The student to whom he showed kindness, when as a stranger he first took

him in, he well knew afterwards as the great evangelist, and he gave to him, with a deeper love than before, his profound respect. Nor did the minister ever forget the kindness shown to him as a student. Often, after he was minister of Urquhart, has he spent a night under the roof which then gave him shelter. On these occasions the back court of Mr. Holm's house was converted into a chapel, filled with a crowd gathered from the country all around; and to the preacher and to many of his hearers the addresses delivered there were often most refreshing.

At college he was of "the first three" in all his classes; in the mathematical class he was *facile princeps*. But once out of college, the "one thing needful" asserted its place in his thoughts and study, and the work of a busy evangelist, when he became a minister, left him little leisure for literary and scientific pursuits.

The professor of mathematics, under whom he studied, was accustomed, towards the close of the session, to give some posing problems to the students which he expected very few of them to solve. The result was that on the last days very few students were present in the class-room. At last John Macdonald was left with but one companion. He was busy with one of the *posers* during the whole of one of the last evenings of the session. He had failed in working it out, and could not discover his mistake. He was at last obliged to lay it aside, and to go to

bed. To his great surprise, next morning he found, written by his own hand, the correct solution lying on the table. His companion told him that he had risen during the night, written what he found on the paper, and thereafter returned to bed. He brought the solution to the class, and the professor found it quite correct.

He was not, nor did he require to be, so scrupulous as one of his predecessors at Urquhart, who was an habitual somnambulist. Engaged to preach a public sermon in Inverness, he was unable to fix his mind on a suitable text, and was obliged to go to bed, on the night before the day of preaching, without having either text or sermon. Not long after he fell asleep, he rose, lighted his candle, sat down at his desk, and was busily writing for some time. He then laid the paper aside, extinguished the light, and went to bed again. His wife watched him all the time. In the morning he awoke early, and seemed in great perplexity. His wife inquiring what distressed him, he told her that he was going to Inverness without either text or sermon. "I can supply you with both," she said. "That can be of no use to me if I did not myself select the subject and compose the sermon," was his reply. "But what I am to give you," she rejoined, "is your own and no other's." She then went to the desk, and taking out the paper which he had written, handed it to him, telling him what she had observed him do at

night. "The text is suitable," he said, after reading what he had written, "and the skeleton is perhaps better than I could have written in my waking hours ; but I was unconscious when I wrote it, and I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing." Laying the paper aside, he started for Inverness. By the way another subject was suggested to his mind, on which he preached that day with unusual power and success.

It was in the interval between two of his college sessions, that John Macdonald began in right earnest to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" There is reason to believe that the reading of President Edward's works was the means of beginning the work of conviction which issued in his conversion to God. This in his case was a fiery process. He has been heard to declare that, such was his experience then of "the terrors of the Lord," he was at the time persuaded that the agony of his soul was an anticipation of hell. Shut up to Christ as his only resource by the felt desperateness of his case as a sinner, and by the authority of the command to believe in the Son, on the one hand ; and on the other, shut out from him in darkness under the power of unbelief and in the impotence of spiritual death, well knew he then the agony of a soul lying without hope at the disposal of Him who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and who hardeneth whom he will. In this state of mind, as he himself once

told the writer, he was walking one day by the sea-side. Under the pressure of despair, and at the suggestion of the tempter, he advanced within the sweep of the great billows that were breaking wildly on the shore. Ere the advancing wave had reached him, a ray of gospel light pierced the darkness in which his soul was shrouded. Rushing at once from the danger which he had rashly provoked, and climbing up into a quiet cave in the rock hard by, he was there and then enabled to commit his soul to Christ. He went to the shore that day in the grasp of the destroyer ; he returned from it in the arms of the Saviour.

The place in which the Lord then met him became his favourite resort thereafter. A few days only had passed, when, as he was pouring out his heart before God in the cave, a young man, whose soul was just entering on the felt darkness of despair, was going towards the sea. Overhearing a sound from the cave, he stood to listen. The words which he heard were the means of arresting him, of dispelling the shadow of death from his heart, and of assuring him that there was hope in the gospel even for him. Thomas Forbes was that young man's name. He was afterwards well known in Glasgow as a consistent fervent follower of the Lamb.

It is impossible to trace with any distinctness the steps of his progress in the knowledge of Christ. He himself refrained from referring to his personal

experience, regarding it as selfish and indiscreet to do so. He kept no record then of God's dealings with his soul. This much however is certain, that the works of Edwards, his father's wise and prayerful instruction, and the clear and unctuous preaching of Mr. Robertson then missionary at Achreny, afterwards of Rothesay and Kingussie, were the means employed and blessed by the Lord in guiding him into the truth as it is in Jesus.

For Mr. Robertson he continued to cherish the warmest affection, to which he gives fervent expression in an elegy written by him after Mr. Robertson's death,—the best unquestionably of all his Gaelic poems.

Recalling his first impressions of him he thus describes his feeling :—

“Since first I heard thy powerful savoury soothing doctrine, in my early days, to me thou wert the first among many honoured brethren. In my affection thou didst then find a place, whence, during all thy life, thou wert not removed ; and since through death thou hast gone home, that place is empty. I did believe that my soul was knit to thee as an ambassador of Christ ; but not till after the separation did I know how strong and tender was the tie that bound us. And if there was aught that could make heaven to me more desirable besides eternal communion with my God, it is that thou art there before me.”

He thus describes him as a preacher :—

“No sooner had thy mouth been opened to preach the gospel of Christ, than the true people of God found in thee a father and not a child. Thus said they; and they said so truly; for the work wrought in thee by Christ ere thou didst enter the vineyard gave thee at the outset an advance of many years in thy work. Then hadst thou such acquaintance with the life of grace in the hearts of God’s people, that when thou didst speak regarding it thou hadst not to grope for matter. Thou camest forth as a champion in the name and strength of thy Redeemer. A champion active and skilled thou wert indeed, for it was the Lord himself who made thee so. He it was who gave thee skill to preach both law and gospel, reserving its own due place to each. So orderly, clear, unctuous, and fluent was thy handling of them both, that utterly void of understanding must he have been who received no benefit from thy preaching.”

He contrasts him with a class of preachers of whom he writes :—

“They substitute cold knowledge for the light which cometh from above; and venture to teach others by proclaiming to them tidings which they themselves have never known. True, there may be much knowledge and learning in their heads, and a fluent tongue as well. They may be loud-voiced, and their sermons may be most exactly in their

memories, and as polished as if they had smoothed them with a plane. But how can they proclaim the gospel in its glory and its power, with a dark understanding, a hard heart, and an insensate conscience. For though the blind may speak of colours, he never saw their beauty ; and though a bird may utter words, it knows nothing of their meaning."

Referring to his death he says :—

"Some have felt the tidings of thy death pierce them as a sharp arrow that hath reached the marrow of their bones, and there stuck fast. Theirs is a sorrow that shall not soon dry up, unlike the grief of others which is but for a little and then passes quite away. As the dew of night on the mountain on a calm morning quickly passes away as if it never was, so soon as the sun has cast his rays upon it ; thus some are for a short season sad ; but joy and singing reach them, and, lo ! their sorrow is away, and it is found no more. But the showering rain abides not on the surface, but goes down into the soil ; and the deeper it sinks, it is the more abiding. Thus, the sorrow of some is but increasing when that of others has quite passed away. . . . Near to the spot where thou hast often stood to preach have they laid thy dust ; and as before thy life, so now thy death, is each Sabbath giving instruction to thy people. Some, doubtless, will look with a heavy heart often on that spot of earth, fragrant to them since thou wast laid there. Methinks I hear one of

them thus speaking over thy grave, 'Alas, all complexion and beauty have now departed from that noble manly countenance. Nor hand nor foot can this day move. They are now at rest under the spell of the grave. Tongue shall not speak; nor shall ear listen to the wail of the mourner. The eye, once so bright, lively, and loving, that often beamed so kindly on the children of grace, and through which the tender heart could be so easily discovered, is now under the seal of death, and shall not be opened. The tongue once so skilled to preach to us the gospel, is now under the strong lock of the grave, and shall speak to us no more. Oh, ye inhabitants of the grave, what stillness has lain upon you since your form and beauty have departed! Oh, when again shall ye move! The worm shall sleep in the ground; in a quiet corner rests the insect during the storms of winter; but with spring they shall awake again. But when shall a spring arrive that shall arouse the still silent dwellers in the grave? When shall *they* awaken out of *their* sleep? A long, long sleep is theirs! Leaves shall spring out again from the branch, bare and uncomely though it be to-day; and in his celestial journey, the sun shall return again after he has gone out of sight. But when shall these again appear in beauty who now lie withered in the grave; when shall those sun-rays reach them that shall give them resurrection from that bed. Yes, warmth shall come after the cold, and day

after the longest night ; but when shall day dawn on the grave, and its long night be past ?' But, soul, restrain thy mourning ; day shall yet dawn on the grave, and before it the grave's long night shall flee away, with all that made it dark and frowning. The dust of him for whom thou hast often wept shall then arise with comeliness, beauty, and strength greater than though in the grave it had never lain. O grave, employ thy power to-day, for the King of hosts permits thee. Yea, extend thy sway, and swallow up the nations. But boast not of thy might ; for though it is enduring it is not eternal. Already the Almighty One hath won an everlasting victory over thee. And in him shall his dead arise—a glorious band, his own purchased possession. Their tongues shall then no more be silent, for all that made them dumb is gone."





CHAPTER III.

LICENSE—OSSIANIC TOUR—MISSION—ORDINATION—TRANSLATION TO
EDINBURGH—HIS WORK THERE.

HE was licensed to preach the gospel, July 2nd, 1805, by the Presbytery of Caithness. He was then known only as the son of James Macdonald. His father's fame as a Christian and as a catechist heightened the expectations which waited for his preaching; and the love and respect entertained for the father made many anxious for the success of the son. His first sermon was not accounted worthy of his father's son. Some expected in his preaching a reproduction of his father's maturity of thought and feeling, and were therefore greatly disappointed. One of his first texts—"I beseech thee, shew me thy glory"—startled others. A sermon on such a subject they regarded as too ambitious an effort for a young man, and not a few shook their heads and hinted, that a young head suited young shoulders better than an old one. His first discourses, though carefully prepared, were very unpretending; and though distinctly were coldly delivered. Some of the more discerning of his

hearers found a germ of promise in his earliest sermons, but except to a few, there was in his appearances as a probationer no indication of his future pulpit power. There may have been an excess of care as to the composition of his sermons, a forgetfulness of his hearers' wants and an overrating of their knowledge, a desire to write well rather than to preach effectively, and a nervousness which made him diffident, and set him to mandate with a painful exactness that acted as starch on his manner in delivering his discourses.

Two months after being licensed, he started on an Ossianic tour throughout the North-western Highlands, at the urgent request of Sir John Sinclair. The object of his journey was to ascertain to what extent traditions of the Fingalians existed in the Highlands, and whether Ossian's poems were still remembered. The results of his tour are thus summed up by himself:—

“1. In the whole course of my travels in the Highlands, I did not meet with an individual, so far as I recollect, who did not hear of the race of Fingal; and to whom the names of Fion, Ossian, and Oscar were not familiar, even though they could not repeat the poems and tales of these heroes.

“2. Persons, in the different counties through which I travelled, who never had any intercourse with each other, repeated the same tales and poems with very little variation.

“ 3. That there existed such a race as the Fingalians, that their time was in remote antiquity, and that the poems of Ossian are genuine, are as firmly believed in the Highlands as the truth of any tradition whatever. Learned and unlearned, young and old agree in this.

“ *N.B.* It is the general belief that the Fingalians were natives of Scotland, and resided chiefly there ; but frequently visited Ireland on warlike expeditions.”

Having asked an old Highlander in Lochalsh, who had fought at Sheriffmuir, and who was in his hundred and twentieth year, whether he believed in the genuineness of Ossian's poems, “ Do I believe the Bible ? ” was his indignant reply.

The question, then raised, and since so often discussed, whether the Ossianic poems are the productions of an ancient poet called Ossian, or of a modern poet called Macpherson, may now be regarded as settled. The discovery, in ancient manuscripts, of a large portion of the Ossianic poetry, and the fact that Ossian's poems were better known in the Highlands before, than since Macpherson's birth, ought to set the question for ever at rest. That Macpherson was in possession of ancient manuscripts of Ossian's poems cannot be reasonably doubted, though he never chose to exhibit them ; but, besides translating them, he may have added to and altered them. He would have done better had he done less.

During his tour in search of Ossianic remains the young preacher did not forget that he was dedicated to higher service. He preached in every parish which he visited, and thus, within three months after his license, began to acquire some training for the great work in which he became famous as "The Apostle of the North." Having preached in the parish of Glenelg, the minister, a genuine Highland moderate, said to him after the service was over, "That was a very good sermon, I suppose, but it was quite unsuitable here; for you spoke all day to sinners, and I know only one in all my parish."

Crossing the hills between Assynt and Lochbroom, his guide across the trackless moor was a little girl just entering on her teens. He had not spoken to her till they were parting at the journey's end. He then slowly and solemnly repeated the words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Twenty years thereafter he was preaching at Contin on one of the days of the communion season. After sermon a woman salutes him, who, after he had entered into conversation with her, told him that she was the young girl who acted as his guide across the hills of Assynt; and that the words which he had repeated to her on that occasion had made an abiding impression on her heart. Inquiring about her, he ascertained, that

she was regarded by all who knew her as a truly Christian woman.

He returned to Caithness in November, and officiated as a missionary in the districts of Achreny and Halladale for six months. He was ordained as a missionary minister at Berriedale, in September 1806; and he laboured there till his translation to Edinburgh in January of the following year.

His first marriage took place in January 1806. The prudence of this step is not apparent. He was not then ordained; his income was very small; his home very lowly; and his temporal prospects not very bright.

While at Berriedale he continued to improve as a preacher, but did not even then excite very high expectations. He was greatly respected by the more judicious of his hearers, and was regarded as a servant of Christ by all; but none anticipated his future eminence.

His most intimate friend at that time was Marcus Gunn. He resided near to one of the churches in which Mr. Macdonald usually preached. He was a judicious Christian, and the young minister was often helped and cheered by his wise and friendly counsels. He has often told a remarkable instance of this. He was once engaged, during all the previous days of the week, elaborating a discourse on a very difficult text, when on Saturday morning he was compelled to lay all his preparation aside, and think of a diffe-

rent subject from that which he had so carefully studied. He wrote a few hurried notes, started for the more distant station, and reached at night the house of Marcus Gunn. "I am very glad to see you," he said, as he met Mr. Macdonald at the door. With more than his wonted warmth of manner he repeated the salutation as they entered the house together, and again after they were seated. "There is surely some reason," the minister said, "why you are so glad to see me to-night." "There is," his host replied; "I was very anxious about you. I was thinking of you last night. I thought that you were attempting to rise up to the clouds for manna to give to your people, and that you tried in vain; that you then at last began to look for it on the ground, where the Lord had laid it, and that there you found it; and if I am not greatly mistaken your text to-morrow should be John vi. 37," the very passage to which Mr. Macdonald's mind was directed in the morning.

Having received from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, a presentation to the Gaelic Church in Edinburgh, he deemed it his duty to accept of that charge. He removed from Berriedale in December 1806, and was inducted as minister of the Gaelic chapel in the metropolis in January 1807. His father visited him at Berriedale on the eve of his departure, and helped him in the work of flitting. The day on which he left his humble home at

Berriedale was very stormy ; and as, with his wife and his father beside him, he was taking his last look of the cottage, its roof was lifted by the strength of the gale and strewn in fragments on the ground. His father turned to him and said, " John, I think it was high time to leave Berriedale."

In the new sphere, on which he now entered, the experience which he had acquired could not be of much avail. True, it was a Gaelic charge ; his hearers in Edinburgh were Highlanders ; but they were in a city, removed from all the restraining influences to which they had been wont to yield, and in contact with temptations which found them unwary and unskilled. They had come from all districts of the Highlands, and were of all clans and of all coteries, and they carried with them in their local prejudices and jealousies many elements of division. A few of them, successful in business, became purse-proud, and ambitious of a position which their want of education unfitted them to occupy. Others, finding it easier, amidst greater laxity of opinion and of conduct, to make a creditable profession of religion, thrust themselves forward into positions in the Church which they would not have ventured to lay claim to before. To manage such a congregation wisely, to refrain from giving unnecessary offence, and yet to deal faithfully with all, required no ordinary skill. There were then, however, among the Highlanders in Edinburgh, not a few pious men, whose character all

respected, and who united all their influence in strengthening the hands of their minister. With their help, and by his own amiable disposition, easy address, and growing pulpit power, he was enabled to consolidate the congregation into a compact body, with the lines of section blotted out, and all animated by the warmest feeling of attachment to their minister, till the proposal of introducing an English instead of one of the Gaelic services began to be mooted.

The introduction of an English sermon each Sabbath becomes always a necessity at a certain stage in the life of a Gaelic congregation in a large city. The young born in the city grow up in ignorance of Gaelic, and some, who once could speak it, by not using lose it. Some of the older members of the congregation affect to be genteel when they become rich, and must try, by rolling their tongues in barbarous Scotch, to rub the Gaelic off them. Others, anxious to have their families along with them in the house of God, must go to other congregations if an English service is not provided for their children in the Gaelic church. The strength of the congregation is weakened if these forsake it. The minister, too, likes to preach in English as well as in Gaelic. Outside his own congregation are some who like the Highland preaching when it is given them in a lowland tongue, and the presence and influence of these is an accession. So there must be English ;

it cannot be kept out. And the pure Celts are sure to resist its introduction. Many of them think that the preaching is not worth a hearing if it is not in Gaelic. Some think that a slight is cast on the only language which they speak, and on the land which was their birthplace, and they stand up against the Saxon tongue as their sires once rose against the Saxon rule. A few who derived spiritual profit by the Gaelic sermons are unwilling to lose one of the diets by which they were accustomed to be fed. There is always, therefore, a risk of serious division whenever the English service is first introduced. Mr. Macdonald had painful experience of this during his ministry in Edinburgh. But let the dust of that strife lie unstirred.

While in Edinburgh his work gradually increased, till at last his labours became excessive. Besides delivering two Gaelic discourses during the day he preached an English sermon every Sabbath evening. Besides prayer meetings and district catechizings he delivered regularly a weekly lecture. As his fame was rising, demands for his services multiplied. He preached occasionally in Greenock, Port-Glasgow, Dundee, and Perth, and frequently in Glasgow and Stirling, where Highland regiments of militia were stationed. There were blessed fruits of his preaching to the Highland soldiers. Not a few of them were converted unto God through his sermons at that time, and when their regiments were disbanded they re-

turned to their homes in the north, to labour in the service, and to live to the praise, of the Lord.

During the earlier portion of his ministry in Edinburgh he statedly visited his people. This was work in which he could easily excel. His cheerfulness, conciseness, and punctuality, enabled him to overtake an amount of visitation impossible but to a few, and to make it always pleasant and instructive. Having visited, on one occasion, a member of his congregation whose husband was a Papist, and at the time lying apparently on his death-bed, he was asked to speak to the sick man. He found him very exhausted, but it was owing to want of food rather than to want of health, the priest having administered extreme unction and forbidden him to taste food thereafter. The minister's persuasion, backed by the sick man's hunger, proved stronger than the priest's authority. Food was given him, and he was in the act of taking it when the priest came in. Indignant, and even furious, he moved forward to snatch the food from the sick man's hand, but the broad shoulders of the Highland parson were thrust in between him and the bed; and the priest, after discharging a mouthful of curses at the head of the heretic, deemed discretion the better part of valour, when he scanned the muscles of his opponent, and sullenly withdrew. The man recovered, and was a regular hearer ever after in the Gaelic Church.

In order to have leisure for study it was his habit

to retire, as often as he could, to a room in the house of Mr. Ogle, the publisher, kindly granted to him as a "prophet's chamber," where he was allowed to study without disturbance during the time set apart for that purpose. In his own house interruptions would constantly occur, especially after he became famous as a preacher. Many Highlanders and some Lowlanders are apt to think that a minister requires but little time for study; and he at least was thought to be able to preach without any preparation at all. A lady once said to him, when he proposed to retire to study, "You, sir, can shake a sermon out of your sleeve any time you like." Yes, ma'am," he replied, "if I had it in my sleeve; but before I can shake it out I must first put it in."

The intercourse which he enjoyed with such ministers as Dr. Campbell, Dr. Colquhoun, Dr. Davidson, and others, and with the *literati* whom he met at Sir John Sinclair's, was most beneficial to him. He had no such advantages before, and, eager to acquire knowledge, he was resolved to make the most of them. He carefully read such works as he heard these great men criticize and commend, and thus attained to be abreast of the leading minds in general information; and he acquired a facility and accuracy of expression in English which greatly contributed to his future usefulness.

But he passed through a still more important change during his residence in Edinburgh. There

is no record of his experience at that time, but of his having made a fresh start in the way of life there was abundant evidence. There have been instances of persons becoming "other men" who were never new creatures in Christ; but there have been also instances of renewed men becoming other men under a fresh baptism of the Spirit. This was the change which Mr. Macdonald underwent in Edinburgh. It was soon apparent in his preaching. Always clear and sound in his statements of objective truth, his preaching now became instinct with life. It was now searching and fervent, as well as sound and lucid. Knowing the terror of the Lord, as he knew it not before, he warned sinners in Zion with such faithfulness and power as excited the wonder and the awe of his hearers. His statements of gospel truth were now the warm utterances of one who deeply felt its power. The Lord's people could now testify that he spoke from his own heart to theirs. His manner in the pulpit underwent a corresponding change. His action became most vehement; but it never seemed extravagant to any hearer who could sympathize with the views and feelings of the preacher. His melodious voice, though often very loud, was always under his control, and was pleasant in all its tones. Chanting occasionally as he spoke, he added greatly to the effect of his preaching on Celtic sensibility. His sermons, always fraught with thought, bright with illustration, and teeming with feeling, were fitly

delivered with the most unaffected and the intensest earnestness of manner.

So marked was the change which then passed over his preaching that many were led to judge that he had never preached the gospel till then. This is entirely a mistake. He preached the gospel in Berriedale as surely as in Edinburgh, though with far less unction, discrimination, and power.

Soon after this change he visited his father in Caithness, and preached in several places during his journey, exciting the astonishment of all who heard him. Being in Tain, on his return from Caithness, he was asked by Dr. Mackintosh to preach, and he at once agreed to do so, and occupied his pulpit during all the services of the Sabbath. Being an utter stranger to the people he received but a cold welcome from them, when he was seen mounting the pulpit stairs instead of their own revered minister. There was present in church one who, on that day, had walked sixteen miles, as he had often done before, to hear the great doctor. He thus described his feelings on that occasion :—"I was greatly disappointed on seeing Dr. Mackintosh walking towards the 'manse seat,' and instead of him a smart-looking young man walking, as I thought, with too rapid progress, and with too light a step, towards the pulpit. I felt at once as if the day was lost. I expected no good, and shut up my heart against the youth who came in between me and my wonted Sabbath fare. He gave

out the psalm. ‘You can’t spoil that at any rate,’ I said to myself. The prayer began ; but I scarcely heard the first part of it. Gradually my attention was attracted, but towards the manse seat I found my eye still wandering. Before the prayer was over I ceased to look away from the pulpit. When the sermon began I forgot all but the doctrine I was hearing. As he warmed up with his subject, the preacher became most vehement in his action ; every eye was rivetted on the speaker ; and suppressed sounds testified to the effect which his sermon was producing. His second discourse was so awe-inspiring that the audience became powerfully affected. Such was the awful solemnity of the doctrine and the vehemence of the preacher’s manner, that I expected, ere he was done, every heart would be pierced, and that the very roof of the church would be rent. The sermon over, all were asking who the preacher was. ‘A young man from Edinburgh of the name of Macdonald,’ was the only answer that could be given.”





CHAPTER IV.

TRANSLATION TO URQUHART—HIS PREDECESSOR—STATE OF THE
PARISH—STATE OF THE NORTH—AN EVANGELIST REQUIRED—MR.
MACDONALD PREPARED FOR HIS WORK.



R. MACDONALD was translated to Urquhart in 1813, and his induction there took place on the first of September. He was presented by the patron, Mr. Forbes of Culloden, on the petition of the parishioners, whose attention was first directed to him by Dr. Mackintosh and Hector Holm, the minister and the layman, to whose judgment they most readily deferred.

The name of his predecessor is fragrant, to all who are acquainted with his life and labours, with associations of peculiar sweetness. Mr. Charles Calder was a Christian who left a persuasion of his holiness in the minds of all who came in contact with him. As a minister he was eminent among many who were famous in the Church. In his congregation were not a few who had been converted and edified under his preaching, and who regarded him with love and veneration. For many years he had been feeding his flock with "the finest of the wheat," and when he

died they scarce dared to hope they would again enjoy the privilege of a ministry by which they could be edified. Their feelings are well described by his successor, in a Gaelic poem written by him in honour of Mr. Calder's memory.

"Sad and mournful tidings have we heard, tidings which deeply wounded us, and drove from mirth and song, all who could appreciate our loss. Widely over all the land has the sad news spread, showering sharp arrows as it passed, and bringing with it the sorrow of the night. What saddened us, and many besides, and made us gloomy and grieved, is that our charming pastor, Mr. Charles Calder, has been taken from us; and that from his lips we shall never hear again the glad tidings of the cross. His tongue is to-day under the seal of death. This, this, O God, is our distress. The tidings have fallen as mist around us, hiding as behind a cloud the sun, and taking our strength and courage from us. Sad indeed is Ferintosh! In some hearts the wound is so deep that, on this side of glory, they cannot hope it shall be healed.

"O death! small is thy compassion! for thou hast pierced our pastor with thine arrow, and made this people desolate, even as lambs that have lost their mothers.

"Though thou, who wast our guide, art taken from us, and though our voice and praise can no longer reach thee, we love still to refresh in our memory the

fame which thou didst obtain and merit ; for this may prove a sweet savour to many whose hearts to-day are crushed, and in others it may awaken anxiety as to their lost condition. Far and wide has spread thy fame, as the pleasant savour of sweet spices ; but all thine excellence was not known, for the veil of self-denial thou didst always spread over thy rare endowments ; thou sawest them not thyself, and others could not speak of them to thee. For the praise of men, for honour from the world, thou didst not labour—this to thine eyes seemed vain and worthless. That the Redeemer might be glorified, and that the precious and abiding fruit of His love should flourish in the souls of men, in reward of the travail of his soul—this was thy desire. That He might see, and be satisfied with, the fruit of his travail in the garden ; that wretched death-deserving sinners would submit to his grace ; that on his head the crown of salvation should be, as is meet ; and that this crown should for ever flourish—this was the highest satisfaction thou didst crave.

“As grace, in rare measure, was given thee, in gifts thou didst excel many who were famous. An understanding acute and clear, a will eager, a mind heavenly, affections warm, a memory retentive, and a conscience tender, were thine. Learning, which in its own place is commendable, made thee polished as a shaft in thy Redeemer's hand. And, besides thy graces and gifts, thou hadst remarkable comeliness of

form, with a handsome, cheerful, noble countenance, through which appeared the fervour of thy love.

“Thy preaching was always distinct, powerful, clear, calm, and well arranged. So well chosen were thy words that they might have gone to press as they came from thy lips, and this thy hearers often wished. But it was the work of Christ on thine own soul which made thy doctrine to us a blessing. This brought all thy rare gifts under the constraining influence of his love. This love moved thee forth in thy Master's name to seek his purchased spouse, and, as the blessed Eliezer, to bring her to the Redeemer. Thou didst not go forth, as some do in our day, who deem a patron's call enough ; men who have made Zion desolate, and oppressed the flock of Christ. Ere thou didst accept the pastoral office, thou wert called of God and men, and this knit thee and thy parish together in the bands of love.

“Thou hadst the power of drawing sinners by strong cords of love, even the love of the cross. At the cross thou didst take thy stand, and thence thou didst declare to sinners that there alone was shelter and deliverance from destruction. There, in the salvation of sinners, justice and mercy and all the attributes of the God of glory met and kissed each other ; for when justice raised the flaming sword unsheathed, the Shepherd stood up before it, and of that sharp sword He, the mighty one, bore the strokes. There justice found atonement, and the law fulfil-

ment; and all the perfections of God found ample satisfaction; there the ransom price was laid down which paid the debt and purchased life, for there was the end of every sacrifice, there the essence of all truth, the sum and substance of all throughout the glorious Bible. There Satan was overcome and spoiled. To us this was the destruction of the grave and of death, the opening of the fountain of salvation and of paradise itself at last. There was shed the efficacious blood which purchased to us peace and reconciliation in the day when its loud cry sounded in the ears of the God of mercy. For its sake he removes the curse from us, and bestows all blessings on us, and puts us in possession of happiness in his own place of glory and of blessedness. There mercy found a door by which to come out to the children of poverty, with power to save them; never to return till all her desire is accomplished, and till she brings the children of destruction into paradise.

“This cross, in these its properties, thou didst preach to this people,—and such were thy views, and thy power to speak of it, that thy report was to us most persuasive. Thou didst exhibit to us Christ crucified as the Alpha and Omega in the everlasting covenant of redemption, and in all the counsels of God—as the shelter from the storm to us—as our enduring defence from wrath—as the peace to our conscience—the oil to our wounds—the righteousness to clothe us—the sanctification to beautify us

—the balm to heal us—the still waters to give us drink—the light to guide us—our strength for all obedience—the life, the beauty, the fragrance of all our service—the food by which we live—our music to remove our sadness—our strength, our stay, our eternal foundation of hope—our shadow from the heat of the sun—our warmth amidst the cold of our distant land—our shield from the sharp arrows of the great enemy—as death to the man of sin within us—as a gracious help to us in every time of need, as well as the enduring fulness of our God which passeth knowledge.

“Faithful, powerful, and compassionate, wast thou in proclaiming to wretched sinners all the terrors of the Lord. No preacher ever sounded more loudly the trumpet of God’s law in the ears of sinners! Alas! there are who proclaim destruction, the law’s curse and God’s wrath to us, but who show that they have for us no affection and no pity. Not like these wert thou, in telling us of our loss and danger; thine own soul was then in travail, and in thy very frown thy love to us might be seen.

“Thou gavest to the flock of Christ pure food; dividing to each, for his instruction and comfort, his own convenient portion. The dew of heaven on thy soul, and the love which made thy very breathing warm, often cheered them, and raised their hearts when sorrow bowed them down. Often, as they listened to thee have their hearts been melted,

their gloom dispelled, their enemies scattered. Sweet were thine utterances to them, bringing life and comfort into their hearts ; infusing vigour, and raising off them the blight of death. The blind would get sight, and the wounded healing ; the frozen heart, on which winter had lain, would be melted ; the sad spirit whose exercises had faded, would blossom as the fig-tree beneath the sun of summer. Scarce ever heard they one who could unravel, as thou couldst, their cases, clearly and wisely in well chosen words. The hidden things of their hearts, which were to them perplexing, seemed to them plain when they heard them from thy lips. Thou wast skilled to speak comfortably to many who were mourners among this people ; for when the golden trumpet sounded, and the influences from heaven streamed down on thee, their mourning and tears would give place to joy, and their gloom would flee away.

“ But it was the power of the Spirit of God which made the trumpet sound profitable to us, and made thy messsge fruitful to us of good. And while we would acknowledge the benefit which we received from thy teaching during all thy ministry, we would ascribe all the glory to the Spirit of God, by whom alone it was made effectual.

“ Often wert thou found in thy closet, pleading at the throne of grace, seeking life for thyself and food for thy flock. It was while on thy knees the dew

reached thee, which made thy doctrine lively, fresh, and fragrant to us alway. And in preparing food for the heirs of mercy, let thy chamber witness to thy travail. Yea, it was with thee, as with David, when he would offer sacrifice,—to give what cost thee nothing thou didst not desire.

“A faithful friend, in Church courts, wert thou to the flock of Christ, never yielding to those who would do them wrong. Lamb-like though thou wert, and always wishful to be gentle, thou wouldst stand up then lion-like in courage.

“To the poor thou wert always compassionate and liberal ; among a hundred none but thy spouse was thine equal. Thou and she lived among us, like two gentle streams from one fountain, communicating, in love, to the poor who had grace, and in compassion to those who lacked it.

“To thy faithful discharge of social duties, let thy friends bear witness. Not in thy teaching only didst thou exhibit the life of godliness ; it flowed out in all thine actions during all thy years in the wilderness. There are who preach of works as ‘the all’ of religion, in their dry, cold, sapless doctrine, while their own works are vile. But what gave beauty to thy words in our eyes, and made thy doctrine seem to us most comely, was, that thy words were attested by thy works. The fruit of the holy and gracious Spirit poured out on thee, broke forth in manifest beauty day by day in thine actions. This so pre-

served thy character from reproach that even enemies could find no occasion against thee, except, as in the case of Daniel, on account of thy godliness alone. Thine was 'the path of the just,' which, like the pure and shining light, increases more and more till the eternal day of glory.

"Thou wert as a tree in the house of the Lord, ever stately, green, and fruitful; and when thou wast old and grey-headed, then did thy freshness and beauty abound the more. For eight and thirty years we enjoyed thy labour of love; and during all that time we never wearied of thee. Sooner shall the water be seen flowing up the steep ascent on the breast to the brow of the mountain; sooner shall the birds of the air cease to sing to us, than that thou, O Charles, shalt be dropt out of memory. Nor shall thy doctrine be forgotten by those who were nourished by it; for it was anointed by the dew of grace, and shall in freshness survive even death itself."

If Mr. Calder's successor had been a man of questionable piety, the people of Urquhart would never have received him. If he had been a man of slender gifts, though of undoubted piety, he never could have commanded their respect, and his influence would have been comparatively small. If he had been a man of the same stamp, in respect of intellect and manner, a comparison would have been instituted between him and Mr. Calder, which was sure to be

unfavourable to the former. If he had failed to show his profound respect for his predecessor's memory, and to remind his people of his life and labours, by merely seeming anxious to wean them from their first love, he would have alienated their affection from himself. But Mr. Macdonald was one whom they all could receive as a man of God ; whose attainments could not but command respect ; whose labours the Lord had already blessed, and His people highly prized ; whose style of preaching was so different, that his congregation could love and respect him, without the fear of preferring him to Mr. Calder ; and Mr. Macdonald, instead of attempting to alienate from his predecessor's memory the warm affection of his hearers, laboured to deepen in their hearts an impression of his excellence.

It was a highly cultivated field on which he then began to labour as the minister of Urquhart. The Session was large, and composed of men of undoubted piety, some of whom were talented, and all of whom were respected. Rare men and true, as Christians and office-bearers, were Vass, Calder, M'Intosh, Gordon, Ross, Urquhart, and Mackenzie,—and by their influence the minister's hands were greatly strengthened. In the congregation were many who had felt the power, and who bore the fruits, of the gospel. From neighbouring parishes came many praying hearers, seeking the bread of life. Besides

the stated services on Sabbath, and the ordinary prayer and fellowship meetings in church, there were regular prayer-meetings in the various districts of the parish. Discipline had been always faithfully administered. Collections for missionary objects were regularly raised, and were always liberal. With very few exceptions all the parishioners attended church.

This was just the post for the minister who was destined to be "The Apostle of the North." Had he been set down in a parish which had not enjoyed a gospel ministry, the immediate field of labour would have demanded all his care, and from the work of cultivating the home waste, he could have spared no time for evangelizing the region around. But Urquhart could spare a portion of its pastor's labour to other places. That congregation could bear the trial of its minister's frequent absence without being scattered or disaffected. Often, indeed, did their minister thus try them. Sometimes when they heard him not once in six weeks, they would murmur, and resolve to remonstrate with him on his return. An opportunity of doing so they would not get before the Sabbath ; and during his preaching then their fit of fretfulness would pass away, and his cheerful greeting of them, when they met, would secure a smiling reception in return. A stranger, from a parish whose minister was a Moderate, once met an Urquhart man during one of his minister's long

tours. "How is your minister?" he inquired. "I can't tell you," was the reply, "we have neither heard nor seen him for six weeks. It is really too bad," he added, "that he should be so long away from his own parish." "Indeed it is," rejoined the other, "but I can suggest to you a plan by which you can have your minister every Sabbath." "And what is it?" "Exchange your minister for mine, and I'll engage that he will be left with you for all the Sabbaths of the year." "Oh, if that's your plan we will rather stick to what we have." "If you won't adopt my suggestion," the stranger said, "let me hear no more complaints about your minister's frequent absence. Be thankful that you have a minister of whose services all are anxious to have a share."

The North needed an evangelist. True, there was then a Robertson in Kingussie, a Fraser in Kirkhill, a Bayne in Kiltarlity, a Mackenzie in Lochcarron, a Stewart in Dingwall, a Mackintosh in Tain, a Forbes in Tarbat, and a Macadam in Nigg, besides other ministers who were faithful and useful in their day; but these were scattered over a wide territory, and extensive wastes lay between and beyond them. True, also, the influence of these men so pervaded the whole region, that the popular conscience throughout the Highlands deferred to Evangelism, and even in parishes from which such preachers were excluded there were precious fruits of their labours; but just on that

account there was a prevalent desire for an approved evangelist, and a field ready for his labour. True, besides, the gospel had, before this time, made its deepest impression on the north. Even already, though the overt power of Evangelism had not begun to wane, the tide of spiritual influence had certainly begun to ebb. Even already the aged Christians felt that they were survivors of better times ; and if they looked with a tearful eye on the state of religion around them, it was not because they were idolizing their memories of the past, but because the days on which they looked back were days of the right hand of the Most High, brighter than the present with a manifestation of His glorious grace. But it was the busy work by which a day of grace, given to a people, is fitly closed by Him who gave it, for which such a labourer as a zealous evangelist was needed. If even then the season of spiritual prosperity gave foretokens of its close ; if the Lord was already withdrawing his right hand by which he had wrought such wonders of grace before ; if it now seemed as if he intended to bestow no abiding husbandry on any portion of his vineyard in the north, when he had begun to remove one by one those by whose ministry he had been rearing there the trees of righteousness ; if the work, now to be done, was the gathering in, right speedily, of outcasts scattered over the wide north, on whom God had set his love ; and if instead of being trained for future work in

the vineyard, travellers Zionward were now only to receive occasional fare, to keep them alive in time of famine and to help them home ; the work of such a time as this could best be done by an evangelist. To this service, and not to the close supervision of a favoured spot, was Mr. Macdonald called, and for such a ministry he was prepared by the Lord. To give such a man for such service at such a time was becoming the God of grace. The sun flashed brightly before sinking into the clouds which lay over the horizon. It has not yet set ; but it is still behind the clouds ; and the light of our evening hour is dim.

In many parishes in the north there were ministers whose influence, if the most powerful, was also the most deadly. To all the worldliness, to much of the immorality, and to some of the power of the chieftains of other days, they added as their own the hypocrisy of a profession of Christianity. It is almost impossible to conceive of some of these Highland impersonations of Moderatism. If a few of them were contiguous in a district preserved from the intrusion of enthusiasts, fearing no Church censures, and feeling no restraint from the public opinion which their own influence had chiefly formed, they lived as do those who care not though all should see the brand of evil on their brow. The parson in one of these parishes was the great cattle-dealer at the market, the leading dancer at the wedding, the toast-

master at the farmer's dinner, and if the last to slide off his chair at the drinking bout, it was because he was more "seasoned" than the rest. He was the man of all others of whom evil doers were least afraid. On Sabbath he preached a borrowed sermon, which he had read so often that he himself was half asleep in delivering it, and their sound sleep alone made the infliction tolerable to those who lounged before him. He would make up to some of them for the fasting in the church by a feasting in the manse; and in gluttony and ungodly jesting he and they together would spend the Sabbath evening. One of these, during the Peninsular war, instead of delivering a sermon, used sometimes to read to his people the accounts of the battles as the news came home. On one occasion, a false report of Napoleon's death reached this country, and the minister told it to his people with all the comments on the great event given in the paper which he was wont to read. Before the next Sabbath, it was ascertained that the report was false; so on that day he began his address by saying, "It was all lies I told you last Sabbath. Napoleon the scoundrel is yet alive!"

On a cold day in April, in the first quarter of this century, a man, with a face remarkable for its want of expression and of skin, having on his head a hat not at all too good for a scarecrow, and wearing a canvas apron over a dress to which a covering was quite superfluous, was engaged behind a manse in

the Highlands in plastering with clay the walls of a henhouse. For lack of trowel he used his broad palms. But the hands, though not unused to labour, could not, scaithless, take the place of iron, for the keen frosty air cut them into furrows. A few days after he started on a journey. His hands, with their wounds still open, were wrapped up in flannel bags ; the hat, which he wore while plastering, was replaced by one a very little better ; and over a suit that was black on his marriage-day, he wore a long drab great-coat. He arrived at night at another manse within the same presbytery. Next morning, in the attire of the day before, he might be seen mounting a donkey at the door, amidst the tittering of the inmates who were looking on. His host, who accompanied him, was well mounted on a horse, and was attired as befitted a foppish squire. They rode together till they approached the town to which they were going, when the equestrian, hurrying on before, and making the best use of his time in announcing the rare spectacle coming after, despatched a crowd of urchins to meet his companion, who, flurried and fretted, entered the town soon after on the donkey, amidst the shouts of an uproarious escort. These two men were ministers ; and it was thus they travelled to their Synod—the one an impersonation of insensate dulness, and the other of reckless levity.

