

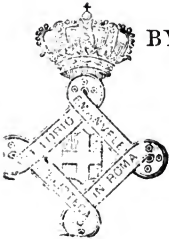


# L I F E

OF THE LATE

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## PREFACE.

THAT one who wrote nothing of any general value, whose correspondence was unusually scanty and mostly of a very ordinary nature, and whose private papers consist almost exclusively of mere scraps on the backs of letters or printed papers, might yet be one of the most remarkable men of his age, is quite possible; but to attempt, in a Memoir of his life, to give the public any adequate evidence of this is surely a hazardous undertaking. Yet that must be considered the object of the present work. As the oldest surviving very intimate friend of Dr. Duncan's early days, I undertook it at the request of his trustees with a readiness which I afterwards had reason to fear was more rash than wise. Up to the period when he ceased to reside in his native city, my own resources, aided by the recollections of a few early associates, were abundantly sufficient for the task, and to that great and decisive period of his life I humbly think that a measure of justice has been done. But coming in close contact with him after that but

occasionally, and dependent, therefore, on the materials which might be supplied me by others, I was for a long time under the apprehension that my account of the latter and larger half of Dr. Duncan's life—the only period of it which might be called his public life—would prove a comparative blank. In fact, the first summer after his death had passed away ere anything of consequence regarding either his missionary life at Pesth or his professorial life in Edinburgh came to hand. At length, however, I was furnished with abundant materials for the former, and by little and little with sufficient and very varied materials for the latter—the only difficulty now being how to turn these to the best account. On examining all the papers, I soon saw that a division would require to be made between the materials for tracing his life and unfolding his character and gifts, and those which would show what he was in the Pulpit, at the Communion Table, and in Meetings for Devotional Exercises. And as I have a great abundance of the latter, which could not possibly have been embraced in a Memoir without overloading it, I early resolved to keep back for the present all this matter, and to issue it by and by in a separate volume. Accordingly, those who knew and valued Dr. Duncan chiefly in those spheres will not find in the present volume what perhaps they most reckon on; but since, if life be spared,



they shall have in due time the matter they desire—and beyond their expectations, if I mistake not—they will not grudge, in the meantime, to learn about the *man* they valued a good deal more than they have yet known. There are, however, other papers besides these, of real value, which I have been obliged to exclude from the present, and reserve for that other volume; partly to avoid swelling this Memoir inconveniently, and partly because the subject-matter of them seemed less suited to the present work. I refer to some letters—particularly to a long one addressed to the congregation of North Bute on the death of their eminent and beloved pastor, the Rev. Peter M'Bride—to some interesting conversations on points of doctrine and spiritual experience, and to other matter of a similar nature.

I am deeply conscious of the imperfections of this book. But having done my best with the materials in my possession, I commend it to the candid judgment of the reader, and to Him in honour of whose singular grace towards the subject of it I chiefly undertook it at the first, and have carried it through to its completion.

Having named those who have chiefly aided me in this work in the places where their contributions have been inserted, and there expressed in general terms my obligations to them, I have only here, in a single

word, to thank them warmly. One lady, however, to whom I am more indebted than to any other—partly in the earlier, but more especially in the later years of Dr. Duncan's life, and up to its very close—is named only as "Miss R." until the two closing chapters, to which the reader is referred on this point.

I received a communication of great length and much interest from my esteemed friend the Rev. A. Moody Stuart; but for reasons known to him I have been unable to do more than barely allude to it in pages 70 (note) and 155.

The references to the "*Colloquia Peripatetica*, by the late John Duncan, LL.D.," for which the public are so deeply indebted to the Rev. William Knight, are to the *second edition* (1870).

ABERDEEN, May 1, 1872.

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## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTH AND BOYHOOD : 1796-1805.

DR. JOHN DUNCAN was born of very humble parentage, in the year 1796, at Gilcomston, in the parish of Old Machar—the more suburban of the two parishes which make up the city of Aberdeen.<sup>1</sup> His father was a plain working shoemaker,<sup>2</sup> of whose not very prepossessing form I have still a dim recollection, having in early youth called one evening at his humble dwelling to see John. His mother, Ann Mutch, was the youngest of five children, by a second marriage, of a well-to-do farmer and blacksmith in the parish of Belhelvie, six miles north of Aberdeen. The occasion on

<sup>1</sup> His name does not appear in the parish register, nor is any record of his birth known to exist. That he was born in the year 1797 was his own impression ; but he was far from accurate in such matters, as we shall presently see, and a comparison of certain fixed dates leaves no doubt on my mind that the date above given is the correct one.

<sup>2</sup> "I wonder," he said, only six days before his death, "at the goodness of God, how I have been cared for, provided for—I, a poor shoemaker's son. Providence has been kind."

which this young woman first met her future husband deserves notice here, proving as it did the turning-point in her own religious history, and through her of a similar change on two other members of her family, while it determined the early history of the subject of this Memoir, materially influenced his religious sympathies in after life, and in later years not imperceptibly affected his judgment on public religious questions.

Ann Mutch had come to Aberdeen on a visit to some relatives; and while there—though both she and the family she lived with belonged to the Established Church of Scotland—she had gone one day, on the invitation probably of some acquaintance, to the Secession church, then under the ministry of the Rev. James Templeton. Being an intelligent woman, and (as I have been told by a near relative) the flower of her family, she could hardly fail to find in the Scriptural clearness and rich, homely simplicity of that excellent man's preaching a refreshing contrast to the sapless, half-heathen sermons too often dealt out in those days in the pulpits of the Establishment. From that day forward she worshipped nowhere else; the grace of God took possession of her heart; her whole character was changed; won by her Christian influence, a brother and sister were induced, as I have said, to join her;



and all three, being received into full communion with the Secession Church, walked every Lord's day from Belhelvie to Aberdeen and back—a distance of twelve miles—to church. Small district prayer-meetings were then held in all the congregations of the Secession Church, as systematically as class-meetings among the Wesleyans—every member belonging to one of them, as a matter of course; and Mr. Duncan being a member of this congregation, it was doubtless at one of these meetings that that acquaintance was first formed which ripened into a marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Duncan had several children, but none of them survived the period of infancy save the subject of this Memoir, who was the eldest. "The earliest thing I remember," said he, a few years before his death, "is the company being gathered for my brother George's funeral." Indeed, John himself was but a weakly child,<sup>1</sup> and an attack of small-pox at a very early age brought him to the gates of death. One of his mother's sisters (the one just referred to) came to see him die; but as she gazed on the poor infant, those words of the Scotch Metre Psalms (cxviii. 17) came forcibly to her mind—

"I shall not die, but live, and shall  
The works of God discover" [or "tell"].

"And, oh! what a 'works of God' has he lived to

<sup>1</sup> "You know," he once said, "what a sickly boy I was."

'discover,'” said she, after the great change had passed upon him, and his mouth was opened to utter the deep things of God. That terrible disease, however, though it left hardly any perceptible skin-marks, deprived him totally of the sight of one eye. In after life he used playfully to boast to me that he could see better with his one eye than most people with their two, nor did strangers readily discover that he had not the sight of both.

His earliest and saddest loss was the death of his mother, when he was about five or six years old. Consumption cut her off, as it had already done all her children but one.<sup>1</sup> For him she had prayed much as her only surviving child ; and long after her removal, when his inconsistent conduct was breaking the hearts of all his godly relatives, his excellent aunt used to say, “He’ll come right yet, for never were a mother’s prayers not answered.” In the present case the loss was peculiarly distressing, as it threw a sickly child upon the tender mercies of a passionate father, who even to his own wife was thought hardly kind. But

<sup>1</sup> “It is a wonder,” said he, a few years before his death, “that I have lived to be so old ; for my mother died of consumption when she was twenty-three.” A strange mistake this, for by a family memorandum, of which I possess a copy, it appears that she was born in August 1771 ; in which case, if Dr. Duncan were correct, she must have died two years before he was born.

all the more did this draw to the motherless boy the hearts of that brother and sister who in early life had owed to her all that they most valued. They had him often visiting them at Old Aberdeen, where they had come to reside ; and a wonderful boy they thought him. Mounting a chair in his father's house, he would imitate the minister's preaching ; and when sent to a school adjoining his own house, he would get up on a cart near the school-door and harangue his school-fellows in a preaching style. One day, when visiting his friends at Old Aberdeen, his aunt went to dig potatoes in a field which they had near the sea, taking John with her on her back. On reaching the spot, he descried over her shoulder a ship in the distance, and directing her attention to it exclaimed, "That's the ship that's to take me to preach to the heathen." "But what if they winna hear you?" "Then I'll gang to some other place," cried the quick little fellow.

The school he was sent to, afterwards removed to a better locality, was kept by a well-known character, "Saunders Munro," the beadle of the Secession church, whose reverent appearance, as he bore the Bible and Psalm-book up the pulpit stairs, dressed in a black suit and white neckcloth, filled the youngsters of the flock with awe. What kind of teaching he would get from this honest man we can pretty well guess. The

Alphabet and other very elementary helps to beginners, printed on the fly-leaf of "The Mother's Catechism," and "The Shorter Catechism," gave the scholars their first lessons. Then came "The Proverbs of Solomon," printed as a school-book; and when the simpler portions of this were got over, the children were "put" into the New Testament, and then into "The Bible"—which completed their reading education. In writing and spelling, it will hardly be supposed that this school was pre-eminent. In fact, if from it the boy Duncan was sent straight to the Grammar School, no other explanation would be needed of what is otherwise almost unaccountable, that through life he wrote like one whose early penmanship had been neglected, while his spelling to the last was more phonetic than alphabetic.

Mr. Duncan had married again before the year 1804. His second wife, Sophia Sutherland, having been previously an Episcopalian, the marriage ceremony was performed according to the Episcopalian form—an offence in Secession eyes for which Mr. D. was summoned to undergo the discipline of the church.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards, however, she herself became a staunch Seceder. After

<sup>1</sup> "I had a stepmother," said he to Miss R., "who used me very well; but I remember the neighbours trying before the marriage to poison my mind against her. She was an Episcopalian before her marriage, and my father, a Seceder, was brought under discipline for being married in the English form."

Mr. Duncan's death she made a second marriage to a respectable member of the Secession church, of the name of Booth; and Dr. Duncan regarded her to the day of her death with the utmost gratitude, affection, and reverence; visited and wrote to them jointly as his "parents" after his removal from Aberdeen, and every now and then sent this excellent woman some pecuniary token of his regard.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Soon after Mrs. Duncan's second marriage, Booth retired from business, spending the remainder of his life in ease and comfort. He lived to see his protégé, Mr. Duncan, married, and was as proud of John and his wife as if they had been his own children. He died in 1839. Between Mrs. Booth and her step-son there was a treasured correspondence. That her little granddaughter should be called after the Archduchess of Hungary was to her a high gratification. At the end of his warm and precious letters (in addition to an occasional bank-order), there were generally (says a niece of hers, through a clerical friend) round circles which had their own touch of tenderness and humour; within were the names of the members of his family, whose kisses to grandmamma they represented. When she took her last illness, during his Professorship in the New College, he paid her a visit. Sitting by her bedside one day his eye caught sight of a strange-looking bag behind a press-door, in a treasured corner. "What's in this bag?" he asked her attendant. "Letters," was the answer. He got hold of it, and sitting down before the fire and opening the bag, he found all his own letters to her, even from boyhood, carefully arranged. To prevent any other eyes resting on them, he began committing them to the flames. "What's that burning?" asked the invalid. "Only my own letters," was his cool reply. "Your letters?" she cried, raising herself hurriedly on her elbow. "Give me them! give me them!" and stretching out her wasted fingers she grasped them as a miser would his gold, and placed them under her pillow. To her they were dear memorials of the past, recalling many of his struggles and many a sorrowful and joyful moment of his history, reminding

The image of this worthy woman even now is vividly before me, her beaming benignant eye bespeaking her fitness for the difficult position she had to occupy, between a severe father and his fragile but remarkable boy, whom she had charged herself from the outset with the duty of rearing. She soon became proud of him, and took pains with him in the preparation of his lessons. Her niece well remembers how she used to tell of his rattling off these lessons of his at such a speed that she had to cry to him every now and then, "Mind the stops, Johnny, my boy." It was his father's poor ambition to bring him up to his own trade, and a fair trial was made of his capacity in that line. Their little kitchen served as the workshop, and there did the father do his best to initiate his boy in the mysteries of the craft—waxing eloquent every now and then on the degeneracies of the Established Church. But the boy proved a hopeless subject in the art of shoemaking. In his awkward fingers nothing

her, too, of some of her own happiest years, when, rid of worldly cares, some of these letters came to her from abroad, like angels from afar, pointing her to the better land.

I have before me what appears to be the rough draft of this excellent woman's will, dated 1855, which I found among Dr. Duncan's papers, in which he and a writer in Aberdeen are constituted her sole executors. Small pecuniary legacies are left to persons there named, while her Family Bible and such of her books as he chose to take are left to Dr. D. The residue is left to the niece, through whom I have these particulars.

went right; threads were badly waxed; soles were spoiled; even patches were botched. At length his tears and sobs aroused his best friend, and she prevailed upon his father to take him off the working-stool. In her opinion, education was what he was made for, and learning he should have if she should have to work her fingers off to procure it. She toiled to have him decently clad; and though the shoemaker's purse-strings were not easily opened, she managed to have him "put on" with a measure of decency. Nor was this an easy matter; for such was his inaptitude for toilet operations, that from childhood he was a marked object for slovenliness in dress, and though latterly he did improve, he was never remarkable for tidiness.

From his earliest years he showed a passion for learning, insomuch that once, when the child was very ill, he was heard to say several times, "O that God would spare me till I get on the red cloakie"—meaning the red gown then and still worn by the University students at Aberdeen. Even in his boyhood he had fits, too, of that intense abstraction which, though it contributed to that wonderful power of conception and expression on every subject which he afterwards displayed, settled down in his case, and at an early period, into an incurable defect. At meals, for example, with spoon in hand, he would explode in bursts of

laughter, *apropos* of nothing. For this his father would frown upon him, but his penetrating mother saw in it the promise of something she might yet be proud of.

Once when at school, having lost his book, and fearing his father's vengeance, he went straight to his trusty friends at Old Aberdeen, who, to get him out of the scrape, asked his father to let him stay a while with them. He gave his consent, and they bought the little fellow another book—which would no doubt soon be as soiled as the old one—and so the affair blew over. But on another occasion the father's severity went to such a length that the high-spirited boy was driven to cry out, "Kill me, father; kill me at once!" Afterwards—when he must have been old enough to know Latin, and probably in his early Grammar-School days—being angry with his father for some act of severity, he took it into his head to make his will in these laconic terms: *Omne matri, nihil patri* ("To mother all, to father *nil*"). But in this Mr. Duncan's experience was not unexampled. For not a few God-fearing parents—parents even fond of their children, from severe natural temper, perhaps, and mistaken views of the right way of dealing with waywardness, real or supposed, in their children, pursue towards them a course fitted to sour them and defeat its own end. Even Luther does not hesitate to say, in one of his



works, that the terror and estrangement from his father which his discipline produced, were with difficulty afterwards shaken off; and as for his excellent mother, "she once scourged him till the very blood came, and all for one miserable nut." The boy Duncan felt this the more, that there was in him a spirit which could fire up almost savagely when irritated, and at such times he could put forth a strength of which few who looked at him on ordinary occasions would have thought him capable. Once, for example, when his companions were going to drown a cat, his finer feelings were so hurt that he rushed in amongst them, rescued the creature, and then soundly thrashed the chief culprit. From that day those who had thought him fair game, and delighted to tease him, ceased to meddle with him. At a later period he had nearly gone much further. In the last year of his life, when speaking of his father's peculiarities, Miss R. remarked to him, that she didn't think he inherited his father's passion, any more than his mother's consumption. "I don't know that," he replied. "I remember when I was a lad walking with a student by the side of a burn. He pushed me into it, when I lifted a stone and chased him for two miles, till he got to his own house. Again, when I was a student in the Se-cession [Divinity Hall], one morning another student,

finding me in bed, struck me so rudely, though in play, that I started up, seized the poker, and if another lad, now a minister in the Secession, had not held me, I think I should have murdered him." Even amidst beautiful displays of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, which he gave in after life, I have seen this *perfervida vis*—this Boanerges-impetuosity—burst forth with almost alarming vehemence, especially when any case of unmitigated wickedness came up before us.

## CHAPTER II.

### GRAMMAR-SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY LIFE : 1805-1814.

JOHN DUNCAN entered the Grammar School, it would appear, in the year 1805-6, when he was nine years of age. This school, though not then so distinguished for the accurate scholarship it imparted, as in subsequent years under the late Dr. Melvin and his disciples, had even then superior masters, and sent students to the University who traced their distinction at College and in after life in no small degree to the training received and the tastes and aptitudes acquired at the Grammar School. Of its five classes, taught by four masters, the Rector had the two highest—the fourth and fifth—ranged on opposite sides of one class-room, so that the boys of the one class could see who excelled in the other. This will explain the following bit of information which I have from a gentleman now resident in London:—"John Duncan was in the fourth class when I was in the fifth. He was considered a

clever scholar, maintaining his position in the first 'faction' [or bench—each 'faction' containing only four boys]. He was rather eccentric in his dress and carriage, but I was not at all intimate with him." Curiously enough, even at this early period the twin passions of his mental life—Languages and Metaphysics—had begun to take hold of him. As to Languages, when in the fourth class, at the age of about twelve and a half, he was detected reading Ariosto under the "faction."<sup>1</sup> And with respect to Metaphysics, I find the following singular entry in one of his conversations with Mr. Knight:—"When at the Grammar School in Aberdeen, I got hold of a volume of George Campbell,<sup>2</sup> in which he ridicules as lamentable folly the notion that to God there is no past, present, or future—to Him all are one. I remember well how I *abhorred* George Campbell for that. I thought it the most magnificent thought I had ever met with."<sup>3</sup> No ordinary boy could that be who at

<sup>1</sup> I have this from my esteemed friend Dr. G. G. Brown, late Inspector-General of Hospitals in India, who, along with the study of medicine, took a course of theology under his father, Dr. W. L. Brown, Principal and Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen, at the same time with Mr. Duncan.

<sup>2</sup> George Campbell, D.D., the immediate predecessor of Dr. Brown in the Principality and Professorship of Divinity at Aberdeen, whose numerous works on the Gospels, on Miracles, etc., are well known.

<sup>3</sup> *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 26.

such an age would care to dive into such a book, and on one of the profoundest subjects of human thought could so feel the "magnificence" of one view of it, as to "abhor" the man who condemned it, and this with such intensity that after the lapse of nearly sixty years, he should "well remember" how strong had been the feeling. Was he then a mere dreamy boy-bookworm? Far from that. He could enjoy play and fun as well as others. During his school holidays—spent at his uncle Robert's farm (at Greenburn, a few miles north of Aberdeen),—his cousin and he herded the cattle and played together; and at a much later period, in the midst of ever widening studies, in the intervals of deep thought and grotesque abstraction, we shall find him brimful of rough humour and even boisterous mirth.

It was not unusual with good scholars, whose parents were unable to support them at the University, to "compete for a bursary" at the completion of their fourth year at the Grammar School, and, if successful, to go straight to College, without taking the fifth year at all. This however was not the case with young Duncan. Poor though his father was, he was allowed to take his fifth year at the Grammar School—probably tutoring a little to lighten his expenses. At the close of that year he "competed;" and an anxious time that must have been both for his parents and himself, for

failure might have led to his giving up hope of a University education, and of entrance thereafter into the Christian ministry—on which their hearts were set. But he succeeded, though the bursary he gained appears to have been small. At the age of fourteen, accordingly, he was matriculated for the first time, and so “got on the red cloakie.”<sup>1</sup>

In so precocious a youth, and one so passionately devoted to study, who would not have predicted distinction at the University? Yet the reverse appears to have been the fact. He passed out of all the Arts classes without attracting special notice in any of them. In Mathematics, indeed, and the Natural Sciences, no one who knew him would have expected much from him, for he never showed the least aptitude for such studies. Even in Logic and Moral Philosophy, where

<sup>1</sup> The following entry appears in the matriculation books of the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen :—

“1810-11. *Joannes Duncan, f. [filius] Joannis calcearii.*” [John Duncan, son of John, shoemaker.]

This Bursary system at the Aberdeen University has proved a great boon to many poor boys; and not a few who have risen to distinction in life would probably never have emerged from their native obscurity but for the advantages it confers. Held as they are throughout the whole undergraduate course, even the smallest of them—and they were much smaller then than now, when the two Universities of King’s and Marischal College are united into one—sufficed to meet all the demands of class-fees and other expenses, in the case of boys whose parents resided in town. At present no less a sum than £3000 a year is thus spent.

one should have thought him in his proper element, little scope was given for the display of superior capacity and attainment, owing to the way in which they were then taught. But as to classical scholarship, one would scarcely have been prepared for the following statement of a respected and observant fellow-student, the Rev. Dr. Anderson of Morpeth:—"I entered Marischal College along with the late Dr. Duncan. He was a poor lad, very ill put on, and only the holder of a small bursary, gained by competition. During the whole sessions of the undergraduate course he made no mark for himself. He was in fact treated as a dolt. When called up he was never prepared, and was uniformly reprehended for his negligence. The reason of this we only discovered when he had reached the Magstrand class [the fourth or highest—that of Logic and Moral Philosophy]. We found that our fellow-student, whose soubriquet then was not 'Rabbi Duncan,'<sup>1</sup> but 'Darby Duncan,'<sup>2</sup> had been always a year behind us. When *we* were studying Greek, *he* was

<sup>1</sup> For the last thirty years of his life he went by that name in familiar parlance, from the peculiar character of his studies and a certain air in singular keeping with this title.

<sup>2</sup> This name he got from an amusing circumstance that occurred at the end probably of his fourth Grammar-School year, when, at the public examination of the whole school—in presence of the Provost, Magistrates, and Town-Council, the clergy, and other friends of education—the boys of the higher classes recited some

studying Latin—reading himself up in Tacitus and Cicero, and, I am sorry to say, in Musculus too.<sup>1</sup> It was only when we got into the Divinity Hall that we discovered that we had had at our side *incognito* a mind of broad measurement. In those days the students were allowed to criticise each other's discourses, but only in the language in which the discourse was delivered; and when the Exegesis came to be criticised [a Latin discourse on some controverted head of Divinity, which every student had, and still has, to write and read], Duncan outshone all his compeers in the fulness and

piece of English prose or poetry, selected by themselves. On this occasion the boy Duncan, with his awkward gait and odd appearance, stepped forward and shouted forth,

“Old *Darby*, and Joan by his side,” etc.

This created such universal merriment, that he was dubbed “*Darby*” or “*Darby Duncan*,” a name which was kept up upon him even for years after he became a licentiate of the Church, and by which his few surviving school-fellows and College contemporaries love still to recall his memory.

<sup>1</sup> But why “sorry”? For if this took place in his last College session, he was already (as we shall see) a Divinity student in the Secession Church, and so “*Musculus*” was quite in his line of things. Wolfgang Musculus, born in Lorraine in 1497, and educated in a Benedictine monastery, had studied hard and begun to preach with success; but embracing Luther's views, he fled to Strasburg and thence to Augsburg. Having subsequently adopted the Reformed opinions, he was appointed Professor of Divinity at Bern in 1548, and died in 1563. His works (commentaries on Genesis, the Psalms, and Isaiah, and on Matthew, John, and Romans, with a volume of “*Loci Communes*”) with other theological works of the Dutch and Swiss school, were much studied by the more learned of the Secession Church, and recommended to the Divinity students.



freedom with which he delivered his opinion on the merits or defects of the exercises in the most correct and Ciceronian Latin. It was a perfect treat to hear him." Reserving the rest of this letter to the period of his Divinity studies, I must make a remark or two on so much of it as I have here given.

My own opinion is, that from the first, even when "uniformly negligent and never prepared" with the *prescribed* lesson, he was reading a great deal more and harder than the best prepared of his class-fellows, but all irregularly and miscellaneous. With such habits, and teaching as he did at times for several hours a day, he would come very unready to his class, and when called up to read a passage he had scarcely, if at all, looked at, would stumble over it. Even when tolerably prepared, if called up unexpectedly—his mind probably away to something very different—he would, as often in later years even in the pulpit, speak in a hesitating, stammering way. Perhaps he would seem to stick altogether, and so be set down by superficial observers as "a dolt." In fact, this irregularity in every study, and that omnivorous desire of his to push into ever fresh regions of thought and new departments of literature, which stuck to him through life, proved a great obstacle to the complete mastery of details, and occasioned slight inaccuracies even in departments

where he had few equals—for example, in the classical languages. Thus, in those very criticisms—the Cicero-nian purity of which was such a treat to Dr. Anderson—another fellow-student tells me that on one occasion, when he was saying “Quod ad . . . pertinet,” Dr. Brown called out, “*attinet*, Domine.” Naturally enough his abnormal absence of mind and rare absorption in the study of the moment, would be mistaken for stupidity. It was productive, indeed, of wonderful results, but it came the length at times of almost extinguishing the conscious perception of visible and tangible objects; and in later years he once and again lamented that it had shut him out from much of the beautiful and the true around him, and discoloured even his theology. An amusing illustration of the extent to which this absence went, even in early youth, I have from a relative of his own, who lived near where it occurred. In those days he used to take his walk, proceeding slowly up the same street, from day to day, book in hand. Observing this, the tricky fellows of the neighbourhood, who knew their man, would steal quietly up alongside of him, and when they saw him rapt in study, would put their foot before his and trip him up—taking to their heels with a loud laugh. On one occasion his walk was along the south turnpike. Absorbed with his book till weary limbs made him look

up, he found himself far on towards Stonehaven, a distance of nearly sixteen miles.

Mr. Duncan finished his University course and took his degree of M.A., as the records show, at the close of session 1813-14. It was customary, however, in the Secession Church, for those who were designed for the holy ministry, to begin their Divinity studies between the third and fourth years of their undergraduate course. This, accordingly, Mr. Duncan did. But as a rupture had taken place in that branch of the Secession Church to which his parents belonged, and a portion of the Aberdeen congregation, to which the Duncans belonged, had broken off from the main body, it will be necessary here to give a brief sketch of that movement.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DIVINITY STUDENT IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY : 1813-1816.

THE first secession from the Established Church of Scotland, in the year 1733, was caused by no dissatisfaction with its doctrine, worship, government, or discipline. It was just the contrariety to all these which reigned in its public procedure, the anti-Presbyterian policy which dictated all its measures, and the heartless tyranny with which these measures were executed, that drove the first Seceders out of a Church which they loved with all their heart. But half a century's experience of Church existence outside the pale of a Civil Establishment, stimulated by the new feeling that sprang out of the revolutionary movement which swept at the close of last century from France over all Europe, did much to modify the opinions of the great majority of Seceders regarding the right relation of Church and State to each other, and the whole question of the

magistrate's province in the domain of religion. This was brought to a head by the proposal—in that branch of the Secession called "The General Associate or Anti-burgher Synod"—to enlarge the "Testimony" that had been emitted by the first Seceders. The object of that Testimony had been simply to set forth, in a permanent form, the constitutional principles for the maintenance of which they had been driven out of the Church of their fathers.<sup>1</sup> The professed object of the movement for enlarging this Testimony was purely historical—to bring it down and render it applicable to the time then present. After much delay and discussion, this New Testimony was adopted by the General Associate Synod in the year 1804. But so far from being a mere enlargement of the original one, it differed from it even fundamentally on one important point. Not only did it contain the germs of what is now known as "Voluntarism," but its statements on the province of the "Civil Magistrate" in matters of religion went beyond what the most distinguished advocates of that principle in the United Presbyterian Church would at present be

<sup>1</sup> "Act, Declaration, and Testimony, for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland; agreeably to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the Three Nations; and against several steps of defection from the same, both in former, and present times. 1736."

prepared to defend. No wonder, then, that the imposition of this document as a mere enlargement of the old one should be resisted and resented by the staunch adherents of the old views. But their resistance was vain. So, seeing this, the following ministers—the Rev. Archibald Bruce of Whitburn, the Rev. James Aitken of Kirriemuir, the Rev. James Hogg of Kelso, and the Rev. Thomas M'Crie of Edinburgh—being together on a sacramental occasion at Whitburn—constituted themselves into a separate Presbytery, and this at the very time when the Supreme Court of the General Associate Synod was holding its sittings at Glasgow, in August 1806. On learning this through an indirect channel, the Synod took proceedings against them, and finally deposed them, on the 2d September thereafter.

On the merits of this question, and the wisdom of the steps taken on either side, this is not the place to speak. But on all hands it will be admitted that the first and last of these deposed brethren were the most distinguished ornaments of the Secession Church, and that the other two were second to none in general and just esteem.<sup>1</sup> They were soon joined by other Secession

<sup>1</sup> Of *Dr. M'Crie* it is superfluous to speak. The most eminent ecclesiastical historian that Scotland has produced, his *Lives of John Knox and Andrew Melville*, and his *Histories of the Reformation in Spain and Italy*, have spread his fame through all Europe and America, and will always be regarded as classic productions; while the new life latterly infused into the Church of Scotland,

ministers, while the little body itself—"The Constitutional Associate Presbytery," as they called themselves—was gradually enlarged by accessions from different Secession congregations throughout the country.

At Aberdeen this disintegrating process, though early begun, did not for several years come to an open rupture. Those members of Mr. Templeton's congregation—including the Duncans—who agreed in disapproving the principles of the New Testimony, and who sympathized accordingly with the Associate Presbytery,

and which has produced such marvellous results, may be said to date from his history of its rise and early struggles in the biographies just named.

*Mr. Bruce's* literary attainments, and vast stores of knowledge, even in rare departments, made him deservedly looked up to even beyond his own body. As a private gentleman he was of singularly primitive type, while in the pulpit his measured slowness would in our day be scarcely endured even by the most patient. But "for solidity and perspicacity of judgment, joined to a lively imagination"—said Dr. M'Crie, who knew him well, in an address to the students of Divinity after their Professor's death—"for profound acquaintance with the system of theology and all the branches of knowledge which are subsidiary to it, and which are ornamental as well as useful to the Christian divine; for the power of patient investigation, of carefully discriminating between truth and error, and of guarding against extremes on the right hand as well as the left, and for the talent of recommending truth to the youthful mind by a rich and flowing style, not to mention the qualities by which his private character was adorned, Mr. Bruce has been equalled by few, if any, of those who have occupied the Chair of Divinity either in late or in former times" (*Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D.*, by his son, the Rev. Thomas M'Crie [D.D.], 8vo, 1840, p. 56).

"Next to Mr. Bruce in point of age, and almost as prominent a

met together from time to time for prayer and conference, and at length took the painful step, in some cases even with tears, of formally separating from their much-loved minister and the bulk of his attached flock, and applied to the Associate Presbytery for a supply of Divine ordinances. The "Kirk-Session"—consisting at first of two elders and the minister supplying for the time—was constituted, and the small congregation organized in February 1810, during which month both Dr. McCrie of Edinburgh and Mr. Chalmers

character in this little band, stood *Mr. James Aitken*. With a strikingly portly aspect and commanding voice, Mr. Aitken possessed mental qualities which rendered him one of the most edifying and popular preachers of his own or any other denomination. A clear-headed, conscientious, and courageous Presbyterian of the old school, he was distinguished for his knowledge of Reformation principles, and for his adherence to them in profession and administration. His favourite study was history, and he was intimate with the topics involved in the present controversy. He was one of the Committee which framed the draft of the New Testimony, and manifested that he had no prejudice against the measure, could it have been accomplished in any tolerable form" (*Ibid.* p. 57).

"*Mr. Hogg* was a classical scholar, an accurate divine, and a man of determined resolution. Pious, humble, and inoffensive in his walk, he was beloved by all around him. And it does not, in our estimation, weaken his testimony to the truth, that, in the warmth of his spirit and honest zeal for civil liberty, he at one time appeared to cherish different views on the subject of controversy from those which more deliberate examination induced him to adopt. It is interesting to find that every member of this little band was marked by his attachment to the cause of genuine liberty; still more so that they were men of God, each of them distinguished for genuine piety" (*Ibid.* pp. 59, 60).



of Haddington appear to have officiated. Mr. Aitken of Kirriemuir, however—as being nearest to Aberdeen—was most frequently sent to minister to the little flock. I was myself taken, while yet a child, by one who was of them, to the sort of garret in which they held their earliest meetings; and well do I remember his noble figure—for he was one of the most imposing of men to look at—while his deep, rich voice was music in my young ears. The issue of these visits was the election and ordination over the little flock as their pastor of this excellent man's son, the Rev. John Aitken—who, having studied at Aberdeen, and attended and taken part in all their meetings, was well known to all of them, and who was then newly “licensed” as a preacher of the Gospel—in the year 1811.

Two years after this Mr. Duncan offered himself, and after examination was accepted and enrolled, for the first time, as a student of Divinity in this body—the Constitutional Associate Presbytery—whose Professor of Divinity was the Rev. Archibald Bruce of Whitburn.

The following extracts from the minutes of the Constitutional Presbytery, in possession of the Rev. Dr. Wylie—formerly of that body, now of the Free Church of Scotland—containing all that relates to Mr. Duncan, have been kindly made for me by that gentle-

man; and as they constitute a link in the narrative, they have their proper place here :—

“*Kirriemuir, July 26, 1813.*—The Presbytery met, and was constituted with prayer by Mr. James Aitken, moderator. Sederunt with him—Messrs. James Andrew and John Aitken of Aberdeen, ministers; with William M’Gillop, ruling elder. Mr. James Ferguson of Kinmundy was appointed clerk *p. t.* After transaction of business, the Presbytery adjourned till next day.

“*July 27.*—Mr. John Aitken reported that Mr. John Duncan, student, from his congregation, wished to be examined with a view to attend the Divinity Hall. He informed the Presbytery that he had attended three sessions at the Marischal College, Aberdeen, and meant to attend a fourth. They accordingly proceeded to examine him upon his knowledge of Latin, Greek, Philosophy, and Mathematics. He was also dealt with as to his knowledge of religion and views in prosecuting his studies. Mr. Duncan being removed, the Presbytery, after some deliberation, unanimously agreed to admit him to the Hall. Mr. Duncan being called in, this was intimated to him.”

“*Whitburn, Aug. 9, 1813.*—Appointed the Divinity class to meet at Whitburn, the 1st of September; and that all the students endeavour to be up there the day before.”

"*Kelso, May 12, 1814.*—Appointed Mr. John Duncan to deliver a homily on John i. 29, at next meeting."

"*Haddington, March 6, 1815.*—Appointed Mr. John Duncan a lecture on Rom. viii. 3, 4, to be delivered on Monday after the Kirriemuir Sacrament."

"*Kirriemuir, July 24, 1815.*—Mr. Duncan delivered his discourse, which was approved."<sup>1</sup>

The Hall (continues Dr. Wylie) was appointed to meet this year, September 6. Mr. John Duncan doubtless attended, but after the above notice (July 24, 1815) his name does not occur in the minutes.

The following reminiscences of Mr. Duncan, with which I have been favoured by an aged Canadian minister, belong to this period:—

"I think it was in the summer of 1814 or '15, when I was living with my parents in the neighbourhood of Fraserburgh [on the Aberdeenshire coast], that a youth of very humble appearance and of attenuated and feeble form, came and introduced himself to me as John Duncan, son of ——. His parents and mine being both Seceders—mine from the Huntly district, under the ministry of the great and good George Cowie

<sup>1</sup> Dr. M'Crie (adds Dr. Wylie) was present at this meeting, and appears in the minutes as Mr. M'Crie of Edinburgh—the usual designation and the only one he would permit to be used in the records of the Presbytery.

—I think they had been mutually acquainted in their early days, going to hear the gospel at Huntly, Cabrach, and other places. The poor dear young man had been appointed parish schoolmaster near Fraserburgh, whether permanent teacher or only to supply during a vacancy I do not know; but he did not stay many months—if he was even months. His appearance was against him; the scholars, some of them considerably advanced, were very insubordinate; and the poor young man left the school.<sup>1</sup> He stayed with us for some time, and his mind seemed then in a state of doubt and conflict. I do not think he had found rest to his soul; but I can well remember what strange flashes of thought he would bring out on various subjects, what wonderful suppositions respecting the works and ways of God, as we wandered along the sea-shore, and gazed upon the works of creation, or talked of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. After this I saw him occasionally for some years, and on one occasion spent two days with him on a journey from Aberdeen to Old Deer [a distance of some thirty miles]. To the best of my recollection he was by that time a decided Christian"—that is, he had got settled in the belief of

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Dr. Anderson, containing a reference to this incident, this aged minister says, "The boys chased him out of the school of Pitsligo; the great master of languages could not manage it."

Christianity, but, if we may take his own word and indisputable facts for it, "a decided Christian" he certainly was not.

As after the death of Professor Bruce, in the year 1816, Mr. Duncan left the Secession and joined the Established Church of Scotland, it is natural to ask how he conducted himself in the former body, and what led to this important change. Strange to say, he not only has left nothing on the subject in writing, but never referred to it in conversation with myself, nor, so far as I am aware, to any one else. But as he frequently alluded, especially in the later years of his life, to the lamentable state of mind in which he entered the Established Divinity Hall; and since the wonderful change which he afterwards underwent can be appreciated only by contrast with the depths into which he had sunk in previous years, I must try to throw some light upon this period of his life from my own knowledge and the materials in my possession.

Trained from earliest childhood in the knowledge and fear of God, and early indoctrinated in the Calvinistic faith of the Church of Scotland, as embodied in the Shorter and Larger Catechisms and in the West-

minster Confession of Faith; familiarized besides, as were all Seceder families, with the heroic struggles and indomitable steadfastness of the Scottish Covenanters, as related in such works as *The Scots Worthies*, *Stevenson's* and *Crookshanks' Histories of the Church of Scotland*—young Duncan would have enough for a time to quench his thirst for knowledge in such things; his speculative turn would be developed by the systematic and far-reaching character of his Church's theology; while his passionate admiration for nobility of character would be nursed by its history and biography, and tend to rivet him to the body which seemed to serve itself heir to his Covenanting ancestors. Certain it is that Mr. Duncan did once "take the Covenants" (as the phrase was in the North), or (as in the South) "enter the Bond," in the very solemn way in which every member was *expected*, and every minister, licentiate, and student of divinity *required*, to set his public seal to "the descending obligation" of these deeds.<sup>1</sup> But a lad of his studious habits, speculative turn, and ever-broadening culture, to whose

<sup>1</sup> The "Covenants" here referred to were—

(1.) "THE NATIONAL COVENANT, subscribed by the King's Majesty and his Household in the year 1580; thereafter by persons of all ranks in the year 1581, by ordinance of the Lords of Secret Council and Acts of the General Assembly; subscribed again by all sorts of persons in the year 1590, by a new ordinance of Council, at the desire of the General Assembly; with a General

polemic temperament the devious paths in religious thought and the heretical side of theological questions presented special attractions, would be sure, in course of time, to find "the place too strait for him" in Secession circles, and be ready to sport opinions horrifying to the simpler and startling even to the best informed of that body. And as the all-subduing, transforming grace of God had not reached his heart for many years after he left the Secession Church, one can imagine how irksome would be his position in a religious body whose atmosphere he could not breathe, and with whose spiritual character he had no real sympathy. One small illustration of this uncongeniality was the estimate formed of him in the little prayer-meeting to which he belonged as a member of the Aberdeen congregation. One of the family in whose house the meeting was held, told me that when his turn came to officiate he was reckoned "a dry stick." But a better illustration of the vein he was in Bond for the maintaining of the true Christian religion and the King's person," etc.

(2.) "The Solemn League and Covenant for Reformation and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Happiness of the King, and the Peace and Safety of the Three Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, taken and subscribed several times by King Charles II. and by all ranks in the said Three Kingdoms." (This document was first drawn up and subscribed on the 28th day of February 1638, in the Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, by noblemen, gentlemen, and ministers, and immediately thereafter brought forth to the thousands who crowded the churchyard, being unable to find

at this time will be found in an incident which occurred at Kirriemuir, either when he was first admitted a Divinity student or when he came to deliver one of his statutory discourses. I have this also from

access to the church, and by them signed with enthusiasm for hours together, until night put an end to the scene, and, the parchment being filled, there was room only for initials.)

These documents will be found printed at large in all copies of the Westminster Standards of the Presbyterian Church. But as some readers may wish to know in what sense and manner these Covenants were renewed in the congregations of the Associate Presbytery, I subjoin a graphic description of it with which I have been favoured by the Rev. Dr. Wylie, who himself, in former days, personally engaged in that proceeding (and having once witnessed the scene myself, I can attest the accuracy of his details) :—

“No one could receive license to preach, much less ordination to the ministry, until he had ‘entered the Bond.’ To enter the Bond was, in fact, to swear the Covenants—‘National’ and ‘Solemn League.’ This was no light affair, and it was gone about befittingly. All who intended to enter the Bond (and all members were encouraged to do so) gave in their names months before. A course of historic reading was prescribed to them, they were conversed with by their minister, the nature of the duty was explained in a course of sermons, preparatory to the work. When the day came (commonly the Fast-day before the Sacrament), the intending Covenanters took their places at long tables immediately in front of the pulpit. First a sermon and the ordinary exercises, then the special work of the day. It was begun by the reading out of the names of the Covenanters. Then came a lengthened and minute ‘Acknowledgment of Sins’ [probably that adopted by a Commission of the General Assembly in 1648, approved immediately thereafter by a Committee of Estates of Parliament, and printed in all copies of the Westminster Standards after the two Covenants, with continuation probably to the time then present], the Covenanters standing up during the reading of it. Then came the ‘Engagement to Duties.’ This was the ‘Bond.’ It reduplicated upon the Covenants—National and Solemn League; but its various engage-



Dr. Wylie, and as the incident occurred under his father's roof, his pictorial details of the whole scene, though long, will not, I think, be unacceptable to the reader :—

ments were suited to the times and circumstances of the swearer. It was read by the minister, the Covenanters standing and holding up their right hands, and proceeded thus :—‘ We, with our hands lifted up to the Most High, . . . promise and swear by the great name of God.’ The duties sworn to ranged themselves under four classes—I. An avouching of the Lord Jesus Christ as their only Saviour, etc. II. A renunciation of all errors and superstition—prominent among which figured Popery and Prelacy. III. A promise to prosecute in their sphere the great end of the Solemn League, viz., the bringing of the Churches of the three kingdoms into the nearest conjunction and uniformity in doctrine, discipline, and government. IV. A promise to use all means in their power for spreading the gospel over the earth. After swearing, every one subscribed his name; and while the subscription was going on, psalms were sung and suitable addresses delivered by the assistant ministers, of whom there were commonly a large number. When all was ended, former Covenanters were invited to signify their continued adherence by holding up their right hand. Covenanters did not necessarily enter the Bond a second time. Some, however, did so. I give an individual instance, because it enables me to mention an incident. I entered it *first* when I became a communicant. I entered it a second time when a theological student, on occasion of the union of the Constitutional Presbytery (Dr. M’Crie’s party) with the Associate Synod (Professor Paxton’s party)—forming ‘The Synod of the Original Seceders.’ The whole Synod—that is, ministers, licentiates, students, and I think a number of elders—then renewed the Bond. The scene took place in Dr. Paxton’s church, Infirmary Street, Edinburgh, the church in which the Rev. Dr. Tweedie preached after the Disruption. I recollect that I chanced to stand opposite the late Dr. M’Crie; we were on opposite sides of a table. At one part of the service I happened to lift my eyes to his face, and was much affected to see that, though it was shaded by his hand, the tears were coursing down his cheeks.”

“ Kirriemuir is a small town in the northern edge of the great plain of Strathmore, about sixty miles from Aberdeen. Its Secession minister, the Rev. James Aitken, was a man of high character and great local fame as a preacher, and Kirriemuir was a great religious centre in the little world of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery. ‘Thither the tribes’ composing that body went up year by year to unite with their brethren in the celebration of the New Testament Passover, on the third Sabbath of July. The journey between Aberdeen and Kirriemuir on such occasions, long as it was, was usually taken on foot, and they went together in companies, not unlike the Israelites on their way to Jerusalem to keep the solemn feasts. The tediousness of the way was beguiled by edifying discourse. As at the ‘men’s meeting’ in the Highlands, a text was selected, and the doctrine contained in it stated, or a ‘question’ raised on it by some of the more elderly or intelligent of the party, while the rest ‘spoke’ to it. On the return journey the sermons they had heard during the sacramental season were carefully gone over, one recalling what another had forgotten; and thus were they as good as twice delivered, and deepened in the memory. The writer, in his youth, often journeyed in these companies, and though too young to take much part in the conversa-

tion, the impression of the pious converse to which he listened is fresh and strong at this hour. Such, we doubt not, were the circumstances of Dr Duncan's journeys to Kirriemuir, to which we find him coming summer after summer for three seasons on end. . . . All the members of the Kirriemuir congregation who were in circumstances to do so threw open their houses to their brethren from other congregations. Hearty exhortations were tendered from the pulpit to be careful to entertain strangers, nor were the people slow to respond to these exhortations. On dismissal, the congregation adjourned in a body to the open space before the church, exchanged congratulations with the visitors, and invited them to their houses; nor did any one leave the ground till he had satisfied himself that there was not one who had 'come up to worship at the feast,' who had not been taken care of. As many as a dozen would be lodged together in one family. Of course, outhouses and every available foot-breadth of room were on these occasions put in requisition. Thus must have been lodged the Aberdeen student on such occasions, passing each week in parties of this character, whose converse was all on spiritual things, and whose social devotions were at times prolonged far into the night; and sometimes into the mornings of the following day. On one occasion, at least, we have the best

reason to know that he was so lodged. The writer's father was an elder in the Kirriemuir congregation, and of course had his house full at communion times. He has heard him tell that on one of these occasions it chanced that among his guests there were two theological students—Mr. John Duncan and Mr. Davis. This did not contribute to the spiritual profit of the company. The two young students delighted in putting puzzling questions to the other guests, and in perplexing their minds by starting ingenious and subtle difficulties. The consequence was the loss of the communion, so far as regarded its social religious edification and enjoyment. It is evident," adds Dr. Wylie, "that by this time he had entered on that speculative career in which he continued so many years, and which brought with it so much mental uncertainty and suffering."

During the last year of his studies at Whitburn, 1815, the present Dr. M'Crie (the historian's son) and Mr. Duncan met for the first time. The following extract from a letter with which that gentleman has favoured me, though but indirectly bearing on our present point, is so graphic that the reader will be glad to have it :—

"It was my first and last session [at Whitburn]. He was a slender youth, of peculiar aspect and manners, and was looked on as very simple, and a fair subject for

those practical jokes so common in the days of youthful folly. We were few in number, and boarded together in a house we called The Barracks ; and out of mere frolic we had a set of rules and a sort of court of review. I recollect that for some petty offence John Duncan was summoned to the tribunal, and being convicted received the solemn mockery of a 'rebuke,' which he took in serious earnest, crying most bitterly. My opinion now is, that his mind had not developed itself ; he was idle, or rather thoughtful, and never ready *in time* with his exercises ; and you can easily conceive that his peculiarities, which grew on him as he advanced, must have been singularly noticeable before they were redeemed in after life, in the estimation of all who knew him, by the gifts and graces with which they were accompanied. But never did he forget his early companions and experiences at Whitburn. I remember that when I was Moderator of the [General] Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland [in the year 1856], he took his seat one day on the steps leading up to my chair, and, struck apparently with the change of circumstances, he said to me, with his serio-pleasant look, 'O man, do you mind about Whitburn and Professor Bruce ? He was a wonderful old man *that*'—doubtless transporting himself to the days when the venerable Professor sat before us in his full-

bottomed wig and silver buckles, lecturing to his sadly reduced numbers [after the rupture in the Associate Synod and the deposition of the four brethren], in the muffled tones of the Dead March in Saul, but uttering a depth of wisdom worthy of being listened to by a whole conclave of bishops."<sup>1</sup>

Here will be observed the same characteristics which, according to Dr. Anderson, marked his University life—an apparent idleness, unreadiness with his written exercises, and that helplessness of manner which exposed him to the jests of his fellows—due partly to the vast variety of thoughts which were ever rising up in that seething brain of his; partly to what this is apt to beget, a procrastinating habit, which was his bane through life; and not least, to an early-contracted aversion to writing, which grew upon him, and became, to his own deep regret in after life, inveterate and incurable. But the reader should not overlook, in this extract, the absence of all indication of general unsoundness in doctrine, or even of wavering in his Secession principles. To a first-year's student, indeed, as Mr. McCrie then was, and in case of its reaching his father's ears, he might be chary of coming on such tender ground. But in so small a party, all housed

<sup>1</sup> Another extract from this letter will be given under a subsequent head.

together, and abundantly free with each other, Mr. M'Crie could hardly fail to have heard of it, if to any of his fellow-students he had at that stage broached anything very wide of the received opinions. I infer, therefore, that up to the close of his last attendance at Whitburn, and the death of Professor Bruce in 1816, nothing fitted to compromise his position in the Secession Church had become known.

About that time, however, something appears to have taken place which brought the matter to a crisis, and would seem to show that internally a change was taking place. An aged and intelligent man, who was a member of the same congregation with Mr. Duncan, and on intimate terms with him—whose memory in details I should not like to trust, but who can hardly be altogether wrong in the present case—tells me that the Presbytery, dissatisfied with Mr. Duncan, threatened to send him back to his studies; that Dr. M'Crie, who was his best friend in the matter, came all the way from Edinburgh to attend a Presbytery meeting on the subject; and that it was this treatment that decided Mr. Duncan to leave the Secession and join the Establishment. That there is error here is evident enough; for the Presbytery minutes, had such proceedings actually taken place, would not have been silent about them, as they certainly are. Still, I think

I see enough to give rise to this story. The period of attendance at the Divinity Hall in the Secession Church was, and still is, extremely short; to compensate for which disadvantage the students were required to prosecute their studies during the long recess under the superintendence of their respective Presbyteries, and more particularly of their own minister. This would lay an obligation on Mr. Aitken to look specially after Mr. Duncan, about whom he would naturally speak often with his father, who, as we have seen, was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with his son. And though one of the meekest of men, this faithful minister, in the light of his father's complaints, would deem it his duty to deal with the student more stringently than he would relish; and probably this would draw forth from him statements not a little painful, and even startling. What, in such a case, was Mr. Aitken likely to do? I happen to know that in several cases of difficulty and delicacy, Mr. Aitken resorted to Dr. M'Crie for advice, and I can hardly doubt that he would do it in so perplexing a case as this. If he did, that wise man, appreciating the rare gifts and attainments of Mr. Duncan, would probably recommend forbearance for a time, in the hope that all would yet come right.

Be this as it may, the decisive step of joining the Establishment appears to have been taken in the



summer of 1816, by partaking of the Lord's Supper in the congregation of the Rev. Dr. Kidd, minister of Gilcomston Chapel of Ease, and Professor of Oriental Languages in Marischal College, Aberdeen; for in offering himself for enrolment as a Divinity student of the Established Church, he presented a certificate from Dr. Kidd, which must have been one of church-membership, else it could not have been sustained.<sup>1</sup>

On the 23d January 1817, the Rev. John Aitken wrote to his father a letter regarding Mr. Duncan, which is still preserved, and of which a copy was kindly made for me by one of the family. It is of too private a nature to be given in full; but the substance of so much of it as is essential to our purpose may here be stated. He says that Mr. Duncan's father had called on him "in a state almost bordering on distraction, to say that he had just told him that he meant to enrol

<sup>1</sup> Certainly, if he was to choose any church to communicate in for the first time as a member of the Establishment, Dr. Kidd's would most naturally be fixed on, not only as being in his own parish, and where were enjoyed ministrations more akin to all he had been used to than anywhere else in Aberdeen, nor even from the high regard which Dr. Kidd ever showed for the Secession body, and his uncommon admiration of Mr. Aitken of Kirriemuir, whom he never failed to hear when he preached in Aberdeen; but especially from his own admiration of Dr. Kidd's genius, and even some of his peculiarities. After the decisive change in Mr. Duncan, Dr. Kidd and he often met; and some of the scenes that occurred between them will come up at a subsequent stage.

himself that day as a student of Divinity in the Established Church of Scotland." After some heavy complaints against his son, he said he meant to go to Dr. Brown, the Professor of Divinity, and endeavour to prevent his admission into the Hall. Mr. Aitken wisely dissuaded him from this, but consented, at the father's request, to call and converse with him. "I found (he says) him and his parents together. The scene was rather of a trying nature. Upon asking him the reason of the course he had taken, he replied, that he had long entertained doubt as to the propriety of separating from a Church holding the essentials of Christian doctrine, and that he apprehended some parts of the National Covenant were inconsistent with true liberty." Without entering on these points, which he deemed unsuitable in the circumstances, Mr. Aitken simply reminded him of his engagements as a Seceder, and then turned the conversation to the charges which his father had brought against him—the justice of which he stoutly denied. So (he adds) "I warned him in the most solemn manner I could, and left him. I was scarcely home when Mr. Kidd, younger [one of the Rev. Dr. Kidd's sons], called on me to say, that he was sent by Dr. Brown to inquire whether I knew anything against the character of Mr. J. Duncan. From this I understood that his father

had called, at which I was rather vexed. I informed Mr. Kidd of what his father had said, but wished him to inform Dr. Brown that his father's application was entirely of himself."

The sequel of this matter I must give from another source. One day, as Dr. Brown was making ready to go to his class, soon after the opening of the Session, his son, Dr. G. G. Brown (who is my informant), being present, a man earnestly requested permission to see him. He was told that Dr. B. was preparing to go to the Divinity Hall, and could see nobody then. "But I must see him," said the man, and with that he almost forced his way in. "What do you want, sir?" asked Dr. Brown, not over-pleased with this unceremonious intrusion. "I want to warn you against receiving my son, John Duncan, as a student of Divinity." "What have you to say against him?" In reply, the man began to make heavy complaints against his son. "Sir," interrupted Dr. Brown, "I have no time for such things. If you have anything to say against his character, I will inquire into it; otherwise, as I have a certificate in his favour from Dr. Kidd, I cannot refuse to enrol him." With that the man was dismissed; but Dr. Brown, as we have seen, lost no time in making some inquiry into the matter through Mr. Kidd. It is probable, however, that his statements

were regarded as too indefinite to found proceedings upon.

Now certainly, for a long time, Mr. Duncan and his father had been on no good terms, and this would colour all the father's impressions of his son's modes of thinking, feeling, and acting. While some of his complaints would be but too well founded, others would have no other foundation than his own contracted ideas of propriety. When questioned as to his late hours and other irregularities, he would have little to say, and that little would be confused enough, and at times even appear contradictory. In fact, even after he became another man, I have known him so confused in giving an account of scenes in which he had taken part, that he seemed at times to contradict himself; and if such cases occurred when his life was most irregular, and his hours at night seemed to turn everything upside down, one can well believe that the irritation and distrust thereby engendered in his father's mind would discolour everything. When his father charged him with disrespect towards himself, I can easily see what gave rise to such an impression. That he could be loud enough when opposed, and even vehement, I myself had abundant cause to know. Even in later years, and almost to the last, when in keen discussion on any engrossing subject with one able to hold his own

against him, he sometimes heard none but himself, and in the midst of his opponent's argument would thrust in his own, in a voice which effectually drowned the loudest tones of his friend. However this may be, the following incident, communicated to me by Dr. G. G. Brown, may well be set over-against this charge.

After hearing from Mr. Kidd what Mr. Aitken had stated to him, the Professor had an interview with Mr. Duncan. "I suppose," said Dr. Brown, "your father and you have been quarrelling and abusing one another." "We did quarrel," replied Mr. Duncan firmly, "but I never in my life abused my father." My friend Dr. G. G. Brown tells me that when his father was dying, instead of staying out late—as he seldom failed to do when at a friend's house after his teaching was over—he went home immediately after his hours of tuition, and was at his father's bedside, night after night, paying him every attention.

As to his absence from family worship, and, to all appearance, neglect of secret devotion, he was hardly ever to be reckoned on at hours when family worship would have been seasonable, even after he knew the value of prayer, as he certainly did not then; and a measure of irregularity characterized even his secret devotions to the last. So that from the time when he became a Christian indeed—when he was of course a

man of prayer, and might be said to live in communion with God—were he to be judged by the length of time which he spent in secret devotion, or his observance of regular seasons for it, an unfavourable judgment might, I am afraid, have been pronounced upon his entire religious character. Not that his father's complaints against him on this head were groundless. So far from this, I have no doubt that for a considerable time before he left the Secession Church he lived a practically prayerless life. But the true nature and deeper causes of this were beyond the cognisance of his father, and even of his minister. And this brings me to that utter break-down of his theological principles, and the accompanying deterioration of his moral character, to which he afterwards again and again mournfully referred. To open up this, however, it will be necessary to travel into a region of speculation unfamiliar, probably, to the ordinary reader, whose indulgence therefore I must crave in the following chapter, and part of the next.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DIVINITY STUDENT IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—PANTHEISTIC ATHEISM: 1817-1821.

THE following confessions from his own lips, made at different times to Miss R., are so startling that they will require explanation. "*I was an Atheist when I entered his [Dr. Mearns's] class*"—that is, when he first entered the Divinity Hall of the Established Church.<sup>1</sup> "I had a godly upbringing, but I broke off from it. *I had three years of dreary Atheism*, and during that time I made a doctrinal atheist of a pupil of mine, who died." "I was much indebted to Dr. Mearns . . . . *It was under him that I gave up Atheism.*" To the Rev. Dr. H. Bonar he more than once made similar confessions; and on that memorable night, at the time of the great change, when he and I walked for so many hours together, parting only between

<sup>1</sup> Drs. Mearns and Brown were joint Professors of Divinity at Aberdeen, the one at King's, the other at Marischal College, each taking different branches of the prescribed course of Theology, and attendance at both being required of all the students.

two and three in the morning, on my coming very close to his conscience, he suddenly halted and said "David"—he never called me by any other name, even to the last—"you don't know what I have been, but I will tell you. To such a depth of scepticism had I sunk, that one day, on seeing a horse passing, I said to myself, There is no difference between that horse and me." "Very well," said I, "but the question is, Where are you now?" "Well," he replied, "Dr. Mearns brought me out of that, and from that time forward I have never doubted the existence of a personal God," etc. Now if this cure of scepticism took place in his first session as a Church of Scotland student—as I have no doubt it did—it follows that for a year and a half, if not two years, before leaving the Secession Church, he had carried on his Divinity studies in what he calls "dreary Atheism." This would be incredible if the thing meant had been hard, dogmatic, crystallized Atheism. But there is good evidence that it was not. From the nature of the case, and his own intellectual restlessness, the process of religious deterioration would be very gradual. His religious beliefs would be undermined only by slow degrees, and much of what he calls in general language "three years of dreary Atheism" would be spent in subtle speculation and bold attempts at generalization on that profoundest of all subjects of

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human thought, the Metaphysics of Theism. From doubt he would pass to denial of the validity of the usual proofs for the existence of God, while stopping short, in all likelihood, of fixed dogmatic belief of the contrary proposition—that there is no God. What he says of the pupil whose mind he so unhappily poisoned seems to bear out this. When he said he “made a *doctrinal* atheist of him,” he seems plainly to imply that he had unintentionally driven his pupil beyond himself—that whereas all he meant was to shake his faith in the validity of the ordinary arguments for Theism, his poor pupil, knowing no other grounds, and not furnished by his teacher with any better, was driven into positive denial of the existence of God.

But the mystery is cleared up in one of his conversations with Mr. Knight.<sup>1</sup> “*I was a Spinozist for three years,*” he said—obviously the same three years which to friends unaccustomed to such nice distinctions he called “years of Atheism.” “THE ONE,” he added to Mr. K., “was then the All to me.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, his religious views, though in effect atheistical, were so in a form which at that time he would regard as the purest and only defensible Theism.

What is this Pantheism? It is a theory which has always fascinated some subtle and dreamy thinkers as

<sup>1</sup> Yet see note at end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> *Coll. Perip.* p. 22.

the only tenable Theism, which, while stripping it of the difficulties of personality, enwraps everything in a religious atmosphere, and ministers, as they conceive, to the sublimest piety. The founder of the modern Pantheistic school was Benedict de Spinoza, one of the most profound of thinkers—of whom, and of whose system, at present engaging the attention of many thinkers, those interested in this stage of Mr. Duncan's life will find a short sketch in the note below.<sup>1</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Benedict de Spinoza was born at Amsterdam, of Jewish parents, in the year 1632, and died near the Hague in 1677, at the early age of forty-four. (By his parents he was named Baruch d'Espinoza, and so he signed all his correspondence; but in his publications he converted the Hebrew "Baruch" into its Latinized form, "Benedict.") He set out in his speculations as a Cartesian, and in a publication which he issued, his design was merely to reduce Descartes' philosophical system to geometrical form and demonstration. But his Pantheistic views gradually developed themselves in the following system:—There is and can be but one Substance or Being in the Universe, God, *τὸ πᾶν*, the great universal ALL. He is Self-existent; and since by the very definition of self-existence one Substance cannot produce another, it follows that God is not only *Unus* but *Solus*. But then, substance has two properties—Thought and Extension. The Thought exists not in God distinct from the thought that is in all thinking beings; the Extension is not distinct from the extended universe. The *πᾶν producing* is *Natura naturans*, the *πᾶν produced* is *Natura naturata*. Thus, God is at once the eternal Orderer and the eternal Order of the Universe. Absolute Infinity is the Absolute All. Outside of Infinity there is nothing; within it only Itself—the One and the All. Finite things are no existences *per se*; they are realities only as the varied expressions or forms of the changeless Substance. Individuality and Personality are incompatible with the idea of infinitely existing Being: therefore Infinite, Unconditioned God is necessarily Impersonal. And

was so filled with a sense of the reality and presence of God—according to his own conception of His being—that the intensely idealistic German, Novalis, calls him a “God-intoxicated man.”<sup>1</sup>

since predicates and determinations consist not with the essential nature of God—Self-existing, Unconditioned, Absolute—but belong to the effects or actualities of God, therefore Will, Understanding, and Action on the part of the Supreme towards definite ends, are logically abrogated, and cannot without impropriety be ascribed to God. As to Prayer—though it may benefit him who offers it—it is childish to suppose that it influences the Supreme. Finally, death is but a returning to the Infinite Whole; and as personal identity is but an illusion, it follows that there is no future state of personal existence having any moral relation to the present.

For a fuller view of this system see Spinoza's *Ethica*, with his *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*; Saisset's *Essais de Philosophie Religieuse*, 1859; *Revue des Deux Mondes* for January 1862; and *Benedict de Spinoza: his Life, Correspondence, and Ethics*, by R. Willis, M.D., an ardent admirer of the man, and devoted advocate of the system; London, 8vo. Trübner, 1870.

<sup>1</sup> *Gott-trunkener Mensch*. The name *Novalis* was but a pseudonym. Friedrich von Hardenberg (his real name) was born in 1772, and cut off in 1801, ere he had completed his twenty-ninth year. His writings—of the romantic school—singularly original and deep, are yet intensely mystical, and hard to be understood. He was undoubtedly a believer in historical Christianity, and at times breaks forth into grand originalities about it; but this is dashed by statements which to most people would seem incompatible with such belief. (See Carlyle's interesting essay on Novalis in *Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. ii. pp. 191-261.)

It was Mr. Duncan himself who first brought this remark of Novalis about Spinoza to my notice, in a conversation I had with him on the German schools of Metaphysics, long after he had given up Pantheism, but before the decisive change. At that time he would quote with rapture some choice passages of the idealistic writers which he had met with; for transcendental sympathies

Such was the hazy atmosphere which Mr. Duncan breathed for three years ; his speculative brain finding for the time something in the Pantheistic conception of God profound enough and beautiful enough to suffice for Religion. But what intellectual satisfaction did it yield? What heart-repose? To these questions we have his own pregnant answer long afterwards. In his conversations with Mr. Knight, this was the subject which more than any other turned up ; and while on the one hand he tells of his own sorrowful experience under this system, he discovers a capacity to gauge it,

were strong in his soul, nor did they ever cease to stir in him, even after he had learned to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Two amusing illustrations of this occur to me. Long after we were both settled in life—he a Professor and I a pastor—we happened to meet in Glasgow ; and having a shrewd notion that my idealistic sympathies were akin to his own, he one day called on me to ventilate some thoughts that were seething in his mind on the old subject of the metaphysics of theology, to see whether I sympathized with them, and to get his own views, like water, purified by flowing. On he went, *Mansel-izing* (if I may so say) on this wise : “ People’s ideas of God seem to me very unsatisfactory. The coarser forms of Anthropomorphism are not what I refer to ; these are attended with no danger ; they deceive no one. But that refined Anthropomorphism which invests the Infinite One with the contracted forms of finite thought, and ascribes to the pure Spirit emotions inconsistent with absolute spirituality—that is what I am jealous of : Don’t you feel with me in this ? ” “ No, I don’t,” said I, somewhat bluntly, perceiving the vein he was in, and knowing from experience how to take him in such moods—“ No, I don’t ; and you had better take care lest this vein of philosophizing lead you further astray than what you complain of does others—for in that, with sensible people, I see no

nowhere else, I think, to be seen. In almost every allusion to it he represents it as a step above blank *Atheism*, but yet as really *no Theism*. "Progress," says he, "is a relative term. It depends on the point from which a man has set out, and on whether he is going up the hill or down it. *If I begin from Atheism I have progressed when I become a Pantheist*; and I have got a step higher when I am a Theist, though I have a great many steps still to take." In this transition state, then, Mr. Duncan found it possible to live

danger at all. True, God is a pure Spirit, and those who believe that know well enough that nothing finite is true of Him. But then, we ourselves are finite, and must needs use the language of finite conceptions as the only possible clothing of our thoughts regarding Him. I have a great dread of these refinements of yours; I see whither they tend; and I tell you that when you have succeeded in stripping your conception of the living God, at least your phraseology about Him, of all that is relative—all that is not strictly absolute—you will find the residuum to be only a metaphysical abstraction, a Spinozistic Impersonality,—no living, conscious Substratum, no thing which can be the proper object of worship, love, and obedience." This lecture, given with some warmth, staggered and silenced him for a moment. On recovering himself, he said, with a mixture of gravity and dry humour: "David, I believe in your instincts, but I don't give so much for your reasonings." On another occasion, when disputing with some minister who revelled in the logic of theology, and seemed to think logical distinctions could settle everything, he tried to show him that in the search after spiritual truth there were other things to be considered than logic; but all in vain. At length, losing patience, he cut him short with this more plain than pleasant speech: "Tuts, man, David Brown understands mysticism, and ——— understands it [I forget now who], but as for you, sir, you know nothing about it."

for three years ; and, wretched though it was, to that experience we are indebted for some of the profoundest views and most candid estimates of it anywhere to be found. So much so, that while I quote here two passages on this subject, because they expressly refer to his own Pantheistic experience, I must be allowed to enrich my pages with other noble statements on the characteristics and bearings of that theory, in the form of an addendum to the present chapter.

“ Pantheism has a curious natural affinity with man, when he realizes his connexion with the universal life : *Ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμέν* (Acts xvii. 28). We live within God’s omnipresence, and we come *from* Him. There is something in Pantheism so deep that naught in bare Deism can meet it. Deism is not so deep, and Pantheism may well keep the house till a stronger than Deism comes to take possession of it. In Jesus Christ I find the only solution of the mystery. *He* was not one with the race, though kindred to it. I admit that Pantheism is a vulgar scheme at bottom ; yet the least vulgar and most pious minds will often talk pantheistically, and *perhaps* they must do so (I’m fond of the caveats) : just as those most remote from Anthropomorphism<sup>1</sup> very often talk most anthropomorphically. And the most transcendental minds can easily afford

<sup>1</sup> Ascribing to God the parts and passions of Humanity.

this. You will find them talking either very abstractly or very concretely. In the poets—in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Thomson—you find much Pantheistic language, but no Pantheism. *I was a Spinozist for three years.* The One was then the All to me. *But I had to throw the system to the winds that I might live.* I believe there are many good Pantheists, but conscience has no speculative warrant in the system of Pantheism. . . . And yet I think that the system is an emphatic admission, or rather proclamation, that there is a secret in the universe that belongeth unto God, unfathomed and fathomless by men.”<sup>1</sup>

“I suppose there are few pious Deists. I presume there are some, but few. Spinoza was a pious man; so was Novalis.<sup>2</sup> But a God that is misconceived is not likely to be often in all a man’s thoughts.” “There are many minds to whom, though they are Atheists, the problem of Being is interesting for evermore, and draws them into this attitude of reverent pondering. *Throughout the three years of my experience of it, I was for ever theologizing on my Atheism.* Who are we? Where are we? Whence? and whitherwards? For what end are we here? What is the hour on the clock of the universe? and so forth. Human life, death, and destiny are for ever interesting to the Atheist who

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. Perip.* pp. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 47, 48.

*thinks.* There are some minds in the Christian Church who are theoretical Theists but practical Atheists. It is an awful thing that practical Atheism—'without God in the world.' It is worse than theoretical error; and I have known theoretical Atheists (Pantheists at least) who were believers in God at heart. Let us not judge persons."

"I have long thought that without an Eternal Logos ['Word'] you must have an Eternal Kosmos [Universe]; and I therefore suspect that a *Mono-personal Theism* [the Theism of the Unitarian, the Deist, the Moham-medan] *is impotent against the Pantheist.* So that, since the controversy has passed from its old Atheistic phases, I doubt if either Deist, Socinian, or Moham-medan will be able to cope with the Pantheist. In short, I doubt if any but a Trinitarian can do so adequately."<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, was Mr. Duncan's three years' experience of Pantheism. It lifted his soul out of the hard, dry, logical Theism of the schools, into a region of sublime speculation which set his whole faculties a-working, and produced a certain rapt devotion, which would seem then not unsuited to his theological studies, even in the Secession. True, it was unsubstantial, a purely æsthetic devotion, void of any moral element. But

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. Perip.* p. 93.



the Theism which he had lost was to him the loss of nothing which he had thought out for himself, and embraced with an intelligent faith. Nay, for the time being it was a positive deliverance from the bondage of a mere traditional belief. He has himself expressed this strikingly in one of his Conversations, in which I doubt not he was speaking his own experience: "Our systems of Theology must be a bondage till they are adopted on rational conviction. And yet very often these very dogmas are cheerfully adopted by those who once rent them asunder as fetters. Systematic truth is systematic error, if I ignorantly and unconvincedly bind myself to it; and all *real* fetters should always be broken. But earnest and good men come to see that what they once found to be fetters are 'the cords and bands of a man'—the girders of his strength."<sup>1</sup> Alas! such is not always the result. Once loosed from their old moorings, not a few of the finest spirits, after breaking with old traditional beliefs, go drifting on the wide ocean of metaphysical and theological speculation, without compass or rudder, till they have made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. Mercifully, it was otherwise with Mr. Duncan.

The want in Pantheism of a personal God, and of "all speculative warrant for conscience," produced in

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. Perip.* p. 36.

Mr. Duncan, after three years' experience of it, such intellectual desolation, such moral derangement, such spiritual exinanition (if I may so say), that he had to burst his Pantheistic, as before he had burst his Theistic bonds, and "throw the system to the winds *that he might live*."

I close this stage of his mental history with a wonderfully thrilling expression of his experience under it, which he was wont to repeat from Jean Paul, though it was rather his own appropriation, in a single sentence, of the most prominent idea and most vivid expression of it, in a "Dream" of Jean Paul's, full of lurid grandeur. Here it is :—

"I wandered to the furthest verge of Creation, and there I saw a *Socket* where an *Eye* should have been, and I heard the shriek of a Fatherless World."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the *Colloquia* (p. 140) Mr. Duncan quotes this as a saying of Abraham Tucker. It is possible this mistake is Mr. Duncan's own, for Tucker was rather a favourite with him. But at other times he ascribed the saying above quoted to its true author. (The work of Tucker referred to is, "The Light of Nature Pursued, by Edward Search, Esq. [his real name being Abraham Tucker]. Three Parts in 2 vols. 8vo, 1768.") The author was a gentleman of independent fortune, and possessed a rare power of making the deepest questions at once intelligible and interesting, by beautiful illustration. His work has gone through several editions.

As for the 'Dream,' of which the above gives the gist—though it is in the last degree weird, and in one or two of its ideas positively repulsive—it depicts so vividly the state of mind in which one would find himself in an *orphaned Universe*, that the substance of it here may not be unacceptable to some thoughtful readers.

## ADDENDUM—ON PANTHEISM.

“It is noteworthy that Pantheism, *by abolishing moral distinctions*, is closely allied to Polytheism—

But first let me introduce the writer himself. *Jean Paul Friedrich Richter* (in Germany familiarly styled *Jean Paul*), a Bavarian, and born in 1763, had to struggle with poverty for many years. He could never settle to the clerical profession, for which he was intended, but with an insatiable appetite for philosophy, poetry, and general literature, devoured whatever books he could lay hold of in these, and indeed all departments; pouring forth strange publications with still stranger titles, and giving such loose reins to his wild imagination that he was set down as a crack-brained enthusiast. At length, however, his extraordinary genius was discovered and appreciated; and getting into easy circumstances, enabling him to follow his natural bent, he issued works which brought him renown over all Germany. In these he swept over the whole region of the mysterious, the beautiful, and the tender in life, and this in his own unique way—now with awful gravity, and anon in bursts of strange humour and weird wildness not easily followed. After the death of his only son at the University, which opened an incurable wound, he set about the preparation of a work on his favourite subject, *the Immortality of the Soul*, during which he became almost stone-blind; and dying ere it was completed, the unfinished manuscript was borne upon his coffin to his earthly resting-place, to the sound of Klopstock's Hymn ‘*Auferstehen wirst du, (Thou shalt arise, my soul!)*’ What were his religious views? it may be asked. I fear he evaporated or sublimated the concrete verities of Revelation into a mystic, though lively, recognition of God as the soul's Supreme Good, and of Immortality in His presence as its sabbath and haven. At the same time, standing so near the border-line between a Pantheistic and a Personal God, he was all the abler to realize and depict the ghastliness of the one—out of which he appears, like Mr. Duncan, to have escaped—and the unspeakable repose that springs from the other, into which he happily emerged. In the following passage he seems to express his own hard-won but at length profound conviction: “When in your last hour (think of

Pantheism the creed of the refined, Polytheism the religion of the herd.”—(*Coll. Perip.* p. 8.)

Since extracting this acute remark, my eye has lighted on the following illustration of it from an important work by the learned Dr. John Muir, entitled “Original

this) all faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away and die into inanity—imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment—then at last will the night-flower of Belief alone continue blooming, and refresh with its perfumes in the last darkness.”

The ‘Dream,’ to which we now come, is pronounced by Thomas Carlyle (on such a subject the best of judges) to be his perhaps grandest production, as it is among his most celebrated. In his Preface to it Jean Paul says, “A man may for twenty years believe the Immortality of the Soul, and in the one-and-twentieth, in some great moment, discover with amazement, for the first time, the rich meaning of his belief, the warmth of this Naphtha-well. Of such sort too was my terror at the *poisonous vapour which floats round the heart of him who for the first time enters the school of Atheism*. . . . *No one in Creation is so alone as the denier of God*. He mourns with an orphaned heart that he has lost its great Father, by the corpse of Nature. . . . *The All [of the Pantheist] is the cold iron mask of a formless eternity*.”

