

MEMOIR OF MR ROBERT FINDLATER, DRUMMOND.

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"Honour thy father and thy mother."

The subject of the following memoir, Mr Robert Findlater, was a native of the parish of Dyke in Moray-shire. He was descended from humble but honest parents, and was born about the year 1753. His father, William, was a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church. He was a man of great natural acuteness and pretty extensive information, especially in the history of his country and in church and controversial Theology. The only book which, during a visit to his brother's, the writer recollects having seen him read, was Butler's Analogy. Whether he could follow out its close reasoning, or preferred it as being written by an Episcopalian, the author could not during the days of his boyhood judge.

After being a few years at the parochial school, where he barely acquired the simple elements of common education, the subject of this memoir was at an early age bound as apprentice to a dyer in the parish of Calder. It was during the time of his apprenticeship, or very soon after, that he began to think seriously about religion. The early instructions of his pious mother, Isabel Mitchell, who was a Presbyterian, and the private reading of the Scriptures, led him gradually to inquire after truth. The attractive writings of Bunyan, and the life of Mr Thomas Boston, tended much to deepen the impression on his mind. Having formed an acquaintance with a few young and pious individuals, he accompanied them pretty often to hear Mr James Calder, then minister of Croy, who was one of the most eminent and powerful preachers in the country, and whose labours were blessed to several who attended his ministry from neighbouring parishes.

While an apprentice and journeyman, such was the confidence reposed in him by his master that the charge of the business was in a great measure devolved upon him. Having lost his relish for the society and amusements of many of his early acquaintances, he devoted his leisure hours to reading and improving his mind with such books as came in his way, or were lent him by some Christian friend. Thus his religious concern proved instrumental in expanding and strengthening a mind naturally acute and ardent, and paved the way for that eminence as a private theologian by which he was distinguished in the rank of society which he filled, as well as fitting him to rise in the estimation of his superiors as an intelligent and judicious and successful man in business. Thus "godliness" is often attended with blessings both of a temporal and spiritual nature: it "is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come." It is at this critical or transition period of life, when the yoke of apprenticeship is over, that young men, tasting, in their estimation, the sweets of liberty, are in the greatest danger. Having higher wages, and associating with others, they are tempted to spend their additional income in extravagance and excess, and often fall victims to their folly. When there is no previous moral training, the mind is neither stored with

information nor the heart imbued with religious feeling. From all excesses of this kind he was preserved.

The majority of the most eminent Christians in the northern and western districts of Moray-shire were more conversant with the Gaelic than the English language, to the former of which he was an entire stranger. He often envied their society when he met with them on sacramental occasions, and resolved, should his lot be cast in a country where the Gaelic was vernacular, he would acquire it, so as to understand the preaching of the gospel and enjoy the communion of saints in that tongue. This he accomplished on his coming to Ross-shire a few years thereafter. Having procured a Gaelic New Testament and compared it with the English, he made rapid progress in understanding it. In order, however, to pronounce Gaelic aright, he invited some young men to his house to correct his pronunciation, and encouraged them by teaching them church music in return. In the course of two years he was able in that language, with considerable fluency, to join with other Christians in public exercises.

It was about this period he fell in with a copy of the Bible with Cann's marginal references which, I often heard him say, proved of incalculable advantage in reading and studying the Scriptures. His mind was opened to see their beautiful harmony and consistency, and it was a favourite maxim of his, which he frequently recommended to his sons, that Scripture was its own, its best interpreter. In accordance therewith he made it his own particular study. Having already formed a habit of early rising, being seldom in bed in summer after four o'clock, his morning hours were entirely given to devotion and the study of the Scriptures. He had no access then to any commentaries or paraphrases, but derived his information of religion from the Bible, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual", and read with a prayerful mind for light to discover its bearings on Christian experience and conduct. The system of divinity he found there, he said, was strictly evangelical and Calvinistic. Instead of looking through books in order to lead his mind to correct views of the truth, he rather employed his discriminating judgement in forming an opinion of books on divinity by the system of truth he previously drew from the great Fountain of truth.

About the year 1778, meeting with due encouragement from Sir Henry Munro, Baronet, of Fowlis, who was anxious to introduce sources of industry among his tenants, he came to Drummond, in the parish of Kiltearn, Ross-shire, and set himself up as a dyer. Being then a young man of active habits and of a cheerful and lively disposition, he laboured hard, by the sweat of his brow, to provide for himself and family things honest not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men, and in a short time paid up the kind friends who assisted him in commencing business. Having acquired a remarkable habit of profitably employing the fragments of time, he devoted them to reading, so that in a short time he not only bore the character of a devout and zealous, but also that of an intelligent Christian.

In this parish there was, at that time, a goodly number of aged and eminent Christians, with whose society he was much edified and encouraged, and with whom

he joined himself in fellowship at their private meetings for prayer and godly conference. Here the truly pious and persecuted Mr Thomas Hogg¹ finished his labours, and the no less pious Mr Stewart and Mr Andrew Robertson, who succeeded him, all of whom were patronised by the zealous, enlightened, and loyal barons of Fowlis. Such was the diffusive influence of religion during their ministry that, as related to the writer by old men who were natives, there were no less than seven places or hamlets in the parish where prayer or fellowship meetings were held. The morning and evening sacrifice were almost universal, from the baronial hall to the meanest cottage; so that this district of the country was commonly called and still goes by the name of the Holy Land, not so much on account of its fertile fields and its rich and diversified scenery, as for the moral and "holy beauty" which adorned its peasantry. Much of this influence was attributed not only to the zeal, fidelity, and holy lives of the eminent ministers of Kiltearn but also to the example of the Munroes of Fowlis, the memory of whose piety as well as bravery is handed down and honourably preserved by the pen of the eminent and learned Dr Doddridge in his *Life of Colonel Gardiner*. Here in many instances might be seen the inimitably fine and moral picture drawn by Burns, in his 'Cottar's Saturday Night.' Times, alas, have since changed. Physical improvements may have adorned and enriched its surface, the eye of the tourist may be gratified, and the political economist, who calculates only for worldly views, looks no farther than productive industry. The baronial castle still stands conspicuous, but the fire that glowed on its family altar has for many years been extinguished. The church, where ancestors of the present race repaired in groups, stands in the same sweet secluded spot, but scarcely a worshipper enters its walls. The adjoining consecrated green, (and the pathways leading thereto,) sheltered and adorned with hawthorn hedges, where thousands were seen congregating to keep the solemn festivals, have been ruthlessly torn by the plough, and the flock is seen wandering on every Sabbath to neighbouring parishes in quest of spiritual pasture, and sighing with regret, when they recall the years that are past. If the question were asked now, Where is the "holy beauty" gone? Echo would only answer — gone!*

¹ The following is a correct copy of the inscription on Mr. Hogg's grave-stone, at the south-west door of the church, which is now almost obliterated. See also a most affecting and graphic account of the church and parishioners of Kiltearn, in a pamphlet by Mr. Hugh Millar, Cromarty, entitled 'Whiggism of the Old School', 1839.

HERE LIES THE RIGHT REVERENT GREAT MAN OF GOD AND FAITHFUL
SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST MASTER THOMAS HOGG, WHO DIED IN THE LORD
AND RESTED FROM HIS LABOURS, AND HIS GOOD WORKS FOLLOWED HIM,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT KILTEARN, WHO DIED AT KILTEARN IN THE YEAR
OF GOD, 1692, MEMENTO MORI.

THIS STONE WILL WITNESS AGAINST THE PARISHIONERS OF KILTEARN
IF THEY BRING IN ANE UNGODLY MINISTER HERE. Mr T. H.

The moral discipline of the church was strictly looked after, according to the Scripture command, and as in the purer ages of the church; they "who sinned openly were rebuked before all, that others might fear," and such was the sacredness and authority accompanying this important duty that, in several instances when signs of true penitence and reformation were exhibited by such as were guilty of public sins, it was esteemed rather a privilege to be restored to the communion of the church by a public profession of repentance. Though it may be questioned now, whether it be "expedient" in the present state of society to follow out the early practice of the fathers in more primitive times, yet we may appeal to statistical fact and history for the beneficial consequences resulting from the faithful discharge of this duty, and must admit that when

*"The reins of discipline are snapt,
The laity run wild."*

As some incidents in the life of the subject of this memoir have become, if not matter of public, at least of local interest, it may be necessary to deviate a little from the narrative, and to state some particulars that may tend to throw light on the state of religion in the district of country where Providence cast his lot, not so much with a view of giving a prominence to his religious character, as a statistical record of some facts which are not generally known in the southern counties, and which have been sometimes misrepresented or exaggerated. Information of this nature, if furnished from each district or county, would yield equal satisfaction to those interested in the well-being of our species and its high destinies, as statistical facts do to the statesman and philanthropist, and would be ultimately attended with more real benefit to its temporal as well as spiritual welfare.

It would be too long a digression, however interesting, to trace the early history of our church in Ross-shire. Suffice it to state here, as matter of history, not very extensively known, that about the middle of the last century, several parishes in Easter Ross were favoured with remarkable revivals of religion. Among the most eminent ministers then, and who were contemporaries, were Mr Balfour of Nigg, Mr Porteous of Kilmure, Mr Fraser of Alness,² Mr Bethune of Roskeen, and Mr Andrew Robertson of Kiltearn, whose memory is savoury still in the country. The author has yet a vivid recollection of their characters and some of their sayings and doings from the lips of some venerable Christians who were in the habit of visiting his father's house, and who heard them preach. Some of these parishes were then, comparatively speaking, a moral wilderness; but by the blessing of Heaven, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit attending their faithful exhibition of the truth to the consciences of their people, religion was seen to blossom as the rose. Their churches were crowded by arrested and deeply-affected audiences, and for a few years seldom a Sabbath

² Author of a treatise on sanctification and evangelical preaching.

passed without one or more being seriously impressed. Prayer meetings were commenced in hamlets where ignorance and worldliness and immorality reigned. In many humble dwellings was now heard the voice of joy and melody. Hundreds were seen frequenting the house of God, and thousands were congregating to hear the gospel faithfully preached on sacramental occasions. The consequence was that, in each of the adjoining parishes, there were many eminent and truly devout Christians, the fruits of the labours of those godly ministers, who were looked up to as pillars in the church and ornaments of society. The moral influence of their example still speaks in these parishes, and has contributed much to keeping alive that taste for faithful and evangelical preaching by which the peasantry of Ross-shire are so much distinguished to this day.

Among the most decidedly serious Christians in Ross-shire the Law of Patronage has been uniformly reckoned a grievance. Whatever opinion maybe formed as to the expediency of its abolition, on which good men on both sides in the church are divided, while some act on the very questionable maxim in the well known couplet of Pope,

*"On forms of government let fools contest, —
Whate'er is best administered is best,"*

it is a matter of history and bitter experience, that the arbitrary manner in which it has been administered, and tamely submitted to and acquiesced in by the judicatories of our church, has been attended with consequences which have proved injurious to the peace and best interests of society, and to our existence as a Protestant Establishment. In one of the parishes above named, Nigg, there has been a Secession church, formed many years ago, whose members cherish the same feeling towards our Establishment in the north as the congregations of the redoubtable champions of Kirkintilloch and Dunfermline have done in the south. The same effects resulting from the same cause have been seen in several other parishes, where the unanimous wishes of the people have been overlooked or treated with contempt; and if not timeously repealed by our Legislature, or controlled and neutralized by the hitherto almost dormant and inherent enactments of our church, may occasion consequences affecting the vital interests of the land too serious to be calmly contemplated.

