

THE MINISTER OF KILLEARNAN.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE minister of Killearnan was my father. I could not forget this, while I was writing his memoir. In the only sense in which he was my father, while he lived, I lost him when he died. But the memory of that loss I can bear to recall, as I cherish the hope, that his death was the means of uniting us in bonds that shall never be broken. Doubly knit to him, therefore, now that he is gone, I can by no means keep down the son in my heart, when I write or when I think of him. This accounts for the frequency with which "I" and "my" appear on the following pages. They came unconsciously from my pen, but, when my eye detected them, they seemed so offensive, that I was strongly induced to attempt their removal. But the effort, to hide the son in the writer, requiring the affectation of an indifference that was far from my feeling, both my heart and my conscience revolted against it. And, even if the change were permitted by these, my hand lacked the skill to make the change an improvement.

CHAPTER I.

His Birthplace His Father—Anecdotes of His Boyhood—His Education—College Days—License—His Sermon in Applecross—His Labours in Lochbroom—Anecdote.

RISSEL, in the district of Kishorn, within the parish of Applecross, was my father's birthplace. It is one of those green spots that usually speck the breasts of hills, formed of such limestone rocks as abound in that part of the country. The time was when the most of these oases had cottages on or beside them. Often, throughout the Highlands, they now serve but to mark where cottages once stood. Some of these desolate hill-sides have seen better days, and they have their own striking way of telling their reverse. As one looks on them now, in their patched clothing of green and purple, through which the grey and naked elbows of the underlying rocks protrude, they seem, like men of broken fortunes, wearing, all in rags, the dress of other days.

His father, himself the son of godly parents, was well known in the surrounding district. He had been educated with a view to the ministry, and had been for several sessions at college; but believing that the Lord had accepted his intention without requiring its fulfilment, as in the case of David, in reference to the building of the temple, he never applied for license, but lived to see two of his sons serving the Lord in the Gospel. Combining, with the warm heart of a Christian Highlander, an enlightened understanding and a tender conscience, he was a man to win affection and command respect. He was eminently a man of prayer; and such was the feeling with which, on that account, he was regarded by the people, that, when the fishermen were out on Lord Kishorn on a stormy night, they knew no fear, so long as they saw the light in his window, believing that while it twinkled, there, he was pleading with God for their safety.

During many years of his life he attended the ministry of Mr Lachlan Mackenzie of Lochcarron, by whom he was greatly beloved and respected.

Sometimes, when that godly minister would shrink from engaging in public duty, in a fit of unbelief, Donald Kennedy would succeed in persuading him, after all others had failed. Once, on the morning of a communion Sabbath, when the hour for commencing the service had come, Mr Lachlan was still locked up in his bedroom.

The morning had been stormy, and the Tempter had found it easy to persuade him that this was permitted, just to prevent his preaching, and that it would be presumption to go out in the face of a frowning Providence. His friend, from Kishorn, had only arrived as the hour for beginning public worship had come. Being prepared to find, what he afterwards ascertained to be the case, he went at once to the minister's bedroom.

The door was locked, and no answer would be given to all his knocks and entreaties. He had much in him yet of the strength of younger days, and, putting his shoulder to the door, he forced it open, and on entering, found, as he expected, the minister stretched weeping on his bed.

He ordered him at once, in accents tremulous with respect, to rise; telling him he was ashamed to find one, who had so often caught the Tempter in a lie, yielding yet again to his suggestions, and assuring him that if he went forward to the Lord's own work, at the Lord's own bidding, difficulties would

vanish, and his fears be disappointed. Mr Lachlan yielded before his urgency; and scarcely had he crossed the threshold, on his way to the place of meeting, when the rain ceased, the clouds were scattered, and the frowning morning was succeeded by a smiling day of sunshine.

During the service of that day, the Lord's servants and people enjoyed a "time of refreshing" that left its mark on their memories for ever.

In his management of his household, he was peculiarly conscientious. It was his habit, as it was that of "his father before him," when each of his children reached a certain age, to retire with them to a quiet spot in the wood, and there, after spending some time in prayer, after explaining to them the nature of his engagements, in their behalf, at their baptism, and appealing to their conscience as to his manner of fulfilling them, directing them to the only source of strength, he took them under vow to seek and serve the Lord. My father always retained a lively recollection of this solemn transaction.

But before that time, and even from his very infancy, he was regarded by his acquaintances as a subject of grace. At the age of three years, it was his habit to retire to some secret place to pray. One day, in his fourth year, while thus engaged, a woman, who was passing, heard the child's voice lisping his petitions to God, and, arrested by the words she first heard, she stood to listen till his prayer was ended.

What she then heard, the Lord applied with saving power to her soul, and she, notorious only for wickedness before, was known, from that time till her death, as a consistent witness for God in the district. Thus early did the Lord give an earnest of the great usefulness of his later years.

Notwithstanding these indications of an earlier piety, he himself, sometimes at least, looked no further back than the twenty-fourth year of his age for the dawns of spiritual life in his soul. In that year, he passed through a process, that gave him a deep experience of the convictions and temptations usually attending a work of conversion; but whether it availed, merely to prepare him for dealing with the cases of others, or as his introduction into the kingdom of grace as well, it is now impossible conclusively to determine. But the individual himself not being always the best qualified to judge in such a case, I cannot dissent from the opinion of those, who knew him in his youth, and who believed that he had feared the Lord from his earliest years.

About the sixth year of his age, he was seized with small-pox. The attack proved to be very severe, and the child, unable to see or to speak, seemed lying at the very gates of death. Just when "at the lowest," and while his father was in his closet wrestling with God for his life, a man from the neighbourhood, who had the reputation of a seer, entered the house. The mother, ascertaining he was in, and having in her as much superstition as made her anxious to consult him, brought him to the room in which her son was lying.

The child was quite aware of the man's entrance, but was utterly unable to express the horror with which his presence had inspired him. "What do you think of John?" asked the anxious mother. The oracular reply was, "Ere the tide that now ebbs shall have touched the shore again, your child shall be no more." This the child distinctly heard, but it gave him no alarm.

He knew the man who spake these words was a messenger of Satan, and the Lord so calmed his spirit that "the prince of the power of the air" could not stir it. Just then the father returned from his place of prayer, his face lighted up with the joy of hope.

Observing the seer, he ordered him at once away.

The man, too glad to escape, instantly vanished, though not through the chimney or the keyhole, as such persons were sometimes suspected of doing. Observing his wife in tears, he asked her why she was weeping.

She told him the seer's gloomy prophecy. "The messenger of Satan lieth," he said; "the Lord hath given me the life of my child, the blessings of His right hand shall rest upon his head, and he shall yet serve the Lord in the gospel of His Son." In course of time the child recovered sight and health; but never could the man, who prophesied his early death, from that day look him in the face. He carefully avoided him whenever he seemed likely to meet him. But as he was leaving home, on one of his journeys to college, and as he was passing out of a narrow gorge, that formed the outlet of the glen behind his father's house, the seer suddenly came out from behind a rock, and, in a flutter of excitement, rushed up to him; but with no worse intent than to thrust a sum of money into his hand, which having done, he as suddenly again disappeared. Doubtless, the man's conscience was smarting under a sense of guilt, and the money was intended as a solatium for the pain which he formerly inflicted.

His early education was the best that could be procured in the district. This, however, is no high praise. He was taught to read, and write, and count, and was crammed with Latin. This was all that parish teachers in the Highlands, in those days, usually tried to do, besides practising themselves in the use of the lash, their kilted pupils affording them a tempting facility for the performance. Each lesson, given with this accompaniment, left its mark on the skin as well as its print on the memory, and, it must be confessed, stuck well to the pupil. Better Latin scholars, at least, were turned out of the dreadful schools of those days, than come from the pleasant seminaries of the present. Whatever was the character of the teacher under whom my father studied, he left his school prepared to pass respectably through the curriculum at King's College, Aberdeen.

Very different from what it now is, was the journey to College in those days.

Many students were obliged to walk their weary way, from the far north, to the granite city. Sometimes a gillie was in attendance, who carried the scanty wardrobe and the provisions for the way; a laird's son would have a horse and a gillie. Hospitality was no rare virtue in the days of our fathers, and but few of the poor students had to pay for a night's lodging by the way. Some kind farmer was almost always found, who made the weary traveller welcome to bed and board for a night.

This might be less necessary to the student, on his way to the south, his purse then containing the sum given him to meet the expenses of the session. But the purse was, generally, empty enough on his way home again. An Aberdeen professor used to tell his students of his having started once, after a College session, for his home in Caithness, with only twopence in his pocket.

On one of his journeys to College, my father walked, "between sleep and sleep," no fewer than eighty miles, a feat very unusual even in those pedestrian days.

A College life, before his time, was almost as unlike the present as were College journeys. Not long before then, all the students occupied apartments within the College, and messed together. Strange parties these must have been that sat around the long table in the College hall! Many a district contributed its share of temper, fun, wildness, and awkwardness, to the talk and the manners of that group of youths. Under a professor's eye and influence, the whole might have been smoothed down into a very dull affair; but the recoil would be all the greater when the professor had gone, and wild and furious would be the din, when each one, in that motley group, resumed his own proper phase, and found the reins lying on his neck again. Had the lodgings been comfortable, the fare good and cheap, and the supervision close and godly, this arrangement might have been excellent. Almost anything is better, than to send a youth to College, without a tutor or a friend, allowed to keep his own purse, and to choose his own companions.

Three sessions, then, completed the literary course at King's College, and each professor carried a set of students through all the classes.

This could only be a good arrangement, if each professor was equally qualified in all the departments of study, if all were equally good or equally bad, and if the professor and his pupils took well to each other at the outset. But the "Jack-of-all-trades" is generally "master of none;" and, considering the difficulty now felt in getting one suitable man for each chair, we may not return to the plan, requiring each professor to be qualified for all.

Two sessions only were then spent in the study of theology. Five years were thus the term of a youth's college studies for the ministry. This is now thought to be greatly too short; but if young men were only allowed to get out of their teens before entering college, the result of a five years' course would weigh just as much as that of eight years, on which a youth at twenty can now often look back. Let Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew be confined to schools and gymnasia, and let theological professors examine oftener and lecture less, and we can have in five years all that is worthy of a college in our present literary course, and quite as useful preparation for the work of the ministry, as can now be procured in our divinity halls. But, after all, what avails any course of theological study, if the essential qualification be wanting, which only the Spirit of the Lord can supply. It is too often supposed, that any gifted man can be shaped into a minister; whereas, the more talented a man is, and the more furnished with all the accessories that constitute a minister's intellectual equipment, the more dangerous will he prove, if he be not a minister of God's own making. It is indeed a mistaken idea, that learning is unnecessary and college studies useless; but it is a greater and more dangerous error, so to elevate the importance of literature and science, as practically, at least, to exalt them above the essential of godliness. On no account ought the Church to lower the standard of literary attainment, by which candidates for the ministry are tried; but when she allows Satan, so often, to thrust ungodly men through her courts, under the disguise which talent and learning may form, she should surely be at liberty to receive, occasionally, from the Lord, men whom He hath "created anew" for His work, though they may lack "the trappings" by which the ungodliness of these others was concealed. Sometimes, such men have been signally blessed in the ministry of the gospel, and any arrangement, that makes their reception impossible, cannot be sanctioned by the Lord.

In these remarks, some may think they discover an admission, that my father's early education was defective. With all the ardour of my love to him, and all the depth of my veneration for his memory, I will not claim for him any distinction for extraordinary talent or learning; nor does it pain me that I cannot.

He may have entered college with the disadvantage of a defective education, and he may have passed into the hall without having made any marked progress in literature and science; but I can truly claim for him, at least, an ordinary measure of attainments.

His sternly exclusive regard to what was substantial and useful, made him utterly indifferent to the acquirement of what was merely shadowy or showy. He knew what he lacked, and if he chose he could acquire it; but if he was understood, this was all he was ever careful about, as to his manner of expressing his thoughts when preaching the gospel. The idea of studying manner or style was one that never found a place in his mind. But what a counterpoise to every defect, in point of literary acquirement and mere superficial polish, were his sound and penetrating judgment, his devotion of heart to the service of the Lord, his experience from very infancy of the power of the truth, his habitual prayerfulness, and that holy watchfulness which communion with God never fails to produce. Such was my father when studying for the ministry, and if I may not be proud of him, I cannot be ashamed of him.

During the interval between two of his college sessions, an incident occurred, to which he often gratefully referred. He and his brother Neil, having gone a deer-stalking, they came in sight of a herd which they could only approach within gunshot, by creeping slowly up the slope of a hill. John was in advance, as they were stealing their way towards the deer. The trigger of his brother's gun having been caught by the heather, the shot was discharged, and the ball passed through his coat. Rising at once, he said to his brother, "Neil, I think it is time for us to give up this work." Discharging his own gun, he shouldered it, and, on reaching home, laid it aside, never to use it again.

He was licensed to preach the gospel, by the Presbytery of Lochcarron, Nov. 24th 1795, in the twenty-fourth year of his age. His discourses, all of which he delivered that day, "were unanimously approved of," and the Presbytery, "were fully satisfied with the manner in which he acquitted himself, in the languages, moral and natural philosophy." Either at the same meeting, or nearly about the same time, other young men were licensed. Referring to the group, Mr Lachlan said, "the others are only preachers of our making, but the Lord made a preacher of John Kennedy."

About the time of his license, he was appointed teacher of the parish school of Lochcarron. While discharging the duties of that situation, he continued to reside in his father's house; and was accustomed to walk to his school and back again, each day; but to him, with his athletic frame and buoyant step, the twelve miles walk was but a pleasant exercise. During his connection with the parish school, he enjoyed the privilege of sitting under Mr Lachlan's preaching, and of being admitted by him to the closest private intercourse. How his face used to light up, in after years, at the remembrance of the sermons and the conversations of those days! Not long after his license, he attended a communion at Applecross, at which Mr Lachlan was the principal assistant. On Saturday, Mr Lachlan was appointed to preach a Gaelic sermon, in the open air; but such was his state of mind, in the

morning of that day, that he abandoned the idea of preaching, and resolved to remain in his bed. He sent for "John," as he always called my father, about breakfast time, and insisted on his preaching for him. It was not easy, to think of taking Mr Lachlan's place; but there was no help for it, and he was obliged to promise to preach. The advice, given him by Mr Lachlan, was "when you are asked to preach on an hour's notice, spend one half of the hour on your knees, pleading for a text, a sermon, and a blessing; and the other half employ in studying the text and context, and in gathering as many parallel passages as you can find." The time for beginning the service arrived, and the preacher went to the meeting place. The tent, in which he stood, was constructed with oars, in the form of a cone, covered with blankets, and having an opening in front, with a board fixed across it, on which the Bible was placed. Unobserved by the preacher, and just as he had begun his sermon, Mr Lachlan, lifting the blanket from the ground at the back of the tent, crept in behind him, and sat down. The sermon had not proceeded far, when a case was described, which was so exactly Mr Lachlan's at the time, that he could not refrain from exclaiming aloud. Starting, on hearing the voice from behind, the preacher, not a little disconcerted, looked round, on which Mr Lachlan kindly said to him, "Go on, John; I have got my portion, and my soul needed it, and other poor souls may get theirs, before you conclude." Thus encouraged, the preacher proceeded, the Lord was with him, and his sermon was blessed.