There were not a few such ministers throughout the Highlands, who, as Upas trees, were spreading

decay around them ; who were pests to all who were in earnest about salvation, and were zealous for the Lord of hosts ; and who formed a medium between the Church and the world, through which the profanity of the ungodly came in to desecrate the house of God, and through which religion appeared to the world as a despicable sham, or at the best, merely as a thing by which worthless men could earn a living. One of these in the neighbourhood, or in the midst of "sheepstealers," had a sorry life of it ; and in revenge for being checked in his ungodliness and deserted by his flock, did all he could to make their life uncomfortable also. The sheep who strayed would be closely watched. They could not be received in other places without his knowledge. Inquiry would be made who gave a token to his parishioners without his certificate, if they were known to have communicated. The matter would be brought before the presbytery, and all sorts of threats employed against those who would indulge in disorderly practices in future. If one of the deserters had a child unbaptized, he would be closely watched. Not applying to the parish clergyman even after the infant has been weaned, suspicion would be excited that his child has been baptized elsewhere. If there seemed to be evidence to convict a certain minister of having done it, a complaint to the presbytery would be preferred against him. This rendered the greatest caution necessary. Often has a baptism party come at dead

of night to the manse of an evangelical minister from the parish of one of these oppressors. In such a state of things an evangelist was greatly needed who was ready for every opening that gave him access with the bread of life to starving flocks, and whose frequent journeyings gave him many opportunities of relieving the oppressed.

There were outlying districts, on the mainland and in the Western Isles, never before visited by evangelical preachers, and where the people remained in a state of heathenism. Into some of these the light was introduced by means of the Gaelic schools. The teachers of these schools were, with very few exceptions, godly, zealous, and judicious men. Though greatly fettered by stringent rules in carrying on their work, and closely watched by the parish ministers who had forged their bonds, they were enabled to sow the good seed in the places where they were stationed, and there were precious fruits of their labours. Wherever a Gaelic school had been planted, a few were found who were longing for the gospel. There were cries to heaven from many spots in the midst of the desert for the visits of an evangelist; and in answer to these prayers, Mr. Macdonald was appointed to his peculiar work. Often have these lonely pilgrims been cheered by his visits and his sermons.

An evangelist's work, in the wide Highlands, must be always arduous; but when Mr. Macdonald entered

upon it, a small portion of the country only was opened up by roads. The distances were long, and must be either walked or ridden over. The labourer in that field required a frame, built up with strong bone and muscle, in a constitution without taint, urged by the active power of an unflagging zeal. A temper not easily ruffled was just as needful as a body not easily wearied; for he must meet with many provocations, which he would require to bear with patience. He must be fond too of looking at the bright side of things. He must have a power of ready sympathy, that adapts him, for the time, to the varied cases with which he comes in contact, without retaining a deep impression of any of them. His memory must be retentive, his habits of thinking exact, and he must have the gift of ready utterance.

In all these respects Mr. Macdonald was admirably adapted by Him who made him, and who made him "new," for the work to which he devoted his remaining years. Robust, healthy, and elastic in his physique, his mental powers and endowments were also such as an evangelist's work required. His intellect, urged forward by a temperate ambitiousness, had carefully surveyed the surroundings of its progress, and retained the full benefit of all its advances. He was quite as careful to arrange as to increase his stores of knowledge. He conceived clearly what came in contact with his mind, and his well-defined views were carefully balanced and laid up in a retentive

memory. His reading was careful as well as extensive : he did not appropriate, without appreciating, the researches of others.

There are some whose minds are like a disordered shop. The shelves are full, but all is so huddled on them, that the merchant cannot at any time lay his hand readily on what he wants. There are others like some catch-eye shops, all whose wares are in their windows. Well-ordered and showy their windows are, but there is no reserve behind ; their best and their all is seen at once. But there are a few shops which show a good window, and have full and well-ordered shelves behind. In these the merchants can lay their hands at once on what is needed, and the oftener you deal with them the more you know of the extent of their resources. Like these last, in the wealth and arrangement of his stores of knowledge, must the mind of a good evangelist be. If like the first, he would be most unwieldy, utterly lacking the power of ready adaptation, without which his work cannot be fitly done. If like the second, he himself would in course of time weary of uttering the same things over and over and over again, and his addresses would soon become stale to others. There are some soidisant evangelists whose addresses have been worn threadbare, because they cannot vary them ; and whose power of endurance, in being able to deliver them so often, is only equalled by theirs who could give them more than a second patient hearing.

Mr. Macdonald's early experience of the power of the truth was just of the type whose fitting fruitfulness was an evangelist's work. In the law's light he clearly saw his guilt and danger as a sinner, and the arrow of conviction was driven deep into his heart. He saw and felt, as but few besides, the desperateness of self-righteous labour. His conception of the gospel plan of salvation was proportionally clear. He "received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost." The Lord established his goings on the rock when he placed him on it. The grave clothes were removed from this risen one at His command who said, "Loose him and let him go;" and in the enjoyment of gospel liberty he was ushered into gospel service.

He was a scribe, already well instructed in the doctrine of justification by faith; not by the mere collection and collocation of sound propositions on the subject, but by being instructed by the word, and subjected to the power, both of the law and of the gospel. He felt what he knew; and he knew what he felt; unlike those who know somewhat of the doctrine, but who have never felt the power of the truth in which it is revealed; and not as others, whose hearts are affected by the truth, but whose minds are ill-informed regarding it.

He early acquired the habit of careful preparation for the pulpit. He laboured to apprehend his subject with definiteness, and to state his views with

precision. His love of system moved him always to attempt an exact arrangement of his ideas. His acquaintance with the scheme of gospel truth enabled him to allocate its proper place to every doctrine which he handled. His power of illustration was sufficient to make his sermons interesting and clear. Always textual, he avoided the sameness which monotonizes their effusions, who discourse on a subject instead of expounding a text.

Freed from entangling fears regarding his own interest in Christ, and taught to tell his troubles only to the Lord, he could carry a sustaining joyousness of heart with him to every portion of his work. His natural cheerfulness, sanctified into Christian happiness, could win for him admission into hearts and homes and pulpits that would else have been shut against him.

Such was Mr. Macdonald at the period of his induction at Urquhart, and of his entering on his great work as the Highland evangelist.





CHAPTER V.

HIS WIFE'S DEATH, AND HIS FIRST COMMUNION AT URQUHART—ACTION
SERMON—RESULTS—JOURNAL—VISIT TO PERTHSHIRE—AWAKEN-
ING IN GLENLYON AND BREADALBANE—THE “DUMB DOGS” ATTEMPT
TO BITE.



R. MACDONALD was in his thirty-fourth year when he came to Ross-shire—young enough to have retained all his vigour, and old enough to have acquired skill by experience for the great work before him.

Within his first year in Urquhart his wife died. Soon after her last illness began, her husband, in fulfilment of a promise to visit his father, and of an engagement to preach for his old friend, the minister of Reay, started for Caithness. During the first mile of the journey his anxiety gathered strength enough to turn his face homewards again. His wife, not then apprehensive of danger, urged him to resume his journey; and he at last agreed to do so. He was absent only a few days when Mrs. Macdonald became seriously ill, and suddenly died. A messenger was despatched, with the news of her death, who met Mr. Macdonald on his journey homewards. The week after his return had been appointed as the communion season at Urquhart.

His elders waited upon him to suggest that the communion services should be postponed. "No, no," he said, "let not the death of my wife interfere with commemorating the death of my Saviour. I feel very unfit for my share of the service; but there are able ministers engaged to carry on the work." Thus, within the same week, he had to perform the sad task of laying the remains of his wife in the grave, and to engage in the public services of his first communion at Urquhart.

On that occasion an immense crowd assembled. As many as ten thousand were in "the burn" on Sabbath. To this vast multitude Mr. Macdonald preached that day. "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever" was his text. From the very commencement of the service there was an unusual stillness in the congregation, and all seemed under the spell of an unwonted solemnity. They knew the preacher's affliction, and they could not even look on him unmoved. His sorrow touched their hearts, and his self-denial, courage, and devotedness to the service of the gospel, appealed powerfully to their conscience. He was marvellously helped by the Lord in his work. His soul was lifted as on eagle's wings above the sorrow which before depressed him. The widower was lost in the spouse; the earthly was forgotten in the spiritual relation; and, unthinking of his own distress, he gave himself up to the praise of Christ. The power of the Lord was signally working in "the burn" that day. Few eyes were tearless in that vast assembly; and

when, in the evening, he appealed to the unconverted, commending to them the love of Jesus, urging on their acceptance his offer of marriage, and warning them of the danger of refusing his advances, the hearts of many sinners were pierced. The excitement at last was very great, the groans and outcries of the stricken ones sometimes drowning the voice of the preacher. During the closing service on Monday the same scene was repeated.

The awakening, then begun, continued for some time. On the 12th of January 1816, Mr. Macdonald thus writes in his journal:—

“In the course of this and of the last week had some visits from young persons under conviction, which were very agreeable, but which made me feel how ill-qualified I was to comfort them. The Lord’s time is not come. But, oh, how much I need to understand more clearly and experimentally the simplicity of the gospel!

“Since I came to the parish in 1813, I think there have been awakened under my ministry, known to myself, besides others unknown to me, and who have not called upon me:—

Belonging to my own parish,	12
Contin, Urray, and Fodderty,	8
Kiltearn, Alness, and Rosskeen,	6
Creich, Tain, Fearn, and Tarbat,	9
Resolis and Cromarty,	8
Avoch,	2
Alness [at Sacrament],	8
Ardelach, Croy, Kirkhill,	5
In all [the Lord be merciful to them],	<u>58</u> ”

On New Year's day, 1816, he began the journal in which the preceding is an entry. On that day he writes :—

“Being now in the thirty-seventh year of my life and the eleventh of my ministry, and desiring to be humbled before my God, for the misimprovement of past time—especially considering that the best part of my life is over—for the little return I have to make to Him for the opportunities, the means, the talents, the education, and [I trust] the grace, which He has conferred upon me ; I would, this day, resolve in the strength of his grace henceforth to devote myself more than ever to Him and to His work ; to consider myself as not my own but His ; and His, I trust, by redemption, and therefore bound to be at His disposal, and to glorify Him in my body and spirit which are His. And in order to this I would, more than I have hitherto done, attend to,—1. Earnest, frequent, importunate prayer. 2. The reading and searching of the Scriptures. 3. Meditation. 4. The state of my heart and life as to personal godliness. 5. My public ministry ; zeal for God ; love to the souls of men ; preparation for the work ; readiness to speak the word, to be instant in season and out of season.

“Among the many omissions of my past life which I have to lament, that of not keeping a diary, containing some account of the Lord's dealing with my soul, and of the work of my ministry, is not the least.

I was chiefly prevented from this by a false humility, as not thinking anything done in me or by me worthy of being recorded; and as reckoning myself so far behind those who usually kept such diaries that it would be presumption on my part to attempt anything of that kind. I now find, however, that this was a mistake, and I have no doubt that Satan was at the bottom of it; for if the Lord wrought in me and by me in any measure, however unworthy I am,—and none is more so, as He knows, on the face of the earth—His work deserves to be recorded, and some account of it might be serviceable to myself, useful to others, and conducive in some measure to His glory. I would, therefore, in future endeavour to keep some account of my labours, with anything in my own soul, in providence regarding me, or in my success in the vineyard, which may be deserving of notice. And I begin with this year [1816].”

The resolution which he then formed was carried out to a certain extent during all his subsequent life. Of the journal only fragments remain, containing chiefly an account of his labours.

The following entries serve to give an idea of his work at this period of his ministry:—

“*Jan.* 5, 1816.—Preached last night at Inverness, from 1 Pet. ii. 17. In which I considered, 1. The character of the believer’s God—‘the Father who, without respect of persons, judgeth,’ &c. 2. The character of his children—they ‘call upon the Father,’

—and, 3. The duty enjoined in consequence—‘pass the time of your sojourning here in fear,’—the last of these referred to some future occasion. Enjoyed some liberty.

“This day [Christmas O.S.], being an idle day with many, and much spent throughout the country in gossiping and dissipation, preached in my own church to a numerous congregation, from Eccles. ii. 1–11. I hope the subject was suitable.

“*Jan. 7, Sabbath.*—Preached Gaelic from Gen. xlvii. 8, 9; English from Deut. xxxii. 29.

“*Jan. 12* [New Year’s Day O.S.]. Last Tuesday, the 9th, held a meeting for baptisms at Hector Urquhart’s—well attended—addressed the people from Luke v. 12, 13. *Wednesday* night, attended the English meeting at Inverness. *Thursday* night, preached there in English from Rom. viii. 6, latter clause, with some degree of freedom and, I trust, spirituality. Endeavoured to describe some of the characteristics of spiritual mindedness. Oh, that I possessed them! *This day* [Friday], being an idle day with many people [though not, alas! idle in sin], I preached to a large congregation from Eccles. ii. 12–18, in some respects suitably to the season of the year, and the character of many of the audience. *In the afternoon*, about four o’clock, held a diet for baptisms at the schoolhouse, Culbokie, numerous attended. Addressed the people from Titus iii. 5, particularly ‘the washing of regeneration.’ The season

solemn—some degree of divine influence—a few in tears—three sobbed and cried. *In the evening*, at six, went to Mrs. Calder's. Addressed at worship from Ps. xc. 1. The occasion sweet and solemn.

“*Jan. 22 [Monday].—Wednesday* last I went to Inverness. Attended the meeting there in the evening—had much freedom in speaking. *Thursday*, returned to Hector Urquhart's at the west end of the parish, where I held a diet for baptisms. The barn was full. Addressed the people from Prov. i. 20. Dwelt considerably on ‘Wisdom crieth without.’ The occasion was sweet to my own soul, and refreshing, I trust, to some of the Lord's people. But oh, wicked self! The Lord subdue it, and keep me humble! *In the evening* went to Mrs. Calder's. Addressed at worship from Ps. xl. last verse. *Yesterday*, preached in Gaelic from Isa. xxviii. 16, and in English from Acts xxiv. 25. Enjoyed considerable freedom in each sermon. Some apparent impression on the hearers—not a a few in tears. The description of the Redeemer as a foundation I felt peculiarly interesting. May I improve this subject for myself; for, alas! what if, after all, I am not built on this foundation.

“*Jan. 29 [Monday].—Tuesday* last I held a diet of examination. *Yesterday*, preached at Kiltarn, in Gaelic from 1 John iii. 1, 2, and in English from verse 3. The crowd immense. Enjoyed unexpected freedom—found some parts of the subject sweet in-

deed. Spent the evening at Mountgerald. After ten the servants gathered with the family. Addressed at some length from Eph. ii., and with considerable ease and freedom. The Lord be praised for it! Oh, how useful ministers might be if they acted as became their office!

“*March 4 [Monday].—Spent Tuesday and Friday* in catechizing. *Monday* night at Mrs. Calder’s. Addressed from Ps. xxx. On *Sabbath* preached in Gaelic from Isa. xxviii. 16, and in English from Exod. xxiii. 3.

“*March 11.—Tuesday and Friday* catechized. *Monday* night at Mrs. Calder’s. Addressed from Ps. xxx. *Yesterday*, preached in Gaelic from 1 Cor. iii., and in English from Exod. xxiii. Had much freedom in the forenoon, in setting before myself and others the danger of building on the foundation ‘wood, hay, stubble.’ A certain clergyman present to whom many viewed the subject as applicable. Was led to it on Saturday, and did not know the cause.

“*March. 18.—Tuesday* last, finished the catechizing diets in the church. A more than ordinary crowd. Addressed the people in conclusion from Prov. xxiii. 23, ‘buy the truth and sell it not.’ Some affected. *In the afternoon* went to the Ness. Addressed a considerable number, who met, with much freedom, from John iii. 32. *Monday* night at Mrs. Calder’s. Addressed from Ps. xxx. *Yesterday*, preached in Gaelic from Matt. vi. 1–4, and in English from Exod. ix. 20, 21. Gaelic, afternoon, Ps. xliii. 5.”

The season, over which these notes are spread, was that portion of the year in which he laboured least; and if then his labours were so abundant, what must they have been in summer when they were more than doubled? But though he then abounded in labours, he did not at that date reach the full amount of service which occupied him in later years.

Mrs. Calder, whose name occurs repeatedly in his journal, was his predecessor's widow. His kind attentions to her she highly appreciated. The deep sorrow of a desolate widow, and the frequent fears of a timid Christian, made her very dependent on the comfort of his cheering visits. While rejoicing in the apparent success of Mr. Macdonald's ministry, it was to her a trial to look back on what seemed the comparative unfruitfulness of her husband's labours. Having expressed this feeling to Mr. Macdonald, he said to her, "What you now see, my dear Mrs. Calder, is the upspringing of the seed which your husband was sowing. The farmer sends his best man to sow the seed; but, the field once sown, he sends any boy who may happen to be at hand, to harrow it. The field must be harrowed as well as sown, but the sowing is the more important work. It was thus 'the Lord of the harvest' dealt in appointing work for your husband and for me. He, the skilled labourer, was sent to sow the good seed, and I, a novice, was sent after him to do a lowlier work."

In the light of the extracted notes we see him watching with an observant eye the Lord's dealings with his soul ; already skilled to keep his work independent of his experience ; and subordinating all to the great ends of the service of the gospel.

Tidings of the awakening at Urquhart reached Breadalbane. Mr. Findlater then occupied a missionary station there. He was a godly man, a faithful fervent preacher, and the lack of learning and talent in his discourses was well supplied by the unction of a broken heart. He was stirred up by the good news of the Lord's work in Ross-shire to seek an outpouring of the Spirit on Breadalbane. Prayer-meetings were set up ; and not long after the "dry bones" began to move. One after another came to Mr. Findlater asking, "What must I do to be saved?" He wrote to Mr. Macdonald, imploring his assistance at his next communion ; and he agreed to go. Of that communion season at Ardeonaig the following account is given by the Rev. D. Campbell, Kiltarn ; who, along with his brother, the Free Church minister of Lawers, looks back on that time as the dawning of a better day.

"On Thursday Mr. Russel of Muthill preached in English from 1 Kings viii. 38 ; and Mr. Macdonald in Gaelic from John xvi. 9. During the Gaelic sermon an extraordinary degree of attention was excited, and towards the close of it a young woman from Glenlyon cried out, being unable to repress her

feelings. Mr. Macdonald preached an evening sermon at Lawers from Ps. xxxii. 6. Owing to the darkness of the night, the poor people of Glenlyon could not return home ; and some of them were quite unfit for the journey, a sense of sin pressing so heavily upon their hearts. Those who were able to go home, next morning, brought with them the tidings of Mr. Macdonald's arrival and of the effects of his preaching ; news which excited an ardent desire to hear the extraordinary preacher, and to witness scenes before unheard of in Breadalbane ; while some desired to experience such influences themselves as were felt by others. The result was that the most of the Glenlyon people were in Ardeonaig on Sabbath. Mr. Macdonald preached the action-sermon in the tent that day to an assembly of people more numerous than had ever met before in Breadalbane. His text was Isa. liv. 5, 'Thy Maker is thine husband.' The sermon was accompanied with an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit. Some cried out ; others were melted into tears ; while many laboured in vain to suppress their feelings. The place was then 'no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.' Mr. Macdonald preached on Monday from Luke xvi. 2, a sermon by which many more were awakened ; so that this occasion proved to many in Glenlyon, and to some in Breadalbane, to be like the month Abib to Israel, the first of all the months."

The most memorable sermon, then and ever preached by him, was the action sermon, on a text cognate to that on which he preached on his first communion Sabbath at Urquhart. Hundreds of abler sermons has he preached, but none which the Lord more signally blessed. It was never fully written out, but the following skeleton of it was found among his papers, and is here subjoined that it may serve to give an idea of the kind of preaching which the Lord delights to honour. It was delivered in Gaelic, but the notes were written by his own hand in English.

“ Isa. liv. 5, ‘Thy Maker is thy husband.’

“ Remarks on context. Consider I. *The parties*.
 1. *The Spouse*. Every true believer, and as such married to the Lord. But by nature, (1.) *In a state of degradation*—a child of Satan—a slave. (2.) *Drowned in debt*—of obedience to the law, and of suffering to the justice of God; unable to pay, and therefore a prisoner. (3.) *Without spiritual beauty*; but on the contrary, altogether defiled, deformed, loathsome (Isa. i. 7; Rev. iii. 17, 18; Ezek. xvi. 6). (4.) *Dead*—spiritually (Ezek. xxxvii.; Eph. ii. 1, 2). (5.) In a helpless condition. None else would or could look after her or relieve her, nor had she any strength in herself. (6.) With all this she was *full of enmity and rebellion against her Husband*—waged constant war with him—thrust the sword into his side. 2. *The Husband*. Thy Maker—the

Lord of hosts—the holy One of Israel. GOD, God in our nature. Consider, (1.) His *rank*. The Lord—Lord of lords and King of kings—the Son—honoured by all the heavenly host—adored by the redeemed—the source of all created rank and greatness. (2.) His *riches*. The God of the whole earth—heir of all things—all fulness in him—rich in what the spouse needs. Rich in merit to pay her debts, rich in grace to make her rich—inheritance that fadeth not away. (3.) His *beauty* (Ps. xlv. 2; Cant. ii.; Heb. i. 2, 3). All created beauty from him—he can beautify his spouse—he can attract and ravish sinners with his beauty. (4.) His *power* (Isa. ix. 6, 7). As God, his power is infinite—manifested in creation, providence, and redemption. Power to quicken—to deliver—to subdue—to protect—to preserve, &c. (Ps. cx. 3). (5.) His *love*. Oh, what shall we say of this! (See Prov. viii. 30, 31). He died for his spouse—she was formed out of his side—waters cannot drown his love—manifested, in rescuing her in a day of power out of her wretched condition; and, after her espousal, in abiding with her, in compassion towards her, in holding communion with her, &c. And, oh, what shall its exercise be through eternity! (6.) His *faithfulness*—in reproofing her faults, in never forsaking her, in not receiving accusers’ reports of her. Oh, how faithful is he!

“II. *The Connection*. Marriage. ‘Thy husband.’

A relation is established which is called *union*. This is variously represented in Scripture ; and subsists between every believer and Christ. Here consider,

1. Christ offers himself in marriage to the soul, by the gospel, in which he reveals his excellent properties, and offers himself to the soul as involved in the ruin described. This is the design of the glorious doctrines and invitations of the gospel (Isa. lv. 1-4 ; Matt. xi. 28 ; Rev. xxii. 17).
2. Gospel means and ministers are employed for the purpose of representing this proposal, (Gen. xxiv.) The apostle espoused Corinthians to Christ. Oh, what an honourable work ! How faithful should ministers be !
3. The Spirit is sent forth—to make the soul sensible of his condition—to reveal Christ in his properties and proposals—to make him willing to receive Him—and to loose him from every other attachment (Rom. viii. 4, 9 ; Ps. xlv. 10 ; John xvi. 9-15).
4. The soul, in consequence, under a sense of need and unworthiness, and having a view of the object, approving of the terms and accepting of the offer, casts himself at Christ's feet—resigns himself to the Redeemer and follows him. This is the act of faith and closes the union, and is the foundation of all future intercourse and communion.

‘ My Beloved is mine.’

“ Here is, 1. A marriage with the consent of all parties—Father, Son, and Spirit ; law and justice ; angels and saints. 2. A wonderful marriage. 3. A

joyful marriage. 4. A sure marriage. 5. An honourable marriage. 6. An everlasting marriage.

“III. The happy results of this marriage. The spouse has from her husband, in consequence, 1. A *change of nature* (John iii. 6 ; Ezek. xvi.), in order to love, obey, and enjoy him. 2. A *glorious robe* as a wedding garment—his own righteousness for covering, shelter, and ornament (Ps. xlv. 13 ; Rev. iii. 18). 3. *Beauty*. Graces of the Spirit (Ps. xlv. 13). 4. *Provision*. Food—drink—light—life—liberty—joy, &c. 5. *Protection*—from enemies—sin, Satan, and the world. 6. *Communion*. The enjoyment of his presence. 7. Riches. 8. *Introduction to heaven* at last, and eternal residence there (Ps. xlv. 14, 15).

“Hence, 1. Self-examination. Marks of those who are not, and of those who are, married to this Husband.

“2. Sinners, consider your condition—accept of the proposal (Matt. xxii. 5). Different classes.

“3. Saints. Draw nigh this day, behold what your Husband did and suffered for you.”

The writer once met a Gaelic teacher, who was accounted a godly man by all who knew him, and who took a leading part in every good work in the district where he lived and taught, and who declared that he knew fifty persons who were awakened through that sermon at Ardeonaig ; that he himself was one of these ; and that he was the only one of

them all whose conversion he was tempted to suspect.

His work in Perthshire then was to Mr. Macdonald most delightful. His soul was in a holy passion of fervent zeal for the salvation of sinners. His preaching was marvellous in its unction and its power ; and of every sermon there was some fruit to God. Glenlyon and Breadalbane were ever after green spots in his memories of the past ; and the remembrance of the working of the Lord's right hand, in these favoured places, often cheered him when his heart was fainting in the toil of later and less fruitful years.

His visits to Perthshire were frequent thereafter, and his services extended to all the parishes to which he could get access. Some of the slumbering stipend-lifters, whose rest had been disturbed by the work of God around them, locked their churches and their parishes against him. One of them, when pressed to allow him to preach on a week day in his parish, said, "No, the command is, 'Six days shalt thou labour ;'" insisting that the fence of this command confined all preaching to the Sabbath. Preaching "in season" might, in his opinion, be useful for earning a stipend, but for preaching "out of season" he had no toleration. The matter was at last taken up by the Presbytery ; and Mr. Findlater was summoned to give an account of his conduct in asking the wild man from Ross-shire to visit

quiet Breadalbane. An overture to the Assembly against vagrant preaching was proposed ; but ere it was ready to take wing to Edinburgh, the Presbytery got ashamed of their bantling and smothered it. The minister of Killin, on being asked why he had given his pulpit to the enthusiast from the north said, "I think we might give our people a treat now and then, when they put up with our gibberish all the rest of the year."





CHAPTER VI.

ABOUNDING IN LABOURS—SPINNINGDALE—STRATHBOGIE—
AT THE BAR OF THE ASSEMBLY.

IN 1817 his extra-parochial work had already so increased, that it was the smaller portion of the year he spent at home. In summer and autumn he preached but rarely in his own pulpit. Tuesday and Wednesday were the only days of any week during these seasons which he could spend in “the study;” and not unfrequently these were preaching days as well as all the others. This amount of work was not only cheerfully but carefully performed. He never delivered an extempore address. He did not write new sermons every week, but he was always ready to deliver a carefully prepared discourse. It was by availing himself of every hour which he spent at home that could be devoted to study, and by acquiring the habit of carrying on a train of thought while travelling, that he was able to perform efficiently so large an amount of service.

If he was officiating in a parish at some distance from home, he usually preached on his return to each intervening congregation to which he had access.

Some churches were locked against him, and against all whom the people were most anxious to hear ; and many a wistful look he would cast at these churches as he was obliged to pass them by. In not a few instances he succeeded in opening the church for himself by calling on the minister, and by his genial and pleasant manner making him ashamed to refuse his offer of preaching to his people. By opening the minister's heart, he opened his church, with the strong key of kindness. But some stern men were proof against all such influence. No power could move them to admit "the wild man of Ferintosh" into their pulpits. But he would not be baulked. On the nearest spot to the forbidden ground on which he had license to preach, he would assemble the people of the recusant parson, and preach to them *en passant*, on one of his evangelistic tours.

Having being asked by the people of Dornoch, during the incumbency of Dr. Bethune, to preach in their parish, he at once agreed to do so, if the consent of the parish minister were obtained ; and he appointed a day. The report of the coming sermon spread before the parish-keeper was consulted. When he was applied to for permission he resolutely refused it. The appointed day arrived, and the expected preacher appeared, but the doctor was inexorable, and the cathedral was closed. But the parish of Creich was not forbidden ground ; so the preacher

and his congregation set off to a spot in Spinningdale where Creich touches the west boundary of Dornoch. The preacher stood on Creich soil, and the congregation sat within the parish of Dornoch. The service of that day was a most memorable one. The power of the Lord was working with the gospel, and many a heart was pierced. There are some still on earth who remember that day with thankfulness, and there are a few in heaven who cannot even there forget it. Such was the fervour of the preacher's spirit, fired as he was by love to Christ, and by pity for perishing souls, that his animation and eloquence were even to him unusual. He never preached with greater power. Ere the sermon closed, the spot on which he stood was worn down, by the action of his feet, into a pit, the form of which could for many years thereafter be pointed out to visitors. Often has that same spot been honoured since by the preaching of the gospel and by displays of the power and glory of the Lord.

A few weeks after he preached at Spinningdale, Mr. Macdonald writes in his journal: "*Oct. 11th, 1816.*—This day heard of the sudden death of the Rev. Dr. Bethune, minister of Dornoch. Oh, what a loud call to diligence in the work of the Lord, and to be found ready when He comes, 'for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh!' Some weeks ago he refused me liberty to preach on a week-day in his parish, though eagerly requested

by his people. The people met with me in a neighbouring parish where liberty was obtained for me to preach, and I believe two or three at least were brought under serious impressions. The Lord will have his own in spite of all who oppose him; and when one door is shut he can open another." "I had a letter this day," he adds, "from a friend at Grantown, acquainting me that the minister of Abernethy had refused me liberty to preach in his parish, though earnestly requested by many of his people. If the Lord had anything to do by me there at present, he would have opened the way. Other places, however, are accessible. Blessed be his name! And where he sets an open door before me, it is my duty to improve the opportunity. I pity those that shut the door, and pray that the Lord may lead them to a better mind."

On his journeys to Aberdeen he passed repeatedly through the district of Strathbogie, which was then a spiritual waste. A very few Dissenters had broken ground in some spots of this dreary desert, but their influence was not extensive; and all the resources of the Established Church were employed to counteract their efforts. The men who "lifted" the stipends in the parishes of that district did little else besides, except spending them. To read on Sabbath the pithless paragraphs of a musty sermon which they had at first either begged, borrowed, or stolen, to a handful of sleepers, was almost all the stipend-earning

work they did. The only zeal they ever exhibited was when they were disturbed by the intrusion of evangelism or dissent into their preserves. The one doctrine of their creed seemed to be that there was no occasion to believe anything; and judging by their lives, the only maxim in their code of morals was, that a minister may do what he likes if he continues in safe possession of his living. It is almost impossible to exaggerate in describing the ungodliness of some of these men. And yet they were called ministers of Christ, and they ate the bread of that office without fear or shame!

How many portions of our beloved land were blighted by the graceless ministry of such men as these! How wonderful it is, that the Church which acknowledged them, should have survived such provocation of God's wrath, and risen again into revived zeal for God, after so utter a decline of fervour and of faithfulness as marked her condition at the beginning of this century! Is it because of the more public connection with his glory which Established Churches have, that the Lord has sometimes, for his name's sake, raised these from depths, where other Churches, which have fallen into them, have been left to die?

With his zeal for the salvation of sinners, his constant readiness to preach, and the manifold proofs he had received that the blessing of the Lord was descending on his labours, we cannot wonder though

Mr. Macdonald could not always keep silence while passing through Strathbogie. In 1817 he preached in a Dissenting chapel within the bounds of that presbytery. The "dumb dogs" who kept the parish gates, though they could not "bark," were resolved to show that they at least could bite. The presbytery in hot haste took up the conduct of "the vagrant preacher" from Ross-shire, and by a reference sent up a complaint against him to the Assembly. In the granite city, there lived and lectured a certain Professor who was now becoming ambitious of a leader's place in the Church, and who, always ready to lay out all his strength in a tilt against evangelism, headed on this occasion the crusade against "the wild man" of the north. He went to the Assembly with a censure in his pocket. Discovering, on consulting with cooler heads, that there was no case against "the vagrant preacher," the consideration of the matter was put off to the last Saturday of the Assembly, that with the scantier attendance there might be the better chance of smuggling through the censure which the Assembly were to be asked to issue.

The following account of the Assembly's proceedings in this case was given in *The Christian Instructor* of 1819 :—

"The Assembly then considered a reference from the Presbyteries of Strathbogie and Aberlour, referring to the Assembly the conduct of Mr. John Macdonald, minister of Urquhart, in preaching in other parishes

than his own, within the bounds of the above presbyteries. Mr. Cruickshanks, a member of the presbytery of Strathbogie, was heard in support of the reference, and Mr. Macdonald in explanation. After long reasoning, a motion was made and seconded, that, 'Having considered the references, the Assembly declare, as it is hereby declared, that the performance of divine service, or any part of public worship or service, by members of this Church in meeting-houses of dissenters, is irregular and unconstitutional, and ought on no occasion to take place, except in cases in which, from the peculiar circumstances of a parish, its minister may find it occasionally necessary for conducting the ordinary religious instruction of his people; and the Assembly further declare, that the conduct of any minister of the Church, who exercises his pastoral functions in a vagrant manner, preaching, during his journeys from place to place, in the open air, in other parishes than his own, or officiating in any meeting for religious exercises without the special invitation of the minister within whose parish it shall be held, and by whom such meetings shall be called, is disorderly and unbecoming the character of a member of this Church, and calculated to weaken the hands of the minister of the parish, and to injure the interests of sound religion; and the Assembly enjoin presbyteries to take order, that no countenance be given by ministers within their bounds to such occasional meetings proposed to be held for divine

service, or other pious purposes, as may, under the pretext of promoting religion, injure its interests, and so disturb the peace and order of the Church ; and in case of such meetings taking place, the presbyteries, within whose bounds they are held, are enjoined to report the same to the meeting of the General Assembly ensuing.' Another motion was made and seconded, ' That the Assembly, having considered the references, find it unnecessary to emit any declaration relative to the subject thereof, the existing laws of the Church being sufficient to prevent the irregularity complained of, and recommend to the ministers of this Church to exercise their usual vigilance in giving due effect to these laws.'

" A vote was taken on these motions, when the first was carried by a considerable majority, and therefore the General Assembly declare and enjoin in terms of the first motion. From which judgment the following members dissented, for reasons to be given in in due form, and took instruments in the clerk's hands, viz. : Mr. James Thomson, Dr. Singers, Mr. John Hunter, Mr. John Ramsay, Thomas H. Millar, Esq., Dr. Lorimer, Mr. John Robertson, Mr. John Shaw, Mr. John Paul, Mr. Walter Tait, Mr. John Macdonald of Urquhart, Mr. John Cameron, William Inglis, Esq., William Maclean, Esq."

The following remarks on the conduct of the Assembly are from the mighty pen of Dr. Andrew Thomson :—

“ We are aware, indeed, that the references submitted to the judgment of the Assembly expressly denounced Mr. Macdonald as a delinquent. But when the matter came to be canvassed, his delinquency was so far from being established, that it was disproved; and though the leading members of the court would willingly have put him into the sentence, and though the original draught of it, as it issued from the pocket of Dr. Mearns, did actually reflect upon him nominatim, yet this purpose was fallen from; such an impression of Mr. Macdonald’s innocence prevailed, that the most violent of his opponents acknowledged it; and the deliverance of Assembly stands upon the record, and descends to posterity, without involving or touching his character in the slightest degree. For our part, we regard it with unqualified aversion and disdain, however much we respect the court from which it emanated, as the supreme judicature of the Church. And we shall shortly state the grounds on which we think ourselves necessitated to speak of it in terms of such severity. In point of form it must be called a decision of the General Assembly; but we think it right to give some explanation of the fact, so that it may be seen how far the Assembly, in fair and liberal interpretation, is responsible for the measure. Two references (one from the Presbytery of Strathbogie, and another one from the Presbytery of Aberlour) concerning alleged misconduct on the part of a particular

individual, consisting in vagrant preaching, were transmitted to the Assembly. They were not taken into consideration until the Saturday before the court rose, on which day, it is well known, a great proportion of the members have left town, and any mischievous proposal has a better chance of being carried through. We do not positively affirm that the delay was intentional; but our suspicion that it was so is too strong and too well grounded to be removed by any declaration to the contrary. However that may have been, it is certain that the case was not taken up till the Saturday; that few members, comparatively speaking, were present; and that it was determined, not only without unanimity, but after a vigorous though ineffectual opposition. We shall soon see its merits; but, in the meantime, it is proper to bear these things in mind, and to recollect, further, that the judgment finally pronounced was the production of Dr. Mearns of Aberdeen, who seemed anxious to try his skill in the work of legislation, and whom his friends, we suppose, did not like to disappoint or discourage in his first attempt. First attempts are generally awkward; and so fares it with this production of the learned doctor's; for a more awkward, clumsy, stupid thing we never saw in the shape of an ecclesiastical decision. It is a sort of monster, springing from the union of mad zeal and ignorant assurance.

“Really its reverend author should not set up as a

leader in the General Assembly—*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. And really the General Assembly would consult its own dignity, and the good of the Church, by expunging from its record what he has already, through some strange oversight, got inserted in it, in the shape of a declaration; and, moreover, by substituting in its place a resolve, that no proposition of his in future shall be allowed the benefit of a discussion, till it has lain twelve months on the table.

“The references which gave rise to the decision accused Mr. Macdonald of Urquhart of irregular practices in the function of preaching. It was his conduct which these documents stated to be the ground of the application. It was his conduct which every one of the speakers, in supporting them, made the subject of their animadversion. And it was his conduct which the motion, in its original form, as concocted (shall we say?) at Aberdeen, was intended to censure and condemn. But every person who had the misery to be present when the matter was reasoned, must recollect how Mr. Macdonald’s conduct was, in the course of the debate, so completely vindicated, that not even the most fierce and unreasonable of his opponents could persist in their primary determination to find him guilty. Every one seemed to vie with another in declaring that he was not only a good man, and a useful minister in general, but quite innocent and blameless in the particular examples brought forward to his prejudice.

And accordingly, the sentence found no fault with him—did not even mention his name—no, nor made the remotest allusion to anything he was alleged to have done. How ridiculous, then, is the sentence !

“The reference and discussion are all about Mr. Macdonald—the sentence in which they issue keeps as clear of that gentleman and his doings as if he had never existed. And thus it seems to be a maxim in Dr. Mearns’ judicature or legislative system, that a court should give judgment on anything but the question that has been regularly brought before it !

“We cannot conclude our remarks on the Assembly’s declaration without noticing the consistency of those by whom it was moved and carried. It was but a few days before, that, in the same court they sounded the praise and contributed to the acquittal of a clergyman who had neglected the duty of preaching to his people for seven months ; whose church, by his own letters and confessions, was not in such bad repair that he might not have officiated in it without danger to himself or his people ; who had the courage to avow at the bar of the Assembly, that his chief object in not preaching for such a long period was, if possible, to shame the heritors out of their alleged misconduct, and to compel them to give him a new church without delay, and thus acknowledged that his design was to take vengeance on the offending heritors, by withholding the word of life from his unoffending parishioners ! We say nothing harsh of

the individual who is here alluded to, for he is not before us, and not under our jurisdiction. But we state the fact, and we leave it to our readers to judge of the views and principles of those who could at once exculpate a minister for a confessed neglect of his pulpit duties for seven months, and prohibit all other ministers from preaching 'during their journeys from place to place in the open air, in other parishes than their own.' If such principles and views shall become general, (heaven forbid it!) then farewell to the honour, and prosperity, and reputation of the Church of Scotland."

The next time Strathbogie sought notoriety in the annals of the Assembly the tables were turned. In 1817 the presbytery tried to shut the mouth of an evangelist who pitied their famished flocks, and sought to feed them with the bread of life. In 1841 the majority of that presbytery were deposed by the Assembly, though, not having received their right to preach from Christ or from his Church, they wrought on as Cæsar's slaves, as they had done before; while "the Apostle of the North" expatiated over their parishes as the ambassador of the King of Zion, proclaiming the glorious gospel without the fear of Church censure, and in contempt of the Court of Session's interdict.



CHAPTER VII.

ST. KILDA—VISITED BY MR. MACDONALD IN 1822—EXTRACTS FROM
HIS JOURNAL.



THE island of St. Kilda rises remote, wild, and barren out of the waste of waters in the western sea. It presents a high rampart of rugged rocks to the billows of the ocean on all its sides, broken only by two chasms through which alone, for all wingless animals, access to the land is possible. On the east side, the ground slopes towards one of these openings, and in front of it, near the shore, are clustered together the rude huts of the inhabitants. Behind the hamlet the ground rises gradually towards the north-west, passing on the south side into the higher slopes of Ruaveil, and on the north rising into the rugged steeps of Congar, while on the north-east stands the Orwall hill, like a stern sentry keeping watch. In the valley between Orwall and Congar is the land which the people till, and from the produce of which they obtain their scanty supply of bread. The Fulmar and the Solan geese, which in myriads nestle in the rocky ramparts of the island, bring to the people their only source of

income. The danger attending their mode of killing these birds to procure their fat and feathers, they brave most fearlessly. The impulsive Celt likes the excitement of an occasional risk, rather than the monotony of safe and continuous employment. Without the vibration of a nerve, and speaking with a voice that knows no tremor, the islander, with a rude rope around his waist, held by friendly hands that shake not as they grasp it, goes over the edge of a precipice three hundred feet in height, and hanging over the sharp rocks around which, far below, the raging sea is lashed into foam—his foot now touching a narrow ledge, and then his whole weight straining the strand by which he is suspended—strikes with his bludgeon nest after nest as he reaches it; loads his shoulders with the slain, and is only drawn to the summit when he can carry no more.