When cases of this kind occurred in some of the parishes in Ross-shire, where no sympathy was shown for the people, or conciliatory means used to win their attachment by the unpopular preachers placed over them, and when there could be no community of fellowship or charitable feeling between pastor and people, several of the most enlightened and judicious felt it their duty to secede from their parish churches, and seek for spiritual instruction in those parishes where they conceived they would be most benefited. Such was the high ground some of them took, that as an act of consistency, they would not even receive or partake of sealing ordinances from those ministers whom they could not hear. These men were called Seceders,

though still continuing members of the Church of Scotland. Others of them were refused sealing ordinances, though desirous to receive the same from their parish ministers, who imagined they acted with equal consistency in refusing them, if they did not regularly, or occasionally at least, attend their ministry. This circumstance, together with the high tone of religious and moral feeling throughout the country as to the qualifications and character of communicants, has occasioned such a paucity of these in most of the northern parishes, that scarcely one in twenty and, in some parishes, not one in forty of the population is a communicant. Some who are esteemed decidedly serious are timid, or deterred by ideal views of church purity: while others, who might be desirous of this privilege, denied themselves, finding that their receiving this ordinance in parishes where they seceded might involve those ministers whom they heard, being in trouble by their moderate brethren, who renewed and were anxious to revive some old enactments of Assembly and Synods. Without adverting to the policy or expediency of this Synodical appointment at this time and in such cases, it certainly had no tendency to unite pastors and their seceding flocks, but rather the reverse. In proposing or renewing this enactment, Mr Downie of Urray published the substance of his speech delivered at the Synod in 1810, which gave great umbrage to the religious laity in Ross-shire, and was a subject of public regret to serious minds. By this enactment the popular ministers were to be prevented from calling on these men to officiate in any public duty at fellowship meetings on sacramental or other occasions, and obliged to refuse tokens to such as did not frequent their parish churches.

The subject of this memoir feeling, in common with many other serious people on reading this pamphlet, that instead of conciliatory measures being used, this enactment tended to deprive them still more of what they reckoned a sacred privilege, inconsistent with that law of liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and bordering on a persecuting spirit for conscientious opinions and conduct, thought it his duty to publish a reply wherein he exposes its reasoning, its spirit, and its tendency, with considerable severity. Considering that it was the first attempt of the kind, and that from a plain man who received no great education, it displays no ordinary specimen of acuteness, close reasoning, and even clear and forcible language. This was in a few months followed by an answer, entitled a 'Lash to the old Seceder,' containing some personal asperities and reflections on the character of those who felt it their duty to secede, which might be overlooked and suppressed by men of common prudence as well as of a liberal education. This called forth another answer from Mr F. no less severe, entitled 'Strictures on the Lash' which has been esteemed by the public superior in argument, and equal in composition to those of the Rev. gentlemen whose zeal for moderation was so influential in renewing the enactment of the Synod. Whatever opinion may be held as to the merits of the controversy, and the collateral subjects of discussion, it was found that in the peculiar circumstances of the state of religious feeling in Ross-shire, the Synodical enactment has been in several instances departed from and, in a few years, came to be esteemed a dead letter by

both parties in the church as alike having a tendency to alienate the minds of many serious persons from public ordinances and inconsistent with that liberality of mind and charitable feeling towards those who were, both by their sentiments and practice, the greatest bulwarks of morality and genuine ardent piety in their respective parishes.

As allusions were made and aspersions thrown on the character of several of the most eminent and religious Christians in Ross-shire in the speech and 'the Lash' above alluded to, I may here briefly state, in defence of their principles and characters, that about twelve or fourteen of those who were in the habit of meeting occasionally and residing chiefly in parishes where, either from the Arminian tendency of the doctrine preached or the want of ministerial consistency of character, saw it their duty to secede. These men, cherishing a community of Christian feeling and sympathy, agreed to meet at each other's houses monthly or quarterly, and formed themselves into a society for prayer and spiritual converse. The society existed before or about the time Mr F. came to Ross-shire. He soon assayed to join himself with them, and was cordially welcomed. Such was the high spiritual enjoyment these men had together, that they sometimes sat up during the night, which they spent in acts of prayer and praise and spiritual conversation, on the marks of conversion, progressive holiness, and lamenting how little of them was seen in their day and generation. They were men of no ordinary status in religious knowledge, and were looked up to by the religious community as lights in their day, not only distinguished for warmth of feeling and unction of spirit, but for soundness of understanding and judgement, and were never accused by such as knew them of any enthusiastic or fanatical feelings. They were well acquainted with systematic as well as practical divinity. It was several of these men whom the respected writer of the interesting life of Dr Stewart's interesting life (successively minister of Moulin, Dingwall, and the Canongate), had in his eye when he says, p. 228, "Experimental religion is there well understood: and it is no uncommon occurrence at public meetings for religious conference, to observe a plain peasant rise with all the modesty of retiring diffidence, and enter into the discussion of some point of casuistry, or penetrate into the marrow of some doctrinal subject proposed for consideration, with a power of discrimination and a copiousness of argument truly surprising. On these occasions one might imagine an Owen revived, having lost nothing but his Greek and Latin quotations. Their religious views are generally profound: and in no place is the discrimination betwixt converted and unconverted more observed or more observable. In parishes that have for a long period enjoyed adequate training the religious standard is very high, and the general aspect of the people is plainly as if they sought a better country, and looked on this world as a scene not desirable. They are grave, watchful, and intent on serious thought; and he who should take the oversight of them had need not to be a novice." As the author of the above quotation was ignorant of their vernacular language, it is probable he formed his judgement of them through Dr Stewart's information.

These excellent men, when called upon to speak publicly to a question proposed at fellowship meetings on the Friday of sacramental occasions,³ or at ordinary monthly fellowship meetings, always spoke judiciously like divines who knew the truth, and spoke as they felt its influence on the principles and character, the deceits of the heart, the scriptural marks of true faith, progressive holiness and the important duty of self-examination, in reference to the solemn duties in view, with a seriousness and unction which often solemnised the audience and proved a practical and powerful argument to the truth and influence of religion. Their language betrayed them as being the disciples of Jesus, and proved in some cases instrumental in leading young inquirers to say and act in the words of the prophet, Zech. 8:23, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." Instead of desultory observations and declamatory addresses, reflecting on ministers and formal professors, these men mourned more in private; and, unlike what may be sometimes witnessed in the more northern counties at the present day on sacramental occasions, a few religious but injudicious men, whose zeal may carry them a great way in declamations on the declensions of the time and the impurity of the church, who imagine they are thus witnessing for the truth, "while they are not sufficiently aware what spirit they are of", unlike such, these men considered ebullitions of temper and personal asperity of language of this sort as quite foreign to the nature and spirit of the solemn duty of commemorating the death of their Redeemer.

Anticipating probably that their motives in collecting together thus exclusively for social prayer and conference might be misrepresented by some, they formed a prudent resolution of drawing up a statement of the causes of their meeting, that they might be "ready always to give answer to every man that asked them a reason of the hope that was in them with meekness and fear." The subject of this memoir was one of the committee appointed to draw up this document, which was signed by each member of the meeting, and each of whom was furnished with a copy. One of these having come to hand, no apology is made for grossing it here, and the writer trusts

³Throughout the northern counties, especially where the Gaelic language is spoken, a portion of Friday as well as other days of the sacramental week is devoted to public religious exercises. On Friday the parish minister generally, or one of his assistants, commences by praise, prayer, and reading a portion of Scripture: then calls for a passage of Scripture, on which a question is founded suitable to the occasion, on some doctrine or topic of Christian experience, such as: marks of true conversion, saving faith, humility, godly sorrow, etc. After a short pause, a grave elder or well known Christian rises and mentions a passage of Scripture on which he founds a practical and edifying question which is opened up for discussion by the presiding minister, or Moderator, as he is called, who now calls on the most aged and experienced Christians from different parishes collected there, to rise and give their views or marks to their fellow Christians. Sometimes ten to twelve or even twenty persons are engaged for four or five hours or more on these occasions. The views suggested by the speakers are then summed up by the Moderator, who calls on one of their number to close with prayer. These services are generally in the open air, the parish churches not affording accommodation for the members who attend.

it will be perused with interest by serious minds as a memorial of departed worth, and as suitable and seasonable now as it was then. It bears internal evidence of the truly devoted spirit and ardent piety by which they were animated. They have all gone into their rest, having witnessed a good confession before men, having shone as lights of no ordinary magnitude in their day and station, their memories being still embalmed in the recollections of a goodly number who enjoyed the privilege of their acquaintance and fellowship.

"Invergorden Ness, 17th September, 1788. The after subscribing persons,⁴ having, by the kind providence of God, and as the outward fruit of the gospel, attained to an intimate acquaintance of one another, although from different parishes; yet as members of one church, of which Christ is the professed head, after spending some time in considering privately together, and secretly alone, the too many undeniable proofs (from the light of the word of God, and our own woeful experience) of our own deadness and unfruitfulness, and the deadness and unfruitfulness of the day, with the prevailing of all manner of sin in the land,

We have come to the following resolution, that is, to meet four times in the year, or as oft as shall be judged fit and most convenient, and in the places that shall be agreed upon, to humble ourselves before the Lord by prayer and supplication, that He would avert the threatened and deserved judgement (in which we acknowledge our own guilty hands) which is already making too visible a progress one year after another. It is generally owned by the most considerable part of ministers and professors that the Lord hath withdrawn his wonted presence, in a great measure, from his people and ordinances (and we own, though others would deny this, that we have daily experience of it), which calls for such a duty; and among other causes we briefly name the following.

I. The woeful deadness and decay that hath fallen on ourselves, our heart backslidings, our closet coldness, our family formality, our dry and careless reading of the word of God, our barren minds as to meditation on the word, with love, profit, and delight; from whence has proceeded an untender walk, unguarded expressions, carnality in heart, inclinations, and actions, worldly in our minds and pursuits, resisting the remonstrances of our consciences, checks from providence, and the word of God, grieving the Holy Spirit, whereby our evidence of his love to us, and our interest in Christ, is darkened, which makes us go doubting in the dark.

II. The deadness and decay of the day we live in, as to a work of the Spirit on the generation. There are few or none crying, 'What shall I do to be saved?' The Lord

⁴ The original members of this meeting were — Charles Ross, Tarbet; Daniel Denoon, Fearn; John Gair, Loggie; John M'Nuctar, Loggie; John M'Inlay, Loggie; Donald Mitchell, Kilmuir; George Ross, schoolmaster, Calrichie; Hector Holm, Invergorden; Hugh Ross or Ben, Roskeen, Alexander Munro, sen., and Alexander Munro, jun., Kiltearn; and Robert Findlater, Drummond. To these were successively added a few more, who united with them from different parishes, some of whom still survive, and who, I feel convinced, will coincide in the views of their character above mentioned.

hath been calling home his faithful labourers and people these many years bygone, and few — few rising in their room; whereby the hands of those that remain are weakened when they are not seeing a seed rising to serve Him, according to His promise; but instead of that, all manner of vice and immorality rising in our land: adultery, fornication, and uncleanness among all ranks, (of which it were to be wished that professors of religion were free,) — murders, robbery, and thefts, — hatred, malice, lying, Sabbath-breaking, etc., — contempt of godliness and the people of God, — religion evil spoken of, and the sincere practisers of it branded and stigmatised as the troublers of the peace of Israel, and as a people that turn the world upside down; which is a matter of lamentation, and should be a lamentation to us.

III. The low case of the church of Christ and, his cause in our land: great men setting up their power and interest to oppose Christ in His rights, prerogatives, and members. In His rights as sole Head of the church, and His prerogative to reign and rule in it, they (the great men) are thrusting in ministers on reclaiming congregations, with the force of the law of Patronage, — ministers who have nothing in view but the fleece; their manner of entry and their after walk proves it is not sparing the flock, but scattering them; which is a sin greatly to be mourned for, and has turned common in our day, and practised without a parallel. And when we add to this sin, the sin of the Judicatories of our Church, that so few of them witness for Christ and his members, with the neutrality of almost all professors in our day, which in the light of the word is clear to be against Christ (Mark 9:40) and his interest, and nothing but men-pleasers, — when they comply and fall in with whatever is proposed to them, they would not venture on the frown of men for a good conscience and the favour of God, (how learned Peter and John divinity of God rather than men!) which we desire to acknowledge to be matter of humiliation before that the professors of Christ are not confessors of Christ, — oh what can be found among a people to bring on wrath that is not found in our land this day! when to this we add corruption in doctrine, legalism generally taught, (which is laying too much stress upon works) or of more refined pressing of evangelical duties without an eye to the Spirit of God. Some press duties, so as they seem to think that their own reasonings are able to enforce a compliance, and more than that, as of old, so of late, we hear that some broach awful errors, and that with impunity.