“I was lying once,” says he (in the ‘Dream’), “in a summer evening, in the sunshine, and I fell asleep. Methought I awoke in the churchyard. [Here follows a wild picture of the impending dissolution of all individual existences in the universe, as seen by him in his dream, after which it thus proceeds:] “Now sank from aloft a noble, high Form, with a look of uneffaceable sorrow, down to the [church] altar, and all the dead cried out, ‘Christ, is there no God?’ He answered, ‘There is none!’ The whole shadow of each then shuddered . . . and shook into pieces. Christ continued: ‘I went through worlds, I mounted into the suns, I flew with the galaxies through the wastes of heaven, *but there is no God*. I descended as far as Being casts its shadow, and looked down into the abyss, and cried, *Father, where art Thou?* But I heard only the everlasting storm, *which no one guides*, and the gleaming rainbow *without a sun that made it*, over the abyss, and that trickled down.

Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and Progress of the Religion, etc., of India" (1858, etc.), vol. v. p. 411 :—

"These extraordinary representations reveal to us in the Indians of the Vedic age a conception of the universe which is at once mystic or sacramental, poly-

And when I looked up to the immeasurable world for THE DIVINE EYE, it gazed on me WITH AN EMPTY, BLACK, BOTTOMLESS EYE-SOCKET . . . Cry on, ye Dissonances ; cry away, the shadows, FOR HE IS NOT ! All was void. Oh, then came—fearful for the heart—the dead children who had awakened in the churchyard, into the Temple, and cast themselves before the high Form on the altar, and said, ' Jesus ! have we no Father ? ' And He answered, with streaming tears, ' *We are all orphans, I and you : we are Fatherless !* ' Then shrieked the Dissonances still louder . . . and the whole Universe sank with its immensity before us ; and on the summit of immeasurable Nature stood Christ, and gazed down into the Universe, chequered with its thousand Suns . . . and as He saw how world after world shook off its glittering souls upon the sea of death . . . He raised His majestic eyes towards the Nothingness and said, ' Dead, dumb Nothingness ! Cold everlasting Necessity ! Frantic Chance ! . . . When will ye crush the Universe and Me ? How is each so solitary in this wide grave of THE ALL ? *I am alone with myself.* O Father ! O Father ! *where is Thy infinite Bosom, that I might rest on it ?* Mortal beside Me ! If thou still livest, pray to HIM, else thou hast lost Him for ever.' . . . I awoke. *My soul wept for joy that I could still pray to God ;* and the JOY and the WEEPING and the FAITH ON HIM were my prayer. And, as I arose, the sun was glowing behind the deep-purpled corn-ears, and casting meekly the gleam of its twilight red on the little Moon which was rising in the east with an Aurora ; and between the sky and the earth, a gay, transient, air-people was stretching out its short wings, and living, as I did, before the Infinite Father ; and from all Nature around me flowed peaceful tones as from distant evening-bells."—See *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, collected and republished by Thomas Carlyle (4 vols. crown 8vo, 1858), vol. i. pp. 1-19 ; and ii. pp. 119-167.

theistic and pantheistic: everything connected with religious rites being imagined to have in it a spiritual as well as a physical potency; all parts of Nature being separately regarded as invested with Divine power, and yet as constituent parts of one great whole."

"My supreme answer to Pantheism is a moral one, and is based upon the fact of Sin. I ask the Pantheist, first, Is sin real? Is it a moral antithesis and discord in a man's life? And then I ask him, Is that which involves a discord the outcome of the Infinite *One*? The forth-flow of the one life of the Universe must contain no *ultimately and irreconcilably jarring elements*. Now sin and holiness are antithetic, and you cannot connect them by tracing them back to a common fountain-head. Therefore, I say the Universe has not been evolved."—(*Coll. Perip.* p. 138.)

"I would answer a man who was caught in the meshes of Pantheism thus: It is true the problem is insoluble, but can the soul of man find rest anywhere else than in the peace which God offers to it? *Sin gives the lie to Pantheism*. And as for your refuge in the beautiful, which soothes, and the high admiration which some accord to 'the holy Jesus,' *without submission to Him*—Jesus abhors that. It's worse than if a beggar had committed murder and were doomed to die, and while the sovereign pardoned him would not

accept the offer, but would condescend to offer him the gift of his admiration.”—(MS. notes communicated by Mr. Knight.)

“It would be an awful thing to live within a Fatherless Universe. . . . The poetry of religion will not lift a man out of that abyss, and reveal to him a Father in the midst of it. We must come to the moral law, and to the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . Sin and Death (*ἀμαρτία* and *θάνατος*) cast two shadows over man in this life, which give the lie to a religion merely of the beautiful.”—(*Coll. Perip.* p. 140.)

“Pantheism stumbles over the problem [the relation of the Divine nature to the Universe], and abolishes the problem in the attempt to explain it. [‘How,’ it was asked, ‘do you meet Pantheism?’ *Answer* :] Pantheism will not account for the facts of Biblical History. It cannot explain the life of Jesus Christ without explaining it away. And Pantheism will not account for the phenomena of Conscience. GOD MUST BE DISTINCT FROM THE KOSMOS, OR CONSCIENCE IS ALL A LIE. [‘Is it the mere voice of Conscience,’ it was asked, ‘that you oppose to Pantheism?’ *Answer* :] No, but Conscience is the great root of Theism, and it leads within the veil, because the tree that springs from it breaks through phenomena. It is something supernatural within the natural, and there is no separating these two spheres if you are true to

*psychology. The webs of the natural and the supernatural are so woven together in the soul, that they cannot be untied.* [‘It is easier to dethrone Pantheism,’ it was rejoined, ‘than to establish the opposite truth.’ *Answer:*] If you overthrow the one, you establish the other. There is no resting-place between them. If we find that there are beings with Conscience and Will, and more especially if we find that some of these are *bad*, and if we admit the full force of moral evil in the will, as the antithesis of good, Pantheism cannot account for that antithesis. *A monistic scheme must minimize evil or reason it away.*—(*Coll. Perip.* pp. 103, 104.)

“A merely æsthetic religion—such as that of Goethe and all worshippers of the Beautiful—is a miserable substitute for piety, and it never stands the tear and wear of time, *especially in the midst of great sorrows.* It is the offspring of sentiment divorced from law; and that is an illegal divorce. The want of the legal is a great blot in theology, and a practical danger in religion. It will lead to a crude philanthropy, to moonlight views of God’s government of the world. It has often led to a hazy latitudinarianism, or to what is even worse, an exaggerated Antinomian evangelism: great raptures and gross viciousness going together; men thinking they are so spiritual that their bodies may do as they like. But the æsthetic must not be eradicated,



it must be supplemented. And it is the realization of the *moral* in God, and the sense of sin in man—the sinner feeling that he is in the presence of a holy God—that is the only cure for its exaggerations. The æsthetic in religion is at bottom the bringing of religion to God, instead of bringing the soul to God to get religion. It is thus that men make a god of religion, instead of allowing religion to remain a worshipper of God. Let a man be in the presence of the most beautiful things which the universe contains, or be thrilled by that perfection of moral beauty which Scripture yields him, and then come to God in prayer, and he will find that the beauty he had realized has passed upwards through the sublime, and been lost in the majestic holiness. Is the æsthetic snare still felt? Well then, God says, ‘There’s my law:’ The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Bring in Conscience. If we lose Conscience we lose dignity; we become pulses, not men. *The mere poetry of religion by itself weakens the soul.* It is the ἡδονή preferred to the ἀπηνή. The ‘Tabula’ of Cebes<sup>1</sup> was far better than it. . . . And yet there is an æsthesis in all that God does as well as in all that He is. God is an æsthetic Being. Let me never forget that fact.<sup>2</sup> The exceeding beauty of the floral world alone proves a

<sup>1</sup> A disciple of Socrates, if indeed he is the author of the Πίναξ.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the following: “I remember,” said he to Miss R., about ten days before his death, “a saying of Hugh Miller’s when he came

certain similarity between the æsthetical nature of man and that of God. And the work of the Son—His very humiliation—was beautiful, as well as true and good. It is fair and lovely exceedingly to look upon. But the pursuit of holiness, as so much personal adornment, is a very subtle snare. I have been humbled by the detection of it. All such detections pain and lancinate the soul. [‘How would you deal with it in another?’ he was asked. He replied:] I would say to him, Let the effort to clothe yourself with the raiment of the beautiful be changed into an effort to strip yourself. Humble yourself, and think of the Law.”—(*Coll. Perip.* pp. 117-119.)

“I believe that the school of theology towards which many fresh minds are apt to drift, is near of kin to that which they would very much wish to shun—to wit, the harshness of Bradwardine. In Bradwardine<sup>1</sup> and Twisse,<sup>2</sup> the lawyer threatens to swallow up the

on a beautiful little flower which had bloomed before there was any other eye to look upon it but God’s—‘*He hath taste.*’”

<sup>1</sup> Thomas of Bradwardine, a scholastic divine of the fourteenth century, reader of theology at Oxford, and afterwards raised to the See of Canterbury; a man of earnest piety, but on the subject of Predestination *Augustino augustinior*. He went by the name of *Doctor Profundus*.

<sup>2</sup> William Twisse, D.D., born 1575; Fellow of New College, Oxford, afterwards chaplain to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, but best known as Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1643, etc., and by his learned theological works.

ethicist, as, conversely, in Mr. Maurice's system, the ethicist devours the lawyer. In Jonathan Edwards and the New-Englanders we have a fine union of moral law and moral ethic. Holiness and justice are respectively the æsthetic and the moral elements of Law;<sup>1</sup> and with all his vigour, Edwards is supremely moral. Yet he was not fully cognisant (though not wholly unaware) that he held within his system a spirit of very high and refined Pantheism. *In a higher theistic system sin must equally vanish as in the atheistic;*<sup>2</sup> and Edwards has in other treatises unconsciously developed internal Pantheism more fully. I have never entered the door of either supra- or infra-lapsarian Calvinism. But Maurice's system is pure illegality. It will never go down with the lawyers; it upsets their science entirely. Bare Ethic without Law is the ethic of Jehovah alone and His Co-equals, living together in the one tie of ἀγάπη where there are no subjects. This ἀγάπη might be the bond of union on Olympus among co-equal gods, were Polytheism true (though it was not even so much as imagined on the ancient Olympus). But whenever subjects appear, beneath the sovereign, *obligation* enters. I can understand the fact I have heard, that Sir Wm.

<sup>1</sup> The one (as I should be disposed to add) answering to the *beauty* of Virtue, the other to the *duty* of Virtue.

<sup>2</sup> I pray the thoughtful reader to note this statement, as true as it is profound.

Hamilton disliked the theology of Maurice. He was an advocate. No lawyer is likely to fall into a sentimentalism about law. It's a serious matter to be under law, and to be at the bar, and to feel the solemn rigour of jurisprudence. And the end of punishment is not, I think, primarily, to reform the punished, but to vindicate the law. ['But,' it was asked, 'Is not such a vindication blank if the final end of it is not the reclamation of the transgressor?'] *Answer:*] Not necessarily; but reclamation is also attempted—it is also provided for. Goethe said once, All the course of Providence goes to show that the God of Providence is the same as the severe Jehovah of the Hebrews.” —(*Coll. Perip.* pp. 41, 42.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since this chapter was in type I have received communications from the Rev. R. J. Sandeman and the Rev. A. Moody Stuart, the former of which will be inserted in its proper place. From these it would appear that even the lowest stage of “materialistic atheism” had at one time been reached by Mr. Duncan. But from one expression in Mr. Sandeman's communication—“Often as he went along the street he would wrap *his student's cloak* about him, and ask with a shiver, What after all are we here for?”—I gather that this was during his *Undergraduate course*, and I cannot doubt that ere he entered on the study of Divinity he had at least risen to the higher level of Pantheism.

## CHAPTER V.

CONVERSION TO THEISM, NOT TO GOD ; TO CHRISTIANITY,  
NOT TO CHRIST : 1817-1825.

"THE dealings of God with souls," said he to Miss R. the year before his death, "are very wonderful. I was much indebted to Dr. Mearns, the leader of the Moderates,<sup>1</sup> although for years afterwards I was Christless. It was under him that I gave up Atheism, and after a kind of way believed concerning Christ—though I then took up with Sabellianism.<sup>2</sup> The Doctor's prayers, more than any man's I ever heard, were addressed to a Great King : perhaps there was not much of a childlike trust

<sup>1</sup> The opponents of the "Evangelical"—or, as they called them, the "Highflying" party in the Church of Scotland—forming for nearly a century the overwhelming majority in its Church courts.

<sup>2</sup> The doctrine first formally broached in the third century by Sabellius—that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not three distinct personal subsistences in the one Godhead, but only three *modes* or *manifestations* of the one personality in the Godhead—for which he was excommunicated by Callistus, Bishop of Rome.

or confidence in them. I think I was indebted to his lectures on Natural Theology, and on the Jewish Economy. When he came to Theology proper, when he came to Socinianism—or, as he called it, *Humanism*—he was in the way of repressing all expression of emotion ; but when he came to the Deity and Humanity—of Christ, we saw his lips quiver, and then the stern man put it away.” Again, only seventeen days before his death, when he seemed to know that something would probably be written about him after that event : “I don’t wish my obligations to Dr. Mearns to be forgotten. He called out all that was in me to combat him, but unsuccessfully. And I do remember his perhaps too distant but so respectful prayers. They were always addressed to a Great King. ‘Jehovah is great, and a great King’ might have been put at the beginning of all his prayers. I was an atheist when I entered his class ; and though it did not come to saving faith, I am under great obligations to him.” Once more, exactly ten days before this : “These especially have had an influence upon me—Dr. Mearns, David Brown, Malan, Gavin Parker, Dr. Kidd, and the writings of Dr. Love, Dr. Owen, and Hermann Witsius. Under Dr. Mearns I was brought out of Atheism to belief in the writings of Moses and the mission of Christ.”

Reserving what is here said of others to the stages of his life to which they respectively belong, I must dwell a little on the nature and extent of his obligations to Dr. Mearns. Having myself studied under that able man for four years, I can attest the striking accuracy of what Mr. Duncan here says of his prayers, and justify his testimony to the power of his lectures. From the first day I entered his class to the day on which I left it, I was riveted and awed by the terse dignity with which he expressed himself in those short yet comprehensive prayers, and even more by the severe gravity and tremulous reverence with which they were uttered. One might have heard a pin drop during the three or four minutes that they lasted. His lectures were framed on the model of Dr. Hill's,<sup>1</sup> in respect both of their subject-matter—the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith—the severely rational convincing strain of them, and withal the absence from them of all evangelical fervour. Like his prayers, they were grave, elevated, impressive—but distant. With nothing that could be called original, they yet fixed the attention and produced a marked impression, owing largely to the stamp of the man and his manner of de-

<sup>1</sup> "Lectures in Divinity. By the late George Hill, D.D., Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews. Edited from his MS. by his Son, Alexander Hill, D.D." (afterwards Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow).

living them. Coming as I did from a school of religious thought and ecclesiastical sympathy very different from his—one too to which every now and then he showed his deep dislike—I also entered his class in a scarcely less combative spirit than Mr. Duncan did, though on different grounds, and expected to detect in his lectures, sooner or later, theological flaws. But the result was the same—I also was silenced. Natural theology he treated more fully and (according to my recollection) more satisfactorily than Dr. Hill; thus remarkably suiting Mr. Duncan's state of mind on entering his class. His unhappy reply to Dr. Chalmers's work on the Evidences of Christianity—though it damaged his own reputation, and was fitter to be withdrawn from public notice than recommended for the undoubtedly sound principle which lay at the bottom of it—showed at least how deeply the foundations of all religious belief were settled in his own mind; and that Mr. Duncan should have been placed under his commanding influence on his first entrance on theological study in the Church of Scotland is to be noted as a special mercy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A sentence follows the extract above given, as to the unhappy influence of Dr. Mearns on the students under his charge, which I think I am not called upon to give here, as both Professor and pupil have passed away. But the sequel may interest some. "He (Dr. Mearns) had been presented to the parish of Tarves (Aberdeenshire),



At what precise stage of Dr. Mearns's lectures Mr. Duncan's pantheistic views began to dissolve I cannot say, but I am pretty sure that some change for the better was almost coincident with his entrance into the Established Divinity Hall. Trained from childhood to regard the Church of Scotland as untrue to its own principles, corrupt in its teaching, and of evil influence on the religion of the country, he had much to shake off ere he could face the thought of abandoning his solemn protest against it as a Seceder, and becoming one of its ministers. And though many things had conspired to bring about a change—his extensive reading, his loosened principles, and his free and frequent intercourse with ministers, licentiates, and members of that Church—still, old associations could not fail to haunt

and then a change took place. He became a very grave man and an assiduous minister. When he was a young candidate for the Chair of Divinity in King's College, Aberdeen [in the gift of the Synod, but decided, in terms of the Charter, by comparative trial], the question was put to him, 'What is the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism?' and his answer [no doubt, meaning 'part of it' only] was so like the man: 'I have given a good deal of attention to that subject, and I am satisfied that the balance of evidence is on the side of Calvinism.' Dr. Black [afterwards Professor of Exegetical Theology in the New College, Edinburgh] and Dr. Love [minister of Anderston Chapel, a profound thinker, and a man of rare spirituality—of whom more afterwards] and he were candidates, and Dr. Mearns got the Chair. Dr. Love was a good deal hurt that he did not get it. Dr. Black was only a probationer when he became a candidate, but he too was made a D.D."

him at times, especially at first. But to find in Dr. Mearns an intellectual power and religious earnestness which constrained both his respect and his admiration, was a thing which his antecedent prejudices and his pride as a thinker were little prepared for; and as these great qualities in his new teacher were laid out from day to day in the service of a positive Theology—Natural and Revealed—there could scarcely fail to come over his unsettled and wretched spirit a healing breath. So at least it was that his theological scepticism by little and little gave way to positive faith in a Personal God, and this induced a preparedness to go a good way further.

Marvellous was the effect of this change, which happily we have from his lips. "When I was convinced," said he to Miss R., "that there was a God, I danced on the brig o' Dee<sup>1</sup> with delight, though I had fear that He would damn me. Atheism would have been better than the certainty of damnation, but there was not that." To the Rev. Dr. Bonar and the Rev. A. Moody Stuart he repeated this in nearly the same terms; showing that the emotion had been such as to live in his memory and render sacred for ever the spot where it was

<sup>1</sup> The bridge of seven arches across the river Dee, at the south entrance to the city of Aberdeen, and about a mile and a half from the Market Cross.

kindled. To the mass of general readers this will scarce be intelligible; but earnest thinkers—such especially as have had to grapple with the deepest problems of existence, who themselves have passed through similar stages of dreary uncertainty, and have “scarcely been saved” from making shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, but at length have had their feet set upon a rock and their goings established—they will understand it full well, and can from their own experience attest the vivid accuracy with which it depicts the state of mind so reached. Pantheism, though for a time it may fascinate profound and mystic thinkers, is found at length by earnest souls to be but a splendid cheat. In sinning, you feel you have offended Nobody—no Conscious, Personal, Living God; you are amenable to no Personal tribunal; you have simply deranged the machine a little, have slightly disturbed the clock-work of the Universe. When you do right, you obey no dictate of conscience, fulfil no moral obligation, please no one who has any right to reward or any business to punish you, attract the smile of no Father into whose loving face you can look up, from whom you may expect help, and with whom you may hope for ever to dwell; you do but keep the great machine, so far as you are a part of it, going a little more smoothly and sweetly. Precious consolation this for

the heaving spirit ! While appropriating the language of Theism, and breathing the air of a seeming piety, it strips Theism of all that is really theistic, and piety of all that is intelligibly pious. Can we wonder, then, that one endowed with an emotional nature as acute and tender as his intellect was massive, when at length the unsubstantial vacuity which he called God was transformed into a living conscious PERSON, and stood before his soul a found Creator, Ruler, Father—to whom he could open all his case, and by whose help he might yet become all that he ought to be—should get into an ecstasy, and literally dance for joy ? Delicious, truly, is this feeling, beyond all the powers of language to describe to such as have never felt it—as if from the depths of hell one were transported into the third heaven.<sup>1</sup>

But Mr. Duncan's joy at this stage was the joy of an intellectual rather than a spiritual repose, a joy chequered by the vivid consciousness that he neither was, nor at that time was willing to be, at peace with

<sup>1</sup> I remember reading of an English barrister, of refined mind but speculative tendencies, who had reached such a depth of Pyrrhonism, alike in philosophy and religion, that he had lost all faith in positive truth. His Christian wife grieved over him all the more that she perceived about him symptoms of incipient consumption. One day, however, as he lay on the sofa, she saw him gazing upwards, as if on some object, with an expression of soft delight and almost rapture. "What's the matter?" she asked. "Do you know

God. The "EYE," with which the "socket" was now filled, was too lustrous and too holy for him to abide the gaze of, unprepared as he then was to part with what it frowned upon. Hence he "had fear that He would damn him." But since there was not "the certainty" of damnation, there must doubtless have been an undercurrent of better intention, or fond hope, of yet getting into harmony with the Divine requirements. Such anomalies of the will, though they ill accord with the hard and fast lines of a logical system, are only too familiar to those who have any knowledge of their deeper selves.

Henceforward, *for a period of nine years*, Mr. Duncan was little troubled with theological difficulties, and concerned himself but little about his spiritual state—indeed, scarcely about his moral reputation. In Theism he was now so established as never to have his belief again shaken; and having soon after become convinced of the truth of Divine revelation, he was never again seriously disturbed on that head. Yet so unsubdued

I have begun to conceive *hope*." "Hope of what?" "I don't know, but somehow I have *hope*." Ah! the haze was dissolving, phantoms were crystallizing into concrete realities and the transporting "hope" of finding solid footing on the rock of positive truth. Right speedily came that faith which overcometh the world—a child-like reception of the Gospel of Christ—terminating, and at no distant period, in a tranquil departure to the region of unclouded light.

was his intellectual pride, as long afterwards he confessed to myself, that he resolved to "stand out against all the doctrines." So he entrenched himself in a loose Sabellianism,<sup>1</sup> untroubled by any questions about the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement, and other peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. In this generalized Christianity he found little to trouble his conscience, and nothing to control his wayward will, while the "fear of damnation"—strong at first as a feeling—got so reduced by habitual disregard of its voice, as to amount to nothing beyond the mere intellectual result, so to speak, of a readjusted theology. And thus the daily round of teaching, reading, deep thinking, company, and attendance during the session at the Divinity Hall, made up his life now for long years.

Yet not unfruitful was this period of his life—very far from it. In fact, it is scarcely too much to say that all the vast knowledge which he afterwards displayed of the classical and Oriental languages, of the literature of philosophy and theology, and of the poetry, history, and general literature of his own country, had its foundation laid, and much of its superstructure reared, during this period of intellectually restored but spiritually barren faith. In Greek he read a great deal, and everything critically—philosophically.

<sup>1</sup> See note <sup>2</sup>, p. 71.

He seized the characteristics of the great dramatists, on which, when I came to be much with him, he often expatiated. But it was Plato and Aristotle that engaged his rapt attention and drew forth his finest criticism—the one for his wonderful reach of thought, the other for his dialectic precision and incomparable style. Yet while he had great philological capacity, and delighted in comparative philology, he had not patience enough to perfect himself in the grammatical niceties of the Greek language. In his study of the English classics, having a fine ear for the rhythm and music of language, he marked, and it was his delight to point out, the peculiarities of our great writers both in prose and poetry. At times he would stalk into my room with some noble passage on his tongue—once, as I remember, a grand passage from Milton's prose writings—and to a late period of life he could repeat passages of some length, whose masculine strength had elated or whose musical sweetness had melted his soul. Even nursery rhymes, if they had point, pathos, or humour, it regaled him to read or hear read. In philosophy there was not a writer of any note—and even of little, if only original—ancient or modern, British or Continental, with whose system and merits he was not critically acquainted. Does any reader suspect this to be somewhat exaggerated? Let me only refer him to Mr.

Knight's *Colloquia*, in which one knows not whether most to wonder at the range of ancient and modern literature which he swept over in these conversations, the critical grasp which he took of every subject and every leading book which came up for talk, the profound and beautiful thoughts to which they gave birth, or the consummate mastery of the English tongue which even in talk he displayed. It is true that the theological views expressed in that work—uttered as they were so late as 1859-60—were very far from being entertained at the period I am now treating of, and that some of the thoughts there expressed were suggested by what at that time had no existence. But in all the great lines of thought on philosophical and literary subjects which constitute much of the value of that book—nay, even in some of its theological features, I trace only the ripened form of much which he was in the habit of pouring forth in no very crude forms in my own hearing and that of his literary friends in the course of those nine years of spiritual and moral desolation, but of richest mental activity and literary fruitfulness. Nor do I hesitate to say, that but for the rich stores of classical, Oriental, and other learning, which he then laid in, and that fund of enlarged thought on most subjects then accumulated, he had never been the man he eventually became, nor exercised over men of



thought, wherever he was known, the influence which he did.

Hebrew was his chief delight at this time, and with it the cognate tongues. "Watson"—a Divinity student, and Dr. Duncan's senior at the Hall by two years—"had promised," says Dr. Thom (of whom more afterwards), "rather from a regard for Duncan than any ambitious aspirations of his own, to attend a class which the future Professor of Oriental Languages was attempting to form, and, quite in accordance with what I knew to be his motive, he urged me to relieve him, if not from the fee, at least from the work. I accordingly placed myself under Dr. Duncan's tuition as a kind of private bursar [exempted from examination]. Of my fellow-pupils I remember only Dr. G. G. Brown. In point of fact, however, I soon ceased to take any interest in the meetings, prosecuting my labours in my own lodgings, with my enthusiastic master as a constant visitor. Before midsummer Duncan had seen me fairly through the Psalter, carrying me thereafter, during the remainder of the recess, into the grammars of Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic." Never, I may say, was he more in his element than when he could get a class around him for the reading of Hebrew, though he usually went on at a rate which few of his pupils could follow. Even his jokes at times were absurdly Hebraic. Thus, hold-

ing up his snuff-box one day, he said to me, "You'll not guess what Hebrew motto I have got painted here?" I paused. "Do you give it up? Then I'll tell you. It's 1 Kings xx. 10, "The gods do so to me, and more also, *if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls*," etc.,—the words in italics being those painted on the box, and the point of the joke being in part his way of taking snuff at times, almost in "handfuls"—out of his waistcoat-pocket instead of the box, for which we used to scold him. But here, too, he was more intent on tracing out the principles of the language, and the cognation of the different branches of the Semitic stem, than perfectly accurate in exceptional minutiae. But through life languages were a passion with him, and none came amiss to him, however remote from those usually studied, and whether likely or not to be of practical use to him. Gaelic, we shall presently see, he tried to dip into even at the Divinity Hall, and more than thirty years after that he availed himself of visits paid to the islands of Islay and Skye to familiarize himself with it. When the British and Foreign Bible Society made a present to the University Library of their Oriental and other versions, he seized on them one by one as so much gold, carrying them off for a week or two by turns; and even when he could find neither grammar nor dictionary of the tongues they were in, he

would poke into them and glory in making out the alphabet for himself, the elementary principles of the grammar, and not a little of the sense. Thus, I remember him coming to me one day in triumph, to tell me he had hunted out the Ethiopic and Armenian alphabets, had got hold of the principal verbs and nouns, and had got through ten of the Psalms in Ethiopic—all in one week.

Of teaching, he was rarely without as much as he had time for, but seldom did he make enough by it to keep him in comfort—his intolerable irregularity and slovenly habits generally losing him the pupils whom his known attainments never failed to bring him. One amusing example of this may serve for all : Dr. Cruickshank (Emeritus Professor of Mathematics in Marischal College, from whom I had the anecdote quite lately), having a young English gentleman as a boarder, who wished to learn French, he sent him to Mr. Duncan. The arrangement was for a quarter's teaching from ten to eleven in the morning in his own lodgings. After a very short time the young man said to Dr. C., "I think, sir, it's no use going any longer to that gentleman." "Why?" "Because when I go I find him in bed, and he tells me to say my lesson at his bedside; but I have hardly begun when I find him asleep." In fact, one of his incurable peculiarities through life was the extreme

difficulty of getting him to bed at any reasonable hour, and the still greater difficulty of getting him to rise when once laid down and fast asleep. At the same time, I believe that to that physical peculiarity of being able to go fast asleep at any hour of the day or night, and sleep on till with difficulty roused, it was mainly owing that his health, in spite of his utter disregard of all ordinary rules of health, hardly ever gave way, and never to any great extent, and that with a frame always so fragile-looking he yet lived to so great an age.

But there was another counteractive to the exhausting effects of close study and intense thought—his hilarious disposition when in the company of congenial friends. “With all this enthusiasm for languages,” says Dr. Thom,<sup>1</sup> “we were neither of us too old for a little play. Evening after evening Duncan and myself enjoyed a spell of amusement with John Watson and Edward Woodford, who subsequently won himself a high name as an Inspector of Schools for Scotland. Our principal forage on such occasions was dulse, which Duncan, with a red-hot poker, used to roast to a turn. Being decidedly the strongest of the four, I often, in our muscular contests, had three to one

<sup>1</sup> Adam Thom, Esq., LL.D., one of his most congenial chums, and himself a distinguished student at King's College, Aberdeen, who has favoured me with two long and graphic letters.

against me ; and on one occasion Duncan, while defending himself with a slate as a shield, was glad to escape from the canister-shot of the splinters." In his second letter Dr. Thom says,—“ With regard to his playfulness, nobody could know him thoroughly who was not able to throw his *p*'s and *q*'s to the winds. When Woodford was present—as was generally the case when we were winding up our evening's work with a bit of rough fun—I had individually to batter the three of them ; and if Woodford was absent, Duncan and myself used to fall foul of Watson, even if he had taken refuge from us in the bedroom.

“ When Watson broke up the quaternio by going to Edinburgh, Duncan, Woodford, and myself trudged with him at a very early hour as far as Bourtreebush, on the road to Stonehaven (about seven miles), having had to rouse the innkeeper out of bed for the nearest approach which pedestrians could make to a stirrup-cup. The remaining three of the original party continued to wind up their days as before. Woodford and I regularly accompanied Duncan to his humble home in Gilcomston, sometimes supplying him with candles for his nocturnal lucubrations. One Saturday evening, after eleven had struck, we heard, as we were passing by the back of the Infirmary, the click of some subterranean machinery (in connexion with a neighbour-

ing mill), obviously bent on the continuous breach of the coming Sabbath. At the instigation of the student of Divinity, we strove vigorously to pull up the grating which seemed to separate the profane noises from his righteous wrath. But the world was too much for us ; and the music, when we left it, struck us as being more lively than ever."

In the summer of 1819, the school of Peterhead (Aberdeenshire) having become vacant, there appeared as candidates for it Mr. Imray, teacher of a subscription school at Stonehaven, and four others, including Mr. Duncan. It was decided by competitive examination at Aberdeen, and Imray was successful. "Duncan failed," says Dr. Anderson of Morpeth, "in the arithmetical questions : he never had a head for figures." Mr. Duncan, however, got Imray's subscription school at Stonehaven ; and so, when he entered on his fourth and last Divinity Session (1819-20), he matriculated (as the books show), as residing in the parish of Fetteresso, to which the town of Stonehaven belongs. "I have conversed," writes the Rev. Alexander Silver, the present minister of the adjoining parish of Dunnottar, whose brother was parochial schoolmaster of Fetteresso, "with two individuals who attended Duncan's school at Stonehaven, and got from them a graphic account of his way of going on. It was no uncommon thing for

the scholars to meet and no master appear. When a deputation of them went to his lodgings, they found him in bed, quite unconscious of the hour, and when he came to the schoolroom, he was seldom quite correct in his dress—shoes and boots not being always matched, and stockings ditto. Of his absence and oddity they gave me this example. He had gone one day with a party in a boat to inspect ‘Fowlsheugh Rocks’ (at no great distance). After spending the day, and partaking of some refreshments, they proceeded homewards. When within the pierheads of the harbour of Stonehaven, some one out of frolic called to Duncan to jump, which he immediately did, and found himself in the sea, from which he was with difficulty rescued. On landing, his friends wanted to prevent him going through the town in such a plight—the salt water streaming from his clothes. But he walked boldly up the street as he was. Once he was invited to sup with Dr. —, to meet a small party of friends. Having seated himself at table, he made preparation for a hearty meal, getting his plate filled. But the poor man never tasted a mouthful. He had got into an argument, and when pressed by Mrs. — to take *a little more*, he pushed the plate from him, saying, ‘No more, I thank you, Madam.’ He had not tasted one morsel. That such a man would be no hand as a

teacher of boys and girls in a public school—incapable of preserving order and discipline—need not be said. It was no uncommon thing for him to whip a boy and then give him a halfpenny to hold his tongue.”

While at Stonehaven, three of his Aberdeen friends—all of whom rose to high positions in after life, and one of whom is my informant—walked all the way from Aberdeen one Saturday to visit him. Putting up at the hotel or inn of the place, they invited him to spend the evening with them, which he did with great glee—staying as usual to a late hour. Next day, being rather late for church, they called on their friend to go with them, but found him in no mood for that. He said he seldom went, there being nothing to be got there worth hearing. So, instead of church, they spent the day in the woods and among the rocks. And my friend afterwards learned that he was hardly ever seen in church. In this view, and considering his failure as a school-teacher, his not remaining long at Stonehaven is easily accounted for.

“When the Earl of Fife,” writes Mr. Silver, “was Lord Rector of Marischal College and University, he gave £50 for prizes to the students, to be decided by competition in the several classes. The exercise in Divinity was to be a Latin essay on a given topic. Duncan was by this time so well known as a distin-



guished student, that few would have ventured to compete with him. But he came forward and publicly announced that he did not intend to compete—a step which in any other case would have been deemed presumptuous in the extreme, but instead of this he received for it the commendation of his Professor, Dr. Brown—showing the estimation in which he was held.”<sup>1</sup>

I have referred to his hilarious disposition in the company of congenial friends, as one great counter-active to the exhausting effect of intense thought, mental abstraction, and an insatiable appetite for all

<sup>1</sup> “As a member of the Theological Society,” says Dr. Anderson, “he divided the claim to *facile princeps* with —, who was an admirable dialectician, while Duncan dealt exclusively in syllogism, in which he arranged his major and minor so ingeniously that again and again he pinned his adversary to the wall, and none was able to come to the rescue. I wonder if my friend — has any lively recollections of these Noctes, when he used to parry Duncan’s thrusts with weapons tipped with Hudibrastic satire: *Forsitan hæc meminisse juvabit*. In these debates Duncan uniformly took the heterodox side of the argument. The meetings were often closed with a supper at Mrs. Ronald’s, where the man that had conquered in argument was often conquered by the potency of his potations.” Dr. A. was struck with his criticisms on the “Exercise and Addition” [a critical discourse on a passage of the Greek Testament], showing his knowledge of Syriac, and the idiom of Biblical as distinguished from classical Greek. And he used to tell me of the tiffs which he had with Dr. M. (next to himself, the most distinguished student at the Hall), on the principles of textual criticism applicable to the various readings of the New Testament, which, at the commencement of my Divinity studies, excited my wonder.

kinds of literature, sacred and profane, grave and gay. Although he and his fellows might be studying together, or discussing some knotty point, yet no sooner did they get upon jocular subjects than he would outdo the rest, breaking out into roars of laughter, and at times kicking up all sorts of noises. The following extract from the letter of a respected friend, who was his fellow-student at the Divinity Hall, will illustrate this—and some more questionable things—in an interesting way. “Very soon after entering the Divinity Hall,” writes the Rev. Thomas Gun, minister of the Free Church, Madderty, Perthshire, “Mr. John Duncan became known among his fellow-students as one distinguished for his acquirements in classical literature.” After referring to his Latin criticisms in much the same terms as Dr. Anderson, he continues : “During one of these Sessions (1819-20, or 20-21), the Chancellor of Marischal College gave a sum of money for prizes to the several classes. No sooner had Dr. Brown announced the subject he had fixed for the Latin essay, than it was buzzed through the Hall that John Duncan would carry the prize. Several essays were given in, but on naming Duncan as the prizeman, the Professor said his reason for deciding in his favour was, that his was the only essay that had been thought out in the language it was written in.—Mr. Duncan

attached himself to some of the Highland students, that he might acquire some knowledge of the Gaelic language.—On more than one occasion, while all were quietly listening to Dr. Mearns's prelections, and within a few minutes of the hour of dismissal, the door of the class-room being opened, Mr. Duncan's head would be thrust in. On these occasions, his look, so peculiar, would raise a titter among the students. Dr. Mearns, however, was likely well aware of his proclivities. Mr. Duncan had considerable practice in the composition of Hall discourses for others; several students engaging his aid, which was generally rendered on the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> For this he was to have tea and supper, as his recompense. One Sabbath morning he arrived at the room which I occupied along with another student, who had engaged his assistance. On returning from church, during the interval of public worship, I found them at work; Dr. Duncan pacing the room with a pocket Bible in his hand, while the student sat writing to his dictation. On my return in the afternoon they occupied the same positions. Of course he accepted the invitation to tea, supper, etc., on one of the week-days thereafter. So hilarious did he become, that he

<sup>1</sup> Though it was in the composition of their Latin discourses that students were understood to engage Mr. Duncan's services, there were cases (and Mr. Gun's one was probably such) in which weak students did not disdain to seek his help for their English ones also.

never thought of taking his departure till early morning, when he informed us that at such an hour there would be no admittance at his own residence ; and as the family in our lodgings had retired to rest, there was nothing for it but to ask him to share our one bed—which he did. But so full of fun was he that none of us shut an eye that night.

“It was then customary [and still is] for the Methodists to hold religious services in their churches on the last night of the year [to ‘improve’ the outgoing of the old and the incoming of the new year]. This service several of us students attended. On coming out of the church on one of these occasions, after midnight, we heard loud bawlings at the head of Queen Street [not far from the Methodist Chapel] ; when, on nearing the place, there was John Duncan, conspicuous for his vociferating powers [for he could put forth a stentorian voice], along with some other students. Among those who had been at the Methodist church, and who witnessed this scene, was the late Rev. Duncan Grant, minister of Forres, but at that time minister of the Gaelic Church in Aberdeen [a man of superior gifts]. Next Sabbath evening, in the course of his sermon, Mr. Grant took notice of the riotous proceedings which he had witnessed on the first morning of the new year, and was reported to have said that many of the students of

Divinity conducted themselves as badly as the sailors of Aberdeen. After these animadversions, the joke was current in the city that, but for the sailors being so much engaged in preparing for the Greenland fishing, they would have prosecuted Mr. Grant for comparing them with students of Divinity."

With the remainder of Dr. Thom's most genial communication, and one or two other particulars, I close this chapter :—

"Soon after I completed my third [College] session"—in the year 1822, as I gather—"I was requested to go to Yorkshire as assistant in a Quaker school. As I could not, or at least would not, break my academical course, I proposed Duncan in my stead. When I suggested this move to him, he was struggling, from pecuniary necessity, with a very small number of miscellaneous fry, in a close or court near Broad Street or the Gallowgate. Well, this stand-by, poor as it was, he could not afford to sacrifice by leaving it, even for a few days, on chance. I accordingly volunteered to act for him till he should have arranged matters with my friends in Edinburgh; and as I had to rise and breakfast before my usual hour on that account, I had the bore of the long walk impressed the more deeply on my memory. My suggestion of Duncan for Darlington was joyfully accepted on both sides. There, how-

ever, the professional, and peradventure the social, restraints were too much for the rollicking recluse—the anomalous but true description of the man's idiosyncrasy."

His stay at Darlington appears to have been of no long duration. His slowness, irregularity, awkwardness, and absence of manner, and want of the teacher's precision of method, would be quite enough to account for this with a quick people like the English ; but I have reason to think there was more in it than this. My friend Dr. G. G. Brown tells me that he and the French teacher quarrelled, that the issue of this was a challenge (doubtless by the Frenchman), and that the challenge was accepted—by one who probably never had fired a shot, if he even knew how to handle fire-arms ! Happily the affair was detected in time, and of course did not come off ; but if any such incident occurred, it was high time that both teachers should be got rid of.<sup>1</sup>

What followed will be best given in his own words

<sup>1</sup> "I was for some time usher in a Quaker school at Darlington. The Quaker, like all Cockneys, put in his *h's* where they should not be, and left them out where they should. I tried to cure him, but in vain. One day he was teaching some of the children that paraphrase, 'Ills on ills, by Heaven's decree, in man's estate are found,' which he pronounced thus, 'Hills on hills,' etc. I said, 'It's not hills ; it is ill.' 'O John,' said the Quaker (he always called me John), 'you know that I cannot haspilate the haitches.'"

to Miss R.: "After leaving the school at Darlington, being too proud to go back to Aberdeen, I remained in Edinburgh, and earned a scanty subsistence by a little teaching, and by sometimes writing a Latin paper for a medical man. I had a room in Bristo Street for which I paid 1s. 6d. a week; the bed was full of bugs, and I lived on 2s. 6d. I felt one day as if my reason were tottering, and I came in, fell flat on my face, and prayed to God to preserve it. I rose up with the assurance that it would be preserved. I had at this time been delivered from Atheism, but was living in habitual sin and in prayerlessness. A lady said to me two or three days after this, 'Oh, Mr. Duncan, I am glad to see you, for there was something in your eye the other day that I did not like.' I believe that my reason was going, but that the Lord heard my prayer and preserved it."

So, failing to support himself in Edinburgh, he returned to Aberdeen to toil away as a teacher of languages; not being then prepared, for reasons which will be mentioned in the next chapter, to take license as a probationer in the Church.

"In March 1823," continues Dr. Thom, "I moved from Aberdeen to Udney [some twelve miles north of Aberdeen], where I remained till April 1825. During those two years I never missed seeing Duncan whenever I

was within his reach, marking as a white day in my memory every incident of the kind. Between 1825 and 1855 we never met ; and yet after a separation of thirty years, we sat face to face in his private apartment at the New College, wholly oblivious of the lapse of nearly an age of absence. From Woodford, however, I had learned much of Duncan's intermediate life. Many of the more public details of their intercourse will be found, I rather apprehend, in the Prefaces to Woodford's classical productions.<sup>1</sup> One purely private occurrence demands special mention. Before Duncan left Aberdeen, César Malan visited that city for evangelical purposes. His preaching constituted the turning-point in Duncan's

<sup>1</sup> The late Edward Woodford, LL.D., one of H.M. Inspectors of Schools for Scotland, was educated at Aberdeen, and devoted his life to classical teaching. So early as the year 1830 he issued the first edition of his *Elements of the Latin Language*, of which a third edition was published in 1862. In the Preface to the second edition (1854) I find the following reference to Dr. Duncan : "The change introduced into the arrangement of the cases has been encouraged by the example of some late Continental works ; but his idea of it originated, with other points, before the publication of the first edition, in the course of many, and to him most valuable, meetings on philological subjects with the Rev. Dr. John Duncan, now of the New College of Edinburgh." Dr. Woodford published two other small classical works, an *Epitome of part of Cæsar's Commentaries* for first reading in Latin, with a map and apparatus, which reached a ninth edition in 1868, and *Eclogæ Horatianæ*, with an Inquiry into the First Principles of Latin Prosody, 1849. But in neither of these is there any reference to Dr. Duncan.



spiritual being. The proof thereof is singularly unique. About one in the morning Woodford was roused from sleep by a loud and persistent knocking at his door. The untimely aggressor was Duncan, to say that he could take no rest till he should have opened his mind to César Malan.<sup>1</sup>

"Perhaps the relations between the three old friends may be in some degree illustrated by a single word of Duncan's under Woodford's hospitable roof [during the visit of Dr. Thom to Edinburgh just alluded to]. After dining together alone, we had transferred our sitting from the table to the fireside, virtually realizing recollections that were at least more than a quarter of a century old. In this position of mind and body Duncan, missing me for a moment, hurriedly exclaimed, 'Edward, has Adam gone away altogether?' I had previously drunk tea at Duncan's own residence under circumstances more characteristic than any that had ever occurred in my experience. At our interview in the New College he had given me the invitation, specifying most carefully both day and hour. Well, I presented myself as ordered. But Miss Sandeman

<sup>1</sup> It will be seen when the details of that memorable time come to be given, that this must have been after his first interview with Malan—not solicited by Duncan but at Malan's desire—held with all the visitors at my brother's house, of whom he was one.

[the lady who then kept house for him] had never been told of the engagement—expressing, however, but little surprise thereat. Duncan in truth was somewhat indisposed. On entering the sanctum sanctorum, there was my oblivious host bolt-upright in bed, writing a Turkish Grammar for the troops in the Crimea, with the aid of an Oriental or rather Polyglot Library which built up the other three sides of the parallelogram !

“Of my own personal knowledge I can say that Duncan had applied much of his zeal to classical literature. During the second year of our intimacy in Aberdeen, he rarely walked abroad without a Greek tragedy under his arm, and as often as he stumbled on those whom he supposed to be skilled in the language, he was always ready with some knotty point to be solved on the spot. In his scholarship there was no vanity ; he merely thirsted after learning for its own sake. As to his critical mastery of Latin, though I am not sure that I ever had any opportunity of judging, I had frequent proofs of his practical command of that tongue, which excited my admiration and envy ; and I was therefore all the more ready to credit what I was subsequently told of his matchless facility in criticising in classic Latinity the ‘Exegeses’ delivered at the Hall.

“In fine, to rise from head to heart, from intellect to temperament, from attainments to dispositions, Dr. John Duncan was more of a pure, simple, unselfish man than I have ever met, or ever expect to meet, elsewhere on earth.”

## CHAPTER VI.

TO THE PERIOD OF HIS LICENSE, AND ONWARDS TO THE  
GREAT CHANGE : 1821-1826.

THOUGH from early boyhood I had known all about Mr. Duncan, and during my Grammar-School and College life had come occasionally in contact with him, it was not until the summer of 1821 that I became intimate with him. I had just taken my degree, and, intending to enter the Divinity Hall in the following session, was anxious, before putting myself under the Professor of Hebrew, to get some insight into the language from one whose attainments in Oriental literature were so well known. I engaged with Mr. Duncan accordingly for a quarter's teaching, but being at that time in full employment, he could only, for a favour, take me from six to seven in the morning—an hour that with his known habits gave me little hope of getting much out of him. In truth, when I went to his class-room half the hour had usually elapsed ere he appeared, and often having *slept in*, he never appeared

at all. Thus my quarter's teaching amounted to just about six weeks of broken hours or half-hours. But beyond all price were those hours to me. His very defects as an elementary teacher of grammar arose from qualities which made him everything to me. Scarcely had we got beyond the alphabet when he plunged into dissertations on the genius, history, and characteristic divergences of the leading Semitic tongues, the philosophy of vocalization, etc.; passages from his great master, Albert Schultens,<sup>1</sup> were read and commented on, and soon we got into Arabic, with *Erpenius* for our grammatical guide, and *Golius* for our lexicon. All this I well knew would be worthless to me, save as afterwards followed up in my own study; but I was resolved meantime to make the most of my rabbi, and so drank in with avidity all he said, drawing him forth on points of special interest by suggesting difficulties or requesting further explanation, which never failed to elicit fresh sparks of philological genius. And very dull I thought he must be who, in a field of study so entirely new as Oriental literature then was to me, could fail to catch the enthusiasm of which the master was brimful, and listen without profit to such masterly outpour-

<sup>1</sup> Albert Schultens, a distinguished Oriental Professor, first at Franequer (1713), then at Leyden (1720); died in 1750: founder of the *Arabic* school for illustrating the sources of the existing Hebrew, and author of learned grammatical and exegetical works.

ings on the philosophy of language as I was then favoured with. Little given to early rising as I was myself, I rose with the lark then, looking forward to my morning's treat ; and if I was disappointed of one half of my hour, I thought the other half compensation enough, nor could I find it in my heart to quarrel with him if I lost it all. Thus did my close intimacy with him first begin. But another tie was soon after formed. The first enlarged edition of Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures* had just issued from the press. As a branch of literature then little cultivated, but much needed in this country, it made some sensation. A copy of it was put into my hands "wet from the press ;" and such was the interest with which I read it, that I never rested till I had got through the four octavo volumes, pen in hand. The author's text was only a respectable and well-arranged compilation ; but its vast stores of literary information on all branches of Biblical inquiry, and especially the German works from which it quoted, gave such an impulse and direction to my theological studies, as constituted the turning-point in them for life. Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament*, translated and edited with the learned notes of Bishop Marsh, was the work which of all others I next sought out, whose six volumes, once in hand, seemed all too short. While this work fed the fire which Mr. Duncan

had kindled, and carried me into new regions, it inoculated me with its own spirit of fearless Biblical research, but at the same time with not a little of that suspicion of received conclusions in exegetical and systematic theology which afterwards cost me dear.<sup>1</sup> To keep to myself, while in daily company with Mr. Duncan, subjects into which I was thus feeling my way and the thoughts they were suggesting, would have been impossible. To him these studies had long been familiar; indeed, they were a favourite walk with him. He began now to draw to me, and finding no one of his acquaintance in quite the same vein, he soon came to be nearly a daily visitor, and few days passed in which we had not long walks together. This companionship, vastly agreeable though it was, and in many respects full of profit—for his gifts as a talking philosopher, linguist, and theologian I saw already to be incomparable—was in the most important sense far from wholesome. Theological and critical questions came to be discussed as matters of mere professional

<sup>1</sup> For these allusions to myself, and some which will presently follow—which I would fain suppress, and have hesitated much before penning—I must request the reader's indulgence, necessary, as they will by and by appear, to the right discharge of the task which I have undertaken. But well might I say, when constrained to revert to those sad days, with Æneas to Dido, when requested by her to tell her guests the story of his disasters—

*Infandum regina jubes renovare dolorem.*

learning or speculative investigation, while the *morale* of my friend, as the reader already understands, was the reverse of high. For a long time, however, he was on his guard with me, both in starting objections to received doctrines and in laxity of conduct. Yet it was impossible not to perceive that all his sympathies were on the side of heterodoxy; while as to conduct, his landlady, observing his intimacy with me and the influence I seemed to have over him, entreated me, especially one day, to get him to take better care of his health, and have some regard for his reputation. For he had come to her door that morning about two or three, in a most pitiable state, quite sick (from a mixture of things given him by some friend more hospitable than friendly), unable even to reach the top of the stair without help, and scarcely able to undress. I did what I could in the way of gentle rebuke and warning, but it came to little. For though he expressed his firm determination to resist importunities and be more careful for the future, he soon forgot all about it, and relapsed into his old habits, insomuch that at times I feared he would openly disgrace himself, his profession, and his friends, and that thus a magnificent mind would prove a wreck and sink out of sight. Still the tie which bound me to him had a magnetic force; when he came to me I could not find it in my heart to bid him away; and so our



walks and talks went on as before. And as it could hardly escape his observation that my own theological principles and beliefs were getting relaxed and disorganized, he grew less cautious in discovering his own deflections from recognised truths, till by degrees it came to be an understood point of agreement that the faith of the Church to which we belonged was much more traditional than Biblical. His Sabellianism never recommended itself to me, though on the doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead I was thoroughly shaken. So I took refuge in Unitarianism pure and simple, as giving us at least one entire and intelligible reality, "the *Man* Christ Jesus;" while for Divinity, a Divine afflatus of the one numerical Godhead, resting on and dwelling permanently in this "*Man*" as in no other man, seemed to supply all that was indispensable to a valid sense of those passages in which Divinity is ascribed to Christ. And yet the name of *Unitarian* was so dreadful to me that even in our freest conversations I never used it. Perceiving this inconsistency, as I think, he made a sly allusion to the word one day, as expressing our mutually understood creed, saying "We Unitarians"—which made me visibly recoil. Strange to say, not only had he observed this, but the impression it made upon him was such that, so late as the year 1862, he recalled

it to our common friend Mr. Taylor Innes, of the Scottish Bar, when relating to him some particulars of his former life.<sup>1</sup> "In my theology," he said, "after being recovered from atheism, I laboured away to make a system in Sabellianism. I received the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ *on grounds of grammar* [but not His *Personal* Divinity; see page 71]—by Granville Sharp's 'rule';<sup>2</sup> but I could not receive the Trinity; and about the nature of Sacrifice, not seeing how a being in one relation could offer himself a sacrifice to himself in another, I made endless hypotheses. I was a Sabellian, and my friend ——" [the reader will now know who is meant] "was a Socinian, though he was very much startled when I said to him for the first time, 'But we Unitarians.'"

For years after he was ready for license, Mr. Duncan

<sup>1</sup> These deeply interesting particulars, taken down from his own lips and afterwards corrected by Dr. Duncan himself, were given to the public but a few weeks after his death, and will be found in the *Family Treasury* for April 1870.

<sup>2</sup> See *Remarks on the Uses of the Definite Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament*. In substance, the rule referred to is this:—"When the copulative *καί* connects two nouns (substantive, adjective, or participles) of the same case, if the definite article in any of its cases precedes the *first* of the said nouns, and is *not repeated before the second*, then the latter always refers to the same person that is expressed or described by the first; that is, it denotes a further description of the first-named person." Of this rule Mr. Sharp gives a number of examples from the New Testament—such as Tit. ii. 13 ("the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"), and

shrank from taking that step, unable as he was honestly to subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith. But at length, one day in the spring of 1825, he startled me by saying, "I'm going to take license." "What," I said hastily, "have you changed your views?" "Not of doctrine, but of subscription; I have come to take Paley's views of subscription to articles of faith—that they are to be regarded simply as *peace-articles*, in subscribing which we pledge ourselves not to preach *against* them; and beyond this nothing more can reasonably be demanded: that pledge I am willing to give." "That may be your view," I curtly said, "but I hope it will never be mine;" nor did we ever, I think, come upon the subject again. In looking back, however, upon this step in after life, he ever spoke of it with grief, sometimes even abhorrence; feeling that, besides the hypocrisy involved in saying, in solemn

2 Pet. i. 1 ("the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ")—where the conditions of the rule do certainly exist; and Mr. Sharp's conclusion is, that it is the same person "Jesus Christ" who is here called "our great God" and "our Saviour." Supposing this a correct inference, the Divinity of Christ is of course established, if apostolic teaching can establish it; but sound as the Greek rule is admitted to be by the best scholars, there still remains the question whether, admitting it in principle, the New Testament passages adduced by Sharp and those who hold with him admit of no other explanation. On this even orthodox critics are not agreed. (See Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Moulton's translation, and Middleton *On the Greek Article*; with the commentators, Ellicott, Alford, etc., *in locis*.)

circumstances, what was not true (for in the Presbyterian Churches the question is put and has to be answered *orally*, whether the doctrine of the Confession is the confession of our own faith), he was in other respects totally unfit then for the holy ministry. To Miss R., for example, he said, less than a year before he died, "I took license in unbelief, in ungodliness, and doctrinal unbelief and heresy." "How did they let you pass?" she asked. "Because I was a hypocrite," was his reply, "not willingly, for I kept back for long; but at last people were upon me, and out of very shame I acted the hypocrite; I did not choose to tell them why I was not taking license." This shows how he came to embrace Paley's easy view of subscription—he *needed* some decent excuse to himself, and Paley helped him to one.

He was licensed accordingly, as the Presbytery books show, on the 24th of June 1825. His first sermon was preached in the West Church, Aberdeen, and I took care to be there. Of this sermon he spoke to Miss R. in the following terms:—"I remember I preached a tremendously bad sermon—it was in the West Church, Aberdeen." But to Mr. Taylor Innes he said, "I preached a sermon in the West Church—I wish I had it now—of the most artful Neology that perhaps ever was spoken, explaining away every evan-

gelical doctrine and phrase." The text of that sermon, the strain and scope of it, and the impression it made upon me, are, even now while I write, vividly before me. In point of composition I do not know that he ever afterwards reached so high, if I except his addresses on the Jews before the General Assembly long afterwards, some occasional flashes of eloquence in the pulpit, and the lofty strain of some of his addresses at the Communion-table. Apart from its vital defects, of which I will speak presently, there was a calm, contemplative, high, half-poetic, half-mystic strain about it which had a most fascinating effect upon the hearer. Accordingly, all was still attention, and a sort of wonder pervaded the audience.

The text was 1 John iii. 1: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The idea of the sermon was taken from Herder—a great favourite with us at that time. I had seen a notice of a small work of his, entitled "Of the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, according to the Gospel of John," which I brought under his notice.<sup>1</sup> This led to a great deal of conversation, resumed from day to day, in the course of which I thought the idea

<sup>1</sup> *Vom Gottes Sohn, der Welt Heiland*, u.s.w. Riga, 1797. A short notice here of this eminent man may not be unimpressive, and ought to be salutary to students. Johann Gottfried Herder (born 1744, died 1803), was latterly General Superintendent at Weimar,

of Herder's book was taking more and more hold of his mind, and his way of conceiving of the Divinity of Christ was approximating to my own, both being nearly identical with Herder's. No sooner, accordingly, had he given out his text in the West Church than I felt confident that the sermon would be a working out of this view. And to a marvel he succeeded. His ideal-

in which capacity he became one of a splendid literary coterie—including Wieland, Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul—in whom the literary Duke prided himself as making his court the envy of all courts. As court-preacher, of rare intellectual culture though his audience was, Herder fascinated all who heard him. "What emotion there was in such a spirit," said Goethe, ere yet the sharp points of repellency between them had appeared, "what power of achievement in such an intellect, can neither be imagined nor described; but we can easily conceive his secret determination when we reflect upon his great works after the lapse of so many years." "His noble intellect," said Jean Paul, "has been acknowledged by men of different times and of various parties; [but] he had the misfortune not to be a star of the first magnitude, nor of any other magnitude, but a galaxy of stars, from which every one could spell out a star-picture according to his own fancy. Men of versatile powers are always ignored, but those of one gift are almost invariably appreciated." Herder was a theologian, a poet, a popular orator, a preacher; in none of these departments was he equal to the greatest, but in them all combined he had probably no equal. His enthusiasm for the poetry of the East, and for Hebrew poetry in particular, was a point of strong sympathy for Mr. Duncan; nor was this lessened, but rather intensified, by the poetic mysticism in which he delighted to clothe his thoughts on sacred subjects. His manner in the pulpit has its nearest parallel in that of an exceedingly different man, the great President Edwards of America—altogether motionless and apparently unimpassioned, but riveting every auditor from first to last. "Our aristocratic congregation"—I quote from one who was a regular auditor, in an earlier chaplaincy, yet who had little

istic and poetic tendencies had, in the writing of it, been stirred to the utmost, and the result was a fascinating picture of "the Man, Christ Jesus" as the Flower of Humanity, the Perfection of Human beauty, the Archetypal "son of God," into whose spirit whoso drinks, and whose bright example whoso copies, becomes him-

sympathy with his writings—"was not very distinguished for the devotional spirit of the early Church; and yet you should have seen how, in a few minutes, he chained all the flutter of diversion, curiosity, and frivolity to the stillness of a Moravian assembly. All hearts were opened; every one hung upon him, and rejoiced in unwonted tears; only the sighs of deep feeling could be heard though the entire congregation. No one preaches as he does." His works—*The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry, Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humanity, On the Spirit of Christianity, Scattered Leaves*, etc.—are well known, and have a voice of their own still in Germany. But he tones down the supernatural in the Bible into a refined and sublimated naturalism, of which probably Ewald is the best representative now; thus, as Mr. Farrar says, "destroying Revelation by leaving nothing to be revealed."

Alas for such mere literary coteries as that at Weimar, brilliant above all that Europe could then furnish! Religion, though not quite ostracised as a subject of table-talk and speculation, had no controlling power over the wayward intellect and hot animal passions of some in it. "There was personal clashing among the great minds that surrounded Weimar court. It is humiliating to see what a contemptible, wicked spirit of gossip could insinuate itself there and embitter the life of Herder." In fact, Herder's own moral tone got sadly deteriorated in such company; and it is affecting to know that one of his latest exclamations was, "Oh, my misspent life!" So much for unsanctified human genius, even the most brilliant.—(See Farrar's *Critical History of Free Thought*, 1862, Lect. vi.; and Hagenbach's *Lectures on the History of the Church in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, translated by Dr. Hurst. 2 vols. 1870. Vol. ii. Lect. i.)

self so far forth a "son of God." I have called this a fascinating picture, couched as it was in stately language, and glowing with the warmth of a fond feeling that he had found out a way of glorifying Christ to which even orthodoxy was a stranger. But what would the sin-stricken soul have said of it? "Miserable comforters are ye all, forgers of lies, physicians of no value. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg? O that ye would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom" (Job vi. xiii. xvi.). If less mystical and poetic than Herder's sermons likely were, it had what was better—more or less of sturdy Scottish theology, which in spite of himself would cling to him. Still it was but a beautiful picture, without life, and void of all moral power.

After this one supreme effort he relapsed into his usual slovenly style of preparation. In fact, his chronic aversion to writing made him reluctant to prepare new sermons. As for the one referred to, I doubt if he ever preached it again, and after the great change—if it survived so long—it would doubtless be committed to the flames.



The momentous events which fall to be related in the next chapter will bring Mr. Duncan in contact with me in so altered a relation, that I must again solicit the reader's indulgence for obtruding a brief statement of what would be too personal for the public eye, were it not that without it the narrative would be unintelligible.

Being bent on a course of study in Germany, I divided the summer of 1825 between the study of German and the reading of its Latin critical and exegetical literature, which was mostly all semi-rationalistic. Happily for me, at this period, that project, after being all arranged, was, much to my disappointment, converted into permission to take a winter's course of study in Edinburgh, according to any plan I might myself choose. Circumstances there brought me under such new religious influences, as in spite of myself gradually prepared the way for a change. Pulpit ministrations of rare intellectual power, of uncommon earnestness, and of searching spirituality, revived all the experiences of my early religious life, and awakened up emotions to which I had long been a stranger. The profound organic unity of the Divine dispensations of grace, from their earliest dawnings in the Old Testament writings to their latest development in the New,

and the great evangelical principles which as a golden thread might be seen running through the whole—for these were Dr. Gordon's *forte*, and these he illustrated with varied freshness from week to week to highly intelligent and crowded audiences in one of the city churches—these seemed to attest their own truth, but they fitted very ill upon the bald Christianity which at that period was all that remained to me. Still there was no change of positive beliefs. That, however, at length came, and in a way most unexpected. I had called one day on the late Dr. M'Crie—with whom I had begun to get acquainted through a near relative, of his own religious body—and as I had to wait in his sitting-room some minutes ere he entered, I was attracted by a small book which lay open on his table, and got so interested in it that I scarcely observed when he came in. The book, I think, was then new, at least in this country; and as he was aware of my wish to study in Germany, if not also of my unsatisfactory state of mind, he said he was reading that book with a good deal of interest, and was sure it would interest me as a student. So he pressed me to take it home with me, little thinking, probably, what it would prove to me. The little work I refer to was Professor Moses Stuart's letters to Dr. Channing—the eloquent and able head of the Unitarian body in the

United States—"on the Trinity and on the Divinity of Christ." It made no pretensions to an exhaustive treatment of this great subject. In fact, the basis on which he rears his superstructure seemed even then to be narrow enough, and to some of its principles I should now at least certainly demur. But the boldness with which he discarded the old dogmatic way of approaching the subject, the intimate acquaintance which he showed with the works of all the great Biblical scholars of Germany, the confidence with which he claimed credit for impartiality, inasmuch as most of his professional life had been spent in the study of critical works whose views on this subject were either wholly opposed to his own or out of sympathy with them, and the fearlessness with which he staked his whole case on a rigid application of the grammatical and exegetical principles of his opponents themselves—all this so suited my then state of mind that it gained my confidence in the writer at once. Ere I reached home I had got through more than half of the book, and the rest soon followed. Unable to settle to any other subject of thought or study, I went forth again to ruminate, and for an hour or two was lost to every object and person around me—one Object, one unseen Person, absorbing every thought. Mastered by strict criticism, conquered by rigid exegesis—which

most English books on this subject seemed to me rather to evade than honestly to face—I still was not without apprehension of being floated into orthodoxy on too easy terms, and guarded myself almost too jealously against the tide of old feelings which were now forcing their way up through the barriers that had been long placed upon them. But dogmatic prejudices at length gave way, disorganized beliefs began to get rectified, and evangelical truth, taking shape by degrees in Biblical forms, wrought itself out into such experimental conviction as gave it all the freshness of novelty, with the superadded assurance of a thenceforth immoveable tenacity. In short, the patriarch's language, after a discipline of another kind yet not more chastening, would once and again come powerfully up, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee."

Still, this change had for some time more of the character of a mental rehabilitation—a private personal recovery—than of an active, aggressive force for the good of others; and mercifully so, as it thus had time to acquire solidity and ripeness. But the one thing wanting at length came.

César Malan, of Geneva, had come to Scotland in the month of May 1826; and as Mr. Duncan's interviews

with this remarkable man proved the turning-point in his religious history, and he ever looked up to him and addressed him as his "spiritual father"—while my own connexion with him is associated with memories never to be effaced—I must be permitted to open the chapter in which I have now to describe the decisive change that passed upon the subject of this Memoir, with a somewhat full account of the great instrument of it, and thereafter of the circumstances which brought Malan and Duncan into contact with each other.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CÉSAR MALAN—THE GREAT CHANGE : 1826.

"THESE especially have had influence upon me—Dr. Mearns, David Brown, César Malan," etc. (see page 72). What Dr. Mearns's influence on him was we saw in a former chapter. We are now brought to the next two names. Of the latter, the great instrument of his conversion, I must give a pretty full sketch.

César Malan—born in respectable circumstances at Geneva, in the year 1787—after distinguishing himself as one of the classical masters in the public Academy of his native city, was ordained to the holy ministry at the age of twenty-three; but he was nearly thirty years of age ere he attained to those views and that experience of Divine truth which made him what he was from that time forth. Thenceforward, salvation by grace, sovereign and absolutely free, immediate justification by faith, a joyous assurance of salvation, with a

conscious sense of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—these, apprehended partially at first, but afterwards (through repeated interviews with Robert Haldane, from Scotland, in 1816-17) shining before his view like the sun in the heavens—became ever after the burden of all his preaching, of all his numerous writings, and of all his unwearied dealings with individual souls. The proclamation of these truths soon brought him into trouble, not only with the ecclesiastical authorities but with his fellow-citizens, to both of whom the bold and burning words of this young innovator on the semi-heathenish type of doctrine which had long reigned in the pulpits of Geneva, and which so well suited the tastes of its citizens, was intolerable. To allay the ferment thus created, and quietly cut off the occasion of it, a “Règlement” was framed by “The Venerable Company of Pastors,” exacting from all candidates for the ministry, and all ministers seeking to exercise their functions in Geneva, a pledge to abstain from handling in the pulpit certain topics—on the plea of their being abstruse, unnecessary, and fitted to raise strife. Malan, feeling this to be an unwarrantable infringement on the liberty of the pulpit, and believing it to be indirectly aimed at himself, refused to submit to it, and was in consequence excluded from the city pulpits. This he felt most

keenly ; for though he " could not but speak the things which he had seen and heard," he was warmly attached to his mother-Church, and resolutely declined to join a small body of Dissenters already established in the town, called "The Little Church." Repeated efforts were made by a distinguished pastor to persuade him that he had misunderstood the intent of the Règlement ; and so successful were these at first, that he consented to write a letter of apology for the hasty and narrow-minded view which he had taken of the document in question, and to apply for permission to preach again, under promise to observe the "Regulation"—in the sense he had been persuaded to believe was its only meaning. This being of course granted, he preached twice ; but the storm, as might have been expected, was renewed, and with such fierceness that he was not only excluded afresh from the city pulpits, but formally dismissed from his office in the public Academy—his only source of support for his family, consisting now of a wife and six children. But He whom he served did not desert him in this dark hour. English and German friends came generously forward to help him in the meantime, and afterwards sent young gentlemen to board with him, to whom were subsequently added a few young ladies. This and the proceeds of his literary works formed his chief means of subsistence. He first



commenced devotional meetings in his own house, and there conducted a Sunday-school. But the numbers soon exceeding the means of accommodating them, he had a small chapel erected at the bottom of his garden, where he ministered in a simple way; holding his meetings, however, at other hours than those of public worship, that he might not seem to be setting up a sectarian worship; and instead of administering the Lord's Supper to his little flock, he ceased not to partake of that ordinance with his family in the Established Church. Foreigners of distinction, when they visited Geneva, attended his meetings regularly. The Duchess Henrietta of Würtemberg, with her daughters—more than one of whom eventually shared a throne—set a high value on his ministrations; and one of whom I shall have occasion to speak in a subsequent chapter—the noble Archduchess Maria Dorothea Palatine of Hungary—well able to form a judgment—spoke of an exposition of his of the 15th of John, as one that “would never be forgotten by her,” and in a letter which she wrote to him thanked him “for the ineffaceable words which she had heard from his lips at Geneva in 1819, and which still resounded in her soul.” In fact, at the close of her long life, she spoke of Malan to his son and biographer as “her father in the faith,” and in proof of the value she set on him, intrusted to him the religious

instruction of two young princes of her family. In the year 1823, having been summoned before the Consistory of the National Church, and charged with insubordination, he was required to make promises for the future, with which he felt it impossible to comply; thereupon he was formally deprived of his ecclesiastical status in the Canton of Geneva; in the following year he was described simply as a "schoolmaster," in the roll of elections for the city and canton; and he was thus rendered liable to military service. But what was denied him at home was accorded to him abroad. In the year 1822, having come to England without any idea of preaching, he was drawn, in spite of himself, to address small audiences in broken English; and having excited considerable interest, he was induced to embrace the openings made for him to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. Acquiring thus a measure of fluency in our language, his reputation for zeal, warmth, and power in the pulpit, added to the worth of his private character, and a certain fascination of manner in private intercourse, won him the confidence of all the friends of evangelical religion in this country.<sup>1</sup> Now

<sup>1</sup> Once, after preaching to an attentive audience in London, an old gentleman accosted him on leaving the pulpit with these words, "I bless God that I have this day heard Romaine and Whitfield." On asking who it was that addressed him, "My name," answered the stranger, "is Rowland Hill"!

that he was cut off from his mother-Church, his desire was to connect himself with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland—in one sense the daughter of his mother-Church. The Established Church of Scotland he was precluded from joining—as had been his wish—as this would have obliged him to go through a lengthened course of study at a Scottish University. But the Secession Church of Scotland opened its arms to him, admitting him to the full status of a minister of the Gospel. In October 1825 he forwarded to the proper authorities in Geneva the certificate of his incorporation among the Scottish clergy, and anew solicited recognition by them as a minister of the Gospel. The only reply was a peremptory refusal—with this insulting intimation, that “he was not even *tolerated*, he was only *endured*.” In the following year he came to this country for the first time expressly in a missionary character, and spent four months and a half in England and Scotland. Of that memorable visit and some of its fruits I shall have to speak particularly at the close of this sketch. Here I only note that on his return he received from the University of Glasgow the honorary degree of D.D. (in a diploma dated 10th October 1826), as “a most faithful pastor, an excellent man, worthy of the highest commendation for piety and holiness of life, and especially worthy of the highest theological

honours." After this he paid successive visits to this country, in 1828, 1833, 1834, 1839, and 1843. In the last of these years the Church of Scotland had been rent in twain; and though he took little interest in the details of the controversy which had thus resulted, and had very close connexion with excellent persons who remained in the Establishment, he recognised in the Free Church a noble stand for principle, and found in it a large number of his most valued friends in the Gospel. Accordingly, when in the month of November 1843 that Church held a second General Assembly at Glasgow, he appeared one evening on the platform in the City Hall, where its meetings were held. There could not be fewer than 4000 present on that occasion, and when his tall handsome form stood before the audience, as he bowed gracefully before them, a thrill of applause went through the hall. But when he next turned round to the venerable Moderator—the late Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown of St. John's, Glasgow—threw his arms about him and kissed him, the silver locks of these two servants of Christ, looking so beautiful as they hung for several moments arm in arm, the audience could no longer restrain itself, but burst into loud and prolonged applause. The scene, so overpowering, comes up as vividly before me at this moment as when, eight-and-twenty years ago, my eyes beheld it.

After a life of ministrations, public and private, nearly as incessant as those of Wesley and Whitfield, sending forth too from year to year an immense number of small publications illustrative of the doctrines which he preached, and narrating the triumphs of grace in those with whom he conversed—not to speak of his numerous “Cantiques,” the music as well as the words by himself, and many of them now used in the public services of the French-speaking Protestant Churches—the last years of this noble servant of Christ were spent at a sweet retreat on a hill behind Geneva, commanding a beautiful view, where on the 8th May 1864, surrounded by his attached family, he fell peacefully asleep in Jesus, and was followed to his grave by fifteen ministers—National and Independent, Anglican and Lutheran.<sup>1</sup>

When M. Malan came to Edinburgh in May 1826, he preached—if I may judge from a little book of Notes of his Sermons published the following year<sup>2</sup>—in the pulpits of the most esteemed ministers of the United Secession Church, in Mr. Haldane’s “Taber-

<sup>1</sup> See *The Life, Labours, and Writings of Cæsar Malan, etc.* By one of his Sons. 1869. Nisbet, London.