In 1822 the population of the island was 108. According to their own traditions, their first sires came from the nearest islands on the east. Their names and their language accord with this account of their origin. Their huts are built of stone, and roofed with turf and straw; and filthy, unfurnished, and comfortless homes they are. Their dress is made of the undyed wool of their own gray tiny sheep, spun and woven by themselves. There was a succession of Presbyterian ministers in the island since the Revolution. The character of these can

now only be judged by the spiritual condition of the people when they were visited in 1822. "It grieves me to say," writes Dr. Macdonald, "and I took pains to ascertain the truth, that, among the whole body, I did not find a single individual who could be truly called *a decidedly religious person*; that is, one who has felt the influence of the truth on his soul, and who exhibits that influence in his life and conversation. . . . They seem to have a sense on their minds of a Supreme Being, who superintends and governs all things; and they admit also that they are sinners, and merit His displeasure. But they appear to have no correct views as to the method, either of obtaining His favour, or of being qualified for enjoying Him. When I proposed to them the question of the Philippian jailor (Acts xvi. 30), and asked what answer they would give to it, an old man replied, 'We shall be saved if we repent and forsake our sins, and turn to God.' 'Yes,' says a middle-aged woman, 'and with a true heart too.' 'Ay,' rejoins a third, 'and with prayer.' 'And,' adds a fourth, 'it must be the prayer of the heart.' 'And we must be diligent too,' says a fifth, 'in keeping the commandments.' After each had thus contributed his mite, and having no doubt that among them a decent creed had been made out, they all looked and listened for my approbation."

Mr. Macdonald visited St. Kilda in 1822 at the request of "The Society for Propagating Christian

Knowledge," conveyed to him in the following terms by the Rev. Dr. Campbell of Edinburgh :—

"The object of this communication is to call your attention to the mission of St. Kilda; certainly a very interesting object, and a case which presents strong claims on the attention of the friends of religion in the Highlands. Despairing, from the shortness of the time, to be able to send a minister to the island before August, I now state that I am authorized by the directors to make a proposal to you, which, from your well-known principles, and feelings of love to our common Lord, and to the souls of men, and from your habits of itinerating, I should incline to think would not fail to be agreeable to you. It is, that you yourself shall take a trip to St. Kilda along with the tacksman, in the month of August. The necessities of the islanders are urgent in the extreme. And I should think that the cry of their distress must be heard as loud in the ear of a zealous evangelical minister, as that of the men of Macedonia by Paul, 'Come over and help us.' I leave it to your own heart to make up an argument on the case, which I doubt not you will feel as irresistible. You go at the expense of the Society. The time is short; and if no minister goes in August the poor St. Kildaites must be destitute of spiritual instruction for another year."

This was a call which he had no strength to resist. He had long thought of and pitied the poor islanders

of St. Kilda, and often had he prayed for them; and now, when invited to visit them, he at once consented to go. Dr. Campbell's letter was dated July 8th, and on the 26th of August Mr. Macdonald started for St. Kilda. Three days were spent on the way to Skye, where he was detained till the 4th of September. After a tedious and disagreeable passage he reached Roudle in Harris on the 7th of September, and there he was compelled to remain for a week. He occupied the time thus lost to St. Kilda in preaching to the people of Harris. "In a strange land," he writes, "and among a people hitherto unknown to me, the Sabbath was comfortably spent, and if its exercises are blessed to a single soul, my detention here is not to be regretted."

But his heart was longing to reach St. Kilda. "In the evening," he writes, "the sky being clear, we had, from the top of an eminence in this island, a peep of St. Kilda, the lofty hills of which resembled in colour the azure of the sky. Immediately my heart seemed to be transported thither, and I said to myself, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!'"

Having called on the minister of Harris, he received him kindly, and expressed his approval of the proposed visit to St. Kilda, "an island," he said, "which, though in my parish, I have never seen."

Thus far from Skye he was accompanied by Mr. Shaw, the minister of Bracadale. But when stepping into the boat that was to carry him from Harris,

Mr. Shaw bade him farewell, his courage having failed before the dangers of the voyage. "I felt now," Mr. Macdonald writes, "that I was left alone, but wished to be able to say with the adorable Head, 'I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' These words occurred to my mind and comforted me."

At sea between Harris and St. Kilda he composed some stanzas in Gaelic, in which he thus expressed his feelings toward the poor islanders:—

"Thinking of the island, so remote and lonely, care and sorrow awoke within me, as I remembered the danger of the people. They are as sheep without a shepherd to lead and pasture them; or as a rudderless ship, tossed on the rough billows of the ocean; who can tell what her course may be, or if she may not be dashed on the rocks? Most dismal is their case! To endless torment they are exposed, without any to help them or to show them the way to Christ. Are we guiltless if these people perish before us, and we preach not to them the gospel of peace which shows the only way of life? Hard as flint is the heart that melts not in pity over their sad case. Oh, for the wings of a dove to carry me to them at once! Hunger and hardship would I bear, and the dangers of sea and storm would I brave, that I might see the people, and preach to them the gospel of peace."

Such were his feelings as he thought of the desolate islanders of St. Kilda; and if the stanzas in which he rhymed the utterance of them contain no

gems of poesy, they are bright with sparks of burning zeal from a true evangelist's heart.

He thus describes his feelings on coming within sight of the island :—"At last I caught sight of the island, a sight I had longed to see, and my heart swelled with gladness as I looked. But who could look on that island, standing erect out of the sea, with its rugged, craggy rocks, and its waste, unlovely mountains, its rough, green shore, the rude, proud billows of the sea indenting all its sides as they dash against it with furious onsets, while it stands unyielding to the surf that is raging all around it, though its brow is bare and hoary with the waste and the spray of the waves; who could see it thus, and unbidden venture to approach it? Truly, if I had not a call from the Lord, I would not set foot on its shore."

The following extracts from his journal describe the reception given to him by the people, his work among them, and the apparent results of his visit. How comprehensive and suitable was the course of sermons which he preached! With what wisdom, faithfulness, fervour, and diligence he ministered to the poor islanders during his sojourn among them! And what sobriety and modesty characterize his own description of his labours!

"*Monday, Sept. 16.*—*Yesterday* morning, at half-past four, we loosed from Ainsay. The wind due south, and a moderate breeze. About six, we passed

the island of Pabbay, and leaving all the lands of Long Island behind us, were now fairly in the Atlantic. We had scarcely, however, proceeded a third of the way, when an accident befell us, which, at the time, threatened to prevent our getting further. The wind by this time blew pretty fresh, and became rather squally, when our mast gave way within a few feet of the top, and down came sail and all about our ears. For a minute, master as well as men were panic-struck, but recovering themselves a little, they found that there was left entire of the mast what was sufficient to carry all the canvas which our little bark could bear at the time. Accordingly, adjusting matters as well as they could, we proceeded, our fine little vessel swiftly mounting the billows, which now ran mountains high; and, by two o'clock in the afternoon, we reached the shore, or rather the lofty rocks, of St. Kilda.

"Thus the Lord affords us constant reasons for gratefully recognising his protecting care and unmerited kindness. 'Oh, that men would praise him for his goodness!' I had certainly much cause to acknowledge his mercies to us at this time, for had the accident been such as not to admit of our getting forward, (which, had the mast broken a few feet lower than it did, would have been the case), neither could we have made our way back, but must, in that event, have been at the mercy of the elements, to be carried whithersoever wind and sea might drive

us, and at that time for anything we knew, into the Northern Ocean. Finding, when we reached St. Kilda, that, owing to the boisterous state of the wind, and its blowing on shore, we could not effect a landing on the eastern coast, which is the only landing-place even for a boat on the whole island, we veered about to the leeward on the north-west side of the island, and in a little loch or arm of the sea, got the boat under shelter, and leaving it in charge of the crew till the weather would admit of bringing it round, the master and I stepped ashore, having nearly two miles to walk before reaching the village, which is situate on the eastern bay. The feelings of my mind, however, on this occasion, were beyond description. I had no sooner got my foot on St. Kilda ground than I trust I was enabled to praise the Lord for His great goodness in preserving me on the mighty waters, and bringing me to my much wished for destination; and also to pray that, having so far made my journey prosperous, he would crown with much success the object of my mission.

“When descending the brow of the hill above the village, we observed some person standing without, and, on a sudden, in consequence as we afterwards learned of his sounding the alarm, all the souls in the village appeared at once, at first flying in different directions, until they discovered from what quarter the strangers were coming, when they made toward us in a body—shook hands with their tacksman, and

welcomed him to the place. After these salutations were over, he introduced me to them as a minister who had come to visit them, and was sent by the Society. Upon this, they immediately shook hands with me as if we had been many years acquainted, and, 'God bless the Society which sent him, and God bless him for coming,' was the general exclamation. Mr. McLellan and I then entered the house where the late missionary resided, and which is at present occupied by a Gaelic teacher lately sent to the island. It consists of a pretty large room with two concealed beds and a kitchen, and is to be our accommodation while we remain in the island.

"After taking some refreshment, it being now four o'clock, I intimated my intention of preaching, and that worship should commence about six. Word soon spread—for the houses being all built in a cluster, a cry, which served as a church-bell, was heard over the whole town; and at six we all met in the school-house, which is also the only barn in the place, and a sort of common property. It was sufficient to accommodate the inhabitants, who, I believe, were all present.—Preached to them, as an introductory discourse, on the angel's message to the shepherds (Luke ii. 10, 11), and was much pleased with the attention the people seemed to give to the Word. On retiring to rest, I felt peculiarly happy that I had now been enabled to commence my labours among this poor people, and prayed earnestly that the Lord

would direct me both what and how to speak to them, and make his own Word, by the accompanying influence of the Spirit, effectual in their salvation. The scenes of the day also had their full impression on my mind at this time.

“*Eodem die, Sept. 16.*—This day, finding that owing to their work at the harvest and business with the tacksman, the people could not conveniently assemble before six or seven in the evening, I spent a good part of the day in visiting and conversing with them at the shearing. The whole people, old and young, were out at once, and every family engaged in cutting down its little croft. Finding the people thus employed, I entered on some familiar conversation with them, in order to become a little acquainted with their views and habits, particularly in regard to religion. Found that they are fond of receiving and relating news. Endeavoured to gratify them as much as I could, and they in return entertained me with all the little tales of their island. I found that this gave me readier access to their minds, and enabled me with better effect to introduce, now and then, something about religion; for as yet we were not sufficiently prepared for entering fully on the subject. To such hints as were brought forward, they listened with attention and gave a ready assent, but said very little, which I imputed to a degree of bashfulness at this early stage of our acquaintance. Walked about thus from one group to another in

order to prevent jealousy, for where all are on a par, as is the case here, to make any distinction would appear invidious.

“Preached to them in the evening from Rom. iii. 21, on the nature, the evil, and the extent of sin. They all seemed attentive, and some discovered signs of being affected, as if the view given them of the subject was different from what they had been accustomed to entertain, and had therefore occasioned them some alarm. After sermon, I explained to them more fully the object of my mission, and the views which the Society had in sending me; adding, that I hoped, therefore, they would fall in with these views by giving a regular attendance, and showing a readiness to receive such instructions as might be given them. ‘That we shall,’ was the general reply. I told them further, that during my stay among them I meant to preach every day, besides catechizing and performing such other duties as might be necessary; but that I would suit the hour of meeting to their convenience, which might in general be at six in the evening, or whenever the business of the day was over. To this they readily assented, and expressed their willingness to meet at any hour I chose.

“Preached in the evening, from Rom. iii. 19, compared with Gal. iii. 10, on man’s natural state under the law, as being under the curse. All listened with uncommon attention, and some were

evidently impressed. The Lord deepen such impressions !

“ *Wednesday, Sept. 18.*—This day a number of the men with two boats (all the boats on the island), set off in quest of solan geese for the island of Boreray, about four miles directly to the north of this. The men being thus employed, I took a walk round the island, and after returning from this excursion, I called at the fields where the women were employed in the absence of their husbands. Had some conversation with them on religious subjects, and was agreeably surprised at finding that they could repeat many of the questions of the Shorter Catechism, although they understood little of the meaning of them. Upon asking them if there was any person on the island distinguished for religion, they told me that there was none at present remarkable in that way; but that a few years ago, there lived among them a young man of singular piety,—that he scarcely did anything else than read his Bible and pray—that he lived quite above the world—that they were not worthy of him—and that therefore the Lord took him to himself. He died, it would appear, at the age of nineteen or twenty.

“Preached in the evening from Rom. iii. 20, on the impossibility of justification by the deeds of the law. I could perceive that some felt affected, and seemed as if they were disposed to ask, ‘What must we do?’ The Lord grant that this may be the case

in reality. It is difficult to storm the citadel of the sinner's heart—many a siege will it bear, yet “nothing is too hard for the Lord.”

“*Thursday, Sept. 19.*—Took a trip this day in one of the boats belonging to the island, with my kind friend Mr. M'Lellan, to Boreray. We had scarcely approached its lofty rocks when the solan geese, which frequent this island and the Lee Rock in its immediate vicinity, flew about us in immense shoals like thick showers of snow, and seemed to darken the sky above our heads. The sight was truly astonishing, and far exceeded any anticipations I had formed. The old ones only fly about, and chiefly in quest of fish for their young. These, having got immensely fat, and their wings not being yet sufficiently grown to enable them to fly, recline on the rocks, exhibiting every symptom of ease and inaction. After taking a full view of the island and of its feathered inhabitants, returned home in the afternoon both gratified and astonished.

“On our way home we attempted to catch some fish, but were unsuccessful. Report says that there is abundance of fish of various kinds about the island, and yet it is remarkable that the inhabitants never employ themselves in that way, and seem to have neither turn nor inclination for it.

“Preached in the evening from Rom. iii. 21, on the righteousness of Christ as the ground of the sinner's justification. While speaking of the Re-

deemer's sufferings, some appeared to be deeply impressed, and there was something like a melting under the word. The cross, I see, is that chiefly which moves the sinner. 'They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn.' 'And I,' says Christ, 'if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'

"*Friday, Sept. 20.*—Walked about a part of this day, and conversed with such of the people as came in my way on their spiritual concerns. Feel that I ought to let slip no opportunity of doing so—that I am in a manner accountable for them in the day of the Lord—and that ere another messenger may visit them, there is every moral certainty that some of those I now see will be in eternity. How overwhelming the thought, if these perish for ever, and perish through my negligence! Felt in consequence of this impression more than an ordinary concern for their salvation, and prayed to God for them.

"I preached in the evening, from Rom. iii. 22, on the manner of becoming interested in the righteousness of Christ. During the discourse, some, both old and young, were affected even to tears; and among others, an old man upwards of sixty years of age. We must leave results, however, with the Lord.

"*Saturday, Sept. 21.*—The day being uncommonly mild, as indeed have been the last four or five days, I took a walk, in order to meditate in the view

of this evening and to-morrow's services, and passed the remaining part of the day in my room for the same purpose. The Gaelic teacher told me that he saw this morning one of the people engaged earnestly at prayer in the fields—‘A new thing,’ says he, ‘in St. Kilda.’ Preached in the evening from Rom. v. 1, on the effects of justification. Felt rather dull and lifeless, and my hearers appeared to be so too. That ‘a dead ministry makes a dead flock,’ is an old remark, which I fear holds but too true.

“*Monday, Sept. 23.*—Preached yesterday in the forenoon from John xvi. 7–15, on the work of the Spirit. Enjoyed much liberty during almost the whole service, and especially when pointing out how the Spirit ‘guides to all truth, and glorifies Christ.’ Many were affected, and at one time almost all were in tears; among others, two young people about ten and twelve. But these impressions, I fear, are of short duration; for after retiring, and during the interval, I observed the people standing here and there in small parties, and apparently discovering little concern about what they heard, except, as I have been told, that they were more silent than usual on these occasions. An individual indeed, here and there, seemed to separate himself from the rest, and lean on a garden wall, or some other object, as if musing on something. But with these exceptions, a general decay of impression marked almost every countenance. Let none imagine that I here

plead for austerity or moroseness in religion. But there is a season in the life of every man, who, after having been thoughtless about salvation, becomes in earnest, and obtains mercy, when he must be sensible of danger and pierced with sorrow, and on such occasions, when the heart is full the countenance cannot easily conceal it. In some parts of the country I have seen such impressions as I have witnessed this day, drive men to their Bibles, and to a throne of grace. But these poor people cannot read, and how to pray they know not. The Lord pour out upon them the Spirit of grace and supplications ; then shall it be said of each of them, as of Saul of old, ' Behold, he prayeth ! ' The want of knowledge is a sad bar to conversion. In the parable of the sower, it is of those who heard and understood the word, that it is said, they ' brought forth much fruit ; ' and without some degree of knowledge every impression is but as ' the morning cloud and the early dew which passeth away. ' In order, therefore, to stimulate them to the duty of prayer, I preached in the evening from John xvi. 24, ' Ask, and ye shall receive ; ' when I took an opportunity of explaining the duty and pointing out the encouragements to prayer. I hope the word spoken had some effect. The Lord grant it may be lasting ! After sermon I baptized a child—the only one in the place needing that ordinance at present, two having died since the missionary left the island. The child's

father, John Ferguson by name, is the only person in the place who can read, at least to any purpose. Found him, therefore, much better acquainted with the principles of Christianity than his neighbours. Preached in the evening from 2 Cor. v. 17, on being in Christ. The doctrine seemed new to the people; and several of them were deeply impressed and in tears; among others the old man formerly mentioned as above sixty. A circumstance, otherwise trivial, yet as it indicates the anxious wish of the people to hear the word, and not to lose a single opportunity for that purpose which can be commanded, deserves here to be mentioned. Some time before the hour of meeting for sermon, it became doubtful, owing to the boisterous state of the evening, whether the lamps would burn in the house, and therefore whether there could be sermon. This was no sooner rumoured abroad, than a number of active young men among them immediately set about repairing the roof, and in half an hour made it quite comfortable, adding, 'There shall be sermon indeed,' and 'we shall not lose a single night.' This eagerness on their part both pleased and encouraged me much.

" *Wednesday, Sept. 25.*—The people were much occupied to-day with Mr. M'Lellan in settling rents, &c. I therefore had little opportunity of conversing with them, and spent much of the day in retirement. Feel it pleasant to have access to God on all

occasions ; and lament much how little I avail myself of the privilege. To enjoy Him would more than make up for all the inconveniences of solitude and seclusion. Preached in the evening from 2 Cor. v. 17, on the new creature ; and hope I was enabled to be faithful and searching. Many were affected.

Thursday, Sept. 26.—This day Mr. M'Lellan having intimated to me that, wind and weather serving, he hoped to be able to leave the island to-morrow, I had my hands full. At an early hour, therefore, in the afternoon, I held a diet of examination, which was pretty numerously attended. Heard the people through most of the questions, which they repeat with tolerable accuracy, but are extremely deficient as to any knowledge of the meaning of them. They listened, however, with attention to such illustrations as were offered. Concluded with an address on the Shorter Catechism—the excellency and comprehensiveness of its system, and the confirmation which every part of it receives from Scripture. I therefore recommended to them to meditate carefully on its contents ; and to ask the divine blessing to accompany it ; stating that this was the more necessary in their case in consequence of their not being able to read the Scriptures for themselves. It was easy to see the expression of acquiescence in every countenance. At this and the preceding diet, all the families in the island were examined.

“ After the examination, I held, along with Mr.

M'Lellan and the Gaelic teacher, a meeting something like what might pass in St. Kilda for a justice of peace court, in order to settle little differences that might exist among the people ; and was pleased to find, much to their credit, none of any consequence, except one relating to marriage.

“Preached in the evening from 2 Cor. v. 17, on the new creature—a continuation of last night's subject. Many during the whole time were much impressed ; but towards the conclusion, when I hinted that this probably might be the last opportunity I should have of addressing them, they all began to weep. The scene was truly affecting, and quite overcame me. I concluded as abruptly as I could,—for to continue was impossible,—by earnestly exhorting them to remember what they had heard since we met, and this once to accept of Christ, and to labour to become new creatures, as that only preparation for that happy place where friends meet to part no more.

“Thus I have concluded my labours among these people, after having preached to them thirteen times, besides other services, and repeated conversations with them on the momentous concerns of eternity. What the result is, He alone knows who has said, ‘My word shall not return to me void ;’ but I can with truth say, that I enjoyed much comfort in the work, and that I hope my poor ‘labours shall not be in vain in the Lord.’ It becomes me to speak with modesty and caution as to any real effect produced. Yet a

few, at least five or six, appear to be under serious impressions ; while the general body seem to feel more than an ordinary concern about their eternal interests ; and, I would fain hope, a greater degree of prepossession in favour of the gospel, than has hitherto appeared among them. May the Lord ‘count when he writeth up the people, that this and that man were born there.’ It affects my heart not a little, in the prospect of leaving them, that I shall have no opportunity for a long while to hear of them, or how they come on, such is the infrequency of communication with the island. But it is consoling to think that they are under His care ‘who feeds his flock like a shepherd, and who gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom.’ And I reckon it no small privilege to the people, in existing circumstances, that the Gaelic teacher among them is a person who is able to instruct and direct them in the ways of the Lord, and who discovers every disposition on his part to follow up the instructions they have received.

“*Friday, Sept. 27.*—This morning, the weather being moderate, and the wind west and south-west, quite in our favour, we hastened to get the boat launched, and everything on board, in order to our departure. When all was got ready, about nine o’clock, and we had been taking leave of the inhabitants, all of them in a body (children not excepted), followed us to the shore, and amidst cries

and tears, in which my landlord and I were obliged to share, we shook hands with them and bade them a final adieu !

“The scene it is impossible for me to describe, but it reminded me of Acts xx. 38, ‘Sorrowing most of all—that they should see his face no more.’ And they literally expressed themselves so. After we had got under weigh, they ascended the brow of a steep hill, and sat following us with their eye, till our little bark, at the distance of fifteen or twenty miles, became no more visible.”

His journal thus concludes, “All praise to the Lord who has thus brought me back in safety; who protected me during the whole of my journeyings; preserved me in health, though often exposed on sea and land to the injuries of the weather and change of situation; enabled me comfortably, and I trust not without some success, to accomplish the object of my mission in visiting St. Kilda, and labouring among the poor inhabitants for nearly a fortnight; opened for me doors of usefulness in many other places, which but for this jaunt I might never have visited; gave me also, I hope, a heart in some measure to delight in his work, and to occupy such opportunities for addressing immortal souls as came in my way, so as during an absence of nearly eight weeks, not to be a single day without being thus more or less employed; and, finally, permitted me again to find my family and flock in comfort, after

the mutual anxiety which the total want of communication between us had for so long a period occasioned us. These are circumstances which, while they ought to humble me in the dust, call aloud for thanksgiving and praise to Him who has done all things for me. Oh, may He grant that my spared life may be devoted more than ever to His glory."





CHAPTER VIII.

DECLINES A CALL FROM EDINBURGH—PREACHES IN LONDON —
REVISITS ST. KILDA.



FEW weeks after his return from St. Kilda he went to Edinburgh to dispense the sacrament of the Supper in the Gaelic chapel, which was then again vacant. He was importuned, at that time, to accept a call from his former congregation, the managers offering to give him a stipend of £400. In reference to this proposal he writes to Mrs. Macdonald, in a letter dated Nov. 19, 1822: "I was offered £400 a year, if I would come back to the Gaelic chapel; but though the translation might be desirable for the sake of a rising family, how could I part with dear Urquhart?"

In the beginning of the following year, he received a letter from the Secretary of the London Missionary Society asking him, in name of the Directors, to preach one of the anniversary sermons in behalf of the Society at their meeting in May. He had never been in the great metropolis before, and would find himself alone among strangers if he went; he had

not then acquired the facility and accuracy as an English speaker to which he afterwards attained ; he feared that unfounded expectations might be cherished by those who already spoke and wrote of him as the great Evangelist of the North ; and with his modest estimate of his own attainments, he could not but shrink from agreeing to the request of the Society. But, years before, he had resolved never to decline an invitation to preach if he could possibly accept of it, and had made it for a long time a special subject of prayer, that the Lord would give him readiness to preach, without prejudice to the truth, on every occasion, however sudden the call, and however formidable the audience. He had been encouraged also to hope, that the Lord would answer his cry ; and this was an occasion to test the firmness of his resolution, and the steadfastness of his faith. He yielded not to his fears. The following letter is his reply to the invitation of the Society :—

“ URQUHART MANSE, BY DINGWALL,
12th March, 1823.

“ REV. DEAR SIR,—I was duly favoured with yours of the 25th ultimo, requesting me, in name of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, to preach one of the Anniversary Sermons before them in May, in behalf of the said Society. After hesitating for some days, on grounds a detail of which is unnecessary, I beg leave to inform you, that I have come to the conclusion of complying with the

request of the Directors. I might plead my insufficiency in many respects for this important service; but I hope never to shrink from a duty, however arduous, while I read in the Sacred Record, 'Our sufficiency is of God.'

"May He plead the cause which is his own, and strengthen His servants, and unworthy me, on that occasion to discharge our duty as those who must give account!

"Wishing for you and the Directors much of the Divine Presence in the very important and useful labours in which you are engaged, I remain, Rev. Dear Sir, faithfully and respectfully yours,

"JOHN MACDONALD."

The journey to London, not so easy then as now, was safely accomplished; and he finds himself for the first time amidst the Babel bustle, and the religious dissipation of a London May. He attended regularly the great religious meetings, and thus conveys to Mrs. Macdonald his impressions of them:—

"Since writing to you last, I have been very much occupied, though not in my usual way. Both on Sabbath and on week-days I have been a regular, and I have the vanity to add, a most attentive hearer. I have not yet attempted to open my northern mouth in the great and polished metropolis. On Sabbath, I heard a plain, sound, and somewhat

pious discourse from the Bishop of Gloucester, in St. Martin's Church. In the afternoon I heard in Mr. Daniel Wilson's chapel, but was disappointed at not hearing himself, although the discourse I heard (from a Mr. Webster), was a pretty good one. I still, however, hope to hear this man of renown before I leave London. On Tuesday, I attended the meeting of the Church Missionary Society, which was very interesting. On Wednesday, at a meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, I seemed to myself, for a time, to have been transported to the very suburbs of heaven. The scene was truly electrifying. To have seen and heard Wilberforce, Vansittart, Teignmouth, Gambier, and others, plead so warmly and ably the cause of the Bible, and giving the sanction of their rank and talent to its spread in the world, would have given joy to any heart not shut up against every benevolent, not to say religious, feeling. This day I have just returned from the meeting of the Hibernian Society. The Duke of Gloucester was in the chair. The narrative read, and the speeches delivered, all tended to impress the audience with a deeper interest in long neglected Ireland. I have heard sermons every day of this week preached on behalf of these and other institutions."

When he wrote the letter from which the preceding extract is taken, he had not delivered his own sermon. In reference to the prospect of doing so he

writes : " My own share of the public labour is soon to come on. If this reaches you in time, think of me, on Thursday evening in Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and pray that I may be strengthened with strength from on high ; and that the Redeemer may bring glory to himself through my poor labours. This is all I desire ; and neither fame, nor human applause."

On the day after he preached, he writes : " Last evening, through the kindness of the Lord, I discharged the leading duty for which I came to London. Though surrounded by upwards of three thousand strangers, a tithe of whom were clergymen, I have reason to praise the Lord, that I was enabled for an hour and a half to speak with considerable ease and freedom. What effects ensued the Lord only knows ; but I trust He was present, nay, I verily believe it. This I ascribe to the prayers of Christians in London and in the north. The subject was the outpouring of the Spirit ; the text, Acts ii. 17, 18. I delivered the sermon without my notes, and felt more at ease on that account."

As to the sermons preached by his colleagues he writes : " They were, upon the whole, able. In some of them there was a want of unction ; but this is a quality which neither talent nor literature can supply." " I have now met," he adds, " and mingled with many Christians in London. This is indeed a season of religious dissipation. I enjoy it as yet,

but I would soon tire of it. This evening I sat down at the Lord's table, in Orange Street Chapel, with many clergymen and others. The scene was pleasing and solemn; and I hope the service has done me good. Mr. Rowland Hill presided. He seems, indeed, to be bearing fruit in his old age. 'They have almost expelled me,' he said, 'from the communion of the Church; but they cannot expel me from the communion of the Lord's dear people—no, neither here, nor hereafter.'"

Having once preached, calls for his services began to multiply till, during the short time he was able to remain in London thereafter, he was occupied in his old congenial work of busy preaching. "Next Sabbath," he writes, "I am engaged to preach in Swallow Street Chapel in the forenoon, and in Mr. Platt's in the evening. I have more calls to preach than I can possibly accept."

But his thoughts turn homewards; the summer work in the north has begun, and the communion in Urquhart is approaching. In his last letter from London he gives instructions to Mrs. Macdonald as to the supplies required for the work of "the sacrament week" in Urquhart. "You will see," he writes, "the following brethren at Resolis; and if not, write to them, mentioning their diets. *Mr. Fraser, Kirkhill*, English on Saturday, and one service at the tent on Monday. *Mr. John Kennedy*, one sermon on the Fast-day either Gaelic or English, as I shall

determine when I return, and the whole service of Saturday in Gaelic, and a share of table services on Sabbath. *Mr. Sage*: a sermon in Gaelic on the Fast-day, and an English sermon on Sabbath evening, with table services. *Mr. Mackintosh* [now Dr.], the action sermon in English, and a Gaelic sermon on Monday. *Mr. Flyter*: table services on Sabbath, and an English sermon on Monday. In these things you will have to act the *clergywoman*."

Often during his frequent absence from home did Mrs. Macdonald act the part which he thus assigns to her. Most sensible was he of his cause of gratitude to God, in having one to conduct his correspondence, who could do so with rare ability, and who was disposed to be helpful to him, for his work's, and for his Master's, sake, as well as for his own.

After his return from London he resumed his wonted work at home. But his thoughts were ever returning to St. Kilda; and he takes the earliest opportunity of revisiting it. At the very beginning of the following summer, he starts for St. Kilda, and gives in his journal the following account of his landing, reception, and labours there:—

"We had no sooner appeared in sight than the people flew down to the shore to meet us, and stood in a body on the shelving rock on which we were to land, to receive ourselves and our little bark. We had no sooner effected a landing (which, owing to

the mild state of the weather, was not difficult), than they all pressed around me, and grasped my hand each in his turn, when I thought they would have wrung the very blood out of it. Few words passed for a minute or two, but tears trickled from every eye. I was overcome myself. At last silence broke, and, says one here and there, 'This is a surprise.' 'This is more than we looked for.' 'We little expected to see his face again (for they addressed themselves to one another), God bless him for this visit. He will bless him whatever becomes of us.' After I could speak, for God knows my heart was full, I told them I came once more to see them, at the request of the Society in Edinburgh, who took an interest in their welfare. 'Many, many blessings on the head of the Society for their attention to us and for sending you among us.' 'And now that I have come,' said I, 'to labour for a short time among you, I trust you will endeavour to make good use of the opportunity thus afforded you.' 'Yes, yes,' say they, 'as we can, and the Lord enable us to do so.' All hands were now called to unload the boat and haul it ashore—a process which took them nearly three hours, so that it was about eight o'clock before we reached the village. We immediately entered the old barn in which we were wont to assemble, offered prayer and praises to God for His mercies, and especially His kindness in permitting us to meet again: and so closed the scene of the day.

“ And what thanks can I render to the God of all my mercies for bringing me hitherto, and causing me once more to see a poor handful of people who had been much on my heart since I left them. May I be enabled to improve the opportunity I have, and may my poor labours while among them, seconded by His divine power, prove subservient to His glory, and to their eternal welfare.

“ Before dismissing the people, I stated to them what I intended should be the plan of my future labours among them, and that besides meeting for service once a day as formerly, we should also meet for an exercise, somewhat resembling family worship, when I should read a chapter of Scripture and make some observations on it, calculated to instruct them in its meaning and to point out the improvement they should make of it. I told them that it was my wish to direct their attention as much as possible to the Scriptures ; and that if we met in the morning, which I conceived would be the most convenient season of the day, as interfering less with their other business, this would be a proper way of commencing the day, and the exercise might be of use to them in carrying on their daily occupations. They gladly assented, and with one voice replied, ‘ We can easily manage our other business, and what is everything else to this ? ’ We accordingly fixed on the hours of from seven to nine in the morning for the lecture, and from six to eight at night for sermon.

“Saturday, May 14.—Met this morning at seven agreeably to last night’s appointment. Read and made some general observations on Rom. i., intending to continue this epistle in course as containing a complete summary of Christian doctrine. The people attended most punctually, and listened with great earnestness. Spent the forenoon in retirement, preparing chiefly for the duties of the Sabbath. In the evening at six we met for sermon. I addressed the people from Rom. i. 9–12, on Paul’s feelings with regard to the Christians at Rome, his ardent desire to see them, and the great end he had in view in wishing to have his desire fulfilled. When mentioning some circumstances of resemblance in my own case regarding them they were much affected. Nothing but kindness will melt the heart of man. The Lord bestow on me more of Paul’s spirit, love to human souls, and devotedness to his own glory.

“Monday, May 16.—Yesterday forenoon and afternoon lectured from Luke viii. 11–16 on the parable of the sower, and in the evening preached from verse 18 of the same chapter, ‘Take heed how ye hear.’ Both during the day and in the evening the people appeared much affected, and discovered a greater degree of solemnity and composure (something like a visible sanctity) in hearing the word, than I have hitherto observed. I was gratified yesterday morning by seeing the children assemble in school to read the Scriptures, and by hearing them

sing the praises of God with their teacher, an exercise in which they have made great proficiency and for which much praise is due to their instructor. Thus 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has the Lord ordained praise.'

"This day we had our morning exercise at seven, from which not an individual was absent. I read and made observations to them from Rom. ii., and in the evening preached from Acts xvi. 14, on the Lord's opening the heart of Lydia. During the whole of the sermon the people appeared to be deeply concerned, and there seemed to be something like the opening of hearts to receive the word. After concluding, two children were baptized, which were all that had come to the world since I left the island excepting one which died soon after it was born. In the baptism service I took an opportunity of guarding the people against the dangerous error of supposing baptism to be synonymous with regeneration or essential to salvation. They acknowledged they had gone into that error, but that they had never heard it corrected or exposed. I was pleased with their candour and openness to conviction.

"*Tuesday, May 17.*—The people were much occupied during the day; the men, in delivering each his quantity of feathers to the tacksman; and the women, on the hill, to which they have to go twice a day to milk the cows and sheep, so that I had few to converse with. I spoke, however, to such as came in

my way, regarding their immortal interests, and found that their understandings seemed to be more open and their hearts more accessible to the truth. Oh, let me not despair, though I should not see instances of sudden conversion. The seed below ground may be making progress though I see it not. The process of vegetation in the seed which fell into the good ground was much slower than that of the seed which fell on the stony. Let me therefore sow in hope. Lectured in the morning to the people from Rom. iii., which led me to notice and dwell much on the important doctrine of justification, and I hope not without effect. Preached in the evening from Zech. xii. 10, on the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit and the effects that should follow. I felt much impressed myself, and so did my hearers seem to do too. The Lord grant preacher and hearers a fulfilment of the promise.

“ *Wednesday, May 18.*—This day the people were employed in the hill or rather in the rocks, fleecing the sheep, where every one, young and old, generally attends. But before setting out, they readily attend the morning service. I read to them in course and explained some parts of Rom. iv., calling their attention particularly to three important points relative to justification. 1. That God justifies the ungodly. 2. That the ungodly are justified by faith; and 3. That it is of faith, that it might be by grace. ‘Three points these,’ said the Gaelic teacher to me

upon coming out of the room, 'which the people needed much to have explained to them, and impressed upon their hearts. 'Is fearrd sinn sud mu'n d'theid sinn do'n chreig.' 'I heard some of the people say among themselves, 'cha neil fhios againn ciod an gabhadh tha romhain mu'n d' thig an oidhche.' Literally, 'We are the better of what we heard before going to the rock, we know not what danger awaits us before night.' They returned in time, however, for the evening sermon, and I preached to them from Matt. xi. 28, on our Saviour's invitation to the labouring and heavy laden.

"*Thursday, May 19.*—Read to the people this morning Rom. v., and made some general observations on the chapter. As I was going along and quoting some other parts of Scripture, I observed several of the people mark the places in their Bibles as if with a view to examine them after going home. I was pleased to see this evidence of their attention to the Scriptures, and at the same time it convinced me of the great importance of directing their attention as much as possible to the sacred oracles. In consequence of the Gaelic school established in the island, several of the young can read the New Testament and some portions of the Old. Some also of those more advanced in life can read a little, and this is a great benefit to them in hearing public instruction. In the evening I preached from Matt. xi. 28, (a continuation of last night's discourse).

“During the day I had an opportunity of conversing with several of the people respecting their spiritual concerns, and found them much more intelligent and better informed than when I was formerly among them. The answers they gave to several questions which I put to them regarding man’s guilt and depravity, and the method of acceptance with God were, upon the whole, scriptural and correct, whereas on my first visit, there was not one of them that seemed at all to understand it. Among others I met with some of those who appeared to have been under serious impressions at the time I was formerly on the island. These impressions I fear have subsided in a great measure, but not quite died away. The want of regular gospel ministry is a sad loss in this respect. I trust, however, if their feelings are not what they were, that their knowledge is much improved. And the light which they have acquired may account in some measure for the calmness and composure of their feelings; at least, it is calculated to remove what is excessive in these and to give them proper direction. I was particularly pleased, however, with the state of the old man’s mind, to whom I referred in my former journal. He feels that he is by nature a lost sinner. He has no trust but in the Redeemer. His life is correct, all his views as to the gospel are pretty clear. He lost his eyesight since I was here before, and upon my adverting to this and saying, it were well for him if

the eyes of his mind were opened, 'I trust they are,' says he. 'And what do you see?' said I. 'That I am blind,' says he, 'I see that in myself I am a ruined sinner, but that Christ is an almighty Saviour.' 'But what if he is not willing?' said I. 'Willing,' says he, 'would he die for sinners if he was not willing to save them? No, no.' He listens to the word with great earnestness, and seems often melted under it. I had much pleasure also in conversing with the children. They listened with uncommon attention to whatever I spoke to them, and their tender hearts seemed at times to yield to the truth. The Lord gather these lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom.

"*Friday, May 20.*—The people, especially the males, were employed this day in the rocks at the sheep-fleecing; but readily attended the morning lecture before setting out. I read to them in course Rom. vi., and pointed out the account which it gives of the great doctrine of sanctification, the nature, fruits, and importance of this doctrine, and its inseparable connection with justification. In the evening I had scarcely any but the females for my hearers, the men not having got home in time from the rocks. I addressed them and the children from Isa. lv. 1, and I trust that notwithstanding the smallness of our numbers, He who has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,' was with us.

“Saturday, May 21.—In making some observations this morning on Rom. vii., the hearers appeared not to understand me, and I confess I seemed to myself to have forgotten that I was addressing not strong men but babes. I immediately checked myself and endeavoured to bring my subject down to the level of their capacities, when they listened with uncommon attention. The Lord enable me to speak at all times to my hearers so as to be understood, and not so much to aim at giving fully what I know, as giving what may be intelligible and profitable to them.

“The people during the day were employed in delivering barley and other articles of produce to the tacksman. Although the farmers chiefly pay the rents, the tacksman, nevertheless, receives off their hands any surplus of produce they may have beyond what they need for themselves, and gives them in return such articles of husbandry, &c., as they may require. This afternoon they had a consultation together (for they do nothing of importance without holding a general meeting), and agreed to make me a present of a good fat wedder, uncommonly so, considering the season of the year. Although I stood in no need of anything in this way, thanks to the liberality of my good friend the tacksman, I could not refuse accepting the present as a testimony of their good will, and (may I not hope) a fruit of the gospel. I am more inclined to view it in this light, as nothing of the kind was hitherto known in St. Kilda. This therefore

made the present doubly valuable. I should not omit mentioning, that every day, as soon as the females arrived from the hill, we are supplied with abundance of warm milk, an instance of their generosity never hitherto experienced by me or any other. It is pleasing to hear these poor creatures talk among themselves at the time they are coming forward with their little presents. 'He gives us the great good, (Math mòr) and why should we not give him the little (good), little indeed, in comparison with what we receive.'

"I preached in the evening from Matt. xi. 28, (conclusion of Thursday's discourse). After finishing the sermon I addressed some hints to them regarding the due observance of the Sabbath, and pointed out to them from Scripture how that day ought to be kept, and the great evil of indulging in carnal and worldly conversation, and certain practices connected with the business of the week, particularly baking their bread and carrying their potatoes or other vegetables from the field on that day. I had no sooner finished than several of the heads of families came up to me, and with tears in their eyes, pleaded guilty. 'We cannot deny,' said they, 'that we were given to these habits, but we have never seen the evil of them, and none told us so till now. With God's help we are resolved to avoid them in future.' I own I was much pleased at the candour and honesty of these poor people, and particularly so, that it evinced a

degree of openness to conviction and a readiness of mind to submit to the truth seldom to be met with. On coming out of the barn, one of the men, adverting to my remarks regarding the conversation proper for the Sabbath, observed, 'You have been forbidding us to speak of worldly things and recommending us to talk less about the world and more about spiritual subjects, but what will you say to those who have nothing but worldly matters to speak of, who cannot read, and who have no ideas relative to spiritual things.' While I told them that they should listen to others who could read and speak on these things, and pray that they might be led to know them, I felt much the force of the remark they had made. The case was truly affecting, and spoke aloud the importance of storing the mind with useful knowledge, and so furnishing it with suitable ideas, if we would have people duly to observe the Lord's day in this manner.