IV. The case of the young generation, who are generally given up to irreligion, and contempt of all that is serious, despising even the form of religion.

What will become of the cause of Christ and his interest in our land, if they continue as they are?

And being together for the above causes, we resolve to keep the following order, namely:

First. That each meeting shall choose a Preses, (only for order's sake,) whose province will be to read and sing a portion of the word of God, and call one about to pray; and during the intervals betwixt the said duties, if one of us have a doubt, upon which he would have the mind of his brethren, that each give his thoughts freely upon it, for our mutual edification.

Secondly. That none of us bring any other person into this our meeting, without consent of the rest asked and obtained.

Thirdly. As the word of God requireth, that we should consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; therefore, if one or more of us see or hear anything unbecoming in the walk, conduct, or expressions of one another, that we be free with one another, according to the Scripture rule: 'Go tell thy brother his fault,' etc. Matthew 18:15. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him." Lev. 9:17.

We are aware that this our meeting together, out of different parishes, will be misconstrued; but so far as we know ourselves, we have no divisive views in it nor do we make a faction, and we desire to give none offence; but if the following of our duty give offence, we cannot help that. If we could meet unobserved, it would be our choice: not that we are ashamed of our duty, about which to find we have been at pains, and searched the word of God, and found it to be His command and the exercise of his people, in such a day as we live in, to meet together for prayer and spiritual conference, as in Mal. 3:16: "Then they that feared the Lord spoke one to another." The command in Zeph. 2:1-3, seems to be to the same purpose: "Gather yourselves together," etc.; and Heb. 10:21,25: "And let us consider one another, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, for as much as ye see the day approaching." These portions of Scripture, besides others that might be mentioned, prove that fellowship-meetings of the Lord's people, mutual prayer, and spiritual conference, (being held within the bounds of men's station), is a necessary duty and special means of life in a declining time, and of strengthening against the temptations of such a time. Wherefore seeing our call and warrant from the word, the example of the people of God, and the Lord's dispensations in the day we live in calling for it, our own needy cases calling for it, (being a day of famine), we have now come this length as to appoint the first Wednesday of November coming for our first quarterly meeting. And may those more near the Lord be stirred up for such a necessity, in a day of so much deadness and lukewarmness, that the Lord may justly complain as in Isaiah, 64:7: "There is none that calleth on thy name," etc. O! for the spirit of prayer to cry, "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down, etc.", "Quicken us and we will call on thy name."

The judiciousness of their conduct, as well as their devoted piety, in thus recording their sentiments and objects soon became evident. Their meeting thus exclusively and being composed chiefly of men who did not frequent their parish churches, their motives were misrepresented, and their character aspersed by the moderate clergy, who at that time carried things with a high hand, both in Church courts and in their Parishes. These excellent men were stigmatized as "leaders of a hostile faction", promoters of schism and division, censorious, etc., and worshippers of idol shepherds — a term applied to the popular ministers — and as breaking asunder the harmony that should exist betwixt ministers and people. Such was the influence of these reports and calumnies, no doubt exaggerated or distorted, that soon after they had held some of their meetings, the late pious and excellent Mr

Mathieson of Kilmuir, to whose church some of these men repaired, made some pointed and personal allusions as to their conduct. In a few days thereafter, two of their number, who were his regular hearers, called upon him, and after requesting an interview in his study and shortly stating the object of their visit, put into his hands the above document, which having read attentively affected him deeply. He cordially embraced them, admitted that he had been misinformed as to their views, and ever after esteemed them as his dearest and most valued Christian friends. He uniformly vindicated their characters when assailed, esteeming them as the truest friends to the church and the cause of religion in his day, and acknowledged that the duty in which they were engaged should be an example to ministers, who he wished had such a meeting for such purposes among themselves, a wish which in a few years thereafter was realized, on the admission of Dr MacIntosh to Tain, and Mr Forbes to Tarbet, which the writer believes is still kept up by the majority of the members of that presbytery. From this meeting, he believes, emanated the first proposal of a Society for missions called "the Northern Missionary Society," which has excited such a lively interest in that part of the country as to be warmly supported by liberal collections and donations from all the contiguous parishes. The late highly respected and deeply lamented Dr MacIntosh was among the first who called the attention of his brethren and the religious public in Ross-shire to its establishment, and was appointed and continued its active and confidential Secretary till his death. But let us return to the narrative of the more private and domestic history of the subject of this memoir.

In the parish of Kiltearn, where my father thought it his duty to fix his residence, such was the high standard which the seriously disposed formed of ministerial character and public professional duties that, though privileged beyond some other parishes with hearing orthodox and even evangelical doctrines expounded by the respected, polite, and benevolent parish minister, the late Dr Robertson, yet they took umbrage at some points of his public character in church courts, some local political views, his discontinuance of public meetings for prayer and Christian fellowship and conference, as well as some other vulnerable points in his private character. They therefore discontinued their regular attendance on his ministry and, when health and weather permitted, they heard preaching in the parish church of Urquhart in Ferintosh, where the late eminent and pious Mr Charles Calder was minister. These men were by no means "babes" as to spiritual attainments in the knowledge and practice of religion, "having their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" and, having imbibed a spiritual relish for the doctrines they heard preached, they continued, with some accession from neighbouring parishes, to be his regular hearers till the day of his death, sitting under the shadow of his ministry with great delight and the fruit was sweet to their taste.

This holy and heavenly-minded man, without any great effort of voice or external graces of oratory or action to attract observation or court popularity, by the truly scriptural illustration of the great doctrines of the Bible, and by the unction that fell from his lips, arrested the attention and solemnized the minds of a devout and

spiritually-minded flock who resided in the parish, and a goodly number who were "like-minded" from eight to ten contiguous parishes. The result was that for upwards of thirty years the church of Urquhart became a central point where many devout worshippers met, exchanged Christian salutations, were animated and refreshed, even by the countenances of each other, and heard the speaker with a riveted and breathless attention. His doctrines distilled like the dew on the tender herb. His expositions and sermons were composed with such studied chasteness of thought and classic beauty and accuracy of language, that they contributed in no small degree to improve the taste, as well as impart a high tone to the scriptural piety and experience of an extensive religious community and also of a few young men who became preachers themselves, and whose labours have since been highly countenanced in other portions of the vineyard. The effect of his preaching on the mind consisted not in praising the man or being attracted by his mannerism. The attentive hearer seemed to be absorbed by the subject. On retiring silently from the house of prayer, the congregation could be seen attracted in small separate groups, introducing again the subject of preaching, refreshing each other's memories with repeating what they heard, and here and there a young inquirer listening behind and endeavouring to retain some of the sentences by which his attention was arrested or his feelings excited. He was a burning and a shining light, and many rejoiced in his light. There was none in that part of the country whose ministry was so highly favoured in having seals to it. Few years of his life passed without some being brought to the knowledge of the truth, either in his own or from neighbouring parishes. A goodly number are still alive, who date their first serious impressions and continued confirmation from his ministry. His public addresses formed a continuous and healthful stream of truly spiritual instruction and comfort and such was the week-day consistency and sacredness of his character that it added a weight to his public ministrations, so that his very name, when mentioned, carried a moral influence along with it that awed the mind and challenged the respect even of the most careless and profane.

Other preachers might equal or possibly excel him in lucid illustration of the Scripture or more rousing appeals to the conscience, but few ever excelled him in clear and consistent views of evangelical doctrines and their bearing on Christian experience. The great and fundamental doctrine of the Atonement was the theme on which he delighted to dwell. The finished work of Christ and the blessings of his purchase were fully and prominently brought forward. The high and the holy ambition of his soul was, as he frequently told young preachers in whom he felt an interest, of a saying of the late eminent Cadogan, to exalt Christ that the promise might be fulfilled "I will draw all men to me." The great motive by which his own soul was actuated, the love of Christ, he used in his persuasive appeals to saints and sinners, while he invited and expostulated with his hearers to come to the Saviour guilty and heavy-laden as they were, whilst now was the accepted time and the day of their salvation. On these occasions the "affectionate look and tender address" riveted

the attention and melted the heart of the serious inquirer, who retired from the house of God resolved to make the subjects spoken of the objects of prayerful meditation.

The reader will excuse this very imperfect sketch of a man whose ministry the author's brother occasionally enjoyed, at a time when his mind and feelings required the aid of so skilful a hand, and whose instruction and example formed one important step of that professional training by which he was raised and honoured by God to be a successful preacher of the truth.

The author's parents, and the few who joined them, will be excused, at least, for availing themselves of such advantages for their spiritual improvement as the ministry of Mr Calder afforded. Though the practice may appear to some a breach of that order which would be desirable in a parish, and as tending to undervalue parochial ministrations in the estimation of others, still they persevered with increased resolution along with increasing numbers, notwithstanding the obloquy thrown on their characters, as Seceders, schismatics and followers of divisive courses, and the very boat employed in conveying them across the ferry was called in derisive terms the Gospel packet. The fatigue endured was not reckoned a burden, civil and ecclesiastical threats and privations had no influence in deterring them and served as tests of decision of Christian character in separating from the world, and availing themselves of their civil and religious liberty in choosing that pasture by which their souls were fed.

Such were the pious feelings cherished in going and returning, and even in crossing in the boat, that the conversation was all of a religious tendency, either repeating the pious remarks of some godly minister or Christian, or asking the meaning of some passage of Scripture, thus ministering grace to the hearers, showing the practical bearings of Scripture and their hallowing influence on the Sabbath. On these occasions the subject of this memoir bore a prominent part. His extensive knowledge and study of the Scriptures, and his superior information to some others, made him in most cases a leader of the conversation as to subjects suited to the day, and was the means of diffusing, by pious colloquial discourse, much religious information to which he had access, as to the progress of the gospel, both at home and abroad, from a few periodical publications he read and circulated and in which he took a warm interest.

Owing to some changes in the political economy of the country, some years after his being settled in Drummond, the home manufacture of wool was in a great measure discontinued and, being a man of considerable energy of mind and enterprise, he thought it his duty, having a rising family to provide for, to commence merchandise as a general dealer in the year 1792. In following this business he laid it down as a rule, and from which he made it a matter of conscience never to deviate, to affix one price to the articles sold, which no haggling would induce him to abate, so that he was generally called the Quaker merchant. He said he never had cause to repent his resolution, and though some might desert his shop, such was the confidence placed in his integrity of principle, that the business turned out beyond his

anticipations, and in a few years his circumstances were such, that he was enabled to arrive at independence, to afford to give a liberal education to his sons, to "do good and communicate", and bequeath £100 to the London Missionary Society.

In his more extended intercourse with the world the decision of his character became more marked. He always acted from principle, not the erring and vacillating maxims of worldly policy or expediency, but those of the word of God. He possessed, in a high degree, that unbending integrity and uprightness of conduct which made him to be feared as well as esteemed. Few men showed more acuteness in the discrimination of character. His natural disposition was open, frank, and cheerful. Possessed of a good deal of firmness, he was not deterred from what he conceived to be the path of duty. What he did, he engaged in it with might and energy. His conversation was in mixed company cheerful and often facetious, and his society was often requested by those who knew and respected his principles. He possessed a wonderful degree of wisdom and prudence on these occasions, while he took care not to cast away his pearls or make religion the subject of common conversation. When in the company of mere worldly men he engaged their attachment, and never failed judiciously to drop hints of a moral or a religious tendency amid his good-humoured conversation and fund of anecdote.