About two years after being licensed, he was appointed to preach in Lochbroom, the parish minister having been suspended. The time, which he spent there, was in some respects the happiest portion of his life, and a light rested on it, that drew the eye of memory frequently towards it. It was the season of his "first love," as a preacher, the Lord was very near to his soul, and a manifest blessing rested on his labours. During that time, many souls were truly converted unto God, some of whom, in Lochbroom, and some, in other places, to which they were scattered, continued till their death, to shine as "lights in the world." Many a sweet hour of communion with the Lord he enjoyed in those days, in the woods of Dundonnell! I cannot forget a trying scene, into which a streak of the light of those days, was once cast to cheer my heart. Being called to see a dying woman, I found, on reaching the place to which I was directed, a dark filthy attic, in which I could observe nothing, till the light I had carried in had quite departed from my eye. The first object I could discern, was an old woman crouching on a stone beside a low fire, who, as I afterwards ascertained, was unable to move but "on all fours." Quite near the fire, I then saw a bed, on which an older woman still was stretched, who was stone-blind, and lying at the very gates of death.

The two women were sisters, and miserable indeed they seemed to be; the one, with her breast and face devoured by cancer, and the other, blind and dying.

They were from Lochbroom; and we had spoken but little, when one of them referred to the days of my father's labours in their native parish, and told of her first impression of divine things, under a sermon which he preached at that time. The doctrine of that sermon was as fresh in her mind, and as cheering, as when she first heard it, half-a-century before. Such was the humble hope of both of them, and their cheerful resignation to the will of God, that I could not but regard them, even in their dark and filthy attic, as at the very threshold of glory. I left them with a very different feeling from that with which I first looked on them; nor could I see, among the gay and frivolous, whom I passed on the

street, after leaving them, any who, with all their health, cheerfulness, and comforts, I would compare, in point of true happiness, with the two old women in the cheerless attic.

CHAPTER II.

Appointed Missionary at Eriboll—First Appearance —First Sermon—State of Religion in the District—Preaching Stations—Major Mackay—Mr Mackay Hope—Donald M'Pherson—Robert M'Leod—Mrs. Mackay—Communion at Kinlochbervie—Translation to Assynt—Success—Trial—Marriage.

IN 1802 he was appointed missionary at Eriboll. It was on a Saturday he first arrived there. The people were looking for the new minister, and were watching the road by which they expected him to come. They saw a young man of a fair complexion, and a frame that seemed, in their eyes, a model of symmetry and power, walking past with a step so light that it scarce bent the heather; but the more they admired the athletic Highlander, the further were they from conjecturing that he was their future minister. To the no small surprise of the people, the traveller, whom they observed on the Saturday, mounted the pulpit on the Sabbath, and, before the service was over, they were all disposed to join with Major Mackay, who said, "We had a minister before, who was a Christian; but we have now a minister who is both a man and a Christian." His text on that Sabbath was Isaiah 40:11; and, through the sermon preached, several persons received their first impressions of divine things, who gave proof, till their death, of their having in their hearts the true fear of the Lord. On the ministry thus auspiciously begun, the blessing of the Lord rested till its close.

Eriboll had enjoyed the ministry of Mr Robertson, afterwards of Rothsay and of Kingussie, and of Mr M'Bride, afterwards of Arran. The labours of these men of God had been blessed, and the fruit of them appeared in a godly remnant of living souls, who were "the light" and "the salt" of the district, and in the respect for the means of grace entertained by the whole body of the people. My father often spoke of a certain glen, in which about thirty families resided, in each of which there was, at least, one who feared the Lord, and in each of which there was the true worship of God. The houses, in this blessed hamlet, were close together, around the sides of an amphitheatre, through which a small river had torn a course for itself. Standing on the edge of the declivity above this glen, on a quiet summer evening, one could hear the songs of praise from all these houses mingling together before they reached the listener's ear, whose heart must been hard indeed if they failed to melt it.

One, at least, did feel, while listening to the psalm-singing in these blessed homes, as if the place were none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. By one ruthless eviction, all the tenants of that glen were banished from their homes, and the most of them found no resting-place till they reached the backwoods of Canada.

Though it was at Eriboll he resided, and most frequently officiated, he was required to preach occasionally at Melness, in the parish of Tongue, and at Kinlochbervie, in the parish of Eddrachillis. The distances between these places are considerable, and as there were then no roads, it required no ordinary strength, and it tasked the best pedestrian, to overtake the necessary amount of work. Often, while in that charge, has he walked more than twenty miles to the meeting-house, over marsh and moor, and sometimes preached thereafter in clothes quite drenched with rain. But the Lord fitted him for such work, and his constitution came scaithless out of it. On one occasion, walking from Eriboll to

Rhiconich, he was accompanied by his beadle, and by his youngest brother, then a mere boy. They had not proceeded far when a snow-storm came on, and his little brother became quite exhausted. Raising him in his arms, my father carried him, and not only kept up with the beadle, but left him behind. The interval between him and the beadle was increasing so fast, that he at last waited till he came up, when he found him so wearied that he was compelled to relieve him of the portmanteau which he carried, and to strap it on his own back.

Those who were waiting his arrival at the journey's end, were not a little surprised to see him coming with the bag on his back, and the boy in his arms, and dragging the beadle by the hand.

Major Mackay then resided at Eriboll.

Faithful in the service of his earthly sovereign, he was, at the same time, "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It was a rare sight to see him rise on a Communion Friday, in his regimentals, to "speak to the question." A gentleman, a soldier, a Highlander, and a Christian at once, it was no wonder that he was loved and respected, and this might be seen in the eager attention of the people when he rose to address them.

For his daughter, Mrs. Scobie of Keoldale, my father always cherished the highest esteem and affection. He corresponded with her during the whole of his life, and his letters to her indicate the warmest Christian friendship. She was generally regarded as the model of a Christian Highland gentlewoman.

Her intellect was of a high order. Her appearance and bearing were such as would befit one of the highest stations in society. Many had proved her hospitality, and all of them found her heart fraught with kindness, and her pleasant home with comforts.

The poor found her charity always fervent, and her hand always full. But beyond all these in price, were her devotion to the fear of the Lord, and her fervent affection for His servants and people.

With Mr Mackay, of Hope, my father was very intimate. He was a man eminent for godliness. The following anecdote, connected with his last days, is given on authority that may not be questioned. My father was to preach on a certain day, in a place not far from his house. Mr Mackay, though very ill, would allow none of the family or domestics to remain with him, insisting on all in the house going to hear sermon.

On their return, some one remarked to him that it was a precious sermon they had heard that day. "Well my soul knows that," he said, "for, though lying here, my mind was following the preacher's, as he was engaged in his work," and, to their utter astonishment, he mentioned the text and repeated much more of the sermon than could those who actually heard it. This story, seemingly so incredible, is perfectly true, and furnishes a most remarkable instance of the mysterious fellowship of the saints. The godly Donald Macpherson was still alive, when my father was in Eriboll, of whom he has often said, that, of all the Christians he had ever known, he was the man who livest nearest to the Lord. Many an hour of sweet profitable converse have they spent together. They have been known to retire to a lonely hillside, and there to spend, in prayer and conversation, a long summer day. It was exceedingly sweet to my father to recall the memories of this eminent saint. He was, in some respects,

more like a seer of the days of old, than the ordinary Christian of the present time. His nearness to God in prayer was remarkable. Seldom, did he specially carry one's case before the throne, without its being so laid open to him, that there was scarce a thought or feeling of the party prayed for, hidden from him by the Lord. Remarkable instances of this might be multiplied.

The well known Robert Macleod, was Donald Macpherson's devoted disciple. In whatever way Robert was at first awakened, it was through Donald's blessed instruction he was established in "the truth as it is in Jesus," and never was a soul more tenderly and wisely nursed, than that of this interesting inquirer. Ardent and honest, he, in his outset, needed a judicious friend; and in Donald Macpherson he found one, who could understand all his peculiarities, and who carried his case so closely under the light from the mercy-seat, that few of his fears and sorrows were hidden from him. No wonder though he venerated this man of God. The story of his first prayer, in Donald's family, has been often told. To Robert's bewilderment, his host abruptly asked him to pray at family worship, during a visit which he paid him. He dared not refuse; so, turning on his knees, and addressing his Creator, he said, "Thou knowest that though I have bent my knees to pray to Thee, I am much more under the fear of Donald Macpherson, than under the fear of Thyself." Donald allowed him to proceed no farther, but, tapping him on the shoulder, said, "that will do, Robert; you have honestly begun and you will honourably end," and then he himself concluded the service. Poor Robert's first attempt was not, he himself thought, very encouraging, and he was expressing to his friend his fear that he never could be of any use, in bearing a public testimony for the truth." Yes, Robert," his friend soothingly said, "the Lord will open your mouth, to speak the praises of free grace, and, as a sign of this, you will be called thrice to speak, the very first day you are called to speak in public." Soon thereafter, Robert heard that the communion was to be dispensed in Lochbroom, and that Mr Lachlan was expected to be there. He went on the appointed week, but did not reach the place of meeting at Lochbroom, till after the commencement of the service on Friday. He had not arrived, when Mr Lachlan was opening the question, and yet, strange to say, the minister declared, that he expected a recruit to the ranks of the speakers, that day, from whatever quarter he might come. Robert, just then, made his appearance, and was not long seated, when he was called to "speak to the question." He did not refuse to rise, but was so embarrassed as to be able to utter only a few hurried words. Towards the close of the service, and after many others had spoken, Mr Lachlan called Robert again, and said to him, "as you were taken by surprise before, you could not be expected to say much, but rise again, and the liberty formerly denied, will be given you." Robert rose, and delivered a most affecting address, which so delighted the minister, that he called him to conclude the service with prayer. This was Robert's first public appearance, and he was called thrice to speak; and thus, the sign was given to him, which Donald Macpherson had led him to expect.

A remarkable instance, of Robert's warm love to the brethren, and of his nearness to God in prayer, has been often repeated, and is undoubtedly true. The case of the godly John Grant was pressed closely on his spirit, along with an impression of his being in temporal want. He was strongly moved to plead with God for "daily bread," for His child, and so constantly was he thinking of him for three days, that at midday of the fourth, he resolved to set out for John's house, and he gave himself little rest till he reached it. Full of the impression that stirred him from home, he arrived at the house, and entering

it, went at once to the place where the meal-chest used to be, and, to his astonishment, found it nearly full.

“This is a strange way, Robert, of coming into a friend's house,” John said, as he advanced to salute him,” were you afraid I had no food to give you, if you should remain with me to-night?” “No,” was Robert's answer, “but that meal-chest gave me no small trouble, for the last few days; but if I had known it was so far from being empty, as I find it is, you had not seen me here to-day.” “When did you begin to think of it?” John inquired. Robert mentioned the day and the hour when his anxiety about his friend began. “Well, Robert,” John said, “the meal-chest was then as empty as it could be; but how long were you praying that it might be filled?” “For three days and a half, I could scarcely think of any thing else,” Robert answered. “O what a pity,” his friend said, “you did not complete the prayers of the fourth day; for on the first, I got a boll of meal, another on the second, and a third on the day following, but, on the fourth day, only half a boll arrived, but now you are come yourself, and I count you better than them all.” Then, rejoicing in each other's love, and in the love of their Father in heaven, who heareth the cry of the needy, they warmly embraced each other.

A still more remarkable person then resided, within the bounds of the Eriboll Mission, —Miss Margaret M'Diarmid, afterwards Mrs. Mackay.

She was a native of Argyleshire, and came to reside in Sutherland along with a brother. During his lifetime, she was known only as a giddy girl, full of fun, and with a way of doing things quite unlike that of all around her. It was her brother's death that was the means of fixing her attention on eternal things. He had been deer-stalking on a winter day, when the lakes were frozen over. Anxious to be at a certain point, before the herd of deer, he ventured on a frozen lake, that lay between him and his goal. He had not gone far, when the ice gave way, and he sunk in a moment, and was drowned. The shock to his sister was appalling, but the season of her anguish was the Lord's set “time of love.” Her soul's state and danger soon drew her mind from the affliction of her brother's death; and she was the subject of a searching work of conviction, when my father came to Eriboll.

Under his preaching, she was led to the foundation laid in Zion, and her new life began, in a flush of fervent love, that seemed to know no waning till her dying day. She was one among a thousand. Her brilliant wit, her exuberant spirits, her intense originality of thought and speech and manner, her great faith, and her fervent love, formed a combination, but rarely found.

During the summer of each year, she was accustomed, for a long time, to come to Ross-shire, in order to be present on communion seasons, wherever she was sure of hearing the gospel, and of meeting the people of the Lord. In all those places, her presence was like sunshine, and many a fainting spirit was cheered by her affectionate counsels. Her greatest enjoyment was to meet with anxious inquirers, and many such have cause to remember for ever, the wisdom and tenderness of Mrs. Mackay's advices.

Her visits sometimes extended to Edinburgh and Glasgow. On one occasion, she abruptly announced to her husband, her intention of starting for the south.

Her purse was, at the time, almost empty, and her husband could not replenish it; and she was also in a very delicate state of health. All this her husband was careful to bring before her, with a view to

dissuading her from attempting the journey she proposed. But, assured that the Lord had called her to go, she would not look at the "lion in the way," and met every reference to her empty purse by saying, "the children ought not to provide for the fathers, but the fathers for the children, and it is not the Father in heaven who will fail to do so." In faith she started, and not a mile had she walked, when a gig drew up beside her, and the gentleman who drove it, kindly asked her to take a seat. Thanking him in her own warm way, she sprang into the gig, and was carried comfortably all the way to the Manse of Killearnan. But it was the smallest part of her journey to Edinburgh, that was passed, on reaching Killearnan, and she could not calculate on travelling over the rest of it with an empty purse. Her faith however failed not, and "the Lord will provide," was her answer, to every fear that arose in her heart, and to the anxieties expressed to her by others. Hearing that the sacrament of the Supper was to be dispensed at Kirkhill, on the following week, she resolved to attend it, and to postpone her visit to the south, till after it was over. She went, and on Monday, a gentleman made up to her, after the close of the service, who handed to her a sum of money, at the request of a lady, who had been moved to offer her the gift. Mrs. Mackay gratefully accepted it; but being accompanied on her way back to Killearnan, by a group of worthies, all of whom she knew to be poor, she divided all the money among them, assured that it was for them she received it, and that provision for her journey, would be sent by some other hand.

Her expectation was realised, a sum fully sufficient was given to her, and she started on her journey to the south.

Travelling by the stage-coach, she was accompanied by several strangers, who were quite struck with her manner, and afterwards fascinated by her conversation.