"*Monday May 23.*—Yesterday during the day, after reading and making some observations on Matt. xxvi., relative to the Redeemer's sufferings, I preached from Zech. xiii. 7, and in the evening by way of following up the subject of the day, from John xix. 30, 'It is finished.' The people heard with great interest and deep concern; many were in tears—and not a few among the children. Christ crucified is the power of God unto salvation. I was pleased to find that the Saturday evening's exhorta-

tion regarding the observance of the Sabbath had a good effect. That day was more strictly observed than any I had hitherto spent in the island. No levity, no giddy conversation, no disposition to meet in parties during the intervals of public worship; every one retired to his house and seemed to court secrecy; indeed, several of them seemed to spend much of the time in private devotion, and in short, I observed that a more than ordinary degree of solemnity and sacred decorum marked their conduct during the whole day. I learned besides, that immediately after going home from sermon on Saturday night, the women instantly set about baking the Sabbath-day's bread that no unnecessary work might be left for that day. This was like being 'doers of the word and not hearers only.'

"We met this morning at the usual hour. I read and lectured on Rom. viii. 1-18, a precious portion of Scripture, and I trust the season was comfortable, at least it was a sweet one to me. In the evening I preached from John vi. 32, 'My Father giveth you the true bread,' &c.; from which I endeavoured to represent that free exhibition of Christ in the Gospel to sinners, and the warrant thereby afforded them for accepting of him, a doctrine which seemed somehow to strike them with astonishment, and in which there seemed to be something new to them. For the sinner naturally riveted to a covenant of works ever conceives that the warrant to close with Christ

must be found in himself and not in the gospel. Hence he labours with all his might, when he takes any concern about the matter, to prepare himself, as he is pleased to call it, for Christ, and even seeks after convictions of sin not so much to prompt him to flee to Christ as a ruined creature, as to afford him some reason to hope that Christ will more readily receive him, and that he is more entitled to his regards than if he had not sought such convictions. I meet with this legal disposition in St. Kilda, as well as elsewhere. The Lord grant, however, that we who preach the gospel may not be the means of subverting it by clogging its free calls with conditions to be performed on the part of the sinner, which strip the gospel of the glory of its grace, and involve the distressed soul in a labyrinth of perplexity.

“*Tuesday, May 24.*—This morning, after public service, a number of the males set off for the neighbouring Island of Boreray in search of eggs, and brought home upwards of eight hundred, besides several hundreds which they left on the island for store when they should be engaged at the sheep fleecing. It is remarkable that the execution they do in this way does not appear to diminish the number of these birds. On the contrary, notwithstanding what they take of eggs and kill of birds in the course of the year (and the quantity is immense), they assure me that their numbers increase rather than diminish. The eggs of these birds, particularly of the solan

geese, resembling much those of our common country geese, eat well, but those of a small black bird, called by the natives the *buigar* (the Greenland parrot, I believe), resembling much in size and taste our hen eggs, relish most of any I have eaten on the island.

“ I lectured in the morning from Rom. viii., verse 20 to the end, and preached from verses 33rd and 34th of the same chapter in the evening. The people seemed to follow me every step while discussing the important clauses of this passage, and indeed their understandings seem to be opening more and more to the truth.

“ *Thursday, May 26.*—Yesterday morning I read in course and made observations on Rom. ix. Although this chapter presents rather strong meat than milk for such babes as were before me, yet I did not think it safe to conceal from my hearers the important subject of which it treats. The sovereignty of God in the method of grace lies at the very foundation of the Gospel, and is a doctrine much calculated to humble the proud sinner in the dust. ‘ Oh, I delight (says one somewhere) in the idea of bowing to the divine sovereignty.’ I spent a considerable part of the day in reading Matthew Henry’s life. What a holy man! What an assiduous servant of Christ! What an exemplary Christian character, in the closet, in the family, in the Church, and in society! In the evening I preached from Rom. viii. 33, 34 (a continuation of Tuesday’s subject).

“ This morning the people assembled at an early hour for the usual exercise, when I read and gave some explanation of Rom. x. Immediately thereafter the men proceeded to the rocks to fleece the sheep. I took a walk about mid-day to see this operation, and it is certainly a hazardous one, both to man and beast. The animals are driven together to a precipice on the summit of a high perpendicular rock, and are there hemmed in on all sides by the men and their dogs till every one of them is got at and stripped of its fleecy mantle. I saw a poor animal fall headlong into the sea from the height of about three hundred feet and completely disappear. I am told, however, that few accidents of this kind happen. The people came home quite disposed for hearing sermon in the evening, when I preached to them from Gen. xix. 18, the Lord’s call to Lot to come out of Sodom. All listened with uncommon attention notwithstanding the fatigues of the day ; and several among them were not a little affected. Mr. Mackenzie, the Gaelic teacher, told me that after sermon he had observed some of them retire to secret places, and heard them earnestly engaged in prayer. The Lord pour out the spirit of supplications upon them.

“ *Friday, May 27.*—At our morning exercise this day I read and gave some illustration of Rom. xii., which afforded me an opportunity of stating the connection between faith and practice, and that the doctrines of grace are doctrines according to godliness,

and lead to holiness in heart and life. This I deemed necessary, as from the high ground I had occupied for some days past, I was afraid the people might veer towards Antinomianism (an extreme as dangerous if not more so than Arminianism), for I find that they could be led into any system; such is the confidence they put in their spiritual instructor. Woe is unto me, then, if I lead them not aright! During the day the people were busied in thatching their houses. For the winter half year their huts have generally two coats of thatch; but about this season of the year they remove the lower, by this time sufficiently smoked and sooty, for the benefit of their fields, and lay the other in its place. In October again they lay a new cover of thatch over the old, and in May thereafter remove the old as formerly, thus repeating the operation every year. Hence perhaps the reason of their confining the smoke within their houses, and scarcely giving it any outlet, a circumstance which must otherwise prove injurious to health, but out of the impropriety of which it would not be easy to reason them. Little prizes and rewards might have the effect, and indeed much might be effected by measures of this kind towards their improvement in many of their habits.

“The tacksman told me this afternoon that he had now finished his business in the island, and was ready to set off with the first fair wind, but that he would remain some days longer if I wished for it.

I thanked him warmly, but told him that whenever the wind permitted I should not detain him a day. We therefore left the matter with Him who has the winds and weather in His hands, perfectly satisfied that when He saw meet that I should leave this island, and had no more work for me to do for the present, He would grant such weather as we needed. This surmise, however, produced a sudden sensation among the people, and it was easy to discover the picture of sadness in their countenances. In the evening I preached on the new birth from John iii. 1-10. The people heard as if earnestly desirous to experience that important change. After the service was concluded I married a couple, the only service of the kind, I am told, I shall have to perform at this time.

“*Saturday, May 28.*—This day Mr. M'Lellan and I examined the school here established by the Society for the support of Gaelic Schools. There were present in all fifty-seven—thirty-five males and twenty-two females. Among them I was pleased to see several grown up and married persons, at least sixteen or eighteen; and considering that they were deprived of their teacher for nearly the last twelvemonths, the appearance they made was wonderful. About nine of them can read the New Testament with tolerable ease; many besides can read small portions of it; and upwards of forty read considerable parts of the Psalm Book—a species of composition of which, from their

musical turn, they seem to be very fond. In short, young and old acquitted themselves beyond my expectations. After this part of the business was over they gave us a specimen of their singing. Coleshill, Pangor, Scarborough, St. George's, &c., were sung with great animation, and in a manner which did credit to teacher and pupils. This being finished, I instituted a diet of examination regarding the principles of the Christian religion. Parents and children were present. After putting some questions to the parents and grown up people all round, who gave me pretty satisfactory answers, I examined the children, particularly such as could read, on some parts of the chapter which they had just read (Luke vii.), and the answers they gave the several questions which were put were most satisfying, such indeed as indicated great attention to what they had read and heard, and as might have put to the blush many who enjoy greater advantages. After the examination the teacher distributed some Bibles and Testaments among some of the best scholars; and a few Gaelic catechisms and tracts with which some friends had supplied me before leaving home, were thankfully received by young and old. I concluded the whole of this pleasant exercise by an address to parents and children. The subject of the morning lecture was Rom. xiii., and in the evening I preached from verse 11th of the same chapter. The people heard with deep attention, and not the less so for the

exercises of the day. Thus I passed as comfortable a day as I had since I came to St. Kilda.

“Monday, May 30.—Yesterday during the day I lectured from Heb. ix. 1–5, on the Mosaic tabernacle and its furniture. The people heard with uncommon attention, and after leaving the barn were heard to express to one another their surprise that so much of the gospel was to be found in these Old Testament emblems. ‘Oh, how blind are we,’ would the one say to the other, ‘that cannot see these things. We must get our children to learn to read the writings, that we may through them be able to know these things. In the evening I preached from 2 Cor. iii. 18, on beholding the glory of the Lord in the mirror of the gospel. I own I felt considerable enlargement on this subject, and not a little impressed while speaking on it. Many of my hearers were evidently affected, not a few in tears. The Lord remove the veil from off their hearts, and let in glimpses of this glory. It was delightful in the evening, between nine and ten o’clock, to hear the praises of God and prayers ascend from almost every family in the village; the children reading the Scriptures and conducting the singing, and the fathers performing the other part of the service. A new thing this indeed in St. Kilda. The Lord grant it may be continued and attended with much of his countenance.

“This day, after attending the morning lecture,

several of the male inhabitants set off for the neighbouring island of Soay, where they remain eight or ten days at the sheep fleecing. This they delayed as long as they well could owing to my being in the place. So they parted with me without the prospect of seeing me on their return, and we were mutually sad enough at parting. I preached in the evening from 2 Cor. iii. 18 (continuation of last night's discourse).

"I had frequently before now, and particularly at this time, mentioned to the people the intentions of the Society with regard to sending them a minister when the necessary buildings were erected, and that arrangements were making for getting this accomplished with as little delay as possible. They were overjoyed at the tidings. 'And we hope,' said they, 'that they will send us a good minister.' 'What kind of minister would you have to be sent?' 'One that will tell us of our danger and preach Christ to us.' 'You may trust that to the Society,' said I. 'That we may, seeing the interest they have taken in us already.'

"The tacksman and I are looking every day for fair wind to set us off. But the Lord's time is the best.

"*Tuesday, May 31.*—This morning I read and made observations on Rom. xiv; and in the evening, after reading chap. xv., preached from the last verse of it,—'Now the God of peace be with you all.' I had no sooner read the words than some of the

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women burst out a crying, and all were in tears, as if anticipating from the very nature of the subject that it would be my last; and indeed I had some idea myself that this would be the case, especially as the wind was veering round and becoming more favourable for us. During a considerable part of the discourse I felt much affected, so much so that I could at times scarcely give utterance to my sentiments, and the sobbings and crying of the people interrupted me not a little.

“ *Wednesday, June 1.*—This morning I read and made some remarks on Eph. v., which I anticipate will be the last exercise of the kind I shall have with this poor people. The wind is quite fair for us, and we are preparing to set off as early as possible in the afternoon. The poor people are sad indeed. It is painful for me to meet them here and there. The Lord be with them and bless to them what they have heard.

“ *Scalpa, Harris, Friday, June 3.*—On Wednesday evening at eight o'clock we left St. Kilda, the wind quite fair, and continued so for nearly two hours, but during the whole night we were quite becalmed. About sunrise, however, a fine breeze sprung up from the S.W., and we got to Caolis in North Uist by ten o'clock, where we were most kindly and hospitably entertained.

“ A little before leaving St. Kilda the people gathered around me and begged for prayers ere we

should part. We stepped immediately into the barn. I read and sang Ps. cxxi., and then prayed with them for the last time. The scene was peculiarly affecting. They then accompanied us to the shore, and amidst tears and cries I shook hands with them, 'commending them to the Lord and to the word of his grace,' and praying 'that he might build them up and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' As formerly, they ascended the brow of a hill hanging over the shore, and sat looking at us till sable night had concealed us from their view. I felt sorrowful indeed at parting with them, and could not but think of them very often since. I could compare my feelings at the time only to those of a father separating from his family. But it was consoling to me to think that they were under His care 'who neither slumbers nor sleeps.' "





CHAPTER IX.

VISITS IRELAND—REVISITS ST. KILDA.

IN 1827 Mr. Daly, then rector of Powerscourt, now Bishop of Cashel, anxious that the gospel should be preached in their native tongue to the Irish-speaking population around him, wrote to Dr. Dewar, then minister in Glasgow, requesting him to procure the services of a Gaelic evangelist. He at once applied to Mr. Macdonald. When Dr. Dewar's letter reached him, he was preparing to start for St. Kilda. He could not abandon his intention of again visiting his desolate flock in St. Kilda, and he was almost as unwilling to refuse the call from Ireland. To visit both the Grey Isle and the Green would require his absence from his own charge for at least five months. He therefore thus replies to Dr. Dewar's letter:—

“URQUHART MANSE, 26th March, 1827.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I was duly favoured with your interesting letter regarding Ireland. After weighing the subject over and over again in my mind, I feel

much at a loss what to write in reply. I admit that the case is urgent, and that the call from Ireland is, 'Come over and help us.' But I see difficulties in the way of my attempting the expedition, which it is unnecessary here to state, but which discourage me from holding out the prospect at present of my being able to accomplish so desirable an object. If the Lord, however, has said that I shall go to Ireland, to Ireland I must go. In that event, he will make darkness light and crooked paths straight before me. At present I cannot venture to give a decisive answer on the subject. I am setting out on another trip to St. Kilda, and hope (*D.V.*) to be back about the end of April. If you can let the matter remain as it stands till then, I shall, as soon as possible after my return, make up my mind, and give you a definitive answer.

"It is truly generous in Mr. Daly to propose defraying the expenses of the itinerancy.

"I have only to add, that whether I can visit Ireland at this time or not, I hope I shall carry Ireland in my spirit whithersoever I go, and remember her before the throne of grace. It shall, I trust, be my prayer to God, that he may maintain what he has wrought in her; bless the 'day of small things' to her; and grant that the dawn which seems now to visit her may be the prelude of a glorious day, which shall bless every corner of that benighted and hitherto neglected isle with life, light, liberty, and

joy!—I am, my dear Sir, most sincerely and faithfully yours,

“JOHN MACDONALD.”

Having visited St. Kilda, and reached his home again in safety, he found letters, urging him to visit Ireland, awaiting him. Power to refuse such a call formed no portion of his strength; and as Mr. Daly indicated August as the most suitable month for the work in Ireland, and as this would give him an opportunity of completing his summer work in Scotland, it was all the easier for him to consent. At the appointed time he started for Ireland, reached Dublin early in August, and at once began to prepare for his work by acquiring the language. His first tour was to the south, extending to Bandon. His labours there he thus describes in letters to Mrs. Macdonald:—

“I arrived in Dublin on Thursday, and went to visit Mr. Daly next day, whom I found to be the *Christian indeed*—the humble, affectionate, zealous, and liberal-minded Christian. I have since spent my time in reading Irish. I reached Kilkenny on the 17th, distant from Dublin fifty-seven miles; and I feel quite at home in the house of Mr. Rae, an Episcopal clergyman, a most excellent Christian man, whose wife is of a kindred spirit. Here, and as I proceed southwards, I shall meet with some of the native Irish, whom I must attempt to address. The

result you shall hear in my next letter. I foresee difficulties in the way, owing to the difference of our dialects, and to my being obliged to study the old Irish characters, in order to be able to read the Scriptures to the people in the only form in which they will allow them to be read to them. A greater difficulty arises from the influence of the priests over the lower classes. But above all is the difficulty arising from the power of the prince of darkness, who holds priests and people as his slaves, and leads them captive at his will. But the Lord, I trust, will make darkness light and rough places plain.

“This town of Kilkenny, famed for its fire without smoke, its water without mud, and its streets all of marble, contains a population of 24,000, of whom the Roman Catholics are to the Protestants in the proportion of twenty-four to one. Mr. Rae and Mr. Shaw, both excellent and zealous men, are the rectors, and I trust their labours are not in vain.”

“BANDON, 3d *September*.—After remaining at Kilkenny for four days, during which I met with few individuals who could speak Irish, I proceeded to this place, which is in the heart of an Irish country, as the people call it; meaning thereby a country where the Irish is chiefly spoken. On my way I stopped for a day at Clonmell, and for two days at Cork. The former is about the size of Elgin, and the latter contains a population of 130,000. Cork is intensely Popish; but even in that Sardis there are a few who

have not defiled their garments. I met there Dr. Macquarry of the Established Church, and several others, who are decidedly on the Lord's side. In neither of these places was I able to do much, beyond reading and conversing with some Irish teachers. At first it required all the attention in listening, and all the deliberation in speaking, of which we were capable, to catch each other's meaning. The language we found to be evidently the same, but the accent and pronunciation very different. The dialect spoken here—that is, in the southern districts—is far more difficult to understand than that spoken in the north, the latter approaching very near to our Scotch Gaelic. On this account I conceived, and I stated so to my friend Mr. Daly, that it would be more to the purpose to send me to those districts where my Gaelic would be best understood. His answer was, 'In the north there has been something already done, but the south has not yet been touched.' I acquiesced, of course, in his opinion.

"I arrived in this place about twelve days ago, and have since resided with Mr. Newman, one of the clergymen of the town, Mr. Daly's brother-in-law. He and his wife are truly devoted to the cause of Christ. The population of Bandon is 12,000, two-thirds of whom are Papists. In regard to any poor labours of mine, I can say but little. After spending a few days in conversing with some of the natives in their own language, and reading portions

of the Irish New Testament, I commenced preaching to them on Thursday last, and have since been repeating the exercise almost every day. I have preached at least five times—thrice in a large school-house in the town, capable of containing about eight hundred people, and twice in a village distant about three miles from Bandon.”

As he became more unfettered in the use of the Irish dialect, he began to preach with somewhat of his wonted power and fervour, and the spell of his eloquence began to touch the Irish heart. Many Roman Catholics were drawn out to hear him under the shade of night. Nicodemus-like, they would steal into the place of meeting. The truth was reaching the conscience of some of them, and not a few began to ask, “What must we do to be saved?” After service one night in Bandon, “three Roman Catholic young women,” Mr. Macdonald writes, “stood near the door as I was going out, apparently affected, and as if anxious to speak to me. ‘Have you been hearing sermon this evening?’ I asked. ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘And how do you feel?’ ‘Not well, sir.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Because your preaching and that of the priest differ.’ ‘How so?’ ‘Why, the priest tells us we must do penance, and say our Paters and Ave Marias often; but you tell us that we must come to Christ as we are, and that he has done all for us.’ ‘That is what the Bible tells us,’ I said. ‘Do you read the Bible?’ ‘No, sir; we dare not.’ ‘Why?’

‘The priest won’t allow us.’ ‘Can you read it?’ ‘Yes, a little; and we could read it better, but that the priest took us away from school.’ ‘Why would you leave the school for him?’ ‘Oh, sir, we must obey the priest, else what will become of us at last, when we need extreme unction?’ ‘Don’t you think,’ I asked, ‘that Christ is greater than the priest?’ ‘Oh yes, sir,’ they at once replied. ‘Ought you not, then, to obey Him?’ I said. ‘Yes, sir; but do we not obey Him when we obey the priest?’ ‘Only when the priest speaks according to the Bible. Are you sure that he does so?’ ‘We are not, sir,’ they answered; ‘and if what you said to-night is true, he does not.’ ‘I spoke and read from the Bible.’ ‘And you spoke, sir, to our hearts. Oh, what shall we do!’ they cried. ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.’ They then sobbed and cried, so that I could not be heard by them. After they had calmed a little, I shook hands with them, telling them I would pray for them; beseeching them to remember that should I never see them again in this world, they and their priest and I should meet together before the judgment-seat of Christ; and assuring them that if they were then lost, their priest could do nothing for them, and that I would be a swift witness against them. Thus we parted, mutually affected. May the Lord bless the interview to their souls!’

From Bandon he started on two evangelistic tours

along the southern coast, of which he writes the following account:—

“During the *first* of them I travelled each day from ten to twenty Irish miles, and preached in the evening in a town or village, and sometimes in country places where there were only a few scattered farm-houses and miserable huts. The people in all these places assembled uncommonly well, and discovered an eagerness to hear the Word. I preached to them in both languages, and generally the same discourse, in order that such of my hearers, as had a smattering of English, might better understand my Gaelic. I find that by this means the people take up my ideas pretty correctly. But you must know that I speak neither Gaelic nor Irish, but a mixed dialect in order to approach their own—the worst in all Ireland—and make myself as intelligible to them as possible. In this I have succeeded beyond my anticipations. Some of my hearers tell me, ‘Sir, your Gaelic is different from ours, but yet we understand it pretty well;’ some say, ‘the most of it;’ others say, ‘every sentence.’ During this tour I had conversations with not a few Roman Catholics, regarding the Scriptures and the gospel method of salvation; and I could perceive that their faith in their own system is tottering, and that their consciences tell them that matters are not right. But, alas! they are ignorant of the Scriptures, and are not allowed by their priests to read or to hear

them. Oh, I feel for them and could weep over their sad state! They are desirous to hear me, but they must not be seen in doing so. They come therefore only at night; and when they come, they skulk into corners, and into the darkest parts of the apartments in which we meet, church, schoolhouse, barn, or storeroom, as it may happen to be. My public preaching during this tour has had the effect, I could perceive, of creating much speculation among the people, and of leading them to think, and to talk together of the things which they have heard. This is reckoned a good sign. I could in a few instances discover some individuals affected even to tears. But I shall leave results with the Lord. Be it mine to sow the seed, and His to give the increase.

“On the *second* tour Mr. Newman accompanied me. We took a different route, the terminus being Bantry, a town situated on a fine bay, fit to contain all the navies of Europe, the scenery around which is almost the finest in all Ireland.. This trip I greatly enjoyed. We met in every place, clergymen of the Established Church who were decidedly evangelical, and zealous in promoting the Lord’s work. We had Bible Society meetings in every place, at which Mr. Newman and I spoke, and chiefly in support of giving the Scriptures to the natives in their own language. In the evenings, sermons were preached in English and Gaelic which were remark-

ably well attended. Churches capable of containing from fifteen hundred to two thousand were crowded, and chiefly by Roman Catholics. I am convinced that the Lord was present on various occasions, and that the Word has not been without effect. We returned from this excursion fatigued by our labours but comforted in our minds and desirous to give glory to God for what had been done. It was particularly consoling to us, that so many hundreds of Papists attended in every place. To get them to hear the Word at all from the mouth of a Protestant is a mighty object gained; and particularly so here, a part of Ireland, which in the language of Mr. Daly 'has not been touched.'"

It was an evidence of his labours not being in vain, that the priests became alarmed. Hundreds of their people crowded the churches when the heretic from Scotland preached; and they felt it was high time to make an effort to do away with any impression which he might have produced. They employed an agent, with a smart Irish tongue, to address the congregation after a sermon which Mr. Macdonald preached in the neighbourhood of Bandon. "After finishing service," he writes, "a smart looking tall young man about twenty-five years of age, and apparently above the common rank, stood up before the congregation had retired, and begged to be heard for a few minutes. I gave him full permission, and the congregation again sat down. He

prefaced a long and elaborate speech by adverting to my Gaelic, as different from that of their country, and therefore not intelligible to them; and whether it was intelligible or not, that I could have no good design in coming among them; that my object must be to make proselytes; and that, if this was really my object, he could tell me I had better have remained at home. He then launched out into the subject of Catholic Emancipation, on which he delivered a warm philippic; casting the blame on the Protestants of their just rights being withheld from Catholics. When he finished his harangue, which occupied about twenty minutes, he looked around for some expression of applause from the people; but in this he was sadly disappointed; for with the exception of two or three who had evidently come along with him for the purpose of supporting him, he could read nothing in their faces but expressions of disapprobation. This I was prepared to expect, as the doctrine which they had heard that evening seemed to make an impression on their minds, and not a few of them were in tears. After he had finished it became necessary for me to make some reply. I did so in as calm a manner as I could. With respect to the language I told him that, if I could not speak their dialect no more could they speak mine; yet if I was understood that my object was gained. If I was not understood, he had no reason to fear that I should make proselytes, and

so might keep his mind easy; but that I suspected I was better understood than he was willing to admit, from the alarm which he seemed to have taken and the exertion he had made, that evening, to throw cold water on all that I had spoken to the people. As to making proselytes I assured him, I came not to Ireland for such a purpose, but if possible to make converts to the Redeemer by preaching to sinners the way of salvation through Christ. In regard to Catholic Emancipation, it being altogether a political subject, I should deem it foreign to my duty as a clergyman, and especially in such a place, and on Sabbath evening, to touch upon it, further than to say, that there is an emancipation, of a more important kind, for which I plead—emancipation from sin, Satan, superstition, error, and delusion. I concluded by observing, that, as he had not touched any point of doctrine which I had brought forward, which I expected he would have done, I considered that doctrine as standing uncontradicted, and besought him and all present to weigh it seriously; and on returning to their homes to pray to God for an understanding to perceive, and a heart to believe and feel it; and to remember, that they and I should one day appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, where, if they rejected the doctrine, I would be a witness against them. Thus ended the discussion; and all retired quietly. I had to travel three miles to my lodging. My driver

told me he was afraid that I would be waylaid. But the Lord preserved us."

On another occasion while expounding the parable of the good Samaritan, and referring to the conduct of the priest, he said, "I am not to inquire at present why the priest passed the poor man by." At once, a man rose up in the congregation and said, "Plase your Rivirence, I can tell you why the priest passed him." "I shall be glad to hear," the preacher said, "if you can tell." "And that I can," he said, "it was because he knew that the thieves had left no money in his pocket." When the service was over, Mr. Macdonald met with his assistant, who told him that very lately he had been obliged to part with his last penny to pay the priest for burying his wife and saying masses for her soul. His own experience had helped him, he thought, to explain the conduct of the priest referred to in the parable.

On his return from Ireland, he applied himself with his wonted energy, to the work of procuring funds for the erection of a church and manse in St. Kilda. He preached over all Scotland, making collections wherever he went, till at last the required amount was gathered. The manse and church were built, to the wonder and joy of the poor Islanders, and a minister was appointed to the charge. In 1830 he accompanied the minister and his family to St. Kilda to introduce him to his future flock. The feelings which stirred his heart on this occasion

are described in the following journal of his farewell visit to the island:—

“MILTON, SOUTH UIST, *June* 19, 1830.—This district, and all to the south of it, lies far from the parish church, and the great mass of the people (I am told, at least two-thirds of the whole population) are Roman Catholics; and both Protestants and Catholics seem to be buried in ignorance, and to rest quietly in the stillness of moral death. In these circumstances it would be highly criminal in a servant of the Redeemer not to take, nay, to seize, every opportunity which came in his way for addressing immortal souls—souls that, in the deplorable circumstances already mentioned, are posting daily to the eternal world, and that must sink for ever into unutterable perdition, unless the good tidings of great joy have been sounded to them, in order to their being received by faith on their part. If they have heard and rejected these tidings, the fault must be theirs; but if they have not heard them, the fault must be ours. It were much to be wished that either of the Societies in the south who supply destitute parts of our country with missions would cast ‘a pitying eye’ over this part of South Uist.

“Mr. McLellan having procured liberty for me, from the officiating clergyman of the parish, to preach here and in the neighbourhood, I have employed myself in that way, Thursday, yesterday, and to-day

and intend to continue to do so while I remain in this place. The people—Catholics as well as Protestants—assemble in crowds. Each class seems most eager to hear the word, and to listen to it with the deepest attention.

“Yesterday, two young females, who among others had attracted my attention, as seemingly in deep distress, and indeed in tears during the whole service, I have been told were of the Roman Catholic persuasion. The Lord bless the word to these benighted and misguided people! Why should we not love the souls of Catholics as well as Protestants, and do them all the good we can? Alas, that so often we should treat them as if they were a people of a different species from ourselves!

“Yesterday, too, a circumstance occurred during the time of divine service, which struck me forcibly as expressive of the poor people’s anxiety and ardent thirst to hear the word. Just as I was finishing the service, and about to dismiss the congregation, a new set of people arrived with a view to hear sermon—no fewer, I suppose, than from fifty to sixty in number, who, it would appear, had come from a distance, or had not got timeous notice. On my expressing a deep regret on their account that the service was now over, and that, should I begin a new one, I was afraid that the patience of my old hearers would be completely exhausted, up started one of these old hearers immediately, and addressing me, said, ‘No, no, you will

not tire out our patience though you should continue till midnight. I know not who could tire of hearing such doctrines; and it is not every day we have such an opportunity, &c. Therefore, sir, if it be agreeable to you, we shall be glad that you continue longer.' The people in general expressed their cordial acquiescence in what the man had thus uttered. Accordingly, I commenced a new service, and had both freedom and pleasure in addressing them. I trust the word, too, had some effect; at least several seemed to be deeply impressed under it, and were in tears during the whole time. After dismissing the congregation, and as I was passing along the crowd, I could hear one say to his neighbour, 'What wonderful doctrines are these we heard to-day!' Another (a Roman Catholic, I believe), 'Wonderful indeed! and when would our priest give us such doctrines?' 'Indeed,' says a third, 'his words pierced my own heart'—literally, 'made holes through my heart.' I retired immediately to my closet, and prayed that the Lord would give these poor people savingly to know that his word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, &c. (Heb. iv. 12).

" *Wednesday, June 23.*—The weather has for some days been uncommonly cold and stormy, and still continues so. Hence I am still detained here. The Lord overrule the detention for his glory and

the good of souls! On Sabbath last I preached in the forenoon at a place called Hallam (three miles to the south of this), for the accommodation of the people who live about the south point of Uist; and in the afternoon at Mr. M'Lellan's here. The attendance at each place was very considerable, and the people listened with uncommon attention. Many of them appeared to discover signs of anxiety in their very countenances, as if they wished to inquire, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Several Roman Catholics were present, as I have been told, on both occasions, and seemed to feel alike with the rest.

"ST. KILDA, *Thursday Forenoon, July 1.*—All praise be to the God of mercies, who has brought me hitherto, and permitted me once again to see the little group of immortal beings who inhabit this sequestered spot, who have been from the first much on my spirit, and in whom, to the last, I trust I shall feel the deepest interest! It is now upwards of three weeks since I left home, detained by contrary winds and tempestuous weather; and while I trust that the detention has not altogether been unproductive of benefit to some, yet I do not now regret that I have seen St. Kilda. The Lord, in granting me this wish, has both disappointed my fears and confirmed my hopes. For both fears and hopes I certainly had: fears that I should be obliged to return without accomplishing my object; nay, that the Lord frowned on the undertaking altogether, as a measure

uncalled for, or at least not entered upon with proper motives, and that therefore he made the elements to combine against me, and made the very aspect of the heavens to exhibit the frown on my Father's countenance. But I had hopes, too, which in the darkest season had not wholly left me, that He who leads the blind in ways which they have not known, would yet 'make darkness light before me,' and 'bring me to an expected end.' Nay, the Lord at times, in reference to this matter, enabled me to walk by faith, and not by sight, and firmly to believe that

' Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.'

Hence I was led to view the present aspect of His providence as designed rather as a trial of my faith than as an expression of his displeasure.

"Yesterday forenoon, at Pabbay, as I was deeply exercised about these matters, the wind, which for several days before had been quite ahead of us for St. Kilda, began to veer round to the south and south-east, and by the afternoon became so fair and moderate, as to invite us to put to sea. Accordingly, with all possible expedition, we set about getting everything aboard, and ourselves in readiness for setting off. Our passengers consisted of Mr. Mackenzie, Mrs. Mackenzie and child, with Mrs. Mackenzie's mother and sister, Mr. Bethune, tutor in Mr. M'Lellan's family, and Major J. M'Neil, who also

accompanied us on the trip, and whose society will be no small addition to our comfort. These, together with myself formed the whole party; and by six P.M. we were all on board.

“At seven we set sail, and the wind continuing fair and steady with us all the way, we arrived in the bay here at four this morning, accomplishing the passage, commonly reckoned sixty miles, precisely in nine hours.

“At such an early hour it could not be expected that the inhabitants had shaken off their midnight slumbers. All, accordingly, was stillness; not a smoke to be seen, nor the bark of a dog to be heard. What an easy prey in such a case were these poor people to the invaders! The sight reminded me of the fearful condition of carnally secure sinners. How easy a prey are such to the enemy of souls, and how defenceless their state when death comes to rouse them from their fatal slumbers, and summon them to appear before God! Some individual, however, who had been on foot, and espied us, gave the alarm to the rest; and in about half an hour all the souls on the island were down at the shore to meet and to receive us. The sea being tolerably smooth at the time, we had no difficulty in landing. But scarcely had I got my foot on shore, when all crowded around me, vieing with each other who should be the first to get at my hand, and give it a hearty shake and squeeze; and as for the ‘how d’ye

do's,' and welcomes back again, and blessings on myself and the Society, who had been so mindful of their poor souls, &c., these and similar expressions, were dealt out without number. Indeed, a tide of joy seemed at the time to overflow our hearts, and occasionally to impede utterance. Mr. Mackenzie, who, with his female friends, had been all this while standing at a little distance from us, gazing and gazed at occasionally, was at last introduced to them as the minister appointed for them by the Society. They again prayed for many benedictions on the Society, but flew immediately around the strangers; and though he had been their seven years' acquaintance they could not have more warmly received him. 'We trust,' say they, 'the Lord has sent you to us. Oh, may He bless your labours among us!' with many other expressions to the same effect. On my mentioning to them how much they owed to the Society for the privileges now conferred upon them, 'Yes,' says one of them, 'we owe much to God and to them under God. See you,' says he, 'these buildings,' pointing to the church and manse, 'who would have thought some years ago that such should ever be seen in St. Kilda? The Society have provided these for us, and now have sent us a messenger—we trust a minister of Jesus Christ. The Lord reward them for their Christian labours, whatever becomes of us; and indeed they shall in nowise lose their reward.' After hearing them thus fully out, I

proposed that we should immediately assemble in church, and offer thanksgivings to God for his great goodness towards us on this occasion. They all marched with me in a body, entered the new place of worship, and seemed with heart and lip to join in the service. I just read a chapter, sung a portion of a psalm, and concluded with prayer. Before dismissing, I told them we should meet for sermon at such an hour in the afternoon as suited their convenience. After the service was over, my fellow-travellers and I stepped into the missionary's dwelling-house (or manse, as it may be called in St. Kilda), and after taking a look through the different apartments of it, all which appeared to be well and substantially finished, we sat down to rest and refresh us after the fatigues and fastings of the voyage.

“But the feelings of delight which arose in my mind at seeing buildings, the erection of which in St. Kilda no one would ever have anticipated a few years ago, now completely executed with stone, lime, and slate, and that in the most substantial and satisfactory manner; at seeing a church—a house built for the worship of God here—a house in which there was reason to hope His Gospel would be preached and His ordinances administered for generations to come—a house, to the erection of which on this lonely island not a few of the inhabitants, perhaps, from age to age, down to a remote posterity, may trace the means, under God, which had been

blessed to their souls for salvation—a house, in short, in regard to which there is reason to believe, that ‘when the Lord shall write up the people, He shall count that this man and that man were born there;’ the feelings of my heart I say, at the time, it was beyond my power to describe.

“*Friday, July 2.*—This day the people were employed with the young man Mr. Bethune (who had come to act for the tacksman) in delivering feathers, barley, &c., till five in the afternoon, when they met for sermon; and I addressed them from Ps. xxxvii. 4, ‘Delight thyself also in the Lord,’ &c. And if I was enabled, in any measure, to enter into the spirit of these words, some of my hearers certainly seemed to go along with me. There certainly appears to be an improvement, in point of knowledge, with them. But there seems to be more of the love of the truth among them, and more openness of heart to receive it, than I had discovered on former occasions. I speak generally. There are many exceptions of course. But to a considerable part of them this observation will apply. The result is, that I find it easier to speak to them, and that the truths addressed to them seem to sink insensibly and without apparent obstruction into their hearts.

“*Saturday, July 3.*—During the greater part of this day the people were employed as yesterday, in delivering feathers, barley, cheese, &c., to Mr. McLellan’s clerk. For it is in these and other

articles of produce that the St. Kilda rents are paid. At five P.M. they assembled for sermon, when I preached to them from these words in 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And while addressing a few things to them regarding the blood of Christ, some of them were affected to tears, and seemed to melt under the doctrine. The old blind man, in particular, of whom I made mention in my former journals, and who, I am happy to learn, holds out steadfastly in the ways of the Lord, could not resist shedding tears, and that most copiously, on the occasion. The people this day, as on former occasions, made me a present of a good fat wedder, in aid of our provisions, which I accepted as a proof of their gratitude and good will.

"*Monday, July 5.*—Yesterday being the day on which Mr. Mackenzie was introduced to the people, and commenced his services among them, was to me the most important and delightful day I ever spent at St. Kilda. This day the people were employed, as on Friday and Saturday, with Mr. Bethune, till about five in the afternoon, when they assembled for sermon, and I addressed them from Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory.' No subjects touch them like those of grace. They seem to melt under such topics. What an argument to ministers for holding out the doctrines of grace continually to the view of their hearers! It is such doctrines alone that are calculated to win the heart of the sinner; and

to such doctrines alone will God append the seal and sanction of his power. I was pleased to observe some young people apparently impressed, and deeply so, under the discourse. Indeed, I was glad to learn that several among this class are in a hopeful way. There are blossoms at least. The Lord grant that the ripe fruit may yet be seen !

“*Tuesday, July 6.*—A little before five o’clock, when we assembled for sermon, a young couple came before me to be married; and after being joined, I was pleased to find that they, and their friends who were along with them, proceeded immediately to the church, and took their seats with the congregation; and on my remarking to them afterwards how highly I approved of their conduct in this, ‘Certainly,’ replied the bridegroom, ‘we should begin everything with God. And what happiness can be expected in the married state without Him?’ I spoke to the people from Eph. v. 31, 33. And while I took occasion, from the passage, to state the duties which husbands and wives owe to each other, and which are enjoined on them by the Lord, I dwelt chiefly on the marriage relation established between Christ and the Church, and the duties and privileges which arise out of such a glorious relation. I trust the Lord has accompanied His word with a degree of power; at least the countenance of the people indicated that the word had some effect upon them.

“*Wednesday, July 7.*—About five in the evening

I assembled the people for sermon; and conceiving that possibly this might be the last opportunity I should have of addressing them, I took for a subject of lecture, 1 Thess. v. 12-23, from which I endeavoured to point out to them the import of the various exhortations addressed to Christians in this passage, and to enforce them on their consideration. Towards the close of it, the poor people began to be much affected, and to weep aloud. My own feelings were overcome. I felt it difficult to speak. Indeed, the idea of a separation was most painful alike to speaker and to hearers.

“Thursday, July 8.—Yesterday the wind was pretty moderate and fair, but to-day it blows a perfect hurricane, so that we must be contented to remain in our present quarters till the weather become more favourable. This afforded the people and me another opportunity of meeting together in the house of God—an opportunity not the less valued that it was unexpected. I addressed them from Isa. xxxii. 2, ‘And a man shall be an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.’ The state of the day suggested the subject to the speaker, and the same circumstance seemed to give it greater force with the hearers. A view of a St Kilda storm was certainly presented to us this day. The sea all in a commotion—its billows rising mountains high, and dashing with fury against the lofty rocks all around, which oblige them in their

turn to retire and sink into their mother ocean—the columns of spray which issue out of this conflict, and overtop the highest mountains—all these present a sight awfully grand and sublime. The Lord, however, rides on the storm, and can say to the raging sea and furious wind, ‘Peace, be still,’ and immediately there is a calm. Nay, more, he can say so, and that with effect, to the storms and billows which threaten his Church, and she too enjoys a calm. Besides, the Church founded on himself as the Rock, like the island of St. Kilda, in the middle of ocean’s storms, stands unmoved and unshaken by all the blasts and billows that assail it.

“*Friday, July 9.*—The wind still continues to blow fresh, though less so than yesterday, and it is otherwise by no means fair for our purpose; so that we must wait patiently the Lord’s time. If he has more work for me to do here, I am willing to remain—and remain I must, till that work is done. Oh, may he overrule the detention for his glory! At the usual hour the people assembled for sermon, when I addressed them from Song of Solomon ii. 3, ‘I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.’ I must say that the doctrine was sweet to my own taste, and I doubt not, that some of my hearers found it so too, in regard to themselves.