From his knowledge and experience of life he was frequently consulted in doubtful civil cases, and such was the implicit confidence reposed in his principles and judgement, that in the capacity of arbiter he was often chosen, which proved a means of preventing expenses and heart-burnings consequent on litigation before courts of justice. If in some cases there was a necessity of having recourse to legal steps, it was no new thing to say "we shall lay it before the Dyer, he will direct how to act", or "we shall abide by his advice or decision."

But without enlarging on his character as a man and a member of society, what the writer would principally record is his character and actions as a Christian, and that of no ordinary standing, both in a public and private capacity, as an example of a man not only "diligent in business, but fervent in spirit."

About the year 1796, the great cause of missions to heathen lands excited a very strong interest in Ross-shire as well as in other places throughout the kingdom, especially in those parishes where the ministers felt interested and made collections for the purpose. Two or three sermons preached by Mr Calder, Urquhart, on the words "Thy kingdom come", previous to his making a collection in aid of the funds of the Missionary Society and a perusal of a few Numbers of the Evangelical Magazine, were the means of kindling in his mind that holy glow of zeal for the cause which continued increasing to the day of his death. He immediately ordered the work from its commencement in 1794, where the rise, progress, and operations of the London Missionary Society were recorded monthly. By his recommendation and influence several copies were circulated among his Christian friends throughout the country, and the lively interest he took in the prosperity of this Society is forcibly and

pathetically expressed by himself several years previous to his death in his Testamentary instructions to his children.

As the cause of missions was dear to his heart he never failed to offer up his intercessory prayers in behalf of its friends and those dear servants who went forth as Missionaries, to whatever denomination they belonged. He felt peculiarly interested in the South-sea mission to Otaheite, and though the success of this mission did not for several years answer the anticipations of its original projectors, he often mentioned it would, indeed it must, succeed, being a child of special prayer and the offering of the first fruits of the Missionary cause consecrated to the service of the Redeemer. He was not spared to hear the gratifying accounts that were published of its cheering success in 1815, fulfilling the promise that is now in a great measure realized, "the isles rejoicing in his law."

The formation of the Northern Missionary Society at Tain and Inverness in 1800 was also a source of much spiritual gratification to his mind. He was at its first formation elected one of its Directors, and seldom or ever omitted to attend its annual meetings at both these places, and was a most efficient and zealous collector to its funds from his parish. Soon after Dr Stewart's settlement at Dingwall, the subject of this memoir suggested to him to use his influence in having a similar Auxiliary Society formed in the western district of Ross-shire in Dingwall, not only with a view to collect funds, but from the moral and religious influence that might attend its establishment. Though that amiable and highly honoured man was a zealous supporter of the cause of missions, he expressed some doubts as to his people not being as yet ripe enough for such a proposal, to which my father laconically answered, in his own good-humoured and characteristic manner, "I fear some of them will be rotten before they be ripe." This district has since been honoured by the formation of a Missionary Society and viewed as some of the fruits of the worthy doctor's ministry.

But it was not to foreign missions alone that his zeal was exclusively directed. He felt a deep interest in the progress of religion at home. Being in an eminent degree a lover of good men, he cordially welcomed the deputations and countenanced the exertions made by several respected dissenting ministers, who itinerated through the country and preached at Drummond, with several of whom he corresponded. He rejoiced much in the active efforts made for the diffusion of religious knowledge, and the preaching of the gospel by pious men of different denominations. Though he did not concur with them in some points of doctrine and Christian experience and terms of church fellowship, still, in their zealous efforts to do good and to rouse his countrymen to inquiry and emulation, he wished them "Godspeed," collected among his Christian friends and acquaintances several liberal contributions in aid of Missionary, Bible, and School Societies, and circulated much information from several religious periodicals and reports he ordered of the progressive benevolence of the Christian public and the aggressive zeal manifested in diffusing the knowledge of the Scriptures to the dark corners of the earth.

Feeling, in common with the excellent men who formed the meeting formerly alluded to, the want of religious influences around him, and grieved at the desecration of the Sabbath evenings, he felt it his duty to do all in his power, in the sphere in which providence fixed his lot, to impart religious knowledge in his neighbourhood, and commenced in 1798 to teach a Sabbath-evening school. Previous to this he circulated an address, which was the means of originating a Sabbath School Society, of which most of the influential inhabitants in the parish were members, and of which he was chosen Secretary. Funds were soon collected for establishing a religious circulating library, consisting of several valuable practical works in divinity, which were lent out to such as were able to understand the English language. In accomplishing both these objects he met with difficulties and discouragements from those who ought to have strengthened his hands, but such was the energy of his mind and the consistency and weight of his religious character, that he persevered, and his labours in instructing the young in the principles of religion were much countenanced, and tended to diffuse and strengthen that taste for practical and evangelical instruction by which a goodly number in that parish are distinguished. The moral effects also were marked, as in the following example. The writer was informed several years after the commencement of the school, by a person on whose testimony he could rely, that the children in his neighbourhood were hardly ever found guilty of stealing fruit from his garden, to which they were formerly much addicted. Indeed when any instance of moral depravity was discovered, the scholar's name was blotted out of the catalogue, was thus marked out as a person not to be associated with, and would not be received back without signs of penitence or promises of amendment. He continued teaching the school with unremitting assiduity till his last illness, and such was the delight he had in meeting his young friends at the school, that though often confined by asthma, and unable to continue long in speaking, he seldom failed in going to it even during his last illness. Some of those whom he taught he had the happiness of employing to pray publicly and in assisting in teaching.

On the first Monday of the quarter, he always had a prayer meeting for the spread of the gospel at the Sabbath school, at which he presided, and on these occasions a part of the time was devoted to a detail of information about Missionary and Bible Societies throughout the world, and recommending them to their special countenance and support. From two to three hundred persons were usually present at these meetings, many of whom contributed a penny a week or month for religious purposes, besides the annual donation from the children of the Sabbath school to the Northern Missionary Society at Tain, of which he was uniformly the bearer.

The only book used at the commencement of the school was the Proof Shorter Catechism in English and, as the Gaelic was the vernacular tongue, he encouraged the children to come to him during the week, in order to have the proof Scriptures translated previous to committing them to memory. No Gaelic Bibles were then in circulation or even completed. And when, a few years later, the Edinburgh and

London Bible Society printed and circulated large editions, a considerable number were ordered to his shop. They were in a great measure a sealed book, as few of the children were taught to read the Gaelic language. In order to make them to be read, he appointed two or three evenings in the week to be devoted to Gaelic reading, in which he was assisted by a few young men from different hamlets; so that, in a short time, no less than seven voluntary Gaelic schools were established. Such was the moral influence of these that, in the year 1811, the children and adults in these schools all collected at the Sabbath school on the 12th January, being old New Year's Day, to read the Scriptures instead of devoting it, as in former years, to play and merriment.

In his addresses to the children and adults who attended the Sabbath evening school he devoted the most part of the time to the illustration of one or two questions of the Shorter Catechism, which he did with an extent and accuracy of theological knowledge that was edifying to inquiring minds as well as to established Christians. His system of Divinity was strictly Calvinistic, which, as already adverted to, he drew for himself out of the Bible. He was much gratified, in his subsequent reading, to find these views confirmed by the writings of Boston, Owen, 'Witsius on the Covenants', and 'Gurnal's complete Christian Armour', the last of which was his Sabbath companion when by illness or other causes he was unable to attend the house of God, and which the late pious and eminent Cecil called one of his classics. This system he deemed the most consistent with Scripture doctrine, and though by some it may be represented as tending to exhibit the character of the Deity to mankind as unamiable, and as leading to Antinomianism, (which will be found to arise either from prejudice, or from not thoroughly studying the subject), still, if the system be judged by its fruits, there were few instances where it was accompanied by more watchful and consistent conduct or a more holy and useful life than he manifested in his own public and private conduct. It was attended with the fruits mentioned by Paul to Titus; "teaching to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Notwithstanding his zeal and notoriety as to religious profession, he was never charged with enthusiastic or fanatical feelings, even by some of the ministers who differed in opinion from him and disapproved of some parts of his public conduct. The Lord imparted to him much of the spirit of wisdom and an enlightened mind, and he conscientiously and boldly followed what he conceived to be the path of duty. "Cease from man" was a favourite scripture maxim from which he uniformly acted, and which he often repeated when he heard of the inconsistencies or vacillating conduct of some religious acquaintances. While he contended earnestly for his faith and was able to give a reason for the hope that was in him, he showed no bigotry, and his judgement was open to conviction. As an example of this, I showed him an able article in the Eclectic Review, (which he admired much for its advocacy of Bible and Evangelical religion, and which he ordered for himself and read for several years), on the disputed passage in the canon of Scripture, I John 5:7, now generally allowed

by the best critics to be an interpolation. I had some doubts whether he would altogether follow the critical reasoning or be led to part easily with what he previously conceived to be one proof of the important doctrine, yet such was his candour and openness to conviction, that he was fully convinced by the arguments of the Reviewer, without in the least shaking his belief of the doctrine in question, which he saw abundantly confirmed by other passages. Indeed, such were his convictions of the necessity of learning and a critical knowledge of the original language of Scripture to ministers, that he often recommended to his sons the study of the Hebrew as well as the Greek and, having an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the former at the parochial school, he sent them for an hour or two in the evening to learn its Grammar a year or two before they entered the University. Furthermore, on their return from college after the first session, he laid it as a task upon them to prepare a chapter of the New Testament, which must be translated from the Greek and read in Gaelic every evening at the family altar. This exercise forced them to read and prepare the Greek lessons daily, and manifested a great deal of shrewdness in him in causing them to follow out the instructions received at College. From his intimate and correct knowledge of his Bible, he felt often disposed to prefer the reading on the margin, or the critical translation he might meet with in the course of his reading, not of course from any knowledge of the original, or even the authority of names but, in his opinion, as agreeable to the mind of the Spirit in other parallel passages or the Analogy of Faith. I frequently remarked in the course of translating that the sense could be conveyed without taking in the supplied italic words in the English translation and he seemed much gratified. Few men yielded more their judgement to or regulated their practice by the authority of Scripture, and he did not wish to add to or take from the word of God.

The writer of these memoirs has, in the course of his experience, met with some serious and devout Christians, who undervalued human learning and accomplishments and thought that a University education proved of little or no service to qualify for the work of the ministry but proved rather detrimental. And it is to be regretted that there should be room for such an opinion, as the excellent John Newton remarks in some of his letters that he knew of some young men who appeared to be humble and spiritual previous to their entering College, yet who returned dogmatic and censorious, to whom he had occasion to apply the words of Milton —

"If thou art he, — but ah! how changed."

Few Christians of his rank, however, had such high views of the necessary ministerial talents and character as the subject of this memoir. His standard was a high one. While he esteemed all the servants of God highly for their work's sake, even though deficient in oratory, or meagre in the discussion of doctrinal subjects, and would not reckon it the duty of a private Christian to desert their ministry and secede to other parishes, provided, as he remarked, "They had the root of the matter

in them"; yet such were his light, and judgement, and spiritual taste, that he never felt edified by common-place observations or unconnected views of the truth, however earnestly delivered, or pious their tendency, if they were not either implied or expressed in the text. The Lord imparted to him in a high degree the spirit of acute discernment, as well as high spiritual affections. For this he was under excellent training for many years by Mr Calder, whose sermons were imbued not only with spiritual unction but were composed with a correctness of doctrinal statement which showed that he was a scribe well instructed — "a workman who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

His religious views did not prevent him from feeling deeply interested in the important and heart-stirring events of the times, as they regarded his country and the destinies of the nations of Europe. The newspapers of the day he perused with interest and avidity; but the events recorded he viewed through a moral and religious medium, as fulfilling the prophecies, which he saw gradually developing in the political revolutions of kingdoms, and to which his attention, and that of several intelligent Christians in Ross-shire, was directed by the perusal of Dr Fraser of Kirkhill's 'Key to the Prophecies.' In forming his judgement of the public events of the times, he took for his guide Scripture analogies and history. His Bible he took as a telescope, to view the wonderful sublimities [excellencies] of God's moral and spiritual government of the world and his Church; and he felt a gratification more pure and sublime than ever "undevout astronomer" did in viewing or calculating the phases and revolutions of the planets. The success of Bonaparte he viewed as ultimately intended for good, in weakening the power and influence of the Papal throne, so that he was jocosely taunted by some of his acquaintances as having a predilection for him, calling him good-humouredly "your friend Bonaparte". He would reply that "he would do more good yet", and when the ends of Providence were accomplished in the events predetermined and brought about by the instrumentality of human agency, he would be laid aside like the Assyrian monarch — "the rod of His anger."