One of them venturing to ask whence she had come, her beautiful and striking answer was, "I am come from Cape Wrath, and I am bound for the Cape of Good Hope. "On one account alone, were they disposed to quarrel with her. At that time there was a change of drivers at each stage, and at every halt, "remember the coachman," was called out at the window. Mrs. Mackay invariably gave a silver coin and a good advice to each of the drivers. Her companions, not liking to be out-done by their strange fellow-passenger, and liking still less to part so freely with their money, at last remonstrated. "We cannot afford to give silver always," one of them said, "and we cannot keep pace with you in liberality." "The King's daughter must travel as becomes her rank," she said, as she again handed the silver coin, and spoke the golden counsel to the driver. Before they parted, her companions were persuaded she was the cleverest, and the pleasantest, but the strangest, person they had ever met. Many a refreshing visit she paid to all the Lord's people whom she could reach before she returned home; and when she did, it was with more strength in her frame, and more money in her purse, than when she left it. Her husband, who had so strongly dissuaded her before, could only wonder now and give thanks to the Lord, for His gracious care of her by the way. Of him she used to say, "he was just made for me by the Lord's own hand; the grace he had not, at first, has now been given him, and he will allow me to wander for bread to my soul, wherever I can find it." She was usually called "the woman of great faith." "The woman of great faith!" a minister once exclaimed, on being introduced to her for the first time. "No, no," she quickly said; "but the woman of small faith in the great God."

In repartee few could excel her, or tried to get the advantage over her, without being foiled in the attempt. On one occasion, she met with Mr Stewart of Cromarty, and few ever more dexterously poised a lance, or were more skilful of fence than he. He had heard of Mrs. Mackay, and resolved to draw her out. His congenial spirit soon evoked all her wit. Getting the advantage over him, Mr S. threw himself on the sofa, exhausted by the excitement of the rencontre, and a little chafed under a sense of defeat. A brother minister wished him to sit up, and to renew the conversation which had been so delighting. "Oh! let him alone," Mrs. M. said, patting him on the head, "every beast, you know, must be after his kind;" shewing how well she had marked his originality, and how skilfully she could feather the arrow of rebuke with a compliment.

Dr. Mackenzie, when minister of Clyne, used, as often as he could, to bring his godly uncle to preach, on a week day, in his church. He invited on such occasions, all the ministers of the presbytery to be his guests at the manse. Mrs. Mackay was present on one of these days, and being seated in the drawingroom, after the service in church was over, the minister of Tongue came in. Rushing up to him, in her own eager way, "glad I am to see, and still more glad to hear you," she said. "Oh, you could not have been glad in hearing me to day," Mr M'K. said, with a sigh, "for I had but little to say, and even that little I could only speak in bonds." "Hush, man," was her quick reply,

"A little that a just man hath,
Is more and better far,
Than is the wealth of many such
As lewd and wicked are,"

and as she repeated the last two lines she waved her hand across the group of moderates who were seated beside her.

Her faith, always remarkable, triumphed in a season of affliction. A beloved son was once drowned, before her eyes, quite near the shore, in front of her house. The body was soon found, and the mother, supporting the head of the corpse as they carried it to the house, was singing with a loud voice the praises of the Lord. She had learned, as few Christians have ever done, to show the dark side of her case, only to the Lord.

However low her hope might be, and however harrowed her feelings, she would allow none to see a tear in her eye, or to hear a groan from her heart, except those with whom her secret was safe, and who would not be discouraged by her distress.

Many were thus led to think, that her sky was always without a cloud. It was far otherwise, under God's eye; but the Christless never saw in her what would prejudice them against a life of godliness, and the godly were always encouraged by her ever-radiant cheerfulness.

Till her last illness her spirits had never sunk, nor had her mind lost aught of its activity and clearness. She died in April 1841. Even while lying on her death-bed, her cheerfulness did not forsake her, and she was always ready to give a word of advice or encouragement to all who approached her. Her husband had heard, a few days after it occurred, of my father's death, and determined not to

communicate the tidings to his dying wife, as she was so soon to know it, by meeting his spirit in the region of the blessed.

With this resolution he entered her room, and sat gloomily down on a seat by the fire. "I know what ails you," his wife said to him, soon after he was seated, "you have heard of Mr Kennedy's death; I knew of it before. He died," she added, "on Sabbath evening, and," mentioning a certain day, "before then, I will join him in the Father's house." And so it was. So knit together, and so near to God, were the spirits of both, that less than the death of either would not be hidden from the other.

The Sacrament of the Supper was dispensed at Kinlochbervie, while he was missionary in the district. The only minister present with him on that occasion was the parish clergyman. The less that would be given him to do, the better pleased would he himself and all others be, and so the whole burden of the service was left upon the missionary. The only available and comfortable room, near to the place of meeting, was occupied by the ministers. A considerable number of respectable persons had gathered, among whom were Major Mackay of Eriboll, Mr Mackay of Hope, and several others. In a corner of "the meeting-house," there was a square seat into which heather had been packed, and there, covered with their cloaks, the Major and some others slept. The minister's housekeeper having to furnish the gentry with a light, as they retired to their sleeping place, failed to find a candlestick, and, being anxious to save appearances, was in no small ferment. In great perturbation, she came to her master to tell him that the only candlestick she could set before Major Mackay was "a peat with a hole in it." "There was no better candlestick in the stable at Bethlehem," was his only reply to her statement of grievances. He knew well that those about whose comfort Abigail was so anxious, were quite content with whatever provision was made for them. A great crowd of people had gathered, and the parcels of provisions which they carried with them were stored behind a screen, formed of a sail hanging from one of the rafters of the meeting-house. Each one came, at stated times, for his parcel, that he might eat his crust beside a stream on the hill-side. In barns they found accommodation during the night. But the Lord was in the midst of them, and many felt His saving power and saw His glory during that communion season.

On Monday, in particular, so much of the Lord's presence was enjoyed by His people, that, to many of them, it was the happiest day of their life. When the time for parting came, none had courage to say "farewell" to the minister. They lingered around him, and followed him to the house; and, before they separated, he and they sat down together, to a refreshment in the open air. That over, they walked together towards an eminence, over which the people had to pass. On reaching the summit, they stood around the minister as he prayed, and commended them to the care of the Good Shepherd of Israel. He then said to them, as tears ran down his cheeks, "This is pleasant, my dear friends, but it must end; we need not expect unbroken communion, either with each other or with the Lord, till we all reach in safety our home in heaven ;" and, without trusting himself to bid them farewell, he turned away from them, and they, each one weeping as he went, took their respective journeys to their homes.

In 1806, he was called to be assistant to Mr Wm. Mackenzie. minister of Assynt.

He had been enabled to decide unhesitatingly, and at once, that it was his duty to accept the offered appointment. What his reasons for this decision were, and how the Lord had revealed His mind to him, there are now no means of ascertaining. But the issue proved that the Lord had indeed taken him by the hand to guide him. No sooner did the people become aware of his intention to remove from Eriboll, than grief and consternation spread over the district. Donald Macpherson was the only one who sympathised with him, being persuaded that the Lord was calling him away. To the rest, and even to the best of the people, it seemed very unlikely that the Lord, who had not ceased to countenance his labours among them, should take him from them in the very midst of his usefulness. For a time, they would listen to no argument on the subject; they wished to retain their minister; they could not see the Lord's hand in his removal, and, with tears and entreaties, they besought him to reconsider his decision, and still to remain among them. One after another would wait upon him; groups would be watching for him whenever he went abroad; each one whom he met was weeping at the sight of him; and the congregation always now parted in tears. All this was extremely painful to him, but could not move him from his purpose. He knew what the Lord would have him to do, and he was resolved, at any cost, to follow His leading. At last, prayer-meetings were held by the people, and they were brought to ask for direction "from on high;" and, ultimately, they came to a sober and resigned state of mind and feeling. Donald Macpherson's influence greatly contributed to this result. The night before his departure, a deputation waited on him, and intimated to him that they could no longer oppose his removal, as they believed it was of the Lord, although it was, on that account, more painful to their hearts, fearing, as they did, that by their abuse of the gospel they had sinned it away. All that they now could do, they said, was to cross, as often as they could, the hills between them and the scene of his future labours.

The state of feeling, thus indicated by the people, must have been gratifying to their minister, as it was creditable to themselves.

The actual parting had now come, and rarely has there been a more affecting scene than that through which he had to pass on the day of his departure from Eriboll. His servant, yet alive, remembers it most vividly. Strong men were bathed in tears, women in groups were wailing as he passed, and all watched to get the last look of him as he went out of sight. His servant, who followed him at some distance, hearing the sound of sobbing from behind a wall, went up to the place from which it issued, and found Mrs. Major Mackay and Mrs. Mackay, Skerra, seated there and weeping bitterly. Poor Barbara could not refrain from joining in the chorus of grief. One of the ladies, turning to her, said, "Little cause have you to weep this day; could we follow him, as you do, we would soon dry our tears." Their pity was reserved that day for those who remained in Eriboll.

Mr William Mackenzie, the minister of Assynt, was almost all a minister ought not to be, yet he continued to occupy his charge till his death. Always accustomed to regard his pastoral work as an unpleasant condition of his drawing his stipend, he reduced it to the smallest possible dimensions, and would not unfrequently be absent, without reason and without leave, for many weeks from his charge. This was the usual practice, in these days, of the moderate stipend-lifters of Sutherland. The visit of one of them to Ross-shire would be an affair of a month's length, at the least, and the people

never clamoured for his return. The beadle, who was also the parson's gillie, invariably accompanied the minister on these excursions.

In one case the beadle was also the piper of the district, and during his absence with the minister on one of his jaunts, a parishioner was asked when he expected the minister to return. "I don't know, and I don't care," was his reply; "if he had only left the piper, he might stop away as long as he pleased." During the latter part of his life, "Parson William" was much addicted to drink. This was known to the Presbytery, but could not easily be proved. The people were unwilling to complain, and to give evidence against him. The awe of his office was on them in spite of all the irregularity of his life, and as a man and a neighbour he was rather a favourite. Such of them as might have been expected to act differently, cherished the hope of his yet seeing the error of his ways; and while they enjoyed the privileges of the gospel, under the ministry of his assistant, they let "Parson William" alone.

There was the least possible intercourse between the parson and his assistant. Consulting him only when absolutely necessary, the assistant carried on the parochial work in his own way, and was generally not interfered with. The parish was extensive and populous, and the church inconveniently situated. It was necessary, therefore, to divide the parish into districts, each with its preaching station, where the minister was expected to officiate in course.

His work, in Assynt, was early blessed, and was made effectual for good during the whole of his ministry there. Very seldom has so much been done in so short a time in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of the body of Christ, as was done during the period of his labours in Assynt. There were then converted unto God many young men who, to old age, and in various districts of the Highlands to which they were scattered, bore fruit, to the praise of the Lord, and to the good of His Church. Assynt.

then became a nursery of Gaelic schoolmasters and catechists, who were afterwards transplanted through-out the north and the west, and were known as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord," wherever they were placed. Of those who were then "turned from darkness into light," many, both men and women, were eminent for godliness and usefulness; and there was a peculiarity of feeling and of sentiment about them all that made them marked as a class.

This was due to the deep impression their early training had left upon their minds.

To those days of power in Assynt were bound the sweetest memories of those who then enjoyed the presence of the Lord. Often in tears have they spoken of them afterwards, amidst the dreariness and trials of the way of the wilderness; and from many a broken heart, and in many an hour of sadness, has the remembrance of them wrung the cry, "Oh ! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon mine head." Amidst his happiness and success in his labours in Assynt he had to bear what, in some respects, was the greatest trial of his life. Among the young men who then began to make a profession of godliness was one, perhaps the most talented of them all. Norman Macleod, known before as a clever, irreverent, forward youth, began, all of a sudden, to join himself to the people of the Lord. Claiming to have been converted in a way, at least unusual, if not miraculous, he all at once started in the course of profession, at a stature and with a

courage that seemed never to have known a childhood at all. He began at once to prepare for the ministry.

But Norman's ambition to preach outgrew the slow process of the stated course of preparation, and, cutting short his college studies, he separated from the Church, and began to found a sect for himself. His power, as a speaker, was such that he could not fail to make an impression; and he succeeded, in Assynt and elsewhere, in drawing some of the people after him for a time. His influence over those whom he finally detached from a stated ministry was paramount, and he could carry them after him to almost any extreme. A few of the people in Assynt were drawn into permanent dissent, and but for the influence that was brought to bear in counteraction of his movement, the whole body of the people would have been quite severed from the Church. Some, even of the pious people, were decoyed by him for a season, who escaped from his influence thereafter; and the people remained, as a body, unbroken. The anxiety and disappointment of this trying season were peculiarly painful to my father, but the Lord was with him to encourage his heart and to strengthen his hands.

This discipline, though trying, was profitable. It kept him humble, when there was much to elate him; sharpened his discernment, and doubled his watchfulness, in his future dealings with professors; and gave him an opportunity of estimating the motives in which divisive courses usually spring.

It was while in Assynt his marriage took place, an event in which he saw at the time, and loved to trace thereafter, the working of the Lord's own hand. Disposed to love him with all the ardour of a first attachment, prepared to reverence, as her husband, him who had first espoused her to Christ, and with prudence, of which her whole subsequent life was an unvarying proof, his wife was truly "a good thing," of the Lord's own giving. His happiness in his marriage was sweetened by the assurance that he would not have to bear the pain of surviving his wife. This anticipation, which he declared at the time, seemed very unlikely to be verified during the years that succeeded, throughout which he continued in the vigour of unbroken health, while his partner often lay at the very gates of death. But "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and the pleasing anticipation by which the Lord sweetened the enjoyment of his wedded life was in due time realised.

CHAPTER III.

Killearnan—The State of the Parish before 1813—Mr Kennedy's Induction—His Father's Death—Anecdotes—The Old Church—Mr K.'s Usual Services—His Domestic Life—His Elders—His First Diet of Catechising—The Conversion of the Champion of Prelacy—The Pensioners, Alexander M'Donald and Alexander Macleod—Old M'Farquhar—Colin of the Peats—Sandy Dallas—David Munro—The Cutterman—Mary M'Rae.

THE parish of Killearnan is pleasantly situated, along the northern shore of the Beaully Frith. It derives its name, according to tradition, from the grave of 66 lernan, a Danish prince, who fell in battle on its confines, where Cairniernan still exists." It extends five miles along the shore, and stretches back, two miles to the north, till it reaches the brow of the Black Isle, which, because of its covering of furze, bears the Celtic name of Maolbuie.

Quite near to the shore stands Redcastle, which, owing to its traditional history, was so famous as to it was have covered the whole parish with its name. once a stronghold, and was the scene of some rather famous exploits, during the wars of the Stuarts, as well as in earlier times. Near it, Montrose is said to have been encamped, when tidings reached him of the death of Charles.

An old manuscript, in the hands of the minister who preceded my father, contained the following lines, said to have been written by Montrose, with the point of his sword, on receipt of the intelligence:

“Great, good, and just, could I but rate
My griefs, and thy so rigid fate,
I'd weep the world to such a strain,
As should it deluge o'er again.
But, since thy loud-tongued blood demands supplies,
More from Briareus' hands, than Argus' eyes,
I'll sing thy obsequies with trumpet sounds,
And write thy epitaph with blood and wounds.”