“*Monday, July 12.*—In the evening I preached from John xii. 22, ‘And I, if I be lifted up, will

draw all men unto me.' Conceiving this to be my last service among them, my object was to lead their views to the cross, and, if possible, to fix them there; nay, to shut them up to this glorious object. This, I told them, was the great end of my ministrations among them, and I trusted would be his who was now set over them in the Lord. I besought them, therefore, to be anxious to make this use of his labours; and not to rest till they perceived and felt the power of attraction there is in the cross of Christ. Then, though we should part, this object would still unite us, and bring us together at last, to live on its fruits, and to celebrate its glories through endless ages. In conclusion, I told them that at this time I felt both joy and sorrow at the prospect of leaving them—joy that I left with them a gospel minister; and sorrow that on this very account I should in all probability see them no more. At this the whole house became a Bochim, and I found it impossible to refrain from taking my own share in this scene of weeping. After coming out of church, the poor people gathered around me,—‘And, oh!’ said they, ‘are you never to see us again? Do you bid farewell for ever to St. Kilda? If so, the present is a more sorrowful parting than any we ever have had. Who knows, however, but the Lord may send you to us again?’ I could make no other reply at the time (for my feelings had quite overcome me) but to address them in the words of the apostle, ‘Only let

your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs,' &c. (Phil. i. 27).

“ISLAND OF PABBAY, *Tuesday, July 13.*—To speak of the feelings of mind with which the people of St. Kilda and I took leave of each other yesterday morning, is no easy matter. We had several separations before now that were sufficiently affecting, but this exceeded them all. Tears were shed in abundance between us. The thought that in all probability we should not see one another again in the flesh, and that this would be the last interview we should have till we meet before the tribunal of Jesus, reached our hearts like an arrow. It was completely overwhelming; it brought to my recollection what is said of Paul and the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx. 37, 38), that they all wept sore—sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more; and after his example, I prayed with them on the shore, and so we parted.”





CHAPTER X.

EVANGELISTIC WORK—ANECDOTES—JOURNALS.



HERE was no man, in his day, whose labours in the service of the gospel abounded more than his. On Sabbath, when at home, he always delivered three sermons. Once a month he preached regularly in Inverness and in Dingwall, and, for a considerable time, statedly in Invergordon. In not a few places he was invariably present on communion occasions, usually preaching every day; besides giving to many ministers occasional and more limited assistance. He often went on excursions to various parts of the Highlands, preaching as he went. During three months of each year he preached, on an average, two sermons a day; and in no year of his life in Ross-shire did he preach fewer than three hundred sermons. He preached upwards of ten thousand times during the last thirty-six years of his life; and never delivered an unstudied discourse. This was not owing to his confining himself to a set of sermons which he constantly repeated; for he has left among his papers skeletons of discourses on almost every text on which a sermon could be

written, besides notes of lectures on the Gospels, and other parts of Scripture.

During the first years of his work in the north he always rode from place to place, the black mare which carried him being everywhere well known, and almost as readily recognised as her master. "If my mare could speak," he once said, "she would say, 'The gospel may be good, and to others it may do good, but as for me, I am ten times tired of it.'" Latterly a comfortable gig, drawn by his trusty "Paddy," conveyed him on his frequent journeyings. He was fully more careful about "Paddy's" comfort than about his own. He has been known, oftener than once, after a fatiguing journey, to use the scythe in mowing a supper for the horse before looking out for a supper for himself. His "Paddy" deserved all the care expended on him, for, like the horse of another evangelist, he had done more for the gospel than all the mitred bishops in the land.

The Lord's care of his life and health throughout his many journeys was most remarkable.

On his way to preach to a congregation in Morayshire, he reached the ford of the Findhorn when the river was in flood. He was urged by friends not to attempt the crossing; but a congregation waited to hear the gospel, and there was no other way of reaching them, and so he resolved to try the ford. He had scarcely entered it, when both horse and rider were carried down by the stream. He kept

his saddle till the water shallowed on a sand bank in the middle of the river, a considerable distance below where he had entered it. There the horse lay stranded, till ropes were thrown across by the people who were watching on the bank, and pulled both rider and horse safely to land.

Approaching Auldearn on a winter night, he was met in the darkness by two men, one of whom seized his horse's bridle, and the other, grasping his arm, demanded his watch and purse, offering him the robber's usual stern alternative. "This was not the reception I expected," he said, "on coming to preach at Auldearn." On hearing this, one of the men immediately said to his companion, "This is Macdonald, we had better let him alone;" and they suddenly disappeared in the darkness. This was not the first time that conscience scared even a robber from harming a servant of the Lord.

Having caught cold on one of his journeys, and refusing rest in order to employ some means of cure, he became at last seriously ill. The pores of his skin so closed that the usual means of producing perspiration entirely failed, and to procure this was deemed essential to his recovery. Hector Holm heard of his illness, and went to visit him. After conversation with him, and discovering what was required in order to his cure, he went about among the houses around the manse, and asked the inmates to assemble to hear a lecture from the minister.

The people immediately gathered. All this was done unknown to Mr. Macdonald. When the kitchen of the manse was full, Hector went to the bedroom, and told the minister that the people were assembled and were expecting a lecture. "I cannot rise to speak to them," he said. "But will it not be hard," Hector asked, "to send them away without 'a word?'" "But how can I manage to speak to them in my present state?" Hector, seeing that he had begun to consider how this opportunity could be used, suggested that he should sit up in bed, wrapped in blankets, the people sitting in the passage outside the room, and that he should read and expound a passage of Scripture. To this he at once agreed; and so the people came, and the minister began to address them. Becoming interested in his subject, his usual fervour warmed him up; and before the lecture was concluded he was wet with copious perspiration. He then lay down, slept quietly all night, and awoke quite well in the morning. Hector used to say that he was the best physician Mr. Macdonald ever had. A dose of preaching was the only prescription he gave. This his patient had often found to be a delight to his heart, but on this occasion it was a cure to his body also.

During his frequent travels he came in contact with all descriptions of persons, and, owing to his unconsciousness and tact, could easily adapt himself to all their various phases of character without

compromising his position as a minister, or laying his own peculiarity aside.

On board a steamer he once encountered a young Oxonian, who, being in Scotland, was disposed to regard himself as an impersonation of refinement and learning moving amidst barbarism and ignorance. He was inveighing against the barbarous jargon spoken on the north side of the Tweed, and wished the group of listeners to whom he was exhibiting to understand, that the English language, in its purity, could not be spoken out of Oxford, except by one who had learnt it there. A little after, the polite Oxonian uttered an oath. Mr. Macdonald turned to him at once, and said, "Where is the purity of the English language now? I did not expect it would be polluted in passing through the lips of an Oxonian."

Travelling in a stage-coach with Major — on one of his journeys to the south, after having taken a pinch of snuff he offered the box to the officer. "I am not given to these minor vices," he said in a very supercilious and haughty tone, at the same time uttering an oath. "Of course not," Mr. Macdonald rejoined, as he quietly put the box in his pocket, "the *major* vices better suit your taste."

While crossing Kessock ferry along with the minister of Killearnan, among their fellow-passengers was a drunken exciseman, at whose feet a dog was lying. The gauger, observing the ministers, raised

the dog, and holding it on his arms, went up to Mr. Kennedy and said, "Will you christen this child?" Mr. Kennedy, horrified, at once ordered him away. He then presented the dog to Mr. Macdonald, who immediately rose up and said, "Do you acknowledge yourself the father of what you now present for baptism?" The exciseman, drunk as he was, saw that he was caught in his own snare. Looking wildly at the ministers, he flung the dog into the sea, and skulked back to his seat amidst the jeers of all who were on board.

A farmer once said to him, after hearing him preach, "Dr. Macdonald, you are the preacher for me, you never weary us with long sermons." The doctor, who saw at once that its brevity was regarded as the great recommendation of the sermon, said, "I fear much, Mr. R——, if you should ever happen to get into heaven, you would soon be disposed to say, like the little boys in school, 'Please, master, let me out.'"

Quite unintentional, but less doubtful, was the compliment paid to his preaching by one of the Inverness magistrates. While a certain doctor ruled within the domain of the Established Church in the Highland capital, he was careful, so far as his power extended, to exclude from the High Church such preaching as would contrast with the polished platitudes and the poisoned sweets which he himself dealt out to his listless hearers. Somehow the wild man of Ferintosh found access to the pulpit

of the High Church one day. The magistrates, as usual, were present. One of them, who was always accustomed to take a quiet nap during the sermon, and who never dreamt of the bailies being furnished with easy chairs for any other purpose, found himself not so comfortable as usual on that day. On coming out of church, he was asked what he thought of the minister of Ferintosh. "The fellow," he said, with great indignation, "did not allow me sleep a wink all day." This was the only compliment to his preaching to which his friends ever heard himself referring.

Amiable though he was, and prone to too great facility, he could, when occasion required, hold his ground very firmly, and rise superior to all the influence which might be employed to sway him. During one of his tours in Lochaber, he was invited by Lochiel to spend a night in his mansion. Besides the clergyman, there was a large party of guests. Between nine and ten o'clock, card-playing having been proposed, Mr. Macdonald at once rose, and going up to Lochiel, asked him whether he was to hold family worship. "Oh, no," he said, "I cannot think of that to-night." "And will you not allow me to engage in worship for you?" "Not to-night," his host replied; "it would give offence to my visitors." "If not," the minister said, "I must go away; for I cannot remain where my Master is denied." Lochiel, anxious that there should be no spot on his Highland hospitality, but quite resolved

against worship, urged him to remain. But he was quite as unyielding as his host, and left the house at dead of night; and walked several miles ere he reached a place of shelter.

Of all his journals in which he recorded the experiences and results of his evangelistic tours only fragments remain. But "the record" of all his labours is "on high," and "the day" shall fully disclose their results.

The first extract describes a preaching tour undertaken at the request of the Scottish Missionary Society. It is specially interesting as containing notices of his last interviews with his father.

"*Monday, March 1, 1830.*—Left home after dinner, drank tea with Mr. Sage, crossed at eight o'clock to Invergordon, stopped at H. Holm's, spent a comfortable night with him.

"*Tuesday, March 2.*—Left H. Holm's at eight A.M. Breakfasted with Mr. Laing. Settled with him for stipend. Preached at Kilmuir for the Scottish Missionary Society, in Gaelic, from 1 John i. 1-4, and English, Acts xxviii. 28—collection £5, 4s. 10d. Dined in the evening at Mrs. Hay M'Kenzie's. Spent the evening very agreeably with herself, and son, and daughter-in-law. Had family worship at nine at which all about the household and some from the neighbourhood attended—slept at Mr. Matheson's.

"*Wednesday, March 3.*—Left Kilmuir at seven

A.M. Breakfasted with Dr. Mackintosh, and was refreshed by seeing him. In the forenoon crossed to Dornoch, with the expectation of preaching for the Scottish Missionary Society; but Mr. Kennedy having had a public collection the Sabbath preceding in his church, did not deem it proper to come upon the people so soon again for another collection; therefore agreed that I should preach in his church for that purpose on my return from Caithness. The 25th curt. was accordingly fixed. Proceeded after dinner to Rhives—Mr. Gunn not at home when I arrived but appeared about supper time. In the evening the house filled with people from the neighbourhood. I addressed them at family worship at considerable length from the chapter read. The people seemed much impressed, and to receive what they heard as anxious to improve the day of small things.

“Thursday, March 4.—Left Rhives at an early hour, and breakfasted at the manse of Clyne. Immediately after breakfast Mr. M'Kay, having collected his people for a diet of catechizing, asked me to address them. Gave them a short discourse from Ps. cxix. 18, and then proceeded to Helmsdale, where I had fixed to preach at two o'clock. Here a large congregation were assembled. I addressed them in Gaelic from John i. 4, and in English from Ps. xxxvi. 7. Collection for the Scottish Missionary Society about six guineas. After dining at Mr.

M'Kay's (the merchant) with Messrs. Ross and Campbell, proceeded in the evening, with Mr. Campbell, to the manse of Kildonan. Mr. Campbell gave me two guineas, one from himself, and one in lieu of a collection from his people, for the Society. His parish being depopulated, he could not hold out to me any encouragement in the way of a collection. Felt quite at home in his house; his mother-in-law is a humble and judicious Christian.

“*Monday, March 8.*—Left Kildonan manse Friday forenoon, and arrived at Reay in the evening. Mr. and Mrs. M'Kay seemed overjoyed at my entering the parlour, and I felt no less so at seeing them. On Saturday, took a trip to see my father—found people assembled for prayer in his house when I arrived—and joined with them in the duty. This prayer-meeting, I was happy to learn, was some time ago transferred to his house from another place, owing to his inability to attend it elsewhere, and is now regularly once a fortnight kept in his house. He moderates the meeting, and points out the psalms to be sung, and the chapters to be read, though he long ago lost the use of his sight. I was pleased to hear him do so on the present occasion. After the people dismissed I had a long conversation with him, and was happy to find his mind entire, his spirits lively, and his faith firm on the rock. ‘Many a shake does my faith get,’ he said, ‘but it is my comfort that the rock on which it rests cannot

be shaken.' *Yesterday*, preached in Gaelic without doors to an immense crowd, from 1 Cor. xv. 1-4, and in English within, from Hab. iii. 2. A spirit of division reigns in this parish at present, people against minister, and minister against people. Neither party has adopted the proper method with the other. The cloven-foot has got in; the Lord hasten the day when it shall be thrust out, none but He can heal the breach. The people, however (even those who generally absent themselves from church), seemed to hear me with attention; and I believe the gospel would yet reclaim the absentees from ordinances, and have the effect of restoring matters to harmony and order. *This day*, I called in the forenoon at Sandside; had some discussion with Major Innes respecting Irving's views of the human nature of Christ; found, on referring to some passages of Scripture on the subject, that he yielded to its authority, and was satisfied that Irving's views were wrong.

"In the afternoon, went again to see my father, and spent nearly two hours with him, much to my satisfaction. Among other things he said, 'The mountains of Bether are at times covered with mist, so that the traveller does not see his way; but on the land of promise which lies beyond them rests no mist; and Jesus is my guide to that happy land.'

"*Thursday, March 11.*—On Tuesday, preached

at Strathy, in the Parliamentary Church—in Gaelic from Ps. lxxxix. 15, and in English, from Rom. iii. 22. The house quite crowded. After the service, a collection was made for the Scottish Missionary Society, amounting to £3, 18s.—considered fair in such a place.—On *Wednesday*, preached at Farr for the Scottish Missionary Society, in Gaelic from Isa. lxiii. 1, and English, from Ps. cxix. 18—collection nearly £7. Came back in the evening, after dining with Mr. Mackenzie, to Strathy and slept at Mr. M'Gillivray's. This morning breakfasted at Big-house. Major and Mrs. M'Kay received me very kindly, and I was happy to visit a dwelling in which I acted as tutor thirty-five years ago; but it threw a shade of melancholy over my spirits to find that its old inhabitants are gone, and that only one out of a family of twenty is now to be seen within those walls. Oh, the wasting hand of time! After breakfast, preached at the new Meeting-house at Strathhaladale, once a part of my mission in Caithness; saw but few faces in the congregation whom I could recognise as old acquaintances; my heart warmed, however, towards the young of the flock which once were mine, and I felt much freedom in addressing them. After sermon, returned to Big-house with Major M'Kay, who with his family attended, and spent the evening very comfortably under his roof; had family worship and a lecture, at which all about the house attended. Mr. M'Gilli-

vray and his sister, who accompanied me both to Farr and Strathhaladale, stopped here all night.

*“Saturday evening, March 13.—*Yesterday, came to Reay to breakfast. In the forenoon, called on Major Innes; found him frank and kind—hope well of him. In the afternoon, called on my father—found him in his usual spirits; his bodily strength, he says, is decaying gradually; but though he cannot say the inner man is growing, he hopes the Lord gives it what food keeps it in life.

“This afternoon, baptized a child of Captain M'Donald's, Major Innes' nephew and heir; the Major and his lady attended; I felt freedom in the service and enjoyed the occasion. Spent the rest of the day in my room; the Lord prepare me for to-morrow's work.

*“Saturday, March 20.—*This week, had my hands full of work, for which I should be thankful. The Lord gave me physical strength. On Sabbath, preached at Reay, in Gaelic in the open air, from 1 John i. 1–4, and in English in church, from James v. 19, 20, when a collection was made for the Scottish Missionary Society amounting to £10, odds. Felt considerable freedom in both languages, and particularly in English. During the Gaelic service the wind, being boisterous, molested speaker and hearers not a little. In the evening, addressed the children of the Sabbath school, which is conducted by the teacher, and seems to be in a thriving condition.

Monday.—Preached at Thurso in Gaelic and English for the Society—collection £13, odds—Gaelic from Ps. cxix. 18, English, Isa. lxiii. 1. After dining at the manse, went in the evening to Buckies.

Tuesday.—Preached at Watten for the Society, from Rom. v. 2—collection £8, 10s. 6d. After dining with the worthy family at the manse, went down to Wick so far on my way to Latheron, where (*D.V.*) I preach next day. Spent the evening very comfortably with Mr. Phin.

Wednesday.—Started early for Latheron, where I arrived to breakfast; distance eighteen miles. Preached here to a crowded audience in Gaelic from 1 Cor. xi. 10, and in English from Isa. lxiii. 1—collection for the Society £12, odds.

Thursday morning came to Halkirk; distance twenty miles. Preached there for the Society, in Gaelic from 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, in English from Ps. xxxvi. 7—collection £9, odds. Stopped all night with good Mr. Munro, and enjoyed his society much.

Friday.—Came to Buckies to breakfast; after parting with my friends there about eleven o'clock, proceeded to the parish of Reay. Examined a Society school in a district of the parish; called on my father, and got to the manse about six o'clock P.M.

Saturday.—This day, called on my father for

the last time; spent some time with him. We were mutually affected at parting, not knowing whether we should see one another again on this side Jordan; he sent his thousand blessings to my wife and family, and 'May we meet,' he said, 'where we shall not part.' The parting with my dear aged parent has made me rather dull this evening for study; but the thought of meeting him in a better place comforted me.

"Saturday, March 27.—Preached at Reay, Sabbath last, in Gaelic from Rom. viii. 29, English, Isa. xxviii. 12. Left Reay on Monday morning, came in the evening to Kildonan.—Tuesday, preached at Helmsdale.—Wednesday, at Clyne.—Thursday, at Dornoch, and arrived here safely this afternoon. Found wife and family well. *Deo gloria.*"

The following notes refer to a visit to his favourite Breadalbane in 1835, after a severe illness. The work done by him then, which to him was the abridged exercise of an invalid, would be accounted more than enough for the healthier days of ordinary men :—

"Left home on Monday, September 7, accompanied by my son James; rested and dined at Inverness, and got to Moy at night.

"Tuesday, Sept. 8.—Started from Moy at seven A.M. Breakfasted at the Bridge of Carr, and stopped an hour or so at Lynvuilg. Got to Kingussie by three. Remained there all night; preached at five

to a pretty large congregation assembled in church, my arrival having been looked for some time in the afternoon. Preached from Heb. iv. 11 in Gaelic, and a short word in English from Ps. xxv. 11. Notwithstanding my late illness, had cause of great thankfulness that I felt not the worse, either in body or mind, for the service. The day wet and raining almost throughout.

“*Wednesday, Sept. 9.*—Started from Kingussie after an early breakfast; fed at Dalwhinnie; dined at Dalnacardoch, and got that evening to the Inn of Coiseville, eighteen miles from Dalnarcardoch, and forty-five from Kingussie. Owing to the hilliness of the road for a great part of the way, both the horse and driver seemed pretty tired when we reached Coiseville. The driver, after swallowing a little bread and milk, immediately threw himself into his bed and fell into a profound sleep, out of which the sound of singing and prayer performed at his side, and to a houseful of people, could not move him—James remained still as a statue.

“*Thursday, Sept. 10.*—The morning being very wet, we remained at our quarters till after breakfast, when we started, and arrived at Lawers by twelve—distance ten miles. Margaret and her husband were happy to see us, and the people of the place no less so—a people once dear to me. I felt equally glad at seeing them all, minister and people; and had great cause of thankfulness that we thus arrived

safely at our destination, without injury sustained, or accident occurring. It being the fast for the communion at Lawers, I agreed to take the Gaelic, and preached from Rom. vii. 9—‘For I was alive without the law once,’ &c. Mr. Elder, of Killin, preached in English; his discourse evangelical, and delivered with considerable earnestness.

“*Friday, Sept. 11.*—Preached at four o’clock at Ardeonag, a spot once highly favoured and endeared to me by various considerations. The people very attentive, and seemed to listen with feelings which would remind one of former times. Ah! Ardeonag! would that these times returned! I preached from Isa. xlv. 5—‘To whom will ye liken me,’ &c.

“*Saturday, Sept. 12.*—Preached the half of the day in the tent at Lawers; Mr. Donald Mackenzie, lately from the north, preached the other half; his discourse, for clearness and point, was far beyond my anticipations, his prayer excellent, distinguished alike by earnestness and unction. My discourse was founded on Isa. liv. 17, last clause—‘Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.’ The audience numerous and attentive, and several individuals deeply affected.

“*Sabbath, September 13.*—Preached the action sermon in English, from Rom. iii. 25—‘The righteousness of God declared,’ &c. Felt much liberty during the whole service. In the evening concluded the service in the tent by an address founded on

Isa. lv. 1—‘Let him that has no money come.’ Many of the hearers evidently much affected; the Lord undoubtedly was present, for his word had a melting effect.

“*Monday, Sept. 14.*—Preached in Gaelic from Rom. vii. 14—‘For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal,’ &c. Had Mr. David Campbell, of Glenlyon, for my colleague, whose discourse was plain, but lively and rousing. The people listened during the whole day with deep attention, and many among them discovered symptoms of true concern under the word. The Lord revive us as in the days of old! During the whole of the solemn occasion I was thus enabled to preach a discourse every day, and this, owing to the previous state of my health, I preferred to taking any whole day. I found upon trial, too, that it suited me; and what thanks can I render to the Lord for it, that I feel as well after the work is over as before it began!

“I felt humbled and thankful at meeting several individuals during the occasion who mentioned their having received their first impressions of truth under my former labours in this place; from ten to twelve of this description spoke to me, and felt it their duty to communicate the fact to me, thinking, I suppose, that it might be some incredulity of mine on this subject that made me give up coming to Breadalbane for some years past. I was glad to learn, however, that they and others continue to walk in the truth.

“Tuesday, Sept. 15.—Being engaged to preach in Glenlyon on Wednesday, a place some years ago highly favoured with an outpouring of the Spirit, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Lawers, and Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, of Glenlyon, and we, set out this forenoon for the Glen. We took the Fortingall road, which was rather a round, but preferable upon the whole for a gig or carriage; the road in some parts of it rather hilly, and in others rather rugged and stony. We arrived at the Manse of Glenlyon about five P.M.—distance from Lawers by this route eighteen miles. The Glen throughout presents much of the picturesque and romantic in its appearance. On our way we called on the minister of Fortingall, who seemed to have taken the visit well, and he asked me to preach a week day to his people, if I could not give a Sabbath. Eighteen years ago this gentleman vowed that I should never preach in his parish—wonders never cease! I agreed readily enough to preach in his church on Friday afternoon.

“Wednesday, Sept. 16.—Preached in the church of Glenlyon from Isa. lv. 3—‘Hear and your souls shall live,’ to a very crowded house. Many of the hearers were in tears. The scene reminded me in some measure of the days of other years in this place.

“Thursday, Sept. 17.—Starting from Glenlyon at ten, accompanied by the minister of Lawers and his wife, we made for Killin, where I was under promise to preach, and arrived there between one

and two P.M. The service commenced at two. The church crowded; preached from Heb. iii. 19; felt much liberty; the people very attentive. It is pleasing to think that the parish is favoured with an active and faithful pastor in Mr. Elder. After sermon, and taking some dinner at the manse, we came to Lawers in the evening.

“Friday, Sept. 18.—Preached this afternoon at Fortingall, agreeably to previous engagement; the church quite crowded, and the audience remarkably attentive; some were in tears. I preached from Rom. iii. 22—‘For there is no difference.’ After taking some refreshment at Mr. Macdonald’s, the clergyman of the parish, we returned to Lawers in the evening.

“Saturday, Sept. 19.—Spent this day in occasional walks, and preparation for the duties of tomorrow.

“Monday, Sept. 21.—Yesterday preached at Lawers to an immense congregation; people assembled from all quarters; and shearers who had gone a few days before from Breadalbane to the neighbourhood of Dunkeld and Perth, forty and fifty miles, came back, and returned immediately after the Sabbath was over. Several of this description did the same at the time of the communion. And what is not less remarkable, their employers gave them liberty. I preached yesterday in English—for the English was first—from Ps. xxv. 11. Also at five o’clock

(the people having assembled in crowds at that hour craving for sermon), from John vi. 67—‘ Will ye also go away ?’ The congregations at both times very much affected, and especially during the latter service. At eight o’clock, when we were to have family worship, the house was crowded with people. I read and lectured on Ps. cxxvi. During the last verses almost all were in tears. The Lord has not left Breadalbane yet. I felt much affected at parting with many of the people, after the services of the day were over. The feelings of sorrow were mutual.

“ This day we proceeded to Kinlochranoch, accompanied by Mr. Campbell and Margaret, and arrived there about five—distance from Lawers twenty-two miles. Here I am to preach to-morrow.

“ *Tuesday, Sept. 22.*—Preached at Kinlochranoch in Mr. Macdonald’s church, and notwithstanding the day being boisterous, with rain and wind throughout, the church was quite crowded. I preached in English from Isa. vi. 63, Gaelic from Rom. viii. 2. After dining at Mr. Macdonald’s, we came in the evening to Mrs. Stewart’s, Crossmount, three miles from Kinlochranoch. Mrs. S. is a well-disposed and an accomplished woman. Here Margaret and her husband and I spent our last night together.

“ *Wednesday, Sept. 23.*—The wind and rain of yesterday were extraordinary, and this morning scarcely less so ; nevertheless, James and I proceeded at seven for Dalnacardoch, I being under engagement

to preach at Kingussie at six in the evening. We breakfasted at Dalnacardoch, and arrived at Kingussie by four. Preached at six o'clock in Gaelic from Rom. xiv. 12, and in English from Rom. iii. 27—'Where is boasting?' Distance travelled to-day, thirty-nine miles, and neither man nor horse fatigued—what cause of thanks!

"*Thursday, Sept. 24.*—Left Kingussie at ten this forenoon, and preached in the church of Rothiemurchus at one. English from Rom. iii., and Gaelic, Rom. viii. 3. Duke of Bedford, the Marchioness of Abercorn, &c., in church. Felt liberty notwithstanding the presence of such personages, because I felt as in the presence of God, and felt that these were but fellow-worms. After the service baptized a child to Mr. Grant, the minister at the manse, and passed the evening at Lynvuilg.

Friday, Sept. 25.—Preached this day on my way home at the church of Duthil—in Gaelic from 2 Peter i. 10, in English from Ps. cxix. 11. Came in the evening to Moy. Thanks to the God of all my mercies that I feel much better after such labours than when I left home!"

In the following year he again visited Breadalbane, and thus recounts his labours on that occasion:—

"*Thursday, Sept. 1, 1836.*—Left home accompanied by James, my son. Preached in the evening in the East Church, Inverness, in Gaelic, from Ps. xlii. 2—'My soul thirsteth for God,' &c.

“*Friday, Sept. 2.*—Started in the morning for Rothiemurchus, Strathspey, where I am to assist at the communion. Breakfasted at Moy, fed at Bridge of Carr, and dined and stopped all night at Lynvuilg.

“*Saturday, Sept. 3.*—Preached at Rothiemurchus in Gaelic and in English from Luke vii. 47—‘*Her sins are forgiven; for she loved much.*’ Each service conducted in the open air. The weather pretty comfortable.

“*Monday, Sept. 5.*—Yesterday preached at the tent to an immense and very attentive audience, from Heb. ix. 26—‘*But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin,*’ &c. A solemn stillness prevailed during the whole day, and several of the people were in tears. This especially under the concluding exhortation. *To-day* preached in Gaelic at the tent, from John xv. 2—‘*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it,*’ &c. Preached the English in church, after the Gaelic was concluded, from Rom. viii. 33—‘*It is God that justifieth,*’ &c. Had the Duke of Bedford and his family for my hearers. Dined with the duke, by invitation, in the afternoon. Found his grace kind, complaisant, and affable. There appears to be some good thing in him towards the Lord God of Israel. Oh, that there were more of his sort! He was pleased to express himself as highly gratified with the sermon I had preached that day—a compliment

which, no doubt, afforded a morsel to *Mr. Self* in me. At the same time, I must say that I felt more happy at the idea of his having orthodoxy and religion enough to approve of the doctrine. Upon the whole, I think this day has been attended with some power. The Lord grant that this may yet appear to have been the case. I enjoyed more than usual liberty in each language, and many of my hearers seemed to be much impressed.

“Tuesday, Sept. 6.—Left Rothiemurchus this morning, and came to Kingussie to breakfast. Preached in the church in the forenoon to a large congregation, many of whom followed us from Rothiemurchus. Text in Gaelic, Gal. vi. 15—‘Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.’ English, John xv. 5—‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ After an early dinner at the manse, proceeded to Dalwhinnie, under heavy rain all the way. Stopped there all night. Had a lecture in the evening with the family, and some strangers that happened to be present.

“Wednesday, Sept. 7.—Proceeded in the morning to Dalnacardoch. Breakfasted there, and had family worship and a lecture. Fed at Tummel Bridge, and proceeded to Fortingall. Dined with Mr. M'Donald, the minister. Promised to give him a week-day preaching before I left the country. Started after dinner for Lawers, where we arrived about seven. Found friends well, and were mutually happy at

seeing each other. The Lord be praised for his goodness !

“ *Thursday, Sept. 8.*—This being the fast for the communion, Mr. Elder, Killin, preached in the forenoon in English, both a lengthy and pithy discourse, from Ps. l. 5 ; and I in Gaelic, after the English, from Eph. i. 19—‘ *The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.*’ Was glad to see again some old faces before me, on whom, years ago, the word preached had a melting influence, and who appeared still not to be impervious to impressions. After the Gaelic service was over, Margaret’s little baby was baptized in the presence of the congregation, and called Georgina, after her grandmother and my once dear wife. The annunciation of the name wakened up associations in my mind which had well-nigh overpowered my feelings.

“ *Saturday, Sept. 10.*—Yesterday afternoon preached at Ardeonaig from Ps. xvi. 8—‘ I have set the Lord always before me.’ The congregation pretty attentive. Ardeonaig was once a favoured spot. I fear it is not now what it was. This day preached in English, in the church, from Eph. ii. 1—‘ And you hath he quickened,’ &c. ; and afterwards in Gaelic at the tent, from Ps. lxxii. 6—‘ He shall come down like rain, &c. Felt considerable liberty in each language, and several of the hearers under each discourse were deeply affected.

“ *Monday, Sept. 12.*—Yesterday preached the

Gaelic action sermon, from Rom. viii. 3—‘*For what the law could not do,*’ &c., ‘*God sending his own Son,*’ &c. The congregation immense; not under 7000. The attention deep and fixed. Every face among the vast multitude gave indications of earnestness and solemnity in hearing the word, and not a few were in tears almost the whole time. I hope the word has been accompanied with power to some. This day preached at the tent to a congregation somewhat less than yesterday, but larger than any that has been seen here on the Monday of a Communion since September 1817—a Monday of great awakening, and, indeed, a day of Messiah’s power. This day reminded us of it in some measure. There were many tears shed, and much weeping and crying. Text, Isa. xxxv. 10—‘*For the ransomed of the Lord shall return,*’ &c. The solemn work being now over, I would here set up my Ebenezer and say, ‘*Hitherto the Lord has helped.*’ I should praise him for his preserving providence and supporting grace, and especially for covering my numerous faults and failings from the eyes of men, and enabling me to speak to fellow-creatures as if nothing stood between Him and me. Blessed be his name, that though He has often set my secret sins in the light of his own countenance, he has not as yet set them before the eyes of man. I should now turn my face northward, and feel anxious to get home; but of this, I see, I must not think for another week. I

have several pressing applications to preach in some parishes in the neighbourhood during the week, and to remain here over Sabbath; and I feel I must yield. The Lord prepare me for the work before me, and give effect to his own word !

“ *Tuesday, Sept. 13.*—This day preached at Killin, in Gaelic, from John iv. 10—‘ *If thou knewest the gift of God,*’ &c. ; and in English, from Isa. lv. 2—‘ *Eat ye that which is good.*’ The church, though large, was pretty much crowded, and the congregation very attentive. One here and there appeared to be affected. The Lord grant the impressions may be salutary and permanent ! In the evening, James and I drove over to Glenlyon, accompanied by Messrs. Duncan and David Campbell and their wives, and arrived at our comfortable quarters there by eight.

“ *Wednesday, Sept. 14.*—This day preached in Glenlyon Church, from Gen. vi. 22—‘ *Thus did Noah ; according to all that God commanded him,*’ &c. The church was crowded; many others being there besides the people of the glen. This was once a highly favoured spot, and I felt that the Lord has not forsaken it yet. Many of the people were deeply impressed, and some of them, awakened twenty years ago, not less so. I understand that Mr. David Campbell’s labours here of late have been blessed to not a few among them, and especially to some young people—a circumstance which makes the congre-

gation extremely reluctant to part with their minister to Inverness, and in which they are to be excused.

“*Thursday, Sept. 15.*—This day preached at Fortingall to a large congregation. The church was crowded almost to suffocation; so much so, that at one time we thought of pitching our tent without doors; but the day threatening rain, we remained as we were, and the doors being kept open, several that were without could hear very conveniently. I preached in English from Rom. vi. 21—‘What fruit had ye then,’ &c.; and in Gaelic from Gal. vi. 15—‘*Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*’ The congregation seemed to listen with deep attention, and many of them with an eagerness that indicated a thirst to hear the word and an anxiety to know the truth. The Lord bless his own word to these poor people! I had much freedom, and felt much impressed with the consideration of their need and danger, while addressing it to them. After dining with Mr M'Donald the minister, who is certainly a hospitable gentleman, the ministers of Lawers and Glenlyon, with their wives, who had accompanied us all the way, arrived with us at the manse of Lawers about eight in the evening. Blessed be God for health, strength, protection, and preservation from injury and accidents! Every night since we arrived here, the people of the place gathered in crowds to family

worship ; and during the sacrament we had to meet every evening in the church, where we had crowded audiences. I believe these exercises have been blessed to not a few, and the people's anxiety to attend them is certainly a token for good.

*“Saturday, Sept. 17.—*Spent yesterday and this day at Lawers with Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, being the only leisure time we had together since we came to this place. Enjoyed and stood in need of a day or two's rest and recreation, after so many days' incessant labour. Besides, had the work of the Sabbath before me, which required preparation of mind and body.

*“Monday, Sept. 19.—*Yesterday forenoon preached both in Gaelic and English to a large crowd, not under 4000, who had assembled from different parishes round, and whose eagerness to hear the word could be read in almost every face. The aspect of the congregation was both interesting and affecting. I preached in English from Matt. xi. 20—*‘Then began he to upbraid the cities,’* &c ; and in Gaelic from Ezek. xxxvii. 5, 6—*‘Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones ; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live,’* &c. Enjoyed considerable liberty, and felt unusually impressed with the importance of the promise, and the necessity of its fulfilment to many present. Not a few were all the time in tears, while the eyes of others glistened with joy. The word had truly a melting effect. At five

in the evening I preached to the people in the church. We were quite crowded; many of those who had come from a distance and heard during the day having remained. I addressed them from Gal. vi. 7, 8—‘*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,*’ &c. The subject had a rousing effect; and it being understood that it was to be my last discourse, many were, no doubt, deeply affected on that account. The Lord be with them, dear people, and maintain what he has wrought among them. Almost immediately after coming out of church, the house filled with people to attend family worship. We were almost all in tears, and parted in that state. Oh, it is difficult, it is painful, to part with some! No tie like that of Christian love! But I am called to breakfast, after which we start off for home. Home is home, after all. Blessed be God for a home on earth, but especially for the prospect of an everlasting home with himself; for his presence is the believer’s home wherever he is! At that home I hope to meet with not a few of those with whom I have now parted, should we never meet again on earth. Oh, sweet prospect!

“URQUHART MANSE, *Sept.* 22.—Left Lawers on Monday after breakfast, accompanied by Mr. Duncan Campbell and one Samuel M’Laren as far as Tummel Bridge (about twenty miles). Came that evening to Dalwhinnie (forty-three miles from Lawers); next evening to Moy (forty-five miles from Dalwhinnie);

and this morning reached home in safety, and found all well before me. *Deo gloria.*"

Annually, for a long series of years, he visited Edinburgh and Glasgow on communion occasions. The following journal of a visit in 1837 furnishes a specimen of his labours at such times :—

"Left home for Glasgow, where I was engaged to assist at the communion, on Monday afternoon, October 23. Stopped at Inverness that night. Next morning went by the mail to Perth. Arrived there at eleven at night. Started next morning for Glasgow. Arrived there by four P.M. Took up my quarters at H. Mackay's, who met me on stepping out of the coach.

"*Thursday, Oct. 26.*—This being the fast for the communion, preached in the forenoon in Hope Street Gaelic Church—Mr. M'Neil, minister—from Matt. ix. 13. Afternoon and evening in Mr. Duncan's church, a new erection called Milton Church. The congregation, considering the infant state of the church, was pretty numerous and respectable. Ah! did they know John Duncan's value, the numbers would soon increase and the house be crowded; but no! Text in the afternoon, Ps. cxxxviii. 3; evening, Rom. iii. 22.

"*Friday, Oct. 27.*—Made some calls in the forenoon. Among others, visited Mrs. Mackay, late of Reay, apparently on her deathbed. Her soul, I trust, is in a hopeful state. In the evening preached

in Milton Church from Isa. lv. 1. Enjoyed much liberty. A number of the Lord's people present. It is well to be among them—"The Lord is in the congregation of His saints."

"*Saturday, Oct. 28.*—Preached in Mr. Duncan's church from John vii. 17. Considerable freedom.

"*Monday, Oct. 30.*—Yesterday, attended the communion in Mr. Duncan's church. His action sermon was masterly. After serving some tables, I preached in the evening from Phil. iii. 10, "*The power of Christ's resurrection.*" This day, preached in the forenoon in Mr. M'Neil's church; Rom. viii. 3, 4. Afternoon in Mr. Duncan's from John xv. 5, "Without me, ye can do nothing."

"*Tuesday, Oct. 31.*—This morning breakfasted with the M'Donalds in Duke Street—a very kind and agreeable family—several other friends were present. Enjoyed the society much, and had a sweet season at family worship. Spent the forenoon in finishing some calls which I was under promise to make. Found the friends on whom I called very kind and truly Christian friends. Mr. Brown, on whom I called, was peculiarly kind. In the evening dined at Mr. A. Mackay's—son-in-law of Mr. Hugh Mackay. A large party of Christian friends present. A lecture after tea. After arriving at my good quarters, retired to my room, where I enjoyed some comfort after the bustle of the day. It is well when

society disposes for retirement, and retirement fits for society.

“ *Wednesday, Nov. 1.*—Left Glasgow this afternoon at four, my sister-in-law being along with me, and arrived here at a little past nine. Took up my bed in the hotel, it being too late to go to a private family. Called at Mrs. Dr. Campbell’s, with whom I usually lodge, but found to my regret, that she was so poorly that I deemed it advisable not to put up there; so I resolved, in the course of the day, to take up my quarters elsewhere.

“ *Friday, Nov. 3.*—Took up my lodgings at Mr. M’Leod’s, the new minister of the Gaelic church, there being a spare room in the house, No. 4 Whar-ton Place, and have the prospect of being very comfortably accommodated. Yesterday being the fast before the communion, preached in the forenoon from Rom. v. 20, and in the evening, in English, to a crowded house, from Eph. ii. 1. Mr. M’Leod preached in the afternoon, a sensible, pious discourse. He seems to take well with the people, which is no small comfort, and promises well for usefulness. This evening, attended the fellowship meeting, at which I was made to preside. Was pleased that, while the fathers are not, some seem to be growing up to fill their places.

“ *Monday, Nov. 6.*—On Saturday, preached from Rom. v. 20—continuation of Thursday’s subject. Yesterday, having to preside at the communion,

preached the action sermon from Isa. liii. 12, '*He hath poured out His soul unto death.*' In the evening, Mr. M'Leod preached, from 1 Pet. v. 8, a rousing and experimental discourse, rather desultory in some parts. This day, I preached from Rom. v. 21. Felt much freedom, and I trust some impressions were made. Thus the solemn work has been got comfortably through; I hope not without some signs of the Divine presence. The praise be ascribed to the Lord!

"*Wednesday, Nov. 8.*—Preached last evening in English, according to custom, to a crowded audience. Was requested by some of the hearers to publish the discourse, which I could not well promise to do. Made some calls this forenoon, and attended a prayer-meeting in the Gaelic church in the evening, appointed in view of Mr. M'Leod's settlement, which is to take place on Friday. I am strongly urged to remain to witness the settlement, and to introduce Mr. M'Leod on the Sabbath to his new congregation. Though rather inconvenient, I have agreed to do so, and the more readily that I have got a good supply at home in the minister of Tain.