But he was not only observant of the dispensations of Providence in the moral and righteous government of nations and public individuals; he was particularly minute and careful in examining and receiving lessons from particular ones towards himself or his family, and viewed this exercise as one of the most important and leading features of a true Christian. As one example of this, the writer has heard him candidly admit that when, in his early and busy days, he would, to save time, neglect the reading of Scripture or singing before prayer at times in the morning, that he found Providence had thwarted him, and his conscience smote him for the neglect of hearing what God spoke in his word. He saw his sin in his chastisement, and he made it a rule, from which I recollect never to have seen him deviate, not only to have the worship of God complete but, after reading the chapter, to make a few illustrative or practical remarks.

His strict and spiritual observance of the Sabbath I never saw surpassed or even equalled by any one, lay or clerical. His habits of early rising were not confined to week days. Indeed, from the distance he had to travel to the house of God, being about five miles and an arm of the sea, the breakfast hour was generally before eight o' clock. The morning was devoted to the perusal of the Scriptures and devotional exercises. The time of family worship, which all must attend, was at seven, when he invariably made practical remarks on the chapter read, and such were the pathos and fervency of his supplications for the preachers of the everlasting gospel and its spreading throughout the world, that it could not fail to produce a solemnizing influence on his own mind, and on such as were privileged to join with him, in preparing them for the devout worship of God in His sanctuary. At breakfast little was spoken, and never but that which was becoming the duties of the day, or which ministered to spiritual edification, or involved giving instructions to his children, who generally went to the parish church, and who were enjoined to have the psalm assigned and the lecture and text by heart at the time of the evening sacrifice. On his return from church, after a short repast, always prepared on the Saturday, he retired for a few minutes previous to entering the Sabbath school. When this duty was over, after some time spent in private, the family were collected as in the morning and were minutely examined on the subjects they heard preached. On these occasions, he never was satisfied with desultory recollections of a striking remark or simile. He always taught his children and the servants to recollect particularly the division or plan of the discourse preached, and such was the attention he showed and the excellence of his memory, that the leading ideas of the sermon were repeated, either by himself or family, in the order in which they were preached. When this duty was over, a portion of the questions of the Shorter Catechism was repeated and one or two shortly illustrated, and after another stanza of a psalm was sung, the service was concluded as in the morning. Thus the whole time was occupied in the public or private exercises of God's worship, with the exception of works of necessity or mercy. To a pious widow or servant who attended family worship he used to ask what was their own particular portion or crumb that fell to their lot, as bearing on their individual experience. Such was his faithfulness and moral fortitude that, if any happened to be his guests over Sabbath, he would not pass such, and asked them how they passed the Sabbath and were benefited, prefacing his authority for so doing by stating that heads of families were accountable for the "stranger within their gates." Such was his veneration for the Sabbath that, when application was made by a gentleman in Ross-shire for one of his sons, then a student in divinity, to engage as his private and confidential secretary, whose terms were advantageous and whose influence was considerable, in the conversation and correspondence on the subject, he would and did actually sacrifice the situation, because no pledge or writing would be previously given that his son would not be engaged in any business or reading unsuitable to the duties of the Sabbath.

It was also his invariable habit on every other day as well as the Sabbath, after the chapter was read both morning and evening, to cause his children and servants to repeat from memory a verse of the chapter. From the age at which the Bible was read by them, each of the family must bring it with them at the hour of prayer, and look on as translated from the English to Gaelic. He habituated his sons, at the age of ten or eleven, to translate a chapter in rotation, an exercise which alike improved their understanding and memory. When, however, the Gaelic Bible was completed and circulated in 1807, this practice of translating was laid aside. Still, the large family Bible by Samuel Clark was always open before him while one of his family read. On these occasions no chapter was omitted; all the inspired volume was read in order, and always remarks of an edifying nature made. The great and fundamental doctrine of the Atonement he looked upon as written with a sunbeam on all the Old Testament institutions, even the minutest ceremonial and what many are ready to pass over, as of no tendency, and as solely applicable to the Jewish ceremony. He viewed the spirit of their divine appointment, and considered each and all of them, as having a practical bearing on the public and private sentiments, character and moral conduct of Christians under the New Testament, without indulging in that fanciful and mystic application which has been occasionally met with in the writings of some divines of the sixteenth century.

This habit, which he commenced early, gave him a copious readiness of expression, which gradually prepared him for more extensive usefulness as a teacher of others. And it has been remarked oftener than once, by men of long standing in religious profession, that of all their acquaintances they never met with any who could give such a satisfactory answer as to the meaning, spirit, and practical bearing of a passage of Scripture when asked.

His family prayers always consisted of some topics of doctrine or duty in the chapter read, and thus presented a variety and richness of devotional meditation which was highly edifying. In order to prevent the annoyance and interruption of business from those calling at the shop about the breakfast hour, it was his uniform practice to call his family together in winter before day-light.

It was not by religious instruction and pious example alone that he trained his children. He was convinced of the importance and necessity of discipline, and commenced it early. As his conduct was uniformly regulated by Scripture principle, he saw it his bounden duty to obey the command, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying". Moral delinquencies especially were never allowed to escape, which he punished with more than usual severity. He early maintained his authority as a parent. His will must be obeyed, often a hint or look awed to compliance, however reluctant, so that at times obedience flowed more from terror or the dread of punishment than from motives of affection or reasons of propriety. To this what some of his acquaintances esteemed excess of severity he was led from viewing the conduct of some whom he denominated Eli-like parents, whom he knew and who, though amiable and excellent men, had to mourn over this their

infirmity of partiality and indulgence, in not holding tight the reins of discipline at an early age. To the neglect of this important part of parental duty he attributed in a great measure the want of piety in the offspring of those whom he esteemed pious themselves, and one of the causes of religious declension, over which he mourned, and which he endeavoured to check by his own example. At the age of twelve, corporal punishment was gradually relaxed and moral restraints substituted. As one example of this, of which the writer to this day has a vivid recollection, his brother and he, at the ages of ten or twelve, were permitted occasionally to accompany their parents to the church of Urquhart. Having strayed behind one Sabbath afternoon, and in order to be in time at the ferry boat, having stripped off shoes and stockings, they ran by the sands on the retiring ebb, partly excited by a few other children who were herding cattle and amusing themselves, which their father observing esteemed both indecorous and inconsistent with the sacredness of the day. For several Sabbaths they were prevented from accompanying him. The severity of chastisement was departed from, and a moral restraint, more painful to the feelings, was used — a silence and distance which indicated severe disapprobation. The natural shyness, or rather pride of the heart, even at that age, was put to the test before reconciliation was sought or pardon granted for the offence, but which at length, by the aid of maternal intercession, was obtained. On this occasion he spoke in a most serious and solemn manner when he knelt down and prayed with and for them. The scene was mutually affecting, and indelibly impressed on the mind a sense of the sacredness of the day, and of his affectionate, faithful, and tender solicitude for their spiritual welfare.

In his intercourse with others as well as towards his own family he exhibited that faithfulness and moral courage which few Christians are endowed with in correcting sin, and which those who knew his character were constrained to respect; and they took good heed not to utter profane language or swearing in his presence. On such occasions his manner evinced much prudence as well as fidelity. One or two instances occur to me. Seeing a gentleman one day walking by the arm of a clergyman, and hearing the former uttering some oaths, he saw it his duty to correct both by remarking, "Sir, take heed, do you know with whom you are walking?" They both felt the reproof and were silent. At another time, while travelling to church on a sacramental occasion, a man who made a profession of religion and who, like "Talkative" who made up with Christian, being silent for some time listening to conversation on religious topics, not so very accordant to his taste, hearing some incidental allusion to some who travelled a great distance that morning, commenced relating some feats of walking upwards of 60 miles for a day or two. On hearing this my father was silent for a little and, addressing him, said: "You have told us how far you could walk in your bodily strength, could you favour us now by informing us, as equally edifying, how far you have walked spiritually in your way to Zion?" He was struck dumb, parried off the question, and soon made up with other travellers more congenial to his taste and less scrupulous in their conversation. Of some whom he

met with at such seasons, with whose religious principles and character he was not satisfied, who had a profession yet whose practice did not correspond, though told of their going aside to pray, "Yes," he adds, "gone to put a wisp in the mouth of conscience." Indeed such was his acute discernment of character and discriminating judgement that few or none of those who rested satisfied with a semblance of piety, or who would wish to be esteemed so by others, could relish his society long. He was not ready to give the right hand of fellowship till he had stronger proofs of religious feeling and conduct than some of his more charitable but less discerning friends would be satisfied with. In several cases of strong mental excitement, or abstraction from the lawful duties of their calling, he was of opinion that they stood at times more in need of the medical man than the minister. To such however as he saw humble and modest and timid in their inquiries, none could be more tender and compassionate and encouraging.

Yet, notwithstanding this fidelity, he was neither reserved nor ascetic, nor what the world would deem unamiable and severe. The very reverse of this was the case. He was in his intercourse with the world cheerful as the day; frank, honest, and often jocose. His humour and anecdote often enlivened conversation, and his company was often solicited; and he seldom hesitated to join his friends and neighbours at occasional family parties, whom in return he invited to his own hospitable table. He not only felt an interest in the improvements carrying on in agriculture around him, but was among the first who commenced the raising of wheat on the small farm he rented, which has since become a staple source of industry and of additional revenue both to tenant and proprietor. He was a stated member of the farmers' meetings held for the improvement of agriculture, and was often employed in commissioning wheat from Essex, and improved farming implements, which tended much to forward the productive industry of the tenants and the circulation of approved and practical agricultural knowledge.

He thought it his duty to accompany his sons to Edinburgh in November 1799, when they both entered the classes of that University, to see them lodged under the care of a relative. After very serious and affectionate admonitions on the journey, and during the week he stayed with them, he manifested his usual interest in their spiritual welfare and, on his return home to Drummond, after mentioning several judicious hints as to health and application to study, he writes — "But above all, read your Bible, read it morning and evening. In it alone you will find true matter for the exercise of logic, when you are deeply impressed with the truths it contain and when, by the impression, you apply to a throne of grace for the breathings of the Spirit of all truth to lead you to the understanding of it as it is in Christ. You will remember to write down all the texts you hear every Sabbath when you come to your room, with the heads of the sermons, and send them to me every month. I hope you will not be seen out of your room on the Sabbath-day but when going or coming from church, nor answer any invitations you get from persons to visit on that day, except you are convinced they are religious persons."

Much to the same purport he writes, 2nd January, 1800. After giving a prudent and judicious advice to mark down every penny of expenditure in a book to show him on our return, an advice the neglect of which has been attended with painful and even pernicious consequences to many inexperienced young men, he adds: "It would be a profitable way for you likewise, to begin and keep a diary of what passes every day in your minds and actions, with what you see in others you approve of and would be for your example, and what you disapprove of; you would thereby follow what is best, and endeavour to shun what you think improper in others. Some as young as you have kept a diary of the Lord's dealings with their souls, which has been of great use to them in their after days. I wish you could begin it. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Pray that the Lord, by his Spirit, would sanctify you in heart, and then your life will be accordingly holy. May the Lord take you under his particular care is the prayer of your affectionate father," etc.