In former times, the whole parish was under the rule of the Mackenzies, and the people, being yet in a state of serfdom, followed their lairds wherever they chose to lead them. This will account for the strenuous opposition to the Whig ministers, which distinguished the parishioners of Killearnan, till the first half of the eighteenth century had passed.

Mr JOHN M'ARTHUR, the first Presbyterian minister after the Revolution, was settled in 1719; and he had but a sorry life, during his brief ministry at Killearnan.

He was succeeded, though perhaps not immediately, by Mr Donald Fraser, the father of Dr. Fraser, Kirkhill, who, about the year 1745, was translated to Ferintosh. He declared, before his removal, that he would not leave Killearnan if there was one man, woman, or child, in all the parish, who would ask him to remain. Besides these, and before 1758, two others, Messrs. Robertson and Williamson, were

ministers of the parish. In that year, Mr David Denoon was inducted. The state of the parish, when he became its minister, is thus described by his son, who succeeded him:— “The generality of the inhabitants were then ignorant in the extreme, and much disaffected towards our civil and ecclesiastical establishments. As a striking instance of this, the following circumstance is mentioned:— The late incumbent was settled minister of this parish in 1758; he, eight months thereafter, publicly intimated after sermon, his intention of catechising the inhabitants of a particular district, on the following Tuesday; but, on going to the house, which he had fixed on as the place of meeting, not above three miles from the church, he found a convention of only a few old women. Having never before seen their minister, they appeared much agitated, telling him, however, that he might have saved himself the trouble of coming to their town, as they had no whisky. They retired, one by one, and alarmed the neighbourhood, by saying, that a strange exciseman had just come to such a house. Since that period,” he adds, “the change is striking; the assiduity of the minister, in the discharge of his parochial duties, was attended with much success. The house of God is now attended with regularity and devotion; they have learned, not indeed the cheerless refinements of modern philosophy, but, in the perusal of the Gospel of peace, to find a healing balm to soothe and comfort them under the pressure of all the calamities of life.” The good work, begun under the ministry of the elder Mr Denoon, continued to make progress under that of his son. The latter died in 1806.

At the time of my father's induction, there were upwards of 300 Episcopalians in the parish, in whom were found, surviving all the changes that had transformed the whole country around them, much of the ignorance of Scotland's old heathenism, much of the superstition of its Popery, and much of the disaffection of its Jacobitism. Apart from these, the people were now regular, in their attendance on the means of grace, in the parish church, neighbourlike in their habits, and with a sprinkling, among them, of the Lord's “peculiar people.” For nearly seven years, before my father's settlement, the parish had been vacant, owing to a dispute as to the right of its patronage, between the Crown and the representative of the Cromarty family. In coming to Killearnan at first, he looked forward to the prospect of being minister of Lochbroom, the scene of his first stated labours, as a preacher; but instead of a presentation to that parish, he obtained and accepted a gift of the living at Killearnan. After labouring, as an ordained missionary, in the parish, for nearly a year, receiving, for his services, a small moiety of the vacant stipend, his induction took place in 1813.

During the same year, his father's death took place; an event which, owing to the double tie that bound them, he could not but have deeply felt. Sweet to both, had been the occasional visits which, since he had begun to preach, he paid to his father; and they were as profitable as they were pleasant. On these occasions, he always preached in his native parish.

Once, while preaching there, on a Sabbath, he said, “There is one, in a very marked and emphatic way, now present, who, before coming into the meeting, was engaged in bargaining about his cattle, regardless alike of the day, and of the eye, of the Lord. Thou knowest that I speak the truth, and listen, while I declare to thee, that if the Lord ever hath mercy on thy soul, thou wilt yet be reduced to seek, as alms, thy daily bread.” The confidence with which this was said, was soon and sorely tried; and he passed a sleepless night, under the fear that he had spoken unadvisedly.

At breakfast, next morning, in his father's house, several neighbouring farmers were present, one of whom said to him, as they sat at table, "How did you know that I was selling my heifers yesterday to the drover?" "Did you do so?" my father quietly asked him. "I can't deny it," was the farmer's answer. Directing on him one of his searching glances, the minister said, "Remember the warning that was given you, for you will lose, either your soul, or your substance." "But will you not tell me how you knew it?" the farmer asked. The only reply to this was, in the words of Scripture, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Some of those who heard the warning given to him, were often applied to for alms by that farmer, during the latter years of his life.

On another occasion, in the same place, while warning sinners of their danger in a Christless state, he suddenly paused, and in a subdued and solemn tone, said, "There is a sinner in this place, very ripe for destruction, who shall this night be suddenly summoned to a judgment-seat." Next morning, the neighbours observed flames issuing from a hut, not far from the "meeting house," which was occupied by a woman, notorious for immorality, and in which, when they were able to enter, they found but the charred bones of its miserable tenant.

These are indubitable facts; if not, they were not recorded here; though perhaps some may sneer as they read them, and others may shake their wise heads over the supposed imprudence of stating them. A little careful thinking on the subject, might help one to see, that, by means of the written word, under the guiding hand of His Spirit, the Lord may give such intimations of His will in a way very different from the direct inspiration of prophecy, and that ends are served, by these communications of His mind, that make it far from improbable, the Lord may have given them for thereby His servants are encouraged, their hands are strengthened in their work, and proof is pressed on the consciences of the ungodly, that the true Israel of God are a "people near unto Him." And it is to simple and uneducated people, unable to appreciate the standing evidences of the gospel, we might expect the Lord to give such tokens of His presence with those who preach it. The improbability of such things, to the minds of some, is owing to their own utter estrangement from the Lord.

This is not the only secret, connected with a life of godliness, which is hidden from them. They know not yet some secrets in that life of which it is death to be ignorant. It is not, to its occasional accessories merely, that they are strangers, but to its very essentials, and yet who so ready as they, to pass judgment on every one of its mysteries. It is a strange fact, that the only subject of which one can know absolutely nothing, without special teaching from on high, is, of all others, the one, on which the most benighted of all "the children of darkness," thinks himself qualified to pronounce. The man who would shrink from directing the blacksmith in shoeing his horse, unless he had studied and practised his trade, will, before one lesson has been given him by the Lord, pass judgment off-hand, with all the airs of an adept, on the hidden life of the people, who alone have "the secret of the Lord." There are some, even of the godly, who are strangers to any such intimations of the will of their Father; but, the longer they live, the less disposed will they be, to measure, by their own experience, the attainments of others of their brethren.

The church of Killearnan, till within two years of my father's death, was almost as bad as it could be. Built in the form of a cross, with the pulpit at one of the angles, its barn-like roof unceiled, its windows

broken, its doors all crazy, its seats ill-arranged, and pervaded by a dim uncertain light, it was a dismal dingy looking place within. But all applications for a new church, or for a sufficient repair of the old, were refused by the heritors. Tradesmen were found to declare, that the church was perfectly safe, and, whether it was comfortable or not, the heritors did not care, as they never sat in it themselves. Strange to say, the heritor, who chiefly opposed the application for a new church, lost soon after, by fire, much more than his share of the expense of erecting it; the carpenter, who declared the old church to be "good and sufficient," was killed, while going to purchase the wood, required for the trifling repair that was granted; and the lawyer, who represented the heritors at the presbytery, when the application for a new church was refused, was unable thereafter to transact any business.

These are facts, and no comment on them is to be added; but there were some who regarded them as the echo from providence, of the voice that proclaimeth, "touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." His first sermon, as minister of Killearnan, was on the text — "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and not more surely was this the text of his first sermon, than it was the rule of all his ministry there. The plan which he had formed, of conducting his work, and the measure of regular service which he had allotted to himself, at the outset, he was enabled without intermission, to follow and to fill up, to the very last week of his life. He preached thrice every Sabbath, held a fortnightly meeting on Monday, and delivered a monthly lecture on Thursday. He catechised his people every year, and visited the sick, as occasion required, or as the Lord might direct him. On Sabbath, the church was almost invariably overcrowded; the Monday meetings were well attended; and the church would be nearly full on the Thursday of the lecture, although the service was during the day, and in a busy country parish. These monthly lectures were specially addressed to the people of God, and often were they signally blessed. These days were known to be feasting times to the heritage of the Lord, and from great distances, were they accustomed to gather, to share in the provision of Zion, There were also, invariably, sermons preached on Christmas, and on New Year's Day, both these being idle days in the parish; and seldom, if ever, did either of them pass, without "a brand" being "plucked from the fire," or one of the Lord's people receiving special help and comfort, in the old church of Killearnan.

During all his ministry at Killearnan, he was accustomed to preach, on communion occasions, in all the surrounding parishes to which he had access. His journeys often extended to the western shore of the county, to Sutherlandshire in the north, and to Badenoch in the south. His soul never wearied of his Master's work, and his health was never impaired by all these journeyings and preachings. "I wish I could enjoy preaching as you do," a brother minister once said to him; "to me it is comparatively a toil." "No wonder," he replied, "though I should enjoy it, for if ever I had foretastes of heaven's own joy on the earth, it was while preaching Christ crucified to sinners;" "and never," he said, on another occasion, "did I truly preach the Gospel but while I felt that I myself was the greatest sinner in the congregation." The mingled labours and joys of these days are now for ever gone by, but the fruit of these labours shall for ever endure, and the fulness of pleasure, of which these joys were a foretaste, is his, in the home of the blessed.

Of his domestic life but little must be written. The record of much that is pleasant to his son to remember, would be interesting to but few besides. Both outwardly and spiritually, his was a life of unusual happiness. Death had never visited his family till sent to summon himself to his home. The partner of his temporal lot was one who, by her watchfulness and wisdom, preserved him from many an annoyance, that might have fretted his spirit and interfered with his work. His home life was, indeed, a holy life.

Few ever spent more time in secret prayer, or more fully evinced that, on communion with the Lord, their happiness mainly depended. In anything connected with his temporal lot, beyond its bearing on his work, and on the welfare of his family, he took no interest whatever. Of all the animals about the manse, his favourite pony, that bore him on his Gospel errands, was the only one he could recognise as his own.

In the eldership in Killlearnan during the first years of his ministry there were no "men of mark." There were a few simple-minded praying men, who could have no commanding influence over the people, though their lives did not weaken the little which they had. John Dingwall, for many years his precentor, and one of his elders, was a simple, loving being, living peaceably with all men, and walking humbly with his God. In his dotage, which extended over the last few years of his life, he read and prayed and sang, and sang and prayed and read, all day long. Every day was then a Sabbath to John, and every week a communion season. I have heard him ask a blessing five or six times before he would begin his dinner.

So soon as he was reminded of his dinner being before him, he at once began to ask a blessing, forgetting that he had done so before, until, at last, it became very doubtful whether the dinner would be eaten at all.

Simon Bisset was, naturally, a very different character. As transparently honest as John, he was far from being so amiable, and had a much more vigorous intellect. Uncompromising in his opposition to all that he did not approve, he was quite as ready to confess his error when convinced that he was wrong.

His minister had been the first to introduce a yearly "private communion" — so called because it was specially intended for the benefit of his own congregation alone, and because, being held in winter, not many strangers could be present. Simon was quite opposed to the innovation, because it appeared to him to preclude all strangers from the privileges of the feast, and he declared that he would take nothing to do with the work. He kept his resolution till the Sabbath, but the action sermon of that day quite overcame him, and, no sooner were his services required, for keeping an open passage to the table of the Lord, than he rose to take his place with tears in his eyes. The sermon was on the character of "the good Shepherd." A boy from Contin, just entering on his teens, was standing in the aisle during the former part of the service, his eyes fixed on the preacher, and an expression of earnestness, and at last of delight, on his face.

Simon found him in his way as he went to clear out the passage for communicants, and was about to remove the boy, when the minister observed him.

"Leave him, Simon," he said, "that may be one of the good Shepherd's lambs." The elder was in such a softened loving mood, that, in presence of all the congregation, he threw his arms around the child, and gently placed him on a seat. That interesting boy gave the brightest evidence afterwards of his being a lamb of the flock. He had given his heart that day to the Lord, was carried in the arms of the good Shepherd very swiftly over the wilderness way, and, within a year, he was added to the flock that is led by "the Lamb" to the "fountains of living water" above. The Sabbath service over, honest Simon could not rest till he had confessed his fault to the minister. Coming to the manse, he requested an interview, during which he confessed, with tears, how greatly he had erred in opposing the private communion, acknowledged how his soul had been feasted during the day, and declared his resolution never to oppose what the Lord had so manifestly blessed.

There were others in the eldership whose memories are sweet to those who knew them, but of whom nothing can be written that would be interesting to strangers, besides what may be recorded of every one who walks in the fear of the Lord.

Soon after his admission, he began to catechise in the east end of the parish, in a district which, at that time, was a colony of Episcopalians. The Episcopal clergyman himself, either not deigning, or fearing to be present, sent his most trusty man to oppose the parish minister in the event of his making any attack on the doctrines or on the practices of his Church.

The champion of prelacy was present all the time, and had to listen to many things that were far from being pleasant, but he had not the courage to cause any interruption of the service. But he became bold, like many a warrior before him, just when the field day had passed, and, surcharged with revenge, he waited about the door till the minister came out. Getting tongue at last, he began to abuse, in no measured terms, the minister and his doctrine. Listening quietly for a little, and then fixing one of his piercing looks on the man, the minister spoke a word to his conscience, as it was given him at the time, mounted his horse, and was gone. What was spoken to his conscience had reached and had pierced it; and but few days had passed, when the champion of prelacy came to the manse, asking, "What must I do to be saved?" The wound was deepened, till the Lord's hand bound it; and from among the most unpromising of his flock the Lord thus raised up, as a witness for the truth, the most unpromising individual of them all.

Inroads continued to be made on the colony of Episcopalians till, some won by the power of grace, and others drawn by the current of example, only a very few old people were to be found in the parish, at the period of my father's death, who crossed the threshold of the Episcopal Chapel.

After the peace of 1815, soldiers, who had been engaged in the Peninsular war, returned, as pensioners, to their native parishes. In general, they were no acquisition. Judging of them as they were on their return, Killearnan's share of the pensioners formed no exception to the rule. But some of them had been preserved amidst all the dangers of campaigns and battles, and brought to Killearnan, that the Lord, in his "time of love," might meet with them there.

Alexander Macdonald, "a Waterloo man," came to reside in a village quite close to the church. Addicted to drink, and pestered by a fretful wife, the poor pensioner led but a miserable life. His home was often the scene of unseemly squabbles. This state of matters continued for some time after his

return from the Continent. But, at last, the day of his salvation did come. While in church, on an ordinary Sabbath, the Lord applied the doctrine of the sermon with power to his soul. He was quietly, but effectually, drawn unto Christ by the cords of His love; and he, who entered church that day in all the indifference of a hardened transgressor, left it rejoicing in the Lord.