"*Saturday, Nov. 11.*—Spent Thursday chiefly in visiting old friends and some sick people; among others, Mrs. Dr. Campbell, whom I did not see, and Mrs. Ross, who is, to all appearance, drawing near her end. I hope she is prepared for the change. Yesterday, Mr. M'Leod's induction took place. An excel-

lent sermon was preached on the occasion by Mr. Bennie of Lady Yester's Church. The utmost harmony prevailed, and the people received their new pastor at the church door, with the greatest cordiality. The scene was truly pleasing. This day, spent principally in my room, having the whole work of to-morrow before me. The Lord strengthen me for it!

“*Tuesday, Nov. 14.*—Preached on Sabbath, in the forenoon, from Ps. xxvii. 4, and in the afternoon, from 1 Cor. xv. 10. In the evening in English, to a house crowded to suffocation, from Gal. ii. 16. Had much freedom during the whole day, and in the evening, not less. My services being now at an end here and in Glasgow, the Lord bless to my hearers in both places what they have heard, and I trust He will bless it to some, and that *His Word shall not return unto Him void*. Yesterday, breakfasted with Misses Mackenzie, Seaforth. Enjoyed an hour or two spent with the good ladies and Mr. Moody, who was present, a most excellent young clergyman. To-day, after a trip to Portobello to see Mr. Rose, spent the afternoon in packing up for the journey. Intend to take Dundee on my way and see dear Mr. Kirkaldy after his late trial. I must also, it seems, visit Glenlyon, that dear spot, doubly endeared to me now, before I get home; and Mr. Campbell, Inverness, having agreed to preach for me, on condition that I should visit his old flock, leaves me so

far at liberty to do so. The Lord be my light and salvation !

“DUNDEE, *Wednesday evening, Nov. 15.*—Arrived here from Edinburgh at four P.M. Good Mr. Kirkaldy met me on the shore with his gig and brought me to his own house, a mile out of town, where he had a party of Christian friends in waiting to join me at dinner. At seven o'clock I preached in Mr. Reid's church to a congregation of about a thousand, assembled by previous intimation. After sermon we returned to his house, and had scarcely time to draw our breath when a houseful of people attended for lecture. I did not feel fatigued after the whole was over. Blessed be the Lord ! *His yoke is easy !* Mr. Kirkaldy's trials, and especially his late sore bereavement in the loss of his son, have evidently been sanctified to him; and he is blessed with a partner who shares in his joys and sorrows. They are truly a blessed couple !

“*Thursday, Nov. 16.*—After two or three calls made this forenoon in Dundee, Mr. Kirkaldy accompanied me in his own gig to Perth, from whence I took the coach to Dunkeld, where I stop for the night.

“GLENLYON MANSE, *Saturday, Nov. 18.*—Mr. Duncan Campbell, my son-in-law, having met me yesterday morning at Dunkeld with his gig, we arrived here about seven last evening; found all well before us, and happy, even to the dog, to receive us.

“*Tuesday, Nov. 21.*—Sabbath last, preached in the church here the whole day, and in the evening at six. The congregation pretty large, notwithstanding the stormy state of the weather. Several from the Lawers side had crossed the hill. Here I felt at home, and found it not difficult to preach. Many of the hearers seemed melted under the word. Preached again this day to a considerable congregation—numbers in tears. The manse crowded every night for attending family worship and lecture.

“*DALNACARDOCH INN, Friday, Nov. 24.*—Yesterday morning I left Glenlyon manse. Mr. Duncan Campbell accompanied me in his own gig; and after preaching at Fortingall and dining with Mr. Macdonald, the minister, we got in the evening as far as Tummel Bridge. The day remarkably stormy. Notwithstanding, the church of Fortingall was crowded to excess. Several of the Glenlyon and Lochtayside people attended, some from the distance of ten, twelve, and fifteen miles; so strong is the desire of the poor people to hear the word! This day, my friend and I arrived here about ten A.M., and after resting an hour or two, Mr. Duncan Campbell returned home. Here, having no other mode of conveyance, I remain to wait the mail which passes for the north at two o'clock in the morning, and in the mean time, in my snug parlour, employ myself in preparations for the Sabbath.”

During a tour to Badenoch and Glenlyon, tidings

reached him of the awakenings at Kilsyth and Dundee. The Lord seemed to him to be giving days of His right hand again to Scotland; and he could not keep away from the scene of His work. He visits both these places and preaches incessantly while there. In the following extracts from his journals are his impressions of what he witnessed on that remarkable occasion :—

“ Left home accompanied by Simon, my son, on the *14th August, Wednesday*. Preached on Thursday at Moy, being the fast there before the communion. Proceeded on Friday to Kingussie, to assist at the communion there. Preached on Saturday in English, and afterwards in Gaelic, at the tent; on Sabbath and Monday also in Gaelic.

“ 20.—On Tuesday started for Glenlyon, to attend the communion there. Arrived on Wednesday forenoon. Preached in Glenlyon, Thursday, Friday evening, and Saturday in Gaelic. The Lord was present here of a truth. Some remains of the weepings of old to be seen, and, I trust, some fresh instances. Glenlyon still a highly favoured spot. Long may it continue so !

“ 27.—On Tuesday started again for Badenoch, to assist at the Rothiemurchus communion on the 1st September. Arrived Tuesday night at Dalwhinnie. Preached, Wednesday, at Alvie; Thursday, Saturday, Sabbath, and Monday at Rothiemurchus. A comfortable season, deep attention and some indications

of awakening to be seen. After this, my original purpose was to return home, but a pressing application from Kilsyth, and another from Dundee, to witness and assist at a work of revival, which, it was said, had commenced at each of these places, obliged me to steer my course for Kilsyth, and afterwards for Dundee. Accordingly, I returned by Glenlyon (Sept. 4), where I arrived on Wednesday forenoon, and set off the same day for Loch Lomond, Mr. Duncan Campbell accompanying me. Passed that night most comfortably at Mr. Samuel M'Laren's, St. Fillans. Owing to the rainy state of the weather, we got to Loch Lomond but on Friday forenoon. We reached Glasgow that evening, and Kilsyth on Saturday afternoon. Here I felt as on hallowed ground, and as if an uncommon influence from above had lighted upon me. The town, containing upwards of two thousand, in perfect stillness; and groups of people here and there standing together and talking of the one thing needful. The sight was truly solemn, and filled me with awe.

“On arriving at the manse, Mr. Burns, the clergyman, felt happy to see me, and set me instantly to work. In the evening I had to address a crowded audience in his church from John iii. 36. All was stillness and deep attention—many in tears—children of eight and ten among the rest. In short, a general impression from above was evidently on the congregation.

"8th.—On Sabbath, I preached in the forenoon from Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8, and in the evening from Isaiah lv. 1. Mr. Burns in the afternoon from Heb. iii. 7, 8. The appearance of the congregation during the whole day was deeply interesting. It

as a melting scene—no audible crying, but much silent weeping. After coming out of church in the evening, about one hundred and fifty or two hundred men, women, and children stood around me anxiously wishing to hear something more from me. I addressed them for about forty minutes, concluding with singing and prayer, and dismissed them, still reluctant to go. The scene of weeping, the stillness of night, and the canopy of the sky, conspired to make this extra and out-door service a solemn one indeed.

"Monday, 9th.—Conversed during the day with several individuals in deep distress—the manse crowded with such, the whole day from 10 to 5. Mr. Burns and I had each our hands full of this pleasant work. Some of those we conversed with have got comfort, others are still under conviction. In the evening preached to a large congregation in church. Much melting, but no crying. When returning, numbers gathered round me with tears in their eyes, evidently wishing to hear more of Christ. I addressed them for about twenty minutes, prayed with them and dismissed them. All this in the open air, and under silence of night.

“ *Tuesday*, 10.—Occupied during the day much as yesterday. In the evening preached at Banton, formerly a district of the parish, but now a new erection, from Eph. v. 14. The Spirit has been evidently poured out on the inhabitants of this place. Numbers were in tears, and children from eight to fourteen years old. After dismissing the people, scarcely any would retire; almost all kept their seats, eagerly looking to me. Addressed them for nearly an hour, and then dismissed them all bathed in tears. The scene was truly affecting and interesting!

“ *Wednesday*, 11.—Took a trip to Glasgow.

“ *Thursday*, 12.—Returned to Kilsyth in the afternoon. Preached there in the evening to a crowded audience from Heb. viii., on the covenant of grace. Many seemed to understand and to feel the subject. It told on their faces by tears of joy.

“ *Friday*, 13.—Having been urged by young Mr. Burns to visit Dundee, and the congregation of which he had the interim charge there, where, it appeared, the Lord had begun a work of revival, I started this forenoon for Dundee, taking Edinburgh by the way; but on my arrival in Edinburgh, finding that the Gaelic congregation were without a pastor, agreed, at their earnest request, to stay with them over Sabbath.

“ *Monday*, 16.—Preached yesterday in Edinburgh, forenoon, from Heb. xiii. 22; afternoon, 1 Sam. iii. 1; evening in English, Eph. v. 14. This day left Edinburgh at nine in the morning by steam.

Arrived at Dundee by three. Found Mr. Burns deeply engrossed with the work of revival. Preached for him in the evening in St. Peter's church—that in which he officiates—from Deut. xxxii. 39. The house crowded; and the audience exhibited a solemnity and fixedness of attention rarely to be seen, and which evidently indicated an impression from above. There were tears to be seen in abundance, and much silent weeping, but nothing audible. The speaker felt much liberty in addressing the people, and a more than usual awe on his spirit, as if the Almighty were visibly present.

“*Tuesday, 17.*—This forenoon conversed with several individuals, in number about sixteen, about the state of their souls, most of them under deep conviction. A few, however, have obtained comfort. The work is evidently a work of God. In the evening, being obliged, owing to the crowd, to remove to St. David's, a far larger house, containing upwards of 2000, I preached from Isaiah xlv. 24. The audience, though much more numerous, exhibited the same symptoms of solemnity and deep concern as last night.

“*Wednesday, 18.*—Made some forenoon calls, and conversed with some who fell in my way in mental distress. The *great concern* is truly the great concern with them. I preached in the evening in St. David's, from Acts xvi. 30, 31. The house crowded to excess, hundreds apparently affected.

“*Thursday, 19.*—Mr. Burns having got a supply for this evening, I took a trip up to Perth, having been requested to preach an evening there. We met in Mr. Stewart’s church. Preached from Isaiah lv. 3. The congregation very attentive, but nothing further to be seen. Was requested, however, by a deputation sent me to the vestry, to promise another evening there.

“*Friday, 20.*—Returned to Dundee, and preached in the evening in St. David’s to as large a crowd as formerly; and apparently not less under an impression of divine things. This day, Mr. W. Burns left me for the Kilsyth communion, and begged that I should continue with his people till his return, which, in their present state, I could not but agree to do.

“*Monday, 23.*—On Saturday evening had a prayer meeting with the people in St. David’s. The church pretty full. Mr. Lewis attended and assisted on the occasion. The spirit of prayer was given. *Yesterday*, preached forenoon and afternoon in St. Peter’s from John xvi. 7–10. A deep and solemn attention, much melting and many tears. In the evening preached in St. David’s from Isaiah lv. 1. The house crowded to suffocation—great movement—a season of power indeed. Conversed with some in the vestry after sermon. This day met with several who called, under soul distress, (in all, twenty-two) among whom were two girls about nine and a boy of eleven. Had much satisfaction in conversing with them. In

the evening preached in St. David's from Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c.

"*Tuesday, 24.*—Spent the forenoon in conversing with people, as yesterday. Upwards of twenty called. No unpromising case. In the evening preached in St. David's from 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. Enjoyed much liberty; and deep impressions made on the congregation.

"*Wednesday 25.*—Preached at Perth from Eph. v. 14, to a crowded and an attentive audience, Mr. Ewing, one of the town ministers, having kindly taken my place at Dundee."

Returning home, he began to publish the good news of the Lord's work in Kilsyth and Dundee, and to sound the alarm to those who were at ease in Zion. A movement commenced among the dry bones, under his preaching in Tain and Tarbat, on communion occasions, and extended to many other places throughout the country. The power of the Bread-albane days came back to his preaching again. Texts from which he had not preached since then were now resumed. Hundreds were now asking for the first time, "What must we do to be saved?" But the Lord's people were complaining that he was withholding their wonted fare from them. He was so bent on the conversion of sinners, that he laid out all his strength in preaching towards that object. Never were more alarming sermons preached than those which he then delivered; but never, in the

most fervid of them all, did he use other than scriptural considerations to influence his hearers. His imagination, even in those days of excitement, was kept under the strong check of truth.

He was always sanguine of good results from such a movement as then waved over the land ; but he was careful, in speaking to those who were impressed, to deal faithfully with them, shutting them up to the only good foundation, and exposing the vanity of every attainment short of their being new creatures in Christ. It cannot be said that his expectations were realized. Good was done, and abiding fruit remained ; but many a bud of promise withered quite away.

The history of revivals in the North warrants the remark, that in inverse proportion to its demonstrativeness in outcries and prostrations is the permanent good fruit of an awakening. And it is in this direction that such movements have been making progress. The more they bear this character, the more they arrest the eye of the public ; and the cases least promising are those which are most observed. When these result in no permanent good, the decline is marked, and the whole is judged of by these samples. The world is thus confirmed in unbelief, and grievous injury is done to the cause of vital godliness. How careful, therefore, ought individuals and churches to be not to form a hasty judgment, amid the excitement of a "revival !" It

is surely unwise and unlawful to implicate the credit of religion in individual cases, or in any movement by which a community may be swayed. By their fruits alone can seeming converts be judged; and only by these can it be determined, whether a widespread awakening was a work of God or not. Till these are developed let individuals and churches both suspend their judgments.





CHAPTER XI.

DOMESTIC LIFE—RULES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME—
CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS SON.

IT was said, but it must have been, by one who was more anxious to speak smartly than to speak truly, that Mr. M'Donald was never "from home" but when he was "at home." None would have said so who had seen him at his own fireside. If he spent but a small portion of his time at home, it was only because he loved his Master better than his family, and the service of the gospel better than the comforts of domestic life. There was no man who could make home more pleasant and was more disposed to do so, and who could more enjoy the happiness of the family circle. Retaining still a father's place, he could be at the same time a companion to his children, making his conversation an enjoyment to them, as well as an instruction. He brought all the fresh interest of a student to bear upon the school-work of his boys. Always punctual, he took an interest in watching and directing the various domestic arrangements. He kept his eye, when at home, on the

management of his temporal affairs, drew out plans for the improvement of his glebe and farm, and kept a record of their results, when they were executed. And yet, while interested for the time in the affairs of home, he could easily relinquish it, with all its cares and comforts, when called to preach the everlasting gospel.

The following "rules for the employment of time, each day," he invariably attempted to follow, when at home.

" From 7 to 9, A.M.	Private devotion.
" 9 to 10, "	Family worship and breakfast.
" 10 to 3, P.M.	Parochial duties, study, &c.
" 3 to 4, "	Dinner.
" 4 to 5, "	Study.
" 5 to 6, "	Tea and conversation.
" 6 to 9, "	Private devotion and study.
" 9 to 10, "	Family worship and supper.
" 10 to 11, "	Private devotion.
" 11 to 7, A.M.	Sleep and dressing.

That is to say,—

For private devotion and study,	.	8 hours.
Meals, family and parochial duties, }	.	8 "
namely, for each, 4 hours.	}	
Sleep and dressing,	.	8 "
		<hr/> 24 "

The form of this table, and the mode in which the day is divided, are quite characteristic. His love of precision would have made him quite uncomfortable, unless he had discovered, that he had divided the twenty-four hours into three equal portions, and that a distinct work had been assigned to each of them.

Mr. Macdonald's second marriage took place in 1818. A few weeks before, Mr. Findlater, who was well acquainted with the Millbank family, and with the character of Miss Mackenzie, thus refers to his intended marriage, in a letter to Mr. Macdonald. "I have to congratulate you in the most cordial manner on the happy prospect of being united to a lady of such accomplishments and such eminent piety." The feeling thus expressed by Mr. Findlater was that with which this marriage was universally regarded.

He had ten children; of whom three were by his first marriage, and six are still alive.

Of them all, John, his first born, was his best beloved—John the correct, lively, precocious boy, the ardent scholar, the distinguished student, the approved convert, the ripe Christian, the able preacher, the successful pastor, and the devoted missionary. The course of such a son was one which such a father could watch with fond and delighted interest. Pleased with his rapid progress as a boy in school, he was still more gratified by his eminence in college; but the joy of joys to him was his son's conversion to God; a change too marked, in his case, to be doubted even by the most anxious heart. And when he was about to enter on the service of the gospel, with what hopeful interest did his father look to the prospect before him; and how often, thereafter, did he sit with ravished feelings, listening to

his clear, spiritual, powerful preaching. To such a son he could let out his heart as to no other. They corresponded regularly; and the father's letters were carefully preserved. These contain much that is interesting and instructive, and exhibit his own character more clearly than could be done by description.

In a letter to his son while in the Theological Hall, he writes,—

“I have sent in your box of books, *Lowth's Hebrew Poesy*,—well worthy the perusal of a young or old Divine—and *Edwards on the Religious Affections*, a work of distinguished merit, as discriminating in the most clear, convincing and scriptural manner, between true religion and every counterfeit.

“The work is worth gold—may the Lord bless it to my dear John, and enable him not only to understand but to reach the attainments of Christian character, knowledge, and experience delineated in it. I am sure you have reaped both pleasure and profit from M'Laurin. You see what kind of divines a former century produced, and how they were employed. I hope you continue to enjoy health. The Lord deal bountifully with your soul. ‘Oh, live not,’ says Brainerd, to one in your situation, ‘after the rate of ordinary Christians, if you would be a faithful minister of Christ you must be an extraordinary one.’”

In reply to a letter from his son asking his advice as to his taking licence soon, he writes,—

“With regard to the point, however, of taking your licence soon, regarding which you wish to have my opinion, I think, upon the whole, it may be as well you should do so. You may in that case avail yourself of opportunities to preach the gospel where it is not a little needed—and where you may be asked to do so—nor are the wishes of the Lord’s people to whom you refer to be despised—they may possibly be indications of the Lord’s own mind regarding the matter. Time is short and fast passing away—immortal souls are perishing; and if the Lord has inclined you to spend and be spent in the service of His gospel, it does not become you to be slothful in going forward to the work. The only fear I should have in taking an early licence, is that you may not be prepared with a stock of discourses to meet the demands that may be made upon you, and that in this case you might not be able fully to prepare, which would be an injury to you at the outset, and much against your acceptability and usefulness; or run the risk of sacrificing your health to the preparations necessary. I hope, however, you will guard against each of these evils; or rather I pray God you may be preserved in the middle path—‘in medio tutissimus ibis.’

“When you acquaint me that you are licensed, I may offer a few hints for your future conduct as a preacher, and such at least as my own experience may suggest to me at the time, but for the present

I desire to commit you for direction, strength, and every needful grace and qualification to Him in whom dwells all fulness, and who can enable you to open your mouth boldly, proclaiming the gospel of salvation.

“The little skeleton you sent me seems to embrace in it a natural enough plan and arrangement of subject—perhaps it would be more in unison with the doctrine of the text in treating of the (true or proper) knowledge of the truth, instead of saying, ‘faith,’ ‘love,’ &c., the knowledge of:—

“1. Its nature and import. 2. Its divine authority. 3. Its excellence. 4. Its purifying or practical influence. The points here are in substance the same as yours; but this seems to correspond more with the language of the text. The words of the enunciation should be attended to. The second head might be worded in greater conformity to the text—reasons why men, notwithstanding efforts made, fall short of this important attainment—efforts made—they are ‘ever learning’—and they nevertheless fall short. Reasons, 1. That they approach truth with a heart attached to sin and worldly gratifications. 2. With a legal (self-righteous) spirit—the Jews. 3. With self-confidence as to their own intellectual powers as competent, &c. 4. Early prejudices and preconceived opinions. They bring truth to these, and not these to truth. 5. Not submitting to divine tuition. But perhaps you had better follow your own plan.”

His son was licensed January 6th, 1830. His promise of writing to him on being acquainted of his license, his father fulfils on the 18th of the same month. In his letter he gives him suitable and valuable instruction in prospect of the great work before him. After referring to two other matters, the letter thus proceeds:—

“But in the *third* place, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your kind and interesting letter of the 7th current, to the contents of which I shall now direct my attention. You see, by the way, when I mention *first*, *second*, and *third*, that I remember I am addressing a *preacher*, who will be expected to observe order and arrangement in his discourses; and to this, from what I know of the cast of your mind, I have reason to believe you will attend. There is too great a tendency, in the present day, to the *essay-mode* of preaching. This may please, and make a temporary impression on some hearers; but it will not instruct or edify the body of Christ. Such preachers seem to me to suit their own minds and to gratify their own tastes, rather than to consult the circumstances and the best interests of their hearers.

“Since your mouth has been opened by *men*, I pray that the Lord may ‘give you utterance that you may open your mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.’ The day on which you received your licence constitutes an important date, and inaugurates a new era in your life. The rise or

fall of some in Israel may depend on the event which then took place—nay, so far as *instrumentality* is concerned, the eternity of your hearers may *turn* upon it. This, I confess, is a solemn, and at times may prove, an overwhelming thought. But be strong in your Redeemer; for he is mighty to save and rich in mercy.

“In regard to your preparations for the pulpit, you know my method. But different men have different minds, and must therefore pursue different methods in this important affair. In general, every man should adopt the method which appears to him to suit best the character and bent of his own mind, as well as his peculiar habits of thinking, and which also will put it in his power to preach with most effect. I approve entirely of your intention *not to read* your discourses. Some may be obliged, from the state of their nerves or memory, to do so, in which case it is excusable. But in regard to many, in our day, who have given in to this habit, I fear no such apology can be pled; and that nothing induced them to it, but the fear of committing an occasional *lapsus*, or of not pleasing a certain class of hearers; in short, the fear of not making a *splendid appearance* before men. I fear pride lurks at the bottom. But what are these, and all such considerations, to the advantages both to speakers and hearers, that might attend preaching the truth of God’s word direct from the heart. Besides, this mode

leaves room for the Spirit, if I may say so, to step in, when we are delivering our discourses, to warm our hearts and animate our souls; nay, to suggest ideas at the time, which He may bless to souls, and which may prove to be the gems of our compositions. The reading system, I am afraid, has a tendency to exclude such divine communications from our discourses. At the same time you must know that I am not against writing your discourses, and writing them out fully and accurately, at least for the first few years of your life in the work. Quite the reverse. The habit of writing them—even though you should not deliver exactly what you have committed to paper, or commit fully to memory—will give you a facility of expression in the delivery which is peculiarly desirable. It will also enable you, in the course of time, to attain to a style which must be *your own*, and in the use of which you will feel quite *at home*. It will, besides, tend to give your mind a clear and correct view of your subject—to possess which is the great secret of properly conducted pulpit services. And, my dear John, make a point in all your discourses of so mastering them as to see every inch of your ground clear before you. Do not work in the dark. Endeavour, too, to feel *impressed* with your subject while preparing it. Pray *for* preparation, and pray *over* your preparation.

“In the pulpit be grave, solemn, and modest.

Modesty well becomes a young man, and an air of confidence is disgusting, especially at that period of life. Avoid affectation too. Speak naturally, and let your manner appear to be so too. But, if possible, be serious and affectionate. Show your hearers that you feel for them, and love them, and that you seek not theirs, but them. Exercise a dependence on God while you speak. Let men and all inferior be lost to you in his Omnipresence, in your personal responsibility, and in those eternal realities with which you and your hearers are inseparably and awfully connected.

“Oh, what wrestlings in prayer, what searchings of the Scriptures, what meditation, what holy walking, are necessary in order to reach these attainments. May the Lord furnish you with these and every other qualification for his own work !

“I trust few of these hints are necessary for you ; but I have thrown them down at your own request, and as expressions of a father’s anxiety and regard.”

In reply to a letter from his son, giving him an account of his first sermon, and asking his advice as to what subject would be suitable for Elgin, where he had been asked to preach, he writes :—

“I am glad you acknowledge that you got on at least beyond your expectations, with your *maiden discourse*. You have cause to be both humble and thankful. I hope you have got on with comfort at Alves, and that you now begin to know what you

can do. The passage in Luke (xiii. 24), I conceive to be a very suitable subject for Elgin. The subject divides itself. I. The exhortation, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Under which may be considered, 1. 'The strait gate.' Some say regeneration; I should rather say, the Lord Jesus Christ in his righteousness and salvation. He is elsewhere called 'the door' (John x. 7, 9; xiv. 6). Through him a sinner enters into life and eternal glory. 'Strait'—not because of anything in itself—not because of any deficiency in the love, power, merits, of the Redeemer, but because of impediments to his entrance on the part of the sinner, such as pride, legalism, the love of sin, attachment to the world, &c. Perhaps also there is an allusion to the smallness of the number who go in thereat (Matt. vii. 14)—the gate being adapted to the number. 2. 'To enter in,' implies receiving Christ by faith—a faith of divine operation. This presupposes divine influences and a certain change. Entering in implies, further, a renunciation of those things which operated as impediments, if not a rescue from them on believing. Also, access to spiritual blessing—such as, peace, communion with God, holiness, &c. In short we enter in by faith, from certain evils to certain blessings. 3. We are required to '*strive*,' that is, *agonize*. This implies a sense of danger, and of difficulties; but the diligent use of means, particularly the word and prayer; and also the prompting

influence of the prospects set before us. Hence—1. To be a true Christian is no easy attainment. 2. The number of such is few. 3. Christ desires our welfare, and is unwilling that any should perish. II. The arguments by which it is enforced. ‘Many shall seek and shall not be able,’ that is, shall seek Christ to save them from hell—shall seek entrance into heaven without holiness, ‘but shall not be able.’ God’s sentence stands against them—their own disqualification prohibits it. Therefore they must be excluded, and be miserable for ever. See context, ver. 25–30. The arguments then are,—1. Our own interest. 2. The risk of exclusion—‘*Many* shall seek.’ 3. The awful consequences of such an exclusion. 4. The Redeemer’s earnestness in warning. The application is obvious.—1. Self-examination. 2. Sinners should consider their danger, and attend to this subject without delay. 3. Believers have still to ‘strive’ for, though in Christ, they are not yet in glory.”

The next extract is from a letter written to his son after his settlement in London.

“You have anticipated me,” he writes, “in the account you gave me of your mode of procedure in your public exercises. You are right in lecturing on one part of the day, and preaching on the other. This was the good old practice, is recommended in our Directory, and commends itself to the hearers for utility wherever it is acted on. I am convinced

your time will be much occupied, or rather, *variously* so, which is worse. Visits, calls, and numerous avocations of one kind or another will, as Dr. Chalmers would say, *fritter down your time to atoms*. Make the best, however, of the broken intervals. Begin your Sabbath preparations early in the week. Do not sit up late; remember you have not your father's constitution. Endeavour by prayer, reading the Scriptures, and a close walk with God, to maintain on your spirit a *preparatory habit*; and in your actual preparations you will get on with greater felicity and expedition. So you have had peeps of Sinai. The Lord will, I trust, overrule this for good both to yourself and to your congregation. But remember that its flames have been quenched in Calvary. There take your stand; and when you visit Sinai—which you ought to do, while there remains in your congregation a sinner exposed to its flames, let it be with the view of drawing them to Calvary."

A few months later he writes:—

"I would feel pleasure in writing to you oftener than I do, did my time permit; but at this season of the year [August], as you well remember, public engagements crowd upon my time. The sacramental occasions around us have been so numerous that I have been able to be but one Sabbath in my own pulpit since June. During that period I have had my share of the solemn work at Reay, Loth, Alness,

Tain, and Urray. Next Sabbath the sacrament is to be dispensed at Dingwall, where a considerable share of the work is assigned to the poor parson of Urquhart. May the Lord strengthen me for it! He has certainly done so during the incessant labours of the weeks that are past; and I should acknowledge this to his praise. But, alas! the ingratitude, insensibility, nay, *adamantinism* of this heart of mine under all his favours. Such a state of things with me shows me what I am in myself, and what he is, and must be, under the designation of 'the God of grace.' I feel he must do the work (both with respect to what is to be done *by*, as well as *in* me), and bear the glory, and I am contented this should be the case. My prayer is that he would preserve me from doing his work either slightly or deceitfully—for I feel at times—and it is a solemn thought—that I stand for him, when I stand before my fellowmen, and that I transact with fellowmen with respect to their eternity. I am happy to understand that you feel increasing liberty in your ministrations, and particularly in your pulpit exercises. Writing your discourses fully out, however much may be said for the practice—and it has its advantages—will in your case have the effect of overburdening your preparations, and fettering your mind in the delivery. In short you are perfectly right (and as a messenger of Christ, it is imperative on you), to adopt that method which enables you best to preach the gospel

to advantage, and which you find the Lord countenance most for the benefit of your hearers. I am aware you will find few, very few friends, even among the Dissenters, to whom you can freely unbosom your mind; and this is a disadvantage which you feel much in such a place as London. There is a sad falling off in all classes of Dissenters, in all that regards vitality in religion, from what their forefathers were—Ah *quantum mutati ab illis!* This, however, will lead you to live more in fellowship with Jesus; and next to him with patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and to be a follower of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

“So you have got some drops of mercury into your discourses. I am glad that they are infused by truth, and not borrowed even from a father. Your father and you are rather in the extremes in reference to that article. But, in *medio tutissimus ibis*. And you are a field-preacher too! Some will say, Where will these things end? Go on, and prosper; and the God of your fathers be with you!”

On his way to London he visited Nottingham, and during his stay there, was constantly engaged in preaching. He wrote to his son the following account of his reception and labours there, and his impressions of the state of religion in that place. There is a most characteristic paragraph in this extract, expres-

sive of his love for his work in the service of the gospel:—

“We were kindly received by Mr. Smith, a banker in this place, who, with his wife, Lady Lucy Melville, from Fifeshire, seem to be Christians indeed. Their house is to be my home while I remain here—and I feel at home in it; it is conveniently situated at the distance of a mile or a mile and a half from the town, and seems to me to be a Goshen in the vicinity of Egyptian darkness. No sooner had I arrived than work was cut out for me, so that I have since preached regularly in the evenings; in dissenting meeting-houses of course—and in the mornings lectured in an apartment of this house (fitted up with desks and seats), to upwards of a hundred people who attend from the neighbourhood. This it is likely shall be my employment—and I am told it must be so—while I remain in the place. I find it pleasing and agreeable to myself to be thus occupied in my Master’s work wherever I am, and would feel out of my element were it otherwise. There is a dear female friend of ours at home, who, if she were near you, and looking over your shoulder, cast her eye on this latter clause, would immediately say, ‘That is perfectly true. When you cease to preach we may order your coffin,’ and were I beside her I should say, *Amen*. If it be the Lord’s will, let me live and die in his work, and not survive my labours or usefulness. I find the people, wherever I

address them, very attentive, and making allowance for that species of attentiveness, which the first appearance of a stranger generally produces, one would read in their faces an eagerness to hear truth.

“I understand that the fundamental, and more prominent doctrines of the gospel, are kept much in the back ground here by those who profess to preach it, and when brought forward, are so diluted by the wisdom of words, as to become quite vapid to the immortals who hear it. Oh, I fear it may be said of our modern English Dissenters, compared with the ancient race, *quantum mutati sunt ab illis!* I endeavour in my poor homely way to set the fundamentals before the people, and they seem to listen to them, as hitherto almost unheard truths. The Lord bless them for the conversion of some and edification of others.”

The visit to Nottingham was owing to his being asked by his friend Mr. Kirkcaldy, of Dundee, to accompany him to be present at his marriage. For this guileless Christian he had a warm affection. He was one of those men who have much more warmth in their hearts than light in their heads, but having at the same time as much of the instinctive discernment which attends the spiritual life, as to know the difference between truth and error, and to elect the spiritually minded as associates from among the many who “name the name of Christ.” A Nathanael in godly simplicity, he was to all Christ’s

servants and followers a Gaius in hospitality in his days of prosperity; and when no longer rich, and no stranger to afflictions of various kinds, he showed by his habitual cheerfulness that his heart and his treasure were in heaven.

Mr. Macdonald gives the following amusing account of the marriage ceremony in one of his letters from Nottingham:—

“I have this day witnessed the knot tied between Mr. Kirkcaldy and his bride, in the Church of England form, of course; and a form it was without a spirit, a body without a soul. The honest man would make you smile in repeating the words of the ceremony after the clergyman, by adding some qualifying terms of his own, such as, ‘by the grace of God,’ &c.; and when he came to the words, ‘with this body I thee worship,’ which seemed to have stuck in his throat, and which, to say the least, are very improperly expressed, he added, ‘in respect and honour;’ so, as Bogue said of Scott, he always added something good of his own. I had to address a parlour lecture to the young couple in the afternoon, Lady Lucy smilingly alleging that the marriage would not be complete without this. They propose hearing a sermon to-night in Zion Chapel, where I am to preach, by way of being ‘*kirked*,’ says Mr. Kirkcaldy. ‘*Churched*, you mean,’ says his bride. I replied that from this day her very name, she must be aware, included the *kirk*.”

The following extract from one of his letters to his son, written in 1835, after a severe illness, is interesting, as containing a confidential expression of his opinion as to the propriety of his being so much from home, and a statement of his reasons for continuing his home missionary labours; and because of the account which he gives of how he was exercised by the affliction with which it pleased the Lord to visit him :—

“I have often resolved,” he writes, “to circumscribe my labours, and I have done so from the consideration of my advancing years and declining health and strength, as well as with a view to my devoting more time to the interests of my own parish and people. But I find it won’t do. I feel I would be going before the Lord, and he might make me smart for it. I regret, indeed, that young men are not rising, with a sufficient portion of the missionary spirit—home missionary, I mean—who would relieve me and others of these extra labours. I long to see this. I would rejoice to see it; and would be glad to be displaced, and that my services in this way were superseded. The Lord raise such in his time and way. Such as will regard not only the *preach* but the *go* likewise. Mamma wrote to you regarding the serious attack of illness with which I had been seized; serious indeed it was. A stitch in my left side which seized me suddenly while assisting at the communion at Moy, was like to take away my

very breath, and indeed rendered breathing peculiarly painful to me, until, under divine providence, it was gradually removed by bleeding, blistering, &c. I was bled profusely. The Lord was pleased to restore me to some measure of health, but I felt considerably reduced and weakened for some time thereafter by the process I had gone through. I have cause to bless him, however, that I now feel as well as ever. May the Lord enable me to improve the dispensation in the manner that is most conducive to his glory, and to my own good, and that of immortal souls. I should have mentioned that the stitch appears to have been occasioned by a fall I had some days before from the gig, and which I neglected to attend to. It was my left side that struck the ground, and it was in this that the stitch arose. There is nothing without a cause, whether known or unknown to us; but query, why should the cause be permitted to exist in this case? Why should the fall take place at all? and why should it be permitted, since it took place, to produce such consequences? These were questions which occupied my mind at the time, and without attempting to explore the hidden purpose of God in the matter, I thought I had been made to see, by the visitation, that he could carry on his work without me, for I had several engagements on hand at the time, all of which I had to put off; that He intended to humble me for dividing the glory with him, in receiving honour from men;

that He designed also to rebuke congregations, who at their seasons of communion, thought nothing was right unless Mr. Macdonald was there, and thus, I fear, looked to man more than to the Lord. May the Lord grant that the chastisement both to them and me may have its due effect."

In a letter written in 1836 he indicates, as the result of his own experience, what he regarded as the best preparation for preaching:—

"We are glad from time to time to hear of, as well as from you, and especially that you enjoy health while you labour more abundantly. I trust you find in the Lord a present help in time of need, and that you enjoy the reward in the labour. 'The way of the righteous is strength,' says Solomon; and the faithful and active servant of Christ will find it so. I have never preached, any summer in my life, so far as I recollect, more frequently than I have done this summer, and have often gone out, so far as experience is concerned, 'without scrip or purse,' yet when I cast myself on the Lord, I had reason to say that 'I lacked nothing.' I find that the best preparation for preaching is not only to collect and arrange ideas, which by no means is to be despised or overlooked; but a holy frame of mind, consistent walk, and constant practice of duty of some kind or other, and along with all this, love to the Redeemer, a devotion of heart to him, commiseration for immortal souls, and intimacy with God in a life of

prayer. Oh, my dear John, I wish you may possess much of these requisites, and the Lord prosper your labours more and more."

While his son was in London, he visited him several times, and assisted him repeatedly on communion occasions. His son returned his visits, and assisted his father at Urquhart. The oftener they thus met, the stronger their mutual attachment as Christians became. All the more anxious, therefore, did his father become to have him in a more accessible position than London. Various places in Scotland were open to his son, and the father's heart was yearning for John's consent to occupy one of them. He did not urge him, but he expressed his strong desire, if it accorded with the Lord's will, that he would accept of a charge in the North. Many seconded the father's desire, and the request was carried by many Christians in the Highlands to the footstool of mercy. But while cherishing this desire, and just after sending him an offer of a presentation made by the patron of an excellent living, his father received the following letter:—

"I had hoped, my dear father, that perhaps I might have heard from you again by this time, not that I had any reason for expecting it, further than that you had thrown out a hint to that effect in your last, but I know too well how your time is occupied to tax it even by expectations. I thank you for your affectionate and full letter of October

13; it was refreshing and strengthening to me, and I can assure you, that in this scene of unintermitting warfare, I need every cordial you can send. Here I can never put off my armour in public or private—Satan seems everywhere and in everything—in my flesh and in my spirit; in my closet and in my pulpit; in the house or on the street; in solitude or in company; in the committee, the session, the presbytery; in books, newspapers, or magazines; in the world or among Christians; it is all one, Satan presses in and I must fight—truly, in London is the brunt of battle. No man that has not been in it can tell what it is. Yet I can, and do rejoice in the midst of it often. I have felt that I have been where the Lord called me to be. On this point I had a clear conscience and a strong heart, and what is infinitely more to me than man's judgment, I must say that I have had my Master's presence in such a measure at least, as to prove that *he abode with me* when others condemned me.

“But, my dear father, the immediate object of my writing you just now is, again to unbosom myself to you as to that *missionary* working of my soul which I formerly mentioned, and to which I begged your attention. It has not yet forsaken me. For some months, say from August till October, when I was so incessantly occupied that I had not time to think of anything except my almost daily exercises, my mind seemed almost at rest as to the duty of

remaining as I am. But for some weeks past, and especially for the last fortnight, I have, without seeking it, been stirred up night and day to revolve the subject in my mind—I have been doing nothing rashly—I have been pledging myself to nothing but determination to do the will of God when manifested to me—I have taken no outward step having a leaning one way or other—I have written out my thoughts at great length in the matter—I have endeavoured to search and lay bare my motives and aims—I have in prayer, effort, and purpose, I trust, laid everything, without exception, at the feet of Christ, and I am not conscious of wishing to recall my act. I may be deceiving myself, I may be deceived by Satan as an angel of light; but if so, I wish to be undeceived. My prayer is—‘Lord, undeceive me!’

“Now, in this state of things, the result of six months’ consideration, I feel myself, as it were, in conviction, making progress towards the point of presenting myself as a missionary, as an evangelist to the Church, to carry the rod of Christ’s strength out of Zion to those nations who have not yet been visited by it. I feel pressing upon me as one the awful guilt of the Church of Christ as to the salvation of the perishing world—I feel that it is of little use to stand talking or preaching on this solemn subject unless some of *us* who talk and preach *do something*. *Something must be done by us* who are to be *lights*

to the world and the Church. It has been so with you, my dear father; you have seen the awful neglect of the Church as to the *gospel at home*; but you knew it was not enough to *preach about it*—you saw something must be done, and through the Lord's blessing you have *done* something—you have stood out against the judgment of a slumbering Church and her sleepy sluggards; and oh, how has the Lord honoured you with hundreds, perhaps thousands of converted souls as the seal of *deeds done* by a poor but faithful evangelist. And if, my dear father, the Lord has been bringing home to *me* the awful guilt of our Church in selfishly hoarding up within herself all the privileges of past years, and in cruelly murdering, by the privation of the word of life, millions of souls who (humanly speaking) might have heard and believed (as our Lord says of Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented)—if I have been exercised and wrought into a conviction that something must be done by *me*, 'who am less than the least of all saints,' to supply that which is lacking—how can I refuse to entertain this working of soul? All that kind and partial friends may say about gifts, acceptance, usefulness, &c., seem only as an additional argument to go forward to dedicate them, *if they exist*, to a work that has hitherto been treated as unworthy of them, or as not at all needing; and *if they do not exist*, then am I not less fit than most who have been sent. It has hitherto been as a *rule*

in the Church that no ordained, tried, or accepted minister, should think of carrying the gospel out of his own land ; but *who* has made this rule? Should it any longer exist? I know but too well how my wicked, deceitful heart is exposed to the workings of vanity and folly in this view of the subject. I trembled over that snare for nearly three months, but the Lord delivered me, and I can now contemplate the possibility of my taking a new and unusual step with comparative tranquillity. Oh, my father, pray for me. You know not how I have been tried and agitated in this matter ; not as to creature-ties—I have scarcely felt *them* affect me—but as to my *duty to Christ*, to stay or go. *What is His will? How shall I discover it?* There are many considerations that work on my mind on the one side or the other, and some of these I may be led to set before you, if you will venture to give me your mind on the subject as I now write. I know the delicacy of this request, and the difficulty of compliance with it ; but God may help you to say something. Forget that I *am your son*, think of me only as Christ's unworthy servant. *Forget time*; we have an eternity to spend together. Cast both of these elements out of the calculation. I am most wishful to hear from you, even were it only to say that you will say nothing."