Indeed in all his letters, however short, he never failed in giving either some hint in the way of admonition regarding our best, our eternal interests. The following letter, addressed to one of his sons on entering the Divinity Hall, I transcribe as a specimen of his faithfulness, and containing such judicious and decided views of the importance of experimental knowledge of religion, and the great responsibility of the ministerial office, as all in similar circumstances ought seriously to ponder:

Drummond, 20th Dec. 1802 — "Your mother and I were happy to hear of your prosperous journey and the kindness of God in his providence to you, in that you got a bursary. I desire to be thankful to God for it, and I hope you will see Him in it, as the disposer of all events. I have taken particular notice of the conclusion of your letter; the office is most important, and without the gifts and grace of the Holy Spirit, a minister is a judgement from God on the people he is permitted to be over. Grace is essential to the right performance of the office of a minister, and without it none can fill that station. [The possession of] gifts is the next [essential]. I hope you see both requisite. But there is still more, and that is a particular call from the Spirit of God to exercise those graces and gifts in the holy office of the ministry. Very few take notice of that weighty passage of Scripture: "they run and I have not sent them". May the Lord preserve you from being among the unhappy number! Though I have exerted myself to forward your education, God is my witness, it was not with an intention to make a minister of you or your brother, but in as far as I might perceive a work of the Spirit of God on your hearts, along with every other qualification requisite for that office; and I hope in God you will not proceed without them, and I hereby charge [you] in the presence of God not to do it. I am very ailing since you went away, and I may not see you again, therefore take heed to what I have said," etc.

To the same purport he also writes 26th January 1803: "We received yours of 8th current, and are happy you are in health. All others are in ordinary health. Thanks be to the Giver, I am happy I never had any views about you but what may be most for the glory of God; and though you say you cannot turn back to any other

employment, yet if you be not fitted with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit to accompany your views, I wish and pray you to any other employment. For I look upon a graceless minister as a mark of God's judgement to himself and the people over whom he is permitted to be." Then, alluding to some local circumstances affecting his interest and usefulness, he adds: "If I be spared to write you another letter, you may expect to hear strange news from me. Sir Hugh is to have a general removal of all his tenants, and I am to get a summons this week. Mr _____ has done all he could to prejudice him against me, on account of the Sabbath school, Mr Sir Hugh mentioned his disapprobation of me and the school to myself: but I rest satisfied, knowing all things are disposed of by Him who rules over all, if I be deprived of the pleasure and the comfort of the school. I do not think (at present) I will continue here after Whitsunday. What is Mr Haldane doing, and is his congregation increasing? What sort of minister is coming from Leith to Dr Erskine's church? Has Mr Black got a church yet? If there be any thing new and useful published you may send me a few copies," etc. In reference to a very serious loss in the way of business, communicated to him by my brother, whose prospects of employment during the summer in Edinburgh were not favourable, he writes him in return, June 22nd, 1801. "Though the news troubled me much, the latter part of your letter fully compensated for it: you mention your being under the necessity of changing your lodgings on account of an irreligious companion. I bless God for it, and your mother and I recommend to you to follow your resolution and leave him as soon as possible. I hope you will be resigned to the will of Providence; Mr _____ and others are but instruments, and you may see the Lord in others as well as them. If you are laid idle, or have not much employment, I would recommend you to attend some of the most useful branches of learning, as French, etc. You may depend while I have a shilling, after paying my credit, you shall have a share of it. You may mention all your wants to us, and what is in our power shall be done for you."

Again, writing to my brother, who unreservedly communicated to him his scruples, and solicited his advice and an interest in his prayers as to a feeling which I believe is cherished by most young preachers and students in divinity, he writes him back in his usual characteristic and decided manner: "26th March, 1807. I do not savour your opinion when you say 'It must be more difficult to preach to established Christians than to those who are not, or those who have not yet attained to the knowledge of it' except you mean a graceless minister: in that case you are right, as he cannot preach Christ, neither knows he what way a Christian lives upon the gospel so as to preach to them. But I never knew a godly minister but would rejoice upon having the people of God to preach to; yea, they are out of their element when they are saying anything but "Feed my sheep — Feed my lambs". You mention that it is to a young preacher the difficulty would be. There should be no such young preachers in the world that could not preach to the oldest Christians in it. However young the ministers of Christ are, they can say all to the oldest Christian; we have received the same Spirit of faith, therefore we speak. Without this Spirit they cannot speak, neither

will they be understood. They know not the voice of a minister that is a stranger to the same Spirit of faith with themselves. I hope before you enter upon preaching you will change your opinion, which I pray God of his mercy, may grant you. Your mother prays the same."

In writing to one of us soon after licence as to a mission about which some of his friends wrote him, he shows the same consistent fidelity. "I cannot," he says, "advise you in the matter; but to wait with patience in the way of duty; and be sure you are convinced in your mind, that you are at the disposal of Him who orders all things right. What I have said is but of a secondary nature. The only thing that will give you comfort and me satisfaction is, that you have not run without being sent. I hope the threatening pronounced against such will be sufficient to guard you from the judgement. On the other hand you may meet with trials in your way, but your comfort will be. Art not thou He that said unto me? I pray God to give you to think upon these things in time. This is the time, the only time. If you neglect this, God may justly leave you to shift for yourself: and if so be the case, many of them will be sinful shifts. Paul prayed that God would give Timothy wisdom in all things; so do I."

But it was not only while residing under the parental roof, or when carrying on our studies, that we were the objects of his solicitude, or found benefit from his judicious, faithful and affectionate advice, which his extensive and deep knowledge of Scripture, his acute discernment of character, as well as his experience as a teacher of others, though on a limited scale, qualified him to impart.

Even after having the charge of souls, he seldom or never wrote to us without reminding us of the importance and high responsibility of the ministerial office, couched in pithy scripture language, conveying some solemn admonitions as to faithfulness and zeal in duty, circumspection and consistency of conduct, and the expression of fervent prayers in our behalf; or some practical reflections or lessons on the passing history of the times, whether civil or ecclesiastical, as well as personal or family circumstances. This he continued even during his last illness, when the writing of an ordinary letter cost him two days' time at intervals from the distressing state of the last stages of asthma. A few extracts from these I subjoin. Thus writing to my brother, while residing for a few months at the Mission of Eriboll, a short time after his licence, he says:

18th Dec, 1807. — "I see no occasion for your hurrying home. I think you may be better employed with your brother than here, till Providence opens a door for you. I hope you have been agreeably entertained by your asking William, and his telling you, how the pleasure of the Lord was prospering in his ministry. I dare say you would have told him the contents of Mr Calder's letter to you, and I think you should never forget it. I would recommend to your particular study and attention a part of the contents of another letter you will find in the First Epistle of John, chap 1, verses 1 and 3. Without an experimental understanding of the passage, your preaching will be dry and unprofitable, and your poverty will appear to experienced Christians that have

tasted, and handled, and heard, and seen in another way than all the learning of the world. Your mother and sister join with me in praying for you both," etc.

To the same purport he also writes him, 25th January, 1808: — "We were much relieved from anxiety about you after so long silence. I am happy to understand you take your sermons out of the Bible, without the assistance of books. I will be still more happy to understand, that you study and preach from the experimental knowledge of what I mentioned in my last to you. Without it, you may preach evangelical truths, so far as you know; but it is only by your having the same spirit of faith, 2 Cor. 4:13 that you will preach profitably to yourself and usefully to others. May the Lord direct you both to the practical use of your call is the prayer of your affectionate father," etc.

My brother being disappointed as to his views of a mission, notwithstanding the prospects held forth and promises made by some friends, my father writes him, "5th April, 1808, I see by what you mention of Mr ____'s letter, that what I suspected has come to light, Isaiah, 2:22. Cease ye from man. I hope you will be directed to see every step of God's ordering you, done by his infinite wisdom, and be made to say; He hath done all things well. Keep the above text always in view, so that you may always see your whole disposal of the Lord." Then, alluding to a painful accident which confined him to bed almost for six weeks, he adds his experience in affliction. "I hope I have seen that the good Lord hath done it, and that for his glory and my good. In this, I will rejoice and thank him for sharp dispensations, as much as for the great train of His former smiling providence. — Grace, mercy, and peace in believing is the prayer for you of your affectionate father. R. F."

In Nov. 1808, he writes my brother, though several circumstances he states made the situation uncomfortable, as he had not only to prepare two discourses every week at Rothiemurchus, but had to teach a school also;

"Your situation is not so agreeable as could be wished; but you must continue in it for a short time, as you have entered in hopes that the Lord will provide in his good time, and improve you in it for a better, if it be the will of him who hath appointed the bounds of your habitation. I pray God to make you of those wise that will turn many from darkness to light - you must be convinced first of the power of His grace, turning yourself, and then you will walk in the light, and preach in the light, and be a light in the Lord; which is the prayer of, etc."

The following short extracts from such of my father's letters as I found preserved among my brother's papers manifest the same interest he felt in his welfare, and the same fidelity in advice and warning, as well as comfort and encouragement in the discharge of duty; which is alike indicative of his judgement and the high standard he formed of ministerial duty, and may be viewed as one very important part of that religious and professional training by which my brother was qualified for future usefulness, as the memoir to follow will show.

January 13th, 1809. — "I hope you are daily at a throne of grace for direction for your own soul and for those who hear you, and likewise for prudence to direct you to walk towards them that are without. If you must give up the practice of your predecessor, (alluding I believe to dining out at times on the Sabbath), I hope you will do it prudently, in a way that will not give offence to the cause of Christ. Follow peace as far as is consistent with holiness and a pure conscience. I hope you will have both in view in all your associations with the world; but let not your keeping peace with the world hurt the peace of conscience for the whole world."

April 21st, 1810. — "The number of your charge is great; you have need to keep near the Lord in private prayer, and strive to walk in the Spirit and in communion with the Scriptures. Learn to be a scripture preacher, and a scripture walker."

Feb. 15th, 1811 — "I desire to thank God, that you have some people under concern. You mention their not coming to see you for some time. I think you should go and see them, and invite them to come and see you; but above all, you should see them every day at a throne of grace. I pray always that the Lord may direct you to glorify Him, in the gospel of his dear Son, by preaching Christ, the only hope of glory to lost sinners."

Jan. 24th, 1812. — "I hope you are diligent while it is called to-day, and that you understand the apostle's injunction, "In season and out of season." It is an observation that has stood, and will stand; 'An idle young minister will prove a useless old one.' But with all your diligence in the outward exercise of your ministry among others, have a particular eye to yourself. Endeavour that your own heart holiness keep pace with your outward zeal; and that a serious frame of mind accompany all your endeavours in every part of your office. You must likewise carry along with you a depending spirit upon the fresh renewed influences of the Holy Spirit; 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he has oft ordained strength.' The more weak the babe the more dependant, and the more dependant the more support, that free grace may be exalted, and all become as little children, always seeking more and more, according to new calls, duties, and dispensations of His powerful working and correcting. Even should you meet with contempt and reproach in your several calls of duty, a believing trusting spirit under trials will be strengthened by the promises, when they are in that case shut up to the faith of them. This I pray to be your portion."

May 9th, 1812. — I approve very much of your plan of a Sabbath-evening lecture. You can do it without hurting yourself. But, remember, a minister that preaches much should pray much: in both respects you must double your diligence. I think you should take a new field for such work, and continue it only in the evenings, and insist most upon the application of the subjects. I pray that you may be directed in this way to have an eye constantly upon the young generation. It is among them that you may look for most success."

June 8th, 1812. — We were all happy that you enjoy good health, and are employed in the work of the gospel of the grace of God. Go on, double and redouble your diligence. Your wages is in your work. That should be it. With my earnest prayer for your prosperity in your soul and office," etc.