<sup>2</sup> *Recollections of the Rev. Cæsar Malan of Geneva, D.D.* Being Notes of Sermons preached by him in Edinburgh, in May and June 1826. Taken in Shorthand. Nisbet. 1827. 32mo.

nacle," and in the Floating Chapel at Leith; the last of these sermons being dated, "Mr. Harper's, Leith, 8th June 1826." Though living then in Edinburgh, I happened neither to meet with him in private nor to be present at any of his public services there. But several things combined to produce a strong desire to meet with him, and an expectation of much benefit from him. My eldest brother (now deceased) had visited him more than once at Geneva, and had got his promise that when he came to Scotland he should visit him at Aberdeen; and this was arranged to take place as soon as he had completed his Edinburgh arrangements. Then, the glowing terms in which my brother described his personal appearance, the fascination there was in his manner, and the power which he had to enchain his hearers, and the almost identical terms in which his Edinburgh hearers expressed themselves, awakened my curiosity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That there was no exaggeration in all this the reader will see from the following extracts:—"His very appearance in the pulpit was in itself remarkable. The calm and serene dignity of his demeanour, the animation of his expression, the placid and benevolent seriousness of his striking figure—everything in short about him—arrested and riveted the attention. As soon as he opened his lips his hearers felt swayed in spite of themselves, by such a voice as enchains an audience, not so much by the depth of its volume as by its clear sympathetic tones. Even before he spoke, the very sight of his noble head, with its abundant snow-white hair"—but it was perfectly black when in Scotland in 1826, and

But what I had heard of his peculiar way of presenting the Gospel in private conversation arrested my attention more than all, and formed the subject of much conversation, investigation, and discussion, between myself and my beloved brother (now Dr. Charles Brown of New North Church, Edinburgh, with whom I was then a fellow-boarder in a Christian family in Edinburgh). It was not so much the truth which Malan presented that engaged our immediate attention, as his insisting that the state of matters between the soul he was dealing with and God should be brought

flowed gracefully down to his shoulders—"never failed to attract attention, when after slowly passing up the chapel he mounted with thoughtful and measured tread the pulpit steps" (*Life of Cæsar Malan*, p. 262). But in case this, coming from his own son, should be thought a little coloured, I add the testimony of Dr. Ostertag of the Missionary Institute of Bâle, published in the *Evangelical Mission Magazine* of Bâle for March 1867 :—"The first impression produced in my mind by seeing Malan [for a few days in 1836] was that of a noble and imposing personage. His figure was a little above the average height, his frame compact and vigorous, while his attitude had about it a semi-military air not the less simple and natural. There was nothing in him studied or affected. His broad shoulders supported a magnificent head; his forehead was expanded and lofty, suggesting the idea of power; his eyes sparkled with wit and fire, while at the same time his affectionate expression captivated you on the spot, and held you in chains; his finely curved mouth betrayed an iron will and a thorough benevolence, while it indicated at the same time that special gracefulness which stamps the orator. His luxuriant hair, already white (he was then about fifty years old), flowed down to his shoulders. For the rest, his black dress, straight collar, and white cravat at once marked the clergyman" (*Life of Cæsar Malan*, pp. 330-331).

to a point *then and there*. This we knew well enough would be set down as fanatical by many ; but as even many good people, holding that legitimate assurance of peace with God could spring out only of a lengthened course of Christian obedience, did not hesitate to say that Malan's procedure was fraught with danger, and fitted only to beget false peace, we were led to look into the matter a little more carefully. And believing that the Gospel, as set forth in the New Testament, affords to faith a basis of immediate peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for the chief of sinners, and that on this basis they are besought to be reconciled to God, we could not but feel that Malan's way of pressing for immediate decision, requiring a present surrender to these overtures of mercy, and the acceptance of a *present salvation*, was more reasonable and apostolic than that life-long uncertainty which seemed to be regarded as the normal condition of the Christian life. This impression was confirmed by the marvellous effect of Malan's conversations in Edinburgh and elsewhere, imparting to Christians of long standing a light, liberty, and joy of heart unknown before, and turning not a few who had been utter worldlings, or worse, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. On my own mind the first effect of this was to vivify and deepen the now recovered sense of



the grandeur of God's unspeakable gift to a lost world, and the glory of the method of peace through the blood of His cross. But along with this came a passionate desire and determined resolution, as soon as I should get back to Aberdeen, and find a fitting opportunity, to deal on this principle with one with whom I had so long been associated in error, and who I well knew had the deepest need of it morally, religiously, and even intellectually.

It was towards the end of May when I returned to Aberdeen ; but having to prepare for examination by the Presbytery, with a view to License as a Preacher of the Gospel, I was in no haste to come to close quarters with my friend—and as little desire for my company did he seem to show, though we met occasionally. But as the time for Malan's visit to my eldest brother was drawing near, the duty of coming to an understanding with Duncan pressed heavily upon me ; for I had reason to hope that if my own dealings with him should have any softening effect, he might be willing to converse with Malan—otherwise he would almost certainly shun him. Accordingly, I watched for my opportunity, but it seemed not to come. In fact, a timid shrinking came over me at times, producing a kind of relief when an expected opportunity failed. Little did I know, what he afterwards confessed, that he was

purposely avoiding me. Thirty-six years after this he said to Mr. Taylor Innes, "My friend was converted under Dr. Gordon's ministry,<sup>1</sup> and when we met I had heard of it and was rather shy of him. Of course at this time I was living in sin, daily sin—promising myself to quit it, but never doing it."<sup>2</sup> Two days, however, before Malan was expected, after the subject had haunted me for at least a week, and driven me for light and courage beyond and above myself, I was fully prepared, and had a strong confidence both that I should find my opportunity and power to be faithful. I waited till I had reason to know that his teaching would be concluded for the evening; and though the sky was so inviting as to tempt him to stay out, I had a good hope of finding him at home. Accordingly, at half-past eight I called at his lodgings,<sup>3</sup> and found him in his room—doing nothing; perhaps thinking what he would do with himself that fine evening. He asked me to sit down, but after exchanging a few sentences—on my part, more for form's sake—I said, "Won't you come out and take a walk this fine evening?" He

<sup>1</sup> Not exactly; but the real nature of my obligations to Dr. Gordon has been already stated, pp. 115, 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Family Treasury*, April 1870, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> For those who know the spot I mention the place—66 Green. The whole scenes of that memorable evening, and every feature of the ground we trode, are at this moment as vividly before me as they were when the events occurred—forty-five years ago.

agreed ; but instead of his former freedom and buoyancy whenever we met and walked, he seemed now to be on some ceremony with me, and there was a gravity in his air and a measured caution about all he said, which seemed plainly to show that he was fully aware of the great gulf that now parted us. Nor was I sorry for this, believing that when we came to close quarters it would place me on a vantage-ground with him. But for a long time it seemed impossible to get to the point. We had, no doubt, much general ground to reconnoitre in the first place, and I allowed the conversation to flow for a time so freely on current events, on literature, on criticism, and on *general* theology that he might at length unbend and open a door for closer work. But whenever the moment for that seemed close at hand, perhaps scenting my object, he contrived to turn the current, and once or twice succeeded so well that I had almost despaired of reaching his heart. But I was determined not to leave him ; and instead of saying to myself, "Go thy way for this time," I betook myself to Nehemiah's course, when he stood before the king of Persia—"So I prayed unto the God of heaven."<sup>1</sup> And the answer came as speedily as it did to him. My friend had dropt a slight allusion to our old talks on the Person

<sup>1</sup> Nehemiah ii. 4.

of Christ. That was enough for me; and with an eagerness and trembling joy at having at length found my opportunity, which even now I vividly realize, I said, "Ah! friend, those were sad days to me—days of disorganized beliefs, of relaxed spiritual and moral tone, of universal and mournful declension. True, I made immense progress in the literature of theology, in Biblical criticism, in exegetical insight; and I despair not of some day or other turning that to some good account in the service of Christ. But the true key to the Bible was then wanting, and not having the mind of God, how could I rightly interpret His Word as a whole? But now I see things in another light; and to me it would be a joy unspeakable if you and I, who so long walked together in darkness and pride of speculation, were now to see eye to eye, and help, more than ever we hindered, one another." The ground thus broken, we set to; he making desperate attempts to blunt the edge of my arguments and pleadings—sometimes trying to close the discussion by saying, "That is your opinion, but it is not mine;" sometimes making light of the difference between us—while I held to my point, feeling as I proceeded that I was gaining upon him, and thus acquiring fresh courage. By this time it was midnight, and though we had done little else than go backwards and forwards over the same space

of ground for more than three hours, now that it was as dark as it would be, our walking ground became still more contracted. Under what Aberdonians well know as the Correction-Wynd dry bridge (over Union Street), we did nothing now but walk backwards and forwards for fully two hours and more. "Tell me," said I, "what of natural and revealed religion you hold to, that I may know what common ground we have." This appeal had a wonderful effect. He stood stock still. Then turning round to me with an air of unusual solemnity, he said : "David, I must now be plain with you. Time was when I was so sunk in Atheism that once on seeing a horse I said to myself, 'There is no difference between that horse and me.' But Dr. Mearns brought me out of that, and I have never since doubted the existence of a Personal, Living God. But he convinced me, besides, of the truth of the Bible as a historical record. So I have come to believe in the Jewish religion and in Christianity as the complement of it. But the *doctrines* I can't and I won't believe—I mean the Divinity and Atonement of Christ."<sup>1</sup> "But what if they are written in that Bible which you

<sup>1</sup> I remember," said he to Miss R. about seven months before his death, "when fully convinced of the truth of Scripture, of shrinking from the Deity of Christ. *I would rather disbelieve the Book than believe that.*"

say you admit? you'll have to believe them. Ay, friend, that towering Luciferian pride of yours must come down, and you must become a little child, willing to be taught, else you have no part in the kingdom of heaven, for Christ, your Master, says so. But tell me this, What has your religion done for you? I know what mine has done for me—what has yours done for you?" "Well, not much, I confess. To tell you the truth, the words 'heaven' and 'hell' sound in my ears with as little effect as the words 'tables' and 'chairs.' And yet I do sometimes feel a little." "What you *feel* is not the question. What I want you to tell me is, *Are you holy?*" I knew I was here touching a sore place. So, looking him full in the face—the dim light now just sufficient to reveal his cowering look—I awaited his answer. "No," he replied, "I am not." "No, nor ever will be," I hastily interposed, "so long as God's way of salvation from sin is to such 'Greeks' as your foolishness; but to us who believe it is the power of God." "Ah! David, but that's just what I can't take in yet. Can't I be saved without the *doctrines?*" "What! are you going to potter at that rate with so solemn a thing as salvation, trying at how cheap a rate—with how small a sacrifice of your own prepossessions—you can be let off? If my apprehensions and experience are worth anything,

all that is worth a straw in Christianity lies in 'the doctrines.' Not that I undervalue its lofty views of God, of morality, of holiness, of a future state, and so on ; but take away the great doctrines that you wince at, and you loosen the foundations on which all the other things rest, and shake the whole edifice. But only surrender your soul to Christ in the Gospel, and those great powers of yours, now running to waste, will seem as if they were newly imparted, and go to noble effect." "Well, David, all I can say is, I can't take that in just yet." There was something, however, in the subdued and half-tremulous tone in which this was said, which, far from dissipating, only encouraged me to proceed—but in quite a changed tone. Taking it for granted that I had so far gained his assent, and believing that his difficulty would now lie chiefly with that "evil heart of unbelief," I suggested one encouragement after another till, like a child, he proceeded to question me how, *supposing* him a real Christian, he was to act in such and such circumstances. Never during all this time had we thought how the hours were passing ; in fact, now we scarcely walked at all, but under the bridge stood talking in a subdued tone, and so lovingly, that I thought he would almost take me into his arms. We now spoke of parting—it being, to the best of my recollection,

between two and three in the morning ; but he would not let me go till we arranged to meet again next day at noon. This gave me the cheering conviction that all unwillingness to come to close quarters with me had vanished, and that we were now at length on a new footing together. So with a full heart I went home, going to sleep with little sense of fatigue, and rising with the tranquil hope that what had been sown in weakness by me, might be reaped by the honoured servant of Christ who was to arrive in Aberdeen that evening.

In Miss R.'s notes I find the following striking confirmation from his own lips, of Mr. Duncan's state of mind on parting with me that night. " I was in a very softened state of mind when I met Malan. It was the night after I had been with David Brown. He had put the question, But are you holy? and till four o'clock [not quite that] he had wandered about the door of the lodgings with me. I said, I know that if I were to die before morning I would go to hell. You speak to me about grace : I don't know what it is. I have resolved a hundred times to be better ; if you can do anything for me, I need it much."

To prepare the way for a meeting with Malan, I told my brother, whose guest he was to be, the substance of what had passed the night before, and suggested his



asking Duncan to join the large evening party that had been invited to meet the stranger on his arrival—which he did accordingly.

At noon, as arranged, I now went to meet my friend, and that we might not be interrupted we went a little beyond the suburbs. But this time our walk was not very long. The truth is, it was so exceedingly satisfactory that I rather wished to avoid exhausting the great subjects of our last night's talk, that he might be fresh for the expected stranger. I found him meek as a lamb; in fact, the gentle, subdued appearance which he presented, and his half-timid eagerness to get into childlike talk rather than theological discussion on the topics of the preceding night, astonished and cheered me. Intense anxiety to be *such a Christian* as I had described and borne in upon him the night before, combined with an inability to see how *he* could ever be such—his all but certainty, judging from the past, that even should he flatter himself that he was such, and go on consistently for a time, he would sooner or later relapse into his old state or a worse—in this state of mind he began to question me much as follows:—“You say, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature—new in his views of holiness and sin, of the service of Christ and the devil, of the world, of all things. Well, but suppose I think myself a new creature, and

all things for a while are new to me, but after that newness wears off I fall back and sink into my old ways, am I still to flatter myself that I am a regenerate man, and how am I to recover myself?" "Don't you be making provision," I replied, "for a time of backsliding. Look rather to the way of safety. Hear what the Lord Jesus says: 'Abide in me, and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' Would the Prodigal Son, welcomed back, and with a full heart seated at his father's table, occupy himself in speculating on the probability of his playing the prodigal afresh, and considering what in that case would be the proper course for him to take? Better far say this: 'I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. What have I to do any more with idols? I will watch and pray that I enter not into temptation.'" This strain seemed to find its echo in his own breast, for he answered not a word. Still there was a want of confidence, and I judged it inexpedient to press him further. I was afraid to put a rash hand to that tender state of mind which he seemed to be in. So having told me he was coming to meet with Malan that evening in my brother's house, we parted after I had said a few encouraging words to him, which he listened to in the spirit of a child.

An elder brother of mine, who had gone up to Edinburgh for medical consultation, was returning to Aberdeen in the same steamer which brought M. Malan; and being unable to move off the cabin sofa, Malan, in his usual way, made up to him simply as a fellow-passenger. But on learning who he was, he took the more interest in him, and held short conversations with him in the intervals of his talk with other passengers. The penetrating eye of the missionary quickly perceived that his new friend had need of his medicines no less than of those which his bodily ailment demanded, and had no doubt they would prove efficacious. In due time the steamer was at the quay, and as the day had been lovely, he stepped ashore fresh and lively. My brother, after introducing me to Malan, was proceeding to introduce to him his invalid brother, when Malan stopped him, said they were already close friends, and whispered, "I am going to introduce him to *you* in a new character." This we set down to our friend's sanguine temperament, for we were rather sceptical as to impressions thus produced; but in the end it appeared there was more ground for his expectations than we thought. On reaching the house we found the drawing-room full of invited guests—Duncan among them—and after they were introduced to the stranger, one by one, he looked round upon

them with a benignant yet critical eye, regarding them, I thought, as a fisherman would a full net.

Knowing his way, my brother had provided a room for him to retire to if he should feel able to converse with any of his company individually.

"Able? Why, what am I here for? I must see every one of your guests alone."

"But remember you have twice to preach to-morrow, and you will be too much exhausted if you see all these after setting sail so early in the morning."

"Not so—I am as fresh as a rose—I must see them all."

So, scarcely had he finished his repast when he went down-stairs alone; requesting that they might be sent to him one by one. With each he spent not more than five or six minutes, or at most ten. At length word came that M. Malan would like to see Mr. Duncan. The professional character in which he had been introduced to him would sufficiently account for this without conveying to Duncan's mind any suspicion of a plot to draw him into conversation. Nor was there any, beyond a hint given to Malan by my brother that if he could be useful to *him*, that alone would be worth coming to Aberdeen for. Mr. Duncan went down accordingly; but instead of five or ten minutes, half-an-hour expired and no return of Mr. D. "What *can*

be going on? Is Duncan drawing Malan into theological discussion? or is Malan grappling with him and trying to take the citadel by storm?" At length he returned, but immediately sat down in a corner, seeming to see no one and not caring to converse; nor did we venture to ask him what had passed. After the whole party had been seen individually, Malan himself returned to the drawing-room, and after some partaking of refreshment, prayers were proposed. While preparation was making for this, Malan whispered to us, "Duncan is all right." "Nonsense," cried my brother or I, feeling it to be almost too good to be true, in the sense and to the extent which we knew Malan meant. "You will see it; you will see it," was all his reply. One of our Scotch metre Psalms was now given out by one of us; and as there was a good deal of music amongst us, and all were full of the spirit of the words, the volume of sound which went up when the tune was raised was something glorious—heavenly. Malan then read some portions of the First Epistle of John—the aroma of which himself so largely breathed—and proceeded to pray, all kneeling except himself who stood. There was something in his foreign accent and silvery voice most winning, as he rose from a few calm little sentences into glowing utterance. In spite of occasional difficulty in finding the precise words he

wanted, it was like clear water sparkling in the sun. One expression—which came out in the midst of a strain of holy yet reverential familiarity of *talk* with Heaven, as if the thin veil could be seen through—I can never forget. “Lord Jesus, everlasting Son of the Father, come near to us as the Son of man, and *lay Thy warm fleshy hand upon us, that we may feel it.*” The company broke up—to meet again at the hall of the Royal Hotel next day, where M. Malan had been advertised to preach, in French at noon and in the evening in English. But Mr. Duncan, at Malan’s request, stayed behind. The two went below again, and remained for some time alone, after which Mr. Duncan left. Malan returned to us radiant with delight at his intercourse with Mr. Duncan, and told us all that passed. From this and what Mr. Duncan afterwards told myself and others, I will now try to give it as correctly as I can.

Malan had at that time one text with which he used to ply every one—not as a panacea, as some imagined, but simply as a ready way of getting at people’s spiritual state and bringing matters to a point. “Read that,” he would say, holding up a New Testament at 1 John v. 1, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “That will do. Now, do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?” “Yes,” would be the usual

answer. "Then you are born of God!" Hesitation would now perhaps appear. "You doubt it, I see. Well, just read it again; 'He,' etc. Now, don't the premises and the conclusion hang together? Is there any flaw?" Of course all depended on the reality and the sense in which the premises were accepted; but of that I shall have to speak by and by. Mr. Duncan's case, however, presented very different materials from those of most others, and could not be so easily dealt with; but the penetrating man proved himself equal to the occasion. Mr. Duncan had read the accustomed words at Malan's request; but when the question was put, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?" he made no answer. Again it was put, but still no answer. "Why don't you answer, friend? Be open with me; speak all your mind."

"Sir, I cannot answer your question, for I know not what 'the Christ' means. The fact is, I have been a Socinian; I suppose I have been all wrong, but meantime I am at sea; and if I should say I believe Jesus to be the Christ, I should be saying what to me has just no meaning at all."

"No matter, I have been myself in the midst of Socinianism; I know it well, and have had to fight my own way up to a living faith. But the question for you just now is, Do you believe what is here written,

that He *is* the Christ on God's testimony, leaving it to God himself to teach you what He means by it?"

"The question, even in that view of it, was a trying one to me," he said to me two days after, "for you know I was all at sea about Inspiration. But, man, a strange feeling came over me at that moment. Apart from all questions about Inspiration, I felt certain that what was there written was God's truth, so I answered, 'Yes.'"

"Well, then," rejoined Malan, "just go to God, and say, 'Lord, Thou tellest me Thy dear Son is the Christ, and I believe Thee; but Thou knowest I have been a poor Socinian, and what "the Christ" means I know not. Yet I want to learn; teach Thou me.'" Seeing the maze he was still in, he said, "Fear not, dear friend, the light will soon come. Plant your foot on those words, 'He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,' and before the full meaning of the words has entered your *understanding*, your childlike *faith* in it will bring the promised change."

One expression of Malan's I have forgotten in the above statement, which came home to Mr. Duncan more than all else, and which he mentioned to me at the time, comparing its effect on him to a shock of electricity. But as I find it admirably given in Mr. Taylor Innes's valuable paper—taken down in 1862 from Dr.



Duncan's lips, and afterwards corrected by himself—I must give here not only that passage, but all that relates to these interviews, though in one or two small details (as usual with him) it is not perfectly accurate :—

“ In this softened state of mind [referring to his long night-interview with me] I went next day to meet Mr. Malan, who my friend told me was in town. He was then here and everywhere working his syllogism, ‘Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God;’ by which I believe he did much good and some harm. But for him I have to thank God. Malan that day greatly attracted me ; his face beamed with happiness and love. You know he is overstrained, but his dogmatism did me good. I felt as if all the Christians around me were sceptics like myself—here was a man who could say ‘ I know, and am sure.’ He was the first gentlemanly, intellectual, and altogether pleasant dogmatist I had met, and I was greatly attracted to him. The conversation turned on religious conversation. I quoted a Jewish word, ‘ When two sons of Israel meet and no words of the law pass between them, they make the Shechinah to depart from Israel.’ Later in the evening he came and touched me on the shoulder and said, ‘ They tell me you are a very learned man. What do you know ?’ I answered rather petulantly, ‘ *I know nothing.*’ ‘ Well,’ said he, ‘ I believe that is not exactly

what a Christian says. He does not say absolutely, I know nothing. *I know Him that is true.*' And so we talked, going away from the company, till late into the night and going over many things. I fought against his syllogism. 'I believe Jesus is the Christ, but I don't believe that I am born of God.' At last in our talk I happened to be quoting a text. He started forward and said, 'See! you have de word of God in your mouth!'<sup>1</sup> It passed through me like electricity—the great thought that God *meant* man to know *His* mind : God—His Word—in my very mouth. It was, I believe, the seed of perhaps all I have, if I have anything, to this hour. Seminally it was perhaps all there—though I cannot even now unfold it, much less then.<sup>2</sup>

"Before leaving, I said, 'Will you pray with me?' He said, 'No ; I cannot pray with unbelievers.' I said in simplicity, 'You do not understand our language. When I ask you to pray with me, I mean to pray for me in my presence, permitting me to kneel beside you.' And he said, 'O yes, I will do that.'

"I went home and wrote a prayer which I wish I

<sup>1</sup> Let the thoughtful reader mark the two last sentences above-quoted, as I shall have occasion to recur to them when I venture to make some remarks on the *philosophy* of the mighty change thus briefly referred to.

<sup>2</sup> "To the question, 'How was this sentence emphasized?' Dr. Duncan pencils the answer, 'A Frenchman does not emphasize his own language, and still less ours.'"

had preserved. 'O God, *my* God (my old Seceder-training made me turn to appropriation of God<sup>1</sup>), my God, because Thou hast made me, *teach me what is the meaning of being the Christ the Son of God*, that I may believe on Him.' It was defective but it was not false, it was true so far. Then I sat down and wrought out a series of syllogisms. Thus—

"*Major.*—He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.—*God.*

"*Minor.*—But I believe that Jesus is the Christ.—*John Duncan.*

"Therefore I am born of God.

"Then I said, No conclusion can be stronger than the weakest of the premises. These syllogisms were favourable to me, with this caveat. But those relating to the Spirit were unfavourable. Thus—

"*Major.*—If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.—*God.*

"*Minor.*—But I have not the Spirit of Christ.—*John Duncan.*

"Therefore I am none of His.

"Then I took down Brown's Bible,<sup>2</sup> and spread it

<sup>1</sup> The use of such phraseology from the heart was called "appropriating faith."

<sup>2</sup> John Brown of Haddington's *Self-Interpreting Bible*,—a work much in use in pious families, and this probably a copy belonging to the landlady of the house.

before me and I prayed—‘I have been speculating about Thy Word: I know nothing; teach Thou me.’ And so my philosophical pride got a stroke which it has never recovered, though it sometimes troubles me yet. I then went to bed, and there prayed, ‘O God, I do not know what is the meaning of “the Christ,” and if I should die before morning I should be lost. But Thou knowest that I can study no more to-night. Let me not die before morning.’ Whereupon, as one who had committed his case to God, I fell with a certain sorrowful tranquillity soon asleep.”

What follows in Mr. Innes’s paper, though given by him as the experience of next day, cannot, I think, have occurred till the day following, as will appear by what I am now to state.

When Malan preached in French in the hall of the Royal Hotel, Mr. Duncan was duly there and at the close exchanged a few words with him: he returned also in the evening when he preached in English, came home with Malan to my brother’s house, had some more talk, and parted, promising to come to breakfast next morning at half-past five, as Malan was to leave Aberdeen at six. Knowing his habits, we none of us expected him to make his appearance. But to our surprise, and Malan’s joy, he was with us sharp at the hour, and was scarcely seated at table when he produced a paper of syllo-

gisms wishing Malan's opinion of their soundness. They were on a lower key than the first one of Mr. Taylor Innes's, but probably the unfavourable effect of the one that followed it had led him to go to the root of the matter, and by planting his foot first on the lowest step of the ladder, he contrived to rise higher than the day before. I remember them as well at this moment as when seated with him at the breakfast-table.

"*Major.*—Ezek. xxxiii. 11: 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.—*God.*

"*Minor.*—But I, John Duncan, am one of the wicked.

"Therefore the Lord God has no pleasure in my death."—"Is that right?" "Right," answered Malan.

"'But that the wicked turn from his way and live.'—Therefore God will have pleasure if I turn from my way, and I shall live."—"Right?" "Right."

"*Major.*—John iii. 16: 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.'—*Jesus Christ.*

"*Minor.*—But I, John Duncan, am one of that world.

"Therefore God so loved me that He gave His only begotten Son—His love to me was what moved Him to give His Son." "Can that be said?" "It can—nothing is more certain: 'That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'"  
"Therefore God's express design in giving His Son, out

of love to the world, was that I, believing on Him, might not perish but have everlasting life." "Is that a safe conclusion?" "It is, dear friend; only hold that fast, and it will deliver you out of all your misgivings, and set your feet upon a rock."

It was time to move, and Malan was ready; but my friend, I think, had taken no breakfast—he was too much engrossed with the new world in which he found himself. He accompanied us to the coach, however, bade adieu to "his spiritual father"—for by this name to his dying day he was wont to call him—and went home. But scarcely had ten struck when our bell rang, and Mr. Duncan was announced, asking for me. Nor was he well inside the door when he said "David, I want you to give me some simple, uncontroversial text expressive of the *Atonement*. The Personal Divinity of Christ I think I see already—I can't do without that now, though you might help me if you could think of any uncontroversial and incontrovertible expression of it; for oh, David, God's words are law to me now, and I am a child at His feet, seeking simply to learn of Him." "Well, I'll give you no text dogmatically affirming the Divinity of Christ; but I'll tell you what is to myself a thousand times more satisfying than all dogmatic texts. I read the Gospels, and there I find the Man that fell asleep in Peter's boat—exhausted

with a heavy day's teaching to the multitudes that lined the shore—I find this wearied Man so fast asleep that the roar of a tempest did not waken Him, yet when roused by His affrighted disciples giving command to His servants, the winds and waves—this same Man—and He is instantly and absolutely obeyed. And what He did to them He did to all diseases, to the loaves and fishes, and to demons, the rulers of the darkness of this world—and all, all felt His presence and owned His power.” “Enough, enough,” he cried. “Henceforth the Personal Divinity of the man Christ Jesus shines before me in all its glory. But the Atonement? I have had a desperate dislike to that doctrine; yet now, I cannot help feeling that somehow it lies at the foundation of all rightful, solid relief from that dreadful thing *sin*. Give me, then, some simple Scripture statement of *it*, which one who cannot trust himself on controversial ground—a child in faith—may get footing on.” I think I quoted more than one, but the text on which at that moment I laid the most stress was 1 John i. 7, “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin,” taken in connexion with what follows, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin: and if any man sin, we have an

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Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Well," he said, "I don't see much of what is in those words, but one thing I see in them, that the Divinely provided relief from that dreadful thing sin is the propitiatory death of the Lord Jesus ; and though I don't as yet see clearly *how* it is, I am resolved not to torment myself with that, but rest meanwhile in the *fact*." "And once receiving the fact, you'll not be long," said I, "in getting all the relief as to the *modus* which you need, or have any right to demand—all the relief, in fact, which can reach any one on matters so profound and mysterious as the magnitude and demerit of sin, and the bearing of it by the Son of God in His own body on the tree ; and that majestic proclamation of the Baptist, the key to the whole sacrificial economy, will fill you with never-ceasing wonder, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' " "Once more : give me some uncontroversial passage expressing *Election*." I quoted John x. : "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." They did not become the sheep by not hearing them, but it was because they were the sheep that they turned a deaf ear to the false shepherds. But "ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep."



He paused, and said, "I see it; but I can't bear more just now—I must go home." So we parted. Now comes in properly the following most remarkable passage in his statement to Mr. Taylor Innes:—

"Well, next day, as I sat down to study, and took my pen in my hand, I became suddenly the passive recipient of all the truths which I had heard and been taught in my childhood. I sat there unmoving for hours, and *they came and preached themselves to me*. There was now no investigation such as I had desired; but presentation of the truth to me passive. And I felt, sitting there, as if in that hour I had got matter for sermons for a lifetime.

"Now the temptation to daily sin was gone. I had not even to fight with it. And I was in an almost infantile state of mind—so that when I mislaid a paper in my study, I would kneel down and pray to find it, and then go and seek for it." In fact, night after night (as he told Mr. Moody Stuart), he laid himself down to rest with the infants' prayer on his lips (not precisely as Mr. Stuart gives it, but as taught and repeated in the north of Scotland):—

"This night when I lie down to sleep,  
I give my soul to Christ to keep;  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CHARACTER AND OUTCOME OF THE CHANGE.

THE most unimpassioned reader of the preceding chapter will admit that the change of which it gives the details so fully, if it proved itself by its permanent results to be solid, was one of the most remarkable on record. That it was both real and radical even scepticism itself cannot doubt; for from the first day of it to the end of his life—a period little short of half a century—those great principles on which the change turned possessed him thoroughly, dominating the whole vast range of his thinking and feeling, and moulding his whole character and life. Let us look at its constituent elements and trace its outcome; avoiding for the present those views of the truth which he called “Malanism,” and which he afterwards disallowed, and confining ourselves to what he ever regarded as vital.

The key to it will be found, I believe, where he himself placed it—in *the new light in which revealed truth flashed upon his soul* during his conversation with

Malan, and in which he beheld it from that hour to the day of his death. Thenceforward the Scriptures were *God's voice to his soul* as really as though their truths had been addressed to himself by an audible voice from heaven. "At last in our talk I happened to be quoting a text. He started forward and said, 'See! you have de word of God in your mouth!' It passed through me like electricity—the great thought that God *meant* man to know *His* mind : God—His Word—in *my very mouth*. It was, I believe, *the seed of perhaps all I have*, if I have anything, *to this hour*. Seminally it was perhaps all there—though I cannot even now unfold it, much less then." Relating the same to Miss R, he said, "*It was the first spiritual feeling*, as it seemed, *that I ever had*; and that was crushed up into a moment which it would take long to unfold." Long years before, Dr. Mearns's Lectures had convinced him of the historical truth of both the Jewish and Christian Révelations, and in that sense he had been a Christian ever since. But it was a rationalistic Christianity—his own conceptions of what the Bible ought to say, and Christianity behoved to be, carrying it over the natural sense of the text of Scripture. His own judgment thus stood like a wall between him and God speaking in the Scriptures. But now the wall was broken down, and the Scriptures, in

the natural sense of the text, were his Father's voice—or (as he himself expressed it in the preceding extract)—“His presentation of the truth to me passive.” Henceforward he came to his Bible in the spirit of the child Samuel, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” So immense was this transition—from the absence of God and of all certainty in religious truth, notwithstanding his general belief in the Scriptures, to His felt presence and voice to himself in the Word—that we wonder not at the vivid way in which he describes his emotion, as he grasped for the first time the idea of “God’s word in his very mouth”—“*It passed through me like a flash of electricity.*” And certain as it is that this view of the Scriptures remained with him, as a fixed principle and without a moment’s deviation, to the end of his days, can it be otherwise explained than as a quickening operation from above, a ray of all-transforming light flashing in from Heaven upon his dark, disordered, distracted soul?

Next, that gigantic Luciferian pride of intellect, which had been his bane ever since he began, without compass or rudder, to launch forth on the wide sea of metaphysical and theological speculation, now received its death-blow. Freely, indeed, did he soon range over the old themes, and in the ripeness of his intellectual powers he could grapple with whatever speculative

questions might turn up in conversation or in books ; but now he had " an anchor of his soul, sure and steadfast." His whole soul rested in that word of the Lord which endureth for ever, in the scale of whose unerring representations every speculation was weighed. Nor was anything more beautiful than that combination in him of unquestioning submission to the testimony of God in His revealed Word with the freest and manliest criticism of all metaphysical and theological theories.

But that element in the great change which beyond everything else evinced its reality and depth—which must make the deepest impression on all thinking minds, and without which the two preceding elements would be worth nothing—was *the holy fruit* in which it issued. "*Now the temptation to daily sin was gone. I had not even to fight with it.*" Nor let it be thought that the reference here is merely to what he felt and what he became at that time, and with respect to one form of sin. It *had* that reference certainly ; but the change he spoke of was so far from being either temporary or one-sided, that from that time forward *I never knew of a more tender conscience on every point of duty, a more quick sensibility to whatever he thought morally or religiously wrong, and a deeper sense of compunction and distress at any deviation from duty, whether patent to the eye of man or not.*

On the validity of such instantaneous changes, and the warrant which he had for that new view of Scripture which dated from his interview with Malan, I will speak by and by; but to me—as I reflect on the instantaneous and life-long changes of view, and character, and plan, and occupation, which new circumstances, new company, even the reading of a new book, produce daily within the sphere of every one's observation; as I think on the thousand mysterious influences which play upon the human spirit, and defy every effort to get at the whole philosophy of almost any mental change; above all, reflecting on the access to the soul of Him who implanted it, and what Scripture tells us, and our own deepest consciousness attests, of His all-transforming power—to me, I say, reflecting on all this, it does seem strange that even Christians should doubt the validity of an instantaneous and total change of religious character, through new views of Divine truth flashing on the soul. In fact, the turning-point in every such change, called conversion—by however many steps preceded and however undeveloped at the time—*must* be instantaneous. On the other point—his totally altered view of the Scriptures—I have still less temptation to dwell, since he himself, nearly forty years after it took place, said he “could not even then unfold it.” But this I will say, that

explain it how we will, it is in its own nature precisely what distinguishes the faith of God's revealed truth, as His own uttered word to the soul, from that vague recognition of the Scriptures which regards them rather as the means of awakening, clarifying, and stimulating our own religious intuitions than as objective and authoritative Divine teaching.

Scarcely had Mr. Duncan time to settle down after the exciting scenes of those memorable days, when he remembered that he was under engagement to preach twice on the very next Lord's Day—in the West Church and in Greyfriars. Though I knew of these engagements, I purposely held aloof from him, partly that he might shape his own course without any advice from me, and partly because, having my own trials for "License" to go through before the Presbytery of Aberdeen on the following Tuesday, I required all the intervening time to myself. In the West Church, after praying in a subdued spirit, as if afraid of letting himself too freely out, he gave out a text which rather surprised me—Isa. xl. 26, 27; and as he proceeded with the sermon (closely read), I wondered still more—so different was it from his own style both of thought and of language. It consisted merely of good views of Providence and some Christian encourage-

ments, but nothing more; his own spirit apparently little in his subject, and the congregation rather listless. I asked him in the vestry what made him preach such a sermon.

"Was there anything wrong in it?"

"No, certainly; but it was not just what I expected from you at present."

"Well, David, to tell you the truth, it was a borrowed sermon. You know what I have passed through during the last few days. To write a sermon I found impossible, so I had to hunt for one of somebody else's; and I am sure no one would know it, for I took it from a volume of sermons by French and Dutch ministers, translated from the Dutch but two or three years ago. So I wrote it out and preached it."<sup>1</sup>

"But what are you going to do for the afternoon at Greyfriars?"

"I was thinking of preaching the same; but after what you say I fear it won't do."

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-four Sermons on Practical Subjects.* Translated from the Works of the most eminent French and Dutch Protestant Ministers in Holland. By J. Werninck, D.D., F.R.S., Amst. and Middleb., Chaplain to H.E. the Ambassador of the Netherlands, and Minister of the Dutch Church in London. Rivingtons, Lond. 8vo. 1823.

The sermon preached was one of Dr. Borger's, Professor of History and Ancient Literature in the University of Leyden, and author of some excellent publications. The only work of his which I have seen is a Latin prize essay on "Mysticism," with



"Well, I should be sorry to destroy your comfort, but some of those who know what has passed during the last few days will likely be there, and I don't think they will quite relish or expect that."

"Leave me, then, and I'll go home and see what to do."

It was a summer of almost unparalleled—in fact alarming—drought. Not a drop of rain had fallen for six weeks; scarcely any grain was expected to be in the ear; and the very woods in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen and elsewhere, through spontaneous combustion, were in danger of being destroyed. Everybody was longing, and many were praying, for rain. To the surprise of his Greyfriars audience, instead of one of the metre Psalms—with which the service almost invariably begins in the Scottish Presbyterian churches—Mr. Duncan gave out the 32d "Scripture Paraphrase"—

"What though no flowers the fig-tree clothe,  
Though vines their fruit deny,  
The labour of the olive fail,  
And fields no meat supply ?

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special reference to the modern German philosophy. I read that some months after this with deep interest. It exposed the unsatisfactoriness to the anxious spirit and aching heart of the modern German mysticism as a substitute for the concrete historical verities of the Bible, and refers, in a noble strain, to his own desolation at a period of heart-rending trial, when nothing could have borne him up but the revelations of the future which Christianity discloses.

“ Though from the fold, with sad surprise,  
My flock cut off I see ;  
Though famine pine in empty stalls,  
Where herds were wont to be ?

“ Yet in the Lord will I be glad,” etc.

Read as he read it—for he read superbly in the pulpit—it arrested the audience at once, and prepared them for something unusual. Nor were they disappointed ; for the first words of his prayer, uttered with a majesty and pathos which I thought I had never heard before, riveted every one :—

“ Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain ? or can the heavens give showers ? *Art not thou He, O Lord our God ? therefore we will wait upon thee ; for thou hast made all these things*” (Jer. xiv. 22). Nor did he stop at these great words, but interwove with his own pleadings for rain the vivid picturings of famine and confession of sin in that remarkable chapter—“ The cry of Jerusalem is gone up : they come for water, and return with empty vessels : they are ashamed and confounded ; because the ground is chapt, for there is no rain in the earth, the plowmen cover their heads ; the wild asses stand in the high places, snuffing up the wind, because there is no grass. O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name’s sake. O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest

thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?" etc.

That such praying—and he was now in the full spirit and swing of it—would direct every eye and ear to him as he gave out his text, I need hardly say; and the text assured me that his morning sermon, at least, was not to be served up to us again. It was on Isaiah xlv. 12, 13 :—"Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, and far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." He had a manuscript before him from which he read for a while, but after breaking off once or twice to *explain* or rather to *refute* himself, he discarded it altogether and extemporized to the end. It was in fact an old paper—how old I did not learn—hastily picked out of a mass of such, in place of the borrowed sermon he had meant to preach. It need hardly be said that in such circumstances he was less impressive than he might have been; but the only wonder was how it should have contained—at least as he now gave it out—the staple of many of his public ministrations, ay, and professional teachings, to the end of life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His points were these: *Two righteousnesses* here, distinct and antagonistic—(1.) *their own*, or what they should have had, but

Of what sort, after this, were his pulpit ministrations? To this question he shall himself reply. "I began," said he to Miss R., "to preach high assurance. I preached things about Christ, about the Trinity, about Sin, about the Incarnation, about the Atonement; and I thought I was warranted to preach that people who believed that were regenerated: I thought I was warranted to preach assurance on that ground. That was the defect of Malanism. Well, I was very popular; crowds came. As for Election, it lay within me as a doctrine. A Wesleyan met me one day, and said, 'You are the same as me.' 'No, I believe in Election.' 'Well, but you don't preach it.'" If he was "very popular," however, it was not with those "Moderate" clergy who had, in his former state of mind, found him a convenient occasional supply for their pulpits—they now ceased to apply to him. In only one case did he much mind this—the case of one greatly respected for his amiability and kindness to the poor; but though this caused him pain, he let that be known only to one individual, so far as I know.

had not; they were "far from righteousness:" (2.) *Jehovah's*—"My righteousness." Having this, it would save them. Hence He calls it "My salvation." Then, how this was to be got: "I'll bring it near to you" that have none. But where is it? It's not come yet, but coming—"It shall not be far off; it shall not tarry;" I am going to "place salvation in Zion (the metropolis of the then Church) for Israel my glory," to be by them sent into all the earth.

But it was in private that the change was most marked. For a long time he could think of nothing and speak of nothing but spiritual things, and of these only in one light—the light of a new-found nearness to God as a reconciled Father. He would sit and talk on such subjects for hours with persons of no intellectual strength or literary culture, and even with Christians in the very humblest walk of life. An hour spent thus was to him what talk with the woman of Samaria was to our Lord—"I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Of this sort was "Eppie Middleton"—to whom my eldest brother introduced him as a Christian friend of his. She was a great favourite, and pithy sayings of hers—or his own suggested by hers—used to come out long afterwards, and were recalled on occasions even to his last days. "That poor old woman in Aberdeen, Eppie Middleton," said he one day to Miss R.,—"it was wonderful how grace refined her taste, and gave dignity to her language. William Brown had gone into her house as an elder, and found Eppie reading 'Sherlock on Death.' He spoke to her about sin, and charged her with being a sinner. When he went away, she said to herself, 'My lad, this is the first sight I have had of you, and I care not though it be the last—speaking that way to me, and me readin' a good book.' Well, but he came back

and said, 'I see you are fond of reading : will you read a good book of mine?' She agreed, and he left her a volume of Ralph Erskine's Sermons.<sup>1</sup> He came back again after a while, and asked her how she had liked the book. 'It strippit me bare, and it laid me i' the close' (she lived in the 'Vennel,' a very dirty close). There was a stripping bare, but there was a clothing of the naked. A number of the pious ladies—my first wife among them—used to visit Eppie. She said to them one day, 'I wonner fat brings sae mony braw [fine] young leddies to me, an auld deaf wife : ' then drawing herself up with dignity, and her tone and language becoming refined, she said, 'But if the Lord of Glory deigns to grace this humble hovel with His presence, no wonder that His servants should do so.'"

But there was one Christian family, from the

<sup>1</sup> One of the fathers of the first Secession from the Established Church of Scotland. His works, consisting mostly of sermons, but also of poetry, were published in ten vols. 8vo, 1797. His sermons, in solid substance, are very inferior to those of his brother Ebenezer of Dunfermline (three vols. 8vo, 1799), but the perorations of them (the "Application," as it is called), which sometimes occupy a third of the whole discourse, are almost unequalled for power of pleading with sinners to be reconciled to God, and for answers to the difficulties and objections of the awakened and anxious sinner, or the timid and trembling believer. One of them, I remember, on Zech. xiii. 7 ("Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd," etc.), exceedingly poor in the body of it, is grand and melting in its long peroration.

members of which he had received rare tokens of kindness for many years before he underwent the great change—when often in great straits, and when his distressing ways were souring and alienating from him most other friends. With this excellent family he now spent hours of almost every day over the Bible, in heavenly discourse and prayer; and one of the members of that family, long confined to her sofa, but of a beautifully chastened character, helped him much, in a quiet way and all unconsciously, in this infancy of his new life. A lady who was present on one of those occasions tells me that such was his elevation that he said “he could dance for joy.” “But you’ll not always be that way, Mr. Duncan,” she ventured to say. “But I will, Miss M., or if not it will be my fault.”

My own intercourse with him, I need hardly say, was abundant; and as his peace and cheerfulness were pretty settled, it was not possible we should long refrain from “theologizing”—to use his favourite phrase—on the peculiarities of what he afterwards termed “Malanism” (of which more by and by), and generally on Biblical and dogmatic subjects, on the great principles of which he seemed, as if by instinct, now to have formed very definite conceptions, and in such harmony with all that he now believed, that one might have supposed he had all along expounded the

Bible and seen in it what he now did, instead of having had to reconstruct his whole critical and exegetical principles since the recent change. To those who reflect on the *laws* which govern such things, this will not be very difficult to understand; but I think it right to state the fact here. And interesting it was to me to observe how the *pugnacity* of his nature—which, I should have mentioned, if I have not, was one of his most marked peculiarities—now showed itself. Thus, had he “spent three years in dreary Atheism,” or in its less vulgar, more idealized form of Pantheism? And, even when cured of that and converted to Theism, had he nevertheless long “feared” that this now Personal Living God “would damn him,” because he was living in the daily commission of sin? Now that “the temptation to daily sin was gone,” and “he had not even to fight against it”—wonderful was the change. That felt nearness to God which made it a delight to be in the very atmosphere of it, among the humblest Christians, converted his theological conception of “the Living God” into an intense and conscious reality, and in the view of His majesty filled him at times with what I might call an awful joy; and “where two or three were gathered together,” and after some elevating talk over certain passages or truths of Scripture, when he knelt down to pray, I have heard



him give vent to his ideas in language of grand freshness and power.

Again, on the Person of Christ his pugnacity became intense, as he trode—at times with almost alarming vehemence—upon whatever had the least resemblance to his former views. Had he floated in the days of his proud refusal of “the doctrines,” between an unbiblical Sabellianism and a refined Unitarianism? Now, the Personal Divinity of the Incarnate Son was seized, held, and maintained with the force of a passion; and if you wanted to rouse the whole pugnacity of his nature, you had but to provide some more zealous than accurate Christian, student or minister, and get him to cry out, as I have heard done in his presence, against the Popish blasphemy of daring to call the Virgin Mary, “the mother of God.” “Dare, sir? I dare; and if you knew anything of Church history you would not venture to call that Popery, which is simply a word happily coined to express one of the most glorious of all truths. Don’t you know that of all the heresies affecting the Person of Christ which the early Church had to struggle against, none was more deadly than Nestorianism; that when a presbyter of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, found such fault with that word—*Θεοτόκος* (*Deipara*), ‘mother of God,’—and taught (or was charged with teaching) that ‘the man

Christ Jesus' was only the virgin's child, to whom the Eternal Word joined Himself—so making two Persons of the one Christ—Nestorius, who defended the teaching of his presbyter, was condemned and deposed by the Council of Ephesus in the year 431; the Council holding rightly that this would deprive the whole human life, actings, and sufferings of Christ, of their *Personal* character and *Divine* value. Yes, sir, and they were right; and in justifying the use of that word Θεοτόκος, they were not making the Virgin the mother of His Godhead, as you and other ignorant people suppose—they were not such fools as that—but the mother of *Him* who was God, and who as the Son of God was born, lived, died, rose, and is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high—all in our nature." In like manner, if one would speak of Christ in His two *separate* natures, he would break in vehemently thus: "No, sir, not 'separate'—God forbid we should think of the Divine Nature of the Word made flesh, as even for one moment 'separate' from the Human, or the Human from the Divine: Say, 'distinct,' sir—'distinct:' mind your Shorter Catechism, in which, on this head, the ripe results of centuries of controversy on the Person of Christ are compressed into a nutshell, into a few words as precise as they are precious; ' . . . The Lord

Jesus Christ, being the Eternal Son of God, became Man, and so was and continueth to be God and Man, in two *distinct* natures, and *one Person* for ever.”

And yet again, had he sat quite loose, up to the period of the decisive change, not only to the great truths of the Bible but to the Divine authority of the Bible itself? Marvellous above almost every other feature of the change was the change in this; I mean in the strength with which he embraced and the tenacity with which he clung, from that day to the day of his death, to the authority of the Bible, as God's voice to men—to himself. A most characteristic expression of this from his own lips I find in Miss R.'s notes, dated only a year before his death. The subject of conversation was Bunsen's statements about the vast pre-Adamite antiquity of man—on which his remarks will be given in their proper place. Here I quote only the two concluding sentences:—"I never did enter into these discussions; for when I gave up my sceptical opinions I did not pick them out one by one, but *I got a vomit, and vomited them all up*. I might have attended more to the Apologetic had I picked them out bit by bit, but I threw up my speculations, and admitted the Bible just at once."

But was this a course to be approved?—I think I hear not a few readers say. To settle that point fully, two inquiries would have to be instituted : first, whether such sceptical tendencies as had kept him tossing restlessly on a sea of uncertainty for so many years had their origin simply in a deficiency of evidence, so far as he was able to see it, for the truths about which he stood in chronic doubt ; or whether they had not their root in the state of his own heart, estranged as it was from Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and the consequent obscuration of his intellectual vision. That this last is a frequent case I need hardly say ; and that it was Mr. Duncan's case I am quite certain. And if so, why should it be thought a thing incredible that the entire change towards God and all divine things which he then underwent put a new granulation, if I may so say, upon the surface of his intellectual as well as moral nature, made his sceptical tendencies to vanish in a moment, and created in him a child-like receptivity for all divine truth, making him capable of receiving at once what his moral obliquity had hopelessly distorted and his pride of intellect refused to take in ? But this difficulty disposed of, another and deeper question emerges—as to the ultimate and supreme ground of certainty in all Divine truth. Though Mr. Duncan acknowledged to the last

that he was unable to explicate either to himself or to others the whole *philosophy* of that "voice" wherewith on that memorable evening God spoke to his soul through "His word" in the Bible "like a shock of electricity," he ever held that the *certainty of faith* thence resulting was as valid as that of his own existence; that there was a grand and vital principle in it, namely, the ability of the Author of the human soul to make His own voice heard in it unmistakeably and resistlessly; that in all saving faith He does this through His own outward, objective "Word" (*heard* for the most part in old time, but now *written*); and not only so, but that, in some mysterious way, this enters more or less into the deepest apprehensions that men have of God himself, and into the immoveable conviction which we all have of the trustworthiness of our own nature. In these profound views—which will come out abundantly in the sequel—whatever may be thought of them by others, Mr. Duncan was far from being alone. Not to refer to Dr. John Owen's short treatise,<sup>1</sup> to Halyburton's essay,<sup>2</sup> and to the Westminster Confession of

<sup>1</sup> *On the Divine, Original, Self-Evidencing Light and Power of the Scriptures, with an Answer to that Inquiry, How we Know the Scriptures to be the Word of God?* 1658; and Works, vol. xvi. 8vo. 1853.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on the Ground or Formal Reason of Saving Faith.* By Rev. Thomas Halyburton, Professor of Theology in the University of St. Andrews. 1714 and 1865.

Faith,<sup>1</sup> perhaps the testimony of *Olshausen*—the learned, deep-thinking, spiritually-minded German commentator—may with some carry more weight. Commenting on Rom. viii. 16, “The Spirit itself [Himself] beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,” he says :—“The witness of our own spirit with that of the Divine Spirit *penetrate each other* in a peculiar manner. The *Giver* in this *testimonium spiritus* [witness of the Spirit] is properly the Divine Spirit; the human spirit is more the *receiver* from Him of this witness; as it is written, ‘It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.’ In other words, the Spirit needs no witness for His truth but Himself; He has it wholly in Himself, as the light is not and cannot be testified to by aught but by itself. But as the physical light requires an eye—a faculty of receptivity—in order to be perceived, and as it is itself light, so is the spiritual light (the *νοῦς*, the human *πνεῦμα*), the eye for the Divine Spirit. It was observed before (on ver. 9) that this witness of the Spirit is not to be placed merely in the feeling (1 John iii. 19), but His whole inward and outward efficacy must be taken together—His comfort, His incitement to prayer, His rebuke of sin, His impulse to works of love, to witness before the world, and such like. *Upon the formation*

<sup>1</sup> Chapter i. section 5.

*of this immediate testimony of the Holy Spirit, all the regenerate man's conviction of Christ and His work finally rests. For the faith in the Scripture itself has its basis upon this experience of the Divinity of the principle which it promises, and which flows into the believer while he is occupied with it."*<sup>1</sup>

Total and palpable as was the change on Mr. Duncan in all that was changeable, from this time to the end of life, there were things in which there was no change—natural idiosyncrasies and ingrained habits. Of these I may refer here, in closing the present chapter, to certain oddities arising chiefly out of his abnormal and incurable absence, of which he gave some examples at this period of his life. One of these only I will give here. "He was usually reckoned," says Mr. Knight, in the preface to the third edition of his *Colloquia*, "one of the most absent of men; and stories are afloat by the score which have the very slenderest foundation in fact. One day when I was with him at his house in Elder Street, a gentleman who had come in told him some stories of himself which he (the narrator) believed; and after listening with more than usual patience, the Rabbi denied their authenticity. His visitor concluded with

<sup>1</sup> Clark's Translation (slightly changed). 1849.

the story of the pinch of snuff on the windy day, when going out to preach near Aberdeen, and said, 'You'll at least admit, Dr. D., that *that* one is true.' He replied, with a quiet sarcasm, the edge of which failed to pierce the obtuseness of his critic's imagination, 'Well, I have heard that one *so often* that I begin at times to imagine myself that there must be some truth in it!'" Notwithstanding this disclaimer, believing Dr. D. to be himself mistaken here, I took means to verify it. But first let me state what the thing was. Having to preach on a Sacramental Fast-day for Mr. Bower, the then parish minister of Maryculter, seven miles up Deeside from Aberdeen, he had gone a considerable way on foot, when he took out his snuff-box to take a pinch; but the wind being in his face, he turned about to perform the operation, after which, instead of turning round again, he went on in the same direction towards Aberdeen, and was only wakened out of his reverie by a man who was himself on his way to worship at Maryculter, who, conjecturing that he was the preacher for the day, ventured to ask him—which brought him to his senses. On reading Dr. Duncan's disclaimer of this in Mr. Knight's notes, I went immediately to an old man of ninety years of age, but in full possession of his memory—especially for old things—who was a member of Dr. Kidd's congregation, and knew a good



deal of Mr. Duncan's early and later history. On recalling this anecdote, the truth of which he at once affirmed, I asked him what ground he had for believing it.

"Ground? the best ground, for I knew the man that turned him on the road."

## CHAPTER IX.

WHAT HE CALLED "HIS SECOND CONVERSION":

1828 AND ONWARDS.

FOR nearly two years Mr. Duncan continued in the state described in the two preceding chapters, save that the liveliness of his religious feelings gradually abated, and a general flatness and formality supervened. Now then was the time to show whether the change he had undergone was of a superficial character. In that case his religious restlessness and the laxity of his moral tone and demeanour would certainly have returned. For though in many such cases the relapse is by no means total, and there is in certain points of opinion and life a permanent improvement, there is too good reason to fear that, from his inveterate habits, Mr. Duncan would have sunk back into all that had so long distressed his friends, if not into worse. But never, within the range of my knowledge, has the reality, the depth, the whole saving character of the change,

been more clearly evinced than in his case, after the first conscious effects of the change had departed. When his "joy and peace in believing" died away, and his assurance of personal salvation as a matter of feeling grew increasingly faint; while yet he was holding this forth as the normal condition of the Christian, his tender conscience was wounded, and he felt sure there must be something wrong, though as yet he knew not what. On comparing notes, we found matters in much the same state with both of us—that we had been dwelling too exclusively on the truths which lie at the outset of the Christian life, that we had too much overlooked the deceitfulness of the heart, and the consequent danger of self-deception, that while the immediate duty of believing had been dwelt on, scarce anything had been said on the work of the Spirit in the subjugation of the heart to the obedience of Christ, and that while declension in the Divine life had very probably been painfully experienced by others as well as ourselves, we had been doing nothing to point out the symptoms of this, and direct them how to recover lost ground. The result of this was the proposal to hold a little daily prayer-meeting from seven to eight in the morning, presuming we should thus have for our audience only those whom we wished specially to influence. The use of "Bon Accord" Chapel was

granted to us for this purpose, and we conducted the meeting alternately. So thoroughly did Mr. Duncan enter into this, that, much as early rising was against his natural inclination, I hardly think he was ever absent when it came to his own turn, and very rarely when it lay with me. After a while we changed it to a weekly meeting, and during several of the summer months it was steadily kept up, attended by the class it was designed for, and I have reason to believe not without fruit. The subjects chiefly dwelt on were those which we thought we had hitherto kept too much in the background—the heart, “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” the marks of a living faith and genuine conversion, and the Divine agency in the production of it; the danger of resting in the elementary truths of the Gospel, and the duty of “going on to perfection;” religious declension, the marks of it and the cure for it, etc. For a while this provided a sufficient vent for Mr. Duncan’s changed feelings, or complaints at the want of feeling; but at length this would not do, and he began with tears to question first the reality of his own conversion, and next the validity of those special views of the truth on which the change upon himself had turned. Let us hear his own description of this near the close of his life.

“By and by”—I quote here from Miss R.’s notes the

year before his death—"all that began in sincerity went away, and I continued preaching assurance when the thing was gone: it began in sincerity but was continued in hypocrisy. But at last the hypocrisy became utterly intolerable, and then I humbly think the Spirit took a strong dealing with me. The former thing is what I call my first conversion. I don't know whether it was real conversion, or a work preparatory, or what, but *elements in it were carried over into the second*. . . . Though much indebted to Malan, I did not become a Malanite. My first conversion did not wholly belong to it, and my second conversion took me off Malanism altogether. The beginnings of his own life perhaps tinged his history—"I was awakened as a mother awakens her child, with a kiss." It was with regard to the work of the Spirit that the defect of Malanism appeared." "For some time he enjoyed," says Mr. Moody Stuart, "a bright and true assurance of salvation. 'Then how did you lose that assurance?' 'Because I could keep it no longer without becoming a hypocrite; and whatever I am, I'm not a hypocrite, and I won't be one.' He saw that he was retaining the shadow without the substance, and he cast the shadow away that he might recover the substance. Afterwards, in his extreme self-jealousy, he often departed from the simplicity of Christ, and darkened and weakened himself

by a fruitless self-inspection. But he knew what he wanted to recover; he was tenderly alive to the gracious affections that are inseparable from true believing in Christ; and he would not be satisfied with the coldness of death under the name of life. He recollected his own intense earnestness at the first, his child-like helplessness, and how he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; he 'remembered' how he had received and heard, and he desired to 'hold fast and repent.' This life-long warning which he gave both by word and by his own example, against what he looked upon as an antinomian security and a false 'ease in Zion,' was made available by the Spirit to the profit of many that they might be saved."

But how did this changed feeling show itself? As he stalked into my room almost if not altogether daily, with head hanging down like a bulrush, he scarcely waited to exchange the ordinary salutation, but as if we had not parted at all, he would break forth into all sorts of lamentations over his spiritual darkness and desolation, the "hypocrisy" of his preaching, expounding, praying, babbling about an assurance to which himself was a stranger, deceiving himself and, he feared, deceiving others too. "I have been a sounding brass, a tinkling cymbal, and by persisting in that empty

vapouring I have so seared my own conscience that now I cannot feel," etc. But that which he felt more pungently than all else was the want of that conscious sense of the presence of God as his own in Christ which before had made him dance for joy. "O that I knew where I might find Him," he would exclaim dolefully; "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him." (Job xxiii.) And again, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever?" One clause in the Scotch metre version of that Psalm (lxxvii.) was now often on his lips—

" . . . my grieved soul  
Did consolation shun."

But anon a gleam of light would shine out from the thick darkness, particularly on getting hold of a verse which he kept repeating at intervals for nearly an hour, as he paced up and down my room: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that *the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy*" (James v. 11)—"*very* pitiful, VER-Y pitiful and of *tender mercy*" (giving increasing emphasis to the word "*very*" at every fresh repetition of it, till, as if the precious sense had not been sufficiently squeezed out by that, he emphasized even the syllables of it).

One afternoon I bethought myself of a way of sooth-

ing him which had a wonderful effect. Often as I had read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, I had but a few days before observed an episode in the Second Part which seemed to me, for its trueness to spiritual experience, the tenderness it breathed, and the exquisite delicacy both of conception and expression which it displayed, to excel almost everything in the first and much superior Part. I mean the story of *Mr. Fearing*, who (as his spiritual guide *Great-heart* quaintly tells the story) "was one of the most troublesome pilgrims, always afraid of coming short of whither he had a desire to go." One afternoon as he came into my room, I told him what a feast that story had been to me. "O read it to me, David." And it would have melted any one to see the big tears rolling down his cheeks and hear his audible sobs, as at one touch after another it seemed as if he himself had sat for his picture to the wonderful artist. The reader will find below its principal passages, with those which went to his very heart, and yet made him once or twice beam and laugh with delight, specially emphasized.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I hear that he lay roaring at the Slough of Despond for above a month together, nor durst he, for all he saw several go over before him, venture, though they, many of them, offered to lend him their hand. *He would not go back again neither.* The Celestial City, *he said* HE SHOULD DIE IF HE CAME NOT TO IT; and yet was dejected at every difficulty, and stumbled at every straw that anybody cast in his way. Well, after he had lain at the Slough of Despond a great while, one *sunshine* morning, I do not know how, he ventured, and



In his conversations with Mr. Taylor Innes in 1862, and with Miss R. in 1869, he entered very fully into the experiences and processes which he went through after the first grounds of his confidence had been swept away, and he was trying to struggle into solid footing. The statements in some parts are almost verbally identical; in others the one account serves to supplement the other. They are a little tedious, but though some readers might prefer to have the thing in brief, I have thought it best to give them fully in his own words, both because he expressed a wish to Mr. Innes that they *might* be made public after his decease in anything that might

so got over. But when he was over, *he could scarce believe it*. So he came up to the gate that stands at the head of this way, and there also he stood a good while before he would adventure to knock. When the gate was opened *he would give back, and give place to others, and say that he was not worthy*. . . . It would have pitied one's heart to have seen him, *nor would he go back again*. At last he took the hammer that hung on the gate in his hand, and gave a small rap or two; then one opened to him, but he shrunk back as before. He that opened stepped out after him, and said, Thou trembling one, what wantest thou? *With that he fell down to the ground*. . . . As he behaved himself at the gate, so he did at my master the Interpreter's door. He lay thereabout in the cold a good while, before he would adventure to call; *yet he would not go back*. . . . At last I looked out of the window, . . . went out and asked what he was, but, poor man, *the water stood in his eyes*. *So I perceived what he wanted*. . . . So my master sent me out again to entreat him to come in, but I had hard work to do it. At last he came in, *and I will say that for my lord, he carried it wonderful lovingly to him*. *There were but a few good bits at the table, but some of it was laid upon his trencher*. . . . *For my master, you must know, is one of very tender bowels, spe-*

then be written of him, and because it is only by a full consideration of all this, in connexion with his whole subsequent religious life, that a dispassionate judgment can be formed of him as a guide to others. Combining the two accounts, then, they are these:—"At last, after preaching high assurance, when I had not a bit of it, the hypocrisy became intolerable, and I went out in the bitterness of my heart till the Lord struck in upon me very powerfully. I thought much of the Shorter Catechism as a string for my thoughts, and

*cially to them that are afraid.* When he was ready to take his journey, my lord gave him a bottle of spirits. . . . Thus we set forward, and I went before him; *but the man was but of few words, only he would sigh aloud.* When we were come to where the three fellows were hanged, he said, *that he doubted that that would be his end also. Only he SEEMED GLAD WHEN HE SAW THE CROSS AND THE SEPULCHRE.* THERE, I confess, HE DESIRED TO STAY A LITTLE TO LOOK, and he seemed for a while after to be a little cheery. When we came at the hill Difficulty, he made no stick at that, nor did he much fear the lions, *for you must know that his trouble was not about such things: HIS FEAR WAS ABOUT HIS ACCEPTANCE AT LAST.* I got him in at the house Beautiful, I think before he was willing; . . . but he was ashamed to make himself much for company. *He desired much to be alone, yet he always loved good talk, and often would get behind the screen to hear it. . . .* When we went down . . . *into the Valley of Humiliation, he went down as well as ever I saw man in my life, FOR HE CARED NOT HOW MEAN HE WAS SO HE MIGHT BE HAPPY AT LAST.* Yea, I think there was a kind of a sympathy betwixt that valley and him, for I never saw him better in all his pilgrimage than when he was in that valley. HERE HE WOULD LIE DOWN, EMBRACE THE GROUND, AND KISS THE VERY FLOWERS THAT GREW IN THIS VALLEY: Lam. iii. 27-29. He would now be up every morning by break of day, tracing, and walking to and fro in this valley. But when he was come to the entrance of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I

much of the facts of my life as another, till the great question came to be, Can there be mercy for me? (One thought was useful to me at this time—that there cannot be so great a difference between a sinner and a greater sinner as there is between a sinner and one who is not a sinner at all.) But the result was this: I came to see that God had a covenant of grace, and that this covenant embraced a salvation that is suited to my *case*, but said nothing about my *person*. From that I came to the Mediator of the covenant, and the Person and

*thought I should have lost my man*: not for that he had any inclination to go back—that he always abhorred—but he was ready to die for fear. . . . But this I took very great notice of, that this valley was as quiet while he went through it as ever I knew it before or since. I suppose those enemies here had now a special check from our lord, and a command not to meddle until Mr. Fearing was passed over it. . . . When he was come at *Vanity Fair*, I thought he would have fought with all the men in the fair, . . . so hot was he against their fooleries; upon the Enchanted Ground he was also very wakeful. But when he was come at the river where was no bridge, . . . now, now, he said *he should be drowned for ever, AND SO NEVER SEE THAT FACE WITH COMFORT THAT HE HAD COME SO MANY MILES TO BEHOLD*. And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable, *the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life*; so he went over at last, not much above wet-shod. When he was going up to the gate, Mr. Great-heart began to take his leave of him, and wish him a good reception above. So he said, I SHALL, I SHALL. *Honest*: Then it seems he was well at last? *Great-heart*: Yes, yes, I never had doubt about him; he was a man of a choice spirit, only he was always kept very low, and that made his life so burdensome to himself and so troublesome to others (Ps. lxxxviii.) HE WAS, ABOVE MANY, TENDER OF SIN. He was so afraid of doing injuries to others, that he often would deny himself of that which was lawful, because he would not offend (Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 13)."

Offices of Christ, and I saw a Saviour suited to me. Then I took a step further. My attention was at this time in great measure directed to the Person of Christ—it was a matter of life and death with me—to the sufficiency of Christ in His offices and work for the chief of sinners; and to this, that He was freely offered to me in the Gospel; that the command of God was that I should receive Him, and that the commination of God was a tremendously additional condemnation above that of the law, and the justice of that, because I had no right to reject Christ—no right to be damned. When I found that I could not believe, there was a relief in that word of Christ, ‘Ye must be born again’ (John iii. 7). ‘Must’ implies ‘may’—‘Ye *may* be born again.’ It is not an absolute impossibility, for if I may be regenerated, I shall believe; but it is a Divine work or act antecedently. No doubt I must be born again before I can believe, that is, receive Jesus Christ; it requires the omnipotent God to do something in me first. But that is not practical [has nothing to do with our *present duty* to believe]. Then this passed through my mind, not formally, for I now explicate what passed in a moment, ‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?’ (Luke xi. 13.) *That* was practical. Regenera-

tion was glorious, for it showed the possibility of faith if God would act; but here was something for *me* to do, therefore there was comfort. Christ was now telling me of a cure for depravity, as He had before told me of a cure for guilt. As I was praying for a purpose, namely, to believe, I essayed the thing. After I had prayed for the Holy Ghost, I tried to believe on Christ, but was conscious of no manner of effect. So I quarrelled with God for not giving His Spirit, and then quarrelled with myself for doing so. Then I thought, Perhaps I am a reprobate, and I quarrelled with God for this, and then I quarrelled with myself for it.

"So I walked out one morning and went to consult Mr. John Aitken, who had been my old minister in the Secession. He said to me first, 'Is this the man who has been knocking us all down with his assurance?' 'Just the same man,' I said, 'but what am I to do?' He answered, 'Submit.' I said, 'If you mean to the equity of my condemnation, I do submit to that; but if God has a salvation including my *case* but not including my *person*, am I to submit to that?' He answered, 'Have you any claim?' and I did not get much more from him, but he gave me some common-sense advice, that in a storm it is good to hold the ship's head to the wind. And now, praying for the Holy Ghost, I heard the voice of my own depravity praying against the Holy

Ghost. My depravity prayed, and I heard it within me praying by an *elicit* act of my nature.<sup>1</sup> There were two things here. One was the novelty of a new state and a shrinking of nature from this, but also the depravity of my nature felt that the change would be the death of it; but it [the changed nature] cried unto the Lord, and cried in me. There was an end now to my saying that God is not true because He will not give me His Holy Spirit. I could find nothing to quarrel God with, for all ground was taken from me. But I ran away into the brick-kilns that were near, and went down on my knees, and I prayed thus: 'O Lord, I have broken Thy law, and I have not believed on Thy Son, and I have refused Thy Holy Spirit; and if Thou shouldst now cast me into hell, all holy beings would say, Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when Thou judgest. But Lord, for Thy mercy's sake give me Thy Holy Spirit, that I may believe on Thy Son.' It is a prayer in which I see

<sup>1</sup> "Acts of the will are distinguished by the schoolmen into *elicit* and *imperate*. 'Elicit' acts are in infants, and idiots, and as it were instinctively in men having the use of reason."—*Note pencilled by Dr. D. himself while correcting Mr. Innes's notes.* "If," said he to Miss R., "you strike a flint with a piece of steel, you *elicit* a spark; if you tramp on a serpent, it will bite your heel—from its nature, the tramping on it *elicits* the bite. So if there be a preternatural indwelling of the Spirit of God in a man, there is a rising of the carnal mind against God: it would be an *imperate* act, if the man struck out that; but it is this—the good comes and strikes upon the bad, and *elicits* the corruption."

nothing yet to retract. (I had not read the *New Englanders* at that time.<sup>1</sup>)

"And now you may well think that text must be ever dear to me, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' Not that it was formally in my favour, but it included a 'may be.'<sup>2</sup> Who knows but the Lord *may* have mercy? and upon this 'may be' hope gathered round, and upon this hope there gathered round the promises to hope, and that 'may be' I have still. And so I said, I'll away home and write my sermon, and from that day to this hope has risen. I can't put a negative upon my regeneration. I don't say I can put a positive. Sometimes hope abounds, and at the worst I have never been able dogmatically to pronounce myself unregenerate. I have the awful fear of being so, though you know the strong feeling we often have just to begin again, all over again, as sinners; and the perfect certainty that Christ can save me—can regenerate me—is essential to my ongoing, so

<sup>1</sup> The New England School of Theology is best represented in the works of the Rev. Joseph Bellamy (born 1719; died 1790), particularly his *True Religion Delineated*, and *The Nature and Glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the Nature and Consequences of Spiritual Blindness, and the Nature and Effects of Divine Illumination*.

<sup>2</sup> The statement, he often said to myself, is not negative but positive; not, "I will *not* have mercy *save* on whom I please," but, "I will have mercy on *any one* on whom I please to have mercy."

that I should not be hopeless even were I proved to be unregenerate.<sup>1</sup>

"Sometimes I have strongly thought that that is formed between Christ and me which shall last for ever. At other times I fear I may be in hell yet. But if I can't affirm my regeneration, I can't deny it; my self-examination can go no further. And when self-examination terminates so, I must just leave my case in His hands who can make it good if it is bad, and if it is good clear it up to me.<sup>2</sup> But whether I have received the truth in the love of it or not—and that is the only evidence of regeneration—I surely think that it is the Spirit of God who has made known to me this truth.

*"I would not wish these things to be published while I am here; but you may use them after I have finished my course with joy, or at least as I trust, with hope."*

Such is the closing sentence of what Dr. Duncan all but dictated in 1862 to Mr. Taylor Innes. Many things are suggested by it; but I must reserve what remarks I have to make on it till I have exhausted the

<sup>1</sup> Not more hopeless about myself than about another such: "There is hope in Israel concerning this thing."—*Pencilled by Dr. Duncan on the margin of Mr. Innes's notes.*

<sup>2</sup> "This is not to be understood as excluding considerable periods of exquisite enjoyment."—*Pencilled, as before, by himself, on the margin of Mr. Innes's notes.*



materials necessary for presenting this second period of his new life fully before the reader.

"These especially have had influence upon me. . . . Gavin Parker, Dr. Kidd, and the writings of Dr. Love, Dr. Owen, and Hermann Witsius" (p. 72). All these influences belong to the present stage of Mr. Duncan's life; and it will be necessary to begin with *Dr. Kidd*. To him I have had occasion to refer in an early chapter (p. 43). But as the few extracts which I have to give in connexion with this very peculiar man will hardly be appreciated unless the reader knows something more about him, I refer him to the foot-note for the principal features of his life and character.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Born in the north of Ireland, of Presbyterian parents, in the year 1761, and left early to the care of a pious mother, he managed to struggle into a good deal of elementary learning, married early, and emigrated to America, where he opened an academy and acted as press-corrector for a printing establishment. The sight of Hebrew characters there kindled a thirst for the knowledge of that tongue, in the reading of which he soon became fluent, having a Jewish tutor and frequenting the synagogue. After some years, coming to Scotland, he took a two years' course at the Edinburgh University, was enrolled a Divinity student, and, under the patronage of his Professor, opened classes for the study of Hebrew. This brought him such a name that he was appointed to the vacant Chair of Hebrew at the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, in 1793; and having there completed his Divinity studies, he received License as a Preacher, and was appointed Evening Lecturer in the newly-erected Trinity Chapel, where during five years his popular gifts drew crowds; and he was chosen pastor, in 1801, of

Of Mr. Duncan's private intercourse with Dr. Kidd, during the period of his strong assurance and warm feeling, I only know that scarcely anything he ever said of the "special influence" which he had over him had

the Gilcomston Chapel of Ease (for the large parish of Old Machar). This chapel, seated for some 2000, he speedily filled; and, though preaching thrice every Lord's day, he kept a crowded audience hanging on his lips for upwards of thirty years. His preaching was not at all distinguished for depth; but such was his fertility and power of illustration, his inexhaustible fluency, his ample resources in the knowledge of Scripture and ready use of it, his evangelical fervour, and, not least, the strong flavour of racy, homely common sense, with a dash of eccentricity, which ran through all his sermons, that his constant hearers thought all other preaching tame, and an occasional visit to his church was a thing to be remembered. Out-and-out Evangelical, while all around was to be heard the driest "Moderatism" for many years, and as his was the nearest resemblance to *Secession* preaching to be heard within the Established Church in Aberdeen, one easily sees how Mr. Duncan, on leaving the Secession and joining the Establishment, would be led thither to communicate for the first time, and thus qualify for admission into the Divinity Hall. Passing by Dr. Kidd's politics, which at that time of day were those of the most pronounced Radicalism; his pastoral labours, in which he outdid the most laborious ministers; and his studies in prophecy—on which he had very decided views and expectations, which he delighted to expound to any who, like myself, were willing to listen to him—he published *An Essay on the Doctrine of the Trinity: Attempting to Prove it by Reason and Demonstration founded upon Duration and Space, and upon some of the Divine Perfections, some of the Powers of the Human Soul, the Language of Scripture, and Tradition among all Nations* (8vo, 1815); and *A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ* (8vo, 1822). Far too diffuse as these works are, they display a capacity which might have yielded much more than it did, had he possessed the necessary leisure, literature, and patience in study. "Thirty years ago," says Professor Masson, most truly

reference to that period. Nor can we wonder at this; for Mr. D. at this time was more disposed to teach others than to be taught himself. In fact, the one thing I have heard of Dr. Kidd saying to him at that period

and graphically, in the year 1863, "there was to be seen, walking slowly, almost at any time, every day through the streets of Aberdeen, a venerable, old grey-headed man, of massive build and peculiarly dignified appearance, in handsome clerical costume, ending in fine black silk stockings, very erect in gait, and looking before him, or to the right and left as he advanced, with an air of authority and portly courage. Had you followed him you would have seen, by the respectful demeanour of those whom he met, that his authority was recognised . . . hats touched to him . . . heads turned to look after him. . . . He had rich Irish eyes. . . . Many myths have gathered round Kidd. . . . Yet the absolutely authentic stories of his eccentricities—his fearless courage, his humorous irascibility, his sudden discharges of steam—would make a sufficiently large collection." [Once, I myself remember him meeting in the street a person who made a religious profession, in a state of intoxication, and the laughing-stock of a crowd. The Doctor marked one fellow jeering at a great rate; and, holding up his staff before him, cried out in the hearing of the crowd, who were awed by his commanding look :—"Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you"—not *laughing*, sir, not *LAUGHING*, but—'*weeping*,' weeping, 'that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ!'" Phil. iii. 18.] He had scarcely returned from his Hebrew class one day when he was seized with apoplexy, became unconscious, and died the following day—December 24, 1834. "What a mourning there was," says Professor Masson, "when the Doctor died! His body lay in state for a week; and the immense length of the funeral procession that followed it to the grave remains in my memory as a mourning pageant, the equal of which I have never seen since."—(*Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. ix., Dec. 1863, pp. 143, etc.; also *Imperial Magazine* for January 1826, and Sketch prefixed to a small volume of Dr. K.'s Sermons, etc., 1835.)

speaks for itself as to the state of Mr. D.'s mind, and of the wisdom which Dr. Kidd showed in not allowing himself to be drawn into discussion by him. He had been expressing his wonder that sincere believers in the Lord Jesus should doubt of their own acceptance. All the reply Dr. K. gave him was this :—"Young man" (he always so addressed him), "the Holy Ghost has wrought so powerfully in you that you can't understand the difficulties of others." But it was after this period that Dr. Kidd "specially influenced" Mr. Duncan. And that influence lay, not in his preaching certainly, still less in his politics or prophetic views, not even in his metaphysical speculations, but in the oracular, epigrammatic wisdom with which he often surprised and overawed Mr. Duncan in conversation, and not least—but probably most of all—when he *snubbed* him and made him ashamed of himself. In illustrating this I copy first from Miss R.'s notes of Dr. Duncan's conversation.