To this letter he sends the following reply, in which, notwithstanding of his attempt to deal im-

partially with the question, the bias given to his judgment by his feelings as a father is evident:—

“ You wished me to state my views or arguments, *pro* and *con*, on the subject of your going to India. I wish you not to be swayed by any opinion I may offer on so weighty a matter, except in so far as it may appear to you, on Scripture grounds, and when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, to be for or against the present bias of your mind; and before stating my views I candidly confess to you that I feel it difficult to be divested of partiality in the matter. That which the apostle discovered and even cherished towards his countrymen and kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. ix.), I would certainly wish to keep in view. But beyond this I would not wish to go a single step. I must also state to you that I have not been able to attain to what I might call scripture light or the Lord’s mind in any specific way on the subject. This, it is true, may be owing to my not living near enough to the Lord. But whether it be so or not, or whether for wise purposes, He is pleased to withhold it, and therefore to put a restraint on my poor attempts, I cannot discover. But in the absence of this, while I would say with the apostle, *concerning this thing I have no commandment of the Lord*, I would also with him say, *I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord*. I. Then, in offering you reasons in favour of your going to India, I think the following

should weigh with you:—The deplorable state of the inhabitants, the fewness of labourers, and, alas! the fewness of those, and especially qualified persons, who seemed inclined to go to India. Also your own aptness for the work, say in point of talent, education, capacity of acquiring languages, simplicity of style, and manner of address. The proposal, too, made to you by the Assembly Committee ought to have its place, although the circumstance that the Committee had been made somehow aware of your views, was that which chiefly, if not wholly, prompted the application, on which account it becomes you to consider what weight to attach to it in the scales. But finally, and above all, the bent of your own mind and the exercises which the subject has occasioned you for some time past—exercises which, I perceive, were deep and painful. *That this thing was in thine heart*, as I mentioned to you some time ago, may be of the Lord. And if it be his design that thou shouldst do all that is in thine heart, David shall then build the *house*; if not, he can raise up a Solomon for the purpose. Yet a David may prepare the materials and encourage this Solomon to embark in the work. So much for the *pro*; now for the *con*.

“II. My objections against your going to India are:—
1st. The severity of the climate. 2d. Your delicate constitution; for though you are in general pretty healthy, you are by no means strong or robust, so as

to bear the fatigues of a missionary life under a scorching sun. 3d. You should consider your time of life also: you are now thirty, and your constitution is by this time confirmed and tempered under the influence of your native climate, and a very different one from that of India. 4th. Consider the time and labour it will cost you to acquire the language so as to be able to preach to or instruct the natives in their own tongue. You might do something in this way in the English language, but that would be of little service to the natives. 5th. The voice of the Lord's people, both in your own congregation and here, so far as I could ascertain, seems to say you should remain in this country. They may be charged with a degree of partiality in this. Be it so, but some of them live near the throne, and the case merits consideration. 6th. I think the countenance which the Lord has given to your labours where you are should induce you to remain. Were he at any time to withdraw his countenance, and that your usefulness were likely to be at an end, then should be your time to think of removing. Often those who have acted otherwise have had cause to regret the change which they made. I admit that your case is somewhat different. But still it is doubtful how far a servant of the Lord in any case is justifiable in leaving a flock in the midst of usefulness; and if he should do so, without strong reasons indeed, and such as would more than counterbalance

the argument of usefulness, he might have reason to calculate, instead of a *direct*, upon an inverse ratio of usefulness. 7th. I might add that your country needs you, and that you appear to me, and to many besides, to be fully as much calculated to be useful at home as abroad. Souls are perishing in multitudes around us, and let such as are placed in spheres of usefulness occupy them. I am not against pitying the heathens abroad, but I am not for doing so at the expense of the heathens at home. Paul felt a laudable attachment to, and Christian pity for his countrymen beyond what he felt for the Gentiles; and it was not till the former rejected the gospel that he turned *wholly* to the latter.

“Thus have I given you my sentiments freely and fully on this important subject, accompanied by my earnest prayer that the Great Head of the Church may soon clear your way, and make it manifest whether He designs work for you in India or in Britain. You can easily perceive the leaning of my mind, but I wish you not to be further led by it than it appears to you to be in accordance with the Law and the Testimony.”

In reply to later communications of his son's mind in reference to the call to India, he thus writes:—

“I can assure you, my dear John, that if it be made clear to you that the matter cometh from the Lord, I wish for nothing else than that *his will* be done. I have resigned you to him in baptism. I

have often since prayed that you might be his. His you are, and not mine. And I am reconciled to it, that you serve him in any part of the world to which he may send you. I do not in this so much consult the feelings of a father, as those which should actuate me as a Christian and a minister of Christ, however short of the character or unworthy of the title I may be. My prayer for you is, that the Lord may make darkness light, and crooked paths straight, before you. And if he should make it appear by the light of his word and the leadings of his providence that he sends you far hence unto the Gentiles, may his presence and power accompany you, and crown your labours with ample success."

The following extract still more clearly proves that he was emancipated from the influence of all considerations bearing on the question referred to him by his son, except such as should sway him as a Christian, and as a servant of Jesus Christ :—

"You have a better counsellor than man. To him I desire to commit you, and may he make darkness light and rough paths plain. In regard to the step which perhaps you are about to take (and which you must take if the Lord has said so), I have given you my mind already, and nothing has since occurred to me, either for or against the matter, that is worth mentioning. You were right to take the communication from Edinburgh into your serious consideration ; a mere report, it is true, has given rise to it.

But still, in your case, it is incumbent on you to ascertain whether the matter is of *the Lord or not*. And in this, notwithstanding paternal feelings and other considerations, I have been endeavouring to say unto him, '*Thy will be done.*' And to him I again commit you, and to the word of his grace."

In course of time he is informed of his son's decision in favour of going to India, and to the letter conveying this intelligence he thus replies:—

"Your last brought us tidings which we were in a measure prepared for. So you have decided for India. We would wish to say, and I trust we do say, '*The will of the Lord be done.*' It is true your friends and well-wishers could not readily give their consent, and that for reasons which you will well guess. But they are not against you on that account; and should they, it is your comfort to know, and to be able to say with the apostle, '*If God be for us, who can be against us?*' May the Lord God of your fathers be with you, and give you ample success among the poor inhabitants of India."

At last he writes:—

"Your pamphlet has silenced us all. Those who take but a worldly view of matters may not feel convinced, but all spiritual Christians must. The Lord be with you in your intended mission, accept your labours among the poor heathen, and crown them with success. May he be your counsellor, your com-

forter, your support, and the breaker of the way before you."

In reply to a letter received from his son, on his way to India, he writes:—

"Your letter from the Cape, which reached us early in February, gladdened our hearts, and indeed the hearts of many besides. What cause of thankfulness to that God from whom all our mercies flow, that you and your dear partner were preserved on the mighty waters without sustaining any injury save some sea sickness, which few in such circumstances escape. It gave us comfort also to understand that your conviction that, in the step you have taken, you followed the path of duty, remained unaltered, and seemed to be rather deepened than otherwise. This is but what I expected should be the case. and it is your mercy that it is so. In the day of trial—and with such a day you must lay your account—you can say with Jeremiah, 'Have I desired the evil day?' Have I entered on these arduous labours, or rushed in the face of these trials of my own accord? Have I run uncalled, unsent by *Thee*? You will experience much support under every untoward circumstance that may meet you in your way, and every opposition from earth or hell which you may have to encounter, from the conviction that the Lord had sent you. And he who has sent you has also said, 'My presence shall go with you.' Go on, then, my dear John, and prosper. May the God of your fathers

be your God, and guide, and portion in a foreign land, and make you eminently useful in promoting his cause and propagating his gospel. Oh, may the Dagon of heathen idolatry be seen to fall before the ark of the Lord, borne by you, his unworthy, but I trust I may say, willing servant ! The tide of Christian prayer in this country has followed you to India. This is a consolation, and shall be for a consolation."

In his last letter to his son there is the following touching expression of his love :—

"You may believe that it is not from want of affection for you that I do not write you often. No ; my bowels yearn over you whenever you come before my mind, and that, I must say, is often enough. I never bend the knee but I think of you, and endeavour to remember you before my God. But my writing time is over. My hand shakes, and gets stiff and heavy, so that it costs me much time and labour now to write a page ; and, owing to the slowness of the pen, my ideas often make their escape, and leave me little to record. Yet I have great cause of thankfulness : my general health is as usual, and the quantum of labour which I am enabled to go through, both at home and abroad, is at least at, if not above, par with me."

His son responds in expressions of love no less fervent :—

"Although I cannot say that I am in debt to you as to letter-writing, yet I am always, and will be

ever, so much in debt to you on other grounds that I am always under obligation to write you when I can. Your picture is always on my wall, but it needed not so to be in order to remind me of you, for your better and more spiritual picture is ever in my soul; and I have, I trust, fellowship with you in your faith, in your ministry, in our prayers, and in our common love of one Lord, and in our common hope of one heaven. The Lord, the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, put forth his divine energy in your soul, to comfort, strengthen, gladden you more and more; and may you richly be filled, in your advanced years, with all the fulness of God! This is my salutation to you, and what more can I ask or think? Ask the same for me."

In 1847, while Dr. Macdonald was on one of his preaching tours in Perthshire, and just before entering the pulpit in Glenlyon, a letter is put into his hand. Intent on his work, he put the letter unopened into his pocket. Next day, as he was travelling to Edinburgh, he recollected the letter, and on opening it read the tidings of his son's death. A few groans from a father's wounded heart, and a few tears from a fond father's eyes, and the Christian triumphed over the man, and with his heart he said, "It is well." On reaching home he preached from these words in his own pulpit. "'It is well,'" he said, referring to his beloved John, "that he was born; 'it is well' that he was educated; it is better far that he was

born again; 'it is well' that he was licensed to preach the gospel; 'it is well' that he was ordained as a pastor; 'it is well' that he went to India; and above all, 'it is well' for him that he died; for thus, though away from us, and 'absent from the body,' he has secured the gain of being for ever with the Lord."





CHAPTER XII.

HIS ASSOCIATES AMONG THE MINISTERS OF THE NORTH—DR. BAYNE—MR. LACHLAN MACKENZIE—DR. MACKINTOSH—MR. FORBES—MR. MACADAM—MR. FRASER—DR. STEWART—MR. KENNEDY—ASSOCIATIONS.

HE early became intimate with all the eminent ministers of the north, exchanging respect and affection with them all, cheering them often by his visits and his services, and invariably assisting them on communion occasions.

For Dr. Bayne of Kiltarlity he cherished the warmest affection with profound respect. He loved, in after years, to recall memories of his intercourse with him, and to relate notes of the sermons which he heard him preach. The two following anecdotes he often repeated.

While seated with Dr. Bayne in his parlour one day, a servant entered the room, and by some awkwardness so irritated her master, that in an eruption of temper, he poured a torrent of angry words on the head of the offending abigail. Mr. Macdonald waited till they were alone, and then, in a cheerful tone, he said, "I hope, Dr. Bayne, that by this time there is not much of old Adam in you, but, certainly, what

remains is good stuff." The rebuke thus kindly given was as kindly received. The old man rose from his seat, and, wringing his hands and weeping, paced the room, exclaiming, "Good stuff, indeed ; good stuff, indeed."

In his latter days Dr. Bayne was in the habit of speaking his thoughts, so that one who was, unawares, beside him, heard what was intended for no ears but his own. Standing at the window of his room one day, and thinking he was quite alone, one who happened to be present heard him repeating the words, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." After a pause he said, "Paul, what do you mean by saying that you are chief of sinners? Do you mean that you are of all sinners, in all ages, chief? If so, I cannot agree with you, for Ronald Bayne is a greater sinner than you were. But, do you mean that you are chief of all the sinners who shall be saved? If so, then there is no hope for Ronald Bayne, for he is a greater sinner still. But, if you mean, as I think you do, that each saved sinner regards himself as chief, then there is hope for Ronald Bayne, and you and he can both agree."

In 1816 he received from Mr. Lachlan Mackenzie an invitation to assist him in dispensing the sacrament of the Supper at Lochcarron. Mr. Lachlan's letter was quite characteristic. "I hear," he wrote,

“that you keep a large store of powder which you use in blasting. I wish you to come and try your skill in breaking the hard rocks of Lochcarron.” He accepted the invitation, and reached the manse of Lochcarron on the evening before the Fast-day, along with Dr. Ross of Lochbroom, and Mr. Kennedy of Killearnan. Mr. Lachlan had been looking forward with great delight to the prospect of their visit and their services. He said to his sister, a few weeks before, “I have sent for Mr. Macdonald with the law, and for Mr. Kennedy with the gospel, and for Dr. Ross with the learning, and I will come after them myself with prayer, and I think we shall have a good time of it.” But at the eleventh hour his courage gave way. The tempter persuaded him that they would not come; and when they arrived he was in bed, in one of his fits of unbelief. When his sister told him that they had come, he refused to believe her till she had sent Mr. Kennedy to his room. He then rose at once, came down in an ecstasy of joy to meet them, gave them a most fervent greeting, and hurried to the press for some refreshment to give them after their long journey. Having placed bread and spirits on the table, he said to Mr. Macdonald, “You are the stranger, and must ask a blessing.” “No,” he replied, “if you are to give us your good things give us a prayer with them.” This he did at once in these words in Gaelic: “*Tha fhios agad, a Thighearna, gun robh*

a namhaid ag innseadh dhuinne nach d'thigeadh do sheirbhisich, agus gum bitheadh ball du air t'aobhar, ach glair dhuit anis gun do chuir thu clach na chraos. Amen."* These words, being the first which Mr. Macdonald heard Mr. Lachlan utter in prayer, made a deep impression on his memory, and often did he repeat them afterwards.

His opinion of Mr. Lachlan he gives in a letter to Mr. Sinclair, Thurso, written soon after his first visit to Lochcarron. "Mr. Lachlan," he writes, "is worth going many miles to see. He is a dear servant of God; and lives near Him at His footstool. He has failed much in body, but his mind is almost as vigorous as ever. He is truly a spiritually-minded Christian. He feels disheartened over the impenitence of Lochcarron sinners; and indeed there are not many of a contrary description in his parish. Yet he cannot believe but the Lord has a design yet to do good to Lochcarron; and he charged us who assisted him, and all the Lord's people, to carry Lochcarron on our spirits, and to pray much for his poor people. Worthy man, little did he seem to know that some of those whom he thus charged had more need that he should pray for them!"

Dr. Mackintosh, Tain, was another of the famous ministers of the north whom he regularly assisted

* "Thou knowest, O Lord, that the enemy was saying to us, Thy servants would not come, and that there would be a black spot on Thy cause; but now glory be to Thee, Thou hast thrust a stone into his mouth. Amen."

on communion occasions. They both exchanged their heart's best brotherly love; and the seasons which they spent in working together in the service of the gospel were often to both of them refreshing. After Dr. Mackintosh's death Mr. Macdonald preached his funeral sermon in Gaelic, Mr. Forbes, Tarbat, officiating in English. The Gaelic text was, "I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. iv. 7). The following skeleton of the sermon was found among his papers, and it supplies his estimate of this man of God :—

"The apostle here speaks, not in the language of self-boasting, but as a Christian hero, not intimidated by the scene before him. He desires to bear testimony for God, and to encourage Timothy, on whom the cause was more than ever to devolve, now that he was to be taken away.

"Ver. 6, 'I am now ready to be offered.' He probably expected martyrdom. Till now, no man could touch his life. The servant of Christ was immortal till his time to die had come. But now he says, 'The time of my departure is at hand.' This is a time that awaits every one. It is fixed by God; and an important time it is. Paul, perhaps, had premonitions, if not a presentiment, of it. 'The time of' his 'departure' from a world of sin and suffering, and of his entrance on his rest in heaven, had 'come.'

"Ver. 7, 'I have fought a good fight.' He fought

for the faith, for the spread of the gospel, and for the prize of his high calling. He fought with sin, Satan, and the world, clad with all the armour of God. He fought the battle out under the banner of Christ. 'I have finished my course.' A course had been prescribed to him—a race had been set before him. This race he ran 'with patience,' 'forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.' He had now come to the end of the race, and, accordingly, he adds,—

"Ver. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' To this his course and labours led, and this God had connected with them as a reward of grace.

"But he adds, 'I have kept the faith.' This defined the course which he pursued, supported and stimulated him in it, and assured him of the crown at the end of it. By 'the faith' we are to understand, not the principle of faith—this is presupposed—but the doctrines on which faith rested (Jude 3), in short, the gospel. This he had received from the Lord, not merely to live upon it, but to preach it to others. The gospel may be called 'the faith,' because it is at once the foundation, support, and life of faith. When faith is in exercise the soul is engrossed with the truth, which works effectually through faith in the heart.

"I. Let us consider what is meant by the declaration 'I have kept the faith.' It implies—

“1. That he had cordially believed, and lived upon, the doctrines which he preached to others.

“2. That he lived under the influence of these doctrines—felt them—fed upon them. That they were the source of his hope, comfort, strength, and sanctification.

“3. That his walk and conversation were such as became the gospel.

“4. That he was enabled to preach the gospel to his fellow-men in purity, plainness, and fulness, and with perseverance, notwithstanding every opposition.

“5. That he laboured with his might to promote the success of the gospel, accompanying it with his prayers; standing up boldly in defence of the truth and against error; anxious for the welfare of the Churches, and watering them as he had opportunity; careful to avoid giving offence; and becoming all things to all men that he might gain some.

“And thus he ‘kept the faith.’

“II. Consider what this language speaks to us on the present occasion.

“The Lord has removed from us your late worthy pastor. Before you, who have attended his ministry for thirty-four years, I need scarcely expatiate on his character and labours. He was my first acquaintance in this county; and I lived on terms of intimacy with him for thirty-three years. I lost in him, not a friend or brother, but a father. Sincere

and constant in his friendship ; cheerful, instructive, and spiritual in his conversation ; he acquired a place in my affections which it is not likely shall be filled up on earth. He was the minister, the Christian, and the gentleman, commanding the esteem and the respect of all. Originally endowed with rare talents, divine grace, which visited him in early life, rendered him an able minister of the New Testament. And it might with truth be said, that ‘the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding abundant’ to him through life. It was this that gave to his character excellence, lustre, and weight ; it was this that made him a truly great man. And, as a minister of Jesus Christ, it may be said of him, as of Paul, that he ‘kept the faith.’ In his devotedness to the work of Christ, his acquaintance with law and gospel, his clear and comprehensive views of truth, and his bold, animated, impressive, and authoritative manner of delivering his message, he always appeared to me to bear a strong resemblance to the great apostle of the Gentiles.

“He ‘kept the faith.’ He believed, loved, felt, and fed upon the doctrines of faith which he preached to others. He lived as became these doctrines, as a father, husband, and friend. His conversation was in heaven. He preached the gospel to saints and sinners faithfully and purely, with authority and with tenderness. He spoke to the understanding and to the heart at once. He preached doctrinally

and experimentally, but the one as arising out of the other. Like Paul, he laboured to promote the success of the gospel, by prayer, by a holy life, by boldly opposing error and reproving sin, by his visiting and catechizing, and by zeal for the spread of the gospel in the world. And he persevered unto the end in his zeal, spirituality, faithfulness, and activity. He did not wish to survive his usefulness, nor did he. You heard his last discourse fourteen days before his death. Thus he 'kept the faith.' He is at his rest; he has received his crown; he is with Paul, with Christ, for ever. To him death was gain; but from us it has removed his prayers, his labours, and his influence.

"And let us remember that, if he 'kept the faith,' it now devolves on us and others to do so. Let us be 'followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' He is dead, but 'the faith' shall never die.

"How have you improved your opportunities under his ministry? Not a few, I trust, have been converted, and others edified. Let these bless God, even while they weep. But others have stood out against 'the faith' till now. How dreadful the state of these!" &c.

He early became intimate with Mr. Forbes of Tarbat, and often preached in his church. He highly valued him for his vigorous intellect, his unquestioned godliness, his thorough honesty, and the rare

clearness, unction, and finish of his sermons; and of all who met him Mr. Macdonald best succeeded in evoking his cheerfulness and love. During a communion season at Resolis he and Mr. Forbes, owing to the large number of visitors in the manse, occupied the same bedroom. Mr. Forbes, who seldom enjoyed a good night's rest, and who feared that this one would to him be a sleepless night, wished to employ one of its long hours in conversation with his bed-fellow. Addressing him after they lay down, he was answered by a snore; pushing him awake, he made a second attempt to engage him in a crack, but failed as before. "I go to bed to sleep," his companion said, "and I must sleep from a sense of duty," and then resumed his snoring. After many vain attempts to follow his friend's example, Mr. Forbes was early astir. Meeting James Thomson, the catechist, on going out in the morning, he said to him, "The minister of Ferintosh is the most extraordinary man I ever met. He sleeps better, and he preaches better, than all others."

Mr. Macadam, Nigg, was one whom he highly valued, and of whom he often loved to speak. Mr. Macadam lived for six years after Mr. Macdonald came to Urquhart, and during that time Mr. M. often preached in his pulpit. On one occasion he was engaged to preach in Nigg on a week-day, on his return from the communion at Tarbat. At the appointed hour the congregation met, but the

preacher did not appear. He had started from Tarbat in good time, but lost his way, and wandered for two hours in search of it. It was past two o'clock in the afternoon before he began the service. Just as he was announcing his text, a godly man from Petty, who had been in great distress for many weary weeks before, entered the church. The text was Ps. lxxxix. 13. The words, "Thou hast a mighty arm," as they were read by the preacher, came with power to his heart, his bonds were loosed, his long-lost songs were given back to his broken heart; and when the service was over, he went on his way home rejoicing.

Mr. Donald Fraser of Kirkhill was another of the eminent ministers of the North with whom he often associated in the service of the gospel. To rare personal beauty, remarkable elegance of manner, great acuteness of intellect, and refinement of taste, divine grace added its saving gifts to prepare him for a place of eminence in the house of God. As a preacher he was acceptable to all classes of hearers. His manner, always chaste, was sufficiently earnest; his statements of doctrine, invariably exact, were aptly illustrated; and there was always the due proportion of the subjective in his preaching; for he did not forget that his hearers had hearts and consciences as well as understandings.

The air of refinement which marked Mr. Fraser's personal appearance laid him open to the suspicion

by strangers of his paying undue attention to dress, and especially to the arrangement of his beautiful hair. The first time he went to assist Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen on a communion occasion, he arrived at a late hour on the night before the Fast. Next morning the Doctor, always punctual, was ready to begin family worship at the appointed minute; but though the bell had been rung once and again, Mr. Fraser failed to appear. After exhausting his host's patience, he at last entered the room where the family were assembled. Dr. Kidd's eye rested at once on the well-adjusted hair, and, fretted as he was, he easily persuaded himself the delay was owing to the care expended upon it by his guest. Full of this prejudice he went to church, resolved not to like the preacher, and expecting no good from the sermon. The text was announced, and as the preacher began to open it up, Dr. Kidd's listlessness began to give way. As the sermon advanced, his attention was thoroughly arrested. At last, listening in an ecstasy of delight, he exclaimed, in a tone loud enough to be heard by all around him—"I'll never judge a man by his hair again."

After Mr. Fraser's death Mr. Macdonald was asked to preach his funeral sermon—a sad duty he was repeatedly called to perform, as one after another of his fathers and brethren was removed to his rest. Referring to the suddenness of Mr. Fraser's death, he said—"The Lord would leave His servant no

longer away from Himself; and unwilling to refuse the request of His people, to whose hearts Mr. Fraser was so dear, He removed him suddenly, that they might have no opportunity of praying for his life."

Mr. Stewart of Dingwall, afterwards Dr. Stewart of the Canongate, Edinburgh, was his next neighbouring minister. A short ferry only separated their parishes, and their manse, opposite to each other, were only a short distance from each shore. Their intercourse was always brotherly, for two more amiable men there could scarcely be; and over every cause of alienation which might threaten to divide them, the love of Christ in their hearts never failed to triumph. In his papers there is the following note:—"Preached at Dingwall on an average once a month in Mr. Stewart's time, from January 1816 to October 1819, when Mr. Stewart went to Edinburgh. Collections then made for the Subscription School." Nor did his labours in Dingwall cease when Mr. Stewart was translated to Edinburgh, for to the preceding note he adds—"Preached at Dingwall also from October 1820 (some time after Mr. Bethune's settlement) once a month, to January 1824, a course of lectures on Romans x.; from January to December 1824, on promiscuous subjects; on Christmas and New Year's Day, O.S., 1824, preached from Eccles. xi.; and on Christmas and New Year's Day 1825, on Eccles. xii. 1. Since this last date agreed to preach at Dingwall in future on the third

Tuesday of every month, Mr. John Kennedy having engaged to preach once a month on the first. On Christmas Day, O.S., 1826, preached from Eccles. xii. 4—"All the daughters of music shall be brought low."

Mr. Stewart's health having failed in 1819, he was under the necessity of going to Edinburgh to obtain medical advice. This was to his flock and brethren, as well as to himself and family, a painful trial. Mr. Macdonald composed a few stanzas in Gaelic on this occasion, entitled "Dr. Stewart on his Voyage to Leith," which were afterwards published. "These verses," he writes in a preface to the poem, "were composed when Dr. Stewart went by sea to Edinburgh for the benefit of his health. The author observing the vessel passing, and Dr. Stewart on deck, the following thoughts arose in his mind:—

"Thou trim, fast, little ship, let such wind come to fill thy sails as shall carry Mr. Alexander Stewart to Leith in safety! Let no storm nor calm overtake thee, nor aught that can cause danger or damage; but go safely on thy way till the place of his desire is reached! Thou bearest a precious treasure, the first and the choicest of pastors, who led his flock to pastures where they might find rest and food; a man whose appearance and endowments commanded respect; a ripe Christian and a gentleman. Oh, it is hard to trust him to a board! But do Thou, who rulest in power over storms and seas

alike, and who hast been set up for us on Zion a rightful king for ever, uphold him by the hand of thy righteousness; give him deliverance, and in the depths of thy pity preserve him from the dangers of sea and wind! Do Thou, who didst heal each one who came to Thee diseased in the days of thy pilgrimage and sufferings in the flesh, make effectual the means which physicians may prescribe, that he may return from Dunedin free from all pain and sickness. Inverpeffer is sad since thou art gone away, as if her sun had set and the shade of night had compassed her. No wonder. A star of beauty and brightness has now forsaken her sky, which gave her light for many years. Some, doubtless, are grieved—being knit to thee in love, the strength of which they cannot tell to others—because they fear that since thou art gone to sea they shall behold thee no more, and that thou never shalt return. Sad indeed shall we be if thou comest not back from Dunedin again! Many an eye shall be tearful, and many a heart shall be rent among thy people. Blind and insensate must they be who will not feel the pain of such a stroke. But if the King of kings hath appointed—for He doeth according to His pleasure—that there thou shalt remain, and in the North appear no more, may prosperity and health be thine. May Christ, thy Beloved, be with thee throughout thy journey in the wilderness, though we to-day are sad without thee!”

The next parish to Urquhart on the south is Killearnan. Mr. Kennedy was inducted there only a few months before Mr. Macdonald's translation to Urquhart. For seven and twenty years they laboured as pastors side by side; as preachers they were often associated in the service of the gospel; and as evangelists they often travelled on the same tours, and often divided between them the work of a communion season; and during all that time their intercourse was invariably confidential and pleasant. His last effort in composition was writing an elegy in memory of his friend, Mr Kennedy, of which he once said to the writer—"If I have not succeeded in my description of your father, I myself have profited by the attempt; for this I can say, that each stanza which I wrote sent me at least once to my knees."

In 1831 an association for prayer and conference was formed by a few of the evangelical ministers of the North. Meetings of this association were regularly held for ten years, and were always to the members refreshing and profitable.

The following "regulations of the ministerial association" were written by Mr. Fraser, Kirkhill:—

"AULDEARN, 5th Oct. 1831.

"An association for the purpose of promoting the object of their high calling, having been formed by the following ministers, namely, Mr. Kennedy of

Killearnan, Mr. Macdonald of Urquhart, Mr. Fraser of Kirkhill, Mr. Sage of Resolis, Mr. Barclay of Auldearn, and Mr. Fraser of Cawdor, the following regulations were agreed on:—

“1. The main object of the association shall be, to seek, by prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, the influences of the Spirit of God upon the members themselves, their families and congregations, and the Church of Christ at large; and two diets for that purpose shall be held at each meeting.

“2. The diets for prayer and reading the Scriptures, at each meeting, shall hold—the first from two to four o'clock, and the second from six to eight, and the remainder of the time shall be spent in such conversation as shall tend to mutual improvement; it being understood that argumentative discussion or controversy is to be carefully avoided.

“3. There shall be three meetings of the association within the year; namely, on the third Wednesday of September, on the third Wednesday of December, and on the third Wednesday of March; it being considered that, owing to the various engagements of some of the members, it would be inconvenient or impracticable to hold a meeting in the summer quarter.

“4. The meetings shall be held at the houses of the respective members in the following order: namely, at the manses of Auldearn, Cawdor, Kirkhill, Killearnan, Urquhart, and Resolis; and the

minister at whose house the meeting is to hold shall write to the other members to remind them of it a fortnight or three weeks beforehand.

“5. The member at whose house the meeting holds shall open the first diet by reading a portion of the Word of God, and by prayer, and the other members shall follow him in the same exercises in the order laid down in the foregoing regulation.

“6. The number, six, of which the association at present consists, being considered as many as can be conveniently accommodated in one house, or employed at one meeting, no addition is to be made to the number; but in case of a vacancy occurring, it shall be filled up only with the unanimous consent of the existing members.

(Signed) “JOHN KENNEDY,
JOHN MACDONALD
DONALD FRASER.
DONALD SAGE.
WILLIAM BARCLAY.
ALEXANDER FRASER.”

At an earlier period a missionary association was formed by the leading evangelical ministers of the North, holding annual meetings at Inverness, Dingwall, and Tain, alternately. On these occasions sermons were preached in English and Gaelic; large congregations assembled, and very liberal collections were raised. In some parishes there were auxiliary associations. From an early date in Mr. Calder's

ministry there was such an association in Urquhart, and it continued in operation till missionary schemes were formed by the Church. During the year the sum of £50 was usually raised for missionary purposes in Urquhart.

Associations, for prayer and for missionary objects, are the invariable fruits of evangelism. They also contribute to its strength: for, as united prayer connects it closely with divine resources, a missionary spirit, by expanding its aspirations, enlarges its capacity to receive. Evangelism is not like a tree, which may spend its strength in bearing fruit; but like a stream from an exhaustless fountain, widening its channel, and thereby increasing its volume, as it flows.





CHAPTER XIII.

TRIAL—DISRUPTION TIMES—INVERNESS ASSEMBLY.

IN 1842 he met the sorest of all his trials. After a faithful ministry of six-and-thirty years; having won, by the extent, acceptability, and success of his labours, the designation of "The Apostle of the North;" long the foremost representative of evangelism in the Highlands; just on the eve of the Disruption, and as he was entering on his share of the preparation for that great event; while his fame was yet undimmed and his usefulness still unimpaired; and as his work on earth was now drawing to a close; a vile slander is cast upon his name, and he appears before his presbytery to vindicate himself.

This trying event his biographer cannot ignore. The providence is too remarkable to be left unnoticed. The hand of God wrought strangely, and we must observe and record His doing. His strange dealing with His servant is fraught with instruction, and it is the duty of others to learn, at his expense, the lessons taught by his affliction. It might, too, seem to some, if this chapter were left unwritten, as if there were

something attaching to the name of Dr. Macdonald which could not bear the light. And yet, much must be left unnoticed, which, if known, would make his vindication still more complete, and show to all his fame unsullied. But the meagre share of detail that shall be given will suffice to show how baseless was the calumny by which it was sought to blast his reputation.

An unmarried woman, accustomed, as many were, to follow him as a hearer from place to place, and regarded by him, and by many others, as one earnestly anxious to profit by the gospel, became the mother of a child. Anxious, notwithstanding of her shameful fall, to retain her reputation as a Christian, or resolved to drag down along with her some one who was famous in the Church, she charged, first an eminent Christian layman, and afterwards Dr. Macdonald, with being associated in her guilt. In a critical hour an acknowledgment was emitted by her, which, if true and unretracted, would have placed her liberty and life in peril. This made the case one from investigating which all shrunk instinctively. The secret was left in its envelope of darkness; and those who loved and respected the Lord's servant would be content if he were vindicated. The terrible dilemma in which the woman's sin had placed her was such that one cannot wonder at the desperateness of the choice she made. By her fall she became a helpless victim in the grasp of the great enemy,

and took what seemed the easier of the only alternatives between which she was allowed to choose. All must be sacrificed which she counted worth possessing, or she must attempt to blast the reputation of another—these were the alternatives, and she chose the latter.

The report flew on rapid wings in all directions, for “the prince of the power of the air” did his utmost to circulate the lie, which, as “the accuser of the brethren,” he had forged. There were not wanting some who rejoiced in the prospect of the great evangelist’s crown of honour being cast into the mire. On the minds of a few, who loved the cause of Christ and were wont to love and respect his servant, the tempter wrought mightily to disturb their peace; and many, who were assured of the falsehood of the charge, were stunned by the startling providence, grieved for the suffering of one whom they loved and honoured, and anxious as to how the foul calumny might affect the minds of men, the honour of the gospel, and the work of Christ.

To himself the Lord was very gracious. Conscious of innocence, regarding the attack upon his character as an ebullition of revenge from hell, and recognising the providential trial as a sovereign and wise though mysterious appointment of the Almighty, he cast himself at the feet of his Saviour and Master, committing his name and influence to his care, and imploring his help against this attempt to drive him from the ser-

vice of the gospel. The Lord verily heard his cry, and he was to him then "a very present help in trouble." "Often," he said, "when alone in my study, the remembrance of the trial would break in as an overwhelming flood on my heart; but, casting myself on my face before the Lord, he restored his peace to my soul, and helped me to resume my work. This much," he added, "must I acknowledge to the praise of the Lord, that never did he allow my mind to be disturbed by it while I was in the pulpit."

When aware of the charge having been brought against him, he at once insisted on the matter being taken up by his presbytery. This painful duty his brethren undertook. The accuser was summoned and examined, but so utterly baseless was her case, and so manifestly false her story, that the court had no difficulty in declaring the accused free from all suspicion in connection with the charge preferred against him. This result did not arise out of the partiality of his brethren. There was one member of court who did not conceal his anxiety to criminate him if possible; and who, when there appeared not the shadow of a shade of evidence in support of the charge, could not veil his annoyance. Abashed and mortified he rose and left the court before the verdict of acquittal was written. But in the face of the proved impossibility of his co-presbyter's guilt he still continued to circulate the calumny against him, sanctioned the baptism of the accuser's child, if he did not com-

mit the sacrilege of performing the ceremony, and advised to brand the name of John Macdonald by attaching it to the offspring of crime !

Most manifestly wrought the hand of Satan in this affliction of the servant of the Lord. Long had Mr. Macdonald laboured in the service of the gospel, and many were the breaches which he was the means of making in the enemy's ranks. We cannot wonder, therefore, though a council should be held in hell to concoct a plot of vengeance. To blast his reputation as a Christian would tend to disparage all his work as an evangelist, and to destroy all the influence for good which he had hitherto been wielding. A crisis, too, had come in the contest for the crown rights of Jesus, and it would be a gain to the enemy if, ere the conflict made further progress, one so zealous and so powerful could be laid low, for in all the North there was none so likely to "do valiantly" for Christ. There were always with him, as he went on his preaching tours, some on whom the great enemy could count to do him service. By using one of these to raise the calumny a double object would be gained—a seeming sample of the power of the gospel would be exposed as a palpable counterfeit, and the victim of deceit and cruelty would become a ready instrument of vengeance. This has always been the policy of Satan, ever since he found, among the twelve disciples of the Lord, one disposed to do his foul bidding, when, working on his love of money, he

moved him to betray his Master. There were verily "depths of Satan" in this plot against the reputation of "the Apostle of the North." The dilemma of the wretched woman was a deep device. Her previous intimacy with the accused furnished a semblance of plausibility to the charge, for each time she had an interview with him regarding eternal things might be alleged as an opportunity of crime. If in the presbytery an abettor of the calumny could be secured; if into the hearts of some of the true people of the Lord suspicion and distrust could be infused; and if, even in his own congregation, some could be found prepared to believe and circulate the lie, who were known to have professed before to love and venerate their minister, Satan might expect success in his attempt to disable the servant of the Lord for his Master's work. Such was the enemy's design; and such was the development of his plot.

But the Lord permitted this assault of the enemy; and there were wisdom, holiness, and mercy wrapt up in the mystery of this providence. It was needful to teach His servant some lessons even at the cost of such a fiery trial. He may have been unduly elated by the devotion of the people who followed him on his gospel tours; he was too ready to receive their professions of godliness; his charity was too indiscriminating; and he was too easy of access; and this trial may have been the rod by which these faults were corrected. It may have appeared to

himself inexplicable, as it did to others, why the Lord should have exposed his character to reproach, when he was so closely connected with His own cause and glory; but the very mysteriousness of such a providence was instructive. "Be still, and know that I am God," was the voice that issued from its darkness. And this outburst of Satan's power served to teach him how careful His Master must have been of his character during the past years of his ministry. There were communings then, between the Lord and His servant, which cannot now be unveiled; but, judging from occasional expressions, there is good ground for saying that he learned all these lessons in that day of trial.

Such a trial as this is formidable indeed; but what follower of Christ can reckon on avoiding it? Against them whom the Lord hath blessed "*all manner of evil*" may be spoken "*falsely*." The wildest license may be taken by the world in dealing with the reputation of the servants of the Lord. And they must not complain of this. Let them be silent and submit, when they remember how it fared with their Master who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." If they knew not such a trial, they would lose much of the sweetness which can be tasted by faith in the doctrine of the final judgment. To the court of last resort these sufferers from the world's reproach must raise their appeal

from the bar of the world's assize, and, with a clear conscience and a good hope through grace, anticipate an acquittal that shall vindicate their character before an assembled universe.

There was a parallel case well known in the north. The famous Mr. John Graham of Ardclach suffered under a similar trial. Unmarried and leading a retired and holy life, the wicked made him the victim of the foulest calumny. In the house in which he lodged there was a young woman who chose to think that Mr. Graham should be her husband. Finding it impossible to receive any encouragement, notwithstanding her assiduous attentions, she resolved to have revenge if she failed to have a husband. She began to drop hints in conversation with her neighbours of Mr. Graham's being too fond of ardent spirits. Having access in his absence to his room she put a bottle under his pillow, and then brought some of her neighbours in to see it there. The *fama* spread; and not a few believed it.

It was Mr. Graham's invariable habit to spend the Sabbath morning, from a very early hour, in a secluded and shaded spot within the wood on the margin of which stood the cottage in which he lodged. He required to carry with him a supply of cold water when he went to his study in the wood. Instead of a jug or other vessel, a bottle would be given him, which he, unsuspecting, carried in his hand, and placed on the trunk of a tree at the end of his

accustomed walk. Some of those who were still indisposed to believe the report would be conducted within sight of the bottle, and would retire with confirmed suspicions.

There lived, in Moy, a godly man, who never missed an opportunity of hearing Mr. Graham, and to whom the Sabbath in the church of Ardelach was usually a season spent at the very gate of heaven. The lying story reached him. After being throughout the week tormented by suspicions, on Sabbath the power of the gospel would banish all his fears. But when the impression of the Sabbath service had abated the Tempter would be at work in his mind again. Hearing the story of the bottle in the wood, he resolved to test the truth of it. Travelling all night he came at a very early hour to Mr. Graham's place of retirement. The minister was there before him. From behind a tree he watches him. He sees him walking leisurely on his usual path; and on the trunk of a tree at the end of his beat, he observes the bottle. After an interval the minister stops, lifts the bottle in his hand, and applies it to his mouth. The Tempter then suggested to the watcher, that, as he had now seen with his own eyes a confirmation of the report, he should return home at once, and never listen to that drunkard again. But, instead of yielding, he rushed forward while Mr. Graham was in the act of drinking, and seizing hold of the bottle, he asked, with desperate energy of voice,

"What have you there?" Mr. Graham, recovering from the shock which the man's rashness gave him, meekly said, "Just try it." The man instantly placed the bottle to his lips, and the cold water flowed into his mouth. Ashamed of having yielded to the Tempter's power, he almost cast himself on his knees before the man of God, asking his forgiveness, and explaining his strange conduct. The cold water from Mr. Graham's bottle was the sweetest, he said, which he had ever tasted; but sweeter still by far the "good news from the far country," preached in the church that day to his "thirsty soul."

But the report continued to circulate, and many believed it. The result was that Mr. Graham removed from Ardelach and forsook the Church of Scotland. In his new position he pined for a few months, and then sickened and died. Referring to his accusers shortly before his death he said, adopting the words of Moses, "If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me" (Num. xvi. 29). But the Lord had sent him; and his enemies were visited by startling judgments; and by uncommon deaths were swept off one by one. By fatal accidents, by mania, and by suicides, the Lord manifested His anger, and branded the names of those who persecuted His servant. It was an awful, but an ample vindication, the Lord gave, in His providence, of the character of this afflicted saint.