This was a case in which we might have expected a more protracted and painful preliminary work; but the Lord is sovereign, and giveth no account of His ways. The pensioner was soon missed by his former companions. Neighbours observed that a calm had settled on his once restless home. He began to attend the prayer and the fellowship meetings, and many were wondering what had befallen the pensioner, They had not heard of any process of conviction of which he had been the subject; they only knew that he was not now what he used to be before. It was with no small wonder, then, that they saw him rise, within a few months after this change, to propose a question at the fellowship meeting.

Still greater became their surprise when, instead of instantly refusing, the minister most gladly accepted it, expressing, at the same time, his assurance that it was proposed under the guidance of the Lord. The pensioner had not then spoken to the minister in private, and this being known by the people, their astonishment was all the greater, because of his manner of receiving the question. But the pensioner's case had been on the minister's heart, and the Lord had led him to expect that he would yet be a witness for Himself, and had prepared him to receive him as such. That day's meeting was countenanced by the Lord, and was an occasion of gladness to minister and people.

The pensioner's life, from that day forth, was a striking evidence of the power of grace. A more temperate man there was not in all the parish. His house was a very model of cleanliness and neatness, within and without. His garden was always the neatest, the earliest, and the most productive. His wife continued the impersonation of fretfulness and discontent she ever was before, but never did she draw an angry retort from her husband. Remembering his former unkindness, there was no self-denial he would not practise, no drudgery he would not submit to, no expense he would spare, to add to the comfort of his wife. Never was wife more tenderly treated than she now was, and though an approving smile, or a grateful word, would never be given in exchange for his kindness, the pensioner never wearied in his tender attention to her wants. His was, indeed, the path of the just, and it shone "more and more unto the perfect day." His Christian course was not long, but it was bright. He had his burden, but he found it light; he had his conflict, but it was short; and, leaving behind him the fragrant memory of the righteous, he passed into his rest in heaven.

At a later period, Alexander Macleod returned to the parish. He had been in the grenadier company of his regiment, and a fine looking soldier he must have been. Above six feet in height, he carried himself so erectly, since the days of his drilling, that, when he had on the long cloak which he usually wore, he seemed gigantic in stature. He is "the long pensioner" in the memories of my boyhood, and that was the name by which he was known in the parish. He had been wounded severely during a siege, and left among the dead, when the wounded were carried to the hospital. It was when they came to bury the dead they discovered that Macleod was still breathing.

When he was brought to the hospital, his case seemed so hopeless that the surgeons would bestow no attention on his wound, till more promising cases had been treated. At last he was examined, his wound was dressed, and he gradually recovered, till able to avail himself of his discharge, and to return to his native land. On the first occasion on which he called to procure the attestation of his schedule, in order to the payment of his pension, he walked up proudly to the front door of the manse, and demanded, in a most imperious tone, an audience of the minister. Being admitted to the parlour, he soon began his stories of the war, and so shocked the minister by the profusion of oaths which he mixed up with his narrative, that, after rebuking him, he was compelled to leave the room. A year had not passed when one day "the long pensioner" was seen walking with a hesitating step towards the back-door of the manse, a greater contrast to his former self than he could be to almost any other.

On entering, he anxiously asked the servant if the minister was at home. He was evidently in deep distress; a tremour shook his whole frame, and tears were falling fast from his eyes.

His heart had been pierced by the arrow of conviction on the previous Sabbath, and he had now come, in deep agony of spirit, seeking an answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" His convictions of sin were deep, but in the Lord's good time, "the oil of joy" was given him "for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." For a few years only did he live thereafter.

He never recovered from the effects of his wound, but as his bodily vigour was yielding before the progress of disease, his soul was advancing in the knowledge of the truth. It was refreshing to those who delighted in the triumphs of grace, to see that noble-looking man, now a broken-hearted sinner, listening to the gospel in tears. Known and trusted as a sincere follower of the Lamb, by all the people of God in the parish, he continued to advance in knowledge and in holiness to the end of his life. One morning, while engaged in prayer, during family worship, he suddenly stopped, laid himself down on the floor, and, without a movement thereafter, he expired.

It is not often that, after three score years and ten, a sinner is turned "from darkness unto light," and whenever this is done the riches, power, and sovereignty of grace are gloriously displayed. On this account, other interesting cases of conversion are passed over, to make room for a sample of converts from among the aged.

Alexander M'Farquhar remembered '45 quite distinctly. He had seen Prince Charlie, and had heard the guns on the day of Culloden. Often did he tell, to wondering groups of listeners, his stories of those days, and filling up, from his imagination, the blanks in his memory, marvellous, indeed, were his tales of Charles and his exploits. The Prince, of M'Farquhar's tales, was a Goliath in height; his horse could be mounted by ordinary men only by means of a ladder; and never was Eastern king, glittering all over with gold and jewels, one half so splendid in his attire as he, according to M'Farquhar's description, who commanded the clans at Culloden. Only as a retailer of fabulous stories of the rebellion, and as a hardened, ignorant, worldly man, was he known, till he had passed fourscore years and ten. But then, the Lord broke down the strong entrenchments of the kingdom of darkness in that hardened sinner's soul, by the almighty power of His Spirit, and won him, as a child is won, by the beauty and the love of

Christ. He had passed into his dotage then, but he had not gone beyond the efficacy of the Lord's own teaching. It was wonderful to hear that man, who had lived for ninety years "without God in the world," now describing, with a child's simplicity, his first impressions of the Saviour's love. It was through the preaching of the gospel, under which he had sat so long, a listless hearer, that the light first broke in on his long-benighted soul, and he first "tasted that the Lord is gracious." He lived, thereafter, wondering at the change he felt, and at the grace that produced it, till he went in to join the choir, who sing the praises of redeeming love in heaven. His new life was, indeed, a short one, but a light shone upon it, in which all around him saw that he was departing "from hell beneath." Still older, was "Colin of the peats," as the schoolboys called him, before the light of truth dawned on his darkened soul. One of my earliest memories is the visit of old Colin to the school, with his little cart of peats. We then thought him to be a century old, and his pony's age was reckoned at almost half its owner's. Up to his hundredth year, he continued a dark earthworm, without a thought about his soul, or one care about its safety. His mind, never vigorous, was then in the weakness of a second childhood; and if there was one on earth that seemed quite beyond the reach of grace, it was old "Colin of the peats." Able yet to walk, he was regularly in church. After a Sabbath, on which he was observed to have a wakeful, earnest expression on his deeply furrowed face, he came to his minister. "I saw a most beautiful one last Sabbath," the old man said, as he sat down in the study. "Where did you see him?" he was asked. "In the sermon," was Colin's answer. "What was his appearance, Colin?" "Oh, he was fairer than the sons of men; I can't tell what he was like, for he was altogether lovely." His minister then asked, "What effect had the sight of Him on your heart?" "Oh, he quite took my heart from me," was Colin's simple and touching answer. This was all that he, then in his dotage, could tell about the change through which he passed. But, thereafter, old Colin thought and spoke of Christ, of whom he had never thought nor spoken before, and he cared now to think and speak of none and nothing else.

The little exercise of intellect, now left in Colin's mind, was bathed in gospel light, and the old man's broken heart gave forth, with all the freshness of a child's affection, the savour of the love of Christ. A year of this new life was added to the century, during which he lived "without God in the world," and then he quietly "fell asleep." More marked and evident was the conversion of old Sandy Dallas. Till he reached his seventieth year, there was not, in all the parish, a more worldly and insensate man than he. He regularly came to church, but he gave not even his ear to the gospel; for no preacher and no sermon could keep Sandy awake. Busy, late and early, with his farm-work all the week, and thinking of nothing else, Sabbath was to him a day of rest, just as he could make it a day of sleep. He chose to take his nap, in his pew in church, rather than on his bed at home, but this was all his concession to the claims of conscience. It was about six years before my father's death, that the long slumber of his soul was broken. The first indication of a change was his earnest attention to the word preached. He, who used to sleep out the whole service in church, now fixed his eye and he had but one on the preacher, and with rivetted attention, and in tears, seemed to drink in with eagerness all that was spoken.

On leaving the house of God, he was now observed to choose a retired path, to walk in, apart from the crowd; and, though his house was only about a mile from the church, hours would pass before he

reached it. The elder of his district, observing this, resolved to follow him, that he might ascertain how he employed his time by the way. He could easily conceal himself from Sandy, while only a short interval separated them. He approached him closely enough to hear his voice, as he repeated all he could remember of the sermon, and to notice that, when his memory failed him, he knelt to pray for help, to recollect what he had lost; and that, when any note particularly impressed him, he would again kneel to pray, asking now the Lord to preserve it in his memory, and to apply it effectually to his soul.

This was, thereafter, his usual practice in retiring from the house of God. In course of the following year, he applied for admission to the table of the Lord, and was cordially received by both the minister and the elders. Among the many who came to look on my father's remains after his death, was Sandy Dallas, and, of them all, there was not a more heart-stricken mourner. Grasping, convulsively, the post of the bed on which the corpse was stretched, all his sobbing voice could utter were the words, "He there, and I here!" He survived his minister a few years, during which he gave ample evidence of his affections being now "set on things above." All he now did about the farm was occasionally to herd the cattle, and even then he passed his time in reading, and in prayer and praise; others complaining that the herding was spoiled by the praying, and he himself complaining that the praying was spoiled by the herding. The freshness of his spiritual feeling waned not with his decaying intellect and strength, and, as an humble follower of the Lamb, he passed the remnant of his days on earth.

David Munro, till within two years of his death, was the most notorious drunkard in the parish. Seldom sober, and only so when he could not manage to get drink, he passed a beastly life, till he approached fourscore years of age. But, all this time, he was regularly in the house of God. This, and his terror of the minister, were the only evidences of his not being quite abandoned. His dread of my father had all the power of a passion. There was no effort he would not make to avoid encountering him. But an occasion occurred, in which he was under the necessity of meeting him. One of his daughters was about to be married, and her father must, of course, come "to speak to the minister," for such was the stern custom of the parish.

He could not avoid meeting the minister on the marriage day, at any rate, so he resolved to come to speak to him in the manse. He came, but in such a state of fear, that it was with difficulty he could mount the stair to the study. He came out of it, after a short interview, bathed in tears. Meeting the minister's wife, he said to her, "Oh, I expected to meet a lion in the study, but I found a lamb;" and, quite overcome by the kindness he had met with, he renewed his weeping.

His case had been on her heart before, and on those of other praying people, and her feeling towards him was such that she could not refrain from saying, "Would that the power of grace transformed yourself, David, into a lamb." "Who knows, who knows, but it may," he said, as he hurried off. Not long after, he was laid low by sickness, and nothing would satisfy him now but a visit from the minister, whom he so dreaded to meet before. My father went to see him, and his visits were blessed to the poor drunkard.

After a deep work of conviction, he was led to the only good foundation of a sinner's hope, and lived long enough to give evidence, which assured the hearts of many, who were not easily satisfied, that

he was verily "a brand plucked from the fire." Another case is linked with David's in the memories of those days, just because the convert had been a drunkard also. Returning home, on a dark night, after preaching in Dingwall, my father heard a moan by the wayside, which arrested his attention, and on dismounting, he found a poor wretch lying in the ditch, helplessly drunk, and almost strangled. Raising, he supported him, as he led his horse to a house at a little distance. There the poor man lay, till he had the drunkard's wretched waking next morning. The story of his rescue was told him next day, and it so wrought upon his mind, that he resolved to go to thank the person, who had so kindly taken care of him.

He could not summon courage, to pay his visit till that day had passed. Arriving at the manse of Killearnan a little after midday, on the Thursday of the monthly lecture, he found that the minister had gone to church, and that there was public worship there, that day. He went to the house of God, the Lord met with his soul, and he, who had been the means, so lately, of extending his life on earth, was now, besides, the means of leading him into the way of life eternal.

A more interesting case, than any yet given, must now be added, as the last in the sample of converts in Killearnan. Mary Macrae lived in Lochbroom, till she was more than fifty years of age. She was regarded by all her acquaintances, as a witless creature that could not be trusted, as she herself used afterwards to say, "even with the washing of a pot." The little intellect she had was in a state of utter torpor, nothing moved it into activity. Any attempt to educate her was regarded as quite hopeless. Her life was indeed a cheerless waste, during her "years of ignorance." Regarded as a simpleton by her neighbours, and as a burden by her relatives, she was a stranger even to the happiness which human kindness gives; and no light or joy from heaven had yet reached her alienated soul. On a Saturday, as she sat by the fire in her bothy in Lochbroom, the idea of going to Killearnan came into her mind. Whence, or how, it came to her, she could not tell, but she found it in her mind, and she could not shake it out. She rose from her seat, threw on her cloak, and started for Killearnan. She had never been there before, although she had often heard it spoken of; the journey was long and lonesome, but she kept on her way, and asking direction as she went on, she at last reached the old church of Killearnan, as the people were assembling on the Sabbath morning. Following the people, she entered the church. During the sermon, the voice of the Son of God was heard by Mary's quickened soul. She saw His beauty, as no child of darkness ever saw it, and with her heart she said, before 99 she left the church that day, "I am the Lord's." Never, from that day till her death, did Mary return to her former home. Where she had found the Lord, there she resolved to cast her lot.

But the joy of her espousals, was soon rudely broken, and deep, for a season, was the agony of her soul thereafter. I used to know her, then, as "foolish Mary," and wondered, what could move my father to admit her to his study, but the time came, when I accounted it, one of the highest privileges of my lot, that I could admit her to my own. By degrees, she was raised out of the depths of her sore distress. Marvellous was the minuteness, with which Mary's case was dealt with by the preacher, Sabbath after Sabbath. Every fear was met, every difficulty solved, that distressed and troubled her; and she, whom "the wise and prudent" would despise, seemed the special favourite of heaven, among all the children of Zion, who were fed in Killearnan. Her mind was opened up, to understand the truth, in a way quite peculiar, and she was led into a course of humble walking with her God.

Owing to the feebleness of her intellect, she could directly apprehend, only a logical statement of the very simplest kind. The truth was first pictured, in an allegory, in her imagination, and then, holding the statement of it before her understanding, and its symbol beside it, she examined and compared them both; able to receive from the former, into her understanding, only what was made clear by the latter, and refusing to receive from the latter, into her heart, all that did not accord with the former. Regarding a merely imaginative, as necessarily a merely carnal, view of spiritual truths, one could not but be staggered, at first, before Mary's habits of thought. But, in course of time, they would furnish, to a wise observer, a very distinct delineation of the proper offices of the various mental faculties, in relation to "the things of God." Being all feeble, each required to do its utmost, in its own peculiar place, ere a truth, presented to her mind, could reach her heart. Because of this, they could the more easily be seen at work, in all her mental processes. Her imagination was employed, in introducing the truth into her understanding; and this must always be its handmaid work, about "the things of God." It must not convey the truth directly to the heart; it must only help its passage thither, through the understanding. When it assumes a more lordly function, the light which it furnishes, cannot be safe, nor the feeling which it produces healthful.