"*March 4, 1869.*—Dr. Duncan began to speak about Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen. He had great grace and great corruption: the two men were very strong in him. He had the habit of using the words 'My God' in a way that looked like profanity. One day I was walking with him when he did so. As we were parting, I said, having laid hold of his hand, not daring to look up into his face, 'Doctor, I think you used the words

*My God* just now.' He said nothing, but pressed my hand; and if he was kind before he was doubly kind afterwards. There was a serious, good man, as everybody but himself judged, a hearer of Dr. Kidd's. The Doctor asked him one day, 'Well, Thomas, how long have you been praying?' 'For forty years.' 'And what have you got?' 'I canna say I ha'e gotten onything.' 'I wonder you are not tired, and don't give up that kind of hopeless work.' 'Na, sir, we manna dee that.' Well, when Thomas was dying—was near his end—the Doctor called, and asked (as he always did when he was going to pray), 'What shall I pray for?' (a custom that should be more followed, according to that, 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven'<sup>1</sup>). 'Give thanks,' said Thomas; 'give thanks, give thanks for my forty years' prayer in a lump.' There were several things in which Dr. Kidd showed great wisdom. For instance, when he was walking with any one, he would reserve himself till they were about to separate, and then give his parting word when the person could not dispute with him about it. Once I was going out of town several miles to teach, and the Doctor walked a bit with me. I was pouring out my complaint to him—I

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xviii. 19.

had a Socinian heart, a Pelagian heart, an Arminian heart, and all kinds of hearts. As we were parting, the Doctor says, 'O Lord, I have a Socinian heart, and a Pelagian heart, and an Arminian heart, and every kind of bad heart; but the Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me. Good-bye.' I went away saying, 'Ha! that's an easy way of getting over it' [taking for granted just what he doubted, whether Christ died *for him*]. I had two miles to go after I parted from him, and I walked the first mile saying, 'That is an easy way;' but the second I walked saying, 'If that be an easy way, what is the hard and right way?' and I could not find it. But I would have disputed the matter with him if I had had the opportunity."

Again, "*October 27, 1866.*—He was a very good man and a very bad man. Somebody once said to him, 'Dr. Kidd, if it were not for the grace of God, you would be the greatest blackguard in Aberdeen,' and there was a good deal of blackguardism left notwithstanding the grace. He had always a large congregation; one-half came for the rich Gospel truth, and the other for the comicality—he would have gathered a congregation on the top of a hill. Preaching was nothing to him. An old woman, who lived under us, came home one [week] day before the sacrament in great dudgeon. He had been speaking [just before

the benediction] about the ministers that were coming [to assist], and then added, 'Now don't be staring at them with your old ugly faces.'—He was very fond of picturing the conversation in hell between the damned souls and the damned ministers. He made the lost people say, 'Ha! you preached a trash of morality to us, and you never preached the Gospel, through which alone we could have any real morality.'—He used to say that he never heard prayer till he heard John Young pray. This John Young belonged to a family of gipsies that were the pest of Aberdeenshire. He was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to be hanged. During the few weeks that intervened, between his sentence and execution, Dr. Kidd's ministrations were blessed to him. He took me with him to visit him one night,<sup>1</sup> and made me read a passage. I, conceited young puppy as I was, began to expound. Dr. K. bore it for a little, and then said, 'Young man, will you hold your peace and let the Holy Ghost speak?' I expounded no more that night.—Once I was propounding my case to him; he spoke not a word. 'Dr. Kidd, do you understand my

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Duncan has here confounded the case of Young (executed in 1801—when he was but five years of age!) with that of some other criminal under sentence of death, but possibly reprieved, as I can find no such case of that date.

case?' 'I understand it quite well—you are running before the Holy Ghost.'

"After what I call my first conversion, Andrew Gray<sup>1</sup> and I, who had both burst forth into high assurance, were breakfasting at Dr. Kidd's. He said to us, after we had been talking a great deal, 'Young men, God has done more for you than you know.'"

The only other extract I give in connexion with Dr. Kidd, is from one who was present on the occasion described, and I give it because, ludicrous as it is, it illustrates three things at once—Dr. Kidd's way of coming down upon Mr. Duncan, when he needed it, in a way which nobody else would have dared to do; Mr. Duncan's peculiar weaknesses, and at the same time the great tenderness of his conscience, and how he could bend under a merited reproof, even when given roughly, not to say rudely:—"On one occasion, Joseph Thorburn<sup>2</sup> gave a grand tea-party in his house, at which I believe all the Evangelical ministers of the town were present. John Duncan was seated near me, and I observed that he regularly helped himself to everything as it came round, with-

<sup>1</sup> The late Rev. Andrew Gray of the Free West Church, Perth, an Aberdeen contemporary of Dr. Duncan's and mine.

<sup>2</sup> Then minister of Union Chapel, Aberdeen, afterwards of the parish of Forglen, Banffshire, and latterly of the Free High Church, Inverness.



out however partaking of the viands, but planting them in front, so that by the time we had finished, his cup stood in the midst of a circle composed of bread and butter, toast, cookies, and shortbread. All this time he was so engrossed with the topics on which he was descanting, that he paid no attention to the process of tea-drinking. He spoke loudly too, and occupied much of the conversation. At last Dr. Kidd, who could stand it no longer, exclaimed in his usual coarse way, 'Hold your tongue, sir; you are gabbling nonsense!' This at once silenced poor John, and struck us all with confusion. In fact it brought the tears into the poor man's eyes, and altogether it was a painful scene, though ludicrous too. It is a curious thing how little things stick to one's memory. Thorburn never forgot it, any more than I."

The influence which *Mr. Parker* exercised over Mr. Duncan during his time of spiritual darkness and distress, will easily be understood by those who knew that excellent man and the character of his preaching, and by those who do not but are acquainted with *the writings of Dr. Love*—to whom Mr. Duncan refers immediately after Mr. Parker as influencing him specially. Mr. Parker had been minister of the Cowgate Chapel, Dundee, but in the year 1828 was chosen first minister

of Union Terrace Chapel, Aberdeen, and entered on his ministry in the autumn of that year. Dr. Love (of whom I have had occasion to speak before as "a profound thinker and a man of rare spirituality," p. 75, *note*), after having been minister of Artillery Street Presbyterian Church, London, for a number of years before the close of last century, became minister of Anderston Chapel, Glasgow, where he continued until his death in 1825. His cast of mind and style of preaching were the very reverse of popular; but the select few whom these suited regarded him with a reverence which they would yield to no other man, hung upon his lips and drank in his every word, while the more quick among them took notes of all that he uttered. Two volumes of his discourses were published in his lifetime, and two volumes of his remains, with a volume of his Letters, were issued long after his death. Though he had a rich fancy, and in dilating on the "beauty" of Christ could indulge in an almost Oriental luxuriance of description, this was very rarely his vein. His usual themes were the "terrible things" of Divine truth; the claims of God upon His rational and moral creatures; the baseness, guilt, and damnable-ness of withholding them; the right of God to withhold His grace and leave sinners to perish; the inability of the sinner to see his real state, to discern the glory of the Divine

remedy, and lay hold of it, until the grace of God takes possession of him and transforms him; the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart, not only in its unrenewed state, but as it works in the renewed themselves; the entire dependence, even of renewed believers, upon continually-upholding grace, to keep them from falling and carry them through, but yet the absolute certainty wherewith "whom He doth predestinate, them He also calls; and whom He calls, them He also justifies; and whom He justifies, them He also glorifies" (Rom. viii. 30).

The "special influence" of such writings on Mr. Duncan—unfolding the views and breathing the very spirit which he describes as his own in his states of deepest perplexity and spiritual distress about his own state, and withal couched in a style often of lurid strength, by a man whose theological learning was such that he stood candidate for a Chair of Divinity, and honestly thought that he ought to have got it too—will easily be understood. Nowhere has he stated anything beyond the fact that they did specially influence him; but it was doubtless partly, by greatly confirming his own views, and partly by expressing them in forms fitted to stamp themselves upon a mind at this time, at least, strongly resembling his own.

Mr. Parker, both in private intercourse on religious

subjects, and in his public ministrations, walked so closely in the footsteps of Dr. Love, that he might be called a disciple and child of his ; nor would he himself have deemed any commendation higher than this. On the congenial ministry of this excellent man Mr. Duncan now frequently waited, and he was with him a good deal in private—almost sitting at his feet.<sup>1</sup> The things then uppermost with him were the infinite evil of sin, and the vileness of the heart of sinful man, his blindness to the glory of Christ, and inability to lay hold of Him as the provided remedy for his lost state, the justice of God in the condemnation of such, His sovereign right to save whom He would, etc. On these subjects he could hardly find language strong enough to depict what was so vivid to him, and express what he felt so keenly. Even Mr. Parker's language—which many Christians thought sufficiently strong and unrelieved—seemed to him at times too tame. In fact, his pugnacity found no better vent than in attacking the shallow views which had sufficed him before, and beating down the current notions on such subjects. "One day," Mrs. Parker tells me, "her husband and Mr. D. were waiting dinner till she should return from hearing a sermon. Mr. Duncan asked about it, and her reply was that "she thought the minister had not

<sup>1</sup> On one point, however, he afterwards saw reason to reject Mr. P.'s views, as will appear in the sequel.

got a sight of sin." "Ah!" said Mr. Duncan, "if he had got a sight of sin, nobody would have cared for a sight of him." On one occasion he said, "I have so much rubbish to get quit of!" To Mr. Parker he said, "Your ministry tried me: it made me see I must part with my faith; but I would not lay it at *your* feet, but at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ." "That," replied Mr. P., "was just what I wanted."

And now it was that "the writings of Dr. Love, Dr. Owen,<sup>1</sup> and Hermann Witsius"<sup>2</sup> had their "special influence" on him. Of Dr. Love's writings I have already spoken. Until now he scarcely knew of their existence, and though he had known them better he would have turned from them with distaste: now they were as marrow to his bones. With Owen and Witsius he had been pretty familiar in the Secession; their writings being recommended to all students of theology, and much studied by the more scholarly men in that body. In the period subsequent to Malan's visit, when he and

<sup>1</sup> *John Owen, D.D.*, born 1616; educated at Oxford; Vice-Chancellor of the University under the Commonwealth; deprived after the Restoration; died 1683. The best edition of the works of this great divine is that edited by the Rev. Dr. Goold, 24 vols. 8vo, 1850-1855.

<sup>2</sup> *Hermann Witsius*, born in Holland 1636; Professor of Divinity at Franequer, Utrecht, and Leyden successively; died 1708. His works are in 6 vols. 4to, 1712-1735. That by which he is best known in this country is his elaborate *Œconomia Fœderum Dei cum Hominibus*, translated into English ("The Economy of the Covenants," etc.), 3 vols. 8vo, 1771.

I talked theology, the works of these divines were often the subject of discussion, as representatives of a well-known school—*Witsius* chiefly for his elaborate exposition of what is called the *federal* theology; *Owen* for his copiousness on the Person and Glory of Christ, and on the Work of the Holy Spirit, on both of which great subjects Owen's rich expositions of the texts which he quotes, and his breadth of conception, notwithstanding the wearisome prolixity of his method, were matter of just admiration. In *Witsius* he found that systematic arrangement of Biblical truth under the head of the *two covenants*—of *works and grace*—to which he had been gradually tending for some time. As *Witsius* is well known to be the fullest, most exact and most learned expositor of that school of theology, so the influence on Mr. Duncan of his treatise on that subject was now so great, that for some time he could hardly theologize or preach out of that man's groove, so to speak. The effect of this was to intensify—perhaps I might say exaggerate—certain features of Divine truth. It is no business of mine here to criticise the “federal” system. All I will say, in passing, is, that while the principle of *representation*—as lying at the foundation of God's treatment of mankind, first in Adam and then in Christ—is absolutely vital, and while the essential features of a “covenant,” even in the current sense of

the term, are to be found in God's treatment of men under both these heads, there are some respects in which the application of the word "covenant," as ordinarily understood, to these Divine transactions, is apt to mislead,<sup>1</sup> and that to shut up all Biblical theology within those two ideas will be found injurious to a natural and unforced interpretation of important portions of Scripture, and to a comprehensive view of Bible truth as a whole. In the writings of Dr. Owen, however, there was no such danger; his discursive faculty and rich spiritual tone raising him largely above the trammels of rigid Dutch system.

With these views, then, experimental and theological, Mr. Duncan now laboured to undo what he regarded as his former presumptuous, confident, and shallow teaching. In prosecution of this object he delivered a weekly course of lectures on the Westminster Confession of Faith in the Gaelic Chapel at Aberdeen. I heard none of them, but heard much about them from those who did. His audience consisted of the select few who followed him wherever he opened his mouth in public. He made but slow progress in the Confession; in fact he got no further than the Fall and its consequences. But the character of them may be guessed from this,

<sup>1</sup> Of which Boston's treatise on the Covenant of Grace is a good example.

that Mr. Parker, who attended them once or twice, said they were *terrific*.

In closing this chapter, I must now try in a few paragraphs to estimate the character, source, and value of this "second conversion."

1. In all the essentials of his first change he remained unchanged to the end of life—his intellectual pride thoroughly mastered; his heart tender, and his conscience sensitively alive to sin in every form; his faith in the Lord Jesus profound, and his subjection to Him, as the Word made flesh and the Lamb that was slain, absolute; in a word, his whole ideas of truth and life adjusted to this high standard. In all these respects, his first views and impressions, far from being changed, were only ripened, expanded, and intensified.

2. That he took the alarm, as soon as he became conscious that he had ceased to feel as he once did, while yet he was praying and preaching as if all was the same as ever—this only showed that his conscience now was not to be trifled with.

3. The fallacy which he believed to lie in his former views he expressed in some such way as this:—"God so loved the world that He gave His Son, that whosoever believeth may not perish,' etc. *But I believe*; therefore I shall not perish, etc. Now the *major* proposition here,



namely, God's part of the matter, is indisputable ; but as for the *minor*, or my part of it (' But I believe '), that depends on the nature and character of my faith. And as no chain is stronger than its weakest link, and that weakest link is my faith, I should have made myself sure of *that* before making myself sure of the conclusion (' therefore I shall not perish, but have everlasting life'). On that awful *uncertainty* I built the *certainty* of my own salvation, and taught others to do the same." This caused him the keenest distress.

4. This discipline was part, I believe, of a merciful training, to teach him what he could learn effectually no otherwise. It is a discipline through which all who are to guide successfully perplexed consciences and timid Christians are made sooner or later to pass—" that they may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble with the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God " (2 Cor. i. 4). Some have it at the outset of their Christian life, and so are long before they can venture to cherish the hope of salvation ; others get so quietly into joy and peace in believing, that, as Dr. Kidd said to Mr. Duncan, " they cannot understand the difficulties of others." And some of these never do understand those difficulties. Living in sunshine themselves, they wonder that all other Christians are not as they are, and they die very much as

they live—strangers to doubt and fear, but strangers also to much soul-humbling insight into the plagues of their own heart, and to that most entrancing of all Christian experiences, when, after deep, protracted, and apparently hopeless backsliding, they hear a voice saying unto them in melting accents, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him,” and they are constrained in return to say with Ephraim, “What have I to do any more with idols?” Mr. Duncan’s first Christian experience was indeed very genuine—fresh and beautiful as a new-blown rose sparkling with dew-drops in the morning sun. But it was superficial. It needed deepening, solidifying, invigorating, both for his own sake and that of others. This he got in a way which, though by no means peculiar, was in his case intensified to the utmost. Not but that there were in this second experience unsatisfactory elements, as I judge, but the real and permanent value of that experience was immense.

5. We have seen that he thought the fallacy of his first views lay in taking it for granted that his faith in the Lord Jesus was of a genuine and saving character, and so assuring himself at once of salvation, instead of probing to the bottom the state of his own heart in embracing Christ, and being sure that that was right ere he made himself sure of salvation. Now I am

very far from saying that Christians ought never to question the saving character of their faith in the Lord Jesus. On the contrary, since the faith which saves is not a mere intellectual assent to the truths of the Gospel, but the soul's cordial reception of Christ Himself as therein revealed, and the absolute surrender of itself to Him as its Divinely-provided Saviour—or, in the language of the Shorter Catechism, a "receiving and resting on Christ alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel"—and since "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," he would be a bold man who should affirm (though I know there are such) that it cannot deceive us as to the character of its own actings, and above all, whether its *reception* of Christ, its *repose* upon Him, and its *surrender* to Him is absolute and saving. And if we are warranted and bound to put this to the test at all, surely it is high time to do it when the Scriptural accompaniments and fruits of faith seem to be wanting. When Mr. Duncan, then, found himself talking, preaching, and praying what he had no feeling of, it was time to him to put to the test the true character of the faith which he possessed. But he did more than that. Feeling now, as he never did before, that on the character of that faith depended his whole right to appropriate to himself the salvation which Christ procured,

he came now to believe that he *should have settled that question at the first* ere he assured himself of salvation, and if he was not able to do that, *should have had no more hope of salvation* than he had confidence of the reality of his faith. In this, as I judge, he was wrong. For what are the proper tests of saving faith? They are either *our own consciousness*, or "*the fruits of righteousness*, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." The latter test cannot possibly be applied at the period of conversion, for hardly any of them are then in existence; nor are they for some time so developed as to afford full ground for decision one way or other. At the first, then, if the saving character of our faith is to be questioned at all, we must be thrown inward upon our own consciousness, aided by such outward manifestations of faith as babes in Christ are capable of. And ought not these to suffice until "*the fruits*" shall have time to appear? Let us hear the Apostles:—"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God*" (1 John iii. 21). "*The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God*" (Rom. viii. 16). Two attestations to our sonship—the witness of the Holy Ghost, and the witness of our own consciousness—are here represented as co-ordi-

nate, which implies, of course, the equal validity (but not infallibility) of the latter with the former. And "if our heart," in its deepest consciousness, and before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, "condemn us not" of hypocrisy, insincerity, rashness, and instability, but "beareth witness that" we honestly and truly have closed with the overtures of reconciliation made to us in the Gospel, "then have we (legitimate) confidence toward God." Accordingly, we find the first Christians full of joy and peace in believing from the very outset, and "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, *knowing* that they had in heaven a "better and enduring substance" (Heb. x. 34). Were their hearts, then, less liable to deceive them than ours? If not, then they were either wrong in building the certainty of salvation on "the awful uncertainty" of their own saving faith, and the Apostles were wrong too in approving of it and commending them for it; or else they were right, and in that case Mr. Duncan had no need and no right to stand in doubt of his own salvation until he should be sure, from an examination of all the "fruits" of his faith, that it was of a genuine and saving character.

Nor were his own statements on this subject, often as he recurred to it in his subsequent life, so uniform, clear, and self-consistent that we should attach undue

importance to what he said at any one time of the unsatisfactoriness of his first conversion. This will sufficiently appear in the sequel; but I may here furnish an example or two. We have seen that to the last he owned to "elements in his first conversion which were carried over into the second," implying surely, that those elements were themselves sound and satisfactory, so far as he considered anything he ever was to be such. And then, what was it in "Malanism" which he discovered to be fallacious, and accordingly discarded? "I preached things about Christ," he says, "about the Trinity, about the Incarnation, about the Atonement; and I thought I was warranted to preach assurance on that ground: *that was the defect of Malanism.*" Does this mean that he preached that the bare belief of these things as contained in the Bible, with no personal application of them to ourselves, and no reception of Christ into the heart as our own Divinely-provided Saviour, was an evidence of regeneration and warranting assurance of salvation? That cannot be: for he never did preach that, and Malan certainly never taught that. But let us hear him again: "Though much indebted to Malan, I did not become a Malanite.<sup>1</sup> My first conversion did not wholly belong to it; and my

<sup>1</sup> The former extract would naturally imply that he had, and that this was precisely what he afterwards blamed himself for.

second conversion took me off Malanism altogether. The beginning of his [Malan's] own [new] life perhaps tinged his history:—"I was awakened," said Malan, 'as a mother awakens her child, with a kiss.' *It was with regard to the work of the Spirit that the defect of Malanism appeared.*" In other words, Malan—himself awakened from the sleep of spiritual death to the faith of Jesus so gently and sweetly that he was scarcely conscious of the mighty power by which the change had been wrought—was apt to overlook, or lay too little stress on, the impotence of the natural heart to receive Christ, and on the need of the Spirit's work to produce faith. But to that Malan would have replied, "No, brother; I believe as firmly as you do, that in every case conversion is a Divine work, the fruit of an operation of God's Spirit upon the heart. But I don't thrust it in where its only effect would be to hinder in place of helping the anxious sinner. When I say to the sinner as Paul did to the jailer of Philippi, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' I don't add, 'But believe you can't without the Spirit, and you are to pray for the Spirit that you may have grace to believe.' The Lord Jesus Himself told the man with the withered hand to stretch it out, a thing he could no more do of himself than I can of myself believe; and yet He who knew the fact and the philo-

sophy of the whole matter right well, commanded him to do it, and he did it, and was made whole ; the will and the power to obey going forth simultaneously with the command. The philosophy of that familiar yet priceless fact is as much beyond human comprehension and exposition, as the principle of it is applicable to impotent sinners, who, in all their impotence, are commanded immediately to believe for salvation ; nor is the work of the Spirit in the production of faith in the heart the *ground*, less or more, either of the sinner's warrant or of his duty to believe."

These are truths so elementary, that I should not have thought of obtruding them upon the reader here, were it not that the whole quarrel of Mr. Duncan with "Malanism" in the extracts I have given, appears to me to be based on a disregard of them. And I am the more emboldened to say so, because once and again in his conversations at a late period of life, he seemed aware how much might be said for that very Malanism under another name, and how easily one might get into difficulties on either side. Let one example, from Miss R.'s notes, suffice :—"Dec. 14, 1869.—Something was said before him about the different ways in which Dr. Bonar and Dr. M'Lauchlan had recently treated the same subject, namely, of a sinner's coming to Christ ; the former insisting on *immediate believing* [as Malan



did], and the latter, more on *seeking*. Dr. Duncan said, 'I am sick of disquisitions about faith—about believing or praying [first for grace to believe]. If you can believe without [such] praying, do it; and if a man feels that he has need of what God only can supply, all the Bonars in the world will not keep him from praying. There is a point at which they both meet. I suppose Dr. McLauchlan will admit that believing is a primary duty; and if Dr. Bonar says a good deal about immediate believing, he gets up afterwards and prays very earnestly for the Holy Ghost. Dr. B. and I could very easily work ourselves up into a controversy, but neither of us is disposed to do it."

5. Dr. Duncan's explanation of all that was objectionable in Malan's way of dealing with cases serves equally to explain his own excess on the opposite side. "The beginning of Malan's new life," he says, "perhaps tinged his history." No doubt it did. But on the same principle, while Dr. Duncan's first views took their cast from him who was the main instrument of his change, the experience which he went through at the commencement of what he called his second conversion, was so terrific in its character, that it discoloured all his views from that time forward, insomuch that he never enjoyed more than very rare seasons of momentary sunshine, was all his lifetime subject to bondage, might

have sat for his picture to Bunyan while he drew his inimitable portrait of *Mr. Fearing*, and did much by his public teaching and powerful conversation to produce his like in other Christians. I have said that the dealings of God with his soul during the early stages of his "second conversion" were terrific. The expression is far from being too strong. As soon as he discovered that his first views of sin were shallow, he seems to have laid his soul open and bare to receive the most vivid representation of Jehovah's claims on His reasonable creatures which the Bible expresses and his own clarified spiritual perceptions attested, of the infinite demerit and damnable-ness of sin, of the righteousness of the curse of the law, of the absence of all right to be saved in any sinner, and of the pure sovereignty of the grace by which any brand is plucked from the fire. And this view of things was borne in upon his soul with a force so intense—I was going to say, almost hell-like—as at times nearly to overpower him. In fact, the following description of God's dealings with the soul in regeneration—extracted from some notes of his weighty sayings in the class-room, which I will give in full in a subsequent chapter—expresses, in the closing words of it, that final-wrath-like experience through which himself passed:—"A great change, a crisis in the soul's history takes place. The law is brought home to the

conscience with power—the law, in its spirituality; the law, in its exceeding breadth; the law, in its curse. *Receiving the curse into the soul is scarcely anything short of actual damning.*" What was the effect of this? It at times seemed to obscure the glory of God's matchless love to the world in the gift of His only begotten Son, and the right and duty of every sinner of mankind, as soon as the tidings of it reach his ears, to lay hold of this gift, and live for ever. Not that he for a moment disputed it—not that he did not preach it—not that he would not have risen with indignation against any denial of it. But such was the vividness and burning power with which the former set of truths was borne in upon him, that from that time forward it came up more naturally and more frequently before him than any other aspects of Divine truth; caused him often to fear that he had no saving apprehensions of the truth, and might most probably perish; in short, threw a gloom over his whole teaching on this subject, which, though at times nobly relieved, was fitted to "make the hearts of those sad whom the Lord had not made sad."

I have ventured to make these observations once for all, with a view to two classes:—that those, on the one hand, whose admiration of Dr. Duncan would lead them to condemn as shallow whatever teaching is not of his stamp, may be led to consider whether it did not err by

giving excessive predominance to one set of truths; and, on the other, that those who may be repelled by the dismal things which we shall find him uttering from time to time about his own state, and his prospects for eternity, even in the class-room, may see in all this only the life-long effects of those scorching experiences through which he passed at the period of his "second conversion," may perceive in it the exceeding tenderness of a conscience which once trifled with sin but now felt it as hell, and may haply be led to ask whether they themselves would not be the better for some touches of that same mighty hand.

I know not how I can close these remarks better than by quoting one of the most striking statements of similar personal experience to Mr. Duncan's which I have ever met with—that of the great Dr. John Owen. It occurs in a short and little-known "Dissertation on Divine Justice," which, though rich in varied learning, classical and theological, was finished, as he tells us, "in a few days."<sup>1</sup> It was written in defence of "the Necessity of the Satisfaction of Christ for the Salvation of Sinners," in opposition to those who held that God

<sup>1</sup> It was written originally in Latin, when he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and dedicated to his patron Cromwell, on the last day of the year 1652. I have not seen the Latin original, but quote from an English version executed in 1794, with some emendations by the editor of Dr. Owen's works, Dr. Goold, and these slightly changed.

could, if He had so pleased, have pardoned sin without any satisfaction to His justice. In the midst of an elaborate discussion of this subject there occurs the following paragraph, closing one of the chapters :—"I could heartily wish that some sinner, whose conscience the hand of the omnipotent God hath lately touched, whose 'sore ran in the night, and ceased not,' and whose 'soul refused to be comforted,' whose 'grief is heavier than the sand of the sea,' in whom 'the arrows of the Almighty' stick fast, 'the poison whereof drinketh up the spirit' (Job vi. 2-4), were to estimate this difficult and doubtful dispute. Let us, I say, have recourse to a person who, being convinced by the Spirit of his debts to God, is weighed down by their burden, while the sharp arrows of Christ are piercing the heart (Ps. xlv. 5), and let us inform him that God, with the greatest ease, by His nod, or by the light touch of His finger, so to speak, can blot out, hide, and forgive all sins. Will he rest satisfied in such a thought? Will he immediately subscribe to it? Will he not rather exclaim, 'I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are ye all: nay, ye are forgers of lies, physicians of no value' (Job xiii. 4; xvi. 2). The terrors of the Lord which surround me, and beset me day and night, ye feel not. I have to do with the most just, the most holy, the supreme Judge of all, who 'will do right, and

will by no means clear the guilty.' Therefore 'my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin' (Ps. cii. 3-5). 'I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors have cut me off' (Ps. lxxxviii. 15, 16). Would that I were hid in the grave, yea even in the pit, if the Judge Himself say not to me, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom' (Job xxxiii. 24). *Indeed, when the recollection of that most melancholy period comes into my mind, when God was pleased by His Spirit to convince the heart of me, a poor sinner, of sin, and when the whole of God's controversy with me for sin is again presented to my view, I cannot sufficiently wonder what thoughts could possess those men who have treated of the remission of sins in so very slight, I had almost said contemptuous, a manner. But these reflections are rather foreign to our present business."*<sup>1</sup>

Other causes, however, of Dr. D.'s depression and dissatisfaction with his spiritual state—physical and moral—will fall to be noticed in the sequel.

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vol. x. pp. 548, 549 (Goold's ed. 1852).

## CHAPTER X.

CLOSE OF HIS ABERDEEN LIFE—PERSIE CHAPEL :

1828-1831.

As Mr. Duncan's preaching engagements increased, he contracted his teaching work, limiting himself to a few select families—in one of which he found the devoted Christian lady who afterwards became his wife. Under the City Mission Committee he held meetings and visited in the poorer parts of the town for several hours each week. On one of these occasions he went into the house of a woman who kept a small shop, and spoke to her solemnly about the care of her soul. She said she had too much to do to attend to him then, and seemed to wish him away. He continued, however, to press eternal realities upon her, and said he could not leave her without engaging in prayer for her. He did so; but as she showed signs of impatience, he went away somewhat discouraged. When visiting, however, in the same locality, about three weeks after-

wards, this same woman watched until he was entering an adjoining house, and then invited him most cordially into her own house ; expressing her grief at the treatment she had given him when last there, and asking his forgiveness. She said the words he had spoken to her, and the prayer he had offered for her, had come back to her and smitten her. She ever after welcomed his visits ; and he was encouraged to hope that his labour in dealing with her soul had not been in vain. A weekly prayer-meeting which he held in the house of a poor blind woman was greatly relished by her and the little "church in her house." His preaching, however, was far from being popular, in the sense of drawing crowds of eager listeners. Once, when preaching for one who was very popular, he observed, as he ascended the pulpit, that many left the church. This pained and disturbed him, and he thought within himself whether the minister of that congregation could have been flattering them, that they had acted thus. "I went through the service," he said, "in a frame of mind neither comfortable nor fitting, but in spite of this the Lord was pleased in infinite mercy to do His own work ; for that night an arrow of conviction was shot into the heart of a young man, which has resulted, I trust, in his conversion. For months he visited me in deep distress of soul, but now I hope



he has really found Christ as all his salvation and all his desire."

Observing in a friend's house a portrait of César Malan, he expressed very warm esteem and affection for him, as the instrument under God of his conversion; and pausing, he added, "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols*" (1 John v. 21).

His spare hours were all devoted to hard study—if that may be called hard which was so very miscellaneous. Nothing in the shape of literature came wrong to him. Whatever he could lay his hands on, or that came casually in his way, in his own or any other language, not on theology only, but on any subject—except Natural Science and Mathematics—that he would dig into, *and nothing was read without begetting critical thought*, down even to a nursery rhyme, which would unexpectedly turn to account, and in ways which showed his vast capacity of literary digestion. But desultory as his reading and thinking were, his predominant tastes and tendencies were unmistakeable. If he had a passion for languages in general, the Oriental languages carried it certainly above all others; and now that the Bible was to his soul of priceless value, his studies all revolved around it, as found in the sacred originals, on which he feasted. Systematic though his theology behaved to be, he was so intensely

biblical and exegetical, that instead of merely extracting from the Scriptures the great truths and principles which they contain, his very forms of thought and phraseology were taken from the Biblical mould. Thus in his favourite study, while tracing the gradual development of Revealed Religion, from the hoary simplicity and rudimental catholicity of Patriarchism onwards to the concentrated teachings of the Mosaic Law, out of which the sweet singer of Israel extracted such rich spirituality and nutriment for the hungry soul; from thence to the prophetic anticipations of a glorious future; and finally, to the broad rivers and streams of a world-wide Christianity in the fulness of time—there were two pregnant words which even then were often on his lips, but afterwards formed with him the great land-marks of Revealed Religion: *Jehovism* and *Abrahamism*. The one of these was intended to express the religion of the Bible as a revelation of *God as standing in saving relations to men*; and this in contrast with all other religions, whether traditional or philosophical—in which, at their best, there is no certainty where certainty is most needed. On this “Jehovism”—by which men, separated by sin from a holy God, are by Himself brought nigh in the most august and tender relations—Mr. Duncan would, at times, wax grand; and nothing in the riper stages of his spiritual experi-

ence and theological strength has exceeded what came out in occasional gleams at this early period. The other term, "Abrahamism," was intended to express this truth:—that according to the promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," *the seed of Abraham is the parent-stem of the true faith, and by it of life everlasting for the whole world*, and so, as Christ said to the woman of Samaria, "Salvation is of the Jews," and in this sense we are to understand the Apostle's way of expressing the promise to Abraham, "that he should be the heir of the world." And not only so, but since we are expressly told, with reference to this very call of Abraham, that "the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29), *so the world's faith and the world's salvation still hold of Abraham's seed, and will to the world's end*; for "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew," and the time will come when "all Israel shall be saved." *Hence the deep and ever-deepening interest which Mr. Duncan now felt in the conversion of the Jews.* But of this more presently.

Mr. Duncan was one of those who kept up their attendance—after License, and until they left town, or were ordained—at the Theological Society of the University, chiefly designed for theological students during their attendance at the Divinity Hall. On one oc-

casion, when my brother, Dr. Charles Brown, happened to be in the chair—probably in the year 1828—the question for the evening was, “Is an immortal life revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures?” “I find,” writes my brother, “the following notes of a speech delivered on that occasion by Mr. Duncan, which I was able to take then from the deep impression which the whole made on my mind, and which has not left me to this day.” As Mr. Duncan’s opening lecture in the New College contains nearly the same ideas in a fuller form, I can only give the substance of these notes below, as showing how the theology of the Old Testament, as he finally viewed it, had already taken shape in Mr. D.’s mind.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Words and things which in themselves seem to have little weight, acquire infinite importance when Jehovah is concerned in them. For example, the transactions of the first chapters of Genesis. Bearing this in mind, the account of man’s creation shows that he was designed for immortality: . . . ‘In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die,’—evidently implying that while he did not eat he should live. After the fall, that God still designed man for immortal life, appears from His condescending to deal with our first parents, instead of instantly cutting them off; and still more from the nature of the promise, ‘The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.’ What did man forfeit by the fall? Life. It was death that the Tempter had introduced. To overcome the serpent, therefore, was just to overcome death; and all God’s intercourse with man from that time was a proof of man’s immortality. Abel, in the very act of offering up an accepted sacrifice, was cut off, while Cain was spared. Enoch was a living proof of the truth that immortal life was the portion of God’s

Scarcely had Mr. Parker been settled in Aberdeen, when efforts were made to bring Mr. Duncan favourably before the congregation of St. Andrew's (or the Cowgate) Chapel, Dundee, with a view to his being called to succeed him. For this purpose testimonials in his favour were forwarded by some of the best-known ministers of the north, which now lie before me, including Dr. Kidd, Mr. Parker, Mr. M'Donald of Urquhart, Mr. Carment of Roskeen, and Mr. Stewart of Cromarty.<sup>1</sup> The

people. Passing on to Abraham, God appears to him and offers Himself to him in all His fulness—'I am God all-sufficient, walk before me.' This was in fact a grant of life, the brightest and strongest that could be. The self-existent, the living God, gives Himself—'I am thy God'—'I will be a God unto thee.' He calls Abraham out from all creatures unto Himself, to be a God to him. It could not be that God was not *able*, and if he had not been *willing* that His people should live for ever, was He 'a God' to them? ('Elohim' expresses the relation of God to the creature.) The Apostle speaks as if God would be ashamed to be called their God, if He had not prepared for them a city (Heb. xi. 16). And here lies the point of our Lord's argument with the Sadducees, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' From the first, therefore, in all His dealings with men, it has been about the communication of immortal life. Nothing less was worthy of Him. And when God gives Himself to be His people's blessedness and reward, that is in the strongest possible way a grant of life everlasting. Passing down to David and the Psalms, we find in them all the life of religion—the desire and enjoyment of God Himself (without which there is no religion); and this necessarily implies immortal life. And all this the Psalmist (see 119th Psalm) found in the *Law*. This affords us a key to discover what there is in the Mosaic Scriptures—whether we can see it clearly or not."

<sup>1</sup> One from a Ross-shire minister, after detailing his many excellences, has the following amusing statement of his defects, as if

whole six candidates, including Mr. D., were set aside in favour of another; but in the wonder-working providence of God, his preaching in Dundee seems to have been the first link in a chain of events which issued in his being soon after appointed to Persie Chapel, then brought to Glasgow, after that sent as a missionary to the Jews at Pesth, and finally brought home to fill the Chair of Oriental Languages in the New College of Edinburgh.

Soon after his return from Dundee, he found his first opportunity of showing his interest in the seed of Abraham. *Church Missions* were then unknown; all Protestant missionary operations being carried on by voluntary Societies—the parent ones and their auxiliaries in different parts of the country—whose members consisted simply of those who paid a certain annual subscription to the funds. And as the London Society for the Conversion of the Jews had awakened much interest among some of us, through its monthly

intended to warn the Dundee people against fixing their choice on such a man: “7th, He is a perfect child as to the things of this world, and shows a lamentable, if not a sinful, absence of mind about his person, dress, etc.; indeed, so much is this the case, that he would require the frequent attention of a prudent, careful friend to take care of his worldly concerns, to put him in mind of those parts of his duty which he is apt to forget, and to rouse him from that indolence to which he seems constitutionally liable”! As Mr. Duncan was placed on the list of candidates, I presume this certificate of his *unfitness* for the charge was not presented.

periodical, we resolved to have an Auxiliary to it established in Aberdeen. A highly successful public meeting was held, the Auxiliary was formed, and the usual staff of office-bearers formed, in 1829; the Rev. Gavin Parker and the Rev. John Duncan being joint-secretaries. I have before me the report read at its first annual meeting, 1830, in Mr. Duncan's handwriting, and bearing evident marks of his composition. The beginning is wanting, but it consists of a sketch of the work of the parent Society for the preceding year at the various stations occupied by its agents. "On the whole," concludes this Report, "your Committee judge that the labours of the parent Society deserve continued support, and they desire to stir up themselves and others to more ardent prayer, that Jehovah would return to the ten thousands of Israel, that He would turn away ungodliness from Jacob, speedily build up Zion, and appear in His glory. Amen." This small matter would scarcely have been worth notice, were it not that the reader will see in it the beginning of that *direction of mind* which issued in his offering himself to his Church, not many years after, as a missionary to the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are some Aberdonians still living who will be interested to learn that on the back of this Report there are the following names: "Peter Duguid, Esq., *President*; Stephen Pellatt, Esq., *Treasurer*; Rev. G. Parker and Rev. J. Duncan, *Secretaries*. Com-

A Chapel of Ease had been erected, in 1829, at Woodside, a northern suburb of Aberdeen, for a manufacturing and stone-quarrying population of some 4000 souls, within the parish of Old Machar; and on the 28th April 1830, a brother of mine,<sup>1</sup> as one of the managers of this chapel, appeared before the Presbytery (as I find by its books), craving, in name of said managers, "that Mr. John Duncan, probationer in Aberdeen, might be employed to supply said chapel with sermon on the days not supplied by candidates, until the election and settlement of a minister for said chapel should take place. Mr. B. also intimated that

mittee, same as last year." Dr. Kidd acted an amusing part at the formation of the Society. My brother, Dr. Charles Brown, and I called upon him to request his aid in the matter. "Will have nothing to do with it." "Why?" "Because it's no use. The time is not come. Till then no Jew will be converted. I don't believe that a converted Jew exists." "But, Doctor, even though you be right, you pray for their conversion, don't you?" "Of course I do." "Well, can you not open our meeting with prayer?" "That certainly I might do." "Will you do it then?" "Well, I will; but mind you, I'll do nothing more—I'll take no part in the proceedings." With that we left him. He fulfilled his promise—he opened the meeting with prayer, full of fervour, and fluent as usual, but when he came to the ticklish point he created an irresistible titter by his determination to have his notion out in his own unique way—"O Lord, convert the Jews, *but they won't be converted* till the appointed time. We expect it, but we must wait for it. Let us not be impatient; many are now trying to convert them, but let them not be too confident, for Israel, poor Israel, is fit for nothing as yet but going through the streets crying "Old clo'!"

<sup>1</sup> See page 141.



Mr. Duncan's name was not to be on the leet of candidates. The Presbytery agreed to the request, and authorized Mr. Duncan to commence his services on the afternoon of the second Sabbath of May, Dr. Patrick Forbes [one of the ministers of Old Machar, and Professor of Humanity in the University] having been previously appointed to open the chapel for worship on the forenoon of that day." Dr. Candlish, in a note to his memoir of the Rev. Andrew Gray, the first minister of that chapel,<sup>1</sup> prefixed to a selection from his sermons, says, "This [appointment of Mr. Duncan] was highly favourable to the awakening of an interest in Divine things. Dr. Duncan was even then distinguished for the deep thought, the racy originality, and the searching insight into the mind of the Spirit, which have been so noticeable in his pulpit ministrations and theological disquisitions. He could not fail to be a useful precursor to one between whom and himself, as kindred and congenial spirits, the closest intimacy subsisted."

I have said that Mr. Duncan's visit to Dundee, and preaching there, though unsuccessful as regarded St. Andrew's Chapel, was the first link in a chain of providences determining his whole future. When Mr. Parker ministered there, he had frequently visited and preached in Persie Chapel (of which presently); and

<sup>1</sup> See p. 202, and note 1.

knowing that there were not a few there who were capable of relishing Mr. Duncan's deep spirituality, he, in conjunction with some Dundee friends, resolved to bring him under the notice of that congregation. Most unexpectedly, this issued in his being chosen minister of that chapel.

Persie Chapel is situated in the parish of Bendochy, in the Presbytery of Meigle, and Synod of Angus and Mearns. The parish lies towards the eastern boundary of Perthshire, and is a long stripe of about 16 miles long, and only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  broad; enclosing between its highland and lowland divisions the two parishes of Rattray and Blairgowrie, and as it is finely varied, so its lowland division is well watered. The parish church being placed within 300 yards of the southern extremity, and about 13 miles from its northern boundary, was thus in the last degree inconvenient for the population, and in 1785 the chapel of Persie was built to accommodate, not only the northern population of that parish, but portions of the parishes of Blairgowrie, Alyth, Kirkmichael, Rattray, and Caputh. "It is most conveniently located," says the New Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. x.), "and has proved a great blessing to an extensive district of country, containing a population of 1000 souls, which otherwise would have been very destitute of the means of religious instruction and

pastoral superintendence." The following particulars, with which I have been favoured by the respected school-master of the district, still living, will be read with interest: "It was indeed a poor living, and till lately had no manse attached. The minister [who then was only a probationer, it being only a preaching station] had nothing but the collections and seat-rents; consequently few men of any note would be induced to become its minister. The first man worth calling such was Mr. Shaw, who was very much liked, and soon gathered a good congregation. But he was called away to the parish of Bracadale, in Skye. After that the chapel was very poorly supplied, and the congregation scattered. The very chapel fell into disrepair, but on the obnoxious minister leaving, from sheer starvation, the people repaired the chapel, and got a young man of genuine piety, and indefatigable in labour, John Martin, from Coupar-Angus. He visited the people, catechised old and young, preached four days in the week in different parts of the district, assisted sometimes in the week-day school and in the Sabbath-school, raised money, erected a wooden bridge opposite the church, to accommodate those who could not otherwise attend, and soon collected the largest congregation that had ever attended there. After labouring with unabated zeal for three or four years, he renounced his con-

nexion with the Church of Scotland, and went to South Africa, considering that the Lord had called him to labour there.<sup>1</sup> After the departure of this good, earnest, devoted servant of God, the congregation applied to the Presbytery for leave to hear candidates. This was granted; and the candidates being heard, a meeting of the congregation and Presbytery was held in the chapel. The meeting was a very stormy one, the Presbytery refusing the people the man of their choice, because he had not preached as a candidate, though he had preached in the chapel, and was then assistant in the parish of Kirkmichael. The people, on the other hand, refused to accept the Presbytery's man, and the meeting broke up very unceremoniously. In a short time after, Mr. John Duncan, probationer, was procured, and sent in rather an unexpected manner. Some said he was sent for a short time as a kind of peace-offering to calm the storm between the people and the Presbytery."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Only one letter, I believe, was received from him, announcing his arrival on the south-east coast of Africa, and his intention of penetrating into the interior alone. It is supposed he was either killed by the natives or died of starvation."

<sup>2</sup> Some fresh testimonials had been made out in his favour, no doubt at the instance of his Dundee friends. One from the Rev. Joseph Thorburn (of whom see p. 202) says, "In literature he has won for himself a distinguished name among scholars, and by the variety and accuracy of his learning has reached an eminence where few can follow him" (July 30, 1830). This sort of thing would go

The manner of Mr. Duncan's entrance into Persie is a rich specimen of the man :—"He left Aberdeen," writes the Rev. John Baxter of the Free Church, Blairgowrie, who immediately succeeded Mr. Duncan at Persie, "on the 25th September 1830, and travelled by the Defiance coach to Coupar-Angus, on his way to Persie. The late Miss Rattray of Dalrullian, who took a deep interest in the prosperity of Persie Chapel, asked her coachman, who had been in Perth with her conveyance, to take Coupar-Angus on his way home, and inquire there if Mr. Duncan had arrived.<sup>1</sup> He found that he had come, and had proceeded on his journey on foot towards Blairgowrie. So he went on, keeping his eye on the road, and watching every traveller, to see if he could discover Mr. Duncan. At last, when about half way on, he saw a man in black clothes lying among the broom or brushwood, and earnestly reading some book. This he thought could not be he. But going on a few steps, he came out of the conveyance and went up to the stranger, who

a great way with the clerical parties interested in the appointment, while the abundant testimony borne to his deep piety would at once ingratiate him with the godly people.

<sup>1</sup> "I have at last met with this old man," writes Mr. Baxter in a subsequent letter, "now residing in Dundee. He remembers very distinctly the circumstances of the case, and went over them to me, confirming my own information, though correcting it in some small points."

started up, book in hand, and came towards the road. The coachman then asked if he was Mr. Duncan from Aberdeen, coming to preach next day at Persie. He said he was. So absorbed had he been that he had forgotten (if, indeed, he knew) that he was twelve miles from the place of his destination. Of course, he was taken up immediately ; but he spoke little, merely making a remark or two on the scenery, and continuing to read his book. What was that book ? The driver, of course, knew nothing about it, but Miss Rattray's niece, who was in the conveyance, and who also told me the story, said it was a Dutch Grammar ! On observing a footpath across a field by which the road might be shortened, he left the conveyance and walked. This he did at least twice. On one of them, not far from Persie Chapel, he got into a morass, and had his clothes considerably bedaubed with mud. He was in a sad plight when he made his appearance, but he was taken to Miss Rattray's hospitable mansion, and put into right trim for appearing on the Sabbath. There he took up his abode for the time, preached next day and on the evening of the Wednesday following, when the services had to be conducted by candle-light. He was unanimously chosen, and entered immediately on his work."

"Mr. Duncan," continues the former writer, "preached

first in Persie in 1830, and left in July 1831, being about ten months. He was much liked by the pious, and also by the intelligent, portion of the congregation, but not so well liked by others, as he was rather unsparing in his condemnation of worldly maxims and customs; the morality he inculcated was rather high for some, and on this account they were ready to take advantage of his oddities—to hold him up to ridicule. Mr. Duncan visited very often on his small pony, and from his absence of mind he was frequently misled by the pony taking its own way. He came generally to church at the proper time, or nearly so, as Mr. Chalmers [with whom he lodged] was with him; but when the service would end no one knew.—He was much annoyed and grieved by the carelessness and frivolity of the people. A dancing-school had been started (I copy here partly from another correspondent). Feeling this would be the undoing of his own labours among the young, he endeavoured to persuade the parents to restrain their sons and daughters, but found the young folks too strong for him. Appeals from the pulpit and the Sabbath-school were unavailing. If some were prevailed on to stay away, enough remained to remunerate the dancing-master. As a last resource, Mr. D. waited upon the master, and offered to pay him all the fees due to him if he would

take his leave. But he declined, and he and his pupils enjoyed their triumph over the minister. One evening, however, to the great astonishment of all present, he entered the dancing-room, and stood with his back to the door till the music ceased. The dancers stood still in wonder, but could not have escaped, even if they would. It was but a moment, when Mr. Duncan said, 'Let us pray,' and prayed such a prayer—his back still to the door—that the narrator said 'she felt as if the floor were opening and she sinking through.' All was still, save the one voice. As soon as he closed, he stepped forward, when a rush was made for the door, and the room was left to the master and the minister. They never returned.<sup>1</sup> The shock was never to be forgotten, and the female who related this said she danced no more after that day.—One of his congregation who made a profession of religion having got drunk, Mr. Duncan was informed of it, and went to the man. He tried to excuse himself by saying that so-and-so had compelled him. Next Sabbath Mr. D. gave out for his text, 'Ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink' (Amos ii. 12), and pointed out the persons implicated so personally, that they went to the man about it, and made him

<sup>1</sup> My other informant, however, probably more correct, says that two females remained, who with the young men made out their month with the teacher.



confess that he took the drink willingly. After that he went by the name of the Nazarite. On another occasion he preached from the text, 'Thou shalt not steal,' and gave such a description of the dishonesty of bankruptcy as caused great offence to several who were or had been bankrupts. One day, on his way to the manse, after preaching in a neighbouring parish, he heard the beadle proclaiming with stentorian voice a roup or sale, as was then customary. Mr. Duncan ran back, and standing at the churchyard gate till the beadle was done, he said, 'Stop, I too have an intimation to make.' 'Have ye, man?' said the astonished bellman. 'Yes: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,"' and gave such a lecture on the sin of Sabbath-breaking, that the practice of proclaiming sales, etc., on that day has since then been entirely discontinued there. One day (says another informant), when visiting, he came to a house at some distance from his own residence, and had no sooner entered than the inmates began, with hearty hospitality, to set forth refreshments for the minister. Mr. Duncan sat and looked on, as cakes, butter, cheese, milk, etc., were placed on the table. At last he said, 'O you're kind, very kind, and I appreciate your kindness, but it grieves me to the heart to think that you can be so kind to the servant and keep the Master standing at the door.' The member of the family who told my

informant this, said, thirty years after, 'I never forgot that.' Once he intimated to his congregation that he would meet them an hour sooner, to lecture on the Shorter Catechism. A goodly number came, and the minister commenced with the first question. The hour passes, and he has not got through with describing man's physical structure. Next Sabbath he described his mental powers. I think there was on the Sabbath following a third lecture, and then it was given up:—Question first not half finished. His last service at Persie was held in the open air, the chapel not being able to contain half the people that had gathered on that solemn occasion. He read a number of verses from one of the Epistles (I forget what), but the discourse was the most desultory I ever heard him preach, without reference either to the text or to the circumstances. We were much disappointed. It seemed impossible for him to collect his thoughts. I think he must have been in one of his depressed moods. As to any special good effected by his ministry, I cannot say much; but I cannot think that such faithful preaching, both of the Law and of the Gospel, would remain unblessed. In all his intercourse with the people he showed the greatest sincerity, simplicity, and honesty, a desire for his Master's glory and the good of his fellow-men. His want of method or plan no doubt

impaired his usefulness, here and elsewhere ; but that was his misfortune, not his fault." During the ten months of his stay at Persie he lived under the roof of Robert Chalmers, Esq. of Netherton of Claywhat, a godly gentleman, and very useful in many ways to Mr. Duncan.

I close this stage of his life with a few reminiscences of his ministry there, with which I have been favoured by his successor, Mr. Baxter, now of Blairgowrie :—

"On the Sabbath after he had made the attempt to put down the dancing-school, he preached from Eccles. xi. 9, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.' 'This,' he said, 'is a grand text for young men and young women, and might seem to lay the foundation for a merry life, were it not for what follows : 'But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.'

"Preaching on the Eighth Commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' he said : 'Each of you ought to keep a book in which should appear both your income and your expenditure. If you adopt not a strict scrutiny in this direction, you may be sitting down to a stolen breakfast, and lying down in a stolen bed.'

"Speaking on Hab. iii. 16, 'When I heard, my belly

trembled ; my lips quivered at the voice : rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble,' he said : ' On the final day, when the redeemed are on the right hand, and shall feel that they are in a state of security, there will be a deep and solemn awe upon their spirits when God marches forth in His indignation, and sweeps the wicked into the pit of woe.'

" After reading out the psalm at the commencement of public worship, he sometimes said a few words before it was sung. On giving out the fortieth Psalm—' I waited for the Lord my God. . . . He took me from a fearful pit, And from the miry clay,' etc.,—he said : ' Now, you that are unconverted must be silent ; you cannot sing that psalm.'

" On giving out the fifty-sixth Paraphrase [Scottish Collection], ' How wretched was our former state,' he said : ' The unconverted must put in, ' How wretched is our *present* state.'

" At a diet of examination, where several families were gathered together, he examined a young woman, putting many questions requiring no ordinary intelligence to answer correctly. The young woman answered them all with great readiness and accuracy. Her companions expected Mr. D. would commend her specially for her knowledge. All he said to her was, ' Now, take

heed lest God say at last to you, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee."

"At another diet of examination, he observed a sneering smile on the face of a young man, the son of the farmer in whose house the meeting was held. He took no notice at the time; but when he was going away, he took the young man by the hand and said, 'Young man, I served the devil longer than you have done, and I sometimes think that I was far more faithful to my old master than I have been to my new.'

"One day he had gone up to the top of the hill behind the house where he lived, from which he had a very extensive view; and, to one of his people passing, he said, under the feeling which that view excited, 'What will worldlings think when their god is all in a blaze?'

"On one occasion he was overheard praying in his closet. He was wrestling with God in behalf of his people. He was very importunate, and continued long at the Mercy-seat. He seemed to be arguing with Satan; he saying, 'I shall have them,' and Mr. D. replying with great force and energy, 'You shall not have them.'

"Quoting 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen nor ear heard,' etc., he said: 'Logicians say that we acquire knowledge by sensation and reflection. Divine saving knowledge cannot be revealed by *sensation*, for "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, the things which God hath

prepared for them that love him ;” nor by *reflection*, for they “have not entered into the heart of man.” How, then, is this knowledge to be got? “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” We hear, and read, and ponder the Word ; but beyond all we need the Spirit.’

“Preaching from Eph. v. 17, ‘This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,’ he addressed the unconverted thus : ‘How would you like to be singled out, and have it said of you, “Don’t walk as that man walks”? God is singling you out, and setting you up as a beacon to warn others.’ In that same sermon he said : ‘The best thing that an unconverted man has is his *mind* ; and if his mind is “vain” he is nothing worth.’

“Speaking of God as being infinite in His nature and attributes, he said : ‘I cannot grasp this infinity ; I am not able to comprehend God ; I know but in part. *If I knew Him I would cease to worship Him.* “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?”’

“Speaking in a sermon of the exaltation of human nature through its union with the Divine in the Person of Christ, he exclaimed : ‘*Oh, what a contrast between human nature in the throne and human nature lying drunk in a ditch !*’

"There were a few Independents in the district, who, being far from their own place of worship, attended Persie Chapel. Not a few came also from other parishes at a distance of many miles. At the close of one of the Sabbath services, when Mr. D. had preached with great power and originality, two of these strangers had met—one an Independent, the other a member of the Established Church, and both eminent believers. The latter asked the former, 'What did you think of Mr. Duncan's sermon to-day?' The Independent answered in the words of Prov. xxxi. 29, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but *thou* excellest them all.'"

More than twenty years after this, one of his students reminded him that he had begun his ministry not far from his native place. "O Persie, Persie!" he exclaimed. "Well, Persie gave me a high estimate of the rural mind, as compared with the urban. When I went to Glasgow, the people complained that they didn't understand me, that I preached metaphysics. Now they understood me at Persie—only I had to speak Saxon to them; if I spoke Latin to them they didn't understand. And I came to this conclusion, that the urban mind gives itself up to a vast variety of subjects, but superficially to each; while the rural gives itself to a few, but goes more intensively into them."

## CHAPTER XI.

GLASGOW LECTURESHIP — CALL TO MILTON CHURCH —  
ORDINATION — MARRIAGE — HEBREW CHAIR — DEGREE  
OF LL.D. — APPOINTED MISSIONARY TO THE JEWS —  
DEPARTURE FOR PESTH: 1831-1841.

I HAVE said that Glasgow was linked on to Persie in the chain of providences that directed Mr. Duncan's movements. How that was I will now state. Mr. Hugh Mackay, one of the most estimable men in Glasgow, and a great admirer of Dr. Love's writings, had been much disappointed at having missed hearing Mr. Duncan in Dundee, when a candidate for St. Andrew's Chapel, though in that city at the time. What he heard of the spirituality and depth of his ministrations fastened upon his mind; and being in Dundee again, with his like-minded wife, after Mr. Duncan's settlement at Persie, he got the friend who had spoken so highly of him before to drive him to Persie one Lord's Day. On coming home, his first words were, "My dear, I have been hearing a young Dr. Love." "Have you? Then I must hear him too."



This they did together, and on coming out the one said to the other, "We *must* have that man to Glasgow." But how? Their first thought was to have him brought forward as a candidate for Anderston Chapel, then vacant, and with this view a number of fresh testimonials were made out in his favour and forwarded to the parties concerned. He was accordingly invited to preach as one of two or three candidates, but, as might have been expected, was not the object of the congregation's choice (which fell upon my own brother, Dr. C. Brown).<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Mackay was not to be balked, and his next thought proved more successful. The minister of Duke Street Gaelic Chapel, of which Mr. Mackay was an elder, was in feeble health, nor were his pulpit ministrations quite suited to the strong appetite of his thoughtful Highlanders. Might he not be willing to take Mr. Duncan as his assistant, in the capacity of afternoon lecturer, if the congregation agreed to defray all expenses? The arrangement was cordially gone into by both parties, and Mr. Duncan having left Persie in the end of July,

<sup>1</sup> Knowing his snuff-taking exorbitance, his friends, lest this should cause offence, got him persuaded to take a smelling-bottle in place of it for that occasion. But they little knew that his absence was greater than what they wished to hide. For in the course of the sermon, getting absorbed with his subject, he snuffed up the salts instead of smelling them, and never perceiving his mistake, he went on till he emptied the bottle, which by degrees so sickened him, that it was no wonder his preaching was ineffective.

as I have stated, immediately entered on his duties in Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> His preaching was by no means popular, save with those who hungered for the deeper and richer things of the Bible, and were indifferent to manner if only the matter suited them. With such, and they were a growing few, one service from him (including the prayers as well as the sermon) was worth twenty from any other in Glasgow. In his conversations with Miss R. I find two entries relating to this period—one dated 1864, the other within a fortnight of his death.

*“Saturday, Aug. 6.—Called on Dr. D. He sat down beside me and half-whispered into my ear, ‘I am always sticking at this—at my irregnecy. And I am afraid that I have a disease of the mind, so as I cannot be satisfied with evidence. Oh, it needs heavenly wisdom—and I have it not—not to lay too much stress upon evidence, and not to lay too little. The Gospel does not answer the question, Am I in Christ? It answers all other questions, but it does not answer that one.’*

*“‘I hope you will be able to preach to-morrow.’*

*“‘I don’t know in the least what I am to preach. I have twice stuck—once in the Mariners’ Church,*

<sup>1</sup> I have before me his letter to Mr. Mackay, dated May 31, 1831, consenting, after laying the whole case before God, and stating sensibly his reasons for so doing, to come to Glasgow; but speaking feelingly of his Persie people.

Aberdeen, and once in old St. Luke's Church in 1846. A Mr. C. stuck in St. Luke's in the forenoon, and I stuck in the afternoon.' (Dr. Duncan did not really stick, adds Miss R.) 'Once, when I was assistant to Mr. Clark, of Duke Street, Glasgow, as I came out of the vestry to go into the pulpit, the devil assaulted me with this :—What if it is all lies, and you are deceiving the people? I went back into a closet to pray, but the beadle came after me, and I had to come out. I went up to the pulpit and gave out a psalm, pale and trepid-enough-looking, I dare say. Was not that a predicament to be in? But during the singing of the psalm I said to myself, Well, I have had proof for it before that satisfied me, and I'll preach it till I get as good proof against it. So I got up to pray, and before the prayer was half done the temptation was gone. People greatly mistake about ministers. My preaching was never more evangelical than when I myself was in the most legal state. I learned this from Dr. Cappadose.<sup>1</sup> He was very subject to despondency. People said, O what a happy man he is! And it was true in one way; but he was very desponding. The poor man was in trouble,

<sup>1</sup> One of the most distinguished Israelitish Christians in Holland, now an aged minister of Jesus Christ. He has paid several visits to this country, and has twice at least addressed the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.

and the Lord comforted him, and then he preached the consolation.'

"*Saturday, Feb. 19, 1870.*—I used to be controversial in my preaching, sarcastically so. When I was in Duke Street Gaelic Church, Glasgow, Gaelic being preached in the forenoon, I used to go to hear Dr. Muir of St. James's, and in the afternoon I refuted what he said. He preached Election and Redemption clearly; but there was not a minister in Glasgow who preached Regeneration more slimly. Peace and joy came in some way by believing. F. and some others were very clear about Regeneration. While they did not lay the foundations of Election and Redemption so deeply, they preached much more about the Holy Ghost. Age rubs down a good deal the controversial spirit in a man."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Duncan's friends in Glasgow slowly increased in number, until at length it was resolved that an effort should be made to have him settled there over a congregation of his own. The difficulty, however, was great, as his admirers were neither so many nor so wealthy as to give the least hope of success from their own resources. But, bent upon their object, they at

<sup>1</sup> On Dr. Muir's *style* he adds, by the way, this most true remark, and none was a better judge:—"That man, Dr. Muir, opened his mouth, and out came a torrent of the purest Saxon."

length got the use of the large and commodious school-room of the late Mr. William Munsie, in West Nile Street, where Mr. Duncan conducted regular service every Lord's day to a flock at first very small, but at length so much larger as to cheer his friends with the confident expectation that it would by and by become a full pastoral charge. And they were rewarded with help from an unexpected quarter. A Church-Building Association had been established in Glasgow, through the enterprise and energy of the late Mr. William Collins, publisher, whose object was to have twenty additional churches erected in the city for its ever-growing population; and on Mr. Duncan's adherents agreeing to have their church put down in a necessitous part of the city, to subscribe liberally themselves towards its erection, and to have their congregational work wrought territorially, that Association consented to make to it such a grant as enabled the subscribers to proceed immediately. The site fixed on was in that part of the city called the Cowcaddens (within the Barony parish), whose abundant population consisted almost entirely of the working classes and the tradesmen who supplied them with the necessaries of life. During the erection of this—"Milton"—church the congregation continued to worship in the Nile Street school-room, with the Presbytery's sanction; more and more consolidated, though not large.

At length the ordination of Mr. Duncan was agreed to by the Presbytery. It took place in the Barony parish church on the 28th April 1836—Mr. (now Dr.) Robert Buchanan preaching and presiding on the occasion (as appears from the Presbytery Records, with an extract from which I have been favoured by its clerk, the Rev. Dr. Smith of Cathcart). Dr. Buchanan writes, "I remember the scene of the ordination as vividly as if it had passed before me only a week ago. One thing in particular is stamped upon my memory—the deep humility and manifest emotion with which he made answer to the usual question, 'Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ, and desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the functions of the holy ministry, and not worldly designs and interests?' Instead of simply bowing his head in token of assent, he said slowly, and with a tremulous voice, 'I hope it is so.'"

After the ordination, the Presbytery dined together, and the task of proposing the health of the new minister, and prosperity to his work, as was the practice then, was laid appropriately on the Rev. N. Morren, of the West Church, Greenock—an old Aberdonian, a scholar, and one who as Divinity Librarian had done more than any one else, by his influence over the students, to bring about that change on the Aberdeen Divinity Hall from

immemorial Moderatism to Evangelical views, which afterwards showed itself in a very pronounced form. I refer to this here for the purpose of introducing one of the remarks which Mr. M. made on this occasion, as pithily turned as it was profoundly true. (I give it, with Mr. Duncan's reply, as I received it from my brother, who, as minister of Anderston Chapel, was present on the occasion.) "Mr. Morren, among other things, said : 'The late eminent Mr. Bain, minister of the Gaelic Chapel, Greenock, was once told of some young licentiate, that he had *mastered Calvinism*, "I wish," said he, "that you could rather tell me that Calvinism had mastered *him*."' 'Now,' said Mr. Morren, 'I know no man of whom, more than of Mr. Duncan, it can be truly said that he has mastered Calvinism. But I am very sure of this, that of no man it can be said more truly that Calvinism has mastered him.' Mr. Duncan, in returning thanks, said, among other things : 'I am ashamed to confess that once I declared my belief in the Confession of Faith when I scarcely believed any part of it. This day I have, with my whole heart and with a full faith, declared my belief in it all.'"

Mr. Duncan was introduced to his new pastoral charge, I believe, by Mr. M'Donald of Urquhart, "the apostle of the north;" but as the building of Milton Church was not even begun for some time after that,

the congregation continued to worship in Mr. Munsie's school-room; and it was the testimony of all his best people, his own testimony, and I may here add mine—for I was several times there—that never was his ministry happier and more fruitful than there.

Long before his ordination, Mr. Duncan had formed a marriage engagement with Miss Janet Tower of Aberdeen—the lady to whom allusion has been made (page 225). Her family was much above his, and for various other reasons there seemed to most people an incongruity in his making the proposal, and nothing wonderful in her declining him at first. On this I find the following curious entry in Miss R.'s notes: "*Aug.* 24, 1869.—I asked if it was true that his first wife had made advances to him. 'No, I proposed to her—I had been tutor [to her nephew] in her mother's house—and was refused. Well, I took my refusal. About two years after, a mutual friend wrote to me in Glasgow, asking me if I had no thought now of Miss Tower, for when spoken to about me lately, she had said, 'Oh, I love John Duncan.' On this I proposed again, and was accepted." Those who knew what a change the grace of God had wrought on that lady some years before that, what deep and protracted spiritual distress she went through ere she could venture to hope that



she had passed from death to life, with what absolute devotion she gave herself up to Christ, how under the ministry of Mr. Parker she drank in all that came from him and his clerical associates, and how exclusively she consorted with such as were of her own spirit—will be at no loss to understand how, though shrinking from it at first, this lady found her affections more and more engaged to a man like Mr. Duncan, in spite of his want of outward attractions.<sup>1</sup>

The marriage took place in the first or second month of the year following his ordination, and Mrs. Duncan soon showed how well fitted she was to promote not only her husband's domestic comfort, but his usefulness in the congregation, while in his increased punctuality, tidiness, and general cheerfulness, a considerable improvement began to be observed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may render this more intelligible, and show what sort of helpmeet Mr. D. got in this lady, when I mention that in a bundle of his most sacred repositories—not, like all his other papers, a confused mass of important documents and things utterly worthless, but put up by themselves in a silk bag—I found, in Miss Tower's handwriting, a formal and lengthened consecration of herself to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in soul, body, and estate, for time and eternity, in language both elevated and touching. It is dated so early as "April 1829, Aberdeen." The correspondence too that passed between them prior to the marriage, and here preserved, is eminently worthy of the high views with which she formed this engagement.

<sup>2</sup> What need there was of this, in respect of punctuality and presence of mind, would appear rather too abundantly if I were to relate some of the ludicrous and occasionally most annoying mistakes

On the 10th March 1838 Mrs. Duncan gave birth to a daughter, who was named "Annie," Mr. M'Donald of Urquhart officiating at the baptism.

On his public ministrations in Milton Church for the next four years, when he was formally loosed from his charge, I need not dwell here; as I purpose to issue a volume of his Discourses and Addresses at the Communion Table—some of the most weighty and striking of which were delivered while in Milton Church. These will sufficiently speak for themselves. But I have been favoured with some reminiscences of this period, which I believe will be acceptable to the reader.

"In our Establishment days," writes the Rev. William Alexander of Duntocher, Dumbartonshire, "when he was minister of Milton Church, he sometimes came

which he committed. Once and again, when in such a place as Greenock, at whose quay steamers lay almost every hour—some on their way down, others up the Clyde—he would take the wrong steamer, and plunge into some book below stairs, and on the boat stopping would ask if they had got to Glasgow (where, perhaps, he had to preach at a given hour). "Glasgow, Sir? You're at Rothesay!" But he would take this quite coolly, and just put his foot in the next boat to Glasgow. It has been repeatedly said—I know not with what truth, though I think it not incredible—that having on one occasion to dine out, he went to his bedroom to dress, but after taking off part of his clothes, in a dark winter afternoon—supposing it night—he went to bed. But like all such stories, even when true, that get magnified by repetition, it has actually been said once and again that this took place on occasion of his marriage. Now that I know to be false, and this makes me think that very possibly the whole may be a myth.

down and stayed a night with me. These visits I enjoyed greatly. On one of these visits, when I had been reading Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, our conversation turned to the writings of the men who immediately succeeded the apostles. I remarked how meagre was their theology, and what a want of bone and muscle there was in it when compared with that of Augustine, and of Luther and Calvin, and that also of more modern theologians; and I asked him how he accounted for this. He advanced various reasons, the discussion of which occupied the whole night. Round the table, and round the table he walked for hours, propounding reason after reason, but none of them seeming satisfactory to his own mind. At length five o'clock in the morning came, and I got him persuaded to go to bed. But in less than ten minutes, and while I was yet musing on the subject of our conversation, he made his appearance again, half-undressed, and said, 'I have found the reason now. Though these men were but poor theologians comparatively, they were burning and shining lights; though they could but poorly write for Christ, they could fearlessly burn for Christ; and in that day Christ had more need of men who could *burn* in defence of His cause, than for men who could *only write* in defence of it. Now, Sir,' he added, 'will you not excuse me for thus troubling you

at this unseasonable hour, seeing I have found out so admirable a reason for the comparative poverty of these men's theology?' I need not say that I not only excused him but thanked him, and cordially thanked him, for troubling me." This, by the way, would seem to be the first time that that striking thought had occurred to him; but it certainly was not the last. He often repeated it, and sometimes with a certain raciness, thus: "O the Fathers, dear men, they were poor theologians, but they were *excellent for burning!*"

"On the occasion of another visit," continues Mr. Alexander, "our subject of conversation happened to be the unreasonableness of Infidelity, and from that we passed to the equally unreasonable doctrine of Socinianism. I remarked that to me a Socinian appeared to be both utterly and wilfully blind—the evidence for the divinity of Christ being so clear, strong, and palpable, and the need for the Atonement so indispensable. 'Well,' he replied, 'all you say is quite true; nevertheless I was once a Socinian myself; and I had the uttermost difficulty, not so much in parting with my Socinian opinions, as in accepting the doctrine and fact of Christ's divinity. I renounced the former without a pang, but I embraced the latter at the expense of a revolution in my natural heart—it revolutionized me.' He then detailed to me the process by

which he arrived at a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and concluded by saying, 'And therefore I say, that to believe in the Incarnation is to be a Christian.'<sup>1</sup>

"In illustration of his well-known absence of mind I may mention the following incident. On the Fast-day of my November Communion, he and Mr. Somerville of Glasgow preached for me on one occasion. Mr. S. preached in the forenoon; and the arrangement was, that both of them should leave immediately after the afternoon service, and catch the four o'clock steamer for Glasgow at Dalmuir Ferry. The service, it was agreed, should close at twenty minutes to four at latest—twenty minutes being required to reach the ferry in time. Well, worship begins, the sermon goes on—and a striking sermon it was, from the text, 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins'—3.40 P.M. comes, but no signs of stopping. Mr. S. gets uneasy, rises from his seat, whispers to me 'I *must* go,' glides out of the church, and hurries to the steamer. Dr. Duncan, absorbed in his sermon, and wholly unaware of Mr. Somerville's disappearance, continued to

<sup>1</sup> Compare 1 Cor. xii. 3, and 1 John iv. 23. This opinion he expressed once and again in varied forms. For example, to Mr. M. (see next page) he said, "I am disposed to think that no man can truly believe in the Divine origin of Christianity unless he be himself a real Christian."

preach till four o'clock. When the service was over, he fell a-discoursing on the subject of his sermon, went away home to dinner—for I had a design to keep him with me all night—and it was only after we began to dine that his obliviousness was arrested, and then all at once he exclaimed, 'But where is Mr. Somerville?'

"We had hare-soup that day to dinner; but he would not taste it, quoting Acts xv. 20, 'But that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and *from blood*.' I pressed him, saying it was very good; but no, 'For,' said he, 'if I did eat, my conscience would be defiled.'" This prejudice against the eating of blood (in spite of Acts x.) Mr. Duncan retained to his dying day.

The Rev. Gordon Mitchell, minister of the parish of Kilmadock, near Stirling, writes me as follows:—"The year after he was appointed to Milton Church he got me appointed as missionary in the district.<sup>1</sup> I had much intercourse with him for the six months I continued there, and much regret my not having kept notes of his conversations. When I was passing the Presbytery of Glasgow, as a licentiate within the bounds, after the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. M., himself an Aberdonian (brother of Dr. Murray Mitchell, the eminent Indian missionary of the Free Church), had been well acquainted with Mr. Duncan in Aberdeen.

trial discourse, when it came to him to express his opinion, he rose and said, 'Moderator, I was hearing for eternity,' and then sat down. A good many students attended his ministry at Milton Church. I did not hear him often, as I was generally officiating elsewhere. But on one occasion, when exhorting his hearers to believe, he spoke thus : ' You say we cannot believe. I am glad you feel your inability. You cannot believe till you feel it.'

" He kindly introduced me at Kilmadock, 17th June 1838. At the Communion, next year, he preached on Saturday from Ps. xc. 14, ' O satisfy us early with Thy mercy,' and speaking on the Incarnation, he said, ' A Brother's heart beats upon the throne. He who now sits on the throne of the universe was once a helpless Infant on His mother's breast.'

" I think he preferred the expression '*efficacious* grace' to '*irresistible* grace.'"