As in the case of Mr. Graham, there was a terrible vindication of the character of Mr. Macdonald; and so legible is the writing by the finger of God on the page of providence that none unblinded by prejudice can fail to read it. There are many who demur to any attempt to interpret providence. Dissociating its movements from the presence and the power both of heaven and of hell, they feel no interest in the aspect, and can derive no instruction from the events, of providence. But, if it so happened, that his accuser was, ever since his death, a raving maniac, shut up with a sister, who shared her confinement and her madness, their brother acting as their keeper; that her father, who encouraged her in her falsehood, was suddenly struck down by death, but not until he had confessed his sin to his minister and asked his forgiveness; that the family in which the calumny was chiefly fostered, was singled out, from all the families around, by a disease, unique in its symptoms and irresistible in its progress, and that one after another was smitten by it, till within a few days five or six dead bodies were carried out of that household to the grave; that one, to whom his position and character gave considerable influence, and whose conduct tended to produce in other minds the suspicion, which he led them to think was in his own, spent the last months of his life feeding his remorse by memories of the past while despairing in prospect of the future; that another, who made her-

self notorious by giving shelter and encouragement to the accuser, spent her last weeks in fetters; and that the happy home, into which the member of presbytery returned, on the day on which he had done his utmost in support of the accusation, soon became the scene of successive afflictions, till he himself, left widowed and almost childless by a series of stunning deaths, passed his last days in misery; would not even these hesitate to deny that such incidents taught us something; and would not he be unenviably bold, who, in the face of such a series of providences, would still dare to circulate the calumny, by which enemies sought to brand with dishonour the name of the servant of the Lord?

It was in 1842 he received the degree of D.D. It was granted to him by the University of the city of New York. It was from themselves, rather than from him, the universities of his native land withheld the honour, by neglecting to award him this degree. By dunning and dining an influential professor, some men have won the honour from a Scottish university in other days, and, as a memorial and explanation of their success, been allowed to append D.D. to their names thereafter. By long, long digging into musty tomes for lore, which they spread over pages that were never read, others have earned a degree as a reward of labour; and in remembrance of their toil, as well as in token of honour, they write LL.D. after their name in future.

But a man, whom the Lord highly honoured, whose fame was in all the Churches, whose talents and attainments were remarkable, whose eloquence was universally acknowledged, and who, if he had less than some theologians of useless lore, had above almost all other divines skill to work for the Church's good, would receive no honour even from the university in whose classes he was once a distinguished student.

The ten years' conflict was now coming to a crisis. With zeal unabated and power unimpaired Dr. Macdonald devoted himself to the work of preparing the Highland congregations for the approaching Disruption of the Church. The following journal, written by the late Mr. Allan of Kincardine, who accompanied him on two tours in Sutherland, will show the amount of work done by him for the Church at this critical period:—

“Journal of a trip to Sutherlandshire by Rev. Dr. Macdonald of Urquhart, and Rev. H. Allan, appointed by the Convocation Committee to communicate information to the people on the present position of the Church, in January 1843:—

“*Tuesday, Jan. 17.*—Arrived at the manse of Kincardine to breakfast, and preached that day at Creich (Rev. Murdo Cameron's), and addressed the congregation on the important objects of the present mission. The people very attentive and apparently deeply interested.

*“Wednesday, 18.—*Proceeded in the morning to Lairg. Mr. M’Gillivray received us kindly. Preached in his church to a crowded audience. After which explained the position of the Church and her present prospects.

*“Thursday, 19.—*Proceeded through Strathfleet amidst wreaths of snow, just on the wane, to Rogart. Called at the manse; Mr. Mackenzie, minister, from home. Preached in the open air in a corner of the parish of Dornoch, indenting his parish, and near his church, to an audience of about fifteen hundred, who seemed to listen with deep attention and interest. Immediately after the addresses, the work of signing commenced—a worthy and venerable elder (John Sutherland, above ninety) having led the van. That evening proceeded to Rhives, where we were most kindly received by Mr. and Mrs. Gunn.

*“Friday, 20.—*Took a trip to Clyne and Loth to make arrangements for future operations, and returned in the evening to our good quarters at Rhives, after having settled to preach on Saturday at Helmsdale, and Sabbath at Clyne. Had a meeting in the evening with the elders of Golspie. Were led to expect the minister of Golspie’s pulpit, but had a note of refusal from him next morning.

*“Saturday, 21st Jan.—*After an early breakfast, started for Helmsdale, where a congregation of fourteen or fifteen hundred were waiting us. Preached in English and Gaelic, and addressed them in each of

these languages. The audience here also deeply interested in the business of the day. Returned in the evening to Clyne manse, and were concerned to find Mr. Mackay laid up in consequence of a severe accident.

"Sabbath, 22.—Preached in the churchyard (Clyne) to an immense congregation, not under three thousand. Spent the evening chiefly with Mr. Mackay at his bedside.

"Monday, 23.—In consequence of previous notice, the people assembled in order to an explanation of the position of the Church. Not less than two thousand five hundred were present, several of whom were from neighbouring parishes. Marked attention given to the sermons and addresses. Returned in the evening to our hospitable friends at Rhives.

"Tuesday, 24.—Not having had permission to preach in Golspie, met with the people in the open air on the Links, where a commodious and comfortable tent was erected for us, and where the greater part of the parishioners were present, and evinced as deep an interest in the information communicated as any of the other audiences whom we had occasion to address. In the evening, at Rhives, fixed our plans for visiting Assynt and Stoer, &c., and sent intimations accordingly to the ministers of these districts, bearing that we intended visiting them next week.

"Wednesday, 25.—After parting with our good friends at Rhives, who entertained us most kindly, and cheerfully accommodated crowds of people from the

neighbourhood, who came there to attend family worship every evening, we proceeded to Dornoch, where we had previously arranged with Mr. Kennedy to preach. Arrived to breakfast. Preached in the open air to upwards of two thousand, and after addressing them in Gaelic at considerable length, preached in English in church to a respectable audience, and addressed them also on the object of our mission.

Thursday, 26.—Proceeded on our return to Kincardine, where a large congregation were assembled for sermon. Had here also another opportunity of addressing the Creich people, the greater part of whom were present. This was deemed necessary and seasonable on account of reports having reached us that evil-designed individuals had been attempting to pervert the minds of the people, and the many well-disposed amongst them expressed themselves well pleased that these misrepresentations were met and obviated.

“TEXTS PREACHED FROM—JANUARY 1843.

Creich	Gaelic	John xv. 16.
„	English	„
Lairg	Gaelic	Ps. lxxx. 14.
„	English	Prov. xxiii. 26.
Rogart	Gaelic	Matt. xxii. 21.
Helmsdale	Gaelic	Ps. xcix. 1.
„	English	Ps. xcix. 105.
Clyne	Gaelic	John xvi. 10.
„ (Sabbath)	English	John iii. 3.
„ (Monday)	English	Gal. vi. 15.
Dornoch	Gaelic	Rom. viii. 31.
„	English	Matt. xvi. 16, 17.
Kincardine	Gaelic	Isa. lv. 3.

"TEXTS ON SECOND JOURNEY.

Assynt Church	...	...	Gaelic	...	...	Ps. ii. 12.
Lochinver (Saturday)	...	...	Gaelic	...	...	Dan. iii. 17, 18.
„ (Sabbath)	...	...	Gaelic	...	...	John xii. 21.
„	...	...	English	...	...	Isa. lv. 6.
Rosehall (Tuesday)	...	...	Gaelic	...	...	Ps. cx. 3.
„	„	...	English	...	...	Ps. cxvi. 10."

"Journal of a trip to Assynt on the business of the Convocation, by the Rev. Dr. Macdonald and Rev. H. Allan :—

"*Tuesday, 31st Jan.*—Rev. Dr. Macdonald arrived from Kiltearn manse at Kincardine about twelve noon, and preached in the tent in the churchyard of Kincardine to about two thousand people, and had a fresh opportunity of addressing the Creich people, who were present in great numbers, on the object of our mission. Prevented from proceeding to Assynt that evening as intended, owing to the very boisterous state of the weather. After going a short distance, were obliged to put back.

"*Wednesday, 1st Feb.*—Left Kincardine manse at half-past seven. Breakfasted at Inveran, Captain Clarke's, and proceeded by Oikel Bridge to Assynt manse, where we arrived about five o'clock, being a distance from Kincardine manse of forty miles. Encountered almost the whole way severe storms of wind, rain, and sleet.

"*Thursday, 2d Feb.*—A dreadful day with drift and snow. Preached in the church of Assynt in the forenoon to a full house, notwithstanding the state

of the day; and, after addressing the audience on the position of the Church, felt happy at seeing the eagerness with which the people came forward to sign their adherence, for in less than an hour one hundred and nineteen names were put down. Intended that afternoon to start for Lochinver, with the expectation of meeting on the following day with the people of Stoer, but were unable to proceed on account of the snow and drift, and were contented to remain for the night in our good quarters.

“Friday, 3d Feb.—Though prepared to leave Assynt manse at an earlier hour, were prevented from doing so, from the stormy state of the day, till eight o’clock, when we set out amidst deep snow and drift, which not only retarded our journey, but rendered it rather hazardous, so that we did not arrive at Lochinver till three P.M., far too late to proceed to Stoer, even had the unabated storm permitted us. Thus, it took us seven hours to travel fourteen miles. Indeed, we never encountered such weather—wind and drift beating constantly in our face, so that we were obliged to employ a guide on horseback the whole of the way, to point out the road before us. Not being able to get to Stoer as proposed, sent an express to Mr. Davidson to inform his people of our meeting next day at Lochinver, where they could have an opportunity of attending, the distance being about six miles. On arriving at Lochinver, we took up our quarters under the hospitable roof of Mr. D.

Macdonald, where we were most kindly welcomed and entertained by his amiable lady in his absence, he being in England at the time.

“Saturday, 4th Feb.—Preached to a large audience in the Lochinver meeting-house, and addressed them afterwards on the subject of the Church question, after which the signatures proceeded rapidly ; Mrs. Mackenzie, Letterewe, and her daughters, Mrs. Macdonald and Miss Mackenzie, having been the first to sign their names. Numbers attended from Stoer who were directed to sign their names in their own parish.

“Sabbath, 5.—Preached in Gaelic and English, when from the crowded state of the house, great numbers were obliged to sit outside, but suffered no inconvenience owing to the providentially mild state of the day. In the evening, a houseful attended for family worship and lecture—Mrs. Macdonald having kindly and readily accommodated them.

“Monday, 6th Feb.—Left our good quarters at half-past eight, and proceeded, through deep snow, to the manse of Assynt, on our way homewards. We arrived there about eleven o’clock, where we rested for two hours, and in the meantime baptized a young stranger whom Mrs. Gordon had introduced into the world during our stay at Lochinver. Starting from the Manse of Assynt at ten o’clock, arrived at Oikel Bridge about seven o’clock, having been accompanied for several miles before by Messrs Matheson and M’Kintosh on their return from Tongue.

After stopping at Oikel Inn for upwards of an hour, during which we took some refreshment and addressed an assemblage of the neighbours on a portion of Scripture, we proceeded to the manse of Rosehall, where we arrived by ten o'clock. Thus we performed a journey of forty miles, by the kindness of providence, through deep snow and wreaths by the way, which, but for the kindness of men who volunteered their services to clear the paths, would have been insurmountable; and so disinterested were these persons, that when offered remuneration they positively declined, observing that their acceptance would be a reproach to the country considering the services in which we were engaged.

"Tuesday, 7th Feb.—Preached in Rosehall church, Gaelic and English, and addressed the large audience in reference to the position of the Church. After which the people proceeded immediately to sign the adherence. In the evening, reached the manse of Kincardine, in health and safety, for which we have much cause to praise the goodness of the Lord, having never in our lifetime remembered encountering such tremendous storms. At the same time felt happy at having been able to accomplish the object of our mission, and, we trust, with success."

Among the people of the North were a few who, to zeal for the honour of Christ, united a clear apprehension of how it was involved in the conflict between the two parties in the Church, and who were pre-

pared to defend the position they assumed against all gainsayers. There were many who knew just as much of the merits of the question, as to be persuaded that the evangelical party were right, and to be prepared to stand with heart and hand upon their side. Besides these, there were others who merely knew that those whom they were accustomed to regard as true ministers of Christ and true men of God, were on one side, and that the mere hirelings who always lived below the suspicion of caring for the honour or for the flock of Christ, were on the other. It was not unusual to charge all the people of the North with the lack of any higher intelligence than was possessed by these last. "They blindly followed designing leaders" was some men's way of speaking of the Highland exodus. "The Highlanders," Dr. Macdonald once said, "are charged with having acted ignorantly at the time of the Disruption. They blindly followed, it is said, a few ministers and laymen who were popular among them. Even if it were so, it is to them no reproach. 'The fairest among women' herself was once at a loss what to do, and whom to follow; and the direction given to her by her beloved was to 'go forth by the footsteps of the flock,' and to 'feed her kids beside the shepherds' tents.'"

He had no hesitation as to his own path of duty. He was not the man to waver when the crown rights of Jesus were assailed. After the Disruption he

cheerfully forsook the old manse, and retired to a small cottage in its vicinity. He flitted again to a larger but not more comfortable house, and a third time to the Free Church Manse, where he spent the home share of the last three years of his life. During the erection of a new church, he preached in "the burn," long celebrated as the place of the great communion gatherings. It was there he preached on the first Sabbath after his return from the Disruption Assembly. His Gaelic text on that day was Gal. v. 1, from which he preached a most stimulating and cheering sermon.

After the attention of parliament was directed to the refusal to Free Church congregations of sites, on which to erect places of worship, and when the Site Committee was taking evidence, an attempt was made to excite prejudice against the Free Church by citing all the strong sayings of her leading ministers, as evidence of their intolerance and bigotry. Sir James Graham had employed a host of purveyors all over the country, to gather all the scandal against the Free Church which they could find, that the Baronet of Netherby might have a lapful of garbage with which to pelt the Free Church leaders when they appeared as witnesses before him. One of Dr. Macdonald's sayings was reported to the champion of the Establishment, and was regarded as a choice specimen of the extravagant bigotry of the Free Church: "The Church of Scotland, as now consti-

tuted," Dr. Macdonald said, "is a Christ-denying, God-dishonouring, and soul-destroying church." That he made such a declaration cannot be denied. He has been heard to repeat it publicly after it had been denounced by Sir James. The language was strong, but in the sense in which he used it, quite capable of being defended. He referred to the altered constitution of the church, and to the abstraction embodied in that constitution, and not to the membership and office-bearers of the church. That Christ was denied, his very position in the Free Church declared, though his tongue should never speak it. If the King of Zion is denied, he who set him on his throne must be dishonoured. Thus too is the Holy Spirit provoked to withdraw his presence, and when he departeth, souls must suffer. It seemed to him impossible that those who would not practically acknowledge Christ as King of Zion, could preach the whole truth regarding him; and from a mutilated gospel he expected no good to souls. It was on these grounds he rested the statement which so stirred the blood of Graham, and roused the ire of many a Herodian besides.

When, in August 1844, a meeting of the General Assembly of the Free Church was held in Inverness, Dr. Macdonald was appointed joint moderator along with Dr. Macfarlane of Greenock. It was thought that as they met in the Highlands, the minister whom the Highlanders most delighted to honour,

should be placed in the Moderator's chair; and, as so large a proportion of the audience understood Gaelic better than English, it was deemed desirable that Dr. Macdonald should explain to them, in their native tongue, the proceedings of the Assembly each day. At the opening of the Assembly he preached a Gaelic sermon. When he announced and read his text, there were few Gaelic-speaking hearers in the hall who could refrain from smiling. Many, who could not understand a word of Gaelic, remained during the Gaelic service. These, observing the excitement caused by the reading of the Gaelic text, were eager to find out the passage in their English Bibles, and were certainly not less excited than the Celts, when they were directed to the words, "And these, who have turned the world upside down, are come hither also." Referring to the occasion on which these words were first spoken, he stated the charge which they involved, examined the spirit in which that charge was preferred, and exposed the falseness of the grounds on which it was based. He then referred to the similar charge brought against the Free Church; traced it to the same spirit as that of the enemies of the apostles; vindicated the Free Church; and flung back the charge of being disorderly on those who would dethrone the King of Zion, and enslave his blood-bought people. The text had actually been applied to the meeting of the Free Assembly in the Highland capital, by the lead-

ing representative of Moderatism there. Hearing of the intended meeting, he, in those honied accents in which he could so deftly utter his sneers against Evangelism and its supporters, but forgetting from whom he borrowed the taunt, and against whom it was first directed, said, "So these that have turned the world upside down, are coming hither also." This was told to Dr. Macdonald, and determined him in his choice of a text, and amply justified his mode of treating it.





CHAPTER XIV.

LAST DAYS—DEATH—CHARACTER.

DURING the last four years of his life, and till within a few weeks of his death, he continued his wonted work. There was no abridging of his labours, no decay of his mental vigour, and no waning of his fervour in preaching the gospel. His sermons were shorter, but this was owing to their greater conciseness; and if there was less energy of manner, there was an accession of unction in his preaching. He delivered at that time a sermon which he himself called his ‘miniature discourse.’ After an introduction, he announced two heads, spoke on each of them, and applied the doctrine to three classes of hearers, all within ten minutes. A minister who heard that sermon, and who marked the time which the preacher occupied, declared, that in that short time he had delivered as much matter as would ordinarily be spread over an hour.

The last entry in his journal is dated in 1848, and records his labours during his last preaching tour. It is headed, “Jaunt to Greenock.”

"*Tuesday, Sept. 19.*—Left home, and stopped that night in Mr. M'Kenzie's, at Kessock.

"*Wednesday, 20.*—At 7 A.M. went aboard the steamer, and reached Mr. Davidson's new manse at Kilmalie at 5 P.M.

"*Thursday, 21.*—Preached at the opening of Mr. Davidson's new church, forenoon, afternoon, and evening.

"*Friday, 22.*—Preached at Fort-William in Gaelic and English, and after dinner stepped on board the steamer, and reached Oban that evening.

"*Saturday, 23.*—Started this morning for Greenock, where I arrived at 5 P.M.

"*Sabbath, 24.*—Preached in Gaelic from Eph. v. 14. Afternoon, in English, 1 Cor. ii. 5. Evening in English, Isa. xlv. 24.

"*Monday, 25.*—Visits.

"*Tuesday, 26.*—Visits.

"*Wednesday, 27.*—Preached in Gaelic in the evening, Luke xix., Zaccheus.

"*Thursday, 28.*—English in the evening, Ps. cxix. 105.

"*Friday, 29.*—At Kilmun.

"*Saturday, 30.*—Forenoon at Dunoon.

"*Sabbath, Oct. 1.*—Preached at Greenock, Gaelic, Rom. iv. 5. Afternoon, in English. Evening, in Seaman's Chapel, Prov. xxiii. 26.

"*Monday, 2.*—Went to Campbeltown.

"*Tuesday, 3.*—Preached in English, Ps. cxix. 105.

" *Wednesday*, 4.—Preached in Gaelic, Rom. iv. 5.

" *Thursday*, 5.—Sailed to Kilmory, Arran, and preached there in Gaelic, Eph. ii. 1; and in English, Isa. xlv. 24.

" *Friday*, 6.—Came by steamer to Ardrossan, thence by train to Paisley, and from Paisley to Greenock, where I preached at 7 P.M., in English, Isa. lv. 3.

" *Sabbath*, 8.—At Greenock, Gaelic, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; English, Ezek. xxxvii. 9.

" *Monday*, 9.—Preached Gaelic in the evening.

" *Tuesday*, 10.—Preached at Dunoon.

" *Wednesday*, 11.—Preached at Kilmun, Gaelic and English.

" *Thursday*, 12.—Greenock. Evening in English, Rom. iii. 19–31.

" *Friday*, 13.—Meeting of the congregation.

" *Saturday*, 14.—Visited some sick people.

" *Sabbath*, 15.—Gaelic, Matt. ix. 11; English, 2 Cor. v. 18. Evening at Port-Glasgow, Gal. ii. 16."

On his return from the south he resumed his wonted work at home, and preached quite as often as usual to neighbouring congregations. The shortness of time, the glory of heaven, and the Father's love, were the themes on which he chiefly dwelt in his last sermons. The prayer of the penitent thief was one of his last texts. During the last weeks of his active labour, he preached repeatedly from the

words, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." In one of his last sermons he declared, that looking back on his preaching, there was nothing which he regretted more than how little he had said regarding the love of God the Father. He preached his last sermon in the Free Church of Kiltarn. His text was Eccles. ix. 10. This, of all others, was the message by which such a ministry as his could be most fitly closed.

His foot was blistered by an uneasy boot. Not regarding the sore as serious he continued his usual work, till at last his foot became so inflamed that he could no longer leave his room. Still he felt no anxiety about the wound; but it continued to increase in painfulness, and at last medical advice was sought. All that skill and kindness could suggest was done towards arresting the progress of disease in the foot, but in vain. Mortification set in. A medical consultation was held. Six medical gentlemen were present, who had to decide in rather peculiar circumstances. The patient was one whose fame was in all the churches, and for the issue of whose illness thousands waited with intense anxiety, and around the house, in which they met, were gathered scores of stalwart men, each one with a cudgel in his hand, threatening to prevent by violence a surgeon's knife from touching their

revered pastor's limb. Uninfluenced by the threats of the excited crowd, the doctors decided that the amputation of the limb ought not to be attempted, further than the removal of the part which mortification had destroyed. But the virus passed into his system; and he became delirious, and occasionally unconscious. At last he lay, for a few hours, merely breathing, till he fell asleep in Jesus on the evening of April 18th, 1849.

His behaviour and conversation during his last illness were just what those who knew him best would have anticipated. He expressed no anxiety, uttered no complaint, and indicated no choice as to the issue of his sickness. "I have no right to ask what He is to do with me," he said, "I leave myself in the Lord's hands." With more than his wonted warmth he welcomed every Christian friend who came to see him. Once he expressed his surprise that any friend of Christ would visit one so unworthy as he was. To a minister who visited him during his last illness he said, "There are three things which the Lord hath done for me; and may you have cause to praise Him for dealing so with you. He did not expose my heart sins to the world; He did not punish my secret sins in my public work; nor did He alienate from me the affections of His people during all my ministry."

During the earlier days of his last illness he was able to sit up in bed, and to conduct family worship

as usual. But as his strength declined, another read, and he offered prayer. Even this at last he was unable to attempt. But in his hours of delirium, he would audibly pray and preach, as if a congregation were before him. Even then his wonted precision of thought and expression did not fail him. A little congregation outside the door of his room listened to prayers and sermons such as they had heard before only from himself. But his mind soon ceased to give indications of activity. There was usually silence thereafter in the room in which he lay, broken only by stertorous breathing. Even this at last was hushed under the wing of death, as his spirit went to its mansion above, leaving the body to sleep its long quiet sleep, till the morning cometh, on which they shall meet again, to spend thereafter an eternal day together in the Father's house.

The following interesting account of his last days was kindly drawn up, at the writer's request, by the Rev. A. Mackenzie, Edinburgh:—

“My object is to furnish you with a few memoranda of the two last interviews I had with him, the one a few months, and the other a few hours, before his death.

“About Christmas 1848, he paid a visit to his daughter here, who is married to our respected sheriff-substitute of Nairnshire. There was this difference betwixt that and previous visits—that those were in connection with the supplies he gave

at the various communions in the district—while this was expressly a visit to his friends. Some of us had remarked on this at the time, as it was so unusual. He came, as if to bid us his farewell; and I believe that after leaving Nairn, on his way home, he remained a day in Inverness, which he spent in going the round of all his friends there.

“During the few days he spent here, he preached both at Nairn and Auldearn; or, as he used to call it, he gave us a word; and that word, particularly in the latter place, I know, many have not and cannot forget. His text was Eccles. ix. 10, ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.’ After a powerful and practical exposition of his subject, he concluded by pressing on Christ’s people the doctrine of the text, and enforced it by the following touching anecdote of the late worthy Mr. Macphail of Resolis. That eminent minister, when on his deathbed, was one night peculiarly restless. His friends, inquiring the cause, asked him, was he in bodily pain? or, was any cloud coming in between him and the Saviour in whom he trusted? Were his evidences of a saving interest in Christ darkened? or, what was the reason of his tossings to and fro upon his bed? The memorable answer he gave was—‘that he felt as much assured of being for ever with his Saviour, as he was of lying on his bed; but I know not,’ says

he, 'how I can look Him in the face, when I think how little I have done for Him.'

"This visit was to us a very happy one. Our much loved friend was singularly cheerful, and mirthfully lived over again some of his early years in the company of friends who had been his associates at college; but who, like him, were soon after taken away.

"Little did we think, as we looked on that powerful frame, that it was so soon to be smitten down. About two or three weeks after this visit, symptoms of that disease which terminated fatally began to appear in his foot. Hoping that rest and the blessing of God on the means employed would soon restore him to his usual vigour, his friends, in different parts of the country, agreed to supply his pulpit for some months. I felt it to be my pleasure, as well as duty, to give a Sabbath at Ferintosh. A long arrear of debt lay against me; as he was, since the period of my settlement in Nairn, my chief assistant both at our summer and winter communions; and I was only too thankful to pay so small an instalment of it. My Sabbath happened to be, I think, the third Sabbath of April, 1849. I arrived at the manse about six o'clock on Saturday evening. He was rather anxious about my appearance; and, the more so, as he expected some information from me, about his name grandson at Nairn, who had been seriously unwell. I was able to tell him, after the

usual salutations, that I had left him better, which cheered him much. That child died on the same day with his grandpapa. I was astonished to find him so contented and happy, knowing the agony he for months had endured; and how unusual a matter it was for him to be confined for days, much less for months. After a short conversation in which all his strong interest in old friends was displayed we bade each other good-bye for the night.

“Next morning, being the Sabbath, and having so much work before me, I was only in his room for a few minutes, but observed a marked change to the worse from the previous evening. He was sinking into that comatose state which, at times, precedes dissolution. Still, no immediate danger was apprehended, as the different members of the family were able to attend the house of God at one or other of the diets of worship. Shortly after dinner, however, Miss Macdonald came into the dining-room, where Mrs. Macdonald and I were sitting, and in tears told us that her papa was so much worse. An express being sent off for the doctor, we all went upstairs at once to his bed-room, when the sad and rapid change was only too visible. He had fallen into that sleepy state from which he could not be roused, and his breathing was very loud. Having engaged in prayer at the request of Mrs. Macdonald, I took my seat for nearly two hours beside his couch. But, though I had his hand in mine and

frequently stroked his brow, his stupor still continued. In this state he remained over the night. As I sat by that bed I felt that I would not wish to see my beloved father and friend long in that state. He looked to me, as he lay there, with his massive heaving chest, like the hull of some mighty war-ship, that fought triumphantly in many a battle and out-rode victoriously many a storm, and that now lay stranded on some beach, with all her masts and rigging gone. I would prefer that the violence of the storm would shatter that hull to fragments, than that it should remain as it is—so contrary to its former self. What I now witnessed was so unlike all that I had ever seen of the Doctor, and that I had associated with his clear and active intellect and powerful frame, that I felt, that if it were not the Lord's will that he should recover, I would not desire to be looking long upon his wreck.

“His medical attendant, who lived at a distance, arrived about eleven o'clock, and remained till next morning, doing all that skill and kindness could accomplish, but with little effect. As I knew how anxious the friends at Nairn would be to know the truth about their father's state, I made particular inquiry in the morning at the doctor, ere he left, as to what he now thought of his patient's case? His answer was, that ‘if he did not rally in a short time, he could not stand it long.’ On my way downstairs to breakfast I went into his room to inquire how he

was, and found him still in a dozing state. The nurse that attended him wished to rouse him up, that he might recognise me. I begged her not to do so, as it might trouble him. She, however, insisted on it, as the lethargy of the previous evening was now not so heavy upon him. Having done so, she asked him, 'if he knew who that was beside him?' I will never forget the strange look he gave her, as if that look would say to her—how could you think I did not know him; and putting out his hand, he gave it to me and wished me good morning, adding with his usual kindness, 'I hope you have breakfasted, sir?' to which I replied, 'Not yet, but that I was just going to it,' with which he seemed satisfied.

"Becoming more conscious after breakfast—though it was that consciousness which often precedes dissolution, that bright but temporary flickering of the taper ere it goes out for ever—he expressed a wish to see me ere I left for home. Shortly after eleven o'clock I went to his room; and whether he wished to be alone with me or not, I cannot say, but all left it. On coming beside him, he thanked me cordially for the help I had given him in his affliction. I replied, 'It was well my part to do so, for that the debt was all on my side.' He then spoke to me of his friends in Nairn, and the deep interest he had, not only in his relations there, but in some who were the companions of his youth; and to each of them

he sent by me his warmest Christian regards. On thanking me again for this my visit, I said that I hoped he would not speak so, for I was only doing what was both my pleasure and my duty to do; adding, that many a weary step did he take in coming to Nairn to tell us of Christ and his work, whatever benefit we derived from his messages. He replied, 'It was well my part to do so, for I ever found Him a good and kind Master.' 'You can then say of Him,' I added, 'what Polycarp did, when his persecutors would have him deny Christ by throwing some grains of incense on the altar to Cæsar—"Eighty and seven years have I served Him, and He never did me any wrong." I proceeded thus far, when so clear at the time was his own mind that he concluded the sentence—"Would you have me then deny my Lord and Master?"'

"Anxious to know the views he entertained of his state, I asked him 'if he thought there was any hope of seeing him again in Nairn, as he knew, if it were the Lord's will, the great gratification it would afford us.' His answer was, that 'his hope was now becoming very feeble.' After some further conversation, he took both my hands in his, and bidding me an affectionate farewell, using the words of the dying patriarch to his relatives, 'God bless the lad,' we parted; he to go to his reward, and I to go to my work. I believe he spoke but little after this. In about five hours thereafter, he breathed his last.

And thus God took to himself his servant, on whom he bestowed a singular combination of endowments; so that whether we view him in the massive build of his body, so significant of strength, or in the clearness and activity and power of his intellect, or in the richness and vigour of his grace, he was peculiarly fitted for doing that work to which his life was consecrated, and which well entitled him to the appellation of 'the Apostle of the North.'

"That playful mirthfulness, in which he at times indulged, did not forsake him amidst all his sufferings. His sorrowing widow stated to me, that the week before his death she was sitting in an arm-chair beside the fire in his bed-room, and his eye observing her, he said with a smile, 'Wife, I will soon put you out of that seat.' To which she at once replied, 'I will have no objections, however soon.'

"As my object in this letter is to furnish you with some *notanda* of our valued friend, I would not conclude without one fact which I had in regard to him from our much esteemed father, the Rev. Duncan Grant of Forres.

"Many years ago, Mr. Grant went to spend a few weeks at Strathpeffer. In doing so, he purposed to be a Sabbath with his old friend the minister of Ferintosh. On arriving at the manse, he found him in bed. He was pressed very much to preach to the people who had assembled in the house of God for prayer, but declined, from the state of his health ;

he spent the most of the day with the patient in his bed-room. In the afternoon, I think, of the Sabbath, Dr. Macdonald said to his friend, 'You have been asking me the matter with me; I will tell you now. For some time I thought that God was not revealing himself to me in his majesty, as I believe I needed; and I, in my ignorance, was often praying that he would do so. Last Sabbath, on commencing my first prayer in the church, I did so by pleading with the Lord that he would thus reveal himself to me; and he was pleased to do so; but the effect was so overpowering to this weak frame of mine, that I could scarcely get on with my public duties that day; and here I am suffering in body from obtaining what I then asked;'—showing us how little of the glare and power of divine glory the mightiest of us can here endure."

His funeral was attended by an immense concourse of people, and his remains were laid beside those of Mr. Calder. Their bodies, having spent their strength on the same field of labour, now lie together in the same spot of earth; together they shall arise at the last trumpet's sound; together ascend to their place on the right hand of the Judge; contiguous may be their mansions in the eternal home; and in one service shall they be employed for ever. A visitor of their graves in the old church-yard of Urquhart shall certainly see nothing to indicate that the men of

this generation are given to garnishing the tombs of the prophets.

Dr. Macdonald's place in the visible Church is empty now, and his work on earth is done. But those who loved him would desire to think of him as they knew him while he was yet among them, and to receive their last impression of him, as he was, while his place on earth still knew him, and his great work was still in progress.

Short in stature; his complexion dark; his physical frame compact, instinct with animation, and showing no trace of ailment or infirmity; his face, with features well defined and regular, showing no peculiarity that weakened the force of its impression as a whole; a brow broad and high; and eyes dark and quick of glance, kept expressive by an active intellect, and ever beaming with fresh love and cheerfulness;—those who knew him cannot forget how he seemed and moved while he was yet among them.

His mental powers were admirably adapted to the work for which the Lord had destined him. His intellect had as much of a mathematical intention, as gave rare precision to his thinking, while his imagination was sufficiently active to preserve it from a bare and cold rigidity. Careful to examine any subject to which he directed his attention, and conceiving clearly any views presented to his mind, his memory easily retained his acquisitions of knowledge. Eager to add to his stores of information,

his reading was extensive; and if his devotion to theology and to his work as an evangelist allowed him not to prosecute his researches far into other fields of study, his general information was gathered out of all departments of thought, and could be employed at pleasure for the instruction of others. His heart had greater width than depth. It could receive impressions from all quarters. But of intense feeling it was incapable, and never prone to exclusive attachments. He could for the time meet every phase of suffering and want with kindly sympathy; but he could not rivet his affections to any one object, except as grace inclined or as duty required him to do so.

His Christian experience was such as furnished the fittest training for an evangelist's work. He had early learned to give to the work of Christ and to the work of the Spirit each its proper place, when dealing as a preacher with men, because he had first learned to do so when dealing as a suppliant with God. The great truths, according to which his personal Christianity was moulded, formed the great lessons of his preaching—justification, on the ground of Christ's righteousness, imputed by God and received by faith, as securing a title to life; sanctification by the Spirit, through the truth, as preparing for its enjoyment; and new obedience, as evidence of an interest in it. Preserved from marked vicissitudes of feeling, he was ever ready for the work

which was given him to do in the service of the gospel.

As a theologian he was, in some respects, unsurpassed. There were divines who had read more extensively, and were possessed of more varied learning. Many could quote works which he had never read, and a few could discuss topics which he had never studied. But there was no man in his day who had a clearer view of the system of revealed truth, and a more extensive acquaintance with the mind of God in his word; who could state with greater precision the doctrines of the gospel; indicate their mutual connections, and define their places in the system with more exactness; and who could apply the truth more skilfully to the consciousness and the work of the Christian life.

It was as a preacher he attained his eminence. There have been not a few who could defend the doctrines of the gospel against learned disputants with greater success. Many have equalled, and a few have surpassed him, in the power to affect the feelings of an audience. In skill of illustration he was inferior to some of his contemporaries, and there were others who were more skilful casuists. But all the elements which combine to constitute a true preacher of the gospel were found in him in rare harmony and in excellent measure. His expositions were always careful, luminous, and exact; his statements of doctrine were marvellously precise; the

arrangement of his ideas was always logical and textual; his facility of expression was singularly great; his illustrations, always apt, were often striking; his practical counsels to Christians, suggested by his own experience, were always wise and seasonable; and his appeals to sinners were most solemn and powerful.

While never losing sight of God's sovereignty in dispensing his grace, he never hesitated to proclaim his good will to all. He believed on the same authority the electiveness of God's covenant purposes, and the indiscriminateness of his gospel calls. No preacher was more careful not to fetter the sovereignty of God on the one hand, and on the other, not to limit the overtures of his grace. It is strange that those who believe the doctrine of election and who preach it, and who also believe, and in their teaching insist on, the necessity of regeneration in order to faith, should be deemed incapable of honestly, heartily, and hopefully inviting sinners, in the Lord's name, to Christ. Surely it is the man, who has made his election sure, and who, in the light of that doctrine, sees his salvation secured by the immutable purpose of Jehovah, who feels himself, above all others, under obligation to declare the will of God, whatever it may be; who, above all others, regards salvation as worth the offering and worth the having; and whose heart, as it came into closer contact with the fountain of God's love, is fullest fraught with its bountifulness,

and readiest to overflow, if it may, in declarations of God's good will to all. He makes much more than others of God's will. To its sovereign exercise he has traced up his salvation as to its spring; and he is more likely, just on that account, to take it, as it is revealed, as his only rule in dealing for God with men. He has been in the habit too of thinking of God's will in its most unaccountable volitions. He is therefore quite prepared to find mysteriousness investing it; and its incomprehensibleness is to him but an evidence of its divinity. He cannot reconcile the good will declared to all, with the saving love confined to the elect; but he takes the revealed will of God as it is given to him. He would have others, he would have all, to come in; for the salvation he himself has found is both sure and free—sure as the covenant secures it, free as the gospel offers it. In Scripture light he sees the will of God, in its relation to the chosen, and in its bearing upon all. The one melts his heart, the other enlarges it. By the one love enters into the very depths of his soul and surcharges it; and the other marks the channel, in which it may be discharged in fervent declarations of God's good will to all.

He stands consciously between souls who are impotent because dead, hostile because sinful, and in bondage because enslaved, and God, who alone hath "the excellency of the power," and who uses that power as he who will have mercy on whom he will.

have mercy, and who hardeneth whom he will. Can he stand there but “in weakness and fear and much trembling?” But may he not, in such a position, have hope of success? Must he ignore the utter depravity of the sinner and the sovereignty of God in order that he may not despair of fruit from his work? There are who judge that he must, and there are preachers who act accordingly. They rest the result of their preaching entirely on the hearer’s will, and they ply him with all their power of persuasiveness in order to bend him to an acquiescence in their views. They usually keep out of sight all except the free deliverance from wrath which is revealed and offered in the gospel. Of the ideal safety which they thus propose, the carnal mind, urged by the fear of death, has no objection to accept, when it is presented apart from the person and the cross of Christ and from the way of holiness. The results may prove that there is power in such preaching. Converts may indeed be multiplied indefinitely under it. In respect of mere temporary influence—mere seeming present success—it has an immense advantage. It affords effective help to the operation of the natural conscience, and at the same time meets the sinner’s selfish desire for peace. It avoids what is offensive to the unrenewed mind, easily allays a nascent anxiety, and may therefore seem to accomplish great things. But of what eternal avail are its results? Dr. Macdonald’s preaching was not such as this,

issuing only in the result of a mere ephemeral excitement.

To Dr. Macdonald preaching was no toil. He was so devoted to it, and became so dependent for his happiness on his work as an evangelist, that the day of which he wearied most, was the day on which he did not preach. He shrunk from acknowledging on any occasion that he felt fatigued, in case it might be suspected that he was wearied of his work, because sometimes wearied in it. And yet it was he who said, "I never went to the pulpit without fear, and I never left it without shame."

His humility was always evident to those who knew him intimately. He was impatient of flattery; a compliment always disconcerted him. And yet he formed a due estimate of his own gifts, position, and work. His low opinion of himself did not arise from his undervaluing his attainments. He could bear to know them without being elated. He could without selfishness claim the position which the Lord had assigned to him. It was indispensable to his usefulness that he should know, as he did, the work which was given him to do by the Lord, and what he had received to be laid out in his service. There was found in him the rare combination which made the great apostle of the Gentiles so peculiar—an assurance of being favoured above others by the Lord, and a willingness to take his place below them all in His presence. Paul knew that he was not

behind the very chiefest of the apostles ; and yet he counted himself the less of the two least of all the saints, and of all sinners he called himself "chief."

In society no companion could be more agreeable. He was always radiant without ever making an effort to shine. The light of his cheerfulness was spontaneous—he was pleased and therefore he was pleasant. He could easily adapt himself to the ever varying circumstances in which he was placed ; and yet he always retained his own idiosyncrasy in character and manner. His power of adaptation arose from his amiability and unconsciousness, never from his assuming a character not properly his own.

Those who were instructed and delighted by Dr. Macdonald's masterly discourses, cannot but regret that no carefully written specimen of his preaching can be found. His busy work as an evangelist left him no leisure for elaborate writing ; and any care bestowed by him on composition was expended in the construction of Gaelic poems. He had as much fondness for poetry as moved him to attempt to write it ; but though he had poetic taste he lacked poetic skill. Though he could admire genuine poetry he could not produce it ; but in deference to his poetic tendency, as a memorial of the work to which it prompted him, and to remind us of his present bliss, his memoir shall close with the only specimen we have

of English verses from his pen. They were suggested by Campbell's well-known stanza—

“ Few, few shall part where many meet,
The snow shall be their winding sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet,
Shall mark the soldier's sepulchre.”

MORAL.

“ But happy he when thus laid low,
Whether on sea, or earth, or snow,
Who finds that all his scenes of woe
Have disappeared rapidly !

Who, wafted on angelic wing,
Enters the palace of his King,
There to dwell, and e'er to sing
The glory of his victory.

To dwell with him ; removed afar
From hateful strifes, and din of war ;
Where sin and sorrow never mar
The streams of his felicity.

Where many ransomed sons shall meet
To part no more—the scene's complete.
Hence, then, far hence, thou winding sheet.
Give place to Immortality.

Let rising glory chase away
The shades of night, and nightly sway,
And usher in the blissful day
That measures long eternity !”



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