Like the sickly child in a family, Mary was all the more closely and tenderly dealt with, owing to her very feebleness. Her imagination could not form the emblem, required to assist her understanding; and the illustrations she employed, seemed to have been the Lord's own suggestions. She could not read, and, in her feeble memory, but little bible truth was stored. The word seemed, on that account, to have been directly given her by her heavenly Teacher. As she could not repair to her bible, to search for it, her daily bread for her soul, came to her like the manna, always fresh from heaven, right down upon her case. Peculiarly near was thus her intercourse with God, just because of her very weakness. Her way of telling any of her views or feelings would be quite startling to a listener, at first. It was always easier for her to give the matter as she found it in the emblem, than embodied in a formal statement. She seemed, on that account, to one who knew her not, to be telling of some dream or vision she had seen. It was only after she had told the allegory, that she could attempt to state what it was intended to illustrate. The emblem was not constructed by her to make her meaning clear to another; it was presented to her by the Lord, to make a truth clear to herself.

She always felt that it was something given to her; and it was always as vivid as a scene before her eyes.

She could not dispense with it, either in examining what she sought to know, or in describing what she sought to tell.

Meeting a young man once, who was on the eve of license, and much cast down in prospect of the work before him, she said, "I saw you lately in a quagmire, with a fishing-rod in your hand, and you and it were sinking together, and you cried, as if you would never rise again; but I saw you again, on the bank of a broad river, and the joy of your heart was in the smile on your face, and you were returning home with your rod on your shoulder, and a basket full of fish in your hand;" and then, in broken words, she spoke of his present fears, and of the joy awaiting him in the future.

Of all I ever knew, she was the one who seemed to enjoy the greatest nearness to God in prayer. The whole case of one, whom she carried on her spirit before the throne of grace, seemed to be uncovered before her. She could follow him with the closest sympathy in his cares and sorrows, during his course through life, with no information regarding him, but such as was given her in her intercourse with God. A minister, to whom she was attached, having been sorely tempted during the week, and, finding no relief on Sabbath morning, resolved not to go out to church at all that day. About an hour before the time for beginning public worship, Mary arrived at his house.

As she came to the door, he was seated in a room just beside it, and overheard a conversation between Mary and the person who admitted her. "What is the matter with the minister?" she asked. "I don't know," was the reply; "but I never saw him in greater distress." "I knew that," Mary said, "and he is tempted not to go out to church to-day; but he will go after all; the snare will be broken, and he will get on the wing in his work to-day." She then repeated a passage of Scripture, which was "a word in season" to him, who listened out of sight, and a staff to help him on his way to "the gates of Zion." It was quite extraordinary how her mind would be led to take an interest in the cause of Christ, in places and in countries, of which she knew not even the names.

Instances of this might be given so remarkable, that I cannot venture to risk my credibility by recording them. One only will be given. Coming to me once, with an anxious expression on her face, she asked, if there was any minister, in a certain district, which she could only indicate by telling that it was not far from a place of which she knew the name. I told her there was, "but why do you wish to know?" I asked. "I saw him lately," was her answer, "fixing a wing to each of his sides, and rising, on these wings, into the air, till he was very high; and then, suddenly, he fell, and was dashed to pieces on the ground;" and she added, "I think, if there is such a minister, that he has but a borrowed godliness, and that his end is near." There was just such a minister, and his end was near, for, before a week had passed, I received the tidings of his death.

Symptoms of cancer in her breast having appeared, and medical advice having been taken, she was told that nothing could be done for her, but the removal of the affected part.

She was then about sixty years of age, and it seemed to all her friends that she would be running a great risk by submitting to the operation.

But Mary had asked counsel of Him, to whom she went with all her cares, and, with an assurance of recovery, she resolved to have the cancerous tumour removed. The operation was performed. A few days thereafter, she was in the burn of Ferintosh, hearing the gospel, and never suffered again, from the same cause, till her death.

Sweet to all who knew her, and who saw in her the working of the grace of God, is the memory of that simple, loving, holy woman. She is now at her rest, in her Father's house; and those who loved her best cannot wish that she still were here. But, since she has passed from the earth, they often sadly miss the cheering streak of light, her presence used to cast, across their dark and lonesome path, in this vale of tears.

CHAPTER IV.

Hearers from Surrounding Parishes—Jane Bain—The Munloch Meeting—Anecdote—John Gilmour—Blind Nelly—The Farmer's Wife—The Papist—The Kiltarlity Merchant—The Double Marriage—The Penny Smith—Little Hector—A Communion Season—Assistants—The Friday Speakers—His last days and death.

DURING all his ministry at Killearnan, many, from surrounding parishes, were among his stated hearers. These were a precious accession, for many of them were praying people, and were athirst for the gospel.

Some had received their first impressions of the truth through his preaching, and the strong tie, thus formed, bound them to his ministry; and others of them found his doctrine to be suited to their cases, and resolved to attend where "a word in season" was spoken. A few regularly walked about twenty miles, each Sabbath, to Killearnan.

To one, at least, the Sabbath journey was nearly thirty miles; for she came from the confines of Sutherland. Leaving home about midnight on Saturday, she walked across the hills, regularly in summer, and often in winter, and generally without any companion by the way. After the service on Sabbath she returned to her home, and was ready to join in the labour of the farm next morning.

On that condition alone, would her father allow her to come to Killearnan, being more anxious about the state of his croft than about the salvation of himself and of his family. It was surely owing to 'the tender mercies,' of the Lord that 'worthy Jane Bain' was so long enabled to bear all this fatigue and exposure. Her soul thriving under the gospel, and her body kept from harm, she continued to grow in grace, till, dying in peace, she was removed to the land, whose inhabitants toil and suffer no more.

The parish next to Killearnan, on the east, is Knockbain. Mr Roderick Mackenzie, better known as "Parson Rory," was its minister, at the time of my father's induction, and for more than twenty years thereafter. More ambitious of being popular as a 'country gentleman,' than of being acceptable as a gospel minister, he courted the favour and society of the lairds, rather than the love and the fellowship of the saints. Naturally amiable, and impulsively generous, few could apply to him in vain for relief, unless they were deserters of his ministry. For these there was no avenue to his heart. Almost all in Knockbain, who desired "the sincere milk of the word," attended on Sabbath at Killearnan. These were all known to "Parson Rory," and their names were on the black list in his books. For the preacher, who drew them away, he had no liking, and he was not careful to conceal that he had not; and no opportunity of appearing in the pulpit of Knockbain would be given to the minister of Killearnan.

A family resided not far from the manse of Knockbain, whose house was always open to the servants of the Lord. My father often spent a night in this house. His kind host, Mr Munro, would of course ask him to conduct family worship. He could not be punished for doing so, nor could the minister for agreeing to his request. The house of Munloch was able to accommodate many more than the members of the family, and it would have been very uncivil to exclude any of their neighbours who chose to attend.

The barn was still larger, and to it, when the house could not hold them, the family and their friends were, on such occasions, in the habit of adjourning.

Often had the barn been repaired to by others, when large parties had gathered for a feast and a dance, and they could scarcely be charged with a trespass, who used it for the worship of God. No law could be found forbidding the minister to lecture on the chapter which he read, even though the lecture should be quite as long as a sermon, and not very unlike one.

In this way, a safe opening was found for preaching the gospel at Knockbain, for which not a few shall for ever give praise to the Lord.

Returning on one occasion from Cromarty, he was prompted to remain all night in Mr Munro's house, but, anxious to be at home, he resisted the suggestion and drove on. He had not gone many yards past the crossing, when his conveyance broke down, and he was compelled to turn down to Munloch. The people, informed of his arrival, gathered in the evening to worship. Among his hearers was a youth, who amused himself a little before with caricaturing the cronies," as he called the good people who were coming to the house. In all the levity of wanton indifference he entered the room, in which worship was conducted . Soon after the lecture began, a case, which he could not fail to recognise as his own, was described, and with such minuteness and authority, that the stricken youth imagined every eye in the room was upon him. To his surprise, on looking up, he saw that the eyes of the minister were closed, and that he was quite unobserved by all around him in the room .He then felt that the eye of the Lord alone was upon him, and that the words, which were spoken, were sent from on high. During a season of sifting temptation which followed, tenderly and wisely was he treated by him, through whom the Lord first spoke to his soul; and deep thereafter was their mutual love.

He still lives, and I will not offend him, by recording his name; but I cannot forget that he was the best friend on earth of my soul, in the day of my distress.

To the end of his wilderness journey, may "the good Shepherd" preserve and guide him ! Among those, who came to Killearnan from Knockbain, was a young man, whose case was peculiarly interesting. John Gilmour, while a tradesman in Aberdeen, was awakened under the preaching of Mr Grant, then minister of the Gaelic Chapel in that city. His convictions were unusually deep and protracted, and, being utterly unfitted for any active employment, he was compelled to return to his native parish. For several years he walked on the very borders of despair.

It was in the study of the old manse of Killearnan, the light of the gospel first shone into his soul. He had come to speak to the minister, but could only tell him of the misery of a soul lying "without hope," on the very brink of destruction. In course of conversation, and to illustrate the state of his soul, in relation to the gospel, the minister rose, and closed the shutters of the window. When the room was thus darkened, he said, "Such is the state of your soul, John; this room is dark, not because it is not day-time without, and the light not ready to enter, but because the light that shineth so brightly upon it, is excluded by something within. It is so with you, in relation to Him, who is ' the light of the world.'" Then, while gradually opening the shutters, he preached Christ to his disconsolate hearer, and just as the light of day was entering into, and filling the room, the "marvellous light" of the gospel, was

penetrating into the broken heart of John Gilmour, till the desperate misery of that heart gave place to an ecstasy of joy. The liberty, then attained, continued, with but little intermission, till he died; but so overpowering was his gladness, that he himself declared, his bodily strength was more reduced, by three weeks of his happiness, than by three years of the misery, which he had previously endured. Rapidly growing in grace, and distinguished for the clearness of his views, as well as for the depth of his experience, he seemed one eminently fitted for serving the Lord, in the church on earth. But while yet in his youth, he was suddenly removed to his place in the church in heaven. On the Sabbath after his death, my father's text was, Psalm 46:10. Having announced it he said, "I have searched the Bible throughout for a reason, why the Lord should suddenly, and, as we would think prematurely, remove, out of the church on earth, one who had given rich promise of usefulness there, but the Lord gave me no account of this dealing, and has only answered my inquiries in the words: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Urray is the next parish on the west; and its eastern boundary is not more than a mile from the parish church of Killearnan. A considerable number, from the eastern district of that parish, came stately to Killearnan on Sabbath. Among them were two, who came always together while they lived, 'blind Nelly,' and her guide and companion, 'old Nanny.' Nelly was a lively Christian, with clear views of the truth, and a deep experience of its power. With more than ordinary cheerfulness, were combined in her much solemnity and courage. Living near to the Lord, and having more than ordinary prudence, she and her minister were on very intimate terms, and she was one of those, whose visits to the study were always specially welcome. Returning from Killearnan on a Sabbath evening, Rory Phadrig, having missed Nelly from her usual seat in church, called at her house, to ascertain why she was absent. Standing before the window of her room, he overheard her voice in prayer.

"I cannot be silent," he heard her saying to the Lord, "till I know why I was kept from Killearnan, for Thou knowest my soul used to be fed there, and that it greatly needed a diet to-day." Rory at once removed, and unwilling to disturb her, went on his way, and, as he himself said, covered with shame, by this proof of her earnestness and boldness, in pleading with the Lord. Rory having on another occasion gone to Nelly's little bothy, along with a friend, so soon as she was aware of their presence, she said: "I was sure the Lord was going to send two of His people to me to-day, who needed food, for meat for three was sent to me this morning, by one who never assisted me before." Then, groping her way to her chest, she produced the food, which had been so seasonably provided. When death came to "blind Nelly," it found in her a body that old age had ripened for the grave, and a soul that grace had ripened for glory.

Among those who came from Urray was a woman, noted for her kindness to the poor, and for her love to the people of the Lord. Her husband was a farmer in comfortable circumstances, but he did not share in the fervent charity of his wife. Anxious, on one occasion, to shew kindness to a few Christian friends, whom she knew to be poor, she resolved before the Lord, to slaughter the best heifer on the farm, and to divide it among them.

On announcing her project to her husband, he laughed at a proposal that seemed to him so outrageous, and decidedly refused to allow her to carry her plan into effect. "I have given the heifer to

the Lord," she said, "and if He comes to claim it for the poor of His people, you cannot withhold it." On entering the byre next morning, the farmer was not a little astonished to find his favourite heifer lying in the stall, and gasping its last breath.

There was now no alternative but to bleed and to flay it; and he was too thoroughly frightened, to prevent his wife from disposing, as she pleased, of the carcase.

Shortly before her death, this godly woman was sorely tempted to fear, that all her love had terminated in His people, and that none of it had risen up to the Lord Himself. Under the pressure of this temptation, she came to Killearnan, on the Monday of a fellowship meeting, and called at the manse after the service in church was concluded. She told her fear to the minister. As she could not doubt her love to the people of the Lord, and as it was proved to her, that it was as the brethren of Christ she loved them, he reminded her of the words, "we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." As there was no simpler, he assured her there was no surer evidence of grace, than that there given; and after explaining to her, why she was more conscious of her love to His people, than of her love to the Lord, he declared to her, on scripture warrant, his assurance of the safety of her state, in prospect of eternity. His words were blessed to her soul, and she was entirely delivered from her distress. "There is nothing now left for me to do on earth, but to die," were her words, as she bade the minister farewell; and on the second day thereafter, she died. There were a few from Kilmorack, and after Dr Bayne's death, from Kiltarlity, who stately waited on his ministry. One of these had received his first impressions of the truth in rather remarkable circumstances. For several years, my father occasionally preached in Strathglass, a district peopled chiefly by Papists. Preaching, on one occasion, beside the river that flows through that lovely glen, a Papist, who dared not to join the congregation, but could not restrain his anxiety to hear, crouched in the thick brushwood that covered the slope of the opposite bank. While lying there, and quite able to hear the words of the preacher, the truth was applied by the Spirit to his soul. He lived to give satisfying evidence to all who knew him, that, on that day, he had begun to "know the grace of God in truth." A reminiscence of another of the hearers from the west, is connected with the circumstances of his death.

Having attended at Contin on a Communion Sabbath, when my father officiated, after all the other communicants had taken their places at the table, he, for some reason which he did not live to reveal, still remained in his seat. The minister said, "There is still some communicant here who has not come forward, and, till that person takes a seat at the table, I cannot proceed with the service." Another verse was then sung, but 'the merchant from Kiltarlity' did not come. He was not in the minister's eye, though there was some one on his spirit, when he said, "I implore you to come forward, for this is your last opportunity of showing forth the Lord's death, till he come, for, if I am not greatly mistaken, you will not reach your home in life after the close of this service." The merchant then came forward, and no sooner had he taken his seat at the table than the minister said, "we may now proceed with the service." On the dismissal of the congregation on Monday, the merchant set his face on his home; but, while crossing the ford of the Orrin, he was carried down by the stream and was drowned.