The Rev. Hugh Jaffrey, of Holytown Free Church (Presbytery of Hamilton), had occasion to meet with Mr. Duncan frequently ere he entered on the study of divinity, and occasionally attended on his ministry in Mr. Munsie's school-room. He was much struck with the combination of original thinking and simplicity of expression which his preaching displayed, and no instructor attended more (to use Mr. D.'s own words) to

the proper connexion between the logical conception and the grammatical expression. "A gentleman," says Mr. J., "somewhat sceptical, but very acute, after hearing a sermon from Mr. D. on the union of the Divine and Human natures in the one Person of Christ (*Ἐκεῖνος*), was so struck with the argument, that he pronounced the preacher one of the ablest of dialecticians."

"Mr. Duncan," writes an esteemed and intelligent lady, once well known in Glasgow, "often spent evenings with us, but I fear his eccentricities made more impression upon us than his conversation. If we had any friend with us who could talk with him on philosophy, etc., the subject got far above our heads; and as Mr. D. generally sat at our round table with his back to the fire, my anxiety and attention were absorbed to keep him and his chair out of the fire. In the eagerness of the argument, he would hitch backward to the very edge of the fender, and I would have to rise and say, 'Allow me, Mr. Duncan, to put your chair forward, or you will get into the fire.' He passively allowed me to bring it again to its place, but as often as the debate waxed warm I had to repeat the warning and replace the chair. In such debates he forgot time, and I had often myself to break up our company, and for fear of accident (as there was building going on at the top of



our street, and Mr. D. might turn the wrong way), I had to send my brother home with him. On one occasion, after a conversation, he was strangely absent. My presence seemed to float into an abstract idea, and, without thinking I was sitting beside him, he began to define the characteristics of the sexes, beginning thus : ‘ Woman, emotional—man, intellectual ; not that man has no emotion, and woman no intellect, but,’ etc. etc. I was too much amused to remember more.”

My next extracts are connected with a mournful event—the death of Mrs. Duncan. She had interested herself in providing funds for supplying coals to the poor people of the district connected with Milton Church during a severe season ; and not contented with succeeding in this, she superintended the distribution of them ; and one day, when near the period of her confinement, she hung about on foot till fatigue brought on premature confinement, under which she sank in the spring of 1839. The following is nearly the whole of a letter which Mr. Duncan wrote on that occasion to Mrs. Booth (the stepmother to whom he owed so much in early life, and to whom he ever looked up with reverence and affection) and her second husband, on that occasion :—

“ You are acquainted, beloved parents, with the afflic-

tion wherewith it hath pleased the Lord (whose holy name be ever adored) to visit me, by the removal of my dearest wife and infant child. You were not altogether ignorant what a treasure I possessed in that excellent woman, whom the Lord gave for a short space into my bosom, and hath now taken to be with Him where He is, to behold His glory. Her worth was far more than I was able, or indèed duly careful, to appreciate, though daily receiving good at her hand, and having daily set before me, without any obtrusive display, the bright example of her humble faith in the Redeemer, manifesting itself in very close adherence to Him; her prayerfulness, prudence, meekness, gentleness, and chaste conversation, coupled with fear. Her worth was, I may say, just beginning to be appreciated among us, especially by those who love and fear the Lord. She was beginning to enter with warmest zeal, notwithstanding of her diffidence, which led her to shrink from the public gaze, into plans of extensive usefulness to my poor parish, both in respect of its spiritual and temporal interests, when it pleased Him, who will carry on His own good work in His own best and wisest way, to come into His garden here and gather this lily,<sup>1</sup> and transplant it to the celestial garden. Our anticipations were otherwise, but He ever doeth all

<sup>1</sup> Cant. vi. 2.

things *well*—how *very well* we shall not know till the light of glory breaks upon us in all its effulgence, and displays to us His excellence in working, which yet we can here, by the light of His Word, and the grace of His Spirit, believe and adore.

“The pangs of premature labour came upon her. A beautiful female child entered the world with a *sigh*, breathed (and scarcely breathed) once or twice the atmosphere of this sin-polluted world, and hastened to appear before God—the faithful God, who keepeth covenant for ever. In His hands I have left her, seeking to cherish through life the humble hope of meeting her among the blood-bought and blood-washed on the right hand of the Saviour and Judge, conscious of and desiring to be deeply humbled on account of my own (I hope not entire) neglect on her behalf. I am comforted by the thought that (I doubt not) her now glorified mother did with frequent earnestness commend her, even yet unborn, to the God of Abraham, according to whose promises those who are *in Christ* are heirs. The mother, during the week she remained here afterwards, could speak but little; but her faith shone forth in the wonderful patience to which she was strengthened. I have few death-bed sayings to relate; but living deeds speak more clearly. She died as she lived, depending, as a *lost* one, solely on Him

who came to seek and to save *the lost*. His Person, glory, grace, incarnation, obedience, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession ; the Gospel, with its free invitations and promise of the Spirit to make them effectual—*there, there only*, lay all her hope.”

Among Mr. Duncan’s papers I have found what seems a meditation penned on the birth of his first child, and along with it some forty lines of poetry, in a high Miltonic vein, on a recurrence of this child’s birth-day, but evidently after his second marriage. The former I might have omitted ; but as the latter paper refers in a touching way to the death both of her mother and of her new-born sister, with an allusion at the end to his daughter by the second marriage, I have given them both in a foot-note—more especially as the latter is in a lofty strain, and has some fine touches.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “A birth-day ! A new and welcome guest to Adam’s honoured family ! Gen. i. 26, 27 : ‘And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion. So God created man in *His own image*, in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them. And God *blessed* them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.’ A new inhabitant of God’s earth, another creature bearing God’s image, and sharing joyfully in the sunshine of His blessing. A new phasis and form of holy, happy humanity ; not issuing, indeed, from the Creator’s hands, like the first father, in the unfolded perfection of adult completeness, but innocent and holy, and possessing all the capabilities by which, under the Creator’s blessing on the parental nurture, this child of ‘Adam, the son of God’ (Luke iii. 38), shall ‘grow in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man.’

Mrs. Duncan's niece had gone to Glasgow on a visit to her aunt, and remained, at Mr. D.'s particular request, till long after her death; and Mrs. R., wife of

Ah! no. It should have been, it would have been, but it was not. It is the birth-day of Cain. 'I have gotten a man from the Lord,' cries honoured Eve, the venerable mother of us all. But alas! Adam had begotten a son *in his own* likeness—not in the image of God, which he had already lost, but in his own as fallen, fallen from God, from holiness and bliss (though, I doubt not, he was personally restored by grace). Oh, it is a sad thing, the birth of a rational, accountable, immortal being in sin and under the curse. Bitterly, surely, did our father and mother weep: 'Alas! alas! in disobeying and forsaking our God we have involved our unconscious babe, our dear child, and children's children—the whole "replenishing" of earth—in our guilt and woe!'"

The poetry (written on a leaf nearly half-covered with *Armenian* characters! with two or three lines unfilled up, one or two erased, and their substitutes inserted crosswise) is evidently just as it was first penned, indicating, however, no little poetic inspiration:—

" Daughter, first-born, and child of her who oft  
 (Ere your arrival to our happy home  
 Added new joy), expectant, bowed the knee,  
 And raised the heart, sin-burdened, grace-sustained,  
 To Him, the twice Creator, who from out the womb  
 Of nothing called us forth to life,  
 To holiness and bliss; and who, when sin  
 Had made us worse than nothing, sent His Son,  
 The Life Eternal, who through death destroyed  
 Death, and, uplifted, pours the Spirit forth,  
 Who new-creates the lost, redeemed to God!  
 What shall thy father, erst so bounteously  
 Enriched with double loan, reclaimed now  
 By the great Donor, say to thee who shar'st

Now when another of the swift-passed years  
 Has brought thee nearer to the great white throne,

the Free Church minister of Dunipace (near Stirling), having been invited to Mr. Duncan's, while yet unmarried, there to visit this lady (her old schoolfellow), arrived after Mrs. Duncan's fatal illness came on, all ignorant

Shall come to guide His purchase through the vale  
Home to the Father's house—home, home, sweet home !

His loss ? O may'st thou also share the hope  
Which, self-condemned and trembling, he is helped  
To cherish, that the Lamb who once was slain,  
And lives for ever on His Father's throne,  
Will, having washed him in His precious blood,  
Make him meet dweller of that blissful house,  
Where He who sent, and He who came, and they  
Who, Spirit-drawn, as lost, have come to Him  
From sin, and Satan, and the world which lies  
In their hard bondage thrall'd, shall ever dwell  
In the absorbing life beyond the bounds  
Of Death's demolished empire ! Saints there see  
Their God ; in nightless day unwearied serve,  
Around the Living One, who once was dead,  
Clust'ring through ceaseless ages, quaff fresh streams  
From the perennial fountains, while, beloved  
And loving all, they fully dwell in God  
And God in them. O daughter ! ere mine eyes  
Be closed to earthly scenes, may they behold  
The happy day when to this blessed hope  
Thou art begot again ; that as to thee  
A sad inheritance I did transmit, reward,  
So He, my Life, were *thine*, and *hers* who shares  
With thee a daughter's name,<sup>1</sup> then welcome death,  
Soon as the Shepherd with His rod and staff

. . . . ."

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<sup>1</sup> An allusion, doubtless, to his daughter by the second marriage—now Mrs. Spaeth, wife of the Rev. Adolph Spaeth, of Philadelphia.

of the state of things (the letter sent to stop her not having reached her in time). Mrs. D. however insisted she should stay, and the morning after she arrived the birth and death of the infant took place. "At worship," writes Mrs. R., "Mr. Duncan read 2 Sam. xii., and when he came to the words, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me' (ver. 23), he burst into tears and could not go on. He used to say if he had a son he would call him César Malan, but all his children were girls. We had hope after this that Mrs. Duncan would recover, but her complaint returned, and in a few days she sank. She seemed in great distress the day she died, but the doctor thought she was quite unconscious. Mr. D. wandered in and out of the room, constantly repeating passages of Scripture, and praying often. Once, I remember, he quoted 'Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty,' when he went out weeping, saying 'Your eyes shall soon see Him, dearie.' Next day, however, he would not say he was *sure* she was in heaven. Though there are few Christians so devoted and consistent as she was, as he well knew, he would not go further than that he had good hope of it. The doctor asked him next morning how he had passed the night. He said he had slept quite soundly.<sup>1</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> Probably he never lost a night's sleep till near the time of his death, if even then.—(See bottom of page 85, and top of page 86.)

stayed about seven weeks at that time, and made one or two shorter visits in that and the following year.

“ I had heard a great deal about his oddity and absence of mind, but found it much less than I expected. However, I believe I saw him when he was freest from these peculiarities. We used to ask him about a number of the stories that were told of him, but he said most of them were untrue. Once I saw him, in earnest conversation with a Jew, go out without his hat, and walk up and down the street for a while ; but I don't remember anything more of that kind. We used to say to him he always remembered an engagement he wanted to keep. He had induced a man, for example, to commence worship in his family, and went himself the first night to begin it. He did not forget *such* an engagement. His habits were very irregular as to rising in the mornings, meals, etc. He had no special place for studying, but had his books in all the rooms. I never saw him *very angry* but once, when his niece had dusted his books and put them in some order. He marched through the house, declaring he would rather dwell in a wilderness than have his books touched. He usually spoke very little during the day, but walked about the house with a book in his hand, apparently quite absorbed ; yet it was not safe to trust to this, as we soon found out. Sometimes we talked together, thinking he



was quite engrossed, when he would break in, showing he had heard everything. He was very noticing as to behaviour, dress, etc., which many, I think, would never have imagined. To us girls he often gave very sensible advice. I remember him saying to us, 'When you meet with gentlemen in society, just speak and act to them as frankly and unconsciously as you would to ladies.' He told us once, that a young minister had spoken to him of his difficulties with a class of young ladies—it was so large. 'I advised him just to marry, his class would soon be reduced.' He read *every kind* of book, however trifling. If we got any story-book, we were sure to miss it immediately. Once at Dunoon we got a book, *Will Watch*. He took it to his bedroom at night, and told us in the morning he had read the three vols. before going to sleep. He used to waken up about nine o'clock at night, and then he would talk freely. He seemed to enjoy supper more than any other meal. Sometimes he was full of mirth, and would say, 'Let us see who will tell the merriest story.' One moonlight night, after ten o'clock, he proposed we should go a walk to Kelvin Grove, which we were delighted to do. We returned home very late, and he seemed to enjoy it greatly. Sometimes he read aloud to us. I remember especially (The Honourable Robert) Boyle's *Seraphic Love*, and

Dr. M'Crie's Sermons, for both of which he expressed great admiration. What I enjoyed most was his long conversations on theological subjects; I should rather call them discourses, for I had only to put a few questions, or make objections [the latter always the most successful in drawing him out], and he would talk for hours apparently with as great interest and anxiety to make his meaning clear, as if he had been addressing a whole class of students. I have never since heard such deep subjects explained so clearly, though he was sometimes extreme. One night in particular, I remember, he wanted to convince me that a Christian should have such a regard for the glory of God as to be willing to be lost if His glory would be promoted thereby. I thought it an impossible case. He quoted Jonathan Edwards (*who he thought had the greatest intellect since Aristotle*), and told the story of the man whose son had died in open defiance of God, saying, 'Now, my son is condemned, God is glorified, and I am satisfied.' It was very late when I went away that night, and soon after I had gone to my room some one tapped at the door. It was Mr. Duncan—evidently afraid I should be discouraged—to say that though I could not see this, many real Christians had that spirit, though they did not know it themselves.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Though Dr. Duncan's cast of theology remained unchanged to the

Another night he spoke of his conversion. He mentioned the streets of Aberdeen through which he went, and how he could not walk, but ran and leaped for joy, for this one thing, that *the Bible was true*, and his eye lighted up with joy, saying, one thing in the world yet made him glad, that 'the glory of the Lord would continue for ever, that the Lord would rejoice in His works.'<sup>1</sup> I had heard that his sermons were very unequal; but his preaching at that time was admirable. He advised me to go and hear other ministers in Glasgow, but I never liked to leave, even once. On Friday night, before the Communion, he preached on John xi. 44—'Loose him, and let him go'—for nearly two hours, and many who were there could have listened for hours longer. Christ *alone*, he said, gave spiritual life. He called Lazarus Himself, 'Come forth!' But after conversion, His people had often grave-clothes about them—these he employed His servants to take away. And he enlarged on the grave-clothes that were (1.) on the Understanding, (2.) on the Will, (3.) on the Affections. Once he preached on

end, his way of looking at such points as the above was much mellowed by time, and I am not aware of any other occasion on which he so expressed himself.—(See top of page 193, and note.)

<sup>1</sup> This seems to refer to the period when Mr. Duncan was first brought out of atheism under Dr. Mearns (p. 76), rather than to the feelings which sprang up immediately on the great change.

Sabbath evening in the Seamen's Chapel, in quite a different style from what I ever heard him before (from Exod. xv. 16, 17), very practical and much more popular. When we spoke to him about it he said he was too tired to preach a sermon with any thought in it. I think it was at the same time that he said he could never preach about hell—he would turn sick if he did. He had a class of young ladies to teach them Hebrew. He made it very simple and interesting. His fee for attendance was to be, that each one who was taught should teach another person Hebrew."

There were two or three Courses of Lectures delivered in Glasgow during Mr. Duncan's ministry there, by ministers of the Established Church. In two of these courses Mr. D. took his share. One of them was "On Protestantism," with special reference to the Romish controversy, and the fifth was assigned to Mr. Duncan—on the differences between the Scripture Doctrine of Justification and Sanctification (particularly the latter) and that of the Church of Rome. Mr. Duncan, as usual, put off the preparation, at least the writing, of this Lecture to the last; and he had to get a friend to write it to his dictation the evening before.<sup>1</sup> He read

<sup>1</sup> There was however a better excuse for this in the present than in any other case, for it had to be delivered on the eve of his marriage, and his letters to his intended show with what difficulty the two engagements were kept from clashing.

it, I learn, just as it had been taken down from his lips. As it lies before me in its printed form, with Latin notes and with references, it is probably fuller than as delivered; at least it bears marks of careful revision. On that lecture I need say nothing here, as it will appear in the volume of his Discourses, etc., afterwards to be issued. But this I may say, that as there was no more effectual way of getting him to speak his whole mind on any subject of importance than rousing his *pugnacity* (see page 170), so the Romish denial of all right to assurance of personal salvation in this life has *provoked* him in the end of this Lecture to say some wholesome things on that subject, which he was too apt virtually to *unsay* in dealing with his fellow-Protestants—and with his own case.

He took also one of a Course of Sermons on the Ten Commandments—his one being on the Third Commandment.<sup>1</sup> The last Course of Lectures in which he took part was on “The Conversion of the Jews;” his one being on “The Work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Conversion of the Jews” (published by Messrs. Collins, 1839). It is a noble Lecture, into which he has thrown much of the enthusiasm which

<sup>1</sup> The whole of these, in their printed form (1837), are before me, and I may give Mr. D.’s one in the forthcoming volume.

that subject was wont to kindle in the Addresses on "the Jewish Evening" which he delivered in the General Assembly of his Church when he happened to be a member. He puts into it as much of his Jewish learning as was admissible in a public lecture, and gives in foot-notes explanations of all his Rabbinical allusions.<sup>1</sup>

I have now reached one of the most important events in Mr. Duncan's life, inasmuch as, though issuing immediately in nothing, it led to his appointment to be the first ordained missionary of the Church of Scotland to the Jews, and, in consequence more immediately of the eminent position which he acquired in that field, to his appointment to the Hebrew Chair in the New College, Edinburgh.

Though Scottish Christians had for a number of years taken a growing interest in the Conversion of the Jews, it was not until the year 1837 that a Committee of the Church of Scotland was appointed specially for this object. In the following year two Sub-Committees were appointed, one to sit in Edinburgh and the other in Glasgow, "for more effectively carrying out the objects of the Church" in this matter. The Glasgow section—with one of whose members the whole move-

<sup>1</sup> This Lecture will be inserted in the volume referred to.

ment originated—was particularly active, holding frequent meetings, and taking important steps towards obtaining the requisite information for future guidance. To this Sub-Committee Mr. Duncan's name was added; and thus was he drawn into that atmosphere which had long been so congenial to him, the issue of which was a formal offer of his services, about the middle of the year 1839, to be employed as an agent of the Church, either at home or abroad, for the promotion of Christianity among the Jews. This offer was cordially accepted; and as the Rev. Dr. M'Caul—long an agent of the London Jews' Society on the European continent, and afterwards Professor of Divinity in King's College, London—was known as the most eminent Hebrew and Rabbinical scholar in England, it was resolved (at his own suggestion, I believe) that Mr. Duncan should be sent to consult with him on this subject, particularly as to the fittest course of training in Oriental Literature and Divinity for such students as might offer themselves as missionaries to the Jews. What impression Dr. M'Caul formed of Mr. D.'s attainments will presently appear.

Scarcely, however, had Mr. Duncan begun his special studies for this new work, when on the 10th October a vacancy occurred in the Hebrew Chair of the University of Glasgow, by the removal of its Professor to

the Chair of Moral Philosophy. On the 31st of that month, at a meeting of the Glasgow Sub-Committee, Mr. Duncan read a statement soliciting the mind of the Committee, whether, after his services had been accepted by them, there would be any impropriety in his now offering himself as a candidate for the Chair of Oriental Languages in the University of Glasgow, and whether the Committee would grant him permission to do so. On the 4th November, the whole Glasgow Committee being met to consider this statement, it was resolved that, "highly appreciating the conscientious delicacy which has prompted the inquiry, they unanimously determine that so far from there being any inconsistency between Mr. Duncan's engagement with the Committee and his present application, his appointment to such a Chair would, under the Divine blessing, tend greatly to advance the interests of the Jewish cause," etc.

Accordingly, steps were immediately taken to procure a few testimonials of his qualifications for this post. But knowing scarcely one qualified to bear the necessary testimony, Mr. Duncan resolved on the bold step of being his own witness—of giving in his own certificate. For this purpose he prepared the draft of a letter to the University authorities, with whom the appointment lay; and as I happened to be in Glasgow at the time, he requested me to revise and put it into



proper shape for him. And it had need; for it was long-winded and ill put together. But I did not venture to meddle with the substance, nor even the unique form of it. It would have astonished and amused any one who did not know that most marked feature in his character, his *consciousness of power* in whatever department of knowledge he had mastered—whether Languages, Philosophy, Theology, or even General Literature—to hear how, humble though he was and eminently modest, he could dilate on his attainments, his superiority to all he knew in *this*, to all but one or possibly two in *that*, and so on. After several hours spent over this draft—interrupted every now and then by amusing though rather tedious dissertations on the basis, for example, of that composite language, the *Maltese*, and the successive agglomerations it had received from the influx of different elements of population—with all which he would have loaded his letter, had he not been persuaded at length that it would ruin it—it was put into its final shape, and, with a few testimonials, sent to the Principal. It is too characteristic not to be given entire, with the accompanying note to the Principal:<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> I have the documents before me, in the form of a printed pamphlet, entitled "Statement, with Probatory Documents, for the Rev. John Duncan, A.M., Milton Church, Glasgow, as a Candidate for the Professorship of Oriental Languages in the University of Glasgow. 1839."

*"To the Very Reverend Duncan M'Farlan, D.D., Principal of the University of Glasgow.*

*"GLASGOW, 7th November 1839.*

"INDUCED by desire to promote the glory of God, the good of the Church of which I have the honour to be a Minister, the welfare of the house of Israel, and the interests of Eastern Learning, I take the liberty of offering myself as a Candidate for the Chair of Oriental Languages in the University of Glasgow. Assured that these interests are dear to the Electors, if I fail, I shall be cheered by the consideration that Sparta has found a better man. If honoured by the choice of the Faculties, I shall strive to evince my gratitude by constant remembrance of the adage, 'Spartam, quam nactus es, orna.'

"I am, Very Reverend Sir, your most obedient Servant,  
"JOHN DUNCAN."

*"To the Right Honourable Sir James Graham, Bart., M.P., Lord Rector, The Dean of Faculty, The Very Reverend the Principal, and the Professors of the Faculties, of the University of Glasgow.*

"HAVING been induced, upon public grounds, stated in my letter of application to the Very Rev. the Principal, to offer myself as a Candidate for the Chair of Oriental Languages in the University of Glasgow, and being placed in the somewhat untoward situation of a person who feels more conscious of fitness to grant certificates, than cognisant of individuals from whom it would beseem him to receive, I adventure—not unaware how little is in ordinary circumstances held due to one's testimony concerning himself—to submit the following PROFESSION of acquirements in the department of Oriental learning.

"For upwards of fifteen years I have been a daily and delighted student of the Hebrew Bible, and during the last twelve I have contracted a pretty intimate acquaintance

with the principal Rabbinical writers. I think I might adventure to read according to the points from an unpointed Bible, *ad aperturam libri*—to translate, parse, and assign the reason (not the mere technical reason, but the rationale) of the points which I employ—to read, or at least write, from the English version of the historical books into Hebrew at the moment.

"I am acquainted not only with the best ancient and modern Christian grammarians, as Buxtorf, Mercer, De Dieu, Leusden, Hottinger, Schultens, Michaëlis, Gesenius, Winer, Ewald, Lee, Stuart, Nordheimer, etc., but also with those Jews who have written on Hebrew grammar in the Hebrew language, as Aben-Ezra, Rabbi David Kimchi, and Judah Ben-Zew.

"In Chaldee I am acquainted not only with the few passages which occur in the Bible, but also with the Targums of Onkelos, the Yerushalmi, and that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel.

"Of Jewish commentators on Scripture with whom I am acquainted, besides ABEN-EZRA and ABARBANEL, I may mention R. DAVID KIMCHI, a favourite with Christians for his close adherence to, and (for a Jew) clear exposition of, the letter; RASHI (R. Solomon Yarchi), who is idolised by the Jews, who see nothing of the text but through the spectacles of his bitter, bigoted commentary; and *Yalkut Shimoni*, which is a congeries of all the odd, whimsical, superstitious, and (but that one who trembles at God's Word cannot but be grieved) the amusing stuff which constitutes the material of the *Midrash*, or metaphorical, and, in their blind eyes, exalted and spiritual illustration.

"Of Law Books, I may mention only the *Mishnah*, or text of the Talmud, with certain parts of the *Gemāra*, or extended commentary upon it; and with leisure, and the aid of Rashi's commentary, I feel it within my grasp to master all the difficulties of the latter, which forms by far the most abstruse part of Jewish learning, not only from the language, a very mixed Aramean (Chaldee), but principally from the subject, as a code of laws more difficult to

be mastered than the Justinian Institutes, Pandects, and Novels of the Roman jurisprudence, or all the mysteries of English law.

"As works subordinate to Talmudical Law, I may mention only the *Yad Chazakah* of RAMBAM (R. Moses bar Maimon, or Maimonides), a copious, well-arranged, and perspicuous digest of the principles of Judaism; and the *Arba Turim* (four orders or ranks), which, as being more compendious, forms the every-day manual of the Jews.

"I pass over controversial writers (as R. Joseph Albo, author of *Sepher Ikkarim*—the author of the Book of Cosri, with 2d part by Nieto); metaphysical scholastics (as Maimonides in his *Moreh Nevôchim*, Doctor Dubitantium); and writers in the department of the Belles Lettres (as the author of *Bechnath Olam*, the elegant Luzattos, and my friend Hoga, the translator into Hebrew of Pope's Messiah; and of M'Caul's Old Paths); historians, chronologists, and a long catalogue of *et ceteras*.

"Of Cognate dialects, I may mention the Syriac Bible, —New Testament *ad aperturam libri*; in Arabic, the Bible, Corān, and several other books.

"Other Oriental languages, not Cognate, would be of great importance to persons going to the East as Missionaries either to Jews or Gentiles, as well as in other capacities.

"In Persian I read a long time ago a good deal, especially the *Gulistān* of Saadi.

"In Sanscrit I have studied the Grammars of Wilkins and of Bopp, and have read portions of the New Testament (version of the Serampore Missionaries), and Nalus, an episode from the Poem Maha-Bharata, edited by Bopp. This language is very interesting, not only as the oldest existing Japhetic speech, casting a flood of light on the etymology and grammar of the Greek, Latin, Teutonic, etc., but also as being the parent of most of the modern languages of India which stand related to it, as those of the south of Europe do to Latin—circumstances these which seem destined to give, in course of time, to Sanscrit

the place due to it in a full curriculum of classical education.

"In Bengali I have read the Gospel according to Matthew; in Hindōstāni the Gospels, and some other books. I have looked into the Gospels in Mahratti and other Indian dialects, and find the staple of the language to be Sanscrit.

"In conclusion, with the exception of Cabbalistic works, which are exceedingly abstruse, and require deep study, I profess *all Hebrew*; and I would most willingly present myself, along with any other, for comparative examination, by any man throughout the world, whether Christian or Jew.

JOHN DUNCAN."

Of the testimonials I will notice only two. The one from Dr. Mc'Cauley is not properly a testimonial at all—but the more valuable on that account—consisting of a letter to Mr. Duncan before the Hebrew Chair became vacant, containing, at his request, a scheme of study for aspirants to mission work among the Jews; in the course of which he says, "Your own acquaintance with Hebrew Rabbinical and Jewish Literature, of which I have had abundant and satisfactory proof in our late interviews, will enable you to fill up the outline," etc. The other testimonial I notice is a highly amusing Hebrew one, which was given in, "with a literal translation" by Mr. Duncan himself. After speaking in that swelling style not unusual with such Jews, of the "many disciples of the Hebrew language, the tongue of Holiness," that he had had, including "so many Ministers and Professors," "every one of whom found

me a hundred degrees above their learning, as they have testified of themselves," but who cared only for the merest smattering in this tongue, he adds, "But not so my beloved, the trustworthy, whom I have found in this city, and by his letter of salutations to me in the holy language, signed himself Jochanan Duncan. And I have taught and I have read with him so many times in so many books, Mishna, and Gemara, and Aggadah, and also in Yalkut; and I have seen him understanding the interpretation of the words well, and also understanding of his own knowledge (*ex propria scientiâ*). This is the man in whom I delight. The whole are the words of Judah Aryeh (Lion) ben Jacob."

The present excellent occupant of the Hebrew Chair in the Glasgow University—the Rev. Dr. Weir—in a note with which he has favoured me, says, "Mr. Gray of Maybole was elected, on the 22d November, by a majority of six to five. The name of the unsuccessful candidate is not given in the minutes, and I do not know whether it was Dr. Duncan or not. There were seven candidates in all."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Weir has been good enough to add the following characteristic reminiscence of Mr. D.:—"When I was a boy, I remember hearing Mr. Duncan (he then was) preaching on a Communion Monday, for Mr. Angus M'Bean of the Greenock Gaelic Church. He was more than an hour late for the service, having allowed the

Unsuccessful, however, as Mr. Duncan was in this case, it was the means of bringing him into notice so remarkably, that in the following year, 1840, his *Alma Mater*—the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen—conferred on him the degree of LL.D., as probably a more suitable mark of respect for his linguistic attainments than the only other degree which it is in the power of a Scottish University to confer in such a case—that of D.D.<sup>1</sup>

The public interest in the Conversion of the Jews was greatly awakened by the appointment, early in 1839—at Mr. (now Dr.) Candlish's suggestion—of a Deputation to visit the Continent for the purpose of collecting information respecting the Jews. This Depu-

steamer to carry him on to Dunoon, and another minister had done duty for him, nevertheless when he arrived he got into the pulpit, and much to my annoyance (for I had made an appointment for an afternoon's game with some companions) began and went on with his sermon. I still remember the text. It was Isa. lvii. 21 : 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' In my state of indignation (for I thought I did well to be angry) I was not likely to get much good from the sermon. But one thing I recollect, and it illustrates Dr. D.'s turn for minute criticism. Part of the sermon (it seemed to me a terribly long part) was taken up with the discussion of the question, whether or not there should be a comma after the words 'saith my God.' How he decided the point I really don't remember. Notwithstanding his eccentricities, he was greatly revered by all pious people, even in those days—which must be about thirty-five years ago."

<sup>1</sup> The Diploma, which I found among his papers, is dated Nov. 28, 1840.

tation, as finally arranged, consisted of the following ministers:—The Rev. Dr. Black, Professor of Divinity in Marischal College, Aberdeen, a man of eminent learning; the Rev. Dr. Keith, minister of the parish of St. Cyrus, Kincardineshire, whose volume on the Fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecy, and other kindred works, pointed him out as a fitting member of such a Deputation; the Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne, minister of St. Peter's, Dundee; and the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, minister of the parish of Collace, Perthshire, now of Finnieston Free Church, Glasgow—two names that have only to be mentioned to show their peculiar fitness for such a mission of inquiry. On the 12th April 1839 they left England, visited France and Italy, entered Egypt, passed through the Desert, went through various portions of the Holy Land, sailed westward to Smyrna, thence to Constantinople, then into the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia; thence they advanced into Austrian Poland and Prussia, and having reached Hamburg, sailed thence for London, which they reached on the 6th November—after an absence of nearly seven months, during all their sojournings having their eyes ever on the outlook for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and their judgment in constant exercise on the great question they had been sent to solve—What portion or portions of the Jewish field



might be most fitly selected for cultivation by the Church of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> But to solve this question their formal report, though eagerly looked for, was not needed, for an overruling Providence had virtually decided it in a marvellous way ; fixing for the Church's principal station a spot which only two of the deputation had visited, on their way home in broken health. But of this more hereafter.

On the 24th July 1840, the Edinburgh section of the Jews' Committee resolved (subject to the approval of the General Committee, afterwards given) that Mr. Duncan be appointed first missionary to the Jews from the Church of Scotland ; that he be employed meantime at home, in instructing aspirants to mission work among the Jews ; and that the whole Committee should be summoned to meet at some convenient time to fix on the first missionary field. On this point there was great difference of opinion. The hearts of many were fixed upon the Holy Land, as likely to awaken the deepest general interest, while not a few saw formidable objections to that course from the unsettled state of the country, the uninfluential character of the Jews settled there, and the pre-occupation of that field, to no small extent, by other bodies. On the other hand, the

<sup>1</sup> See *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839*. Edinburgh, 1842.

large number and comparatively superior class of Jews in Hungary, its being all but virgin soil for Christian effort in behalf of that people, and above all the wonderful opening created by Dr. Keith's illness at Pesth, its capital, and the good ground there was to hope that the Austrian Government, however averse to the settlement of Protestant missionaries in their dominions, might not be unwilling to tolerate them in the character of pastors to the Scotch mechanics at that time engaged in the construction of a great public work in the city—these considerations, latterly urged with great force by Dr. Keith himself, seemed to point to Pesth as providentially marked out for the Church of Scotland as its principal field. Still, as the decision hung in the balance, prayer-meetings were held both in Edinburgh and Glasgow, to seek Divine guidance, and frequent conferences took place. Several places in the East, each having its special claims, were brought up for consideration; but the eyes of the most dispassionate were turned towards the West as the chief home of the Jews for many centuries; where a great work had already been accomplished by contact with the Gentile Churches; where the great problems of the future had been slowly maturing; and where, amidst much strife and contention, many struggles and sufferings, those principles had been for ages evolving which will receive

their first full embodiment when the heart of the Lord shall again be turned to favour Zion. Both views found strenuous advocates; but at length the way was made plain, and the Committee came to a decided and unanimous conclusion. The problem was rendered more easy by the accession of additional labourers, opening the prospect of ultimately occupying both East and West. Without foreclosing the future, it was agreed that the first mission should be planted in Jassy, the chief town of Moldavia (under the charge of the Rev. Daniel Edward, assisted by Mr. Philip,<sup>1</sup> a Jewish proselyte, who accordingly started for their destination in the spring of 1841), to be followed by another mission at Pesth, the capital of Hungary. There was still some thought of Dr. Duncan proceeding ultimately to the East, to which for several reasons he was himself not averse; but he was first to break ground in Hungary, being accompanied thither by Mr. W. O. Allan, who had not quite completed his theological studies, and by an able young missionary, the Rev. Robert Smith, who had just been licensed to preach the Gospel—to whom I am indebted for some of the above particulars, and for some very interesting details presently to be given.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Rev. Dr. Philip, at present doing good work among the Jews in Rome.

On the 2d of September 1840, Dr. Candlish had appeared before the Presbytery of Glasgow, and craved, in name of the General Assembly's Committee for the Conversion of the Jews, that Mr. Duncan be loosed from his pastoral charge in that Presbytery; and the usual steps having been taken, the pastoral tie was formally dissolved on the 7th October, "the members of Presbytery expressing their views of his distinguished qualifications for the work of a missionary to the Jews, and their deep regret at the loss of an esteemed member."<sup>1</sup> At the request of his office-bearers the Presbytery agreed that he should continue to officiate in Milton Church during his stay in Scotland, while during the week he spent the winter of 1840-41 between Edinburgh and Glasgow, conducting Hebrew classes, and superintending the studies of the aspirants to mission work among the Jews. The effect of this—in awakening among the students of both Universities; as well of the literary and philosophical classes as of the Divinity Halls, a love for Hebrew literature; and an interest in the Jews—exceeded the highest expectations of the Committee, as afterwards reported to the General Assembly. And in a visit which he paid to the other Universities, for the purpose

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Rev. Dr. Smith, Cathcart, Clerk to the Presbytery of Glasgow.

of rousing among their students a similar spirit, he met with encouraging success.

At length, on the 16th May 1841, he was publicly designated to his new office in St. George's Church, Glasgow. "The services were conducted with great solemnity by the Rev. Dr. Brown of St. John's, who preached, the Rev. Dr. Smyth of St. George's, who delivered a singularly appropriate and impressive address to the new missionary, and the Rev. William Burns of Kilsyth, by whom the workman and his new sphere of labour were commended in prayer to the Head of the Church. It was about this time that I first met personally with Dr. Duncan" (writes Mr. Smith, from whom I here quote, and whose offer as a missionary to the Jews had just been accepted by the Committee).<sup>1</sup>

The interest of Scottish Christians in the conver-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Smith is now minister of Corsock Free Church, Dumfriesshire. It may not be uninteresting to learn the impression which Dr. Duncan made upon this able and observant man from the first, and which during a long and very close intimacy with him was only deepened. "He seemed to be a child and a giant in one—both characters curiously intermingled—making intercourse with him peculiarly delightful. No man ever inspired less awe, nor called forth deeper reverence. What added greatly to the weight of his words was, that all his views on the great questions of Philosophy, Theology, and Philology were thoroughly matured. You very rarely discovered an idea in the process of formation. Every thought came forth from the birth in full maturity. But though from this circumstance his opinions were not only clear but

sion of the Jews had been remarkably deepened this year by the General Assembly's incomparable *Address to the Children of Israel*.<sup>1</sup> No wonder, then, that Dr. Duncan, on leaving Scotland to seek in a foreign land the lost sheep of the house of Israel, was "recommended by the brethren to the grace of God," like the two first missionaries of the cross (Acts xiv. 26, xv. 40), and followed by the prayers of many Christians.

"It was agreed," writes Mr. Smith, "that we should all meet in London about the middle of June 1841, and there make final preparations for our united journey. Besides Dr. Duncan himself, the party consisted of his wife—whom he had lately married, Mrs. Torrance, an

strong and decided, he was singularly free from dogmatism. The severe mental conflict by which the most of them had been reached made him tolerant towards the cruder and less perfectly formed views of others. All this I learned more fully afterwards, but I saw enough at my first interview to convince me that the Church had made a wise arrangement in giving him the superintendence of the studies of the younger missionaries, and I reckoned myself fortunate in the prospect of possessing such a guide in my preparation for future labour."

<sup>1</sup> Originally suggested by Robert Wodrow, Esq., an esteemed Christian merchant of Glasgow, whose enlightened zeal for the conversion of Israel had burned like a flame for many years. It was drawn up by him at the request of the Committee, and after being approved by them, and thereafter by the General Assembly in May 1841, was published, and not only circulated extensively through all English-speaking countries, but translated into nearly all the Continental and some of the Oriental languages. For scriptural character, elevated Biblical strain, and unction, it has probably never been surpassed by any human composition.

officer's widow, a lady of remarkable energy, tact, and penetration, of deep affections and great generosity of character—with her daughter,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Duncan's own daughter, Annie (still a child), by his first marriage, Mr. Allan, and myself." When in Holland they paid a visit to Dr. Cappadose at the Hague, who, "as an experienced and much-tried Christian, a sound Calvinist of the olden stamp, and well read in the Dutch divines, a lover of Presbyterianism and of the Church of Scotland (of whose recent struggles he had just published an account), and one of the few beacon-lights which God had kindled amidst the gloom now resting on the once famous Church of Holland—presented to the mind of Dr. Duncan so many points of contact and congenial sentiment, that a strict friendship between them was improvised at first sight." (See p. 253, note.)

Sailing up the Rhine to Mayence, and travelling from Frankfurt by Nürnberg to Ratisbon, they steamed from thence to Linz and Vienna. "Linz being the frontier town of Austria, by the Danube route, the day before we reached was to us all an anxious one. We were by no means sure of being permitted to enter the Austrian territory at all. Some of our German friends shook their heads ominously, while others on hearing

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards married to the Rev. W. O. Allan, one of the party.

of our intention held up their hands in amazement. When the two younger members of the Deputation of Inquiry passed through a part of Austrian Poland in 1839, simply as travellers, they had to part with all their books and papers—even their pocket Bibles being laid under arrest. We proposed not to pass through the country, but to settle in it; and though in the kingdom of Hungary a somewhat greater amount of freedom was enjoyed than elsewhere, we had not yet reached that point. We could only commit our way to the Lord, and await the result, using meanwhile such precautions as the circumstances suggested. One document we had in our possession which we were most anxious to preserve, but which, if discovered, would betray, we feared, our intention to establish a mission—a consummation which at this stage would have been fatal to all our hopes. It was resolved to sacrifice it, but the happy expedient was hit upon, first to commit it to memory, so that it might be reproduced, word for word, on the other side of the frontier. For this purpose, its eight or ten pages were carefully distributed among the company, and in this impalpable form it safely crossed the barrier. The number of our books excited the alarm of the officials at Linz; but though this necessitated our detention there a whole day, it caused us no further damage.



"In Vienna we had the happiness of being introduced to the pious and learned Dr. Schauffler, the well-known American missionary at Constantinople, who was then engaged in superintending the printing of a revised and much improved translation of the Old Testament into Jewish-Spanish—which the Government of Vienna permitted to be put through the press of that city, on condition that no copies of the work should be circulated within the Austrian Empire. A German by birth, but educated in America, Dr. Schauffler combined in himself the best characteristics of both nations. His conversations with Dr. Duncan were to us, the younger members of the mission, like a perpetual feast.<sup>1</sup> During his stay in the Austrian capital, he had gathered together a little flock which met from week to week secretly in his own house. Some of these were Christians from various parts of Germany; but they chiefly consisted of native Viennese, who had been converted under his faithful ministrations. About a year after our visit, and just before Dr. S. left for Constantinople, the meetings, on which the blessing of God had so eminently rested, were denounced to the police.

<sup>1</sup> From this time an occasional correspondence between these two learned missionary Doctors was kept up; and while the literary aspects of mission work among the Jews seem equally to have attracted both—it is delightful to observe, from Dr. Duncan's papers, that vital and spiritual Christianity was paramount with both alike.

Numberless investigations took place. Those of the little company who were not natives of the city were dismissed to their homes ; the others were harassed by every species of petty persecution—including temporary imprisonment, doubled or trebled taxes, restrictions on the employment of apprentices in their several trades, etc.—by which they were ultimately dispersed. Some of them found their way to Hungary, and not a little aided the cause of the Gospel in that country. We had now reached the commencement of the last stage of our journey. It was the policy of the Austrian Government at that time to limit free intercourse with Hungary, as far as practicable. Except in the case of those who were *in transitu* for Constantinople, minute inquiries were made of every traveller regarding his object in visiting the country before his passport was countersigned. By the good hand of God, however, we escaped attracting particular notice. Accordingly in the early morning of August 21, we embarked in the Danube steamer for Pesth, and after a sail of between 120 and 130 English miles, reached it in safety."

## CHAPTER XII.

### ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND'S MISSION AT

PESTH: 1840-41.

WHEN the deputation referred to in the preceding chapter set out on their journey, the Committee and they were alike agreed that "their labours should not be thrown away by visiting any part of the Austrian empire, knowing (or thinking they knew) that a Protestant mission could not be established within its bounds."<sup>1</sup> Owing, however, to an accident which befell Dr. Black, one of the senior members of the deputation, while on their way through the Egyptian desert to Palestine, it was found necessary that he and Dr. Keith, separating from their two junior brethren, should take their journey homeward by the Danube, and pass—contrary to all prior intentions—by that river through the heart of Austria. They had a letter

<sup>1</sup> I here and throughout this chapter draw upon a series of papers contributed by the Rev. Dr. Keith, one of the senior members of the deputation, to the *Sunday at Home* for 1867.

from the Foreign Office to all the ambassadors and consuls, but at Pesth there was no consul. Introductions they had in abundance for other cities, but none for Pesth, nor did they know a single individual within it. But, once there, they wisely resolved to look about them with a view to their great object; and as they soon saw that of all the places they had visited none was to be compared with this as a site for a Jewish mission, they allowed the steamer in which they had taken their passage to go without them, that they might pursue their inquiries. Besides many intelligent Jews, who would willingly enter into communication with them, they ascertained that there were thirty Jewish youths studying at the University. But how get a footing there? The Austrian Government, then supreme in Hungary, they knew would be dead against it. "The dread object in our view—the grand palace of the Prince Palatine (overhanging the Danube), an Austrian Archduke, and the Emperor's uncle—seemed to defy us. It was the very last place to which we could have looked for help." Yet from that frowning palace, in the marvellous providence of God, issued just that help through which the establishment of a mission to Pesth would alone seem to have been possible. "Two quarantines," says Dr. Keith, "on the banks of the Danube, and ascending up that river but slowly for many

hundreds of miles, at the most pestilential season of the year, had smitten us both with the 'Danube (intermittent) fever.' Thus enfeebled, we had to grope our way as strangers in a strange city, and to gather our information, as unostentatiously as we could, from Rabbis, Professors, Protestant clergymen, etc. Going thus from house to house to complete our inquiries, I was seized, while passing along the street, with faintness and sickness, and had to retreat into a court. There I lay for some time before I was able to return to the hotel, on reaching which I was speedily prostrated by an attack which had some of the symptoms of cholera; and when my beloved friend of many years, Dr. Black, saw me sinking more and more, till he thought I was about to die, was walking up and down wringing his hands, bemoaning himself and weeping like a child, and I, who thought myself dying, yet believing in Jesus, felt my true self to be all alive—I fainted away, became insensible, and my pulse stopped, while two men waited by my bedside to carry me away as soon as I should breathe my last. I seemed to have taken my last look on earth of my Christian friend—who was the strength of our mission—a man of vast erudition and a profound theologian, who spoke nineteen languages and wrote twelve. On seeing me, as he thought, dying and dead, his affectionate heart was touched to the quick, and his

fever returned with increased violence. For six weeks I saw him not again, though there was only a thin wall between our rooms. When I became insensible, the master of the hotel, running up to a gentleman in the street, whom he found to be an Englishman, entreated him to come and see two of his countrymen very ill, and one dying, while he himself knew not what to do. He went, but having to leave Pesth early next morning, he informed an English lady and her daughter of the circumstance, and as their errand to Pesth had already brought them into communication with the Archduchess, they first went to learn who the prostrate stranger was—which they discovered from his portman-teau—and then wrote to the Archduchess about him. That noble lady sent immediate orders that everything possible should be done for him. The only sign of life was my breath on a mirror put close to my mouth, and of this there were doubts. 'I never knew, heard, or read of any one but yourself who touched the gates of death without passing through them,' said the physician afterwards who attended, one of the Professors."

When the Archduchess learned who the travellers were, that they were on their way from Palestine, and the object of their journey, the Archduke gave her a copy of an illustrated edition of Dr. Keith's book

on the Evidence of Prophecy, which would of itself have awakened a lively interest in its now prostrate author. But there was something far beyond this which stirred the soul of this noble lady, which must be given as she herself often told it to Christian friends, and Dr. Keith's pen has recorded it. But first I must explain the very peculiar and trying position which she occupied in Hungary.

The Archduchess Maria Dorothea was by birth a princess of the house of Würtemberg and a Protestant. When she consented (while spiritually unawakened), to marry the Roman Catholic Archduke-Palatine, Joseph, the Emperor's uncle, and viceroy of Hungary, it was with the express security that she should enjoy full religious liberty for herself, and even after she became so decided, she had the sincere attachment of her husband. Still, she felt herself alone in her adopted country, and though feeling the deepest interest in its religious welfare, she was able to do next to nothing for it, owing to the jealous watchfulness of the Romish authorities, then all-powerful in Austria. But deep waters of affliction, through which she had to pass, were greatly blessed to her. Her eldest boy—a youth of great promise, and already styled “the hope of Hungary,” of high talent, good address, and handsome person, and, what his mother valued most of all, already her companion in decision

of Christian principle—had, to her unspeakable grief, been taken from her at the early age of seventeen. Driven to her Bible and her knees, she there found the needed relief. The palace in which she resided stands on an eminence, looking down on the Danube rolling beneath, with the city of Pesth on its opposite bank; and her private apartment lay towards the front of the building. "There, in the deep embrasure of a window, which she more than once pointed out to us afterwards," says the Rev. Robert Smith,<sup>1</sup> she was wont, day by day, to seek the face of God. Looking out on the scene below—the city with its 100,000 inhabitants, and the vast Hungarian plains stretching away in the distance behind it—she thought of her own desolateness, and the still greater desolation of the land, and poured out her heart before the Lord. Sometimes her desires became so intense that, stretching out her arms towards heaven, she prayed, almost in an agony of spirit, that He would send at least one messenger of the cross to Hungary. She thus continued waiting on God *for about the space of seven years.*"

We must now hear the Archduchess herself, as reported by Dr. Keith:—"During the previous fortnight

<sup>1</sup> In a series of interesting papers entitled "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary," contributed to the *Sunday at Home* for 1866.



[before the first tidings of Dr. Keith's illness reached her], night after night, without the exception of one, she awoke suddenly in the midst of the night at the same hour, with the strong and irrepressible conviction that something was to happen to her. After a wakeful and most anxious hour it uniformly passed away, when she had her usual undisturbed rest. In vain she thought what it could be, except her mother's death, which would affect her most. But on hearing of the seemingly dying minister of Christ at the hotel, she said within herself, 'This is what was to happen to me;' and from that night onwards her sleep was unbroken by any disturbing thought. (Seven years afterwards, when the Duchess of Gordon and Dr. Keith went to meet her at her mother's, in the palace of Kirchheim, Würtemberg, she said she never had any such feeling in her life, either before or after, but only then.) *In that feeling lay the key whereby a door was to be opened for the Jewish mission at Pesth, though no one knew or thought of it then.*

"As soon as it was deemed that my returning strength would permit, the Archduchess came for the first time to see me. So far as known, she had never entered a hotel in Pesth before, and the cry of the surprised inmates was, 'The Princess Palatine!'" For a reason not requiring mention here, her first visit lasted but a

few moments. "The next time she sat down by the patient's bedside, with all the ease and frankness of a friend, inquiring after my health and comfort; and the third visit was much the same. But at the fourth visit, leaving the lady in waiting in another chamber, she entered the sick-room alone, and unburdened her whole case. The death of her son, two years before, she said, had all but crushed her. He had been her associate and joy, and her heart had been bound up in him. Though her unshaken fortitude and patient acquiescence in the Divine will had been remarked by all, her heart knew its own bitterness; and thinking that this trial was a manifestation of the Divine displeasure with her, her spirit was so dragged down that often when she lay down to sleep her wish was that she might never waken. For two long years she had kept all this to herself, finding no one in Hungary to whom, as a Christian counsellor, she could unbosom her grief. Now at length she found vent to her pent-up feelings, and out of the abundance of her heart her mouth spake freely and copiously." What reply Dr. Keith made need not be here related. As she could speak no English, and he no German, they conversed in French; his part consisting chiefly in suitable passages quoted from his French Bible, which, when all his other books were officially sealed, packed up, and numbered

carefully, he had contrived to retain. That Word, which with her was law, when put before her in so unlooked-for a way, came home to her so powerfully, that speaking afterwards to an English clergyman of the impression made upon her by Dr. Keith, she said, "He raised himself on his elbow, and gave me such a look that he seemed to look through me, and as he spoke the scales fell from my eyes." In two days she returned. "Every second day I had regular attacks of intermittent fever; and on the day of its intermission she uniformly visited me at an appointed hour, that there might be no interruption. In worldly gaieties she had no pleasure, and took no part; and so wholly surrounded was she by those with whom she could find none of the fellowship which she sought, that her fervent prayer to God had been that He would send her a Christian friend, a brother, a counsellor, were it only one. To find one, therefore, with whom she could freely converse, with the Bible open, on Christ and His salvation, etc., was to her an answer to her prayer."

While Dr. Keith met her many inquiries as to the path of Christian duty in so high and difficult a position as she occupied, with the faithfulness of a man of God, he could not but admire the childlike teachableness of this noble lady when Scripture was brought to bear on any question, and her strength of will when

once she felt her footing firm. When, for example, "in consequence of her frequent visits the rumour arose that our object was to establish in that city a mission for Roman Catholics, and there were spies on the house to see who should enter it; when informed that there was great excitement in the city, and that a remonstrance was being numerously signed for transmission to the Austrian Government, I dreaded that evil might arise to her or to our cause, and asked my informant to say to the Archduchess that it might be better that her visits were discontinued or deferred till this agitation should subside. 'If you tell me not to come,' was her reply, 'I will not, but otherwise, nothing on earth shall prevent me.' That I cannot do," was Dr. Keith's reply. "Soon, accordingly, she came, smiling even more than usual, and said at once, 'I know all they are doing, or can do. They can only lodge a complaint with Metternich, and all he can do is to present it to the Empress. But I have been beforehand with them, for I have already written to her that I have seen you, and will see you, and nothing shall prevent me; so make yourself easy about me.' No other in Hungary save her husband could have written thus; and in those days, as I was told, the Empress used to say, 'Marie will take her own way, and she must have it.' " She subsequently displayed equal promptitude and

decision, whenever the mission was imperilled. On one occasion, the only two missionaries then in Pesth (Messrs. Wingate and Smith) were officially required to present their passports. One of them had lost his, and the other had only a passport for another city (his original destination), which gave him no right to remain in Pesth. But the palace was then the place for help. The Archduchess sent for Count Szycheni, and told him to go to the Provost (a high ecclesiastic), and tell him from her, that if he did not hold his tongue she would speak out. It was enough; she knew him too well, and he knew it too. The lowest bow which the missionaries had in Pesth was on again meeting the Provost in the street. On another occasion, in the temporary absence of the Archduchess, when the room of the missionaries was crowded with uninvited, but inquiring Jews, one of them (Mr. Schwartz) was called before the police-court, accused of holding public meetings contrary to law, and his sentence was that he should leave Pesth on the following Tuesday. Arriving on the Saturday, the Archduchess sent for him, and on hearing his statement she said, "You preach for me in the palace to-morrow, and every Sabbath regularly thereafter." She had a legal right to her own chaplain, and a Jewish missionary took his place. Passing between two Imperial Guards at the outer door, Jew

and Gentile, rich and poor, were alike free to enter; and a congregation was there formed, for which a church was built before the Archduke's death—a thing never heard of before.

Upwards of two months having passed away after the arrival of Drs. Keith and Black at Pesth, the professorial duties of the latter at Aberdeen obliged him, weak as he still was, to return home. Dr. Keith, however, while waiting for a carriage in which he could lie down, was again seized with a violent attack of fever and ague, and had to stay behind—which proved of the utmost consequence to the object of his mission. The Archduchess's attentions to the prostrate missionary were redoubled; and what the Church of Scotland's mission to the Jews at Pesth owed to her in its rudimental state, and even till the missionaries were expelled in the year 1852, it would not be easy to tell. As soon as she knew the wishes of his heart, she assured Dr. Keith that should the Church of Scotland plant a mission there "she would place her own person between it and whatever danger might assail it."<sup>1</sup>

On his return home, after six months' detention in Pesth, Dr. Keith had much difficulty in persuading his brethren of the Committee—notwithstanding all he was now able to urge in its favour—to throw their

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Robert Smith.

strength into Pesth as their most important station ; and some of his friends, who thought him positively wearisome with his urgency, said jocularly that they saw little difference between *Pesth* and *pest* but the letter *h*. Thus wonderfully, however, in what seemed at first the most hopeless of all localities, originated a mission to the Jews, now of thirty years' standing, and prosperous, perhaps, beyond every other.

## CHAPTER XIII.

FROM HIS ARRIVAL IN PESTH TO HIS RECALL AS PROFESSOR  
OF HEBREW IN THE NEW COLLEGE OF EDINBURGH :  
1841-1843.

THE missionary party arrived in Pesth just as the annual fortnight's fair was commencing, when the town was crowded, and private lodgings were not to be had. "Without waiting," writes Mr. Smith, "till more permanent arrangements could be made, Dr. Duncan resolved to begin at once a public service in the hotel on the Lord's day for the English residents ; and though the first notice was necessarily hasty, the attendance amounted to about thirty persons. At this time a number of British workmen, about one hundred in all, including their families, were employed in the erection of a magnificent chain-bridge to connect the sister cities of Pesth and Buda, a circumstance which proved of the very highest moment in connexion with our work. For while we, on the one hand, hoped to be useful to them and their families—long neglected and destitute of the means of grace—they, on the other



hand, in accepting our ministrations, were materially helpful to us, by furnishing us with a valid claim on the Austrian Government for toleration ; so much so, that without such a plea it may be doubted whether the Archduchess, with all her influence, would have been able to protect us. Before the fortnight was over we had secured a suitable residence, having beneath us and on a level with the street a vaulted magazine, which only needed white-washing and furnishing with desk and benches to make a very respectable chapel. This was the scene of our ministrations for many years, and was hallowed in the memory of not a few by the manifestations there first made to their souls of the grace and power of God." Dr. Duncan officiated here in the morning, Mr. Smith in the afternoon. Besides such of the English residents as attended, many Hungarians, and Jews especially, were attracted thither, some from a true religious interest, others from a desire to improve their English—at that time a favourite study in Hungary.

In the delicate position which the missionaries occupied in Pesth, Dr. Duncan felt it a duty to adapt himself to its habits, usages, and ecclesiastical regulations. With a view to this he almost immediately put himself in communication with the clergy of both the Protestant Confessions, Reformed and Lutheran, and felt his way

to their confidence, which he speedily acquired. His very inability to speak the German language, and even to converse in French, helped him greatly; for, having to throw himself for a medium of clerical intercourse on Latin, they were immediately struck, not only with his fluency in that language, but with the classic purity of his Latinity. But let us hear the Hungarian ministers themselves, through Mr. Török, the present superintendent of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Pesth, his earliest and most intimate acquaintance, who from that day to this has proved a steady friend to the Jewish mission in that city, and who, in a German letter, has favoured me with a few brief reminiscences, regretting that his multifarious engagements preclude his going more into detail:—"Dr. Duncan's mode of procedure on coming to Pesth was the most appropriate for attaining his end. He gained for himself before everything the Evangelical preachers of both Confessions, and, through the favour and interposition of the Archduchess, secured the protection of the Archduke Palatine Joseph. By his learning, moral character, friendliness, and affability, he immediately won the Evangelical clergy. He cultivated them steadily, and had us often to his house in a friendly way, and we conferred and took counsel on all religious and ecclesiastical subjects and questions, home and foreign. This

went on without difficulty ; for Dr. Duncan was quite a master in classical Latinity, and spoke it fluently, while we also were expert in it, having been pupils at a school where everything was taught in Latin. Dr. Duncan soon set himself to acquire the Magyar language, and like an apt philological grammarian learned the grammar, and apprehended even the peculiarities of the language in three months. He did not, however, attempt to speak it, but confined himself to the right understanding of printed books. In this I had the honour of being somewhat helpful to him. Often would he read before me, and investigate grammatically, three or four chapters of the Bible, or three or four Church Hymns, at one sitting. I must further speak of his wisdom, modesty, and judicious procedure. He thus won us all, and carefully and happily avoided every cause of offence—all conflict with the political and ecclesiastical authorities. We scrupulously instructed him in the laws of the country, the Church regulations, and the circumstances of the place—to which he accommodated himself. And in this spirit did he initiate and train his assistants, Messrs. William Wingate and Robert Smith, and at a later period Alexander Thomson. And so will those hours gone by which we spent in that brotherly circle be reckoned among the most precious hours of our life, and never will they vanish from our memory."

But far wider objects Dr. Duncan contemplated than merely to adapt himself to the circumstances, laws, and habits of the country, so as to give no just cause of offence in the prosecution of his Jewish work, or even by putting himself in friendly communication with the clergy to obtain their support and encouragement in that work. Seeing the low state into which Protestantism in all its forms had sunk in Hungary, both in religion and in morals, he felt that little solid progress and permanent fruit would come of this mission, unless a new evangelical and spiritual element could be introduced into it. To do something, however humble, towards this, Dr. Duncan soon deliberately set himself. This might seem presumptuous in a foreigner, who never learned to speak the language of the country, and whose business there was one that was novel to the best, and by most people was no doubt viewed as Quixotic. But with him it was more than a felt duty to do what he could—"necessity was laid upon him," for "his spirit was stirred in him when he beheld" the state of things all around him. Let us first hear himself on this, and then what Mr. Török and others testify as to the wonderful effects that crowned his efforts.

In one of his early letters he thus writes :—"I believe that whoever occupies himself heartily with the things pertaining to the kingdom of God will find, that

the unity of that kingdom binds together, in multifarious and close relations, all the various departments of effort for its preservation; so that, if one member suffers all suffer with it, and if one flourish all flourish with it. Certain I am, that if we are by the blessing of God to succeed in our aim in this place, it must be by pursuing it, as the main object indeed, but by no means as the *sole* object of our exertions. While matters are in so lamentable a state as they are here, as to religion and morals, even among professed Protestants, the most serious of all impediments remains in the way of Israel's conversion. I am therefore very decidedly of opinion that whoever shall be stationed here must make it his study, as far as the Lord may vouchsafe opportunities, to labour for the revival of true religion (both as regards sound doctrine and godly living) in the Protestant Churches of the land; which, if it please the Lord to visit them graciously—as I pray, hope, and believe he will—would then become, instead of a stumbling-block, as now, the best instruments for carrying on the work of gathering in the lost sheep of the house of Israel to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. To this work, because it would thus remain neglected, we, though strangers, are imperatively called. Warm fraternal love bound our fathers together. Why should the sons of our sires forget the sons of theirs?

Through the fires of oppression these once famous Churches passed and shone with all the greater spiritual brightness. Now they enjoy greater ease, but the canker of indifference has blasted all their beauty, and well-nigh eaten away the very life, leaving, I fear, in most cases, a political Protestantism instead of a living religion. Still they are our brethren, and I can never despair of a Church which retains the glorious symbolical books transmitted to them by the divinely-promoted, divinely-sustained heroes of the Reformation. When truth ceases to live in the bosoms of living men—its proper dwelling—these books become the cemeteries of dead truth, which reposes there ‘in hope of a blessed resurrection,’ whereof, too, the day approaches.”

“As a first commencement,” says Mr. Smith, “he suggested the propriety of a fraternal letter being addressed by the Church of Scotland to the Reformed Churches of Hungary and Transylvania, though doubting whether, considering the novelty of our mission, the proper time were yet come. And though the idea was not carried out, an opportunity offered of exhibiting sympathy in a material form with the Protestant Church of Hungary. The Archduchess, Maria Dorothea, ever zealous in promoting every good work, had long earnestly desired to see a congregation established in Buda as a centre of influence in the capital and throughout

the country. Dr. Duncan entered heartily into the proposal, and made an appeal in its behalf. 'I beg,' he said, 'the Gospel for Hungary; I beg it of God, I beg it of you. Remember the fathers of the Reformation. Rekindle the lamp that kindled ours. Even amidst domestic afflictions [referring, I presume, to the ecclesiastical troubles which were now coming to an alarming crisis in Scotland] liberally devise liberal things.' Though at the time little was done in this matter, yet some years later the effort was renewed, and a considerable sum of money collected in this country, chiefly through the energy of Dr. Keith. The church and school were both completed, and an endowment fund—always insisted on by the Government as a condition of sanction—was also provided. The pastor called to preside over the newly founded congregation was a truly pious and devoted man, one of the few who, when we first went to Hungary, knew and preached the truth. Weak and suffering in body, but bold and courageous in spirit, he greatly aided the cause of God among both Jews and Gentiles."

Now let us hear Mr. Török's remarkable and truly humble testimony to the fruit of Dr. Duncan's efforts to raise the tone and character of the Protestant teaching in Pesth:—"As respects Dr. Duncan's activity, it extended itself to ourselves, the present Evangelical

ministers, and indirectly to the National Church, to the special Jewish mission, and the mission-school. I must premise the remark that here, at the time when Dr. Duncan came hither, rationalism, imported from neighbouring Germany, reigned supreme among the Evangelical preachers and Professors of Theology. His learning, his earnestness, his experience, his instructions, made us thoughtful, and by little and little we began to give way and to apply and devote ourselves to believing Christianity. We began to preach in the capital in this spirit; Török and Trikais issued a weekly paper, giving Church and School news in Hungarian, while Bauhofer Georg, Court-preacher to the Archduchess M. D., in Ofen (Buda), issued the same in German. Török and Szekacs also edited with a similar view a Magazine for Preachers, of which three small volumes have appeared. The next step was the projection of a theological college at Pesth [not, however, carried out till long after] to counteract the superficial rationalism of the other colleges. The suggestion of this was due chiefly to Dr. Duncan."

What higher testimony than this could well be borne to Dr. Duncan's influence on the Hungarian ministers of Pesth, and through them on all whom their voices and their pens reached? "The first time you were here," said Mr. Saphir—of whom by and by—to Dr. Keith,



“there was not a village in all Hungary in which they knew that there was such a thing as Evangelical religion.<sup>1</sup> The second time you were here (in 1844) there was not a village in all Hungary in which they did not know; and now there is not a presbytery in Hungary in which the Gospel is not preached”—the little wave which, as Mr. Török says, first issued from the foreign missionary diffusing itself through those that felt its impulse far and wide through the country.

But let us now see how Dr. Duncan laid himself out for his proper work. He had his two young assistants, Messrs. Smith and Allan, to aid in their Hebrew and German studies; the one a licentiate, but not ordained, the other not having finished his theological studies before leaving for Pesth, but allowed to prosecute them under Dr. Duncan. Then his own German studies occupied much time and labour, for “it is difficult,” he wrote, “for a person in advanced life to attain that readiness of suggestion which is needful for the extemporaneous use of a foreign language”—in which, indeed, he never fully succeeded. But this did not hinder his immediate usefulness in many ways among the Jews. “I have been several times at the synagogue,” he writes, “and distributed copies of the

<sup>1</sup> Not quite; for, says Dr. Keith, “there were three Evangelical ministers in Hungary, one of whom came two days’ journey to see me, as I afterwards went to see him.”

New Testament to several Jews who appear to be sufficiently acquainted with Hebrew to make an intelligent use of it. I had the pleasure of meeting here repeatedly with one of the most distinguished of the writers of modern Hebrew. He spoke of executing a version of the New Testament in the Judæo-Polish jargon, the only language understood by thousands of females. 'I should be happy,' he said, 'could I do anything to promote the knowledge of that divine book.' I love him : I weep for him. May the Lord make his way plain before him." In fact, Dr. Duncan soon began (says Mr. Smith to make acquaintance with some leading Jews, among whom he speedily acquired a high reputation for learning. Being as yet in no alarm on the subject of conversion, instead of hostility they exhibited the greatest friendship. He received from them a kind and even flattering invitation to the public half-yearly examination "of the boys' Jewish school, an institution which had acquired great celebrity in Hungary, and might have done credit, in point of efficiency, to any country." As a literary institution (he says), "it is one of the best, if not, without exception, the best conducted school of primary instruction I have ever witnessed. The examination lasted two days, and comprehended a vast extent of subjects. There were many teachers, all apparently able and

assiduous in their various departments; but the Hebrew teacher, who seemed to be the rector, and is no mean poet in the Hebrew language, excelled them all."

In the beginning of the following year (1842) he thus writes of his work: "The only good I have hitherto found from discussion is that of preventing them from despising the practical argument of our example, as that of silly fools unable to give a reason of the hope that is in them. This consideration indeed ought deeply to humble us, myself in particular, that the light of the glorious Gospel is so dimly reflected by our daily conduct. Yet in adverting to the very low state of religion here, which brings into prominence what a high state of society would, and what the brightness of divine truth does, cast into the shade, I may say, with neither pride nor vanity, but with the shame and confusion of face which belongs to me, that our merciful Lord has hitherto enabled us so to walk, as that some curiosity is excited to know what are the principles which guide our conduct; and thus the mission has begun in a moral sense to cast its roots into the soil. I should therefore deeply regret its removal [contemplated by some], as an uptearing of what I humbly trust is the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. Still you will see that, humanly speaking,

our progress must for some time be slow among a people among whom our only holds are, their wish to learn our language, curiosity to scan our habits, and ascertain if possible the cast of mind of persons who profess to live according to the Bible; a curiosity rendered piquant by finding that we are not quite illiterate, nor strangers to philosophy, even their own, which they think has emancipated them from the bondage to which they fancy we wish to bring them back. O pray, then! pray for us—for a humble, believing, benevolent, beneficent, pure, self-denying frame of spirit will do a thousand times more for us and our cause than all the learning in the world; and I know you will not suspect us of holding it in contempt.”

In the end of January 1842, Mr. Smith was recalled home for ordination, Mr. Allan still continuing his studies at Pesth under Dr. Duncan's superintendence. On Mr. Smith's return in July, accompanied by Mr. Wingate,<sup>1</sup> he found Dr. Schaufler and his family taking their final leave of that city for Constantinople, and both parties travelled together as far as Pesth. On reaching Presburg, they were agreeably surprised to meet another Jewish missionary, the Rev. Mr. Schwartz,

<sup>1</sup> A young Glasgow merchant, who had given up superior prospects to devote himself to Jewish work, and who, having had a University education, and partially studied theology, was now going out to Pesth to be under Dr. Duncan's tuition.

who was about to enter on his labours in Constantinople under the London Jews' Society. When joined a few days later by Mr. Philip, we found (says Mr. Smith) that, besides the female part of the company, there were no fewer than seven Jewish missionaries providentially met together in Pesth—an opportunity of which we were glad to avail ourselves for conference, and prayer, and praise. A fortnight was spent in these exercises; “the presence of the Lord was sensibly felt, and all hearts seemed to expand under His gracious influence. It was as if a spring of water had been suddenly opened in a desert place, or as if a number of coals, each burning dimly apart, had been draw together and burst into a flame. Nor were those outside the narrow circle of fellowship overlooked. Hitherto the public preaching had been only in English. But Mr. Schwartz, being a native German, was prevailed on to defer his departure for three weeks, which, partly from a temporary illness, and partly from the success which attended his German ministrations, was still further deferred. Besides preaching on various occasions in the city churches, he held a series of meetings in Dr. Duncan's house, which were attended by a large number of Jews, and by many Protestants. Thus was a spirit of inquiry extensively awakened, and the impression was deepened by much private intercourse and instruc-

tion. Meanwhile a manifest blessing rested on the English ministrations, which continued to be visited in increasing numbers both by Jews and Hungarians. Two sermons of singular power were preached by Dr. Schaufliker during his stay, which were followed up by Dr. Duncan with more than his usual depth and vigour. The result was a powerful impulse given to the work, and hopeful appearances of conversion in not a few who came under its influence."

Of all these hopeful cases, none was so interesting as that of Mr. Saphir, a Jew of good position in society, and now somewhat advanced in years. At the time when Dr. Keith was in Pesth—his health partially but not fully restored—he had inquired of a Polish literary gentleman if he knew of any Jew in Pesth on whose testimony he could thoroughly rely. "There is no man like Mr. Saphir," was the reply. With him, accordingly, and others, he held interesting conversations, and with him he was so much struck, that he said to the Archduchess he had good hope he would become one of the first converts—he was so candid. "Every Lord's day"—wrote Dr. Duncan to Dr. Keith, not two months after his arrival—"almost from the beginning, there have been some, and sometimes several, of the house of Israel present, and some of them have been, for the time at least, evidently impressed in some measure. Mr. Saphir

has been most attentive, has shown the greatest kindness, and has been on many occasions present at our religious services. He was touched when I told him I would write to you, and that I knew you would remember him in your prayers." But to this remarkable man I will return presently.

Before the autumn of the following year (1842) was over, a great scattering (says Mr. Smith) had taken place in the little company. Dr. Schaufler and Mr. Philip were the first to take their departure for their respective spheres of labour; Mr. Allan was recalled to Scotland; Mr. Schwartz left in the beginning of October. But the most serious breach of all was the removal of Dr. Duncan to Italy in the beginning of November. During the previous winter he had suffered much from the severity of the Hungarian climate, and as his health still continued in a precarious state, the Committee decided that he should spend the coming season at Leghorn, that he might both recruit his strength and do good as he found opportunity.

Immediately before his departure he thus wrote to Mr. Wodrow (Nov. 5):—"The hand of the Lord has been very observable with us, and though not without trials, to teach us humility and constant dependence on the providence and grace of God, we have had many causes of grateful and adoring wonder. The particulars

are longer than I can at present recount, but I shall make it my first work to write from Leghorn, perhaps a series of letters [not carried into effect]. I may only state that of late we have had the happiness of being allowed to hope that our labour among our dear countrymen here has not been altogether in vain, several souls giving us reason to think that they have turned unto the Lord. Old Mr. Saphir, I believe to be a Christian in heart, and I cannot express the delight I had in hearing him join at our domestic worship in the hymn—

‘To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
The God whom we adore,  
Be glory, as it was and is,  
And shall be evermore.’

“To-night he came to bid us farewell, and I was well-nigh overpowered when I observed the tears trickling down the cheeks of my revered friend. He feels keenly the opposition which he has already had to endure from his brethren, and especially the disruption of his intimacy with his friend the Rabbin, whom he so highly esteems and so affectionately loves. I was however pleased, as you may be sure, with these sentiments, as I myself feel a very great respect and tender affection for the Rabbin, and earnestly long after him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, who, I hope, will yet give him to my prayers, to which I beseech you to add



yours, and as many more as you can procure. I think I have never seen a more amiable man. To return to Mr. Saphir: I wish I could say there were many Christian families here in the same state with this Jewish one. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are daily read in the family, and conversed over. The servant (of their own nation) takes lessons in German, that she may be able to read the Holy Scriptures, and has given some indications of anxious care about salvation. I am fully of opinion that the daughter is earnestly seeking Jesus—may perhaps have found Him—though she does not yet decidedly say as much. She acknowledges, however, to have experienced benefit by praying in His name. The first time when, after professing herself on the whole convinced that He is the Messiah and the Son of God, and yet continuing to complain of darkness and distance from God, she was reminded that it was her duty so to pray, and that Jesus had promised, ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, I will do it for you,’ she said, ‘Before going to bed she intended, but could not resolve to do so; that afterwards she felt impelled to rise, and prostrating herself, she continued for a considerable time in that attitude, unable to present a single petition, but continued to repeat again and again the name of Jesus. Of an elder son, also, good

hopes are entertained, and even the prejudices of Mrs. Saphir appear to be relaxing.”<sup>1</sup>

These details regarding the Saphir family may well be excused, not only as illustrative of the eagerness with which Dr. Duncan watched the progress of light and life and Christian decision in this Israelite and his household, but in consideration of the influence which their eventual accession to the ranks of the Gospel had on the whole community, and the new character which it gave to the Jewish mission in Pesth. “A Jewish merchant there,” says Mr. Smith, “the bosom friend of the chief rabbi, the founder of the great educational institution already noticed, and a man universally held in respect by the Jews for his integrity and learning, he had become acquainted with Dr. Keith when he

<sup>1</sup> “The reference in the above letter to benefit received by some of our own countrymen points especially to the family of Mr. Rawlins, an Irish gentleman, who had come to the Continent for the education of his children, and by a series of providences had been led, quite contrary to his original purpose, to settle for a time in Pesth. There he first met the Lord, and then he had the happiness of seeing first one and then another of those dearest to him in possession of the precious hope. Highly exemplary as the whole family had been in every department of moral and social duty, so much the more powerful was the testimony they gave to the necessity of that deeper and more vital change which every one must pass through who would enter the kingdom of God. An Episcopalian by birth, Mr. Rawlins became afterwards a clergyman of the Church of England, a step in which more than one of his sons followed his example.”

first visited Pesth, and even at that early period, as we have seen, some favourable impressions had been made on his mind. These were greatly deepened by his attendance on the public services of the mission. From the time of its first establishment, and by much private intercourse at the time now spoken of, he received a strong additional impulse by the ministrations, both in English and German, and the benefit was now also shared by several of his family, who understood only German.