Nov. 26th, 1812. — "I conclude with my daily prayers to God for you, that you may be kept faithful in the great charge you have. When you endeavour to open the fullness of Christ, you must cry out "Who is sufficient for these things?" When you endeavour to declare the denunciations of the holy law of God against hardened sinners, you must cry out, in the same manner, ' Who is able to do all these things?' as a point betwixt death and life."

May 4th, 1813. — Alluding to the vacancy of Urquhart by the death of Mr Calder, the spiritual comfort he enjoyed under his ministry, and the prospect of its being soon supplied, he writes my brother, who assisted at the celebration of the Sacrament in the Gaelic chapel: "I hope you will have an agreeable time of it in Edinburgh. I pray for His presence among you. Though not acquainted with Mr MacDonal, you may make offer of my best wishes to him and tell him that Ferintosh is proverbial for a good dram, and that we hope he will present us with nothing inferior to what we got. It has oft been so strong and sweet, that we have drunk of it till we forgot our poverty and remembered our misery no more"

October 16th, 1813 — "If you wish to prosper in your ministry, let prayer have the start of your preaching, and let it follow hard after it. Never let prayer lose sight of preaching. If you make conscience of this, I could venture to prophesy that you will see the pleasure of the Lord prospering through a really prayed gospel. I would wish to remember all your exercised people, and particularly the woman you mention. I wish you to pay particular attention to the young generation, by example, counsel, attention, and inviting conversation. I would not advise you to be pressing on your people for a collection, till you have their minds so prepared, that they will be in earnest to go hand in hand with you," etc.

In the last letter he wrote my brother, (with the exception of a short note requesting his paying him a visit before he die), he evidently anticipates that the time of his departure was nigh, which must have been read with peculiar solemnity by my brother, and viewed as the last parting advice from his revered and excellent parent. The interest he felt in his welfare appears unabated.

March 3rd, 1814 — "We desire all to be thankful for its contents that you are in such good health, which is not the case with me. My old trouble began with the first frost and snow which commenced here on the 15th of November. I was able to hold up fighting with my complaint till about the 1st of January, when the most intense frost that ever I remember set in with continued violence, which increased my trouble to such a height as to oblige me to confine myself to the garret night and day ever since, except a few days last week and Sabbath-day that I went to the school. Being confined to a warm room so long, and not taking proper care of myself, I caught a fresh cold, which has sent me to the garret again, as poorly as ever. This day I begin to mend a little. I was never so long imprisoned from all society, as I could permit none to visit me, not having breath to speak to them. The day of our quarterly prayer meeting (for the spread of the gospel) was a very stormy day here. I was not able to go out but, though the meeting was not very throng, all the particular persons in the parish

attended, and James Munro moderated. I was told it was very agreeable, and I began to mend a little next day. I know they were praying for me. Naturally speaking, I have lived as long as nature can be comfortable, with such a broken constitution, or worth the living for. I am this day as sensible of it as Barzillai was when he refused to go to court with David. In a spiritual sense, my life is almost useless to myself and to others. I cannot go to the house of God to hear the joyful sound of the gospel; neither can I be employed in any of the Christian duties of my day. There are many sick and dying at present and I cannot go to see them, which grieves me much. I pray you spare not youth and health, in season and out of season, in the work committed to you, till you 'make full proof of thy ministry,' to the comfort of your own soul, and by being the happy instrument in the Lord's hand of converting many. This and this only will be making full proof of being a minister of Christ, to your joy and their happiness. Be not satisfied to be a shaft in his hand, without being a polished shaft, giving testimony of the power of the grace of God. This you may depend is my prayer for you that your own soul may prosper. Some have observed that in proportion as this was the case with them so it was among their people. I will long to hear of your conversation with Mr Russell," — etc.

Similar judicious and faithful extracts might be given from letters addressed to the writer of this, were it necessary to exhibit at greater length his Father's principles and character. He shall just conclude these extracts by quoting one judicious and excellent advice to a young clergyman, in whose character and usefulness he felt much interested, and who corresponded with him and esteemed him not only a Christian friend but a father in Israel.

February 22nd, 1814. — "While I wish you to be faithful, be at the same time cautious, with that holy ingenuity that will reach the conscience, before you irritate nature; and then strike home with all the force of Scripture. I hope you are diligent among your poor people; but remember that the diligence which will profit others in a minister must begin with himself, and equally keep pace with all his other exertions among his people. Without this they will want the principal part of the minister's usefulness which is, that thy 'profiting may appear to all'. Whether they are graceless or gracious people, they will have an eye upon your growth, in whatever sense it may be: therefore it becomes you more particularly to have an eye upon yourself. Let no man despise you in your civil transactions or ministerial office."

Even to some of his correspondents, or Christian friends in the way of business, he was often in the habit of dropping some short hints in the way of information, advice, or encouragement as to the great concerns of eternity, and the interests of religion in the world and around him, some examples of which might here be given were it not that the memoir has already extended farther than was anticipated. One letter, however, may be adduced, in confirmation of this, and which is transcribed as being very probably the last he ever wrote, when he fully anticipated that his end was drawing nigh, and his hopes and desires were fixed on that better country where

sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away, where mortality shall be swallowed up in life.

Drummond, May, 1814. — "My dear Friend, I received yours of yesterday, containing part of your account against me, which you will receive enclosed. When you do business with me in the way of your office, I wish you to deal with me as you would do with a Lochaber man. I thank you for your good hopes of the power of the 'old man of sin' being destroyed shortly. Among all the tossings of my mind on my bed last night, (for I sleep little), Bonaparte came to my mind. I viewed him cast down from his throne by the Allies, given away under a strong escort to exile, imprisoned for ever in the sea and, in consequence thereof, peace restored. When I viewed such contempt poured upon a prince, who of late was esteemed irresistible, what, thought I, will not the Lord of hosts do with the disturber of his people's peace — 'the old man of sin.' Dethrone him, exile him, imprison him in the sea that flowed from Calvary, that he may no more disturb the peace that passeth all understanding."

The important event alluded to in the above letter would be only viewed by most readers as merely the result of disappointed worldly ambition, or attributed to the fortunes of war; and might prove as inexplicable, as to any spiritual lessons of improvement, as Samson's riddle of the lion and the bees was to the Philistines.

The most prominent feature of his religious character, as already adverted to, was a holy and fervent zeal for the spread of pure Christianity both at home and abroad. The truth of the remark often quoted, "The ruling passion strong at death", was seldom or never more verified than in his experience. His soul was swallowed up in the prosperity of the kingdom of Christ: he could not refrain from expressing the joy he felt at the interesting intelligence communicated in the Evangelical Magazine. Only a few hours before his death he had read to him a letter from Mr John Campbell, (with whom he was personally acquainted), from Africa; and so much was he animated by the cheering accounts it contained, that he sat up in bed, weak as he was, and, with the faith and feelings of a dying believer, addressed the few around his bed, saying: "What an encouragement to you to continue in prayer". These were the last words he was heard distinctly to articulate. Being assisted by my mother and a Christian friend to kneel as he wished by the bed-side, he continued for a few minutes in prayer, and in the act of assisting him up, he gently reclined his head on his deeply affected and beloved wife's bosom, and resigned his spirit to God who gave it, about 7 a.m., on the 30th May, 1814.

Such was the general regret expressed for his death, and the respect for his memory that, though not invited, as is generally the case in that part of the country, when the day of interment was known upwards of 2000 people from the neighbouring parishes, some upwards of twenty miles, assembled, who almost every moment retarded the procession by putting their shoulders to the bier in conveying his remains to the grave. On this occasion there were not a few, besides his own children, who had cause to adopt the exclamation of the prophet, "My father, my

father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof", especially the young whom he taught for sixteen years, several of whom looked up to him as their spiritual instructor, their father, and "the guide of their youth."

Subjoined is a copy of his testamentary instructions, as proofs alike of faithful, judicious, and affectionate concern for his family, and of the lively interest he felt for the cause of religion, especially that of missionary exertions.

"To Messrs. James Ross, merchant. Bridge of Ales, Hector Holm, merchant, Invergorden, George Ross, schoolmaster, Culrichie, William MacIntosh, schoolmaster, Culbok, and David Findlater, Strathglass.

My dear friends, — I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that I am at this present time in full soundness of mind and reason and judgement, though very weak and ailing in body, yet hoping and endeavouring, through free grace, to believe that this weak and ailing body shall, through the grace and power of Christ, put on an immortality never to be defiled with sin any more, consequently never feel the effects of it. If this be my mercy, it will be grace, grace indeed, to one of the vilest of the vile. As my present trouble — the effects of sin — threatens at this time to bring down this mortal body to its original dust, and my soul to God who gave it, I should by this dispensation hear the oracle divine calling to me, — 'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.' In consequence of this irrevocable sentence, at his call and time of executing it, I have judged that what follows may be an incumbent duty upon a husband and a parent; though I am convinced there is in the call to me something of an eternal nature, far beyond that to which I call your attention, and to which I beg and hope you will give your assistance to the widow and the fatherless, if so is the will of God.

Through the goodness of the kind providence of God towards me, I think after all my debts are paid and all my effects roup'd [auctioned] and turned into cash (except what may be absolutely necessary for my dear widow's use) there will be a balance, if near good payments are made, of about £700, sterling. And I hope, for the sake of the widow and fatherless, and the cause of Christ, that you will see the above disposed of as after mentioned. And I hereby empower and authorise you, or any three of you, to take the whole management, and dispose of it in the following manner: — First, The Lord has bestowed on me a very meet help in the wife he has given me, in whom I could confide, and for whom I bless his name. You will therefore settle upon her, out of the above sum, £300, sterling, upon interest, which shall be wholly for her own use and support while she lives, and at her death you will divide what may be remaining among my surviving children. But, as the interest of £300 is far less than I would wish for the comfortable support of my dear wife, then a widow, you must not see her want or in straits while a shilling of the stock remains; but on no account whatever may you or she dispose of any part of the stock to the children while the widow lives; for I have known parents, whose affections governed their judgement in this respect, and left themselves destitute after their children squandered their whole means of support. Secondly, you will settle £100, upon the same interest as my widow's is, for each of my children, William, Robert, and Isabella, till you see their necessities call for the stock, or part of it, and then they shall have no more of it in their power than you

may think proper for their present use. If it be the good will of God, that one or other of them may be taken away by death, the portion or portions of the deceased shall go to the further support of my widow while she lives, and at her death all that remains of her portion shall be equally divided among my surviving children; but if a breach is made by death, and that the portion of the deceased has gone into my widow's portion while she lives, at her death the portion of the deceased shall follow the below bequeath, and only what may be remaining of the £300, divided among the children.

You will remit to the treasurer of the London Missionary Society, within one year after my death, £100 sterling, for the promulgation of the Gospel among the heathen nations. The Lord has much honoured that Society. It was from it that my soul first caught the blessed flame that has so often warmed my cold heart and affections since; and at this present time while I am writing, the fire is burning — my heart and eyes are full, viewing with joy the spreading glory of Immanuel's kingdom, when all His people's prayers, and all His Father's promises for the glory of His kingdom, shall be fulfilled with a shout, — “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.” I must stop at this present time, lay down my pen, and give vent to my affections, because my heart is set upon it. O Lord, hasten the glory of the cross of Christ among all lands, that He may see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied!