Among those who came from the west, was one of whom those who knew her used to say, that she was twice married in the same hour. During an excursion to the west, my father preached in Strathbran, which, though now a waste wilderness almost throughout, then contained a considerable population. A marriage party arrived before the hour appointed for preaching, and having a considerable distance to travel to their home, were anxious to start immediately after the ceremony. The minister agreed to marry them at once. During his address, while commending the love of Christ, and presenting first of all, His offer of marriage to each of the parties, the Lord applied the word with power to the heart of the bride, and, before the marriage ceremony was over, she gave herself to the Lord. No persuasion could now induce her to leave the place till the sermon was over. Christ was now the supreme object of her love, and she would not lose the opportunity of hearing His praise. During the remainder of her life, she gave satisfying evidence of her having truly known "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." A few from Dingwall regularly attended at Killearnan on Sabbath. One of these was Kenneth Mackenzie, commonly called "the Penny Smith." He was one of the few who succeed in keeping their original shape under all the pressure of conventional usage, refusing to take the form and fashion of those who surround them. In his dress, manner, habits, and modes of thinking, he retained his own peculiarity, and would be neighbour-like in nothing. In his kilt and antique coat, he seemed to have just stepped out of the midst of the generation of the fathers. While his neighbours were engaged in idle gossip, or lounging idly by the fire, he was poring over an old Latin book, spelling through a Hebrew grammar, or writing in characters of his own devising some of his strange thoughts in a record. On the Saturday afternoon, his smithy was cleared of its iron and its tools, and seated with benches, on which, for an hour in the evening, sat the young men of the neighbourhood, while the smith gave them lessons in psalmody. Not fearing the face of man, it cost him no effort to administer a reproof, whatever the character, rank, and influence of the transgressor might be. Meeting the Sheriff on his Sabbath evening walk, "Law-makers should not be law-breakers," the smith said to him, as he looked him boldly in the face.

"My health requires that I should take a walk, Kenneth," the Sheriff said by way of excuse. "Keep you God's commandment, and you can trust Him with the keeping of your health," was the smith's reply; "accursed must be the health that is preserved by trampling on the law of God." Hector Maclean was another of the hearers from Dingwall. "Little Hector" he was usually called, for he was not four inches above five feet in height.

In his youth he had been engaged in smuggling, as in those days was too commonly the habit. Having lost, by a seizure, the produce of a small quantity of barley, which he had purchased on credit, he was not able to pay for it. Determined, even then, to owe no man anything, he accepted of the bounty that was offered for a substitute, by one who was balloted for the army; and the sum that was given to him just covered the price of the barley. Soon after joining his regiment, he was sent to Spain with the army under Sir John Moore. He went through all the adventures of the memorable retreat, that terminated in the battle and victory of Corunna. Of all his regiment there were only seven who, on landing in Britain, were healthy and unwounded; and Hector was one of them.

Often did he look back on this fact with gratitude and wonder, after he had learned to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord.

Returning to Dingwall, after the peace, he resided there till his death. Not long after his return, as he was dressing himself on a morning early in August, 238 THE MINISTER OF KILLEARNAN.

he was seized with an unaccountable desire to go to Cromarty. He had never been there before, and was conscious of no inducement to visit it; but he could not repress the feeling, that had so suddenly seized him. He started on the journey, not knowing whither or wherefore he went. Reaching Cromarty before noon, he followed groups of people, who were gathering to an eminence above the town. It was the Saturday of a communion season there. My father preached outside in Gaelic, and Hector was a hearer.

The doctrine preached that day, the Lord applied with power to his heart, and before the sermon was over, he had given himself to the Lord. Few lives were more unblemished than Hector's, from that day till his death, few witnesses for Christ more faithful than he, and in simplicity and godly sincerity but very few Christians could excel him.

These are but a few specimens of those who usually came to Killearnan on Sabbath. Almost all of them are now removed from the earth. They no longer require the wells in the valley of Baca, for Zion has been reached, where the Lamb is leading them to living fountains of water, and where they hunger and thirst no more.

During the first half of his ministry at Killearnan, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed only once a year, and generally on the first Sabbath of August. Great crowds were accustomed to assemble on such occasions. As many as 10,000 people have met on a communion Sabbath, and nearly 2000 communicants have sat at the table of the Lord. These large assemblies were, of course, in the open air. The place of meeting was a large quarry, not far from the church.

In front of the rock, which with the strata of earth that covered it, rose to a height of about a hundred feet, and between two mounds of the rubbish that had been removed during the process of excavation, the minister's tent was erected. There was level ground in front of it, on which the communion tables were placed, and on either side, tier above tier, rose the vast multitude of people. All were able to hear the voice of the preacher, and even its echo from the rock.

Sometimes, a few adventurous people sat just on the edge of the precipice; but if the preacher was prone to be nervous, it was not safe for him to look up to the group on the gallery of the church in the quarry.

An unreasonable prejudice exists in the minds of strangers, against the great sacramental gatherings of the Highlands. They are associated in their views with endless confusion, and many positive evils. It cannot be denied that, where such large crowds assemble, there will necessarily be much, in the outward behaviour of some, that is offensive to those who are impressed by the solemnity of the occasion. But of what congregation, may not this to some extent be affirmed? There was more of this, however, in the days when these gatherings were most honoured by the presence of the Lord, than now, when "the Hope of Israel," is "as a stranger" in the midst of them.

When the Lord was doing a great work, Satan was busy too. While souls were born again, and the quickened were refreshed, the enemy took his revenge, by doing what he could, through the conduct of the openly ungodly, to grieve the hearts of the servants and people of the Lord. But would not that

work of the enemy have been got rid of at too great an expense, if removed at the cost of losing that work of the Lord? At present, much less will be seen, in the outward demeanour of a Highland congregation, in the open air, to offend right feeling, than in that of some congregations, in the fine temples of the south, that may be held up as models of propriety.

It has also been objected, that these frequent gatherings must encourage habits of indolence among the people, as they draw them so often away from their stated employments. That they have by some been thus abused, cannot be denied. But let it not be forgotten, that many of the people, in the Highlands, had no stated employment, and no family to provide for, and were therefore free to search for "the bread of life," wherever they could find it.

They have been condemned too on the ground of their necessarily causing a vacancy in surrounding parishes, whose ministers must be present to assist where the sacrament is dispensed. But if the people attend there, what reason is there for their ministers remaining at home? They could only preach to their own people by leaving their own parishes on that day; and as it must not be supposed that there is any peculiar virtue in their own pulpits, they may be quite as useful to their people by preaching to them elsewhere.

This takes for granted, what was usually the case in days past, that neighbouring ministers would find the whole body of their people in the great congregation before them.

There were two great advantages attending these public communions, as they were called. An opportunity of fellowship was given by them to Christians from all parts of the country, who would not else have met or known each other on the earth; and the gospel was preached to a great multitude of sinners, by a variety of ministers, amidst the prayers of a great many of God's people. In other circumstances a narrow congregational feeling is apt to cramp the sympathies, even of Christians. Even in the same town, how few are the opportunities of worshipping together afforded to the people of several congregations; and any opportunity of sitting together at the Lord's Table they have not, during all their life on earth. The effect of this is, that each congregation becomes a detached self-contained sort of community, with a minister better than every other minister in the town, and who must be extolled at the expense of all others around him. One congregation says, "I am of Paul," and another says, "I am of Apollos," and jealousies arise, causing alienation, where there should be a community of interests and feelings. In widely scattered communities, such as are in the Highlands, there was all the more need of a prevention of this evil. There was, in the wide north, a greater tendency to rally round a Paul and an Apollos, and there were some there too — and in all ages they were the worst — who were prone to say, in a spirit of proud exclusiveness, "I am of Christ." But the opportunity which was afforded, on a communion occasion, of hearing all the good ministers of the district, the proofs given of the Lord's presence with each of them, the effect of a community of profit and enjoyment under their preaching, and the loving fellowship of such seasons, tended in a great degree to bring all these sections more closely together, and to expand their sympathies and hopes.

On these accounts, while desiring to have the sacrament of the Supper administered also more privately, my father resolved to continue the public communion once a-year. Feeling the desirableness of having it oftener than once, and it being impossible to find two days, with a sufficient interval, on

which the people could comfortably assemble in the open air; and, anxious, besides, to be rid of the distractions that necessarily attend the public communion, he resolved to dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in winter. At that season a large number of strangers could not attend, and could not be accommodated even if they did; and it was called, on that account, "the private communion." A strong prejudice against it generally prevailed at first. It looked to some like an attempt to shut out strangers from the privileges of the sacred feast, and to those who viewed it thus it wore a most unchristian aspect. Forgetting that it was only added to the other mode of celebrating the ordinance, they opposed it as if it were its substitute.

Some ministers, yielding to the unreasonable prejudice of their people, refused to adopt it; but, in course of time, the feeling against the private communion wore away, and what was at first a solitary and disliked exception, became afterwards the rule.

The same ministers, for many years, invariably assisted in conducting the services of the communion season at Killearnan. He himself usually preached on the Fast-day, alternately in English and Gaelic, choosing always for that day a different language from that in which he preached on Sabbath. His brother, the minister of Logie, always officiated in either language in the action service. There were always some to whom his presence and preaching were peculiarly acceptable. Himself often touching the two extremes of experience, there were a few to whose depths of distress, his was the hand to let down the cord, that helped them to rise up to light and liberty in Christ.

Peculiarly searching and solemn, while systematic and clear, his manner quiet, and his style unadorned and simple, there were few who felt attractiveness in his preaching but such as relished the savour of its spirituality. His appearance was very pleasing; and an air of meekness and dignity rested on his countenance, well befitting his position and his work. If there were others his superiors in pleading with men, there was none to excel him as a wrestler with God.

The late Mr Fraser of Kirkhill was always one of his assistants while he lived; and by none was he more loved and appreciated than by my father. His sermons, always remarkable for lucid arrangement, cogent reasoning, and vivid illustration, were peculiarly so in Killearnan. Generally on Saturday he preached in Gaelic on some subject bearing on the priesthood of Christ; and on Monday in English, on the life, privileges, duties, or prospects of believers. These latter were always specially acceptable to the people of God, and oftener than once they were blessed for the conversion of sinners. Mr Fraser's sudden death, which occurred a few years before his own, deeply affected my father. The tidings reached Killearnan after he had gone out to church, on the day of the monthly lecture. To the surprise of all, he expressed, in public prayer that day, his persuasion, that a breach had been made on the walls of Zion in the north, by the removal of one of the eminent servants of the Lord.

On coming out of church, and being informed of Mr.

Fraser's death, he said: "I was prepared for this." Dr. Macdonald was invariably there. He usually preached on Saturday in English, and on Monday in Gaelic. His share of the work was always heartily given, and always heartily relished; and the communion season at Killearnan used to be to himself a time of peculiar enjoyment.

The only survivor of all his assistants is Mr Sage of Resolis. Comparatively young, and always given to seeking a lower place than would be assigned to him by his brethren, his portion of the work was usually as small as he could contrive to make it. He contributed his share as if he might be ashamed to present it; but he himself was the only one who wished it were omitted.

Yet among us, a representative of other and better days, may the evening of his life be brightened by the light of his Father's face, and may a rich blessing from on high rest on his last works in the vineyard.

What a goodly company of the Lord's people were wont, in the earlier days of his ministry, to meet at the communion in Killearnan ! Many pious men and women from Sutherland, the flower of the worthies of Ross-shire, the most eminent Christians in Invernessshire, and not a few from greater distances, would meet together there. How precious were the loving fellowships, and the wrestling prayers of these saints; and how many proofs were given, ere they parted, that the Lord was in very deed in their midst ! On Friday, the difficulty in these days would be to select, and not as now to find "men ;" so many would be present who were qualified to speak, and who would be acceptable to their hearers. Each one, who was called to speak, knowing this, and unwilling to occupy the time of another, was invariably concise. Hugh Buie would be the first speaker, and clear, full-fraught with thought, and unctuous his remarks would be.

Alexander Vass, himself in tears as he spoke of the love of Christ, would move all others to tears by his melting words. Hector Holme, less remarkable than these as a speaker, would be listened to as a man of God, and the unction of his utterances would be sweet to many hearts. John Finlayson, with an experience of the power of the gospel, deeper than his knowledge of its doctrines was clear, would speak a word in season to the simple, broken-hearted Christian. John Gordon would catch the attention of his hearers by some striking allegory, and would be sure to leave some saying in their memories. Donald Fraser would carefully dissect the question, and bring it closely home to the conscience. When Alexander Hutcheson spoke, it was as if the alabaster box of ointment were broken in the midst of the assembly. John Clark, with a grace and dignity of manner quite remarkable, would command the respectful attention of all who heard him. In a few broken but savoury sentences, Daniel Bremner would follow him. When Angus Ross rose, all were eager to listen. A few searching sentences of rebuke, addressed to the hypocrite, would be followed by a few sweet words of comfort to "the poor in spirit," and he would be soon on his seat again.

John Fraser, unconscious of his gift, spoke with peculiar precision and fluency. Roderick Mackenzie, in spite of his rude manner and rough voice, would have, earnest listeners, for all knew his thorough integrity, and many felt the point and unction of his remarks.

John Munro would speak deliberately, clearly, and to the point. Angus Munro's untutored genius would prove its power, in presenting, in bold striking words, a view of the subject, not seen by any other, till suggested by himself, and even then appreciated only by a few, owing to the intensely metaphysical cast of his thinking. David Ross would always have something to say, at once fresh and striking. And John Macdonald would determine the state of the question with marvellous precision,

and would apply it with rare skill. These and some others would have spoken to the question in these days.

Of all these, the two whom my father most fervently loved were Alexander Hutcheson and Angus Ross.

Of them he used to say, that of all the Christians he had ever known, except Donald Macpherson, they lived nearest to the Lord.

Alexander Hutcheson was catechist in Kiltarlity during Dr Bayne's ministry there, and thereafter till the infirmities of old age no longer permitted his engaging in his work. He was but eleven years of age when he felt the first impression of the truth. Engaged in tending his father's sheep, one night, as he was shutting them up in the fold, he was strongly moved to kneel down and pray. There, in the midst of his little flock, he fell on his knees, and ere he rose he thought that Christ had won his heart. The impression then made gradually wore away, till he had fallen back into the lethargy that preceded it. Just a year had elapsed, when the same feeling was again excited, and in the same circumstances as before. This, once more, in course of time, wore away. The listlessness which succeeded continued till, one night, just after he lay down in bed, an impression of his guilt and danger as a sinner, was made with irresistible power on his heart. So sudden and so overpowering was the awe that came upon his spirit, that he had sprung out of bed, to rush out to the hill, when, as suddenly, the light of the glorious gospel illumined his soul. Never from that hour did Alexander Hutcheson return to the ways of sin, and thus began his Christian life.

Enjoying unwonted nearness to God, he was at the same time a most humble, loving, tender-hearted Christian. It was a fine sight to see him, in his old age, when he rose to speak to the question, as he leant on some one for support, while tears gushed from his eyes at every reference to the love of Jesus.