In consequence of Dr. Duncan's departure for Leghorn, Mr. Wingate had to remain with Mr. Smith at Pesth, instead of returning, as intended, to Edinburgh, to complete his studies. Many were the misgivings of these young missionaries at the prospect of the work being left on their inexperienced shoulders in the absence of their strongest earthly prop; but He on whose guidance and strength they were driven to cast themselves disappointed all their fears, and more than fulfilled their highest hopes. And as nothing in the history of Christian missions to the Jews is more remarkable than what passed at Pesth during Dr. Duncan's absence, as the tidings of it wonderfully uplifted him and diffused joy among all the friends of Israel at home, and as these events may be said to have secured the surprising stability and success of the mission

through all the years which followed the expulsion of the missionaries in 1849 up to the present hour, it will not be deemed out of place to insert here Mr. Smith's most interesting account of it :—

“Having now the free use of German, we were enabled to maintain all the former services in that language, in which we received valuable aid from Mr. Neuhaus, an unordained assistant, who had, recently joined us ; the English congregation rather increased than diminished ; and a feeling of deep solemnity occasionally showed itself, like the calm before the coming shower. From week to week we perceived a visible deepening of religious impression among those who visited us in private, and before the end of the year some, formerly hopeful, gave good evidence of a saving change. This was the distinctive feature of the new stage at which our work had now arrived—the first consisting in the spread of religious knowledge, the formation of a new class of religious ideas, and a gradually deepening conviction of the reality of Divine truth ; the second showing itself in a wide-spread interest, a spirit of inquiry, and in various instances real, though not as yet fully ascertained, conversion ; while in this third stage these buddings were seen bursting into blossom and fruit. Old Testament experience now passed into New Testament sonship, those added to their number receiving the seal of the Spirit, and light, love, and joy abounding in their hearts. With this special movement the year 1843 was ushered in. A communion was held on the 1st of January, being the Lord's Day. We met in an upper room, at night and in secret—for fear of the Jews, and to escape the eye of an intolerant Government. From the moment that the service began, the place where we were assembled seemed to be filled with a mysterious presence. Indeed, the risen Lord had entered by the closed door, and stood, as at Jerusalem, in the midst of His disciples. Deep silence

fell on the little company as they realized His nearness, a silence interrupted only at intervals by the deep-drawn sigh of some bursting heart. The dividing wall which separated heaven and earth seemed for the time removed, and that fellowship between both was experienced which is the fullest blessedness of earth, and anticipates the glory of heaven. Our hands now became so full of work that frequently we had not time so much as to eat bread ; from early morning till late at night we were occupied in guiding, counselling, and instructing those who were inquiring earnestly what they must do to be saved, and from time to time we had the unspeakable happiness of seeing one and another, amidst manifest tokens of Divine power, enter the kingdom of God. A spirit of prayer was poured out in a remarkable degree. Some of the younger brethren, without any suggestion from us, and indeed without our knowledge at the time, frequently spent whole nights as watchers before the throne. Indeed, all of them, from the moment of their spiritual birth, may be said to have lived and breathed in an atmosphere of prayer. For a time the whole Jewish community was deeply moved, wondering whereunto these things would grow. Nor was the interest confined to Pesth. It reached the highest point of intensity when, about the middle of May, Mr. Saphir, universally known and respected by the Jews throughout Hungary, was baptized, along with his numerous family, each member of which had given evidence of a distinct work of grace in the heart.<sup>1</sup> The late accomplished and devoted

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Saphir's youngest son, Adolph (now minister of the English Presbyterian Church, Greenwich), was then a mere boy. Writing to me lately, he says, "Though in Pesth I was quite a boy, I remember Dr. Duncan there very distinctly. His sermons in English made a very *solemn* impression, even on those who could not understand the language. I remember especially one sermon, on 2 Cor. v. 20, 'We pray you, in Christ's stead,' etc., of thrilling pathos. Imperfect as my knowledge of English was at that time, and incapable as I then was, being scarcely twelve years old, of following

American missionary at Athens, Dr. Jonas King, after a visit of ten days to Pesth, wrote from Vienna, on the 29th May, the following letter to his brother-missionary, Dr. Goodell, at Constantinople, which that missionary was good enough to send to the Jews' Committee in Edinburgh for their encouragement:—‘DEAR BROTHER GOODELL, . . . Please say to Mr. Schauffler, Mr. Schwartz, Mr. and Mrs. Allan, and Mr. Edward, that I was received by Messrs. Smith and Wingate in the most cordial manner, that they are doing a great work, and seem to be doing it in humility and love, and God is blessing them greatly. My visit to Pesth was one of the most interesting I ever had anywhere. I shall remember it all my life, and I doubt not through eternity. . . . A great work is certainly going on at Pesth. Several Jews have been converted there. I visited many of them at their houses, and often united in prayer. They give most striking evidence of true faith in Christ. During the nine or ten days I spent at Pesth I was labouring night and day in the work of the Lord. The Scotch brethren there seem to have just the right spirit—the spirit of their Master—and God blesses them. . . . I hope you will *all unitedly* remember Pesth in your prayers, night and day. Oh, I wish I could see you, and tell you what I have seen and heard there! My soul was full of joy. I have never seen such conversions among Jews before. Several of the young Jews who are converted are students at the University. O pray for the University! With the greatest haste.’ . . . This first shaking among the dry bones of Israel, on a scale large enough to arrest the attention of the Churches, coincided, remarkably enough, with the era of the Disruption in the Church of Scotland, and as after the solemn signing of the Deed of Demission

his logical discourse, I can still remember the impression made on my mind that day, of the love of God and of God's servants towards the souls of men. I also recollect his address on Song of Solomon, v. 2, 3—the soul's excuses, delaying to open to Christ.”

the first public work which engaged the attention of the Free Church General Assembly was the consideration of the Jewish Report, the Convener of the Committee was able in that Report to announce the joyful tidings that the Lord had visited His ancient heritage with the first droppings of that abundant rain which shall yet make the barren wastes of Israel to rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Among the Jewish students at the University of Pesth who were attracted to Dr. Duncan by the rare union of Hebrew and classical learning with the deepest piety, intense love of the seed of Abraham, and consecration to the work of gaining them to the Christian faith, was Alfred Edersheim (now Ph.D. of the University of Kiel, and minister of the English Presbyterian Church at Torquay). By the time of Dr. Duncan's departure for Leghorn this talented youth had made considerable progress towards the Christian faith, and his religious impressions were at length ripened into an open confession of Christ in baptism, during the remarkable movement above described by Mr. Smith. A former tutor, on parting, had recommended him to the affectionate care of the missionaries. "What! Doctor," replied the missionaries, "you, a Jew, commend him to us! Do you not know that we should seek to make him a Christian?" "Be it so," replied the Jew; "I can wish nothing better for him, morally speaking, than that he should be like you." Noble

testimony this to the power of that Christianity which they were exemplifying. Immediately after his baptism, this youth had written to Dr. Duncan a full account of the rise and progress of the change in his religious views and feelings up to his reception by baptism into the Christian Church. Dr. Duncan, in reply, wrote him a pretty long letter in Latin, which Dr. Edersheim has kindly sent me. It is dated "Leghorn, 2d May, 1843." Though written, as it states, under sickness, it overflows with affection, expresses unbounded joy at the event, anticipates for the young convert a career of usefulness in the service of Christ among the scattered sheep of the house of Israel, but cautions him against a mere intellectual religion, gives him in six great words the foundations of Christian doctrine and the chief points of Christian experience—"God, the Law, Sin, Grace, Jesus the Mediator between God and sinners, and again the Law!"—forewarns him in a strain of deep earnestness and humility (as an old man one young in years and younger still in Christianity) of the trials that awaited him if he would live godly in Christ Jesus, commends him with affecting tenderness, as a lamb of Christ, to the care of the Good Shepherd, and promises to return, as soon as the Lord would permit, to the scene of his labours.

Of Dr. Duncan's stay of nearly two years in Leghorn



I have pretty full details, the most important of which I will now give. Within less than three months of his death he spoke thus to Miss R. :—

“I rather shrink from the idea of anything being written about me after my death ; but if there is to be, I must submit. In that case, I should like it to be known about my connexion with the Church in Italy. When I was at Pesth, Mr. Allan, without my knowledge, having written to the Committee that my health was in danger from the severity of a Hungarian winter, I was ordered to repair to Leghorn, where there were a good many Jews. My wife and I accordingly went, and we were lodged in Thomson’s hotel.<sup>1</sup> I found little entrance to the Jews, and cannot now remember if I made any great effort, not having sufficient command of Italian, either for preaching or discussion. We found the Thomsons very kind people, as also several families, both Scotch and English. We attended the English Chapel of which Mr. Gambier was minister—not distantly connected with the good admiral. When we had been some time at Leghorn, Mr. Thomson said to me one day, ‘O Doctor, will you not give us a word?’ ‘Yes, if I had a place.’ ‘I can give you a place, and I think an audience too.’ Opposite the hotel he had hired a house for the reception of visitors during the busy season. So on the Sabbath I found myself in a spacious hall, with a chair and reading-desk, chairs and forms, and a small audience. Our service was at an hour different from that of the English congregation. But after a few weeks, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> They arrived about the end of November 1842. They were shortly afterwards joined by Mr. Allan, on his way to Constantinople, who was there united in marriage to Miss Torrance, Mrs. Duncan’s eldest daughter by her first husband. Her second daughter (afterwards Mrs. Wingate), who had accompanied Mr. Allan from Scotland, now took her sister’s place in Dr. Duncan’s family.

Gambier made this intimation, 'It has been thought proper to have an afternoon service'—fixing his hour the same as mine. 'What shall we do now?' said Mr. Thomson to me at the chapel door. My reply was, 'I shall go on as usual.' After sermon I announced that as I was a stranger, resident for a time on account of my health, and had not come to set up altar against altar, we should meet next Sabbath at a later hour. From this time the meeting considerably increased. A few weeks after, Mr. Gambier announced that another hour had been thought more desirable, naming my hour, but without alluding to me. I followed the same course as before, intimating that as there was service in the chapel, I should go back to the former hour. My meeting still increased, and I heard hints that the people thought I had been used shabbily.<sup>1</sup> On Sabbath I was much struck with the appearance of a gentleman who listened very attentively. He turned out to be a fellow-lodger just come to Mr. Thomson's, Dr. M., the Dean of Ardagh—newly come from Rome with his wife and daughters. I soon became intimate with the Dean, as Mrs. Duncan did with Mrs. M. He asked if Mr. Gambier held and preached Baptismal Regeneration. 'I could not say (I replied) from the sermons I heard, but I had heard it hinted that he did' (my information coming from Mrs. H. of Glasgow, who was well able to judge). 'Why (said the Dean), if he be wrong there, he is wrong everywhere.' About this time there was an article in the (*Edinburgh Witness*), the purport of which was that diocesan bishops, by assuming a title and office to which they had no right, should not even be acknowledged as presbyters. 'Is that (asked the Dean) your opinion or that of your Church?' 'No (I said), we have no sympathy with it. I believe that in the

<sup>1</sup> "Among the more intelligent and serious-minded," says Mr. Smith, "much dissatisfaction prevailed with the extremely High Church ministrations provided for them in the Episcopal Chapel, and in Dr. Duncan's effort to supply the lack of Evangelical teaching he met with a cordial response."

Church of Christ presbyters are bishops, and your bishops only presbyters.' 'Ah! well,' said the Dean, 'you have as good order as we have, and we have as good as you have.' I asked him if he had preached much when at Rome. 'I preached once (he said), and I never was asked to preach again—my preaching was not much relished there.' I asked him to preach for me, but he declined. I then asked him to give an address in my room to a select company of my ordinary hearers. He complied; and if I had been blind, and but for the difference of voice, I should have thought it was Dr. M'Donald of Ferintosh. The discourse was an admirably clear statement of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.<sup>1</sup>

"A considerable part of our congregation consisted of captains and mates of ships—sailors were not permitted to enter the harbour. Of the captains, I remember three whom I had good reason to regard as pious men—C. M. of the United Secession, Leith, a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, and a Wesleyan. This last called on me one day, and, after some conversation, requested me to preach in his ship.

<sup>1</sup> In a letter which Dr. Duncan wrote to the Committee after his return to Pesth about his work in Leghorn, he says :—"Most of my audience manifested a marked and daily growing attention to the important truths which I was enabled of the Lord to place before them. Our domiciliary visits, which we constantly sought to turn to the best account, were very kindly received—eagerly sought, I think I may say; we were enabled to make the promotion of vital godliness our single object. Of the effect produced in the conversion of souls to God, I have nothing definite to say. But I believe some souls, of whom we had cause to hope, were built up in knowledge, faith, holiness, and comfort. In others, religious impressions which had long been declining and withering away were revived, and through the mass of our little company there was manifested that serious—increasingly serious—attention to Divine things which is so frequently the prelude to a more remarkable blessing upon the means of grace. Such was the deeply interesting state of matters when we were recalled."

I said I was very willing, but he knew there were doctrinal differences between us, and that if I preached, I must preach quite unfettered—I brought my whole creed with me. He answered, ‘Sir, we have the worship of God morning and evening in our ship, three of my men are converted, and other two, I think, seriously inquiring. While I have a ship I am resolved that the Bethel flag shall wave at the mast; and indeed we have enough to do to fight the devil, the world, and the flesh, without fighting with the Calvinists.’ I preached on board accordingly.

“Shortly before leaving Leghorn, Mr. Thomson told me that some friends wished to have a parting meeting with us. After tea and conversation”—with the presentation of an address and a valuable testimonial (says Mr. Smith)—“they presented a request that I would procure them a Presbyterian minister. I informed them that our Church was on the eve of splitting into two [just before the Disruption], one part leaving, and the other remaining in the Scottish Establishment; and as I meant to leave, I asked from which party they wished a minister. They said, ‘Any in which you have confidence.’”

Dr. Duncan accordingly urged on the Church the duty of making permanent provision for the spiritual necessities of that important seaport town. From the great strain on the resources of the Free Church, as to both men and means, consequent on the Disruption, this appeal could not be immediately complied with; but about midsummer 1845, the Rev. R. W. (afterwards Dr.) Stewart was appointed to labour there—whose abundant labours among the British residents at Leghorn, and invaluable services to the Waldensian Churches, and to the cause of the evangelization of

Italy generally, from that time up to the present hour, are known to all who take any interest in the progress of the Gospel in these regions.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1843, apparently when Mr. Stewart was going from Leghorn to Geneva, Dr. Duncan wrote by him to Dr. Malan, whom he had not seen since the never-to-be-forgotten June 1826, when through his instrumentality he passed from death to life. He appears to have addressed him, accordingly, as his father in the Gospel—as he ever spoke of him. Though this letter has not been found among Dr. Malan's papers,<sup>2</sup> the tenor of it may easily be gathered from the

<sup>1</sup> "I arrived here," writes Mr. Stewart, "on the 12th June, and began my labours the Sabbath after, to a congregation of forty persons, assembled in a room in Mr. Thomson's hotel, already consecrated to that purpose during my friend Dr. Duncan's ministry here. Our congregation is now on an average the double of what it was the first day. The success which has hitherto attended our Church I attribute to two causes, 1st, the presence of Dr. Duncan in Leghorn during the winter of 1842-43, during which he created a taste in the minds of his hearers for a sort of preaching which they had never been privileged to hear; while they experienced a painful blank on being obliged after his departure to feed on 'milk'—I had almost said 'husks'—instead of 'strong meat'; and 2d, to the extreme Puseyite views of the Episcopal chaplain here, and his want of prudence—to call it by no harsher term—in condemning them as sectarians, and pointedly anathematizing from the pulpit the doctrines of Calvinism, to which they were conscientiously attached."

<sup>2</sup> One, undated, has been kindly sent me by the family, but written evidently not long after the great change—perhaps early in 1827.

reply to it (in French), the substance of which I give here, as showing the beautiful spirit which it breathes, and indicating the points of divergence and how they were regarded by this now aged servant of Christ.

“ GENEVA, 18th April 1843.—VERY DEAR AND TRUE SON IN THE LORD,—Your precious letter came as from the hand of our God Himself. Dear Stewart, who brought it to me, gave me also many details about you and your labours of the deepest interest to my soul since the name of the Lord is glorified in your work, and you are pressing on to the possession of the heritage, at the same time pointing out the way to poor sinners like ourselves, who also are with us taking possession of the kingdom that cannot be moved. Very often, my justly honoured and beloved brother, have I revolved in my own mind, and recounted to the children of God, the marvellous circumstances which your excellent letter recalls. Ah! had I visited Scotland only as the bearer of that message of light and of peace to you, with which the Master charged me, would not that journey have been the richest blessing of God on the work of so feeble and unworthy a labourer? Your gratitude and your tender and filial affection comfort me exceedingly, and I glorify the Lord for it. If the apostle wrote, *Μεϊζότεραν τούτων οὐκ ἔχω χαράν, ἵνα ἀκούω τὰ ἐμὰ τέκνα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατοῦντα* [‘I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth’], may I not feel something of that blessed joy, etc.? But, beloved, what are those *clouds* of which you speak, and which you say, like the mists upon the Alps, rise and vanish alternately in your faith? I have asked about that, and he has confirmed the fear which those words produced in my mind, that it is nothing else than unbelief under the appearance of humility; and that thus, dear friend, you make God a liar while professing to tremble at His Word. . . . You say, and here is your error, If I bring not forth fruit I am not elected. *Answer*: The

fruits are produced by the spirit of adoption ; that is to say, We must first be sure that we are children of God before obeying as children. . . . How could I love my mother as a mother if I were not sure of being her son ? Hence, as Noah built the ark *after* he was sure there would be a deluge, and Abraham saw that Sarah was with child *after* he was sure that he should be a father of nations, so Duncan will, by the spirit of filial assurance or adoption, bring forth celestial fruits after he is assured that he has life, that he is a child of God (see 1 John v. 1, and 9-13 ; also Gal. v. 22, compared with Eph. i. 13, and Gal. iv. 6). The believer, when unhappily he sins, does not say, ' If I were a child of God I should not do that,' but '*Because* I am a child of God I will do it no more.' Beloved, I cannot write more, for my health is not good. But perhaps the spirit of consolation will give some power to my words. . . . Adieu, dearly beloved son and brother,

(Signed) C. MALAN, D.D.

אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ בִּי [ 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.' ] ”

During part of the time which Dr. Duncan spent in Leghorn his health had given way even more than before : towards the latter end of spring (1843), however, it greatly improved, and as the hot season was rapidly approaching, the Committee resolved, in accordance with his own wishes, to recall him with his family to Pesth—whither their hearts were already drawn, says Mr. Smith, by the tidings they received from time to time of the success of the Lord's work in that place.

“ We left soon after ”—I quote from what he spoke to



Miss R., above referred to—"and in passing through the Tyrol I received the number of the *Witness* (newspaper) containing the account of the DISRUPTION. I said to Mrs. Duncan, 'I'll go to Pesth; I think I should get pupils as a teacher of English for so much a lesson.' She replied, 'O yes, the Lord will provide; and I don't think the Church will leave us.' We went to Pesth. I found the missionaries had got letters from each Assembly. I received one from Dr. Hunter only,<sup>1</sup> thus remaining with the Free Church without being asked. Soon after I received a call to be Professor of Hebrew in the Free Church College, Edinburgh."

Anxiously did the young missionaries at Pesth look for Dr. Duncan's return with his family.

"To our unspeakable joy we saw their faces on the 29th June 1843. It seemed like half a century since we parted. The day was so full of work, and we had so much to tell of the things that had befallen us, and of God's majestic goings in the midst of His people Israel, that the night seasons had to be encroached on for unburdening our spirits. Our joy was indeed damped when we received accounts of Dr. Duncan's appointment to the Oriental Chair in the New College, Edinburgh, by which in a few months he was to be separated from all direct participation in the work of the mission. Meanwhile, however, the happiness of the little Jewish Church, which had taken shape during his absence,

<sup>1</sup> Of the Tron Church, Edinburgh, appointed Convener of the Jewish Committee of the Established Church after the Disruption and Dr. Keith's adherence to the Free Church.



the atmosphere of light and love and peace and hope in which it breathed, and the presence amongst us again of him who had done so much in laying its foundations, made this to be truly a Pentecostal season."

What Dr. Duncan's feelings were on rejoining his young friends and recommencing his local occupations in Pesth, I will let himself express in his letter to Dr. Keith, as Convener of the Free Church Jewish Committee, dated Pesth, July 15, 1843:—

"REV. AND DEAR FRIEND,—It would be absolutely impossible to express the feelings of delight which we experienced on our return to this place, and with which I was enabled, through the Divine favour, to address our little meeting on the first Lord's Day, from the words, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in [the] truth.'<sup>1</sup> It has long been a favourite theme with me to turn to the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, where he has not one word to bring of reproof, but all is full of thanksgiving, praise, and holy boasting of them before the churches of God. And this, in a measure far above all expectations, have I found here. Our children walk in love, and the God of peace and of love is with them; and though we have no theological discussion on assurance, they abound in the joy of the Holy Ghost, receiving the truth in the love of it with all simplicity of mind, abounding in prayer, and admonishing one another daily. Some time ago, indeed, as I have been informed, a difference of opinion about a matter of practice arose among them, which it was feared might at least diminish that cordiality which subsisted among them; but they agreed to meet together frequently,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adolph Saphir notes this sermon as one which he vividly remembered, though then but a boy.

and continue to strive together in prayer till they should be brought to unanimity. I need not tell you the effect. Having found by experience what to do in circumstances of difficulty, there has since arisen no evil in which the same remedy has not in the same way been sought and obtained. In a word, we see, we feel, the presence of Him who walketh amidst the seven golden candlesticks; we gaze with grateful, adoring admiration on His stately steps and His majestic goings in the sanctuary. Indeed, when standing in the midst of them, marking the work of the Lord and the operation of our God, I seem to myself to have received of all the least share of the holy anointing; and I tremble lest my corruptions, which I feel yet strong, should break out to dishonour or mar this fair and goodly garden of Jehovah's planting. Yet must I beware of ingratitude, and learn, as I have now for many years been striving to do, from Paul—'The Lord will keep me from every evil work, and bring me to His heavenly kingdom.' It is several months since Mr. Saphir<sup>1</sup> made the remark, 'There must be many prayers just now somewhere for this place.' Surely it must be so still. Messrs. Smith, Wingate, Neuhaus, and I, have as much work on our hands as we can well do. The labours of the two first especially are astonishingly assiduous—conversing with inquirers, teaching Greek and theology, holding meetings for prayer, and for instruction in German and English. Mr. Smith speaks the former language with accuracy and with still increasing fluency. We have unanimously agreed to recommend most earnestly that Edersheim and Tomory be received by the Church as students of theology, and obtain the necessary support. I cannot speak in too high terms of their deserts. I doubt not that if not accepted they would obtain employment in the native Church.<sup>2</sup> I think that long ago you

<sup>1</sup> The initials only are given in the letter itself, from motives of prudence; but there can be no reason now for not giving the name in full, and one or two that follow.

<sup>2</sup> Of the former, see pp. 337, 338; the latter, now the Rev.

inquired whether we could not find some Jewish youths to be educated in Scotland for the ministry of the Gospel among their brethren. At times I have feared that some at home might wonder when we recommend so many as we have the promise of doing. But it appears to be of the Lord that the principal door opened to us should be among literary young men, students of philosophy, medicine, and rabbinism, who having no handicraft cannot maintain themselves, but possess that mental culture which fits them, when brought under the power of the truth, to become theologians and preachers."

Before terminating the account of Dr. Duncan's Pesth life, I must not omit to notice his intercourse with the noble Archduchess. "Dr. Duncan," says Mr. Smith, "was on very intimate terms with her, and she fully appreciated his great worth, as well as his oddities. I think the first introduction was through a letter from Dr. Keith—at least it was so in my own case. The visit always took place in the palace, by appointment. These interviews were, at first, somewhat less frequent, but in after years they became a regular institution—once a week at a given hour, and varied only when anything particular came in the way. No memorial remains of what transpired on such occasions. It was always possible that at some time or other our house might be searched for papers, and the post-office was not secure.

Alexander Tomory, has been for many years a devoted and esteemed missionary of the Free Church of Scotland to the Jews at Constantinople.

On these grounds, as well as on others, it was necessary to observe the utmost caution, in order not in any way to compromise her. Any needful reference to her in a letter was always veiled under the designation of 'The Sister on the Hill,' by which she was known among friends. Her affection and reverence for Dr. Duncan were strong to the last, and she specially delighted in his prayers."

In the month of August 1843, the Rev. Dr. Wilson, the distinguished Orientalist—for a lifetime the honoured missionary of the Established Church, and since 1843 of the Free Church of Scotland, at Bombay—having travelled through "the Lands of the Bible" on his way home, paid a brief and, to the missionaries, most refreshing visit to Pesth. "It was," writes Mr. Smith, "like a mutual salutation between the Gentile and the Jewish missions." Dr. Wilson having again come to Scotland to be Moderator of the General Assembly last year (1871), I had some conversation with him about his visit to Pesth, his intercourse with Dr. Duncan, and his interviews with the Archduchess. After going over the eager discussion which the two linguists had had on Sanscrit and kindred topics, he told me how amused the Archduchess was at his little peculiarities. Finding that the polished, inlaid floors of her palace invariably marked the spot where he sat, being covered with the

snuff which he uncereemoniously took from his waistcoat-pocket in anything but a genteel way, she had made him a present of a gold snuff-box, but that soon she found him at his old trick, she only laughing at the oddity of it.<sup>1</sup>

I have before me six French letters of the Archduchess to Dr. Duncan, the very first of which, written but a few months after his settlement in Pesth, begins, "My dear and revered Dr. Duncan," and prays that the joy which she had experienced in making the acquaintance, through him, of "that dear brother of the house of Israel" (no doubt Mr. Saphir), "might be imparted to himself; and regarding this as a new proof of the Christian love which he had already shown to her so many times." Three months after this, writing to him to make an appointment at her château on a matter of church business, she says in the course of this note, "I will rejoice to see you, my *dear*, dear Dr. Duncan," etc.

When the Disruption of the Church of Scotland took place, on the memorable 18th of May 1843, two of the

<sup>1</sup> "Though he never," writes Mr. Smith, "had a personal interview with the Archduke, it was he, I think, who presented him with the snuff-box, through the Archduchess. Of course the Doctor always took snuff in the palace, as in all other places. He could as little get on without snuff as a steam-engine without fuel. And only about the half of what he took found its way into his nose."

Divinity Professors left the Establishment—Dr. Chalmers, Professor of Theology, and Dr. Welsh, Professor of Ecclesiastical History—and were at once recognised in the same office in the Free Church of Scotland. But as the Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages adhered to the Established Church, a new Professor of this branch was required for the Free Church. All eyes were turned to Dr. Duncan, but it was impossible to elect him till it should be seen to which of the two bodies he would adhere. It was therefore, by the Disruption Assembly, remitted to the Education Committee to elect some fit and proper person to fill the vacant Chair of Hebrew. In due time intelligence arrived that *all* the missionaries of the Church of Scotland, to the Gentiles and the Jews, had adhered to the Free Church; whereupon the Education Committee unanimously elected Dr. Duncan to the Chair of Hebrew in the Free Church of Scotland, and the appointment was formally confirmed by the General Assembly which met at Glasgow in the autumn of that year.

I cannot close this account of Dr. Duncan's connexion with the Pesth mission, for which I have been so much indebted to Mr. Smith, without adding the concluding sentences of his valuable paper regarding the history of the mission after Dr. Duncan's removal from it:—

"The parting was painful, but the faithful Lord who had stood by us in similar circumstances the year before, kept us from despondency, nor was our confidence misplaced. The Word of God grew, and multiplied greatly, and the Lord added to the Church, if not daily, yet from time to time, such as should be saved. The blessing which rested on the mission was even less conspicuous in the number of converts than in the love, harmony, and mutual confidence which reigned among them. Strangers who visited us from many quarters felt, according to their own statements, as if, overleaping the lapse of centuries, they had suddenly stepped into the midst of an Apostolic church. Mr. Saphir was associated with us in the work, and proved, by his deep piety, his rare humility, and his great learning, a most efficient coadjutor. A school was established under the auspices of his singularly devoted son, Philip,<sup>1</sup> which, before the premature death of its founder, numbered more than a hundred children, and subsequently several hundreds, to all of whom was given a thoroughly Christian education, not only with the consent, but in many cases the most cordial approval, of their Jewish parents. A superior class of colporteurs or evangelists were trained, and sent into all parts of Hungary, meeting, wherever they went, with eager inquiries regarding the strange reports of conversions in Pesth, which had penetrated into every corner of the country. The friendly alliance between us and the Protestant pastors of Pesth and Buda, which had been initiated in the time of Dr. Duncan, became more and more intimate. Weekly ministerial conferences were set on foot, which, besides being productive of direct spiritual benefit to these brethren, and to all of us, enabled the

<sup>1</sup> See *Letters and Diaries of Philip Saphir*. Edited by his Brother (Rev. Adolph Saphir), Edinburgh, 1852—drawn up while the gifted editor was prosecuting his studies for the holy ministry at the New College, Edinburgh. An unpretending little book, but fragrant, and fitted to teach young and ardent students some striking and precious lessons.

mission through them to exercise a powerful, and in some respects even a determining influence on the welfare of the Protestant Church during the perilous times that followed. But all these things belong to a later period, and I only refer to them now as the proper outgrowth of what already existed in the germ, before Dr. Duncan's connexion with the mission terminated."



## CHAPTER XIV.

### TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OF UNBROKEN PROFESSORIAL WORK: 1843-1870.

WE have now reached the last and longest stage of Dr. Duncan's life, in treating which it will be convenient to confine ourselves in this chapter to the manner in which he discharged the duties of his new office, and his influence over his students. Not having reached Scotland till the beginning of November, he had immediately to enter on the work of his Chair. This consisted in the teaching of two Hebrew classes, a junior and a senior; the latter including Exegetical Lectures on the Old Testament. Those who were familiar with Dr. Duncan's mental habits could not help having serious misgivings as to his success in both these departments, especially the junior. Capable he was beyond most men of kindling enthusiasm both for the language he was teaching and the thought conveyed in it—provided his pupils were few, and he were allowed to go off into sidings, at times of rich

fertility, but often distantly connected with the point in hand, and possibly demanding from the pupil no evidence of preparation for the lesson, and sending him away without the information he most needed; but he wanted the capacity to initiate a large class in the elements of a language, and to drill them thoroughly, as junior students require to be, in the grammatical structure of the language, and the peculiarities of each passage of an author as it comes up for investigation in the lesson of the day. It need not, therefore, be wondered at that very soon, and especially after the first two or three sessions, the students—a class quick to observe such things—began to grumble. Conscientious students, determined to learn, made up by their own industry at home for much that they missed in the class; but there were others, especially such as had little taste for linguistic studies, who took advantage of Dr. Duncan's slackness, allowed their time to be engrossed with other studies, and learnt in the Hebrew class next to nothing. Even in the senior class, where one should have thought he would be in his element, he seldom had written lectures to read, and when he had, they had none of the fire and freshness which he now and then threw into his subject in oral exposition. Even when carefully thought out, and expressed with exegetical and theological precision, there was a

stiffness and sometimes a dryness about them which showed to the discerning hearer that what he wanted, in order to give forth his whole capacious thoughts and deep feelings, was to get rid of his manuscript—to be “loosed and let go.” In fact, he was wont to say himself, that his “prelections” ought rather to be called “prolocutions”—what he *read* being, in his own view, but the starting-point for what he *spoke* in the way of expansion and illustration.

But while I state this frankly at the outset, there was a sense in which his professional work yielded richest fruit, and a line of things in which not only his best students, but all his colleagues in office, looked up to him with a kind of awe. Perhaps the best way of bringing out what I mean here, and in fact all his professional peculiarities, excellences, and defects, will be to give a few extracts from communications with which I have been favoured by students who were under him at the New College. Before doing this, however, I may quote what his missionary colleague at Pesth felt about this when they parted, and continued to feel ever after, expressing as it does with much accuracy and force both the excellences and defects of his friend in his new sphere :—

“It always appeared to me somewhat doubtful whether the Church had acted wisely in calling him to the Oriental

Chair in Edinburgh. That doubt would have been entirely removed had it been possible in his new sphere more effectually to utilize his extraordinary gifts. His habits of mind totally unfitted him for the efficient teaching of elementary Hebrew, or, indeed for any kind of merely routine work. On the other hand, his vast learning, his still more remarkable powers of exact thought, and, above all, the profound reaches of his spiritual experience—which penetrated, and pervaded, and illuminated from within the entire range of his scientific attainments—all these admirably qualified him to handle the exercises of Scripture, and especially that of the Old Testament. This was the kind of work which he could best pursue consecutively. In ordinary circumstances his mental activity vibrated in a series of strong and even violent alternations. Usually when he took hold of a subject—or rather, for this is the more correct description, when a subject took hold of him—he could not dismiss it again till either he had exhausted it, or it had exhausted him. This absorption of mind lasted often for several days, after which he would emerge as from an arena of inward conflict, fatigued and almost prostrate both in body and mind. The mere exhaustion of physical and mental, or (as the case might be also) of spiritual energy, made him beat about for a few days more, occupied with nothing in particular—like a ship becalmed. But the breeze springing up, and filling the sail afresh, he would set forth on some new voyage over the ocean of truth, steering, or rather being driven, towards possibly an entirely different point of the compass from that to which his previous course had been bent. Such being his natural habits, it will readily be perceived how the exposition of Scripture should be the occupation best suited to evoke continuity of labour. It supplied food for his heart as well as for his mind, which was a first essential; his accurate linguistic and Biblical learning made it congenial; and the constant though gradual change of topic provided the requisite variety. I have often thought that if, in addi-

tion to Old Testament exegesis, our staid forms of theological training had admitted of his being turned, along with his students, at a given hour twice a week, into the Princes Street Gardens, there to walk, talk, and discuss together in perfect freedom—content sometimes to get nothing, at other times obtaining glimpses into vistas of thought sufficient to last a lifetime—there would have been inaugurated the greatest school of theological learning in modern Europe. The admirable mixture of the logical, the ideal, and the experimental in his theology would have secured the result, had it been possible, by some such expedient, to draw from his mind—in a way conformable to its nature and working—the almost inexhaustible stores of truth with which it was filled.”

As Dr. Duncan’s professoriate was discharged, if I may so say, quite as much out of the Chair as in it, and, I should say, to more lasting effect in his pregnant and sometimes invaluable conversations with his students in his walks with them, and when they called upon him at his own house, some of the following extracts will be found to speak to both.

From the Rev. W. Scrimgeour, Free Church, Arbroath:—

“At the time I studied under Dr. Duncan, having no assistant, he had himself to begin at the very alphabet of the Hebrew language and take us through the paradigms—in short, to do the work of a schoolmaster rather than of a Professor. It was not till the second year that we got into the literature of the Old Testament. And even then we did not get very much. We read a little of Genesis and the Psalms, Isaiah, and a very little of Daniel. There were no exegetical lectures, and only very rarely were there running commentaries on select portions of Isaiah. A great deal of time

was devoted to the study of the accents and the practice of cantillation. Indeed, the class, viewed as a class for the teaching of Hebrew, was not very efficiently conducted. Sometimes the thing prescribed was not taken up, but something quite different. And sometimes a discussion on something incidentally emerging in the course of the lesson would occupy most of the hour. So that those who attended the class merely to learn Hebrew, and trusted to their teacher to guide and superintend their studies, and keep them at their work, got little. The absence of mind which characterized Dr. Duncan contributed greatly to this. I remember that on one occasion when from some cause I had not prepared the lesson for the day [Mr. S., however, distinguished himself in Hebrew]—when called up, I got through my work with the greatest difficulty, a difficulty perceptible to all my fellow-students. When I had finished Dr. Duncan followed up with a mechanical ‘Very well,’ at which the class could not refrain from laughing. The laugh woke him up from his reverie, and seeing that his sentence of approbation had been somewhat out of place, with a good-humoured smile he acknowledged the mistake, saying, ‘Well, gentlemen, it *might* have been worse.’ But when a student—trusting to the Doctor’s unmethodical way of conducting the class, and counting on his good-nature—was found often and grievously neglecting his preparations, he sometimes learned to his cost that this was far from being safe. I remember yet the effect produced in the class one day when a student, who had made a most shameful exhibition of ignorance of the very elements of Hebrew, as he sat down, received this scathing rebuke : ‘I trust, sir, for the honour of Christianity, that you will never meet with an unconverted Jew.’ It was as if a thunder-bolt had suddenly crashed down among us, and made the most careless feel that our Professor, oblivious as he sometimes seemed, was wide awake, and, with all his loving patience, was not to be trifled with.

“ There were not a few of us, however, in Dr. Duncan’s

class, who felt that, though we did not get much Hebrew from him, we got something far better. In the region of comparative philology he was a thoroughly competent and most delightful instructor—the connexions of the Hebrew, not only with the other Shemitic dialects, but with the Greek and Latin, and more modern languages, being most carefully and luminously pointed out. We found him a most acute and profound metaphysician also; and on such subjects as Necessity and Free Will, what fell from him seemed to touch the core of the matter better than anything we had ever heard or read. And, on the great questions of Theology, we felt that we got more from him than from any other. It was not just that he had made a thorough study of them, and was able to give a masterly exposition of them—rather it was, that he had had to look at all the great problems as things which he must see and understand for himself, and obtain thorough conviction of; that he had had to satisfy himself that the truths were really truths; *that he had doubted* in regard to one and all of them, and had looked at them on every side, considering what could be said for and against them with earnest impartiality, and had at last received them, only when overmastered by the evidence presenting itself on their behalf. Most of the great questions in regard to the being of God, the past, the present, and the future of man, and the Person and work of the God-man, turned up in some way in the course of his prelections, and on all of them he threw light, so that for myself I can say—and I am certain that others could say the same—that to Dr. Duncan, more than to any other of my teachers, I owe it that the great truths of the Christian Revelation have become matters of personal conviction.

“The spiritual character, also, of Dr. Duncan was most impressive. The child-like simplicity of the man, his profound reverence, his sense of personal unworthiness, the absoluteness of his reliance on Christ, his devotedness to the Saviour appearing in all that he said and did, deeply

touched not a few of his students, and formed a powerful instrumentality in subduing them into the obedience of faith.

“His prayers were very remarkable. Sometimes, when it was far from being obvious to himself that there was any gracious relationship between Christ and him, and when his longings for personal experience of the love of God were very intense, his prayers would be, as some would have thought, unduly long. On one occasion the prayer that should have preceded the lesson prolonged itself for an entire hour, and it was only the ringing of the bell at the end of the hour that awoke him to a remembrance of the actual circumstances of the case, and terminated the reverie. But many who listened to that prayer were unspeakably moved by it, were awe-stricken, and had their hearts melted, and were led to enter into the petitions as most suitable for themselves.

“In one such prayer he was wrestling with God to bestow salvation, on the ground that those who craved it were ‘the work of His hands;’ and at this point the prayer took form in the following words: ‘O Lord, we are *thine*; we are *thine*, and *wrath* is *thine*; we are *thine*, and *salvation* is *thine*; we *deserve* wrath, but we *need* salvation’—such a pathos of entreaty being thrown into the word ‘need’ as cannot be described.”

From the Rev. John Henderson, Free Church, Coat-bridge:—

“The extent and accuracy of his learning were quite extraordinary. As a linguist, I should suppose he had few equals. . . . To have looked upon him, however, merely, or even chiefly, as a distinguished linguist, would have been to make a great mistake. I never met with any one with an intellect more subtle and profound. It was my good fortune to study under Sir William Hamilton



and Dr. Cunningham. With the former, rather than with the latter, Dr. Duncan had intellectual sympathy, and with the former, consequently, he may be more fitly compared. I speak for myself; but in my apprehension Dr. Duncan's mind was to the full as subtle as that of Sir William's. He could go as deep, and draw distinctions as fine. Nor did he fall behind in expression. Sir William's style was distinguished by accuracy and point, but however suited for a philosophical disquisition, it is not to my mind so indicative of genius as the aphoristic sayings in which it was Duncan's wont to express himself. Dr. Duncan possessed, in a very remarkable degree, the power of dealing with questions of philosophy. That power, as few know so well as yourself, was exercised in no stinted manner. Not before passing through many phases, philosophical and theological, did he at length find rest for his soul in simple trust in Jesus. Nor did he ever permit his speculative talent to get rusted. His piety, indeed, was childlike; few could with better reason apply to themselves those words, 'My soul is like a weaned child.' How deep his humility and self-abasement! The manifestation he gave of them comes back affectingly upon me. I remember well his extreme depression of spirits at times, under a sense of personal unworthiness, and how ready he then was to be helped by any one who had spiritual counsel to impart. But while he cheerfully accorded to faith all that it may rightly demand, he continued to be a resolute upholder of the claims of reason. It was no opinion of his that in putting trust in Jesus a man consented to relinquish the exercise of his understanding. The Bible presents us with truths which the human mind is incompetent to discover; but between these and such as it can discover there is no real opposition; and, moreover, it is by reflecting upon what the Bible contains that we discover the import and value of its teaching. So far from there being any antagonism between true faith and the understanding, vigorously acting in obedience to its own laws, they are

mutually helpful. He applied his subtle intellect intrepidly, though reverently, to the investigation of the doctrines of Scripture. After reading Edwards on 'God's Chief End in Creation,' I took the liberty of submitting to him this question, 'Whether the Father, while heartily choosing to give His Son for sinners, and beholding in them nothing to merit His doing so, was not at the same time required, by a regard for His own glory, or for the manifestation of His grace, to make that gift, or may He, all things considered, have refrained from making it?' The Doctor replied, 'Anthropologically I am an Anti-Pelagian; but I am a Theo-Pelagian. The acts of the Divine will are not to be traced back to any ulterior cause or motive. As regards the things willed, the relation of cause and effect obtained among them; but the Divine will was not itself subject to the law of causality.' He quoted with approval the saying of the Schoolmen, 'Deum velle hoc propter hoc, sed non propter hoc velle hoc.' He thought the representations of the godly Edwards—so he called him, in the treatise just mentioned—had a slight tinge of Pantheism [see *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 49], and he added that there were statements of the no less godly Chalmers of which the same thing might be affirmed. It was not, however, he said, the intention of the one or other to teach Pantheism in any form. All this took place at one interview, in the course of which he quoted several passages from Augustine bearing on the topics treated of. He also strongly recommended me to read Thomas Aquinas upon them. In his case there was no room for supposing that feeling outran reason. The thoughts legitimating the strong emotion were sure to be forthcoming. His profound piety was seen to be the proper result of, or, if you will, to be in coincidence with, the processes of thought gone through by his singularly-gifted mind. *His power as a theologian chiefly showed itself in dealing with the difficult questions which lie on the border-line between Theology and Philosophy, and in so representing conflicting*

systems of theology that the hearers might understand what the elements in each were which were likely to secure acceptance for it.

“As a Professor, his usefulness was not by any means such as might have been anticipated, when regard is had simply to his gifts and attainments. The explanation is not far to seek. He was one of the most absent-minded of men, and utterly unmethodical in everything but the arrangement of his thoughts. He did not commit his thoughts to paper. He was a man of moods, too: now cheery, and again utterly dejected. And, to crown all, he did not seem to know where his strength lay. For, while he was but little qualified for instilling the elements of Hebrew, and had no superior as an exegete and an unraveller of the knotty questions in theology, he took up the chief part of his time in imparting elementary knowledge which could have been far more efficiently communicated by one not having a tithe of his ability and learning. There were students, consequently, by whom Dr. Duncan was not prized. Those who looked chiefly, not to the quality of the work done, but to the quantity, and regularity of performance, could not well fail to be dissatisfied with him. I have seen his class at times miserably attended. In a sense, and that, too, a not unimportant one, he was, as a Professor, a failure. There was good ground for dissatisfaction. But when I take into account his influence as a whole, when I pass under review all that was received from him—often, it is true, in a fragmentary enough form—my conviction is that his presence in the New College was of incalculable advantage to the students. They had in him one of the brightest examples of the scholar, the philosopher, the theologian, the Christian. And much proceeded from his lips which acted most powerfully in stimulating those who heard it, both to exert their intellectual faculties more strenuously, and to treat with a more profound reverence the declarations of God’s Word. He was constantly uttering memorable sayings.

“The New College has reason to feel proud of having had Dr. Duncan as one of her Professors. Few things, I know, have given me greater pleasure than on one occasion, when he was much cast down on account of his seeming want of success as a Professor, having spoken words fitted to encourage him. The class had been very thin. The state of matters had led him to speak of the question whether it was not his duty to resign his Professorship. When I was leaving at the end of the hour, he signified that he wished to speak with me. On retiring with him to his sitting-room, he asked me how the students were affected towards him, and whether I thought they were benefiting by his prelections. I remember that I told him that the chief explanation of the small attendance was the fact that he had begun to give lessons in Arabic, which the majority of the students did not seem to care for, but that his services as a whole, and in particular his exegetical instruction, were held by the students with whom I associated in the highest estimation.”

From the Rev. Alexander D. Campbell, Free Church, Lockerbie :—

“I feel strongly that nothing that has yet appeared (certainly not the *Colloquia*) has given the world the least idea of the spiritual idiosyncrasy of Dr. Duncan. No one, for instance, could gather from what has yet been published how much he was loved and followed by plain, uncultured, but deeply exercised godly people everywhere, but more especially in the West of Scotland. His true mission in the New College (as it appeared to me at the time, and now more than ever), was not the teaching of Hebrew—that (to use one of his own phrases) he did ‘indifferently well’—but *to exhibit* to the youth who flocked there a living embodiment of deep, exercised, spiritual religion. There we were—many of us fresh from discussions in philosophy which had engrossed and fascinated us, some groping their

way through difficulties in the Evidences, and some through difficulties in systematic theology, while others, perchance, were passing through deep spiritual struggles as to the reality of grace in their own souls and their call to the work of the ministry; but whatever was the character of our difficulties, when we looked at 'the Rabbi,' we all felt, and were wont to say, There is the best evidence of Christianity, and especially the best evidence that there is such a thing as living, personal godliness; there is a man who walks closely with God, who actually knows what it is to enjoy the light of God's countenance, and at the same time what it is *to be without it*, even for a day; there is a man who, while brimful of all knowledges, ancient and modern, evidently prizes most the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. His very darkness and distress, often so mysterious and humiliating, and which he could not keep to himself, was, I believe, for *our benefit*, and I have known instances in which it produced the deepest impression and led to conversion. One memorable instance of this, of which I have a vivid recollection, occurred at the prayer-meeting of the Professors and students; when Duncan, who was presiding, broke down, and in the presence of Principal, Professors, and students, wept and sobbed, and said that God had forsaken him. It was one of the most solemn scenes I ever witnessed, and long afterwards I learned that God had a gracious purpose to serve by it.

"But I must stop. According to my judgment Dr. Duncan's was by far the freshest, subtlest, most original and suggestive mind in the Professoriate of the New College. And then he was so humble and childlike, that we never hesitated to go and tell him our difficulties and perplexities; and some of us could tell how often he disentangled our feet from the meshes in which they had been caught, and so completely established the truth of the orthodox view that we had nothing to reply to his emphatic and triumphant *grumph*, which I can't describe.

“Those who did not know Dr. Duncan intimately might conclude from his general seriousness and gravity that he had no sense of humour. But this is a great mistake. Not only had he a great deal of genuine boyish feeling in him, but he had a keen sense of humour and love of innocent fun. An amusing illustration of this occurred one day in his class. We were reading in the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Numbers, the story of Balaam. After one or two others had read, a Highland student was called up and was found very deficient in some of the nicer details of Hebrew. Duncan wrought with him for about a quarter of an hour, and almost lost his temper. At last, in despair of making any impression on him, he said to the student, ‘Well, read on.’ The student resumed his reading, and the very first words that came were, ‘And the ass said unto Balaam, *Am not I thine ass?*’ The scene was truly ludicrous, and the Professor immediately exploded in a loud fit of laughter. The whole class of course followed suit, and kept up the roar for some time. But no sooner was the explosion over than that tender and almost morbidly sensitive conscience of his smote him. A cloud passed over his face, and his eyes filled with tears, while he confessed to his class that he had done wrong, and had set us young men a bad example. He said that no one should ever laugh over the Word of Jehovah, and that he especially, a Professor of the Old Testament Scriptures, should have been the last to do so.”

From the Rev. Frederick Souter, Coningsburgh (Shetland):—

“I still remember, after the lapse of fifteen years, the deep feeling of awe that filled my mind as our venerated teacher, when going over with us the Book of Psalms, in language most exact, and in manner most solemn, discoursed on the marvellous display of the omnipotence and



grace of Jehovah evoked in the deliverance of the afflicted, yet trusting believer. After critically examining the verses of the eighteenth Psalm, the Professor was led to speak of the Divine attributes as manifested in the work of redemption, showing how marvellously these were blended, harmonized, and glorified in the work of salvation. On leaving the class-room on that particular occasion, a fellow-student, well able to appreciate what had just fallen from the lips of Dr. Duncan, said to me, 'He is not surpassed in power of intellect by any one in the College.' On another occasion, when engaged in studying the prophet Isaiah, the expression [מִנְחַת שָׁו] 'Minchath-shāv,' chap. i. 13 ['an oblation of falsehood,' or 'worthlessness'], called forth a vigorous expression of the Professor's sympathy with Jehovah in his disgust at worship offered by hypocrites without pious feeling. Descending from the *rostrum*, as if to drive away such loathsome objects from his presence, with averted face and outstretched hand, in tone indescribably emphatic, he pronounced his verdict on their multiplied, costly, yet heartless services—as *shāv* ! 'It's all *shāv* !'

"Several of the students, desirous to have the Doctor's opinion on some of the more difficult passages in Job, preferred a request to that effect. This the Doctor at once granted. Next day, accordingly, due intimation having been given that a preliminary critical lecture would be delivered on the exegetical literature of that Book, the class-room was crowded. Nor were the listeners disappointed. Without a single note before him, the excellencies, peculiarities, and defects of Umbreit and other commentators were fluently set before us, proving that, in his capacious mental storehouse, treasures of learning were amassed, capable of easy production as occasion required. On the first day of the Session, Dr. Duncan occupied the greatest part of the hour in prayer, thus consecrating, as it were, the exercises of the Session before us—imploping Divine guidance and teaching for us all, and casting him-

self and his students on the tender mercy of Jehovah, our covenant God.

“‘Jealous over us with a godly jealousy,’ he noticed with pain that a few of the students occasionally entered the class-room after prayer was ended. This called forth first remonstrance, and then rebuke, which, from the unquestionable piety of Dr. Duncan, was felt deeply, even though no disrespect to the exercise of prayer was meant. On one occasion his rebuke was certainly undeserved. After prayer had ended, and the exercises of the hour had just begun, the door opened and a stranger entered and quietly took a seat in one of the back benches. The Professor’s zeal for God warmed, and fancying that the offender was one of the students, he launched forth on the fearful inconsistency of want of interest in prayer on the part of divinity students. Having had the privilege of hearing Mr. W. C. Burns in former years, I remembered his appearance, and recognised in the stranger that devoted evangelist and missionary. I looked round to see how he was taking his rebuke. All I noticed was a quiet, subdued smile on his countenance—passing away immediately—and as the class work was resumed, engaging with evident interest and sympathy in it. Mr. Burns had just returned from China, and had come to salute his much-valued friend, Dr. Duncan, bringing in his hand some of his recent translations into the Chinese for presentation to him.

“On parting with a student, Dr. Duncan was in the habit of speaking solemnly on the subjects of personal religion, at the same time making kind inquiries as to professional studies and prospects. He also had several books which he strongly recommended for diligent study. Of these I remember Pearson on the Creed, and Witsius on the Covenants.”

From the Rev. James P. Lilley:—

“The first duty of the hour he took a very deep delight



in, viz., the prayer. He always prolonged it much beyond the usual limit, sometimes standing far into the hour, with his open eyes fixed on the faces of his pupils, and yet evidently quite unconscious of any movement they might make. Frequently they were very impressive; while some of us felt it a weariness to come into the class-room towards the close of his last Session, one of our number remarked that he would go to the Rabbi if it were only to hear his prayer. I was more than once struck with the number of *historical* allusions he introduced into them. Frequently in structure they resembled some of the Psalms. I have heard him begin with the herald mission of the Baptist, and then mention the facts of the Apostles' Creed, and end with the expressions in 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' Among all the Psalms, I think his favourite was the seventy-third, which he regarded as the concentrated expression of much in the Book of Job. In speaking of the Psalms one day, as the book of Divine Erotics, he said that the Christian Church had a Divine right to use in worship hymns especially relating to the facts that had brought her into existence. Towards the last, it was scarcely possible to take notes from him—he spoke so very low and indistinctly, and frequently began sentences that he never finished in an intelligible form. The reason he himself assigned for this was '*mental debility*.' His general health, he said, was good enough—but he entreated us to bear with him, for he was mentally worn out. And when, in answer to this, we gave the usual noisy response of students, it was something delightful to see the smile that lighted up the old Israelitish face. Altogether, the impression left on us towards the last was that of a powerful spirit gradually fading away from communion with men into the fellowship of the unseen and eternal. We looked on the frail, bent body that entered the class-room door—clad in the tattered

pulpit gown, and holding the two-ounce paper of snuff in the left hand—as not much more than an old tent from which the glory was departing.”

“The last prayer which Dr. Duncan offered up for his class,” writes a student who was under him that Session, “was marked by a heavenly glow of enthusiasm which I shall never forget. I think I see him yet as he wrestled with God—rather as one absent from than present in the body—uttering the following words with an emphasis that all must have felt the power of: ‘Deepen our humility, enliven our zeal, and inflame our love!’ In fact, the effect produced by this prayer—the last we were ever to hear him offer up—was made the topic of conversation among a few of us at the end of the hour.”

But the Rev. Robert J. Sandeman, Free Church, Partick (Glasgow)—nephew of the lady who kept house for Dr. Duncan after Mrs. Duncan’s death until she herself died (a period of nearly seventeen years)—had access to him and enjoyed intimacy with him to an extent which none of his other students had, and he has favoured me with a paper too valuable not to be given nearly in full.

I. *His professional work.* “His forgetfulness was fatal to his success as a teacher of Hebrew. It was unfortunate for him and for us that he was required to

teach a class almost ignorant of the elements of the language. He could plan a graduated series of lessons for beginners as well as any, but he never could carry out his own plans. The position of an accent, or a grammatical peculiarity in the first sentence of the reading-lesson, often led to a philological discussion that occupied the whole hour. Day after day the prescribed task was undone. The tendency to digression seemed irresistible. Oblivious of his audience, and intent only on his subject, he gave learned disquisitions, in which the students—with the exception of a few devoted linguists among them—took no interest. They were impatient of the philology. They found it unintelligible. They complained of it as irrelevant to the proper work of the class. Sometimes Dr. Duncan, anticipating this complaint, would say that he never should have left the Jewish Mission merely to teach the Hebrew language, and that he felt free to discuss questions theological and philological raised by the lesson. The misfortune was that, while he was constitutionally unfitted to drill a class in reading and grammar, he was still required to attempt to do so. He felt his inefficiency keenly, and bitterly reproached himself, and was always trying hard, and always failed, to do this part of his work better. He would sometimes, in despair, say that he thought it might be his

duty to resign the Professorship, when I would remind him that he was not merely teacher of Hebrew, but also Professor of Old Testament Exegesis, and that, as such, he was invaluable to us all. Many symmetrical men do all parts of their work tolerably well : he was an unsymmetrical man, who, while he did one part of his work, the teaching of Hebrew, badly, did the other part of his work, expounding the Old Testament, supremely well. His Lectures—which he gave on two days of the week to the senior class—were fresh, stimulating, and powerful. Though not read, but delivered extempore, they contained brilliant, eloquent passages, some of which I have tried in vain to recall : bare outlines alone remain in memory. The glory of the flower—its bloom and fragrance—gone, and nothing left but withered leaves.

“ But while these elevating, stimulating lectures must for the most part remain as a dream of the past to those who heard them, the lecturer himself may be described. At ten minutes past the hour he entered the class-room, and walked up to the desk slowly, without looking at any one. His thoughts were pre-occupied. He was meditating the opening prayer, which with him was not a mere formal introduction to the class-work, but an integral part of it. Without sitting down, he laid hold of the desk with both hands, and in slow measured tones reverently and

earnestly pleaded for himself and for us with God. The prayer was a fresh, vivid utterance of the whole man, heart, soul, and mind, exactly expressing the aspirations of a true divine after the knowledge and the life of God. It had the solemnity without the formality of a liturgy. His old students often speak of the ineffaceable impression produced by these opening prayers. After the prayer he sat down, opened the Hebrew Bible, and slowly read the first verse of the passage he meant to expound. Critical difficulties, if such there were, were briefly and lucidly explained. Verbal and grammatical peculiarities were pointed out. Having discussed the form he proceeded to expound the subject-matter of the passage under consideration. He took a preliminary pinch of snuff; he paused till he caught the line of thought; he rose from his seat, he walked backwards and forwards, half-lecturing, half-soliloquizing, in a profound and interesting manner. From time to time a bright gleam lighted up his face; he raised his forefinger. He had caught a glimpse of one of the mountain-tops of divine truth. He spoke like one inspired. His mind was a glass, collecting rays of light from all quarters, theology, philosophy, and poetry, and concentrating them upon the Scripture-text. He was in 'that region where,' to use his own words, 'the profound is simple, and the simple is pro-

found.' His utterances had the force of demonstration. The truth shone through him self-evident and irresistible. At such times his expression and whole appearance was very striking. Flesh and blood, in him never very obtrusive, were etherealized away. This, however, could not last. Enthusiastic vision of truth was followed by calm reflection upon it. He sat down, leant back on his chair, and, after taking a pinch of snuff, summed up all in an aphoristic utterance. Perhaps his taste for sparkling antithesis led him at the moment to overstate the truth. He would pause again, and balance the aphorism on one side by an aphorism on the other, and, always loyal to truth, would say that the truth lay somewhere between the two."

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## CHAPTER XV.

THE SAME—OUTPOURINGS ON PHILOSOPHY, THE METAPHYSICS OF THEOLOGY, THE THEOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, ETC.

I HAVE said that quite as much (if not more) of the value of Dr. Duncan's teaching lay in what came from him in conversation with his students, as in what he uttered from the Chair. Here I avail myself of Mr. Sandeman's paper—supplementing it in a subsequent chapter by extracts from other communications.

### I. *Speculative Difficulties—his own Experience, and the Result of it.*

"Though," writes Mr. Sandeman, "I felt Dr. Duncan's moral power from the first, I did not realize his intellectual power till I entered on the study of philosophy. He listened with interest to my enthusiastic report of the Lectures of Professor Fraser (then of the New College, and now of the University of Edinburgh). Professor Fraser treated philosophy as an experience and a life, rather than as a system of truth. He preached the duty of thinking. He exhorted us to awake from the sleep of unreflection. His fervid appeals were to some of us a means of intellectual

awakening. We began to examine the foundations of our beliefs. The region of first truth, which we entered as inquirers, was to us a new world. At that stage I found in Dr. Duncan an invaluable guide. He thoroughly understood the change that had passed upon us. He interpreted to us our experience. He told us that this awaking of intellect through philosophy much resembled the awaking of the conscience by the Gospel. He had passed through the same experience. No one understood better how to treat young men at that stage. He did not bid the awakened intellect go to sleep again, and escape the dangers incident to thinking by not thinking at all. He always laid stress not on the danger, but on the falsehood of wrong views. He knew that the young mind is fascinated by danger, as the moth is by the flame. Truth was to him the main consideration. He would not deny, distort, or overstate a fact to favour his own views. He acknowledged truth wherever he found it. The young inquirer, who too readily suspects the intellectual honesty of other men, could never question his. While he admitted that philosophy was powerful to *awaken*, he denied that it could *enlighten* the soul. He regarded the history of philosophy as a demonstration of its inability to solve the problems it raised. Philosophy fails, and must for ever fail, in its grand attempt to build a bridge of proof by which a man can pass from the *ego* to the *non-ego*—from the subject to the object—from the inner world of his own thoughts to the outer world of realities. There was to Philosophy an impassable gulf between thought and being. He could get no philosophical ground for believing in anything material or spiritual beyond his own sensations. A Deistical companion had shaken his faith in Christianity. He was too logical to rest in Deism. He did not stop till he reached Materialistic Atheism, which, with its few postulates, suited the requirements of speculation. But his heart could not rest in that dreary system. Questions as to the end of life rose to disturb him. Often, as he went



along the street, he would wrap his student's cloak about him, and ask, with a shiver, 'What, after all, are we here for?'<sup>1</sup> He was ever seeking an Ethic in the system. He found nothing more stable or higher than himself on which he could lean. So far as he could discover, he was a stream of sensations, rising from nothing and tending no whither. His creed was made up of negations. He could sum up his confession of faith in the utterance of a dying philosopher, 'The world is a shadow, and I the shadow of a shade.' Philosophy led him to a dark, impassable abyss. There was no bridge across, by which reason might pass from the world of shadow to a world of substance. The philosophic systems, by which men imagined they could cross that gulf, were beautiful suspension-bridges, resting at either end on a baseless assumption. The philosophies destroyed each other. Each exposed the delusions of the rest, and nursed its own delusion. He disbelieved and renounced them all. Philosophy led the man who was logically consequent in his thinking to the utter negation of everything. He had stood at the brink of that abyss, straining his eyes for light, till his whole being shuddered, and he despaired of and renounced philosophy for ever. The light of the Christian Revelation alone saved him from despair. Faith—in some way he could not explain—got up to God."

## II. *The Scottish Philosophy.*<sup>2</sup>

"Dr. Duncan seemed to some to underrate the Scottish 'philosophy of common sense,' which, as expounded by Sir

<sup>1</sup> See page 70, note.

<sup>2</sup> "Dr. Duncan's views of this subject are far better given," says Mr. Sandeman, "in his own words in the *Colloquia Peripatetica*. Only I speak from independent knowledge of his views." But far from thinking Mr. Sandeman's statement on this account superfluous, there is no reader interested in such profound questions, and capable of intelligently following them, who will not be glad to have the one statement to compare with the other.

William Hamilton, then ruled the student-mind of Edinburgh. While it did something for psychology, through its sober, patient investigation of mental processes and laws, it left the grand problem as to the relation between thought and being unsolved. It failed, in his estimation, like all the other philosophies, to establish beyond question the objective truth of our knowledge of God and of the world, or the real existence of anything besides our thoughts. Reid and Stewart had, through timidity, abstained from closely scrutinizing man's knowledge of the Divine above him. They had limited themselves mainly to the investigation of man's knowledge of the material world around him. They seemed to be afraid to philosophize in that highest region which chiefly interests men. Hamilton boldly contended that this region—which his predecessors spoke of, for the most part, cautiously, in vague, general terms—lay altogether beyond our horizon. Our knowledge of the Infinite, according to him, was entirely negative, and so we never could truly know the Divine. Dr. Duncan constantly opposed that view as a vital error. It was, in his opinion, of little moment whether man had, as Hamilton asserted, an immediate knowledge of the material world or not. It was all-important that he should have—what Hamilton denied he had—a direct knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup>

“Dr. Duncan held no opinion as to the doctrine of immediate perception. Our knowledge of matter might be equally well explained, he thought, either by supposing, with Reid, that we had a direct perception of the material object, or by supposing, with other philosophers, that we had sensations accompanied by a belief in the existence of the object.<sup>2</sup> He rejected the ground on which the doctrine of immediate perception is usually based, viz., that it is an ultimate truth which is necessarily and universally taken for granted. He regarded it merely as a scientific theory,

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 64, at bottom, and p. 65.

advanced to account for one department of our knowledge. When Reid appealed to the vulgar against Berkleianism he gave evidence of an unscientific mind. It was like seeking to overturn the Newtonian system of astronomy by the common notions of untaught men in regard to the stars. The untrained man can be no fit judge of the claims of rival theories. Philosophers, the only competent judges, have not reached, and are not even approaching, a common understanding in regard to perception. The doctrine of immediate perception, then, lacks the alleged universality, the '*semper, ubique, et ab omnibus.*' The utmost the philosophy of common sense professed to do for us, viz., to lead us to certain necessary beliefs—principles which we must believe without knowing why—could never satisfy him. It was, he thought, a very poor result that man should learn to say 'I must believe because I must, and I cannot help myself.'<sup>1</sup> If the highest flight of philosophy leads at last only to this acknowledgment of necessity, then he needed in some way to get higher, for he could not rest there. It was just the old sad story repeated, of man striving through philosophy to reach objective truth, and failing to attain anything more than subjective belief. He could not regard the necessity of a belief as an infallible guarantee of its truth. Such necessity did not shut out the horrible possibility of delusion. The Author of our nature might be a malign being who mocked us with falsehood. We might thus, through the very constitution of our nature, be under the necessity of believing a lie. He needed something to satisfy him of the truth of his nature. The Bible did this when it assured him that he was created by a God of truth after his own image.<sup>2</sup> He expressed intense repugnance to this philosophic representation of man as a prisoner driven and bound to truth only by iron necessity. He accepted with his whole heart and soul the Christian representation

<sup>1</sup> "Can't-help-myselfism is to me a very shallow philosophy" (*Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 2.

of man as originally a child in the house of the Infinite Father, who speaks truth to him in a voice he can recognise as His. This representation he was well aware rests upon two vast assumptions, 1st, That man actually knows God, and, 2d, that he is able to recognise His voice. He always frankly admitted that he could not prove these positions, but he held them fast as the main support of his intellectual and moral life. He strongly held that man reaches highest truth only when God utters it to his soul by His Word and Spirit. Through learning and science we get subordinate truths ; but through Divine teaching alone the highest truth. This conviction, which took full possession of him, produced a beautiful intellectual humility. No one ever imbibed more of the levelling spirit of the Gospel that calls the sage to sit beside the little child in the school of Christ. He had no sympathy with the intellectual Pharisee, who thanks God he sees and understands more than the common man. He held that in religious truth, which is at once the highest intellectual and the highest moral truth, all are on a level. Once when I told him that I was striving vainly to explain the meaning of such words as 'believe' and 'repent' to a class of young children he said, 'I fear you are seeking to be wiser than the Holy Spirit. Depend upon it, he has used the simplest words. It is only through Divine teaching that any one, child or grown-up man, can apprehend what it is to believe and to repent. With that teaching the youngest child can understand as well as the philosopher.'

### III. *The Theology of Spiritual Experience.*

"Never were the understanding of the schoolman and the heart of the child more beautifully united than in Dr. Duncan. He gave his strong subtle understanding the freest scope in theological discussion. He walked with firm step to the furthest verge of ascertainable truth, as far as definite language could carry him, and then would say, 'There are dizzy heights of scholasticism beyond, that

affect me with mental vertigo.' But, in the course of the discussion, his heart would from time to time utter an exclamation of adoring wonder or a cry of aspiration. Sometimes when his understanding ran riot in interminable subtleties, his heart abruptly stopped him—as when he once cut short a discussion on the Atonement by saying, 'But I must not any longer chop logic at the foot of the Cross.' He employed rigorous scientific methods always in a devout spirit. He spoke of Divine truth with childlike faith.

"He used to say that men constitutionally sceptical, such as Augustine, often became the firmest believers; and he himself, who for years had questioned everything save his own existence, never, so long as I knew him, expressed the slightest doubt in regard to any fundamental Christian verity. He theologized with fresh and fervid feeling from a glowing personal experience. He spoke as one who was ever sounding the depths of his own vileness, and ever finding the grace of God deeper still.

"Without this personal experience of sin and grace Christian theology, he held, must be unintelligible and unreal. He said to a Divinity student, 'To theologize well you must cultivate a sense of the infinite evil of sin and of yourself as a sinner.' Through his intense spiritual experience he apprehended with rare vividness these two correlative facts, the infinite excellence of God and the infinite evil of himself as a sinner. The Bible was a Divine exhibition and illustration of these two facts in their manifold bearings."

#### IV. *His Catholicity.*

"Calvinism he regarded as the best and fullest human systematic exposition of doctrine yet attained. But he was ever saying that one main stream of doctrine<sup>1</sup> ran through the Church-teaching of every age, the general characteristic of which was, that it set forth God's excellence

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 139, middle paragraph.

and man's vileness. In this catholic truth, as embodied in the ancient Creeds of Christendom and in the Confessions of all the Evangelical Churches, he specially delighted. Christian men of all Confessions, he held—while through misunderstanding they often differed in what they said in regard to Divine truth—agreed wonderfully in what they meant to say. Many theological controversies would cease if each side could realize the other's point of view. Christians, if they took pains to understand each other, could never employ hard words in argument."

#### *V. The Pauline Theology.*

"He often lamented the increasing neglect of doctrinal teaching in the pulpit. He spoke of the present time as 'an untheological period,' 'a most infantile age in theology.' Most of the prevailing scepticism in regard to Bible truth was plainly, he thought, the result of ignorance. The people were rapidly becoming ignorant of and therefore uninterested in Christian doctrine. The mind of the Church, which in his younger days had been mainly directed to the Epistles of Paul, was now chiefly applied to the Gospels. While he granted that different parts of Divine truth and of God's Word must engage the attention of the Church at different times, he lamented the modern tendency to neglect the Pauline Theology. The intellect can never rest in a statement of facts, but must rise to general truths; and the facts of the Gospels can be properly apprehended only in the light of the general truths of the Epistles. Our own generalizations on the Gospel History are at best ingenious theories, airy speculations. The inspired generalizations of the apostles are certain truths that, while they exercise, at the same time feed the intellect. The Epistles of Paul were Dr. Duncan's favourite intellectual food."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But see pp. 458, 459, where the reader will find him near the end of his days lamenting the effect, in his own case, of too exclusively living upon this food.

I conclude this portion of Mr. Sandeman's paper with some weighty hints given to him by Dr. Duncan, in a letter addressed to him at Heidelberg, whither he had gone to attend theological classes in the winter semester of 1856-57. After bidding him give his grateful thanks to Dr. Umbreit, the well-known Professor and Old Testament critic, for his kind reception of him, and giving him a general caution as to what he was to admire and to avoid, Dr. Duncan says :—

“As for your theological studies, I have no suggestions to make but such as are of a very general nature. In German progressionism (real or supposed) take care not to lose Scottish conservatism. Our theology always based on and ever directly recurring for its proof to Holy Scripture has, as a developed system, a venerable back-leaning on the whole history of theology in the Christian Church from the beginning. Hence it embraces Athanasianism as to the Trinity and Person of Christ, Augustinism as to the nature of saving grace, Calvinism as against Lutherism and Zuinglianism (a fraternal combat), and still more decidedly as against Arminianism. It radicates deeply in Patristics, the massive theology of the Reformers, the developments of the post-Reformation schools of the Dutch and French divines, the sturdy Anglican bottom of solid learning, manly thinking, practical good sense and decided piety of the Puritans, the lucid metaphysics of the New-Englanders, with that peculiar ardour, the *perfervidum ingenium*, which distinguishes the older divines of our own Church—the Rutherfords, Grays, Dicksons, etc. That the Word of God is the only rule of faith and manners; that Christ is the only Saviour of God's elect; that Christ is freely offered to sinners; that Christ is the believer's all—are the main themes on which it delights to dwell.



"It, no doubt—as a system, a human arrangement and exhibition of Divine truth—has had its colour affected by the Peripatetic Philosophy, as has that of the whole Church. But this philosophy has first been put through the alembic of a most searching trial by the express declarations of Holy Scripture, so that it should not be allowed to affect in the least the *matter (materies)* of faith. When new philosophies affect theology—and they must affect it, considered as the sum of all that we believe and know about Divine and moral truth, from all sources—then is there good need for extreme caution. I do not swear by Aristotle. New philosophies may be true, or may contain truths; but, before they can be permitted to affect theology, their products must be put into the *crucible*, and go through as hot trials as the older has done. That the *faith* be preserved intact is absolutely indispensable.

"What further advice can I give you? The longer I live the more am I convinced of the importance, especially in these days, when all things, even first principles, are called in question, of maintaining firmly the inheritance which our fathers have gained for us. I am strongly conservative; that retained, progressive also. For we have not exhausted the oracles of God. I have no wish to fetter Christian liberty of thought. We are commanded to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

"The points to which I would especially claim your steadfast adherence, are,—

"1st, The plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, avoiding, as beyond our knowledge, being out of the field of our experience, *all* theories about its modus.

"2d, The true and proper Deity of our adorable Redeemer, comprehending the orthodox faith concerning the blessed Trinity.

"3d, The true and proper vicarious sacrifice of Christ on behalf and instead of His people.

"4th, Salvation by sovereign and omnipotently efficacious grace.



“As means of establishment in these and in all truths, cultivate a deep reverence and fear of God, a deep sense of the infinite evil of sin. Be much in prayer and the study of the Book of God. Receive its teaching as a little child. For its exegesis, think how it would be understood by the foolish things which God hath chosen to confound the wise. ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding’ or that of other men. Reverence your teachers, but remain *nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SAME.

THE New College, Edinburgh, occupied temporary premises from the year of the Disruption up to 1850. But through the exertions of the late Dr. Welsh, Professor of Church History, the sum of £21,000, in subscriptions of £1000 each by twenty-one individuals, was speedily raised for the erection of a College in Edinburgh in connexion with the Free Church of Scotland. In the beginning of November 1850, the new building was opened and inaugurated, first, by a discourse delivered by Dr. N. Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly for that year, and an address to the Principal and Professors, in name of the Church, committing to their care the education and oversight of the students who might enrol themselves in the New College; and thereafter, by an address from the Principal on the system and course of study to be pursued in the College, and by a Lecture from each of the Professors on the pro-

spects and claims of their respective departments, and the general nature of their intended course of instruction.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Duncan's Lecture, printed in the volume noticed below, has a history so grotesque, that though my informant, the Rev. Alexander Silver of Dunnottar parish church—to whom I have been indebted for some recollections of Dr. Duncan's early career (pp. 88-91)—said he had it from Dr. James Buchanan, Dr. Duncan's colleague in the New College, I could not trust myself to put it on paper till (Dr. Buchanan being no more) I had it confirmed by Mrs. Buchanan. He had been in one of his moods of deep depression about his spiritual state; and well knowing his off-putting disposition, and his aversion to writing, Dr. Buchanan, jealous for the credit of the College, called on him the evening before he had to deliver his Lecture, to see how matters stood. "Well, are you ready?" "Ready with what?" "Why, with your Lecture, to be sure." "Lecture? I have other things to attend to just now than writing Lectures." (Not a line of it had been written.) "But what else can you have to attend to more important than the preparation of your Lecture?" "The state of my own soul." "But, Doctor, will your soul

<sup>1</sup> See Preface to "Inauguration of the New College of the Free Church, Edinburgh, Nov. 1850. With Introductory Lectures on Theology, Philosophy, and Natural Science." (1851.)

come into a right state by neglecting your professional duties?" This touched him to the quick, and wakened him suddenly out of his morbid depression to a practical view of his position. "But what am I to do?" he asked. "Come," said Dr. Buchanan—seeing his altered mood, and knowing that not a moment was to be lost—"give me your desk, pen, ink, and paper, and I'll write to your dictation." So, pacing up and down the room, Dr. Duncan dictated, while Dr. Buchanan wrote; and ere they stopped, the whole Lecture was dictated and written, and, surprising to say, was delivered *verbatim* from Dr. Buchanan's manuscript—from which, I presume, the printed copy we now have in the Inauguration volume is taken.<sup>1</sup> He had done a similar thing before, when in Glasgow (see p. 282); but there was something here which, if it showed the marvellous fertility of his mind and readiness of his resources, showed at the same time such a lack of practical judgment and self-control, as to the conduct of his heart and the daily duties of his life, as *must* have rendered abiding satisfaction with his spiritual state impossible. In fact, while those who knew him but slightly—and some even who knew him pretty intimately—ascribed exclusively to physical causes that

<sup>1</sup> On being appealed to, Mrs. B. said she recollected the circumstance perfectly, and the only point she could not verify (one of no moment) was its happening the very night before the delivery of the lecture.

mental depression, and spiritual darkness, and tendency to self-condemnation—which, at times, he would express in language terrifically strong—I myself have no doubt that the hidden spring of nearly all this was his *irregularity*, his absorption in the topic of the moment (it might be a book—say one of the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Puritans, or a Greek classic, or an English poet, or a collection of nursery rhymes, or a novel—or it might be a walk and talk with some student for hours together, of day or night), to the utter forgetfulness of family arrangements, of express appointments, of important duties, and of times for devotion. Such a state of things, as every one must perceive, could not fail to produce disorder in the heart; and with a conscience so sensitive as his, an emotional nature so soft, and a mind of such strength that on wakening up from a course of sad irregularity, and taking a view of himself all round, in the light of his high spiritual ideal, he could only abhor himself—one can account for many things regarding his own state which otherwise would seem inexplicable, and have even been set down as evidence of mental disease.