Now, my dear friends, according to the best of my judgement, I have disposed of all which God in His kind providence has bestowed on me of worldly substance; and I trust you will see the whole disposed of in conformity with my wishes. But I see still the weightiest part of my duty, and your charge before me; and I am so weak that I cannot say much to you upon the very weighty subject to which I now particularly call your attention; therefore will only observe to you, that God has promised to be the husband to the widow, and the father of the fatherless; not in a miraculous way, but instrumentally in providence, are the ordinary ways of fulfilling His temporal promises. I hope I can say I have often given wife and children to the Lord; and now I leave the widow and the fatherless on Him and on you under Him. I know my widow loves you all, and will be comforted with the comfort, counsel, and direction that you may be helped to give her. My fatherless children will think they have a right to look up to you for direction and protection; and I assuredly confide in you, that neither will be wanting to them on your parts. I cannot give you any advice about them. If God grants the boys grace, they are in a fair way to prosecute their education for the ministry; but unless it be to your satisfaction, I charge you particularly to debar them from that office; and I hereby, through you, by the authority of a parent, (though dead, yet speaking), debar one or both of them, as they shall answer to God for being disobedient children to an affectionate parent. You will further declare to them, that I leave my assent to all the denunciations of the word of God against those who run without being sent. I hope, therefore, that one or other of them will not presume that way, without the grace of God in their hearts, and His glory for their end. But whatever branch of business they may think proper to follow, I charge you not to consent or allow them to go to the West Indies, that complete nursery of hell, except God gives them a real missionary spirit, and that they go to that glorious work.

Finally, brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of peace and love shall be with you. Amen, and amen, is the prayer of your affectionate friend,

"Robert Findlater.

"Drummond, 17th June, 1800."

In 1782, the subject of the foregoing memoir married Helen McRae, a native of the parish of Urquhart, Ross-shire. In forming this important connection, he was under the influence of Christian principle, regulated by the apostolic precept, "Be not unequally yoked." For several years previous to their union, she was decidedly pious, being brought early under serious impressions, while under the ministry of the late eminent Mr Hector MacPhail, minister of the neighbouring parish of Resolis, whose memory is still revered among the descendants or acquaintances of the older Christians of Ross-shire, and whose labours were blessed to many, not only in his own, but in some other parishes. In this union they were mutually happy. She proved a "help meet", not only as to temporal but as to spiritual matters. They were both "of one heart and of one way", coinciding in every prudent and holy purpose to "serve the Lord", encouraging and comforting each other in the active duties of life, and in the afflictive providences by which they were visited.

Her early piety was marked among the circle of her acquaintances and Christians, and recommended her to the particular attention of Lady Mackenzie, dowager of Rosehaugh, who resided then at Findon House. This excellent lady was highly distinguished for her piety and beneficence. She was truly a "mother in Israel" to all who were seriously inclined. To such her house and her hand were always open. Such was the moral and religious influence of her character, that it diffused itself not only in the parish, but among an extensive circle of relations. Being much taken with the religious concern manifested by her young servant, she committed almost the whole superintendence of her household affairs to her care. Here the author's mother remained till her marriage; and from what this honourable lady heard of his father's character and principles, she rejoiced much in the choice he made of one of kindred religious sentiments, and parted from her with some tokens of regard for her worth and her fervent benedictions for their temporal and spiritual prosperity.

Without enlarging particularly in giving expression to the feelings of filial affection, or adverting to recollections of maternal tenderness, her frugal and industrious habits and dutiful co-operation with her husband in looking carefully to the ways of her household, the writer may be permitted here to state briefly some of the leading features of her Christian character and conduct.

She was a woman much devoted to prayer. From his earliest recollection, she was in the habit of retiring privately during the day to her closet, not merely at the stated times of evening and morning, but especially in the afternoons, after the more active duties of the day had been finished; and when missed by some of her family,

she would recommend often to her children, with affectionate earnestness, the importance and necessity of prayer, quoting some advice of Samuel Rutherford, "Bairns, bairns, pray. It is praying folks that will win through the storm!" or some Scripture promise, "They that seek me early shall find me," sic. Having a lively sense of the influence and power of religion on her own mind, she felt deeply interested in the religious training of her children. As soon as the first dawns of reason appeared, she stored their minds with the principles of religion; so that before they could read, they had some knowledge of the historical facts of the Bible and some of its leading doctrines. Feeling herself, however, with the active duties of the household unable to teach them elementary knowledge, which few mothers in her situation can attend to, yet taking a deep interest in their moral and religious training and, though the parish school was within a few hundred yards of the house, she and my father not only concurred, but were, I believe, the first to suggest, that a pious widow in the village should keep a school, where moral and religious, as well as elementary instruction, would be given. To this school we were sent, and were among her first scholars; and such was the progress made under this excellent woman's tuition that, before my brother was five years of age, he was able to read the Bible, and repeat distinctly the questions of the Shorter Catechism. Having thus acquired the mechanical art of reading, our mother made us read every morning a chapter of the Bible, accompanied with moral and religious remarks, tending to illustrate its meaning. Being never allowed to stray out on the Sabbath, that day was devoted to committing psalms to memory, or reading at the parlour window some of her favourite books, such as Gray's Sermons, Rutherford's Letters, or Erskine's Gospel Sonnets. Religious juvenile books were not then much known, and though the task was often irksome, when not understood at that early age, it was profitable in some respects afterwards.

It was not her children alone she instructed. The servants, if young and docile, she assisted in reading, and recommended to them the perusal of the Scriptures; so that in several cases they were able to follow the reading or translation of the chapter at the morning and evening sacrifice. Some of these the writer has subsequently met with, who dated the commencement of their religious knowledge and feeling to the time they resided in the family, and who, from the instruction received and the example set before them, blessed God that in His good providence it was their lot that they ever entered it.

The influence of religion thus manifested was not confined to the family circle; it had a diffusive influence among her acquaintances. In the society of such as feared the Lord she had a peculiar delight, and kindly welcomed them at her house and, as her worldly circumstances improved, she often supplied the wants of the poor with a delicacy and privacy not generally known, especially the pious poor, whose privations she knew were greater than modesty and principle would allow them to reveal.

She also bequeathed the £50 left at her disposal in her husband's will, one half for religious and pious uses at home, and the other to the funds of the London Missionary Society, in the prosperity of which she felt much interest.

The bereavements of her family and friends she bore with uncommon fortitude. It was on these occasions that the influence of Christian sentiment and deep religious feeling were manifested in bowing with meek submission to the will of Him "who does all things well". Though fond of reading practical works on experimental divinity, during her last illness her chief and high consolation flowed from the Scriptures, which proved wells of consolation. Though the writer of these memoirs was not privileged to hear from her own lips her dying experience, he was assured from a beloved relative, who affectionately watched and waited her end, that her death was triumphant, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and anticipating the joy experienced when called to join the assembly of the first-born.

He subjoins the following extract of a letter written to him by his brother, which is no less a strong testimony to the worth and excellence of his character, than to that affectionate dutiful feeling towards a beloved parent which glowed in the heart of the writer.

"Ardeonaig, 15th January, 1816.

"My dear Brother, — I am this night writing under a very painful impression at the accounts I have just received from my sister of the very weak state of our dear mother's health, and of her own feelings and anxieties under such a dispensation. Our dear mother has not been out of bed for a month past and looks forward to her dissolution with pleasing composure. This I do not wonder at. The change, whenever it takes place, will be a glorious one to her, when her spirit shall take its flight to the mansions prepared for the justified saints, and join in that eternal song and praise which shall be ever new to the saints in glory. But O! what a dark prospect to us of being deprived of both parents, who were so dutiful and so exemplary, and who testified that their conversation was in heaven, even when they lived on earth. Surely nothing but the religion of Jesus can support under the trying scene of a deathbed. I assure you the prospect is dark to me, and you need not wonder that it be particularly so to our dear sister, with all the cares and burdens which hang on her shoulders at present. I fear that by every post I may have accounts of our dear mother's dissolution, or a call to see her once more in the flesh, which I think would be the most gratifying sight I could behold in this world. Though I consider our sister's situation at present arduous, yet I envy it. Were it not that duty commands my presence here, I would fly on the wings of affection and melancholy joy, to witness and hear the experience of a dying believer, who is so dear to me, and who has given testimony of that grace which shall be perfected in the full enjoyment of that God who has been her portion in time, and who will be her everlasting joy through eternity. I expect we might all have at least one happy meeting at Drummond, but my fears forebode it will be a melancholy one. I could wish much that I had one opportunity of receiving her parting blessing, which has been blessed to many. I

thought we might enjoy the comfort of being as it were nurses to her for some time, but an all-wise Providence seems to say, 'Where I am, there shall my servant be to honour her'. Let us endeavour to be "followers of those who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises". — I remain, etc.

"Robert Findlater."

As there are diversities of operations of the same Spirit, as to the manner and means by which the Lord commences his own work and trains his people in the ways of holiness, so there are also diversities as to their experience while entering the dark valley of the shadow of death. This was the case in some respects with both the subjects of the preceding pages. Physical or constitutional temperament and habits may in part account for it, yet it must be attributed to other and higher causes. The Lord severally divideth to each as He wills. Some excellent Christians are often timid and jealous of themselves, diffident and often sorrowful, walking in darkness, without reaching to that assurance of faith to which it is the privilege of others to attain, and in whom the marks or evidences of true conversion and progressive sanctification are more evidently discernible by others than experienced and realized by themselves; their speech and conduct betray them, by which others take knowledge of them, that "they have been with Jesus". These have often on their death-bed been more highly privileged than Christians of greater spiritual strength and fortitude, and have given incontestable demonstration of the power and happy influence of religion on the mind. They have entered the haven of rest, not only with hope but with joyful assurance, and their sun has gone down without a cloud to obscure his glory. Of this class the subject of this brief notice was a marked instance. She died triumphant in the faith of the gospel, her mind in a great measure abstracted from previous troubles and temporal objects. She viewed the land that was afar off, saw the King in his beauty and longed to be with her Saviour, where she might join the society of those in whom her delight was placed, who were brought through great tribulation, and sung the song of Moses and the Lamb.

In her husband's case, however, his experience in his last affliction was somewhat different. He did not appear to be so highly privileged. This has at times been the lot of several of the most eminent servants of God in every age of the church. God in a wise and mysterious providence sees meet that, as to spiritual consolation, their sun should descend in clouds without those rays of joy and peace in believing, which feebler and more timid Christians have enjoyed. They are "in heaviness through manifold temptations". He hides his face and they are troubled. The enemy of souls at times reserves his fiercest attack to the end of the journey; like the children of Israel in their sojourn through the wilderness, who had their severest conflicts when near the end of their journey and about to enter into the promised inheritance. This was occasionally his feeling during his last confinement, especially on days when no Christian friend of kindred feelings and sentiments visited him. Such, however, was not uniformly his case. During this period he expressed a desire

to depart and to be with Christ, his mind was generally staid, trusting in the Lord and waiting submissively His time. He felt often peculiarly animated and gratified by the sight even of some few Christian friends who visited him, and still more when permitted to hear and join in the devotional exercises of praise and prayer, and derived much comfort from musing on the 57th, and the 61st Psalms, as peculiarly applicable to his case at the time.

Having made no arrangements for a family burying ground, he gratefully accepted the offer made a few weeks before his death of the ground where the Munroes of Culnasketh and Ketwall were buried, at the north-east corner of the church of Kiltearn, where many a precious dust is committed in the hope of a glorious resurrection. His wife, from an excusable and amiable partiality, requested that the grave should be made some feet deeper than usual, as she expressed a strong wish to be buried in the same grave, anticipating from her growing infirmities that she should soon follow him. In this desire she was indulged, and over it is a plain stone with the following inscription: —

IN MEMORY OF

*ROBERT FINDLATER, DYER, AND MERCHANT AT DRUMMOND,
WHO DIED THE 30TH MAY, 1814, AGED 61 YEARS.*

*AN ENERGY OF MIND AND CONSISTENCY OF CHARACTER ADORNED HIS
TRULY ZEALOUS AND ENLIGHTENED PIETY.*

ALSO, OF

*HELEN M'RAE, HIS SPOUSE,
WHO DIED 27TH JAN. 1816, AGED 63.*

*A MEEK AND HUMBLE FOLLOWER OF THE LAMB. SHE DIED REJOICING IN
THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.*