Angus Ross, more talented than Alexander Hutcheson, was also much more impulsive. The first sermon he ever heard my father preach, proved to him peculiarly seasonable. Living in a district once highly favoured, but then again a desert, he was just on the eve of seceding from the Establishment. He had gone so far as to be quite ready to join the Secession Church on the very next Sabbath. Hearing that a stranger, who was well reported of, was to preach in a neighbouring parish church, he went to hear him. The text was, "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents." During the discourse, all Angus' difficulties were so minutely described, and his whole case so thoroughly met, that he was filled with surprise; and accepting as of God the counsels that were given him, he finally abandoned, then and there, his intention of joining the Seceders. An attachment was that day formed between him and the minister who preached that sermon, that knew no waning while they lived. It was his habit, ever after, to come occasionally all the way from Auldearn, to hear sermon at Killearnan.

As a speaker, always pointed and lively, Angus never failed to be interesting. His statements of doctrine were always exact, his practical remarks suitable and searching, his reproofs very penetrating, and his counsels specially apt and discriminating. His prayers were very remarkable for childlike freedom and burning earnestness.

During thirteen years of his life, he enjoyed a continuous assurance of his interest in Christ. Happy were these years spent under the light of his Father's face ! Not long before his death, the Lord laid His afflicting hand on his body, and withdrew the light of His face from his soul. For a season, he walked amidst terrors in "the valley of the shadow of death," but emerging into light and liberty again, he went singing across the river to the heavenly city.

John Macdonald, Urquhart, was the Turretine of "the men." Trained in early life under a powerful gospel ministry, his views of the plan of salvation were peculiarly clear. He was intolerant of any deviation from the strictest accuracy in a statement of doctrine, but was intensely practical withal. Often have his luminous and unctuous addresses been blessed "for correction and instruction in righteousness ' to the people of God; and not a few received their first impressions of divine things under his teaching.

On the Friday of a communion season, he was generally the last speaker; and often has he excited the admiration of his hearers by the dexterity with which, after determining the exact state of the question, he would explain or rectify some of the remarks of those who preceded him, and employ for practical uses the bearings of all that had previously been spoken.

"Donald Fraser of the Haugh," as he was called, from the name of the street in Inverness in which he resided, was well known and highly respected. "My minister," he always called Dr. Fraser of Kirkhill, for it was under his preaching he was trained in his youth.

After the first impression of eternal things was made upon his mind, he was tried with a peculiar temptation. Satan would insist that only great sinners could warrantably expect to be saved, and that as he had been kept from all flagrant transgressions, he ought not to apply for salvation to Christ, till he had first qualified himself by committing some crime. Pressed by the tempter, he had almost yielded to his suggestion, when the Lord broke the snare of the fowler. The light of the law's spirituality shed into his soul, soon discovered to Donald guilt enough to entitle him to rank with great sinners, without his adding one other to the list of his transgressions. His temptation thereafter was, that he was too great a sinner to have any reason to expect that Jesus would receive him. But, on the right hand as on the left, the Lord was near to deliver him, and guided his feet into the way of peace. Of all, who usually spoke at the fellowship meeting in Killearnan, in those days, Angus Munro alone survives, retaining, at fourscore years and five, much of the fire of his genius, and all the fervour of his love. These righteous ones shall be held in everlasting remembrance. Their several histories shall not be left buried in the dust of the past, but, written on their memories, shall be read over in their heavenly home, to the praise of His wisdom, faithfulness, and love, who kept and guided them by the way. Assembled worlds, too, shall yet hear as much, regarding their life on earth, proclaimed from the great white throne, as the glory of their God requires to be made known.

Towards the close of my father's life, the only change that could be observed, and that was evidently to a few, was his growing abstraction from the things of time, and the increased heavenliness of his doctrine. His bodily health was not impaired, nor was his natural strength abated, and he abounded in labours to the end.

Always deeply interested in all that concerned the welfare of his church and of his country, he was peculiarly so during the latter years of his life. Being resolutely opposed to Catholic emancipation, many a groan was wrung from his heart by the Act of 1829. He often referred to it in public, and many incredulously listened to his forebodings of the sad results of that measure. Regarding papists, not merely as the members of an anti-Christian Church, but as the subjects of a foreign prince, who aspires to establish, as the dominant power, in all countries, his own temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty, all his loyalty and patriotism, as well as his protestantism, revolted against giving them a place in the legislature. His forebodings were but too well founded; for whether, as the natural result of the increase of its political power, or as a judicial award, from the hand of the Highest, to the nation that gave so much of its "power to the beast," popery has, since 1829, made greater progress in this country, than during the whole century which preceded. The plague of mawkish liberalism, which prevailed at the time, smote the great majority with blindness as to the true nature and results of the measure, and the few who protested against it were regarded as bigots. Opinion has changed since then; and the concession has lately been wrung from those once loudest in denouncing them, that the bigots were right.

The conflict that terminated in the Disruption of the Church of Scotland from the State, had been going on for seven years before his death. He never hesitated as to the part he should act in that controversy.

On the question of the spiritual independence of the Church, he had no difficulty in forming a judgment. The people's right to elect their own pastors he asserted most strongly, but he, at the same time, expressed his fear, that they were not qualified to use it. That, however, he did not regard as a reason for retaining it from them; for as it was given them by Christ, no other power had a right to withhold it. His anticipations of the result of the conflict were very alarming, and to some seemed prophetic.

Often did he distinctly announce the event of the Disruption. Dr. Macdonald has told me, with what surprise he heard him once say, while preaching in the Church of Ferintosh in 1829, "This crowded church shall yet become a place into which none who fear the Lord will dare to enter," adding, "not long before this change takes place, I shall be removed to my rest, but many who now hear me shall see it." From that period till his death, his anticipations were more and more vivid. The coming crisis seemed to emerge, before his eyes, more and more distinctly, out of the mist, that lay on the future, and that hid its secrets from the eyes of others; and his solicitude, in prospect of the Disruption, wrung more groans from his heart, than the actual experience of the trial from the hearts of many who survived it.

His anticipations as to the state of religion in the north, during the next generation, were extremely gloomy. Often did he declare his persuasion, that the people were wearying of a spiritual ministry, and of a purely preached gospel. Like the Israelites, in the wilderness, they had begun to count as "light bread" what was sent to them from heaven. "Few and far between," he expected the faithful preachers of the gospel to be, in the generation that succeeded; and when the decay of religion had converted "the garden of the Lord," almost into a wilderness again, he expected a season of trial to

come, during which "the man of sin" would again have supremacy, and the witnesses of Christ be few, feeble and hidden, and through which he could only look with a tearful eye, to the prospect of the glorious millennium, whose bright morning was seen dawning beyond it. The religious awakening which, a short time before his death, spread over various districts of Scotland, he did not regard with much hopefulness and pleasure. He expected but little permanent fruit as its result, and was much pained by the countenance given, in the excitement of that time, to manifest delusions.

The experience of all his life tended to make him distrustful as to all awakening accompanied with violent bodily excitement, and he never failed to repress any such exhibitions, whenever they appeared in his presence. His anticipations were, alas ! too fully realised.

The rich flush of blossom, that then appeared, withered prematurely, and almost entirely away, and bitter disappointment awaited those, who formed a more sanguine estimate than his of the fruit that might in the end be produced.

Shortly before his death, he took a peculiarly warm interest in the case of a woman in his parish, whom he frequently visited. While engaged with others in planting a piece of moorland, she observed, within the broken walls of a ruined cottage, part of a lady's veil protruding out of a heap of rubbish. Taking hold of it, she was unable to pull it out without removing the stones and turf around it, in doing which a woman's face appeared. The shock caused by this discovery was such, that she was almost distracted with terror.

The horrid sight of the murdered woman's face--for such it proved to be--was the last her eyes ever saw, for from that moment she was quite blind. Laid aside on a bed of sickness, she remained a helpless invalid till her death. But her reason survived the shock which deprived her of vision, and the Lord visited her with His salvation in the day of her distress. Her pastor's visits were greatly blessed to her, and she was one of the last whom he was the means of turning "from darkness unto light." Precious to the blind, as well as to others, were his lectures in her house, and the time spent beside her was to himself a season of peculiar enjoyment. Her Christian course was short, but it seemed to all who knew her to be indeed "the path of the just." His last pastoral visit was to a pious couple in the east end of his parish, who were apparently dying, and very anxious to see him. The husband was one of his elders, but both in intellect and in spirituality excelled by his wife.

Among other questions, he asked them individually, "Do believe that your your affliction was appointed by God in the everlasting covenant?" The wife was first addressed, and her reply was, "I believe that it is permitted by God in His providence, but I have not attained to believe that it was ordered in the covenant." The husband's answer was, "I cannot even say what my wife has just said." "You are a step behind her, Donald," his minister said, "and as surely as she is before you in this, she will be before you in heaven." And so it happened; though the husband was both older, and a greater invalid than his wife.

After leaving this house he passed into the parish of Knockbain, to visit a woman who had been for many years one of his stated hearers, and whose soul had profited by his preaching. She was enduring great agony under the gnawing of a virulent cancer, and her soul's hope was, at the same time, sorely tried by the tempter. Her case had for some time lain closely on his heart, and his frequent and

earnest references to her in family prayers indicated how intensely he desired her deliverance from her deep despondency. Much of his interview with her was strictly private. Its result was her complete deliverance from the fetters in which Satan, for a season, bound her. She was enabled, ere they parted, to declare her assurance of salvation, her contentment with her lot, and her willingness to leave the event of her death in the good hand of Him to whom she had committed her spirit. Her eye was moist with tears, but her face was bright with joy, as she bade him farewell; and, before a fortnight passed, they met, for the next time, in their eternal home in heaven.

His references to his death were frequent in his preaching during the last year of his life, and his appeals to his hearers were peculiarly earnest and solemn. His anticipation of death was so assured, that he could not refrain from referring to it, and he himself preparing, he desired to prepare his people also, for the parting which drew near.

He would announce the subject of a course of sermons, and open it up; but instead of resuming it next Sabbath, he would mention a new text. This again would be laid aside for another. He was thus hurried over a series of texts, in such pressing haste, that he could not but direct the attention of his people to the fact, entreating them to observe how his Master was urging him to fulfil his ministry with all haste, as the end of it was near. One of his last Sabbath texts was Rev. 3:20. His sermons on that verse were very remarkable, and were, indeed, like the utterances of one who was just going to step across the threshold of eternity.

For a few weeks before his death, he preached every Tuesday evening, from the words, "We are come to God, the Judge of all." This text was the announcement of his death to his people, and his sermons contained much of his own feeling in prospect of that event. His last sermon in church was preached on the Tuesday evening before his death, and it closed the series of discourses on the text last mentioned. At the close of the service he announced that on Thursday he would preach in the schoolhouse in the eastern district of his parish, in order to take that last opportunity of wiping off his skirts the blood of the people who resided there. The congregation was then dismissed by him, under the assured persuasion that he and they would never meet again on earth. On coming out of church, he stood for a few minutes looking to the people as they were retiring under the clear moonlight. "My poor people," he was heard exclaiming, by one who came up beside him, and whose approach caused him to turn away, and to hurry on to the Manse.

All this time he was in perfect health, his step almost as firm and elastic as when he was in the prime of his manhood. The usual indications of approaching dissolution were entirely wanting, and yet his persuasion of death being nigh, was quite assured. His sermon on Thursday was on spiritual worship, and in preaching it, his whole soul seemed to go out in aspirations after the pure service of heaven. On Friday his throat became affected. Inflammation set in, and continued to make progress. He expressed no anxiety, and uttered no complaint, and his family had no distinct anticipation of danger. Remaining in bed, he seemed lost in contemplation, an expression of placid joy resting on his face. He had calmly laid himself down to die. His work was done; he knew that his eternal rest was nigh; and with his eye fixed on the glory that was dawning on his vision, he awaited with joyful expectation the coming of death.

His only reply to all inquiries about his health was, "I'll soon be quite well." While his wife and a pious friend were sitting in his room, not till then excited by alarm as to the issue of his illness, their attention was suddenly arrested by sounds of the sweetest melody.

Such was the softness of the strange music, they felt as if it could not have been a thing of earth, and while it lasted, they could only listen in solemn silence.

When the spell was broken, Mr Kennedy hastened to ask him if he had heard any strange music. He gave no answer, but beckoned her to be silent, with an expression of absorbed attention and of ecstasy on his face. Her rising fears then grew strong, and, in a crushing foreboding of her loss, closed upon her heart. The medical man arrived soon thereafter, and, with the utmost kindness and with all his skill, applied the fitting remedies. His patient meekly submitted to the prescribed treatment, but the disease was quietly, though surely making progress, and, on Sabbath evening he fell asleep in Jesus.

The week on which he died was very stormy. Snow had fallen to a great depth; but many of the Lord's people, from all districts of the country, hurried, on hearing the tidings of his death, to take a last look of his body. A large crowd attended his funeral; and amidst the tears of his people, and under a frowning sky, his mortal remains were laid in the grave. Many of the people hovered around his closed grave, as if they shrunk from realising that they had parted with him, and that they should see his face no more on earth. Dr. Macdonald, who was standing beside the grave, knowing well the feeling that detained the mourners, turned to them, and said, "You will never see John Kennedy again, till you see him on the last day." His bereaved flock testified their respect for his memory, by enclosing his tomb, and erecting beside it a tablet, which bears the following inscription:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN KENNEDY, MINISTER OF KILLEARNAN, WHO DIED, JANUARY 10TH, MDCCCXLI.

A MAN OF GOD, SENT FORTH INTO THE VINEYARD WITH THE FULNESS OF GOSPEL BLESSINGS; THE PECULIARLY HONOURED AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST, THROUGH WHOM SHONE FORTH THE EXCELLENCY OF THE POWER IN THE CONVERSION OF MANY A SOUL TO GOD.

THE JOY OF THE LORD WAS HIS STRENGTH.

THE MINISTERIAL GIFTS AND GRACES OF PRIMITIVE TIMES, WHEN ON THE GLORY OF ZION THERE WAS DEFENCE, IN HIS PERSON WERE SEEN REALIZED, ATTRACTING THE LOVE OF BELIEVERS, AND IN EVERY UTTERANCE REFRESHING THEIR SOULS.

THEY WERE GLAD IN HIS LIGHT.

IN EVERY ORDINANCE OF THE SANCTUARY, RICHLY REPLENISHED IN SPIRIT BY CLOSE COMMUNION WITH GOD, OF INTIMATE STANDING IN THE MIND AND COUNSEL OF CHRIST, WITH HOLY UNCTION, FERVOUR, WISDOM, AND LOVE, HE WATCHED, WARNED, AND NOURISHED THE HERITAGE.

SINNERS IN ZION WERE AFRAID.

FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, ABOUNDING IN LABOURS, AND RIPENED FOR
GLORY, HE FELL ASLEEP.

THIS PARISH MOURNS.