The Lecture referred to, though heavy in style, is marked by Dr. Duncan's pregnancy of thought on the characteristic features "of the Theology of the Old Testament," and of its connexion with and preparation

for that of the New. But I have from the Rev. B. Bell, now of the Free Church, Friockheim, Arbroath, the substance of a similar Lecture, which he delivered to his students so late as 1867, which in point of style is rather more lively, and in quality suggestive, as will be seen from the extracts which I give below.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "This is an anxious and critical time for you who mean to be ministers. You need above all, first, to be experiential, personal believers. The attacks are mainly on the Old Testament. It needs, too, more charity than I profess to possess, to believe that some of the critics do not know where all this will land us.

"The Person of Jesus Christ, His work, His salvation, are the things at which these attacks are really levelled. These critics, in their Old Testament exegesis, not only impeach its authority, as inspired for us, but that of Jesus himself. 'He was a Jew; they didn't know everything down there in Judea; He was not above the prejudices of his time; He did not come to teach Biblical criticism.' Now-a-days, men calling themselves Christians, nourished and fostered still in Christian Churches, set aside the authority of our Lord for their canons—which are clever enough indeed, but which, I think we shall find, are weak enough too, and founded on a pure *petitio principii*. This learning, of its kind, must be met by greater. You must now be thoroughly furnished on all points, and capable not only for homiletics. When the cast-off clothes of Germany are being sold by British brokers, it will not do to shut our eyes like babies, and think that when we do not see we are not seen.—But we return to where we started. It is well, in these days, to be established in the truth. He who has known what God is—what Sin, Law, Justice are, and has known and felt himself as a sinner needing a Divine Saviour, who has found such a Saviour in Jesus only—and, in fact, *no other offers himself, no other pretends to be such to such a sinner—(that we are not such sinners is the postulate of the negation of Christ)*: such an one, not only having, but himself *being*, one of the proofs of the truth of the Christian Religion, is secured, not indeed from perplexity and pain of mind,

From an early period Dr. Duncan's warmest friends could have wished that some arrangement might be made for relieving him of the duties of his Junior Hebrew class, for the teaching of which he was in no

but preserved so that in the midst of all perplexities and doubts he is held firm to that immovable rock, from which he cannot be shaken. . . .

"While in the Old Testament at large there is a Unity and a Diversity, we have a unity and diversity in the Pentateuch itself. For, omitting the intermediate books, see how in *Deuteronomy* we have Moses both as a teacher and prophet. This book is important as at once the *application* by Moses of the Divine law, and the *groundwork* on which all the *prophets* formed themselves. *Deuteronomy* is the introduction to the whole prophets. And what is here commenced is carried on by the prophets whom God raised up from time to time for the maintenance of true religion. This the prophets do by recounting what the Lord had done for Israel, by calls to repentance, by the commination of judgments, with the promise of God's remembrance of His holy covenant, and of the approach of the bright Messianic kingdom. The *Psalms* are the response of the congregation to the voice of Jehovah speaking to them in the מִוְחָ [Torah, the Law]. This throws the attention back on the Torah. Its subjects are various. The sacred poetry of Israel was scanty before the time of David. Then it became abundant and of a new character. As in other nations and in individuals, the infancy of it was *objective*. Hence was it that Luther put his creed into metre, and sang it with all his heart. Later in life, men begin to be more *subjective* (in the sense of *reflective*, that is ; for, in fact, the objectivity of youth is the truest subjectivity, in the sense of *taking on* impressions). So we have Israel not only listening to, but speaking again to, Jehovah, of such themes as these: His claim as Lord of all, His sovereignty in Israel, the blessedness of Jehovah's man, the צַדִּיק [zaddik, the righteous man], the excellency of His Torah. And connected with these ground-tones we have notes of every expression of pious feeling. So no manual of psalmody gives force so fully, in all their diversity, to

way qualified, as will be sufficiently seen from the statements of the preceding chapter. All, indeed, who had any desire to learn Hebrew grammatically, had the best opportunity of doing so under Mr. Theodore Meyer

the subjectivity of the pious Christian mind. We may in the Church have need of a few hymns to bring out the facts of the New Testament; but certainly for the elements of personal religion in all respects, there is nothing to be compared to the Psalms of David. There, there are outbursts of Divine seraphic love; there moanings of distress, the deep groans of penitence; there we trace a wonderful susceptibility of what they beautifully call 'the light of Jehovah's face': how they wail when it is hid, rejoice when He causes it to shine on them, how they improve it, and how they give thanks for it. Every one of these notes was, in the ground-work, prepared in the *Torah*.—There is another field, also grounded in the *Torah*: the חכמה [*Chokmah*] or 'Wisdom.' This had its blooming in the reign of Solomon the wise. The *Proverbs* contain the finest expression of the Gnostic. They are not to supersede the *Torah*, but were as a Catechism for the instruction of youth. (By the bye, when I was young, we were made at Aberdeen to learn the *Proverbs* by heart.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this accounted for our proverbial character for superior acuteness.) These *Proverbs* contain the *Torah* in practical maxims, short and wise, whereby to use the *Torah* aright. (This *chokmah* is different from בינה [*Binah*], 'Intelligence,' as it is a practical principle. Thus, 'The tongue of the *chokmah* useth *binah* aright' [Prov. xv. 2], i.e. 'The tongue of the wise man useth understanding,' or intelligence, 'aright.'<sup>2</sup>)—There is another book, *Ecclesiastes*, which is a treatise in the Jewish style and mode of thought, formed by the *Torah*. . . . Besides this there is a noble poem, the 'Song of Songs,' which, as the *Synagogue* understood it, meant the marriage between God and Israel, and which the Christian Church understands of that Union, called the mystical, between Christ and His own Church.—All these, you will see, form a Unit, having its root in the *Torah*."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The word there used, however, is not *binah* (but בינה).



—a young converted German Jew, trained at the University of Berlin, a superior scholar, and warmly attached to the Free Church of Scotland, of which he had become a Licentiate. Being in Edinburgh as a teacher of languages, he was appointed Hebrew tutor in the New College in 1850, his duty being to teach the preparatory Hebrew class for students during their literary curriculum, to fit them for their Entrance Examination on beginning their Divinity studies. Mr. Meyer's instructions were felt to be of great value to the students—virtually supplying, indeed, Dr. Duncan's lack of service. In 1858, however, Mr. Meyer resigned this post, to engage in Mission work under the Jews' Conversion Committee;<sup>1</sup> and it was not till 1863 that the General Assembly—in consideration of Dr. Duncan's long services and advancing years—unanimously elected the Rev. A. B. (now Dr.) Davidson to be his colleague and successor; his duty being to take the entire charge of the Junior class, and of the Senior whenever Dr. Duncan should be unable for his own work. This proved a great boon to Dr. Duncan, setting him free to give his exclusive attention to the Exegesis of the

<sup>1</sup> In whose service Mr. Meyer has been a greatly valued and honoured labourer, first at Ancona and latterly at Amsterdam, attaining to fluency and force in the use of two foreign languages—Italian and Dutch. Last year he came to London, where he now labours in the same cause under the English Presbyterian Church.

Old Testament. A feeling of weariness, indeed, had begun to creep upon him, but for several years there was hardly any perceptible symptom of it in the discharge of his public duties. Indeed, some of his finest exegetical Notes (for this they were, rather than Lectures) were given forth from the Chair after that time. In some portions of the Old Testament he took especial delight—the Psalms, for example, and the Book of Job. I have before me some excellent notes by students of his, on portions of the Pentateuch, on several of the Psalms, on the prophetic books in general, and on some portions of them. I can only give in a footnote a few introductory sentences on the Book of Psalms.<sup>1</sup>

Of part of the Book of Job Dr. Duncan wrote out a

<sup>1</sup> “This is a Book which has ever been dear to the Church, and in the Church Universal occupies a unique place. 1. As connected with the Old Testament, it is the response of the Congregation of Israel to God speaking in the *Law*. The *Tehillim* (Psalms) are this answer, and the two should be studied together. In connexion with both New and Old Testaments, this Book brings out the oneness of true religion. Between the two, in respect of fulness and clearness of *objective expression*, there is a very great difference; but no fundamental one in the *subject-matter*. There is no principle of the New Testament not found in the Old—though there often secondarily, darkly, and imperfectly; for ‘they without us could not be made perfect.’ As to *subjective contents*, the two Testaments are so at one, that the Church will never find, as she has never found, a substitute for the Psalms. I am more inclined than once I was, to admit the utility of our having a few Hymns, for expressing the clearer objective revelation of the great facts of Christ’s

translation of his own, which I have seen. Glancing through it hurriedly, I was struck with the elastic purity, terseness, and stateliness of its style.<sup>1</sup>—His criticisms on the Latin discourses read before him were generally given in the same language—kindly and complimentary when good,<sup>2</sup> but when the reverse, sometimes sharp. One discourse he stigmatized in Latin as fustian and bombast. His private intercourse with his students was, in not a few cases, invaluable. In addition to examples already given, I give the

history and work. But no Hymn-book I have seen gives every phase of subjective religion with the fulness, distinctness, and appropriateness of the Psalms. Whether it be the celebration of the Divine excellences, or the deep-toned voice of penitence, or the longing of the soul after God, the rejoicing in the light of His countenance, or thanksgiving for His mercies—in short, every emotion of the renewed heart Godwards, finds adequate expression in the Book of Psalms. It has been called the Book of Divine Erotics. The key-note to it all is the praise of Jehovah. ‘Who is a God like unto Thee?’ ‘Their Rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.’—Such are the key-notes of Judah’s worship. So in Psalm i., around the name of God centres all. We have Jehovah’s law, Jehovah’s man delighting in Jehovah’s law, and his blessedness—‘for Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous,’ etc.

<sup>1</sup> In a scrap of paper—apparently the opening sentences of a Lecture introductory to this Book, for it is addressed to his class—he says it “fascinates—at once cowing and attracting. He listens to it as at once a Sermon and a Poem; a portion of Divine Revelation (making known to man the mind and heart of the Only Wise), and, at the same time, a remnant of hoar antiquity, and a marvellous production of transcendent genius.”

<sup>2</sup> “*Tam clare, tam præclare, disposuisti . . . ut nil habeam quod addam*”—he would say of one.

following. One of them had consulted him about the *quid pro quo* theory of the Atonement (to which he was then inclined)—that Christ's sufferings were an exact 'equivalent' in amount or extent, neither less nor more, to the desert of those whose sins he bore. "Ah!" said Dr. Duncan, "I took in that theory from Gavin Parker, my minister for some years at Aberdeen. I was much indebted to him; but he was all wrong there, and he put me wrong too." He then pointed out how he had got out of that entanglement—by coming to see that owing to the dignity of the Sufferer the sufferings of Christ were of infinite value, but that their efficacious virtue was conditioned by the Divine purpose and the application of the Holy Spirit. On this view, and its harmony with the universal call of the Gospel, he so expatiated as to set his student's mind from that time at rest.

In the year 1859 Dr. Cunningham had been elected Moderator of the Free Church General Assembly. For some time before that his health had begun to give way; and, in his closing address, he said "that though he had not suffered from the work of the previous session, there had been a return, shortly before the Assembly, of some unpleasant symptoms in the organs of sight, and his health was otherwise rather uncertain.

He had been obliged, in consequence, to withdraw himself from a good many of the evening diets, and he was precluded from making any preparation for the addresses he delivered. In these circumstances he was forced to content himself with a few valedictory sentences."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Duncan's remark on these appearances afterwards was one which will not easily be forgotten by those who knew the giant of whom he spoke:—"Very admirable; all his strength, but finely mellowed; *Hercules still, but he has no club!*" Early in December 1861, Dr. Cunningham's last illness came on, and shortly after midnight of Friday the 13th of that month—to the grief of all who knew him, and the unspeakable loss of the New College, the Free Church of Scotland, and Scottish theological learning—he breathed his last. At the first meeting of the remanent Professors with their students after this heavy blow, they all doubtless addressed them as they deemed suitable to the occasion. Happily I have found Dr. Duncan's short address among his papers. While, as a whole, it will be deemed not unworthy of the occasion, there are in the closing paragraphs of it touches which will scarcely be read by those who knew anything of Dr. Cunningham without emotion:—

<sup>1</sup> Life of William Cunningham, D.D., Principal and Professor of Theology and Church History, New College, Edinburgh. By Robert Rainy, D.D., and the late Rev. James Mackenzie (1871), pp. 422.

"DEAR YOUNG GENTLEMEN,—Gathered together this day in the name of our Lord Jesus, who has promised His presence, we meet in peculiar circumstances—solemn, afflictive, trying, *i.e.* probatory. The Lord hath taken our master from our head. His immense gain is our great loss. We love him too well to indulge the wish that it were otherwise. We thank the Lord who gave us so great a boon; and now that He hath taken him to be with Himself, which is far better, greater is the ground for our sympathetic joy than for our lawful, reasonable, and dutiful grief on our own account.

"The Head of the great school in which all Zion's children are taught of God, said, when about to depart, 'If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go to my Father;' and the analogy of the Head is applicable to the members.

"I will not venture, nor do I need, to speak of what is so well known throughout all Scotland, and far beyond it. I will not say in praise of him, but of Him who endowed him with natural abilities so vigorous and so fine, and with grace so early, so abundantly; forming him to be in so distinguished a degree a good and faithful servant, a diligent and affectionate pastor, a good soldier of Jesus Christ, who with wise and tender love for the persons of all men, used mercilessly the might which Christ had given him only against error and sin, pernicious to man as dishonouring to God.

"Of him as a Professor I need say nothing to you who have studied under him. We, his bereaved colleagues, deeply feel our loss. Chalmers is gone from me. Cunningham is gone from me—with mine eyes to the Forerunner, I would say *before* me. They have gone, but they have left names and remembrances sweet, fragrant, hallowed; to me, indeed, deeply humbling yet animating—a sweet savour of Christ, of Him who saith, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' who also says, 'Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

"Cunningham being dead yet speaketh. One not girding

on his armour but about to put it off, and exchange the battle-field for the victory which the Captain of salvation having achieved, bestows, leaves us (with his example commended by *itself*, not himself) a word, very precious and endeared the more to us by the death-bed and dying lips from which it comes—a word so consoling, so animating :

‘A few short years of evil past,  
We reach the happy shore  
Where death-divided friends at last  
Shall meet, to part no more.’”

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A number of Dr. Duncan's noteworthy utterances can be classed under no one head—drawn forth, as they often were, in the most incidental manner, and addressed, now to students, now to ministers, now to any intelligent friend with whom he happened to come in contact—particularly those who, knowing his way, had the tact to draw him out. “While he wrote little on paper,” says Mr. Sandeman most truly, “he wrote much on living minds—in spoken words—full of light and fire. None ever was more prodigal of himself in talk than he. In the fixed language of books he was in shackles, but in the plastic language of oral speech, which he could modify and supplement at will, he moved freely. He was no builder of a system that might perpetuate his name. He was a sower of seed—thoughts, that in fitting soil, bore precious fruit. We, his old pupils, can never tell how many of our best thoughts were sown by him.”

The following are some of these :—

*Rev. F. W. Robertson* (late of Brighton).—"Robertson believed that Christ did something or other, which, somehow or other, had some connexion or other with salvation."

*Archbishop Whately*.—"I once heard Archbishop Whately, to my great disappointment. He was very dull and wishy-washy. He preached on good behaviour, but it was blanched morality."

*Wesley's Hymns, and Hymns for Children*.—"I have a great liking for many of Wesley's Hymns; but when I read some of them, I ask, 'What's become of your Free-will now, friend?' Some of his stanzas are specially beautiful. For example :—

'All are not lost or wandered back;  
All have not left the Church and Thee;  
There are who suffer for Thy sake,  
Enjoy Thy glorious infamy.'<sup>1</sup>

That last line has a *curiosa felicitas* in it. Hymns 188 and 200 of his Third Part, beginning, 'Lord, and is Thine anger gone?' and, 'My Father, my End, I long for Thy love,' are fine effusions. Some of the hymns composed for children are very fine. For example that of Edmeston's, 'I think when I read that sweet story of old.' "

*Anthems — Chanting*.—"I should like to have some anthems, composed to suit certain passages from the Minor Prophets, which have been selected for that purpose. The musical notation to prose often brings out its poetry." 'But,' said Mr. Knight, to whom we owe the *Colloquia*, and from whom I have this and some of the choicest of the sayings here recorded, 'Prose is poetic when it can be sung.' "Well, we might have some special Anthems for all the prose poetry of Scripture.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew chanting is

<sup>1</sup> No. 483, *Wesley's Hymns with Supplement*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Oratorios* are constructed upon this principle, with their recitatives, solos, chorals, etc., as the *Messiah* of Handel, and the *St. Paul* and *Elijah* of Mendelssohn.



sometimes very grand. It is founded on the syntactical construction of the passages; the musical cadence giving rise to the accents, not the accents to the cadence or chant. Some Highland ministers chant [parts of] their sermons [and prayers]; and the old Seceders used to sing them.<sup>1</sup> Old A[itken] of K[irriemuir] sang like a very mavis. [Sec p. 26, *note*, and p. 27.] He had two tunes: his quotation-tune [in quoting Scripture], which he used as often as he could; and his ordinary one, for his own words. I have heard him sing, 'The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knoweth, and Israel he shall know,' as splendidly as they do it in the synagogue."

*The late F. D. Maurice.*—"According to Mr. Maurice, I do not see that a man *should* do even that which is seemly—τὸ πρέπον. There is no *should* in his system; but even Cicero saw that there must be a *lex* at the base of morals."

*Delitzsch* [of Leipzig].—"I have the highest opinion of Delitzsch as a commentator. He is the finest Jewish Belles-Lettist existing. Umbreit's æsthetic is also fine, but at times it is sandy, and he is never so deep as Delitzsch." But "that is rash theorizing of Delitzsch's about the palæontological animals suffering death for the devil's sin. A brute's death could not be penal. Where there is no con-

<sup>1</sup> The thing here meant is the same in both cases, as all know who have heard both. When the soul swells with religious emotion, a species of *intoning* or *chanting* instinctively takes (or tends to take) the place of prosaic utterance in those who have any music in them—getting into the *minor* key in mournful utterances, and into the *major* in those which are joyous: inasmuch, that were one's eyes shut during certain passages in the prayers of some Highland ministers, especially at Communion seasons, he might suppose himself transported to Rome, and listening to some of the minor chants of the "Holy Week" (Passion Week). No doubt both have their origin in the same principle—the tendency to accommodate the tones of the voice to the character of the utterance. But when this gets into stereotyped forms and becomes mechanical, the charm of it departs.

science there can be nothing penal. It is strange how far grotesque speculation carries some men."

*Genius.*—"Genius lies very much in that region where the profound is simple, and the simple profound. The great thoughts of such men as Chalmers are very simple when expressed; but only a man of genius could think them."

*Visitations of Truth.*—"It's strange how visitations of truth come over men at times, men (that is) who think at all. For example, poor Tom Hood, when friends were saying to him, 'Oh, all will come right in the end.' 'No, wrong never comes right.'"

*Mysteries.*—"All the great mysteries are simple as well as unfathomably deep; and they are common to all men. Every Christian feels them less or more."

*Nature's praise of God.*—"It is a fine thought, the eternal present in Nature's praise of God: 'The heavens are declaring the glory of God,' etc.—one day uttering speech to another, and one night teaching its successor."

*Creation and Preservation.*—"It seems very religious to dispense with an original creation, in magnifying the ever-present creation of Providence; but it's all a sham. Preservation is not a new creation, else you make creation itself void. Hence, I have still the *φύσις* along with *Θεός*—the conferred power, and behind it the original Omnipotence. Yet God we maintain to be the cause of the actual life of each being, by His real and personal presence within it. God we maintain to be the author of *good*, of *all good*, and of *good only*. And this involves the truth, 'Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man:' and also it implies that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father."

*Scottish Episcopalian Puritans.*—"The old Scottish Episcopal Puritans, who were the earliest school of Puritans, contained some able forgotten men. See Fenner on *Right*

*Moulding*—on what the spirit would do, if it got all its own way, and what, contrariwise, the flesh would do."

*Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*.—"Hyper-Calvinism is all house and no door; Arminianism is all door and no house."

*Æsthetic Religion*.—"There is no entering into the kingdom of heaven by a mere sense of beauty."<sup>1</sup>

*The Inspiration of Scripture* (as not interfering with the individual peculiarities of the writers).—"True, they were the penmen of the Holy Spirit, but then they were pen-men."

*Scriptural subjects*—Are they capable of poetic treatment? and referring to a striking Bible scene: "It's either poetry, or it's above poetry." A student reading his exercise on a Psalm, and pointing out this and that word as *figurative*;—"Or more shortly, say that the Psalm is poetry."

*The Greek and Hebrew minds*.—"The Greek mind was abstract; the Hebrew concrete."

*Terminology*.—"There is a curious connexion between the success of a teacher and his possession of a fine terminology—a good store of words to express *shades of meaning*. Much wisdom has been stored up in men, and never diffused for want of the gift of speech."<sup>2</sup>

*Ultras*.—"The great German theologians are right in the track they have followed in the development of Christian doctrine. But the older methods from which they recoiled had a great truth in them. *Ultras* generally correct themselves."

*His charity*.—"Every one should have a strait creed for himself, and a wide one for other people."

*The Lord's Day*.—"Never since our Lord honoured this

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Coll. Perip.*, pp. 69 and 117-119.

<sup>2</sup> All who were intimate with Dr. Duncan used to marvel at this plasticity of language in his own hand, in the coinage of expressive terminology.

day by His resurrection, do I believe has the day passed without some absolute gain to His kingdom."

*The Hebrew Language.*—"The Hebrew language is peculiarly rich in religious-moral terms, though scantily enough in others. The reason is evident, it chronicled a Revelation."

*Reason in God.*—"Transcendentally, it is true that God has reason, but He does not reason; He does not draw syllogisms."

*Love, individual and universal.*—"Individual love, *per se*, is a centrifugal force; universal, cosmopolitan love, *per se*, is centripetal: combine them, and the revolutions of love are orderly."

*The Epistle to Philemon.*—"The most gentlemanly letter ever written by the most perfect gentleman is, in my opinion, St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon. If you study its courtesies, you will see how manifold and how delicate they are."

*Incidental notices of Scripture men.*—"I like the incidental notices we have of the men of Scripture. Paul, for example—the little rickety man of the big strong fist. He wrote a large hand, in uncommonly big capital letters, possibly because of his defective eyesight. Gal. vi. 11—"Ιδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ" ['Ye see in what large characters I have written unto you with mine own hand'], and I should have liked to see Paul making tents. It was a fine thing for *that man* to work with his own hands, rather than burden the churches."

*Patristic reading on the Person of Christ.*—"For patristic discussion on the Person of Christ, I recommend Athanasius *de Trinitate*, Basil, and Gregory Nazianzen; Chrysostom also in his Homilies on Matthew and John; for though I disagree with his theology on many points, his views of the Person of Christ always kept him right."

*Synod Libraries.*—"I urge the formation of Synodal Libraries throughout Scotland. Manse Libraries (the permanent part of the Manse property) are good; but Synodal Libra-

ries should be instituted, and they should contain the rarer folios."

"*Mästricht* is about the best system for an ordinary country pastor that I know. Let him have what other treatises he chooses: this one he should certainly have. His arrangement of topics is most admirably clear, and his discussion always luminous."<sup>1</sup>

*John Gill and Hyper-Calvinism.*—"John Gill I reckon the best, as well as the most learned, of all the Hyper-Calvinists. The rabbinical and the patristic were fairly blended in him. He mistakenly charges us with what he calls 'Duty-Faith,' but he was a good and reverent man. His remarks on St. John are very good. And the Hyper-Calvinist is more consistent than the Arminian. Calvinism and Pelagianism are the only *consistent* systems. Arminianism is utterly inconsistent and irrational. I have talked with many Wesleyan Methodists, and I have generally found that they have no objection to being dealt with on the principles of Calvinism; but they are somehow jealous of the ultimate destiny of the universe on these principles. I think their concession of more consequence than their reservation."

*Tracts.*—"Our tracts are, in general, not good. They are wishy-washy productions, very wishy-washy. There are exceptions—two especially: 'Poor Joseph,' a *catholic* tract, and 'George Medway, or The Great Concern.' These are good; but why should not men of cultivated gifts write tracts? It is an agency too much despised. It was good George Herbert who said, 'A tract may find him who a sermon flies.'"

*Glorified Saints.*—"Who have washed their robes, and

<sup>1</sup> Peter v. Mästricht was a German Protestant divine, born 1630. After being Professor of Theology and Hebrew at Frankfurt and Dinsburg, he succeeded the celebrated Voet in the University of Utrecht, and died in 1706. The work above referred to is *Theoretico-practica Theologia*. (2 vols. in 1, 4to. Amst. 1724.)

made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Ah! yes; and they'll be prouder of their redness than of their whiteness."<sup>1</sup>

*Dr. Love.*—"Though I didn't care for Dr. Love for anything else—and I care for him for a great deal more—I

<sup>1</sup> A startling saying, but referring, doubtless, to the unutterable emotions of wonder that will swell the hearts of the redeemed as they think of "the redness" of their guilt having passed clean away, of the *cost* at which that was done—"the blood of the Lamb"—of the *love* both of Him who "bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and of Him who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," and of the *grace* that makes all this free. There are times, it is true, with the soul that groans under the burden of "prevailing iniquity," when the prospect of one day being "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" is ready to swallow up the sense of the preciousness of pardon; and I well remember a conversation in which Dr. Duncan maintained to me—in a way with which at the time I could not in the least sympathize—the infinitely greater grandeur of positive and perfect *holiness* in those who were once the bond-slaves of sin, than of the *pardon* of their deepest guilt. But there are assuredly times when the sense of guilt and demerit is so overwhelming that forgiveness seems impossible, and almost unbecoming the majesty of Heaven. At such seasons *mercy*, or, what flows solely from it, *pardon*, is the sweetest word in all the Bible, and the heart is ready to break as it utters the first note of that song which will never grow old, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." One can then enter into the last two lines of that verse of Wesley's to which Dr. Duncan refers us (No. 188)—

"Oh, 'tis more than I can bear,  
The sense of pardoning love."

This, doubtless, was Dr. Duncan's feeling when he uttered the above saying, and in this view the sentiment will find a deep echo in many a Christian heart. "I saw in my dream," says Bunyan in one of the most exquisite passages of his 'Pilgrim,' "that the high way up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall is called Salvation (Isa. xxvi. 1). Up this

should like him for getting into raptures about *Light*, and its being first seen by the angels."<sup>1</sup>

*The Resurrection of the Body.*—"There is something in Samuel Drew's idea (the cobbler-editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*) in his Essay on Immortality and the Future State—that there are two bodies, the *real* and the *accretionary*. The 'real,' he says, shrinks at the amputation of a limb, the 'accretionary' part only being cut off. And at death the 'real' shrinks into atomic invisibility. He wishes to have some philosophic ground for the resurrection of the *body*, and while he clothes his doctrine in the language of paradox, I believe he is feeling after a truth. The doctrine of imponderable matter suggests something grand as to the possibilities of the future σῶμα πνευματικόν.

*Instantaneous Conversion.*—"I believe that a man may come into a new world consciously, in an instant of time, and that through no specific agency."<sup>2</sup> But I must equally

way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a *Cross*, and a little below, in the bottom, a *Sepulchre*. So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death.' Then he stood still a while, to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him, that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks (Zech. xii. 10). Now as he stood looking and weeping, behold three Shining Ones came to him, and saluted him with 'Peace be to thee!' etc.

<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 204, on Dr. Love's "rich fancy" and "almost oriental luxuriance of description" at times.

<sup>2</sup> Compare p. 160.



affirm that in the very nature of things the three elements stated in our Catechism as parts of 'effectual calling' are essentially necessary—the 'conviction of sin,' the 'enlightening in the knowledge of Christ,' and the 'renewing of the will.' They are terms of a sequence. Thus, 'conviction' may be pungent, may be *ever so pungent*, yet come short of the off-cutting, the cutting off of the legal hope: that belongs to the 'enlightenment in the knowledge of Christ.' And this, again, may be keen, may be terribly vivid, and yet 'the will' remain unpliant and unrenewed. I believe that the act of 'renewal' is instantaneous; but there is a *power* as well as an *act*, and in its development to the observation of others, or even to a man's own consciousness, it may be slowly progressive. In the Philippian jailer, in Nicodemus, in Cornelius, in Nathanael, you see the instantaneousness of the act, and Nathanael was a man truly renewed before he had heard the facts of the life of Christ, and Cornelius was a renewed man before Peter saw him."

*The How and the What.*—"All questions as to the 'How' are best answered by a more extended knowledge of the 'What.'"

*Antagonisms and Antinomies.*—On reading the first sentence of *The Patience of Hope* [by Dora Greenwell, whose prose and poetry show a fine mind], viz., "In Jesus Christ all contradictions are reconciled; yet in Him also, and in all that is connected with His Person and Office, we are met by a strange contradiction—a clashing of opposing attributes," he said, "There is here a confounding of antinomies with antagonisms."

*RELIGIOUS and Religiose.*—"Very religious," was the character given of some devout but unrenewed man. "He is very *religiose*," was the answer.

*Citizenship in the Heavenly Places.*—"Ah! there is a πολιτεία ἐν ἑπουρανίοις, and the feeling of being 'seated in the heavenly places,' even now, gives a very fine tone to a



man's prayers. There is — ; it has given a very fine tone to my friend's religion."

*Baxter, Matthew Henry, Bengel, Poole.*—"Baxter was in my eyes a great muddler; but the whole Church cannot help liking Richard Baxter for all his muddling. He was a singularly great man in his power of dealing with the conscience, and he made a revolution in the town of Kidderminster.

"Matthew Henry is not deep, but broad. He had not a deep insight; but his was an 'exceeding broad' religion, because he cast himself with equal reverence upon the whole of the Bible, and *had no favourite texts*. There were, however, some deeper diggers in the same field—for example, Thomas Goodwin.

"Bengel's short 'Scholia' are amongst the very best on the New Testament. But why is that book translated? It is a *loss* to our ministers to have it translated.

"Poole's 'Annotations' are well suited to the well-instructed laity. Henry is too diffuse a commentator for them; he is more useful for the country people."

*Halyburton.*—"I advise every theologian to acquaint himself with Halyburton. I have great sympathy with his mind. He neither understates nor overstates the value of the Law to the Gospel, and the necessity of the Gospel to the Law. I like his view of a man's acceptance of the Gospel as a cordial approbation of God's way of recovering man. The steps upon which he travelled on the side of the *Gospel* were these, as brought out in his *Self-Examination*—(1.) Have I cordial approbation of the plan of the Gospel? Am I perfectly satisfied that this scheme both perfectly satisfies God's attributes and is perfectly adequate to my need? (2.) In all my darkness and doubt I never wished for another way different from that which is appointed. (3.) I am resolved for ever to cling to this, with the expectation—sometimes more and sometimes less vivid—of a good issue. Then, on the side of the *Law*—(1.) I do not wish the Law altered in any particular; (2.) and that even when

it runs most counter to my inclinations. So thoroughly did he go on and into this question of the Law, as it were upon himself, that he brought himself to this position, that he wished no alteration in the Divine procedure towards him, but only that he himself should be changed. It may seem a very simple attainment; but if I may judge from my own experience, it is not so easy to consent unto the whole law that it is good—when that means not merely an intellectual assent, but also a moral consent, the ‘amen’ of the will. Witsius and Halyburton were, I should say, Owenians; yet they were not so great as Owen. They were minor men; yet we get nearer to them somehow.”

*Durham.*—“Read Durham on the 53d of Isaiah at my request. He has much repetition; you may be disgusted with that. But it’s repetition of a very fine thing, the eating of Christ’s flesh and the drinking of His blood. Well, that’s what we must be repeating, in fact, all our life long.”

*Dr. Cunningham and Dr. Chalmers.*—“The one was a learned theologian, the other a great theologist.”

*Preaching.*—“I have been an extemporizer all along, not a writer. At one time I extemporized seven sermons a week. I preached too much. There is a possible tendency to put the sermon in place of the true end of preaching. But I advocate the writing of sermons, after which men should speak them as they best can. Never *learn* a written composition. No reading so dull.”

*Truth in love.*—“The world is crying out for a *working* Church and a *united* working Church—ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ‘truthing it in love.’ There is war all around the Church, and we must be brethren, united against a common enemy. During long-continued peace I don’t wonder at division within the Church; but in a time of war we must be one, and forget our differences.”

*To what Preaching the whole Church’s heart beats responsive.*—“It’s a striking thing that the whole Church likes those who preach experientially to the life of men, apart

from the *details* of their doctrine, and who lay more stress upon their *Christology* than upon anything else. Yes! the Church's heart *beats towards its Lord*, and it's not mere *heartiness*. Yet I affirm that Calvinistic Theology corresponds to catholic experience."

*Arminianism and Antinomianism*.—"Intellectually, I dislike the Arminian doctrine far more than the Antinomian, though practically I am far nearer the former. Dr. John Gill's creed is not so repugnant to my intellect as Wesley's, but Wesley comes far nearer in practice. Gill and Crisp were the best theologians among the Antinomians. Crisp's edition of Gill's works, with notes and commentaries on the Bible, contains some excellent matter. Samuel Rutherford, in his work on 'Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself,' gives us some unpretending but deep philosophy. He denies power in the will against the Arminian, and asserts it against the Antinomian position. And any other doctrine of power uncreaturifies the creature. It either brutifies man or deifies him."

*Substitution*.—"There is no special mystery in Substitution. There is a mystery in Christ's Person and Work, and a mystery in my own nature and in humanity; but in the act of substitution—in the exchange of place—I see no special mystery. It is a mere transfer. Why should men find a difficulty in the act or process of exchange?"

*The Knowledge possessed by Old Testament Saints*.—"We must not unsaint the Old Testament saints, but we must not make Pentecostal Christians of them."

*The Trinity*.—"The Trinity is my highest Theologoumenon. I reach it, and find in it the supreme harmony of revealed things. But it is equally irrational and irreverent to speculate on the nexus between the distinct Persons. This is not revealed, and is not revealable."

*The passive and active features of the New Life*.—"I maintain that the whole Word of God is congruous to our nature as human, and quite contrary to it as depraved. But in order to see either the congruity or the contrariety,

we must be enlightened, we must be regenerate; and in this, though we are passive in our regeneration, we are not to be passive *about* it or *after* it. See this discussed in Howe's 'Redeemer's Tears,' and by Richard Baxter and Bishop Reynolds. That whole school were not Calvinizing Arminians, but Arminianizing Calvinists. Baxter was fundamentally a Calvinist; and, *that in free grace there is no concurrence* was a distinct doctrine with Reynolds. But this is not to be understood as if the Spirit of God left a man for one moment a mere *patient*."

*Sin and the Curse*.—"Sin is the infinitely horrible, the Curse is the infinitely terrible, and salvation from that horrible is not enough without salvation from that terrible, while deliverance from that terrible is impossible without salvation from that horrible."

*The Blessedness of the Curse of the Law*.—"Men don't realize the truth that 'the curse of the law' is blessed. By the curse of the law overlapping it sin had a right to hold the sinner while he is under the ban of the Empire. But then, the sin itself is cursed; and our depravity, whence the sin proceeds, is divinely removeable. It is irremoveable *but for* the curse of the law—the curse upon the sin. That 'but for' is an important addition. That *we* should be saved and our sins also is an impossibility; consequently the plan of our salvation must combine the destruction of our sin and the salvation of our persons, and both together. Sin, by being condemned, loses the power which the law gave it to hold us, and so the 'sin shall not have dominion over us.'"

*Holiness as a personal Ornament*.—"I have been troubled much with the detection of a desire for holiness as a personal ornament. Ah! the debility that is in us. But there is no evil that God cannot eradicate, nor good that he cannot impart."

*Purchasing the Influences of the Spirit*.—"We must never forget that the Holy Spirit is a Free-will Agent. We cannot rightly think that the influences of the Spirit were *purchased*

by Christ. I exceedingly dislike that expression of some divines, that Christ purchased for us the blessings of the Spirit. I cannot but believe that the three things—the Father's love, the sacrifice of the Son, and the influence of the Spirit—are each and all the unpurchasable blessings of grace. And I am driven to this, to hold my ground against the Socinians."

*Preaching the benefits of Redemption.*—"I would not preach the benefits of redemption without preaching Christ, but neither would I preach a benefitless Christ: and though neither should exclude the other, I would rather preach Christ exclusively than pardon exclusively. Men must be taught to seek the Saviour rather than peace. On the whole, I think the 'Marrow-men'<sup>1</sup> and the fathers of the Secession put this rather in a good light. I believe that the Puritan age had a depth that we know nothing about."

*Definitions of Faith.*—"I am not sure that we are much the better for our attempted definitions of Faith. Baxter connects it with the doctrine of the mystical union; Lampe defines it as a willingness to be saved by Christ; Halyburton and Owen as a cordial acceptance of the offer; Sandeman as simple belief in simple testimony. Well, a man is sometimes very little the better for a definition, and all these perplex as well as enlighten. But 'none perish that Him trust'—none perish that Him trust."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those who held the doctrine of an anonymous book called *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, known to have been written by the Rev. James Fisher, one of the fathers of the Scottish Secession, though not one of the original four (p. 24). It created a great sensation among the Scottish clergy, from its pronounced type of theology on the subject of the Gospel.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxxiv., last line, Scotch metre version.

I close this chapter with the following

## ADDENDA.

Being one day in a very low state of mind, some one read to him what struck him much. "That man," he said, "is far advanced," and he lamented he was so far behind him. "Doctor," replied his friend, "that's your own lecture." (One or two ludicrous examples of this I have heard.)

While Mr. Davidson (one of his fellow-elders when in Free St. Luke's) was painting his portrait, the conversation turned upon Art. "The effective power of the architect and the artist," he said, "is of God. But the Arts sprang up and grew in a heathen school"—looking at his friend, as if to say, Mind that. "Yet," he added, "God took the artist Bezaleel, trained in the heathen school, and filled him with His Spirit to do His work." "Some of the greatest works of Art," said the artist, "were wrought in the devil's service;" to which he replied, "The devil then had been using stolen property, which should be restored to the Owner." On another occasion, "Art is a luxury, and therefore dangerous. 'Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor.' But we are allowed a measure of luxury. We should not please God more by leaving our houses and living in wigwams—eh?" His friend asked if portrait-painting was not

included in the commandment, "Love one another." "Yes, yes," he said; "it is right I should remember not only the sayings of my friend, but also the countenance God gave him."

Speaking to the same friend, with great tenderness, of the ancient philosophers who knew of no Saviour, though they almost cried for one; and pacing up and down the room in tears, he said, "My heart bleeds for Plato." Frequently this came out in different forms of expression, and to different friends, when that subject came up.

One evening, being in the house of the Rev. W. Tasker (Territorial Free Church, Edinburgh), and in a particularly happy mood, he stayed till a late hour, full of rich talk, in the course of which he came out with the following inimitable bit of humour:—

*Mr. T.*—"Doctor, I have a case of some difficulty just now, I wish you could help me."

*Dr. Duncan.*—"Well, let's hear it."

*Mr. T.*—"I admitted a man of whom I thought if ever there was a converted man it was he. But he went wrong upon my hands. Now I have another case, of which I think quite as well as the other—but no better—and I'm afraid to admit him, in case he should turn out like the other. What say you?"

*Dr. Duncan.*—"Oh, I have no difficulty there. You see there was once a man called Simon Magus, and he took in Philip the Evangelist, and when he was no doubt mortified about that, he was sent away from Samaria to a desert spot, and there he fell in with an Ethiopian noble-



man reading his Bible, as he drove home from 'keeping Pentecost at Jerusalem. The nobleman asked him up to take his seat in the chariot, and they got into conversation about the passage in Isaiah that the gentleman had been reading; when Philip threw such a flood of light upon it, that he burned to be baptized, and on coming to a pool of water, he asked what was to hinder it there and then. 'Oh, a great deal, sir; for, you see, I'm a *Scotchman*, and I was taken in the other day by a man they call Simon Magus, and maybe you'll take me in too: but if you'll come back *next year*, and I find you of the same mind, I'll admit you!'"

Dr. Duncan held a series of voluntary Saturday morning meetings for the students of all the classes, for the exposition of doctrine and for devotional exercises. He took the Shorter Catechism as his text-book, and his expositions, which were theologico-practical, were much valued by the more earnest of the students, and by others who were permitted to attend them. Of these expositions I have pretty full notes, but must reserve them, with other similar matter, for a separate volume. "One of his bursts," says a correspondent, "I well remember: 'O Augustine, Augustine, this is among the wood, hay, and stubble, that will be consumed in the fire that will try every man's work!'"



## CHAPTER XVII.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPEECHES—VISITS TO PESTH— GENERAL INTERCOURSE.

DR. DUNCAN, though he wanted the business capacity which makes a useful member of Church Courts—the meetings of which he seldom attended—took a lively interest in all the public movements of his Church, and when elected a member of the General Assembly he invariably attended, and made his voice to be heard in it repeatedly and to good purpose. During the Assembly 1844, for example, after the thrilling sermon of Mr. (now Dr.) Charles Brown, Dr. Duncan, on the call of the Moderator, engaged in prayer, and fearing to weaken the solemn feeling that pervaded the House by more speaking, it was unanimously resolved to adjourn at once till the evening. At the evening meeting, Dr. Duncan, among others, addressed the House in impressive terms on the necessity of preaching a definite and full Gospel, warning his brethren against a *dilution* of

the Gospel, which would very soon slide into a *perversion* of the Gospel.

But it was on the Conversion of the Jews that Dr. Duncan chiefly spoke in the General Assembly, when the Jewish Report was under consideration. His first speech on that subject was in that same Assembly, 1844. He regretted that his statements at one time, as to the importance of Jewish learning for a missionary to the Jews, had deterred some excellent aspirants to that office; whereas its whole importance (which was not small) lay in the personal credit which it gained to the missionary—it was of no earthly use beyond that. He dwelt on the low moral character of professing Protestants, and on the abominations of Popery, as the great stumbling-blocks in the way of the Jews, who felt that they would lose instead of gaining by becoming Christians; whereas it had been proved, in their own experience at Pesth, that a bold, uncompromising, and spiritual profession of religion, aided by consistency of character, went to the heart of the Jews. Finally, he spoke of the keeping and progress of the converts, as of as much importance as their inbringing—the *preserving* of the salt of the earth of equal moment with its *diffusion*.

In the Assembly 1845, Dr. Duncan spoke again, but this time upon the Report on the State of Religion.

His speech breathed a fine, mellow, spiritual tone—chiefly of congratulation—on the hopeful state of things which had been reported.

In the Assembly 1846, after a long and warm debate, followed by a division (the first in the Free Church General Assembly) on the subject of Church Union, with reference to the warrantableness of joining the "Evangelical Alliance" recently formed—Dr. Duncan spoke. He was against the motion condemnatory of this step, as leaving no scope for individual action in aiming at union; but neither could he approve of the one in favour of the Alliance, as he thought that the organized form of it, based upon something like a creed, seemed at least to trench upon the peculiar province of the Church in her corporate capacity. "I rejoice," said he, on the former point, "in being a member of a Free Church, but I rejoice still more in being a member of the Catholic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ." He should certainly pause before he would say that he did not belong to the Church of Athanasius, of Augustine, and Cyprian, although he could not coincide with all the views and doctrines of these fathers of the Church. He had had sweet fellowship and communion privately with many brethren of other Churches, whose doctrines, in many respects, he considered erroneous; but he had lost no opportunity of maintaining his own testimony.

He specially alluded to brethren of the Lutheran Communion, whose Christianity he had not failed to recognise, although he had found that their Church, as a community, was dead enough. He had met many men who appeared to him to be in error, but who nevertheless seemed to love the Lord Jesus Christ with such intensity that he should have liked to warm himself at their fire.

In the Assembly 1855 he again spoke, in moving the adoption of the Jewish Report. But it was in 1860 that he spoke the first of those speeches on this subject, in which he rose to his highest strain. This applies especially to his speech in the Assembly 1862, some passages in which read like an expanded piece of Scripture—instinct with a biblical inspiration.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Duncan, who was received with loud cheers, said,—“Old men are fond of reminiscences. I revert with fondness to the times when the Church of Scotland, much at the excitation of the excellent Robert Wodrow, undertook the mission to the much and long neglected Jews, and to that, when on our own exodus from the house of bondage, your first thought was of the recall of Jehovah's banished. I say your, not having been present. It was in the happy, happy days which I spent in Pesth. Dr. John Brown, M.D., dates his fondness for dogs—so affectionately sagacious—to his having been bit by one when a little boy. Among my earliest inducements to labour for Israel was my being cheated by a pair of Jews to the tune of £5. Often since have I been good-humouredly jeered at for my Judeomania; and my good friend Hugh Miller showed me up cannily in the *Witness*. I did not mind it much, save as an impediment to my effecting some kindly intentions, which friends did not think over and above sagacious. For the

drafts of some of these speeches, now before me, though fragmentary, contain some noble apostrophes to Israel backsliding, and Israel restored, kindling into raptures

rest, I enjoyed an inward cachinnation at the thought that people did not know that I allowed myself to be cheated with my eyes open, that I might gain an opportunity of slyly stealing away a prejudice or two, and insinuating a word for Him who is the Gentile's light and Israel's glory. But now, owing perhaps to the ondrawing of senile juvenility, I have been tempted to disclose the secret, as I do not wish longer to be thought a greater fool than I really am. Of this quite enough, perhaps too much. We have lately been listening to a noble discourse on a nobler text. Union (not identity, which is absolute sameness, but oneness in diversity—archetypal in God himself) is the grand principle in God's creations—original and new—God and man—the Word made flesh—one Christ—Immanuel the key-stone of the universe of being—Jew and Gentile, one Church—Antioch and Jerusalem—met, and embracing at Jerusalem. For He Himself is our peace—He who made both things one thing (having demolished the middle wall of the partition), the enmity in His flesh, having abrogated the law of the commandments in positive institutions, that He might create the twain in Himself into one new man, making peace, and reconcile them both in one body to God by the Cross, having slain the enmity by it. Glorious words! glorious scene! Prince of Peace, come to thy Father's house, Thou art the mighty breaker and render of cramping enclosures and confining repagula [bolts]. Down is the outer wall, and in are we Gentiles—torn is the veil, and the way to the holiest of all is made manifest, and the one new man hath been made to enter. He who said of old, 'I will put enmity,' speaks anew—'I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith Jehovah, and I will heal him.' In the study of Scripture, I wish ever to keep in view Jewish priority in Christianity—Israel as *primus inter pares*—the Jew first, and also the Gentile. We are no longer foreigners, but fellow-heirs, etc. We are fully engrafted. But our native olive was wild, theirs the good olive-tree; and though the mark of the husbandman's sharp pruning-hook be on them as they

at the prospect of Israel's recovery. "At hearing, you obeyed," says the Jew, "while I, though He had done so many wonderful works, believed not." "Through

lie at the bottom—in righteous and wise severity, to our solemn warning—yet the future shall accord with their illustrious past, when re-engrafted into their own olive-tree. They were always a stiff-necked people; and if at any time good, very fickle in their goodness. Jehovah (let it be spoken with reverence) had a deal to do with them, and he did do great things for them. 'Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth;' and Thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth (I suppose like the awful nocturnal sacrifice of Abraham). And God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew. Let us not, then, be weary in this well-doing, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. Let us labour assiduously in calling in the remnant which is at this present time, according to the election of grace, stretching with earnest ἀποκατάδοκία ['earnest expectation'] forward to that blessed future when all Israel shall be saved. Already there is a shaking, and an approximating of dry bone to dry bone. Speedily may the life-giving afflatus come, and there arise not a numerous throng, but an exceeding great army, far different from what they fell in the day of Jehovah's great battle. For 'He that scattered Israel will gather him.' And when the ransomed shall come and sing on the height of Zion, we, the younger son and pardoned prodigal, are not to repay in kind his peevish pride. Though most sadly he too has transgressed the Father's chief commandment, of him too it shall be said—'This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.' If a fatted calf was killed before, it will surely, then, be a stalled ox now. And it will be meet that we make merry; for what shall the receiving be but life from the dead? Though it is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath kept in His own power; and though the command and promise are the ground laid for our faith and obedience, yet may we soberly emulate the science of the children of Issachar, who understood the times, and knew what Israel ought to do. By the calling of Abraham mankind was divided into two halves, and on the great Pentecost

your unbelief," replies the Gentile, "I obtained mercy." "And through your mercy," rejoins the Jew, "I also obtain mercy." "Well, let us join in singing, 'Worthy is the Lamb,' that Name which is above every name."

"His name for ever shall endure," etc.

"Now blessed be the Lord our God," etc.

"And blessed be his glorious name," etc.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Duncan again spoke in the Assemblies 1863 and 1864, and at one of the 'Commissions' of the

Jew and Gentile were the party names. Both were opposed to God's holy child Jesus, as also in Him both were united. To Pagan idolatry and Jewish unbelief have since been added the apostasy in the professedly Christian Church and the scourge of the Mohammedan locusts. In our eventful day, heaven and earth, all powers, mundane and spiritual, all forms of tyranny and error, are being shaken. While the reviving Spirit has been visiting in succession almost all the Churches of the Reformation, Paganism in every shape, from the rude fetishism of Africa to the philosophic pantheism of Brahma, and atheism of Budha, has felt the shock. The triple crown is tottering on a poor old man's head, and even infidelity is sapping the foundations of the evil spiritual power; even the iron vigour of Islam is, if not softened, yet bent and near to breaking—its moon, decrescent, about to vanish. Israelites scattered through all the world, coming closer to each other by mutual knowledge and intercourse, and feeling themselves drawn especially to British Christians as tolerant, and defenders of civil and religious liberty. This present is an era, the birth-time of a period. All portends some great event at hand with which Providence is pregnant. They whose good we seek shall have their distinguished share. 'For Israel hath not been (and shall not be) forsaken, nor Judah of her God: though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.' Let, then, our efforts be, like the gifts and the calling of God, without repentance."

<sup>1</sup> Scotch metre version of Ps. lxxii. 17-19.

Assembly on the subject of a letter with which he had been intrusted, and visits paid by him to the Protestant Church of Bohemia. The longest of these speeches is uncommonly interesting—rich in glowing recollections of the past of that sorely-trying Church, in notices of its present state, and in hope for its future. Only want of space obliges me to reserve it for the present. His last speech in the General Assembly was in 1867, and on his favourite theme—the Jews—and in the same fine strain as his other speeches. Though not rising to the full fervour of some of them, it has a mellowness all his own. (I hope hereafter to preserve these speeches entire.)

I have said that Dr. Duncan took a lively interest in all the movements of the Church to which he belonged, and in general ecclesiastical affairs, though no frequenter of Church Courts and no public debater. Hence, in what is called the *Union Question* he could not fail to be deeply interested—the negotiations for Union between the non-Established sections of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Free, United Presbyterian, and Reformed Presbyterian sections, including the English branch of the United Presbyterian Church and the English Presbyterian Church (in fraternal association with, but independent of, the Free Church of Scotland).



These negotiations—begun peacefully and unanimously in 1863, and for a time so continuing—at length gave rise to two opposing parties in the Free Church. The one party yearn for the incorporation of these sections of the Presbyterian Church in one visible body, and see no essential difference in doctrinal principle, and no difference in their modes of working which, by friendly negotiation, may not be removed; they grieve, therefore, over their continued separation, and feel it an imperative duty to take all steps consistent with principle and prudence towards incorporation. The other party, after the first two or three years of negotiation, first expressed considerable hesitation as to the consistency of the projected Union with Free Church principles, and by degrees saw reason to condemn and oppose it on this ground; and in this state things continue up to the present date.<sup>1</sup> I am not aware that Dr. Duncan indicated any strong leanings on this subject until about the years 1865 or 1866. By that time, however, it came to be known that he took the unfavourable view of the question, and by little and little he began to speak strongly against the projected Union. Being, as we have seen, a member of the Assembly 1867—by far the most exciting one on this subject which has yet occurred—when it was resolved, by an

<sup>1</sup> April 1872.

immense majority, that, so far as had up to that time appeared, there was no bar, in principle, to the proposed Union, he sat out the great debate most patiently; and came home quite exhausted. I hardly think he intended to speak on that occasion, but if he did, he had no opportunity.<sup>1</sup> Next Assembly, however, 1868, he fully prepared himself upon the subject; for I have before me the fragmentary and very incoherent draft of his speech—never spoken. After some rather tedious prefatory remarks, he makes a formal confession of his long neglect of a noble study—"the common ground of theology and jurisprudence, the religion of polity, and the polity of religion. The jurisprudential side of this science, like its theological, is twofold—natural and revealed. Come in Plato and Cicero, come in Lycurgus and Solon and

<sup>1</sup> How much the subject excited him may be gathered from the following little incident:—I happened to preach the following Lord's Day for Dr. H. Bonar, of whose congregation he had become an elder. On coming out, after the service, I found Dr. Duncan at the door waiting me. Almost without the ordinary salutation, he took hold of my wrist and held it, and looking earnestly in my face he said, "David, take care!" "What do you mean?" "David, take care!" "Care of what?" "*That Union!*" emphasizing each of the two words. Seeing the half-raised expression of his countenance, and at the same time the enfeebled aspect which he presented, I simply said, "Oh, we'll not enter on that subject just now, please." He knew that I was on one side quite as strong as he was on the other, and thinking him far from being in a condition to discuss the question calmly, I was unwilling to risk even a momentary interruption of our loving intercourse.

Numa. Come into your higher place, Moses and Ezra, ye scribes, and Nehemiah the Tirshatha," etc.—and for what purpose are all these summoned forth? "Rise, Cicero, and with thy noble elevation recite that splendid passage, which I have forgotten, of 'Above all man-made laws.' My Lord Stair, you remembered it in the opening of your Institutes. All ye Pagan sages, who knew not God, . . . say . . . did ye forsake your gods? Oh, never." And so on; the whole gist of it, to the end, being to show that it was a natural duty, all along recognised, even by Pagans, to acknowledge the Divinity as supreme over nations as well as individuals. As I purposely refrain from obtruding any remarks of my own upon this question, the reader can judge for himself of the bearing of Dr. Duncan's way of looking at it, so far as is indicated by the above. And here I leave the subject of his public appearance in the Church Courts, and his views on the movements of the Church.

Dr. Duncan paid several visits to Pesth, at the request of the Jews' Committee, after his direct connexion with the Mission ceased in 1843. His interest in the prosperity of that Mission—that of a father in his children—continued unabated. On these occasions his visits to the noble Archduchess were among his choicest enjoyments; and the feeling was mutual. Her

French letters to him show her lively interest in the Mission and regard for the missionaries at Pesth, as also her love of the Scottish Church, through whose ministers she had herself received a blessing. At the close of one of them she says, "Elizabeth, and especially Marie [her daughters], are beginning to speak English;" and in her last letter, written 20th June 1847, immediately after the tidings of Dr. Chalmers's death had reached her, she speaks of his "Heimgang" ("Home-going") as an event which not only plunged the whole Church in profound grief, but weighed herself down also. I have before me the scroll of a letter of Dr. Duncan's to her in most respectful language, putting before her such scriptural consolation as was fitted to soothe under sore trial. "You and your dear children," he says, "are often in our remembrance, and sometimes in our prayers. Father, keep them from the evil. Our hearts bleed for you under your deep trials, while we rejoice and give thanks for your most merciful preservation. Many, we hope—several, we know—think of you and pray for you. Among them I may mention the Duchess of Gordon. Her interest is deep and her inquiries frequent." (These noble ladies afterwards met at Würtemberg.)

Within less than two months of his death Dr. Duncan began to speak to Miss R. about the noble Arch-

duchess, and the following touching particulars, taken down by Miss R., will, I am sure, be acceptable :—

“She said to us, ‘I love my husband and my children ; but if I had been converted, I could not have married a Romanist.’ The Archduke was twice married ; his first wife was a Greek by religion, and his second a Protestant. He said he wished to have one who would care for his non-Catholic subjects. She retained after his death a well-thumbed copy of the *Vulgatum*. They called him ‘Joseph the Just.’ After the massacres in Galicia, he said he did not think that people who read their Bible would commit such atrocities, and sent word to the Protestant missionaries of Pesth that with his permission and authority they should circulate Bibles and such books as they approved of. When he was on his death-bed the Archduchess was speaking to him of the remission of sins through the obedience of Christ alone. He did not dispute with her, but just said, ‘My dear, my sins are a bit big.’ After his death, his son Stephen said, ‘My father is in heaven.’ Some one remarked that he had forgotten Purgatory. But I think that Stephen is in heart a Protestant. He used to go to his mother’s rooms to read his Bible. She gave him our Catechism to read, and Stephen said he believed it. He was sent down to the Schloss a prisoner, that is, under charge of a priest ; his Bible was taken from him—he was only permitted to keep the Book of Psalms. The last account I heard of him was that he had gone to some place, and was employing himself as a schoolmaster. The last time Mrs. Duncan and I were abroad we saw the Archduchess at Vienna. She threw her arms round Mrs. Duncan’s neck, and said—‘Oh Mrs. Duncan, I am a poor widow !’ She was residing at the Court, and she was not allowed a maid of honour, nor a carriage to go to the Protestant Church. I am no advocate for Sabbath-driving, but it was an unusual thing for a member of the Imperial family to have to trudge on foot.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### DR. DUNCAN AT HOME.

"DR. DUNCAN," says Mr. Sandeman, best able to speak here, "appeared to most advantage in the domestic circle. Very little, and that little not the best part of the man, came out in the Professor's Chair, in the pulpit, or in general society; but all his most striking, racy, loveable qualities were manifested at the fireside. Those who saw him only in public or on special occasions were apt to judge him a dry scholastic or a monkish divine. We who have often lived under his hospitable roof found him the raciest, kindest, and most genial of hosts. Like most men of large calibre, he had fits of melancholy, when he spoke little; but when in tolerable spirits he was always communicative, and often highly entertaining. Others might see more of the extent and accuracy of his learning; but the members of his household saw most of the marked individuality and beauty of his character, and never met one so acute, who at the same time was so simple,

'ae-fauld,' or, as the Germans say, *aus einem Stücke gegossen*. He never could wear two faces, and this charming simplicity inspired full confidence. He was frank with all—at times some thought to unwise excess—and every one was inclined to be frank with him. His confidential talk to the members of his household was often literally 'thinking aloud.' He lamented that his outward life had become hopelessly irregular. He observed no set times, no methods. On several occasions the servant found him in the morning reading in the room where he had been left the night before. He had never been in bed. To prevent a recurrence of this the gas was turned off, by his own desire, at a particular hour. Though he was always warned a few minutes before, he usually read on till the light was put out, and tumbled into bed in the dark. Commonly he rose late, just in time to get to his class by running part of the way. When he went out it was always uncertain when he would return. If he were in a talkative humour, and met a student or a friend, he would go along with him in whatever direction he was proceeding, and discuss philosophy or theology with him on the street as long as he could or would listen. When his mind was occupied, bodily wants were unfelt. No remonstrances could make him observe the dinner-hour.

"When he came home, unless exhausted by unlimited

walking and talking, he went to his books. He was an omnivorous reader, taking up philology, philosophy, theology, travels, poetry, and fiction by turns. Through his miscellaneous reading he gathered immense stores of heterogeneous knowledge, but his vast learning did not extinguish or impair his individuality. It did not turn him to a 'walking library' or a talking encyclopædia. He had such a command of his information that it never overpowered him.

"When he wearied of his books, he loved to relax himself in frolic with young children. He had the manhood that becomes to the child a child. Children soon came to look upon him as one of themselves. In his old age he said, 'I have still the taste for bairns' plays, but I have not animal spirit enough ;' and again, 'I would like to be beside children learning to speak, it is a good lesson in mental philosophy.' His love for animals, also, was characteristic. He would often lay down his folio to play for ten minutes on the carpet with a light-headed little dog called Topsy. In the frolics of this creature he found endless amusement. He said that he had seen in Topsy most of the elements of human nature, though undeveloped—something even resembling a conscience *towards man*. And in regard to the lower animals, he quoted a sentence from a Puritan, 'Man is a little God unto them ; their waiting



eyes are fixed upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season.' Another of his favourites, a cat, to which he had given the name of Peregrina, having come to an untimely end, he could not bear, for a long time afterwards, to hear her name mentioned.

"He commonly carried a book with him in his walks. His eye rested chiefly on the printed page, and was but rarely turned to the green fields or 'the human face divine.' The beggars assailed him pertinaciously, and got from him whatever money he had. Before going out, he commonly provided himself with a few pence to get rid of these tormentors. No mendicant of Jewish extraction, however questionable, ever went unhelped from his door. To every remonstrance he said, 'They might be rascals, but they were Jews, and Israel had claims upon him.'

"In the evening, after tea, he was at his best. To meet him then, with one or two congenial friends, was a rare treat. If a difficult question was started, his comprehensive, subtle intellect, under the excitement of discussion, went with wonderful agility straight to the solution. No antagonist had the smallest chance. If in one sentence he left a loop-hole, in the next he anticipated you, so that you could not get in a word. His treatment of a subject was always suggestive, never exhaustive. You felt that he was drawing out of in-

exhaustible depths. Everything he said conveyed an impression of the boundlessness of truth. It was a great relief when, after a flight through the regions of high truth, he came down to the lowly regions of ordinary converse. His remarks on men and things were quaint, original, and entertaining. He was brimful of genial humour, that overflowed in playful sallies and racy Scotch stories. His wit had no sting in it. His laughter was without bitterness. He had a deep sense of the sad, ridiculous incongruity between the actual and the ideal in human life—the source at once of pathos and of humour. He laughed heartily, but kindly, at the foibles of men, for he felt *res humanæ sunt flebile ludibrium*. He said he had had many a quiet chuckle over ‘Knickerbocker’s History of New York.’ He often quoted, and laughed heartily, at the sayings of Sam Weller in the *Pickwick Papers*, and he thoroughly appreciated the jokes and illustrations of *Punch*. His countenance, which was of a severely intellectual cast, when suffused by a glow of humour was softened, so as beautifully to express his refined and genial soul. His friends have often wished, not a lifeless *carte-de-visite*, but an artistic likeness of him in these pleasant social moods. To them he is most memorable not for his commanding intellect, but for his genial, kindly, childlike, Christian heart. Those

who came nearest him admired and loved him most. They admired him for his strength, moral and intellectual ; and they loved him for his very weakness ; for ' even his failings leaned to virtue's side.' "

Mrs. Duncan having died in the autumn of 1852, Miss Sandeman, aunt of him to whose paper I am so largely indebted, volunteered to come and stay with him. The offer was gladly accepted, and for nearly seventeen years—till her death, indeed—she proved, by her gentle Christian manner, and devotion to Dr. Duncan, most valuable. For some time previous to this lady's death, which occurred on January 24th, 1869, Dr. Duncan (writes Mr. Sandeman's sister) was suffering from one of his periodical fits of bodily illness and mental depression. His customary and kindly visits to the sick-room were discontinued. His favourite books were unopened. The newspaper, which he usually read with interest, was neglected. He continued in this miserable state till the morning of the Sabbath on which she died. When we informed him that death was manifestly at hand, startled by the announcement, he suddenly roused himself, called for pen and paper, and wrote out a request for the prayers of the congregation on behalf of his dying friend. He hastened with it to the church, where service had just begun.

He returned almost immediately, and entered thoroughly into the sad circumstances of the household. Kneeling by the sick-bed, he offered up a fervent, child-like prayer, that God might be with his friend in her extremity. An hour or two afterwards, when death had occurred, he knelt beside the dead and implored help in this hour of desolation and sorrow with a fervour I can never forget. It was cheering, in the evening of that sad, solemn Sabbath, to hear him repeat, in his characteristic way, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Their bodies were in the grave at Machpelah, but *they* were still alive."

Of Dr. Duncan's two daughters, *Annie* was, in the summer of 1861, married to Mr. Leckie, and went to the West Indies, where her husband's business lay. There she died in 1864, leaving two children, both alive: John Duncan, now aged ten; and Catherine, aged eight, both coming to Scotland. *Maria* (called after the Archduchess of Hungary) was, in May 1865, married to the Rev. Mr. Spaeth, a Lutheran, and esteemed minister, settled at Philadelphia, United States. They have two children: John Duncan, born September 1868; and Douglas, born October 1870.

Mr. Sandeman speaks of his revered friend's chronic *irregularity* and *absence* to the last. I have in the preceding pages said a good deal on that also ; but I may here give one other illustration of each. When I was minister of St. James's Free Church congregation, Glasgow, he assisted me at one of my Communion. The services had been to me unusually fatiguing ; and after my family had gone to bed, and he and I had talked till one in the morning, I said if he would not go to bed I must : so I showed him to his room. On Monday he was engaged to preach in his old "Milton" church, but knowing his propensities, I had no hope of seeing him up to breakfast. At nine o'clock, my wife, at my request, knocked at his door, and getting no answer, went in with a cup of coffee, his usual beverage. On getting him roused with difficulty, he said, "I can take no breakfast." "But as you've got to preach, you'll need to take it." "Oh, I can't preach ; I'm not well." After a great deal of pressing, he promised to drink the coffee, but would eat nothing. So she left it with him ; but returning after a while, she found him sound asleep—the coffee never touched. "Oh, Doctor, you must take something ; I must stay till you take your coffee." After a good deal of coaxing, he drank half of it, but would take no more of anything. Hoping he was thus roused, she again left him ; but within forty minutes of

the church hour, when two of the congregation called to show him the way, he was fast asleep. "Tell them I am sorry I can't preach to-day; I'm not well." On hearing this, they insisted he should come and tell them that himself—even the sight of him would do them good. He consented, dressed, went with them to church, and agreed to go to the pulpit, give out a psalm, and then say he could do no more. But after the psalm was sung, he prayed, gave out a text, and preached—till the bells were ringing two o'clock! There were to be (according to their custom at Communion times) two sermons, one to follow the other. But Mr. Leitch of Stirling, who was to preach the second sermon, merely went to the pulpit to pronounce the blessing. A lady who was present—one of the most intelligent hearers I know—said it was the most splendid sermon she ever heard. He had been on "the perfect law of liberty" (James i. 25), and she said he absolutely revelled in the illustration of this thought that 'law was liberty, and liberty was law.'

The case of his absence to which I refer I have from a friend, who had it from one of the parties concerned. It is amusingly characteristic. One or two clerical friends saw him one day standing before a tobacconist's shop, and scraping with his nail the last grains of snuff in his box. On making up to him, the following

dialogue ensued :—" Doctor, your box is empty." " Oh, I know that." " But there's a tobacconist's shop." " Well, I know that too; but it costs money." " Oh, not much." " Oh, I know what it costs—it costs fourpence; but I haven't fourpence just now." " But we'll lend you." " Thank you." So in he went, and found the required quantity cost only threepence-halfpenny. On coming out, he put the halfpenny he had received into the hand of him who had lent him the fourpence, and said with perfect gravity, " Now, Sir, we are quits!"

I have given under another head a specimen of Dr. Duncan's occasional gleams of Miltonic poetry (pp. 271, 272). On the birth of Mrs. Duncan's great-grandchild (1866 or 7), I find six verses of a Scotch poem, the language of which—though a racy specimen of classical Scotch—will be unintelligible to very many Scottish readers. I give it, however, in a footnote,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ON THE BIRTH OF A GREAT-GRANDSON.

(IN 1866 OR 7.)

" Weel, ye see, your news made me fidgeting fain, and what could I do but crack out in a snatch o' a sang? Here it is:—

" Aha! you bonnie wee callant, ye're welcome,  
Fu' welcome to th' auld folk, baith ane and a';  
E'en grandpapa's sel' had a thocht that he'll come,  
But na, na, my laddie, it's owre far awa'.

as being in a vein which he occasionally loved to indulge in ; also a Hymn<sup>1</sup> on the same occasion, which,

He daurna noo hirple sae far frae his hallan,  
 Whatever hir-hirre o' a blast it may blaw ;  
 Ere ane can tak' tent, comes a gusty puff, callin',  
 And doun dumps the withered tree ready to fa'.

But daddy and minny will baith dearly lo'e ye,  
 Ye wee, wee bit bonnie bairnie sae bra' ;  
 And wha, let them tell me, may dow to say to ye,  
 That ye 'll no be to them a shelt'ring wa'.

To screen their lyart pows frae the playin' pilgits  
 That, an Heaven lat it be sae, may to them befa'.  
 Oh ! sair are the dirds, that as it doonhill gets,  
 Aft dunt on an auld saul that's wearing awa'.

But what is 't that gars the dottled auld carle  
 Keep shoudin' and shoudin' sae on his see-saw ?  
 Oh, now my guid folks, it war gey hard to harle  
 The puir doited haveral ower roughly awa' !

I ha'e (so he thinks) some sma' right to cackle  
 As papa, grandpa, and noo great-grandpapa ;  
 Weel, I troo I am noo a bittock henspeckle,  
 So cock-o-re-o-ro, cock-a-didle-di-da !"

#### <sup>1</sup> ON THE SAME OCCASION AS THE ABOVE.

Hymn suggested by a mother's prayer after the birth of her first-born son. The prayer, "O may God make him and keep him His own !"

"Him Thou, O Lord, to us hast given,  
 Him we, O Lord, give back to Thee ;  
 Oh ! may the light which shines from heaven  
 His guidance and his glory be.



though having no pretensions to poetic merit, has a value of its own. There is also a New Year's Hymn, dated January 1, 1868, of which, as it is not

In guiltiness and sin conceived,  
And brought into this world of woe,  
Grant that—the *second birth* received—  
He in the heavenward path may go.

Spare him, we pray Thee, Gracious One,  
To serve Thee in this world of sin ;  
And, when that work on earth is done,  
To dwell Thy heav'nly court within.

May he be like to Bethlehem's Babe,  
And to the Youth of Nazareth,  
Who His own self for sinners gave,  
And breathed on His, His sacred breath.

His steps—in life, in death—pursue,  
With love to God and love to man,  
Have the Forerunner still in view ;  
Christ with him now, be with him then.

A *brighter birthday* then will shine,  
When speaks the *Firstborn from the dead*,  
'Child of the resurrection, mine  
Art thou by living streams to lead.'

God and the Lamb's high throne from out  
Which flows, in Paradise above,  
Where all the happy land throughout  
Is beaming with the light of love.

'Hosanna !' sing we here, 'Save now ;'  
Yonder without a spot or flaw,  
Beyond the realm of death and grave,  
Incessant peals 'Halle-lu-i-ah!'"

so happy, I give only two out of the four verses as a specimen.<sup>1</sup>

When his eldest grandson was beginning to prattle, he addressed to him a longish letter, ingeniously constructed all in the third person, without the use of *any personal pronoun* from beginning to end ; but though he himself was rather proud of it, we waive insertion of it here.

<sup>1</sup> JANUARY 1st, 1868.

“ So glorious a thought should cheer  
Drooping hearts, and banish fear,  
Our battle against sin  
He'll end, who did begin :  
His mighty help alone  
We implore.

Till our Lord again appear,  
His heavenly voice let us hear ;  
That the vict'ry o'er sin  
By His grace we may win,  
And be where He is gone,  
Evermore.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE LAST STAGE APPROACHING.

THOUGH Dr. Duncan's vigour had begun to decline, and he felt age creeping on for some years before his death, he retained much of his mental fertility, and could from time to time waken up to richness and power. In fact, scarce a week passed that did not see him in something of his youthful buoyancy of spirits, and that did not call forth sayings either weighty or witty—those which were mellowest and most tasteful being drawn forth when contrasting the views and studies of his old age with those of his earlier years. Thus,

“Accompanying him home one bright evening,” writes Mr. Davidson the artist, “we took our way by the Meadows, where hundreds of lads and boys were playing at all kinds of healthful games. A football came rolling near us, after which some little boys were running, when the Doctor took a run also to give it a kick; but a little boy getting the start of him sent it past him in a moment, at which he had a hearty laugh. It was a lovely evening, and before turning off to his house he stood looking over the bright, busy, green Meadows, and said, ‘I shall soon be leaving all I see

—I should like to carry away with me a good impression.' 'It's a bonny world,' he said to one of his students, 'a bonny world, and I am only coming to see this now that I must be going to leave it.' 'I am soon to leave this beautiful world,' he said again, 'and I am anxious to carry as perfect a calotype of it as possible; and therefore I gaze with unwearied delight upon the trees and flowers, and the blue sky, and the faces of men.'"

*To a Student.*—"I do not forbid you to speculate. I like speculation. I have speculated a great deal during my life, but now that I am turning an old man, I am in love with the facts." Then in a quasi-humorous tone, "Now that I'm an auld man, I have just come back to the theology of the old wives and the bairns. I like that." The perpetual parturiency of his mind, says this student, now a licentiate, prevented him from being an expander of thought. He was intensive rather than extensive.

"I am getting old," he said, "and can't rack my brains perpetually over knotty questions. But there are two scenes from old age I often think of. The Archduchess of Hungary told me once of a theological Professor at Pesth, who, when in his dotage, was oblivious of everything. But troops of children used to follow him, and, laying his hands on their heads, all he could say was 'Ἰησοῦς Χριστός [Jesus Christ], 'Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, 'Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. The other is of the old man who was dying, and his memory quite gone. His own name was mentioned: 'Don't know that man.' His grandchildren's names: he shook his head. The Saviour's name—when leaping up with energy he said, 'Ah! Jesus Christ, my Saviour, my God!' Were I so old as to be in my dotage, I should like to have the spirit of these men."

To *Mr. Brownlow North*, after hearing him expound some passage:—"You are an untrained theologue." "Very untrained," replied Mr. North. "You mistake me, sir; I put the emphasis on 'theologue.' I meant that you were a theologue without the training."

Of a sturdy theologian, a great and good man in his way, but a perpetual combatant, he said, "My friend has a great deal of the turkey-cock in him."

*Thomas Carlyle.*—"Sham is a word often in the mouth of one who is a keen detector of other people's shams, and a very earnest maker of his own."

"Platonism is the grandest effort of the unaided mind of man; but truth, according to Plato's loftiest conceptions, was only an abstraction, a thing—τὸ κάλον καγαθόν. Revelation introduces us to One who can say, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.' Platonism has to do with it—Christianity with *Him*."

One who observed him reading his colleague Dr. Davidson's volume on Job, said, "Why do *you* not write a book?" "I cannot write," was his reply; "I'm just a talker."

Reading to a friend that fine passage about "Mercy" in the "Merchant of Venice," he was fain to think that Shakespeare had himself apprehended this mercy. "It is known that he sheltered and concealed in his own house some of the persecuted Nonconformist ministers, and I indulge the happy thought of maybe after all meeting in heaven poor Will the player. I put the 'Merchant of Venice' among my Tracts, and the story of 'Poor Joseph' and 'Rab and his Friends'" [by Dr. John Brown].

"We should be thankful for our minister," speaking of Mr. M. S. "In soul-analysis I would say he is first, and in other things fair; and a man who is first in one thing and fair in others is no common man. He and Dr. G. would make a fine man 'carded through other.'"

A lady anxious for his opinion of *Ecce Homo* (a book at that time creating a great sensation) was taken to call on him by an intimate friend. Though confined to his bed, they were admitted to his room, and by and by his friend told him what the lady wished. He gave no direct reply, which disappointed her. At length, when advancing to his bedside to take leave, he grasped her hand, paused as if thinking

what to say, and then spoke thus—"You wished my opinion of *Ecce Homo*, and I desire to say to you that any man who can write a whole volume about the Lord Jesus Christ, and leave you in doubt as to what he thinks of Him, *cannot* be a safe guide."

I have said that Miss Sandeman died in 1869; but twelve years before that Miss Robertson became acquainted with him, saw him more and more frequently, and was so struck with the weight and worth of his conversation, that she took down, almost literally, everything which he uttered—as he himself more than once said, "*Boswellizing*" him. (How well she suited him, and how skilful she was in drawing him out, the reader will presently see.) When at length she took Miss Sandeman's place—keeping house for him till he died—these notes so swelled in bulk, that at length they extended to two books of goodly size, now before me, with kind permission to make whatever use of them may seem needful for this work. I have already availed myself largely of this diary, nor is there almost anything in it which, in some connexion or other, is not worth preserving. But at this stage of my task I must confine myself, in the following extracts, within much narrower limits than I could have wished—restricting myself to what is either too valuable in itself to be omitted, or to what is needful for throwing light upon the varying states of Dr. Duncan's own mind, which

at times would seem to defy explanation on any ordinary principles.

"On a Sabbath," says the Rev. James Robertson, Newington U.P. Church, "when I had been preaching one of a series of discourses on Angels in their revealed connexion with the work of Christ, Dr. Duncan came into the vestry and said, 'Will you be so kind as to let me know when you are going to take up the case of my favourite angel?' 'But who is he, Doctor?' 'Ah! guess that.' 'Well, it would not be difficult to enumerate all those whose names we have given us.' 'But I can't tell you his name. He is an *anonymous* angel, mine—guess him—eh?' 'Well, I think I must give it up, Doctor.' 'Then I'll have to tell you. It's the one who came down in Gethsemane, and "strengthened" my Lord to go through His agony for me, that He might get forward to the cross and finish my redemption there. I have an extraordinary love for that one, and I often wonder what I'll say to him when I meet him first.'" This was a thought Dr. Duncan never wearied of repeating, in varied forms, whenever the subject of angels turned up in conversation.

A day or two after this, the following conversation took place between him and Miss R., "April 21, 1864:—*Dr. Duncan.*—'I went last Sabbath and heard Mr. Robertson preach one of a course of sermons on the angels.' *Miss R.*—'I think one sermon might have exhausted them.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'O no, it is a very wide subject—do you think about the angels?' *Miss R.*—'Not much.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'Do you hope that you are an heir of salvation, and so have your own special ministering angel—and yet you don't think much about the angels! Do you think you have "come unto Mount Zion"? Well, what have you come to? "To an innumerable company of angels," and yet you don't think much about the angels! The angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill to men"—God, earth, men; the angels care for *men*—

and you don't think much about the angels! The angels of heaven sang, "Glory in the highest, peace in *heaven*." Have you and I some hope that God has granted to us repentance unto life? Then there was joy over us in the presence of the angels of God. And do we need daily repentance? Then doubtless the joy of the angels over us continues, and you don't think much about the angels! The Lord Jesus shall come "in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels," and you will be taken quite by surprise that day, because you have never thought much about the angels!' *Miss R.*—'I may be off the earth before that.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'Oh, and you will have time between death and the resurrection to get acquainted with the angels, so as you will not be surprised?' *Miss R.*—'But there is a great deal of sentimentality in much that is said about angels.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'Oh, because there is a great deal of nonsense in other books about them you will not attend to what the Word of God says about them! just as some persons, because the Papists worship the Virgin Mary, will not call her 'the blessed Virgin'—although it was said, "all generations shall call me blessed." I don't say that *fancy* will make anything of it—oh, fancy draws a bonny man with a pair of wings! but can faith not make something of it? and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' *Miss R.*—'But I think the angels cannot do good to our souls, only outward good, Ps. xci. 11, 12.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'I don't see why holy angels may not have as much power to do our souls good as the devil has power to do them ill; if the devil has power to do us ill through the sin that is in us, may the angels not do us good through the grace that is in us? I take that passage to mean, thou shalt not *even* dash thy foot against a stone—they shall take charge of thee even down to that; it was more than that to the Head—and so also, I take it, it is to the members. I have my favourite angel, though I do not know his name. It is not Gabriel, who announced the birth of my Lord. It is that angel



who, when our hope was staggering, and when twice He fell, appeared from heaven, strengthening Him. If I get to heaven, and meet that one, I will say to him, "Art thou the angel who strengthened my Lord in His agony?" Did that angel do you no good? and though it is a less thing than strengthening the Head, did the angel who let Peter out of prison do you no good? did Peter do you no good after he came out of jail?"

*Dr. Duncan.*—"I am sticking at death just now." *Miss S.*—"That is a poor stick." *Dr. Duncan.*—"And do you stick at the Fall too? Do you just think of your *pravity*, and not your *depravity*? Do you just think of your badness without thinking that you *fell out* of a good state? You should take a walk in Eden sometimes." *Miss R.*—"You once said, 'Men should be living like dethroned princes.'" "Yes, but that is only part of the truth—believers should rather be living like restored princes, though not yet fully. Had Adam not fallen, and had he filled this earth with a holy race, I know not what the Adamic state of glory would have been, but I know that it is a much higher into which we shall be brought through union to the Incarnate Son of God. 'To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.'"

"*Nov. 26.*—*Miss R.*—"Are you to preach in Clare Hall to-morrow?"<sup>1</sup> *Dr. Duncan.*—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. If you make an idol of me, there will be no glory to God, you will do yourself no good, and you will do me much harm."

"We met Mr. and Mrs. D. in the Meadows, and Dr. Duncan spoke to them for a few minutes. *Dr. Duncan.*—"Have you heard Mr. D. preach? and how did you like him." *Miss R.*—"I did not like his very *human* way of speaking about Christ the time I heard him, nor his praying almost entirely to Christ." *Dr. Duncan.*—"Whatever

<sup>1</sup> There Dr. H. Bonar's congregation assembled while his church was in course of erection. Dr. Duncan, living now in that neighbourhood, became one of his elders.

there be under that, there is not a denying of the true and proper Godhead of Christ. Perhaps some of us make too little of Christ's humanity—make no more of it than just this, that he needed to be man, in order to be a sacrifice. But I am not so severe a critic as some of my friends.' ”

“*Dec. 10.*—Called on Dr. Duncan. ‘There is a great hurry in my mind—I want patience. I hurry from one thing to another, and do nothing right.’ Speaking of last Sabbath’s sermon he said, ‘I could not do justice to my own ideas—the links were wanting. Ah! the youthfulness of mind is gone. I have come to the time of which Solomon says, “The grasshopper shall be a burden.” But it is a wonder that I have lived to be so old.’ ”

“*June 26, 1865.*—Called on Dr. Duncan. ‘I am neither company for a sinner nor a saint, but I think that if Dr. Love were alive I could speak to him. In these days I have sometimes been in an agony—and my agony is from the Gospel, not from the Law—my fearfulness is not at all from the Law, it is from the Gospel. The Gospel, and that just when I would seek to embrace it, detects sin, detects unbelief, detects the carnal mind—that I am not willing to be saved in God’s way. I think there is something of making my complaint unto God—complaining of my own unbelief. “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.” Ay, not only confessing the sin that he has done, but the sin he is doing just now, the sin that is in him just now. Oh, it would be horrible if it were the imperate act saying, “I will do it,” and doing it; but it is the elicit act.<sup>1</sup> “So then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”’ He beat upon his breast and said, ‘Sin that dwelleth in me. Oh, to think of having that hellish thing in us as long as we live.’ *Miss R.*—‘God will bring good out of it.’ *Dr. Duncan.*—‘No, He will not; He will bring no good out of it; it is wholly evil; however, He may overrule it for good. . . . I am under the domination of fear. I am not in despair. I have hope; but fear predominates. I am glad to maintain

<sup>1</sup> See p. 192, note.

composedness of mind, by not so much making efforts unto appropriation, as imploring the application of the Spirit. And after all, that is the way; it is the Spirit's application that gives appropriation. The sun shines, the rain falls on the vegetables, and then,

"Ilka blade o' grass keeps its ain drap o' dew."

The susceptibilities lie at the foundation of the activities. I am almost wholly contemplative—I am not practical. I am morning, noon, and night taken up with the contemplations of Divine and spiritual verities; and I don't remember when I was born, I don't remember when I was married, I don't remember when I was ordained, I sometimes don't know the faces of my oldest friends, and scarcely remember that I have such a thing as a daughter on the face of the earth. Now there is something deeply wrong in all this—it is not human—I am as if I were not on the earth at all. You have heard the story of the Nonconformist minister. One of his people complained that his wife spent all her time in her closet reading the Bible and praying, and the stockings were neglected, and everything about the house was going wrong. The minister took this way with her: he opened the door of her closet, and said with a stern voice, "Is there no fear of God in this place?" This view of the matter startled her. She was neglecting plainly commanded duties. And so am I neglecting plainly commanded duties. It is not *thinking* that is commanded, but *doing*. "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." James speaks much about doing, and Paul also. And oh, Christ was a working Christ! I preach the law, but I don't do it. In going over the Catechism in my mind, I leave out the Ten Commandments. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." *Miss R.*—"You do no ill to anybody." *Dr. Duncan.*—"That is partly true, but not wholly. Love is not merely negative, it is positive. I have taken the liberty of giving

you my confidence, so as I would do to few, in order that your prayer for me may be more specific. Pray that the way of truth may not be evil spoken of by my becoming wholly senseless about the things of time. Pray that I may in a sense be brought back into the world and into time—that I may be made more practical.' *Miss R.*—'God does not change a man's natural constitution.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'Ah! but He does.' *Miss R.*—'He does not change a contemplative character into a practical one, and I don't believe He will ever make you practical.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'Well, it is true that there is an individual idiosyncrasy that is not destroyed—but grace is omnipotent. I never have the shadow of a doubt as to the truth about Christ. Ah! however it be as to my interest in Christ, it is a comfort to know that I have not been preaching *lies* about Him. We "have not followed cunningly devised fables." As to my sermons, are they not all doctrine? Is there application in them? is there application to saints and to sinners? and to sinners in the way of setting the Gospel fully before them? is there anything in them to take forth the precious from the vile? A full gospel ministry has need to be a searching one, and a searching ministry has need to have a very free Gospel.'"

"*Dec. 8.*—Called on Dr. Duncan. 'My nerves are completely shattered, but that is occasioned by my mind, and that is occasioned by my *conscience*. O what a tremendous thing sin is! looking merely at the evil which it has done to us, though God can bring moral good out of penal evil. The truth is, Miss R., I betook myself to a line of study to which I was not called, and my heart departed from the Lord, though I was not wanting to quit with Him altogether. "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart;" and what whoredom and wine have done to others, linguistics have done to me. And when I would seek to return, then it is that the trouble comes. I have something of the battle, but worse, which the awakened soul has.' *Miss R.*—'But is it not lawful enough to study linguistics when God has given you a capacity for it?' *Dr.*

*Duncan.*—‘ Oh, don’t extenuate sin. How would you like if your servant went and did work which might be lawful for some other person, and duty for some other person to do, but the doing of which hindered her in her duty to you? I am not without the realization and support of the truths, “Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious,” etc. “This is a faithful saying,” etc. “Him that cometh unto me,” etc. I believe that the Gospel is proclaimed to sinners as sinners, and therefore to me. But I am shut up and turning round in these truths—there is no expansiveness, no going out into all the words and ways of the Lord.’

“*Miss R.*—‘ What do you think of Dr. M’L.?’ *Dr. Duncan.*—‘ Oh, I am very sorry for N. M. John Knox and the Puritans were very sound about the Sabbath, and we have cause to bless God that they were. But Luther and Calvin held precisely the same views as N. M. I have read that on one occasion a deputation was sent from this country to consult Calvin about something; on the Sabbath forenoon they went to hear him preach, and were greatly delighted; but going to his house in the afternoon, they were scandalized to find him playing a game at draughts. N. M., holding the views he does, should leave the Church; but they say too much who say that he is rejecting moral law altogether—he is rejecting the moral law as given by Moses. He is not saying that children are not to obey their parents, but does not take the obligation from the Decalogue. Paul takes it so, I think, in Eph. vi. 1-3. He puts it decalogically—as logically deduced from the Decalogue—and he changes the words which referred to the Jews, “That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,” into those which are for all men, “that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.” I don’t see how N. M. will be able to prove the appointment of the Sabbath at all, apart from the Decalogue—how he will be able to prove that God said, “I release you from the obligation of the Fourth Commandment, to keep holy the Seventh Day, but I command you to keep holy

the First Day." How is time divided into weeks at all? how is it divided septuagintally, except on the foundation first of creation and then of resurrection?"

"Aug. 18, 1866.—Called on Dr. Duncan. He read me extracts from Dr. Pusey's book on Daniel. 'He has a fine spirit of reverence for the Word of God.' *Miss R.*—'Do you think Dr. P. is a good man?' 'I don't know why I shouldn't think so, but his Christianity radiates back to that of Augustine; he is an Augustinian.'"

"Sept. 8.—Called on Dr. Duncan, and suggested his preaching in St. Luke's. He agreed, preached, came down, and stayed with us all night. Spoke about the *Plymouth Brethren*. 'They would need to be taught about the Visible Church. A body without a soul is a carcass; a soul without a body is a ghost. In England they have been so disgusted with the carcass that they have taken up with the ghost. They throw away the eighteen centuries, and go back to the state of the Primitive Church. If Scotland were to be overspread with Plymouthism, we should have to begin and go over it all again; the different heresies would spring up, and then men would be obliged to come forth with what were their opinions, and so there would be Confessions and Creeds. They don't like Rom. vii. O well, if a believer does not sin, so much the better, it is very good; but if he sins, and is not troubled about it, that is not good. Was Noah when he got drunk, and David when he committed adultery, to think no more about it? I don't know where they put repentance. You are not to repent *before* you believe, but to believe at once; and you are not to repent *afterwards*, that would be unbelief. And I suppose they make faith believing that Christ died for me. I am not called in the Gospel to believe any such thing. . . . They say that "believers have nothing to do with the law." Is there not a kingdom, and is not God a great King? and how can there be a kingdom without a law? They are God's friends, and God and they are of the same mind, but are they not his *subjects*? And why does Paul call himself



"*servant of Jesus Christ*" if he was just a man that "*likit*" the same thing that Jesus Christ "*likit*." Miss R.—'I don't see why the objective law and the subjective disposition should be put in opposition.' Dr. Duncan.—'They take that text, "*The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient.*" Well, the law *is* made for the disobedient man, and the righteous, the obedient man, is he who *obeys the law.*'"

"Nov. 24.—Called on Dr. Duncan. 'I am able to hope a wee bit in His mercy.' Miss Sandeman was going to tell me something about the doings of the Pitcairmites, when he said, 'O don't speak about it. I should be thinking about my own sins and other people's, but I feel this way, O don't touch me! I think this is not so much from a tender conscience as from an *inflamed* conscience.'—"He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." The faith of adherence may not be a very strong thing, it is not assurance, but it is a very tenacious thing; it cleaves to the Lord against solicitations alluring it away, and against discouragements from the Lord Himself. A friend of mine once said to me about the theology of the good people of England, It is like a limpet, it has no bone in it. I said, 'Well, a limpet is not a strong thing, but it cleaves to the rock.'"

"June 29, 1867.—Called on Dr. Duncan. He resumed about north-country people. 'Sandy Macleod of Bracadale was acceptable to 'the men,' though in his preaching he directed them most to Christ and the Bible. Once at a 'question meeting' they had been discussing the distinction between true and counterfeit faith. When they were done he said, "All that is very well, but in analysing and scrutinizing your faith there is danger of neglecting the Object of faith. Was your faith crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of your faith?" It is of more consequence that I eat my dinner than that I inquire into the state of my digestion. God maintains life in me without my always thinking about or being conscious of my vital

organs performing their functions. So the Holy Spirit maintains spiritual life in me without my always thinking about or being conscious of the actings of life in my soul. Doctors inquire into and scrutinize the vital organs and their actings, but they live themselves like other people. I remember in my youth reading a book on Physiology which interested me; now it turned out that the author's theory was quite wrong, yet he lived himself just in the way that others did. There are plain, simple Christians who do live spiritually, and yet they do not know or think much about inward actings of spiritual life. And there are divines, ministers, or persons who are divines, who scrutinize and analyse faith and the actings of faith."

"*July 16.*—Dr. Duncan looked out of his bed, and observed my niece, a little girl, who was sitting on the floor, looking at him. 'Oh, Missy, are you there? What are you at in your Bible lesson at Mr. Oliphant's?' 'We've just finished the Passion Week.' 'Oh, lassie, lassie, there was never a week like that since the world began, and there never will be a week like it again: that was the week of weeks—there never in the universe will be a week like that. There are in the heavens a heap of fixed stars, and probably all of them have suns or planets round them; but never in the universe of God did there take place such things as took place that week on this earth. It is a wonderful place this earth. Edward Irving, speaking of "world-despising," says, "Despise this world! The masterpiece of God's creation, the triumph of creation's God!" There are splendid things in his *Orations*—very oratorical. You know the swell of his pompous English; in that scarcely anybody is like him, except Jeremy Taylor. Yes, I find out about the Scriptures, that I have looked not too much, but too exclusively, to St. Paul's Epistles and David's Psalms, and that I have but a scanty acquaintance with the four blessed Gospels. Now, good things may be accompanied with abuse and mixture of good and evil; so with the tendency of the present age



to go a good deal to the four Gospels. No doubt it often is accompanied with a danger. Paul is a systematizer. But then the Pauline Epistles presuppose the four Gospels; for the Church to which he wrote—the primitive Church—was a great Gospel-reading Church. The primitive Fathers were very poor divines; but reading and reading away at the four Gospels, the hearts of the people were gathered in a simplicity of faith, with love, round the Person of Christ. As I have often said, I don't think Polycarp could have stood a theological examination by John Owen; but he was a famous man *to burn*! <sup>1</sup> We are the ancients, they were the infants.'—'Self-suspicion is a good thing, and yet grace-doubting stands very close to it. That is what Rutherford calls "the sin that is sib to grace." It is a good word "sib." I don't think "akin" touches a Scotchman so much as "sib." 'Now, you are not going to Boswellize me, are you?' At the door, going away, Dr. Duncan said, 'A diligent reading of the four Gospels would go to correct that tendency to look only at the Godward side of things. Oh how human Christ was!'

"July 13, 1868.—'The best phase of heathenism I know is the philosophy of Plato; and it is the best, because it is a philosophy of *despair*. When I say of despair, being in the place of hope, not of final condemnation, it was not without hope springing up in human bosoms. It elucidated the fact that we are fallen creatures; but as ignorant of the *history* of the Fall, it fell—as it could not but—into mistakes about the origin of evil; said that evil was inherent in matter. Plato says, "We have fallen into this miserable plight, from which we know not how to extricate ourselves, unless God send us a teacher." In that pagan world, without the light of the Gospel, without the law of Moses even, God was working by His Spirit on the law written on their hearts; and they were better men, in their ideas of virtue, than the Scribes and Pharisees among the Jews were, who had the law of Moses, and they will rise in the judgment and con-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 261, 262.

demn many professing Christians. The best pagan philosophy was God's *scavengery* to keep His prison-house somewhat clean, into which prison-house He was to come who was to proclaim liberty to the captives. Oh, God does a great deal to keep this earth from being a perfect hell, as it would be. My heart bleeds when I think of Socrates and Plato, and I don't envy the religion of the man with whom it is otherwise. The Christian Fathers had great tenderness for the memory of Plato, whom one of them calls the great pagan theologian. Boyle, in his work *Civitas Dei*, speaks with great tenderness and affection of Plato and his philosophy, to which he himself, a Christian philosopher, was much indebted; whilst as a Christian, he hesitates not to pronounce the best works of pagans to be but "splendid sins"—not proceeding from the grace of God, and from that love to God which is founded on faith in Jesus Christ. Even during the restrictiveness of Judaism, the salvation by Israel's God and Israel's Messiah was not restricted to Israel, while it *was* restricted to Israel's God and to believers in Israel's Messiah. There were such, who were neither proselytes of righteousness nor proselytes of the gate—analogous to those who are in a state of salvation though not joined church members. Cornelius was a "devout man"—he feared God, the God of Israel—and if so, he was a worshipper of the God of Israel, and therefore had Israel's hope—knew the Messianic promise—he was in a state of acceptance already. "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved:" that does not mean that he was not a saved man already, but, the new economy having commenced, it was necessary that he should be brought in accordance with it."

"Sept. 9.—Called on Dr. Duncan. 'When Kepler the astronomer, after long search, came to ascertain fixed rules, he fell on his knees and said, "O my God! my thoughts are with Thee!" His thoughts were with God's astronomical thoughts. There is the sun of righteousness, and the stars that are to shine in the firmament for ever and ever—I don't

know whether Kepler's thoughts were with God's in that—I hope they were. A poet says, "A godless astronomer is mad"—Kepler was not such; I am afraid Laplace was.' *Miss R.*—'When did Kepler live?' *Dr. Duncan.*—'I don't remember; <sup>1</sup> I have no memory for dates, I never had, and it was a great loss to me.'<sup>2</sup> *Miss R.*—'They are the little minds that remember them.' *Dr. Duncan.*—'Not at all; Jesus Christ is apt to be to me just an abstraction of Divine and human excellences, instead of Jesus Christ who was born in Bethlehem and lived in Judea, for want of a chronological and geographical mind. We live in space and in time, and we forget that, and just dwell in the region of eternal truth—eternal truths become mere abstractions to us. "Mercy and truth have met together," but there is "the death which *He* accomplished at Jerusalem"—"Righteousness and peace have kissed each other," but there is "the death which *He* accomplished at Jerusalem."'

"*Dec. 6.*—Called on Dr. Duncan. This was the last time I saw Miss Sandeman in a conscious state. Dr. Duncan prayed before I left—he very seldom did so. Called on Dr. Duncan, and was startled to hear that Miss Sandeman was in an almost hopeless state. Dr. Duncan well—not seeming to take in about Miss Sandeman."

"*Sabbath, Jan. 24, 1869.*—Miss Sandeman died this afternoon, having lived with Dr. Duncan from the time of his second wife's death in 1852. When told that death was at hand, Dr. Duncan hastened to the Grange church, and sent a message to the pulpit informing Dr. Bonar, and asking prayer for Miss Sandeman. It was near the close of the service, and in the concluding prayer she was prayed for as dying. Meanwhile Dr. Duncan had hurried back to

<sup>1</sup> Kepler: born 1571, died 1630.

<sup>2</sup> To Mr. Knight he said, "I can easily remember the causal and logical nexus of things, but not the temporal and spatial. I might have remembered the latter had I given more attention to the physical sciences."

the house, which he reached before she died. As soon as he saw that she was dead, he fell on his knees by the side of the bed and prayed—Miss Sandeman's niece, the nurse, and servant being present. One of his petitions was this touching one, 'O Lord, Thou knowest how helpless I am—send some female friend to live with me.' "

"*Monday, Jan. 25.*—Called on Dr. Duncan. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. Lazarus also died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." Do you ever think about the angels now? Ah! we are taken up with the *Centre*, Christ, and Him crucified, so as we are apt to forget the *circumference*. "They shall go in and out, and find pasture"—we shall not find much pasture except we go out as well as in.' "

"*Jan. 27.*—Called on Dr. Duncan. He took me into a room alone, and said, 'I have sustained a great loss—will you come?' 'Yes, if you can't make a better of it.' 'Better or not better, you have at least this betterness, of not being a stranger to me. I need one to be not only a mistress of my house, but a mistress of myself. When you come here there will be the temptation to me to talk too much, when I have one whose mind runs in the same channel as my own, and you must curb me. Ah! well, Miss Sandeman was a blessing in this house. My house is emptier, but heaven is fuller. You remember that unrecorded saying of the Lord Jesus—unrecorded by any of the four Evangelists—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." That shows how a poor man can be generous—he can have the generosity of *receiving*. It is an ungenerous thing the pride that will not receive.' "

"*Sab., March 14.*—This sentence in a sermon was repeated to Dr. Duncan: 'The Holy Ghost is the most shadowy of all the Persons of the Trinity, and the One who gives us the least idea of a Person, yet the One who comes most into contact with the human spirit.' This suggested the following remarks: 'The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are Persons; but they are so unique in the Personality that we cannot make a definition of the

word "Person" that would include all persons, just because of the Trinity. Three human persons are three human beings; three angelic persons are three angelic beings; three Divine persons are *one* Being. The Divine Personality must be unique. But except in Heb. i. 3, the word "Person" is not used in Scripture—"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person"—or the effulgence of His glory, the stamp of His Person, the exact correspondence, as the coin corresponds with the stamp which it got in the mint. Still we shall see that the word "Person," besides that text, is an appropriate word. What kind of persons do you call "I" and "He"? Personal: well, "The Father who sent me, He doeth the works"—the Father is a Person. And Christ calls himself "*I*" always: "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will"—the Son is a Person. The relations of Father and Son are personal relations. Then Christ says, "I will send you another Comforter that '*He*' may abide with you for ever"—that is a Person, is it not? Then there are the personal properties. Christ is the only begotten Son of God—to beget is a personal property; to be begotten is a personal property. And that which is applied to the Holy Ghost—to be promised, and to come—is a personal property. Christ says, "the Spirit, which proceedeth from the Father." The Western Church, Romish and Protestant, say, "From the Father *and the Son*—they introduced that into the Nicene Creed. It is not expressed in so many words in Scripture—the Western Church affirms it, and thinks it has sufficient ground for deducing it as a Scriptural consequence. The Greek and Roman Church, it is there that the doctrinal split is between them—but the doctrine of Rome and the Protestants concerning the Trinity is identically the same. I think Calvin was very well guided when he received the first four creeds. The four creeds are held by the Greek Church as well as the Romish Church, with the exception of these words concerning the procession of the Spirit, "*and from the Son.*" I think the Western Church did wrong in

this ; they had no right to put an article into the Nicene Creed without calling a Council of the whole Church ; yet I think that the article put in is true. The Greeks, some of them, by no means all, denied the truth of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son—and others only denied the right to put it into the Creed. The Greek Church explained itself thus : the “ Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and *takes* of the Son.”

“ ‘ The Spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters. God breathed into man’s nostrils the *breath* of life. The Spirit of the Lord strove before the Deluge—and God said, “ My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.” A notable text, being the first in which Spirit and flesh are opposed. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” and the opposition of flesh and Spirit—the first of it is in Genesis. I don’t recollect of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon Moses, but we read of His *being* come, for God says, “ I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them ”—upon the seventy. For Moses was to have his duties lightened, therefore the superior help was taken away ; the government of Israel under God was to be distributed by Moses principally, and by the seventy with him—therefore, something was taken from Moses and given to the seventy. Then Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God—there was the communication of the arts. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson—it seems to have been the communication of unseen strength. The Spirit spake by the prophets. “ The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Then the most particular work of the Holy Ghost—“ The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.” Then the fitting of Christ for His functions. God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him—not only as Mediator furnishing Him for the work which personally He was to do, but also for the work which He has to do in bringing many sons unto glory. Therefore there is a fulness of grace and truth communicative—“ Of



His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." He bade the disciples tarry at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high—and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Holy Ghost descended on them in cloven tongues as of fire—a symbol bringing it nearer to our senses. Then there were voices of people raised up in the temple, and in various languages—Galilean fishermen thus speaking the wonderful works of God. Look at that manifestation of the Holy Ghost, cloven tongues of fire—Galilean fishermen speaking all the languages. Look further at Peter, who had denied Christ. You are not to think that it is all Peter's courage, when he stands up in the midst of Israel, and their rulers, and says, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Whence this boldness? The Holy Ghost. What was the effect? When they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter's words were sent like a sword to the hearts of these men—they understood that they had crucified the Christ. Who caused Peter's words to be a sword, and to pierce their hearts? The Holy Ghost. "We have crucified the Messiah, the Hope of Israel, what shall we do?" they said. Well they might. "Shall our nation be cut off, and our persons perish? is there any way of escape? What shall we do?" "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." They repented and believed—by what power? By the power of the Spirit. Then throughout the whole Book of the Acts we may trace the work of the Holy Spirit in what Luke says was the work of the exalted Saviour: "The former treatise have I made of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach"—this is the continuation of an account of Christ's work when on *earth*; thus in the Book of Acts there is the continuation of the work of the unseen and exalted Saviour. So, in the conversion of Paul, it was Jesus who was working by His apostles

as His ambassadors, and the power of the Spirit was accompanying their testimony. We find in the conversion of Paul an actual appearance of the risen Saviour—a breaking in through this economy somewhat, as that in which He has now retired personally, and is present by His Spirit only. He broke through it at this time—and if you read the Epistles of Paul, you will find that He did so several times afterwards. As He appeared to John, so several times to Paul. Then the Gentiles, when the Gospel was preached to them, “turned from idols to serve the living and true God.” And how did this take place? Because “the apostles’ word” came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. They had to give up their gods—they were not true—and to give up the carnality of their religion, to serve the living and true God. And Jesus says, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth”—therefore their service of Him was in spirit and in truth—therefore they were quickened by the Holy Ghost. And coming further down, are there not at present men on earth who have been convicted of sin, and brought as guilty sinners, deserving God’s wrath, to the judgment-seat of God on earth, with their mouths stopped by the Holy Ghost convincing of sin? He, the Holy Ghost, is God, and He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son—and ever in His application of the law He is present. Not that an omnipresent Spirit of God man can be conscious of, but he is conscious of Divine power, conscious of an operation distinct from himself, because Divine. Then do you believe that there are any men on earth who have found peace by the blood of the cross? and do you find that these live holy lives and die happy deaths? Now “there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not”—and “all our righteousnesses,” say the saints, “are like filthy rags;” yet you believe that there are men who have found peace by the blood of the cross—men who obey God, men who have filial hearts toward God, men to whom



there has been the application of the promises of grace, and in whose hearts is written God's law—men who, being made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness, have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Who works all that? It is imperfect—but, as I have said, these men live holy lives, and die happy deaths. "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not"—is there, therefore, *not* a just man upon earth? Is a child a perfect man? He is, and he is not—he is not, but is there not a sense in which a child is a perfect man? You will observe the notable point in the economy of the day of Pentecost. The justification in the court of heaven avails nothing in our conscience" . . .

"*April.*—Dr. Duncan announced his intention of going to Wales early in summer, to some place where no English is spoken. Accordingly, he was for some weeks deep in the study of Welsh."

"*May 7.*—Dr Duncan began to try to teach me Greek—going into Ogle and Murray's, and bringing me out a grammar and lexicon. He liked better, however, to teach my niece, and had her out for that purpose—teaching several languages at once. When his teaching fits were upon him, he would also go into the kitchen and give the servant lessons in geography and grammar, having presented her with books.

"*May 10.*—'I could not stand reading such a book as Robertson's Life [Brighton]. It would set all my sensibilities into commotion. He believed in the Deity, but not in the Atonement of Christ.' *Miss R.*—'Do you believe that a man can be saved who does not believe in the atonement?' 'It is the safer affirmation to say that he cannot, safer than the other; but I believe it is too little to say. And as for men who are dead and gone, we don't know what was between God and them in their latter end. There is a dangerous fascination about such men as Robertson. Spurious spirituality is very dangerous. William Law—his "Serious Call"—what a striking book it is! yet it

contains the denial of the Atonement. William Law seems to me to have been a legalist of a very peculiar type. He was not one of those whose legalism is a mere doctrine, a mere praising of virtue—it was a desire of and aiming at virtue. He was a serious man, of a mystical turn of mind. In some way he believed in the Deity of Christ, and in the example of Christ, and in some way in the renovating and sanctifying grace of Christ. I have read somewhere that the last words of William Law were these. Some one was speaking of what he had done—"Away, away with the filthy rags! a flame is kindled in my soul that shall burn to all eternity in honour of Jesus Christ." And it is striking that a sermon on Regeneration was the last preached by Dr. Paley. These are deep, serious errors which we have been speaking of, and perhaps God does leave the men to perish in their errors; but even when there is no evidence of Christ's having been manifested, it may be the case that God often shows mercy to them. What praise is in a serious soul when God delivers it from deadly error! It is a serious thing to worship a man with a conscience awake to the peril of idolatry. The worship of Christ, if He be not God, is idolatry, and the Christian religion damnable sin. So we must be very sure that Christ is God before we worship Him. We think that our faith is firm with regard to the fundamentals, that it is only defective about the personals; but if we come to examine it, we are forced to say, even about the fundamentals, "Lord, help mine unbelief." The errors of godly men are the most dangerous. Richard Baxter lives in the affections of the Church, yet he greatly perplexed the Gospel; he tried to make peace between the Calvinists and Arminians by getting some middle way.' Dr. G. was spoken of. 'I don't know what makes ministers use the expression, "Christ left the bosom of the Father." Dr. G. had it in one of his books. I pointed it out to him, and he said, "I'll correct it in the second edition." And so he did, but when I looked at the book there were a great

many more errors. Ah! well, I am pernickety about doctrine; but I lie all day in bed and read, while he is doing good. He is very Christ-like. It is strange that G. should fall into these errors, and I have often been provoked at his latitudinarianism; but I have a heart-love to the man. Ah! there will be great mourning in Edinburgh when G. dies; and when B. dies—but there is a roughness about him. Dr. Bonar in his preaching raises a good testimony against the bad things of the present day. Mr. M. S. uses a very skilful scalping-knife for spiritual direction.

“*Aug.*—Dr. Duncan, walking up and down reading Dr. Chalmers’s *Scripture Readings*, read some passages on Genesis aloud. ‘It is very touching to be led into a man’s closet that way.’ ‘How did you and Dr. Chalmers get on?’ ‘Oh, nobly. Though very inferior, I took the liberty of differing with him sometimes about doctrine. One day, when he came down to my house for a little refreshment, I found fault with his definition of Faith. He said to Mrs. Duncan, when he went out, “You should get him to write.” Ah! my doctrine about faith was better than his—but he went to prayer, and his faith was better than mine.’”

“*Nov. 5.*—Dr. Duncan went to the College for the first time. I asked, ‘Were the students glad to see you?’ ‘I suppose so, for they gave me a good ruffing.’ He was very much fatigued.”

“*Nov. 15.*—Dr. Duncan into a low turn.

“*Nov. 16.*—Not able to go to the College. Was anxious to have attended a meeting of anti-Unionists to-night, but sent a letter of apology. Called up to read to him after he was in bed. ‘There is a fighting within me between faith and unbelief. I find that I cannot do now without assurance, but I am very unwilling to count myself a believer. I cannot lay hold on the promises. I was trying to read the newspaper, but I loathed everything except thoughts of God and Christ.’”

“*Sab., Nov. 21.*—Dr. Duncan very full of Dr. Bonar’s

sermon on Ahab's humiliation. 'I experienced something like it myself when I was unconverted, of the Lord's having respect to my prayers. After leaving the school at Darlington,' etc.<sup>1</sup>

"Nov. 24.—When Dr. Duncan came down this forenoon he said, 'You should pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury. . . . Dr. Tait seemed to get good by his trials, but there is a great snare to the Bishops and Archbishops in England: for you see they have power, and they have not power. There is power in theory in the Church, but in connexion with the State the power which they claim cannot be exercised. If they would purge heresy out of their charges, they have to go to the Queen and the Council.'

"Speaking of Law, author of the 'Serious Call,' Dr. Duncan said, 'We cannot say by what God sometimes keeps up, amidst much darkness, a seeking which, according to His gracious promise, is met at the last by a finding. There may be some work of grace in the heart of these Legalists—of the *doing* ones.' . . .

"I am a weary man. I am thankful to the Lord, I trust, for a spared life, but if He would give me Simeon's dismissal, I would be glad to go.

"Dec. 1.—"I cannot see for the glory of that light"—there is to me just now such a light on the things of God that I cannot rightly see them. God is a glorious God—Christ is a glorious Christ—the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory is a very glorious object.

"The Voluntary principle is not only antichristian, but atheistical. I wish I had strength to define it. I see the outlines and shadows of many things which I cannot grasp. This question I would like to consider—What, in the light of reason and of Scripture, is a nation before God? how is it constituted, and what constitutes it? A nation, a state, a city, a republic, is not a mere aggregation of such individuals, but is a unity, bound together by a

<sup>1</sup> The rest of this will be found, p. 97.

common polity, having the bond of common law and magistracy.'"

"Dec. 2.—Dr. Duncan set himself to serious preparation for his class next day—he turned over great Hebrew tomes most of the day. He wanted to resume the Voluntary principle at 11 P.M., but was persuaded to go to bed."

"Dec. 3.—Dr. Duncan went to the College."

"Dec. 4.—I went to Stirling for two days, from Saturday to Monday, and Dr. Duncan was very anxious to go with me to have some further discourse with Mr. Taylor.<sup>1</sup> Said coaxingly, 'Now, when I have been at the College, will you not take me with you?' It was out of the question, the weather being very severe.

"He continued going to the College on Tuesdays and Fridays till the Christmas holidays."

<sup>1</sup> On the subject of "Assurance," about which Dr. Duncan's thoughts at that time were much engrossed, and on which he spoke at great length to the Rev. William Taylor, of Stirling, editor of the *British Messenger*, in which that elaborate statement afterwards appeared, as corrected by Dr. Duncan himself.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE END : 1870.

*"Sab., Jan. 2, 1870.—*Dr. Duncan was at the Grange Church on the afternoon of this first Sabbath of the year—never was at church again."

*"Jan. 3.—*Some appearance of a low turn."

*"Jan. 4.—*Dr. Duncan had been engaged for some time to dine at Dr. Candlish's. Sent an apology. Did not get into his usual state of distress."

*"Jan. 10.—*Called on Dr. G. Keith, whose carriage I saw pass.—Said he had often seen him much worse."

*"Jan. 14.—*'Alas! I feel that I am not able for continuous study. If I were applying for license I would not be passed; if I were applying to be made a B.A. I would not be passed. I could not stand an examination in the Grammar School, in geography and mathematics.' 'I heard that you gave a splendid lecture lately.' 'Oh! you know a candle when it is going out gives splendid flickers. I hope in the Lord that that

be not fulfilled of me : The candle of the wicked shall be put out.' ”

“ *Tues. Jan. 18, 1870.*—Dr. Duncan went to the College. He said on his return, ‘I had great difficulty in getting up the stair to my class-room, I was so breathless, but after sitting a little I got better, and I am none the worse of having gone. The laddies gave me a good ruffing.’ ”

“ *Wed. 19.*—My niece was reading the tract ‘Alone in London.’ Dr. D. said, ‘O lassie, take another book and give me that ; I am a wearied man.’ A Hungarian and Bohemian student and a Prussian Jew were at tea. Dr. D. was very bright, speaking Magyar, Czech, Polish, Latin by turns. Said we had had a very pleasant evening.

“ *Thur. 20.*—Dr. D. almost never rose to breakfast, but this morning came down before it in great haste, and threw himself on the sofa, panting for breath, looking very pale. He soon recovered and took breakfast. Said he would only be able to repeat the Lord’s Prayer at worship, but had a long prayer.

“ *Sat. 22.*—Dr. Gordon, who had seen Dr. D. before, examined him particularly in bed, and at once took a very serious view of his case. Said the breathlessness was occasioned by weakened action of the heart. Dr. D. heard this, but did not seem to be alarmed.

“ *Sab. 23.*—Dr. D. rose at eleven, and was down-stairs till nine. Was reading a volume of H. Evans’s sermons, from which he read me extracts, saying, ‘He brings out truth in a striking way.’ In the afternoon he said, ‘I would like to read a historical tract ; I don’t feel able for anything else’—meaning such books as ‘Alone in London,’ ‘Little Meg’s Children,’ ‘Pilgrim Street,’ which at his request had been got for him.

“ *Monday, 24.*—Dr. D. better, and having a desire to go to the College to-morrow. ‘I am in the middle of ‘Psalm xxv. and would like to finish it before what I have thought

of passes away from my mind.' I said he could not climb the stair. 'Do you think Robert could carry me up on his back?' Robert called, and Dr. D. put the question to himself. 'Ay, fine that, sir.' 'Well, try.' Dr. D. with great gravity, got up on a chair, and thence on to Robert's back, who, with equal gravity marched about the room with him, to our great amusement. Mr. M. Stuart called, and Dr. D. talked with great animation about Bohemia, etc. Said that if he were able for it, he would like to go about to different places and collect money for bursaries. He interrupted Mr. M. S. in the middle of his prayer, saying, 'Remember Spain and Mr. Black.' He sat up till nine; had worship.

"*Tues. 25.*—Dr. D. panting a good deal this morning, and gave up his last thoughts of College work. He made me read Ephes. ii. 11-22, and then repeated it himself. Told me to read in Deuteronomy. I read xi. 18-25. 'Deuteronomy is the ground-work of all the prophecies; we have Moses as a preacher there. They have never got that in ver. 24, and Dr. Keith says in his book that therefore they must get it yet.'<sup>1</sup> 'I was in terrible agony last night at the thought of a Christless state, and that I might be in it. The fear of it exhausted my faculties. I had a flickering hope. Oh, what are we to deal with the great God, either in the greatness of His wrath or in the greatness of His love? or with that great transaction wherein is displayed the terribleness of His punitive justice and the riches of His grace?' He made me read part of Ps. cvi., and sang with me ver. 4, 5, 6.

"*Thurs. 27.*—'I got out of bed last night in an agony of fear of death and hell. O the misery of a Christless state! and the thought, I may be in it! I went back to bed saying, "I will look again toward Thy holy temple."' Dr. C. Brown called. 'I am afraid I may soon die and go to

<sup>1</sup> "Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be."



the bad place.' *Dr. B.*—"Oh, my dear friend, you are not fit for it; and we shall not go to hell unless we be fit for it, any more than to heaven; we shall be bound in our own bundle. You cannot say that the Lord never did you any good." 'I am sometimes afraid that I have only orthodoxy.' *Dr. B.*—"I believe that nothing but grace could have made *you* orthodox." 'I try to bring myself up to believe, and I cannot, and then I do it.' *Dr. B.*—"Ay, the omnipotence of weakness—"When I am weak, then I am strong." "What a wicked thought I had when going to bed last night: If I were sure I am a Christian, I would not pray to-night."

"He said in prayer at worship, 'O what a life of sins and mercies, and then of sins after mercies! and the sins prevent the kindly remembrance of the mercies.'"

"*Friday, 28.*—*Dr. D.* reading 'Pilgrim Street.' 'Nat. Pendlebury's simple faith did me some good. Little May knows almost nothing about me, save that I'm her father,' etc., p. 204. The theology of these books is defective, but there is a touching simplicity about some of the characters.

"*Sat. 29.*—*Dr. D.* gave me Law's 'Serious Call' to read. I read the chapter on Prayer, and said it was miserably legal. 'I distinguish between legal and *legalistic*. It is good to be legal—the Gospel is very legal. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." *Dr. Candlish* wishes the students to *deliver* their popular discourse, at least twenty minutes of it. I could not get on the first six months after I was licensed without *reading*; but I remember when lying in bed reading Law, that the thought came to me, "I think I could preach." I was employed as a city missionary, and at the meetings I did not read. I began to leave spaces in my sermons, and I found that the parts filled up at the time made most impression on the people."

"*Sab. 30.*—"I do well enough when I just keep at the surface of things; when I try to go deeper, it brings on this

panting. When I think of the loving-kindness of God by itself, I do well enough ; but when I begin to try appropriation, it brings it on. I must take Samuel Miller's advice, viz., when a sweet word came to me, to let it lie in my mouth. "Imperate" acts of the will are our duty, but perhaps God deals with us more through the "elicit,"<sup>1</sup> through the susceptibilities, as in the vegetable world.' Dr. D. looked very dull this afternoon ; sat looking into the fire for a long while without speaking. *Miss R.*—'I will give you a penny for your thoughts.' 'They are not worth a bawbee ; I could not tell you what they are.'"

"*Mon. 31.*—'I had some sweet meditations through the night. I wanted to theologize according to the habit of my mind, to put them in their connexion, but could not. Perhaps something permanent to the soul may come out of them. I am not able for great good any more than for great evil. I had to cry, "Gently, Lord, gently." That was a favourite text of my second wife's, Thy gentleness hath made me great.'"

"*Tues. Feb. 1.*—The last day Dr. D. was down-stairs.

"*Wed. 2.*—'We owe God a debt of praise even for those mercies which we have squandered. It is difficult to praise Him for them : difficult in the sense of being heart-breaking ; it would be easier not to acknowledge them.' 'Being unable, whether through my own fault or not, to do anything else, I would like to pray for the spread of Christ's cause everywhere. And I think we may succeed as well in prayer, not by seeking something very efficacious at once, but by bringing important matters often before God and our own mind.' 'People would rather preach to me than pray for me ; but there is no use preaching to one who is always preaching to himself. I don't believe, and so what they say does me no good, I would have them pray for the Spirit. There may be some truth at the bottom of what Dr. Bonar said, "I think you have more confidence in the prayers of others for you than in the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 192, note.

Intercessor." But I think it is that I have more confidence in their access to Him than my own. It may be that I have an impatient desire for assurance.' 'I am always going round on my treadmill, but I am taking more texts into it. When I get a text, I try to get one that seems quite contrary—it keeps one right in the middle. They are not contradictory, but the wrong conclusions which we would draw from the one are corrected by the other.' After Dr. D. was left alone to-night, I was alarmed by hearing a voice sounding through the quiet house. Found it was Dr. D. praying aloud. He was not in the habit of doing so.

"*Thur. 3.*—Dr. D. suddenly got much worse. Dr. G. said his lungs were considerably stopped up, that he was breathing only by the upper part of them. 'I am afraid of death and judgment.' I quoted, 'It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: *so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.*' 'I would have no hope at all if I did not believe that. I believe all about Christ. I am sure that Jesus is the *Christ*, but I am not sure that I am a *Christian*."

"Some people say that with them unbelief says the things are too good to be true; with me it is not that, it is that they are too big to grasp. My heart is weak, and it puts me into a fever when I think of sin and wrath, grace and salvation—specially the latter.' 'God has taught me that what they call *Calvinism* is God's way of grace and salvation—that is, evangelical Calvinism, with the free offer of the Gospel. Did I make a free offer of the Gospel in my preaching? did I not clog it with any legal enactments?'

"He asked me to sing, and sang with me in a feeble voice the paraphrase, 'Father of peace and God of love.' At another time, 'Vain are the hopes the sons of men,' etc., adding, 'I wonder what fault they can find with that.'

"I fear I have been a practical Antinomian, thinking and not doing. They talk in these days about "great thinkers," but "we must all appear before the judgment-seat

of Christ, that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath *done*." "What *do* ye more than others?" Through this night there was the most distressing part of Dr. D.'s illness from first to last; he spent most of it sitting before the fire, his breathing being easier thus than in bed. He said once, 'I have had a comfortable hour, a happy hour in my soul. Pray that it may continue, that my doubts may not return. I have never had any doubts about the truths of Christianity, about the sufficiency of Christ's atonement; my doubts have been about my interest in Him, whether I were truly united to Him.' 'I have had an hour's sweetness in seeking to keep hold of that word, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"'

"*Friday 4.*—Early in the morning when he was much oppressed, I quoted, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee.' 'I cannot take hold of that word.' *Miss R.*—'It is true for all that.' 'God does not say that to everybody.' *Miss R.*—'No, but He says it to you.' Dr. D. looked up quickly, and said, 'What makes you so confident about me? You cannot search the heart like God—is my Christianity so very apparent? Pray that I may be delivered from the spirit of fear and timidity, so as I am afraid to look at the great things of God. It is quite true what Miss S. used to say about me, that I have a great deal of fear in my composition.' 'If it please the Lord to lead on, I am a good deal more comfortable in my mind, but shaken.

"'If I am dying, I don't know where I am going; but since it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief, I may be saved. I am not able to examine myself; my friends will have it that it is real—I must just go on the present offer of Christ; if I have not done it before, I may receive Him now.' Dr. Begbie saw him with Dr. G. They agreed that he was in a dangerous, but not

altogether hopeless state. When they went back to his room, Dr. D. asked their opinion, and was told it very candidly, but gently. He seemed after this to look on himself as dying.

"*Sat. 5.*—Dr. D. very much relieved, especially by an opiate, under the influence of which he continued more or less for twenty-four hours. He said to me at night, 'Read five verses.' I read 2 Cor. v. 1-7. 'It is a good thing that we have to do with One who knows us altogether.' I quoted, 'He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.' 'Yes, not only the best things are in the Bible, but they are said in the best way.' 'What church does the nurse sit in?' She said she had been a member of the West Church for forty years. 'Ay, I knew Dr. Dickson. Well, if we be in Christ it is well; if not, it is not well.'

"*Sab. 6.*—Dr. D. looked very weak—in a sleepy state most of the day. I asked him once if he had any message for his daughter; he merely replied, 'Looking to Jesus.' He called me to him at night and said, 'I have been for a moment looking out to Jesus, who is, and was, and is to come, who liveth, and was dead.'

"*Mon. 7.*—Dr. D. considerably revived. 'I am theologizing again, going round on the treadmill; give me a word now and then to take me out of my own rut.' He told me to read about Moses sprinkling the people, then said, 'Now read about the better blood' (Heb. ix. 19-22, 23-28). He asked me at night, 'Do the doctors think I may recover?' 'Yes.' 'I scarcely think it. What will Alice (the servant) do when I am taken away? Will you take an interest in her? and will you correspond with my daughter? Tell Mr. Laing to take my Turkish books for the one I lost, and pay for any other College books that I have lost.' 'I would see Jesus. I am thinking on His name distantly, but I would see Him. That was not a wise word of yours, though it may be a true one, about the probabilities; there is unbelief enough in every man without putting it into him. Whenever a man comes, it must be

as a sinner ready to perish.' He referred to a conversation so far back as Nov. 24. Dr. D. at that time was taking a great concern about the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was thought dying.

"*Tues.* 8.—'What is that about Christ being made a spectacle?' *Miss R.*—'It is not Christ, it is the Apostles' (1 Cor. iv. 9). 'Read "Thy loving-kindness to shew forth."<sup>1</sup> He said to my niece, 'God bless you, lassie! but I am not able to speak to you. I have a weight on my spirits to-day, and I cannot get it off.' He told me to read. I read John xvii. 1-5; he made me do it three times. 'Read the Psalm about "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me."' 'What kind of weather is it?' 'Very cold.' 'Well, mind the poor—mind the sick bairns—mind the birdies.'

"*Wed.* 9.—'I am glad to be able to think and to express my thoughts again. I have been attempting to think of the unity and totality of that one thing *sin*—"to put away sin," "to bear the sins of many." And by being made *sin*, and bearing *sin*, and bearing it out and away, Christ brings the other great thing, the *life*, the eternal life. Poor are my thoughts about them, but these are infinitely great things—the worst and the best. Oh, how darkly I see through a glass! and how I have neglected the great salvation! I thank the Lord for a hope of His salvation; but I see that if I had lived more closely with Him, it had been better now. Salvation is entirely of grace; yet God makes, as it were, gracious compensation to those who seek Him, and most to those who seek Him most. I do not say that I do not know Him and His great salvation—no; but oh, John Duncan! you might have been a better man at the end of this life than you are, though it is as a sinner deserving to perish you must lie down and die, were you the very best.'

"*Thur.* 10.—Dr. D. very much better. 'My friends' prayers have done me good. I have been so much removed out of the Lord's work, that I did not think there would

<sup>1</sup> First line of Psalm xcii. 2, Scotch metre version.

have been so much interest about me.' 'I don't wish my obligations to Dr. Mearns to be forgotten.<sup>1</sup> My obligations are very great also to Gavin Parker, whom, I dare say, I plagued very much. I was constantly intruding on him. Oh, is Mrs. Parker in this country? Write, stating how I am, and that I would much value her prayers. Say that I remember the days of old with her and good Gavin, and would like to know how the children are, and what they are doing. Many outward ties have been broken—whose fault I am not to judge. I trust the inward bond of our union remains in Christ; a tie binding each to Him binds each to other indissolubly. When we all reach yonder country, we shall wonder what foolish bairns we have been. But though the outward union was gone, I never at heart quitted my friends.' He said to my niece, 'Lassie, I like to see your face.' 'I suppose it is a relief from our old ones.' 'O she may be an auld pechin' [panting] wife yet; she does not know what may be in the book of the decrees, and what chapters it may unfold. Jacob changed his mind about some of the chapters in his.'

"'Christ is God's good gift to cursed sinners, to cursed creatures. I am quite persuaded that the occupations of time will have an influence on the occupations of eternity, that they will be in the same train. That is nailed by this—that the greatest of all events took place here 1800 years ago, and that the lines of all history meet in the history of Christ. Blessed is the man whose individual history falls in and under the history of Christ; if not, he is swept away with the burning. Christ was in the world, and you were in the world, but you are not in Christ. But now He says "*Come*." He will say the old word at last, "*Come*," and for the first time He will say that word "*Depart*." The children of men have despised and rejected Him, but we never read that He despised and rejected men. Are you not wondering to see me? But I don't think I am going back to the world again,—I shall never be the man

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 71, 72.



I was ; something has been taken away, and perhaps something given. I can never engage in the literary study even of the Word of God again ; it is a desperate thing self, and must be given up.'

" *Friday, 11.*—'There is a strong sense of justice in a man ; he will not consent to condemnation unless he sees that it is just ; and he will not consent to be saved unless he sees that it is just through *grace*, it must be *just* grace. Law and Grace are wonderful things.

" 'The Calling of Abraham made a great change—the Exodus from Egypt made a great change—the Law given from Sinai made a great change—the Incarnation of Jesus Christ made a great change—the Death of Jesus Christ made a great change—the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ made a great change—Pentecost made a great change—the Calling of the Gentiles made a great change. And then that change, the beginning of which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and explained further in the Epistles, is the present state—that which has been going on ever since, and which will continue till the Millennium. Dr. Bonar and I never discuss that. It is good ever to be kept up in the Church that the Lord will come again, and that we should be like servants waiting for their Lord, that at whatever hour He come, He may find us watching. Whether it be as the Doctor says or not, it will be. And I think the Pre-millennialists have done some good to the Church in drawing attention to the important fact that the Lord will come again, to the importance of that as one article of the Christian faith' (Heb. ix. 27, 28).

" 'I have found the country intellect more profound than that of the city. The country people in Scotland are intelligent ; they are not like the English boors, and they are glad to have something to think about, something to be a real occupation to their minds and wills and hearts. They called me metaphysical in Glasgow, in Persie they never did. I used to say that the country people knew everything but Latin. In the town they knew the ele-



ments of a hundred things floating on the surface ; in the country they think of one thing more profoundly.<sup>1</sup>

“ ‘ We can be only in the present, but not in the present without a past, nor in the present without a future. We need a present stretching from an eternal past and eternal future. In Jehovah alone is such a past, present, and future found (Psalm xc. 1, 2). Jehovah hath created the heavens and the earth. We are here, and here as an integral part of them. “ Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion : bless the Lord, O my soul.” We are connected in that verse with all places of His dominion—everything, everywhere, my soul. Yet the foundations of our being, of our eternity, are in God—our possibility in His omnipotence—our futurity in the purpose of His will, as our actuality in our generic creation, and our individuality from Him who calls the generations from the beginning. So of men—so of our salvation—omnipotence, purpose, creation in Christ. There’s something there that I’ll no’ spin out ; it could be spun out into a long thread.’

“ ‘ The prince of the power of the air. I think the air is figurative ; we talk of breathing a bad moral atmosphere, and I think there is a very bad air just now. I remember once, when in a state of poverty of soul, of an air coming from the Word of God, it was not any particular place, just air to breathe in.’

“ ‘ I got a lesson once from seeing two blind blackbirds in a cage. When they were stirred with a stick their nebs gaped and gaped. They needed, and in their blind way they sought, and they obtained. I have often spoken about our receptivity. I believe it is that which lies at the foundation of our salvability.’

“ *Sat. 12.*—‘ I am wonderfully well ; it is coming back to me in lumps of health, yet it is an invalid’s health, to be treated not as a taskmaster but as a nurse, which I little am consistently and habitually accustomed to do.’ ‘ Dr. Wilson of Bombay is a literary man, but a true-hearted

<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 249.

missionary. Our missionaries in India have held a high place as literary men; so did the Baptist ones. Carey was sneeringly called "the Sanctified Cobbler," but God has plenty of talent down in the under strata of society which He can bring up if He please.' 'If God is giving me lumps of health, death and I were face to face, with the dreadful backing of judgment—no trifles. But Christ died and rose again, so I could venture to look at death and judgment—Christ's once dying for sins, the just for the unjust, the foundation of a sinner's hope—and I was back at the beginning.

"Jesus! how glorious is Thy grace!  
When in Thy name we trust,  
Our faith receives a righteousness  
That makes the sinner just."

'Let us seek to have well-grounded marks of saintship, but when the push comes, nothing but imputed righteousness will stand the day. It was there we began, and it is there we must end, with God as a sin-forgiving God through the obedience unto the death of His only-begotten Son (Rom. v. 21). And being shut up and driven back to that, will not hinder holiness but promote it, for "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," etc. (Tit. ii. 11, 12, 14). And that's a wee bit o' the fundamentals o' the glorious Gospel—no cunningly devised fable, but a foundation of the Lord which stands sure.'

*Dr. Duncan's message to Mr. Somerville.*

"About ten days before his death Dr. Duncan told some one to write to Mr. Somerville of Glasgow [who has long taken a deep interest in the evangelization of Spain] to give his love, and to say as follows: That some person of a poetical turn in Spain should be got to translate a selection of the Psalms into metre, say the i. ii. xxii. xxiii. xxiv. xl. li. lxiii. lxxxiv. c. ciii. cxxx., and that there are three

copies of Calvin's Institutes in Spanish extant, one in the possession of La Harpe of Geneva, which should be looked after and printed in a modernized form."

"*Sab. 13.*—Dr. D. told me to bring him his Hebrew Bible, Greek and Latin New Testament, and several other books. He opened them all, but did not seem able to read much, and this was his last attempt at former studies. The books lay untouched in a recess at the back of his bed, where he always kept a goodly store, till they were sorrowfully lifted out over his dead body. 'I have been wonderfully obligated of God with long life; you know what a sickly boy I was; but all I expect in this world now is an invalid's health. I am not going to enter the harness of life again, former occupations must be laid aside.'

"'Marks of grace are very well, and I must now look to these, but I had to face death and judgment, and nothing would stand but the atonement. Well, I did not expect to see this day.' *Miss R.*—'You thought yourself dying?' 'Yes; it was a death-warrant at any rate, and I desire to take it as such. Well, it is a solemn thing to face death—nothing but a sight of death will meet death. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord—that principle you have to do with for evidence of your saintship, but the evidences will not do the battle, you must go to the foundation.' 'It is not merely the truth, but the justice of our redemption that conscience has to deal with.' Dr. G. told him that he was attending a young Methodist minister who was very ill. 'Tell him that a stout-hearted Calvinist sends him his love.' *Miss R.*—'I think their way of putting it, "Christ died for me," must be very comforting to them.' Dr. D. replied with great energy, 'It is a monstrous doctrine, "Christ died for me, and I may die the second death," only God does not hold them by their logic. I must come as I am, a poor sinner, to the cross; there is a personal transaction in the matter, and the personal transaction goes on. Is it sufficient for the individual?'

"One said to David Dickson<sup>1</sup> when he was on his death-bed, 'What are you doing, brother?' He answered, 'I am taking all my bad deeds and all my good deeds and throwing them into one bundle, and fleeing from both to Christ.' But the difference with me is this—I have been casting about, and I cannot find any good deeds to put into the bundle.'"

"*Monday 14 to Friday 18.*—'God has not let sinful man's world be a devil's hell. There are elements in it which, if God were to let them loose, would make men very miserable; so also there are in the individual man, soul and body.

"Read what is said about the stranger in Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. vi. 32, 33). Judaism was not a missionary but a conservative system, yet there was some provision made for the Gentiles; before the door was wide opened it was somewhat *ajar*.' He said to Dr. G., 'The things of God are too big for me.' 'You must just try to meddle with the little things at present.' 'Ah, but there are no little things—there is no little God, no little law.' He said afterwards, 'I am trying just to think of God's works of creation and providence. I would sing the song of redemption, and I can only sing "He maketh grass to grow for the cattle."

"Lying in the dusk looking out on a blazing fire, Dr. D. said, 'For centuries the Lord was filling the coal-cellars; that flame is a collection of sunbeams which God shut up in the coal for us.' 'I remember a saying of Hugh Miller's when he came on a beautiful little flower which had bloomed before there was any other eye to look upon it but God's, "*He hath taste.*" God liked to look on the beautiful thing Himself.' Dr. D. always asked for the *Daily Review* (Edinburgh paper) whenever it came in the mornings, but used to say, 'I wish to begin the day with God, however shortly,' and so a few verses were read and sung, and he prayed, sometimes at considerable length, but once, after

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Divinity, first at Glasgow, afterwards at Edinburgh; died 1662.

Psalm cxix. 88 had been read,<sup>1</sup> all the prayer was, 'O Lord, do it and we shall do it.' During his last illness he was very fond of singing, and always joined when it was a Psalm or Paraphrase—was very fastidious as to the suitableness of the tune. He used to say, 'I must have some music in me, though I never could learn a tune so as to sing it by myself.'

"*Sab. 20.*—Dr. D.'s last Sabbath. He said he thought he could read Mr. M. Stuart's book, *The Three Marys*, but it was not in the house. He refused all the books I proposed. He afterwards read the volume for 1869 of *The Children's Missionary Record*, which Mr. W. Dickson had sent him a few days before. I think this was the last book he read. He said with reference to it, 'I like to learn Christianity like a little bairn.' In the evening I sang 'There is rest for the weary,' the first verse of the hymn taken from Rutherford's last words, 'The sands of time are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks,' etc., and several other hymns. Dr. D. said, 'I would rather have "Just and devout old Simeon lived" than the whole of them—sing that.'<sup>2</sup> I sang most of the verses and Dr. D. joined, singing with peculiar heartiness these words, 'Then fondly in his withered arms he clasped the promised Child.' It had been a saying of his during the past year, 'I would be glad to go if the Lord would give me Simeon's dismissal: Christ in my arms.'

"*Tues. 22.*—When I went into Dr. D.'s room early this morning, he said to me, 'I am disgusted' (with a strong expression of it on his face). I thought it was at some food which he was taking at the time. 'I am thinking with horror of the carnal mind, enmity against God. *I never get a sight of it but it produces horror, even bodily sickness.*

<sup>1</sup> "Quicken me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth."

<sup>2</sup> Paraphrase xxviii. (Scottish collection)—no doubt from its historic associations, as a rendering of Luke ii. 25-23.

Oh to think that the best man has hatred of God in him !' He was much pleased at night with a visit from Mr. Robertson of Newington—said he had enjoyed his prayer very much. 'Ah! you are good folk you Robertsons.' 'No, no, we are not all good.' 'Well, you must admit that there are good folk among you.'<sup>1</sup>

"Wed. 23.—'I am fighting with unbelief, and it is like to kill me.' 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, but then we may hang a dead work on a dead faith.' Miss R.—'O dear Dr. D., never mind your faith, just look to Christ.' 'I am seeking to do that, but we must mind our faith. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith* in His blood." "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the *faith*," —'we must mind our faith.'

"He said something about fear of irregnecy and Christlessness. I said, 'Oh, don't frighten yourself with these bugbears or you will bring on the breathlessness,' and he said no more. I repeated the hymn, 'Tis a point I long to know,' etc., and sang 'There is a fountain filled with blood,' and 'Rock of Ages.' It was a common request in these days, 'Read me some of His own teaching, in His own words.' The washing of the disciples' feet was a very favourite passage, he always tried to repeat it himself after I had read it. Sometimes it was 'Read me about the good Shepherd,' and to the passage in John x. I had always to add the one in 1 Pet. ii. 21-25. Sometimes it was

<sup>1</sup> "The last time I saw him," writes Mr. Robertson, referring to this interview, "he was very weak. He grasped my hand and whispered, '*Pray*.' During the minute or two so spent, one of the first sentiments uttered was, 'We seek the *lowest* place as that which best befits us.' At that instant he pressed my hand in both of his and exclaimed with emphasis, 'Amen to *that*; Amen, Amen.' When we ceased praying, he lifted his eyes, heavy with the shadow of death, and articulated slowly, 'Oh the magnitude of that great salvation of God! My feeble faculties can never cope with it.' This was only a little while before his happy spirit sprang to immortality."

'Read me a bit of a hortatory Epistle.' Sometimes he made me hear him repeat these verses, 2 Cor. i. 12; Gal. v. 22-24; Col. iii. 1-17; i. 28.

"*Thurs. 24.*—Dr. D. looked very peaceful this morning. 'If I perish, I perish justly; if I am saved, I am saved justly—to the greater honour of Divine justice.' 'Thank you for these hymns yesterday, they did me a great deal of good.' I repeated the two last verses of 'Tis a point I long to know,' viz., 'Lord, decide this doubtful case,' and 'Make me love Thee more and more,' etc. At the end of each Dr. D. said, with great emphasis, 'Amen, amen. I agree to the hymn with all my heart.' *Miss R.*—'Well, is not the real desire for grace, grace?' 'Yes, and I am inclined to think that I am His. That is a precious verse, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Lord, that is the way of Thy grace: let it be Thy way with me.' 'I am inclined to draw the inference, since Jesus died and rose again, I may be in heaven yet, made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.' Dr. D. sat up for an hour and a half this afternoon by the fire—during the previous ten days he had been sitting up for a little. He began to vomit his food this evening, and as his strength had been kept up hitherto by frequent nourishment both night and day, it became very speedily reduced.

"*Friday, 25.*—Dr. D. retained his food to-day, but was very much disinclined to take it through the forenoon. Was in a very drowsy state. When he did speak, it was difficult to make out what he said. Seeing the newspaper lying, he said, 'What about the Irish Land Bill?' In the evening he seemed to revive, asked for food, and took it several times; also, which I had been told was a very good sign, took snuff with great vigour. He fell into a drowsy state again. Late in the evening he woke up, called me to him, said, 'Rock of Ages.' I repeated the hymn, he



motioning to me to repeat the verse, 'Nothing in my hand I bring,' I think *about six times*, muttering the words after me; the last verse also several times. He then said, 'There is a fountain,' and I repeated the hymn. He said, 'You have not said it all.' I had missed out a verse. About eleven I bent over him, and repeated the words, 'My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' He did not speak or open his eyes; but lifted his head from the pillow, and nodded twice very emphatically. There was little waking consciousness afterwards—apparently little suffering.

"*Sat. 26.*—Dr. D.'s death was rather unexpected at last. We had raised him into a sitting posture, for the purpose of arranging the pillows, and when we laid him down again, passing his left hand several times over his heart, he quietly breathed his last at half-past six in the morning."

The funeral of Dr. Duncan (I copy from the public prints) took place on Wednesday afternoon, the 2d March. At half-past one o'clock the students and Professors of the New College, as well as a large number of ministers of the Free Church, assembled in the Grange Church, where Divine service was conducted by the Rev. Professor Davidson (his colleague) and the Rev. Dr. Bonar (his minister). At the conclusion of the service, those present formed in procession and proceeded to 10 Dalrymple Crescent, the residence of the deceased. A short service, conducted by the Rev. Dr. Bonar and the Rev. A. Moody Stuart, having been held, the body was then removed, and the funeral *cortége*, which was a very large one, was followed to the place



of interment, the Grange Cemetery, by the students and Professors of the New College, and by a large number of the general public. In the absence of Principal Candlish (who was prevented through illness from being present), the Rev. Professor Smeaton was chief mourner, and the pall-bearers were Rev. Drs. C. J. Brown and Bonar, Professor Davidson, Rev. Moody Stuart, Rev. Mr. Gray, Logiealmond, Mr. M'Donald, and Mr. Balfour, W.S.

An obelisk of Peterhead granite has been erected over Dr. Duncan's grave, by his daughter Maria (Mrs. Spaeth). It bears the following inscription :—

IN MEMORY OF  
THE REV. JOHN DUNCAN, LL.D.  
PROFESSOR OF HEBREW AND OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES IN THE  
FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, EDINBURGH,  
AN EMINENT SCHOLAR AND METAPHYSICIAN,  
A PROFOUND THEOLOGIAN,  
A MAN OF TENDER PIETY, AND OF A LOWLY AND LOVING SPIRIT.  
BORN 1796. DIED 1870.

He lies buried in the Grange Cemetery, not far from the earthly resting-place of Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Cunningham, Dr. Bannerman, Dr. Buchanan, and many other friends in Christ.

Thus has passed away from this earthly scene one of the most remarkable men of this or of any age : remarkable for inexhaustible fertility in profound and varied thought ; remarkable, as not inferior to the best talkers that ever appeared in this country (for, though equalled by Coleridge in the highest walks of literature, metaphysics, and theology, his aphoristic utterances were, in coruscations of genius, not inferior even to his continuous flow of lofty talk, while he had walks of his own which Coleridge never crossed, and with Johnson he scarcely admits of comparison at all) ; remarkable for his equal passion for philology and philosophy, and equal excellence in both—a combination exceedingly rare ; remarkable for his ready command of pure Saxon English—and splendid articulation of it—at the same time, for his ability to coin a phraseology for himself, whenever subtle distinctions had to be drawn or ideas to be chiselled out into strong relief ; remarkable for equal poverty in the use of his pen and richness in the use of his tongue ; remarkable above most men for the irregularity of his habits and the absence of his mind ; but remarkable, too—in another and more mysterious region—for the shipwreck to which his great powers seemed, at one time, to be hastening, for the Luciferian pride with which he then delighted to argue down every ground of human belief, and for the way

in which his Pyrrhonic scepticism was first quelled and afterwards for ever slain ; remarkable for the revolution which this great change created even in his philosophy —moulding his whole views of the ground of certainty—for the completeness with which it brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, for his deep humility, his intense spirituality, his exclusive devotedness thenceforward to the service of the Lord Jesus, for his burning sense of the holiness of Jehovah, of the paramount claims of His law, and of what it was to be a new creature in Christ Jesus, which, working upon a conscience now exceeding tender and a nervous system never strong, made him at times absolutely wretched—unable to cherish more than a faint hope of salvation. To those who never met with him I can scarcely hope that I shall not be thought, in this Memoir, to have exaggerated his superiority ; while those who were intimate with him will probably think that, in some features of it at least, I have done him scanty justice. I have, however, done what I could with the materials I possessed ; and to one only of the points suggested by the preceding pages would I advert in conclusion—to present which was my chief inducement to undertake this work. In Dr. Duncan's person we behold the most sceptical of men transformed—I may say, in a moment—into the most believing of

men. Nor was it a blind faith. In after years he could look at his faith all round, and loved to do so. He looked at the philosophy of it, and came to some profound conclusions on that view of it; he looked at it in its Biblical relations and experiential bearings—both objectively and subjectively—and the Christianity which he received, and the man that that Christianity made him, on that memorable evening of the year 1826, remained, in one of the most restless spirits, *unchanged to the last moment of his life*. Developed, no doubt, it was, but only thereby matured and deepened; stripped it was of some features, which, on reflection, he deemed accretions; but in all its essential and dominating features, it was never disturbed, even by a momentary doubt. That evening, God, *he knew*, spoke to his soul, spoke by His *word*, spoke with resistless power, with the voice which wakes the dead. “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, did then shine into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the faith of Jesus Christ.” I am not here spinning theories—I am stating *a naked fact*. Will the thoughtful reader weigh its import? Will those who explain away Christianity into a species of refined culture do themselves the justice to ask, Does this fact—the vast and decisive revolution for life which Dr. Duncan underwent—admit of any tolerable ex-

planation on their theory? Has it no bearing on those words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"? In him order was brought out of confusion, light out of darkness, strength out of weakness, life out of death. In him we behold one who could try conclusions one day with "Sir William," in the deepest problems of metaphysics, and the next day sit for an hour or two with the "Eppie Middletons," talking of the things of the kingdom, and getting "meat to eat," in such humble converse—like his great Master with the woman of Samaria—that most metaphysicians "know not of." He could, at one time, dilate with a student on the subtle distinctions of "Thomas" and the schoolmen, or the profound ideas of Augustine on the subject of Sin and Grace, and at another when in bed, and asking a little girl on the floor what she was at in Mr. Oliphant's school, and being told she was at "Passion Week," break forth with equal tenderness and sublimity, "O lassie, lassie! there never was a week like that week," etc. A strict Calvinist he was, but a Catholic Christian. To use his own words, he had a strait creed for himself, but a wide one for others. A rare union of opposites, or rather antinomies, there was in him—an intellect of immense strength, and a heart of exquisite sensibility, book-learning and original insight, profound

humility and consciousness of strength, rich humour and deep sadness, manly exegesis in dealing with the text of Scripture, and yet, when that Word was before him, and standing in the presence of God, the reverence which would make him put off his shoe from off his feet because the place whereon he stood was holy ground.

But I must leave him to make his own impression upon the reader, with the materials for estimating his life and character and work, which I have put before him, humbly trusting that it may yet be found that, imperfect as this memorial cannot fail to be, it will be instrumental in showing what the grace of God can do to rescue the gifts which He bestows from utter waste, and turn them, even amidst many infirmities, to the noblest use.



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